

6.5 Area 5. William Brown Street Cultural Quarter

Until the beginning of the eighteenth century this was an area of sloping heath-land known as Shaw's Brow, beyond the limits of the town, partially enclosed into fields and interspersed with windmills and lime kilns. The line followed by the present William Brown Street, was one of the principal coaching roads to the east and there were few cottages and some almshouses along the road. During the eighteenth century, the town of Liverpool expanded across the area with the erection of the infirmary in 1749 and St John's Church in 1784. However it was not until the 1840s, when St George's Hall began to rise on the former infirmary site that the area began to be redeveloped to create the formally planned environment that we still see today.



The William Brown Street Conservation area forms the principal cultural quarter of Liverpool, where a high concentration of the city's major public buildings are located. The most impressive of these is St George's Hall (1840-1855), one of the outstanding buildings of European neo-classical architecture, which stands detached and prominent between the hard surfaces and open spaces of St George's Plateau and the softer and greener but still formal terraces of St John's Gardens, and occupies high ground above the old city centre to the east. Later public buildings are strung out in an irregular line along the slope and form splendid and romantic architectural backdrop for the hall. St John's Gardens were laid out in 1904 on the site of St John's Church, demolished in 1899, and its churchyard and were from the first intended as a place for commemorative sculpture. The closure of William Brown Street to through traffic in the late twentieth century enabled St. George's Hall, St John's Gardens and the public buildings to be combined into a single pedestrianised space.

A strong element of the area is the abundance of statuary and monuments, both freestanding and integral to the buildings. The Steble Fountain and the Wellington Memorial occupy the triangular space at the east end of William Brown Street but it is in St John's gardens and St George's Plateau where most of the monuments are strategically located, effectively creating an outdoor sculpture gallery. When combined with the surrounding grand buildings the authentic street furniture and the tradition natural paving materials, the monuments form an important part of a complete cultural landscape that been created by classical formal planning.

The northern edge of the area is defined by the former County Sessions Court, the Walker Art Gallery the Picton Library, the Museum and the former College of Technology. They comprise a group of imposing classical buildings from the second half of the nineteenth century. The ordered arrangement and scale of these buildings helps to create an exceptionally fine civic parade. They are splayed on two axes around the fulcrum of the semi-circular Picton library, which faces and reflects the northern apse of St George's Hall. The public buildings form a continuous barrier, shutting out discordant views of the modern elevated carriageways of Commutation Row and Churchill Way.

