

## Planning

- Newtown began to take shape in 1809 and the pattern of the roads and city wall has hardly changed. Large gardens were converted to car parks in the last century and a few office blocks and residential properties were added.
- Newtown has become predominantly residential, although Baffins Lane and the northern end of St John's Street are mostly commercial.
- Friary Lane, Baffins Lane and to a lesser extent St John's Street, were important pedestrian routes from the car parks to the city centre during the shopping day, but pedestrian numbers have dropped dramatically since the first covid lockdown. After 5pm the streets have always been and are now deserted and very quiet.
- People think this is a safe area.
- Houses in St John's Street have gradually changed to residential. There are few properties left that could be converted to residential.
- There are no major gaps or boarded up buildings. Generally, all properties are in a good state of repair.
- The St John's Chapel garden and churchyard is rarely used, it is a grassed area behind the chapel with no public access.
- Newtown has a sensible mix of residential and commercial properties, with commercial use increasing towards the main shopping roads. Managing the conflicting requirements of restaurants and residential properties causes some problems, these have mostly been successfully resolved by the restaurants being proactive and responding to the concerns of residents.
- Waste management and noisy waste collection from restaurants is a problem, this should be more carefully considered, also in the long term and conditioned when change of use planning applications are examined.
- There have been problems with strong smells from restaurants, but not recently – perhaps because the volume of cooking has been reduced by covid restrictions.
- Conditions for disabled people are good from the East Pallant car park along Friary Lane and Baffins lane. But not good along St John's Street because the pavements are narrow, poorly maintained, and uneven. Pavement parking outside the St John's house office block causes problems for mobility scooters.
- Pavements and roads are badly maintained.

- The Friary Lane Jubilee Gardens development is the only open area with seating.
- Car park usage has dropped dramatically since the first Covid lockdown, some creative thinking is needed to change behaviour patterns and bring people back into the city.
- The forecourt of St John's Chapel could be a public meeting space with seating, but the forecourt surface needs work to improve its appearance and the tree should be replaced. The Chapel is open to the public and used for events, improving the forecourt would make it a better venue. In addition, benches could be placed in the green space in the Cawley car park.
- St John's Street and Newtown can be busy and noisy with cars accessing the car parks, white van deliveries and heavy commercial vehicles servicing the shops in East Street. Some drivers love speeding down St John's Street, but it's doubtful whether a 20 mph sign on the road will change that.
- The large mature trees in the car parks and gardens give the area an attractive, natural appearance. Views that include magnificent big trees from market avenue to the back of the houses on St John's Street and views into East Pallant car park are important.
- The Walls walk in Cawley Priory car park is too dark and overshadowed. Strong pruning back however, conflicts with encouraging biodiversity in this area.
- There are lots of air conditioning heat exchangers on commercial properties in the area. They are unattractive and, in a few cases, appear to be operating and noisy outside working hours.

## Landscape

- There is a view from Newtown to the Cathedral, views from Market Avenue towards the back of houses in St John's Street, and an open view over the car parks with large, mature trees.
- The car parks are the only large open spaces. Grassed, lightly maintained, slightly wild spaces under trees between East Pallant car park and Cawley Priory car park and around the Walls walk act as a small scale nature reserve to encourage biodiversity but are also used by dog walkers and as a convenience since the public toilet in East Pallant car park was demolished.
- Nearby, an area behind New Park cinema has been encouraged to become wild and some sections of the East city walls have been sown with wild flowers.
- The canal towpath and Centurion way provide routes to the countryside from the city.
- The green spaces do not connect, and the area is fully developed with almost no opportunity for change.
- The river Lavant flows in a culvert under the southern end of St John's Street, but it cannot be seen in the Newtown area.
- There are large, beautiful, mature trees in the East Pallant, Cawley Priory and Market Avenue (St John's) car parks. They are very visible and are a great contribution to the Newtown area. The large Cattle Market car park has a few large, mature trees and several smaller urban trees. These trees improve the appearance of what would otherwise be a flat expanse of concrete and tarmac.
- St John's Chapel grounds should be planted with trees or used to support community gardens.
- Residents with small courtyard gardens or no garden add colour to the street scene in Friary Lane with window boxes and hanging baskets. There are approximately 15 houses with good sized or large gardens that support wildlife, several with large trees that add to the appearance of the area.
- The St John's Chapel grounds could be a space for a community garden or allotments, it is too enclosed to be a public space and some control of access would be required. The Church Hall is currently occupied by the local foodbank and used as a warehouse.
- There are no hedgerows.

