

4 Character Areas

4.1 The eight Character Areas

To understand Winchester's Conservation Area and its historical development, the Conservation Area has been appraised as distinct 'character areas', each with its own individual character and contribution to the City. Eight character areas have been identified:

- The Walled Town (including the Barracks area and Cathedral Close as distinct areas within the Walled Town);
- Winchester College and Kingsgate;
- The Riverside;
- St Giles' Hill—the Eastern Suburb;
- Christchurch Road;
- St Cross;
- Hyde—the Northern Suburb; and
- Oram's Arbour and the Western Suburb

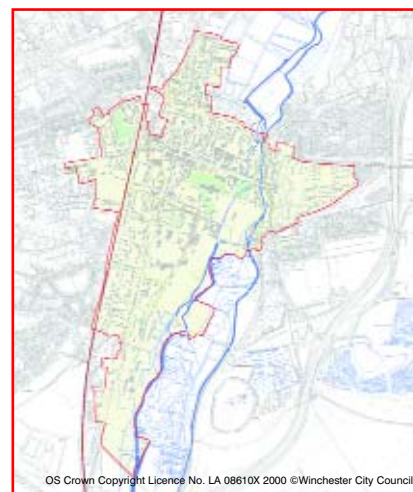
In each case, the areas are separated by noticeable transitions such as scale of development, land use, or architectural period, or are separated by physical boundaries—the railway or the river. In many cases, these transitions reflect the historical development of the City.

The river itself comprises a distinct character area with its own historic development arising from millworking and its own distinct relationship between buildings, flora and water.

The railway cutting is an essential element in the character of both the western suburb and the walled town which it separates. Rich vegetation provides a backdrop for buildings and breaks views between the two areas, adding to an awareness of arriving at the approach to the city centre from the west.

The following section looks in detail at each Character Area, assessing its local history and development, the building uses and design, the quality of the streets and public spaces, and its natural features and topography; including views. The negative and neutral features of each are also assessed and guidance given on the potential for enhancing each area.

The Listed Buildings are noted, together with unlisted buildings which are considered to merit consideration for Listing. Reference has also been made to other elements of the urban environment which contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. Winchester has many areas where high quality enclosing walls, paving, and public art are important elements. Commercial signage is also important, the High Street for instance includes a number of unusual signs which contribute greatly to the area's identity without being obtrusive or over-illuminated. Street lighting is another important element both in terms of details, for example lamp posts, and in the coverage and intensity of illumination.

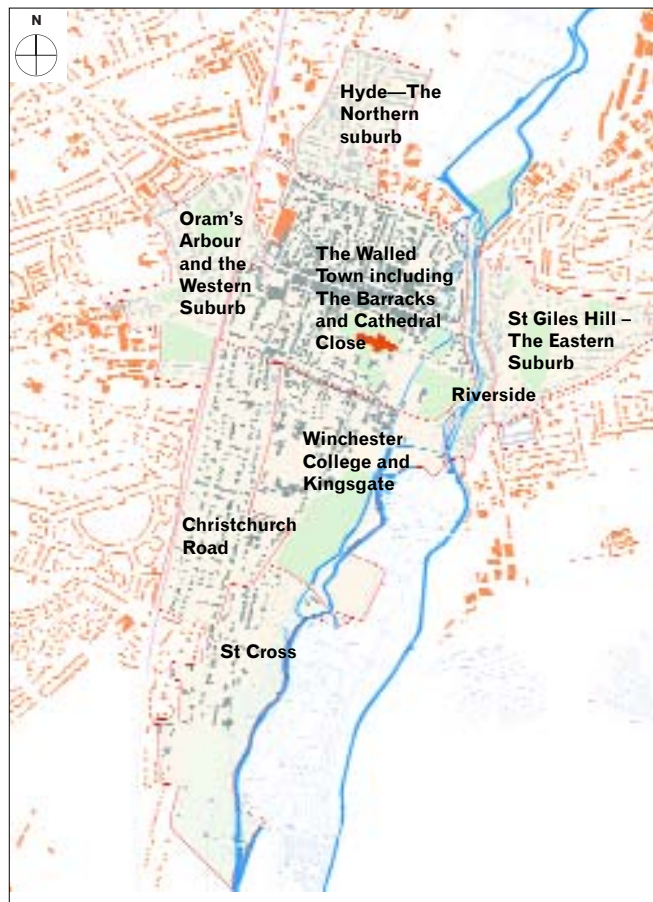


Characteristics of Winchester—
Middle: Materials such as flint
Bottom: Walled gardens and courtyards

In assessing the areas covered by the Conservation Area status, we have considered the following qualities of the built urban form:

- Historic importance and associations;
- Historic street pattern (morphology) and uses (continuity of uses);
- The degree of completeness and survival of the historic fabric;
- Layout: urban structure and 'grain'—the framework of routes and spaces and the scale and arrangement of street blocks, plot sizes and building frontage widths;
- Density and mix: the intensity of development and the variety of building uses and public activities;
- Scale: the height and massing of buildings and groups of buildings in relation to each other and to the City's landscape setting;
- Appearance: the details and materials of buildings, street furniture, walls, paving and public art. The variety of architectural styles and historic periods. The architectural and craftsmanship quality of buildings and other elements; and
- Landscape: the natural topography, eco-systems and vegetation.

Each of these aspects of the development form contributes to establishing the character of Winchester but it is the interaction of these aspects which makes Winchester a unique and attractive place.



Above: The eight 'Character Areas'

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