Bristol Central Area



City Design Group

September 2013
City Design Group

Prepared by:

City Design Group
Planning and Sustainable Development
Neighbourhoods and City Development
Bristol City Council

Authors: Peter Insole, Senior Archaeological Officer
Hannah Porter, Conservation Officer
with contributions from Julie Witham, Urban Design Officer
and Brigit Luffingham, UWE Agency Project Student

Second Draft

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2013
Ordnance Survey 100023406
© City Design Group September 2013

No portion of this document can be reproduced without the permission of City Design Group, Neighbourhoods and City Development, Bristol City Council

Contents

Preface **2**

1. Introduction **3**

2. The changing city **9**

3. Repairing the city **33**

4. Character Areas - Areas of change **37**
1 South Redcliffe 41
2 North Redcliffe 53
3 Old City 65
4 Lewin's Mead - St James Barton 77
5 Newfoundland Way 89
6 Old Market 101
7 Broad Plain 113
8 The Dings 125
9 Castle Park 137
10 Broadmead and Cabot Circus 149
11 Cumberland Basin 161
12 St Pauls 173

5. Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone - character descriptions **183**
13 Temple Quay 184
14 Temple Meads City Gateway 186
15 Silverthorne Lane 188
16 Avon Riverside 190

6. Other central areas - character descriptions **193**
17 Hotwells 194
18 Spike Island 196
19 Brandon Hill 198
20 Canons Marsh 200
21 Park Street and College Green 202
22 Centre Promenade 204
23 Queen Square 206
24 Bathurst Basin 208
25 University 210
26 St Michael's Hill 212
27 Hospital 214
28 Stokes Croft 216
29 Portland Square 218
30 Barrow Road 220
31 Newtown 222
32 Stapleton Road 224

Preface
Historic legacy informing the future city…

The City of Bristol is one of the most historic cities in England. Founded in about 1000AD the city has always been a place of change, economic growth and innovation.

Until the First World War the fabric of the city was essentially a medieval structure centred on the cross roads of High Street, Corn Street, Broad Street and Wine Street. Even the outer structure of the city, now the inner suburbs such as St Pauls and Kingsdown, was based on medieval routes or field patterns.

Despite centuries of urban growth and densification this structure remained unchanged while building forms adapted to new uses and new architectural styles.

During the twentieth century Bristol has seen its most dramatic changes with the depopulation of the central core, bombing during the Second World War and the dominance of private motor car use. Although this period has continued the process of urban renewal and the replacement of built form it is the Post War highway infrastructure projects that have eroded the physical fabric of the city on a scale unlike any other period.

The Bristol Central Area Plan is now looking ahead to the future and the potential to repair the fabric of Bristol to re-establish physical connections between communities and places.

This Context Study is intended to inform this process and help to deliver the plan policies particularly around issues concerning local character and distinctiveness. The document should enable an understanding that helps to explain how any particular element of the city has arrived at its current state. The existing character of each area of central Bristol is described and specific challenges faced by each area are identified.

From this understanding appropriate changes to the city can be achieved that can create a better, healthier, safer, more sustainable and prosperous city in the future.

Bristol has always seen change and change is necessary for growth. However, the historic legacy of the city is part of what makes Bristol special and attracts visitors and investment. For the next phase of this city's history to be successful it is vital that future changes build on the valuable historic legacy and strengthen Bristol's distinctiveness.

Introduction

1





Fig 1
Bristol Central Area Plan

Purpose, scope and status

1.1 Purpose and scope

The context study document is intended to provide an understanding of the historic development of Bristol and the significant changes that have affected the physical structure of the central area.

To achieve this understanding the study has defined distinctive areas of individual character. Each of the character areas have specific issues in terms of the existing physical structure that require an appropriate urban design response.

The study has used historic maps and desk-based tools to describe the physical characteristics of each area based on:

- Topography
- Views and vantage points (into, out of and within each area)
- Landmarks (positive landmarks and other notable features)
- Routes
- Spaces
- Urban structure and grain
- Scale and massing
- Building ages
- Building materials

1.2 Status of the document

This document is intended to guide new development in the central area. Where possible the study has drawn from previous Conservation Area Appraisals, Supplementary Planning Documents or similar documents.