## Architecture

- The Friary Lane Jubilee Garden was a good development that has created an attractive public space that acts as a meeting point.
- The logic of the city is clear, but visitors have trouble finding local landmarks, the signage isn't sufficiently clear. Newtown is almost completely developed, with no space or flexibility to make significant changes.
- Newtown is an attractive urban, mainly historic landscape with a mix of styles and sizes. It is enhanced by mature trees. Some poor modern, mostly commercial developments detract from the appearance of the area.
- The Corn Exchange, the earlier Baffins Hall and St John's Chapel are large late Georgian buildings that make a big contribution to the character of the area. There are many other historic houses. People always stop to feel the galletted flint walls of the former rectory at the south east end of St John's Street, and children try to peer over and through the wrought iron railings at the other side of the road to look into the vaults that extend under the pavement.
- There used to be good views of the cathedral from the Baffins Lane car park, but recent developments and have spoilt it.
- There are twittens (alleyways) and arches in Newtown and the Pallants that provide interest. In Cawley Priory car park there is an interesting tunnel through the city wall.
- Building material is mostly red brick but some yellow brick in the Georgian buildings in St John's Street. Some blue chequer pattern brickwork. A few houses have flint walls and there are many with flint garden walls.
- The joinery details are very similar in many of the Georgian houses both in Newtown and more widely in the city. This includes internal skirting board and architraves, and door cases.
- Most of the houses have doors that open directly onto the pavement. Some commercial properties on Baffins Lane and East Street have security grills that are used at night.
- Pitched tile and slate roofs are common with some parapets on St John's Street. Large chimney stacks and pots on some of the Georgian houses. A few Fareham chimney pots.
- Attractive flint boundary walls surround the gardens of many properties, and the city walls form the boundary walls of a few properties. Wrought iron railings can also be seen.

## Newtown Area PLACE Assessment

- New heritage style street lights are an improvement, but they are bland and bright, some units had to be blacked out. The south end of St John's Street, is not adequately lit.
- The modern York stone Friary Lane Jubilee Garden paving is excellent. There is also good public seating and not unattractive bins. The paving in St John's Street, Baffins lane and Friary Lane is very poor.
- Some large houses have generous gardens, smaller houses have courtyard gardens.

## Culture

- St John's Chapel is a Grade 1 listed building and is open to the public to visit during the day, it is also an event venue used for music and other performances.
- The Henry Adams and Strides Auction rooms are both in Newtown; Strides auctions have been taking place for over 130 years. They both sell a wide range of materials including works of art and the auctions are international.
- The flint boundary walls are an attractive feature of the area, they should be retained and maintained carefully. Poor planning decisions and lack of care in the application of planning conditions have resulted in poor flint wall replacement in the Baffins Lane car park.
- Change of use from commercial to residential has been encouraged in the area for many years. The high percentage of residential use now limits the opportunities for other types of development.
- Newtown is contained by East Street, Market Avenue (the city walls), the East Pallant and Baffin's lane car parks. East Street is one of the main shopping streets, Market Avenue is a busy ring road.
- Many visitors examine the houses carefully and can often be heard saying "Isn't it lovely here".
- There are too many unnecessary big signs, for example the large blue and white "END of Cycle Lane" sign at the south end of St John's Street, right in front of a fine listed building. Other conservation areas have solved this problem by having more discrete signs not mounted on poles.
- There are opportunities for information boards connected with buildings such as the Corn Exchange and St John's Chapel but can this be managed without adding even more signage. Perhaps a good Chichester Visitor App for mobile phones would be a better solution?

## Engineering

- The roads are in a very poor state and desperately need resurfacing. The pavements in St John's Street are also in a poor state. In addition, cars park on the pavement at the south end of St John's Street.
- There is no opportunity for new routes and no opportunity for change, unless car usage drops and the car parks could be repurposed for public, commercial or residential use.
- Most road users drive at sensible speeds in this area, the roads are not wide and there are many parked cars.
- In general, crossing the roads it is easy. Visibility is restricted at the south end of St John's Street where the road bends sharply, pedestrians must cross at the corner so that they can see in both directions.
- There are no pedestrian crossings in Newtown but crossings in Market Avenue that are sensibly placed. The coupled crossing lights in Eastgate Square for Market Avenue and the Hornet have inconsistent stop light timings, which is confusing for pedestrians.
- Facilities for cycling are limited in this area close to the city centre, pedestrians take precedence as you would expect.
- The Walls Walk in Cawley Priory car park is very dark and shaded, pruning shrubs, and lifting the trees would help to make this a more welcoming area.
- The south end of St John's Street, outside St John's House, is not adequately lit and pavements in St John's Street are poorly maintained.
- The Newtown/St John's Street junction is not good for people with prams or mobility scooters, the pavements are narrow and there is a post that makes accessing the dropped kerb difficult.
- There are good bus stops on Market Avenue close to Eastgate Square, but the pavements are narrow on the eastern side and there isn't enough space for pedestrians and people queueing.
- There are loading and unloading facilities opposite Henry Adams on Baffin's Lane. It is busy because it services many businesses. Large delivery lorries that service shops in East Street have trouble with the junctions at Baffin's Lane, Newtown and St John's Street, sometimes they get stuck. The Food Bank behind St John's Chapel has deliveries from vans which are forced to park on double yellow lines to unload.

## Newtown Area PLACE Assessment

- There are large public car parks, on street parking and limited garage parking. Parking on the pavement outside St John's House causes problems.
- There is a car club parking space in East Street, two public electric charging points in East Pallant car park and two private car charging points in the Sanlam office car park on St John's Street.