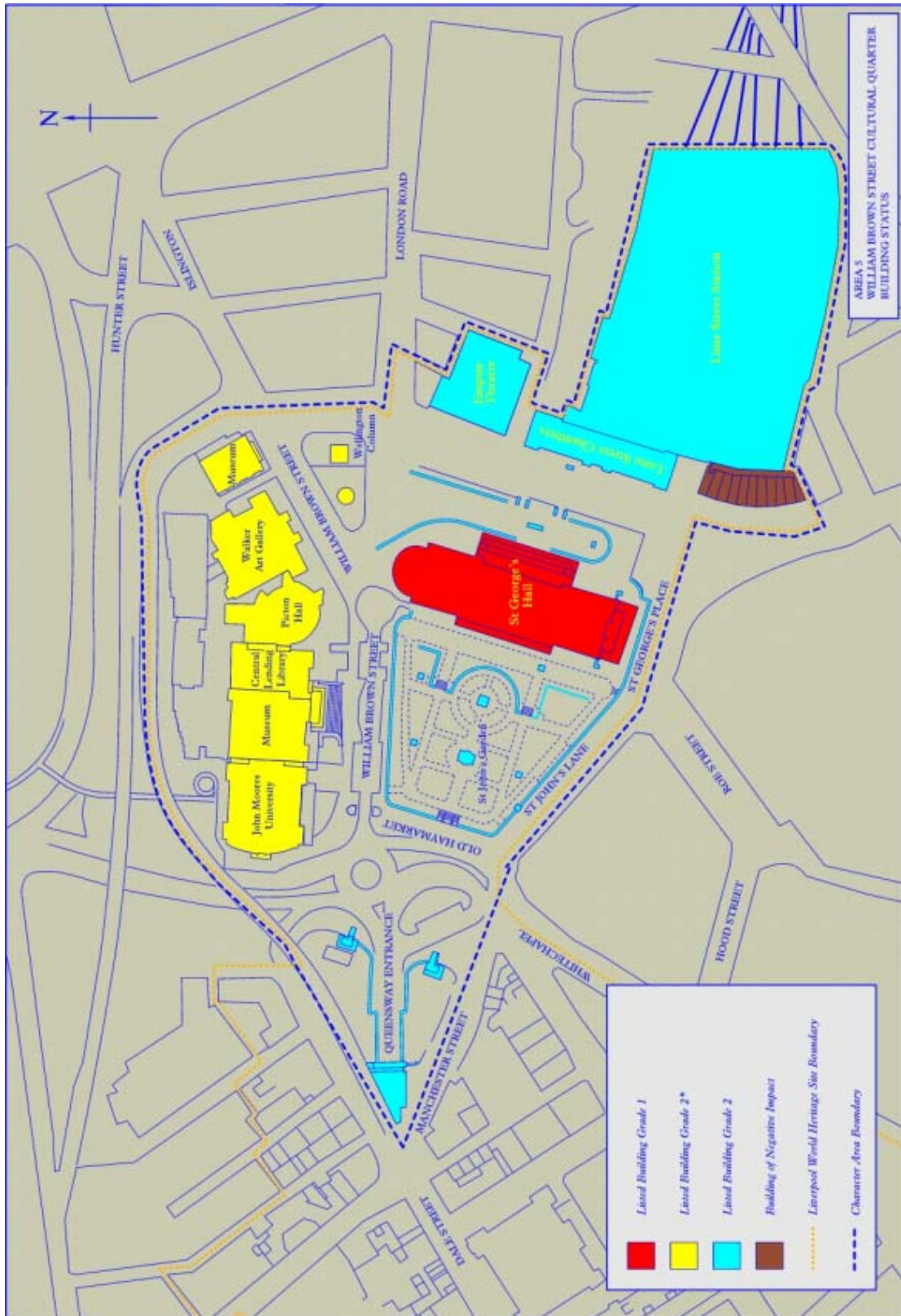


The east edge of the area is formed by buildings of contrasting design which also create an enclosing backdrop to St George's Plateau. Near the junction with London Road is the 1920s neo-Grecian Empire Theatre, next to it is Alfred Waterhouse's former North Western Hotel (1871), a monumental stone structure ornamented with turrets and steeply pitched dormer roofs. Behind the Waterhouse building stands one of the two great iron-roofed sheds of Lime Street Station. The arched end of the south shed is unfortunately obscured by a row of 1960s shops (soon to be demolished) and the present entrance from Lime Street appears distinctly makeshift. Lime Street itself is a very wide and busy road which makes a strong divide between the station side and the Plateau.



The southern boundary line is St John's Lane and the boundary wall of St John's Gardens, while the lower west end of the area is focussed upon the portal of the Queensway Tunnel (1934) with roads and flanking walls concentrating upon the voids leading to Birkenhead. Although the 1930s tunnel portal with its flanking walls and attendant structures are of high architectural quality the area immediately around the portal is a visual muddle, with car parking and an elaborate road junction, which effectively divorces the William Brown Street Cultural Quarter from the adjacent Dale Street Character Area.

There are currently no buildings at risk in the Cultural Quarter.



Liverpool World Heritage Site

Character Area No	Building Name	Building No.	Address	Merit Status	Merit Criteria	Need/ At Risk Status
5	St George's Hall		Between St George's Place, Lime Street and William Brown Street L1	I		C
5	College of Technology and Museum Extension		Byrom Street L3 3AF	II*		C
5	Lime Street Station		Lime Street L1	II		C
5	Telephone Kiosks		Lime Street L1	II		C
5	Concourse House		Lime Street L1	Negative		
5	Empire Theatre		Lime Street L1 1JE (includes 2-10 London Road)	II		C
5	Lime Street Chambers (now North West Hall - formerly North Western Hotel)		Lime Street L1 1JG	II		C
5		17	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		15	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		35	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		21	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		19	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		27	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		25	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		23	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		29-31	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5		33	Lime Street L1 1JG	Negative		
5	Queensway entrance to Mersey Tunnel		Old Haymarket L1	II		C
5	Recumbent stone lions (x4) marking entrance from Lime Street		St George's Plateau L1	II		C
5	Equestrian statue of Prince Albert		St George's Plateau L1	II		C
5	Statue of the Earl of Beaconsfield		St George's Plateau L1	II		C
5	The Cenotaph		St George's Plateau L1	II		C
5	Lamp standards to Lime Street front (x41)		St George's Plateau L1	II		C

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Character Area No	Building Name	Building No.	Address	Merit Status	Merit Criteria	Need/ At Risk Status
5	Monument to Queen Victoria		St George's Plateau L1	II		C
5	Statue of Alexander Balfour		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Statue of William Rathbone		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Statue of Sir Arthur Bower Forwood		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Statue of William Ewart Gladstone		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Statue of Monsignor James Nugent		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Statue of Canon T. Major Lester		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Monument to the King's Liverpool Regiment		St John's Gardens, St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	Retaining wall, gatepiers and terrace wall to St John's Gardens		St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	K6 Telephone Kiosk by St John's Gardens		St John's Lane L1	II		C
5	St John's Gardens		St John's Lane L1			
5	William Brown Museum and Library		William Brown Street L1	II*		C
5	Picton Reading Room and Hornby Library		William Brown Street L1	II*		C
5	Walker Art Gallery		William Brown Street L1	II*		C
5	Wellington Memorial		William Brown Street L1	II*		C
5	Stable Fountain		William Brown Street L1	II*		C
5	County Sessions House		William Brown Street L1	II*		C