The Context Study forms part of a suite of guidance documents referred to in Policy BCS21 of the Core Strategy and the Local Character and Distinctiveness policy in the Development Management Policy document.

The Context Study provides base line information on the character of places in the city in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (sections 7, 12 and paragraph 170). This study is also a component of the city's positive conservation strategy.

Further detail about many parts of the central area are contained in the associated Conservation Area Character Appraisals (fig 2).



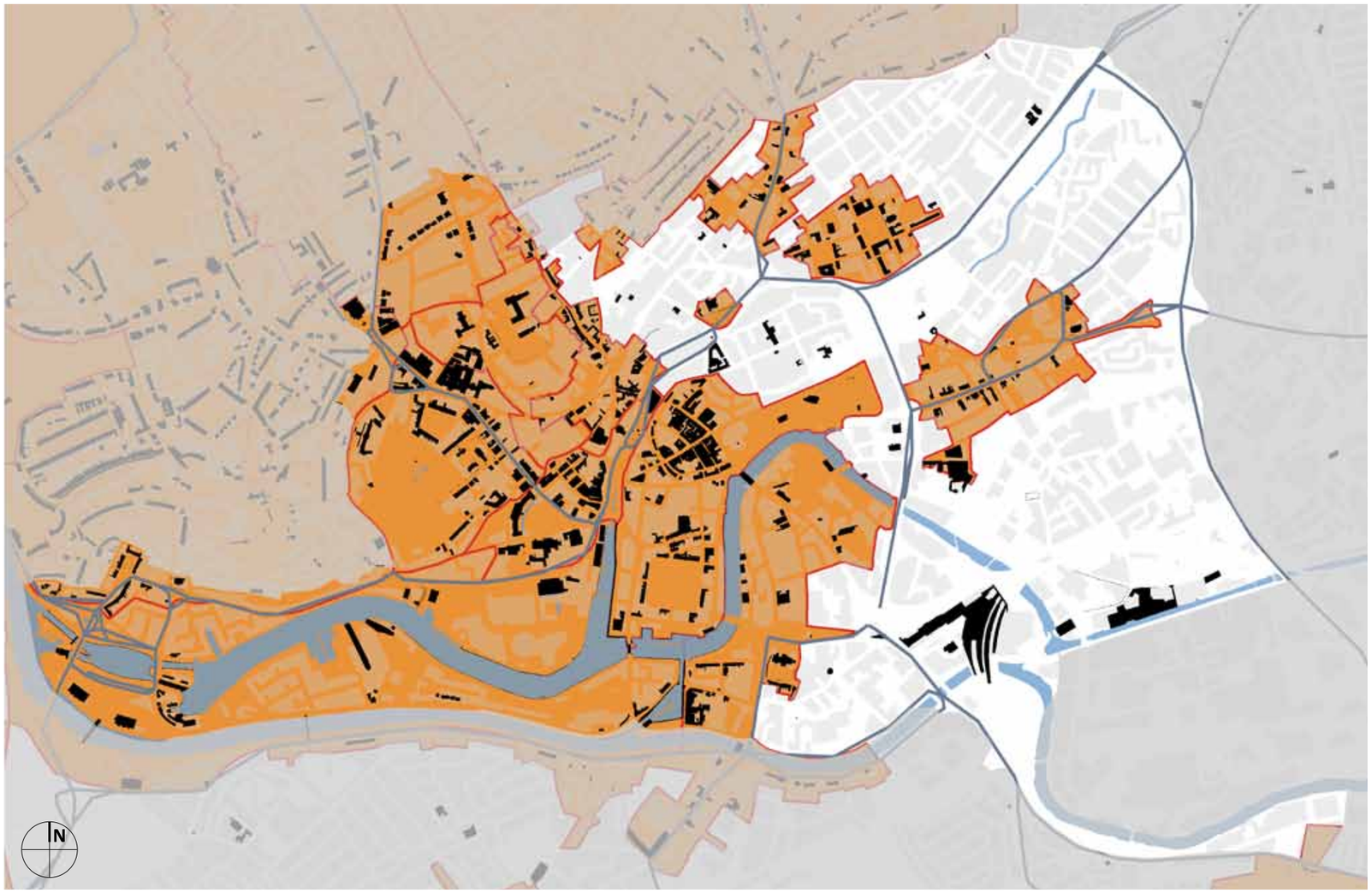
Fig 2
Designated heritage assets

Listed buildings

Conservation Areas

1.3 Conservation Areas within the central area

— City and Queens Square
— City Docks
— Redcliffe
— Old Market
— Stokes Croft
— Portland and Brunswick Square
— St James' Parade
— Park Street and Brandon Hill
— College Green
— St Michael's Hill and Christmas Steps
— Tyndall's Park
— part of Clifton
— part of Whiteladies Road
— part of Kingsdown



Language of the document

Character/context

The main visual characteristics of an area resulting from the influence of geology, topography, urban layout, plot form, land use, and predominant building ages, types, form and materials.

Topography

The physical form of an area defined by natural features of relief and geographic elements such as rivers.

Views

Within the scope of this document views are discussed in terms of locations from which a view to a specific landmark, or series of features (natural or built) is possible.

Landmarks

Are defined as features that make a positive contribution to a view (long distant or local). The description of each character area refers to positive landmarks as well as 'other features within the area'. This latter type are not necessarily visible in a specific view but are of historic interest or make a positive contribution to the local character.

Urban structure



The framework of routes and spaces and the way they relate to one another as defined in Cowan, R '*The Dictionary of Urbanism*'.

Urban grain



The pattern of development in terms of the size of street blocks, building plots and the size of building in relation to its plot as defined in Cowan, R '*The Dictionary of Urbanism*'.

Built Form

Buildings and structures described using the following terms.

Scale

The size of a building described in terms of the number of floors.

Massing

Relates to the building or group of buildings' volume or perceived volume as a result of its structural form.

Materials

The context study refers to materials in terms of the predominant building materials used in an area for walling, paving and roofing.

Fig 3
Contextual examples

1 Landmarks

2 Urban structure and grain

3 Scale and massing







The changing city

2



Overview

2.1 Introduction

Bristol is a medieval city that was established on a sandstone ridge between the rivers Frome and Avon. The majority of the central area now occupies the former flood plain of these rivers with the land rising to form the Clifton and Kingsdown escarpment to the north.

Although little physical fabric of the medieval city survives above ground the street pattern particularly the main arterial routes was established early in the city's history.

Until the late eighteenth century Bristol Bridge was the westernmost bridging point over the River Avon. This defined the converging routes through Redcliffe whereas there where numerous crossing points over the narrower Frome resulting in a wider distribution of route networks north of the historic core.

Until the twentieth century, and the largely post World War II highway infrastructure projects, this medieval street pattern was largely intact with the exception of some limited eighteenth century road widening in the historic core and the creation of Victoria Street in the 1870s.

2.2 Phases

There have been seven recognisable phases of urban development and expansion in Bristol:

— 1 Origins (11th-12th century)
— 2 Diversion of the Frome (13th-14th century)
— 3 Dissolution and Civil War (15th-17th century)
— 4 Queen Square and Early Industry (18th century)
— 5 Further Industrialisation and Urbanisation (19th century)
— 6 'Slum' clearance and suburbanisation (1900-1940)
— 7 Wartime Bombing and Post War Planning (1940-1975)

Each of these phases have been mapped to show the approximate date of the urban structure of the city, although in almost all cases the original building forms from the earlier phases are no longer extant.

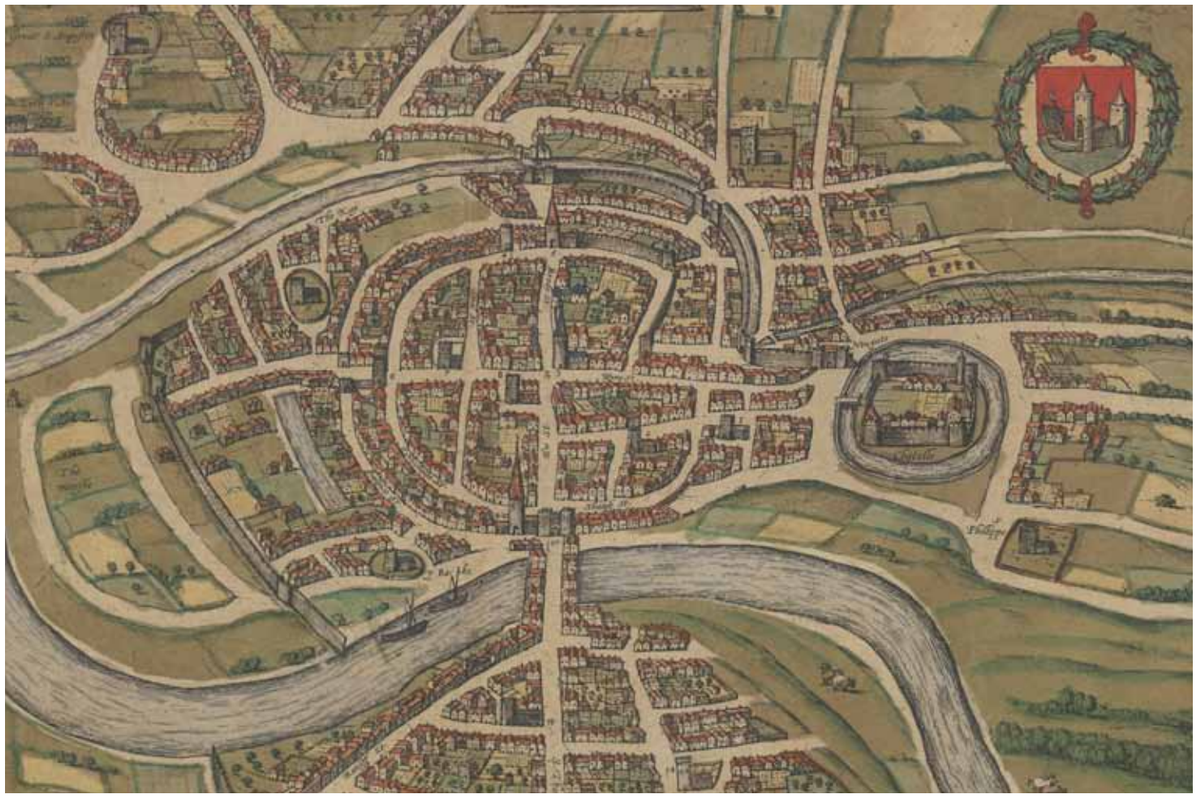
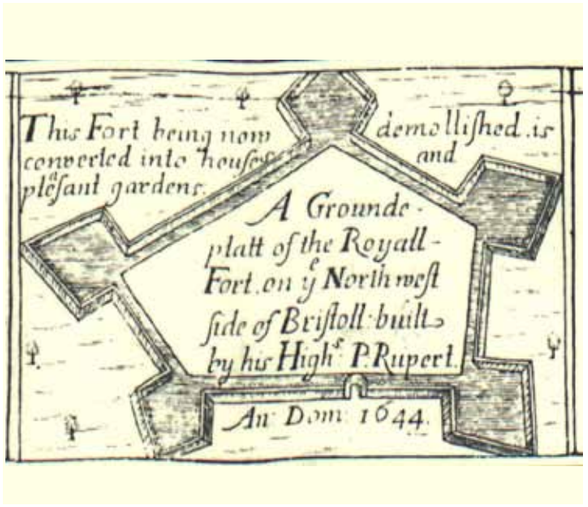


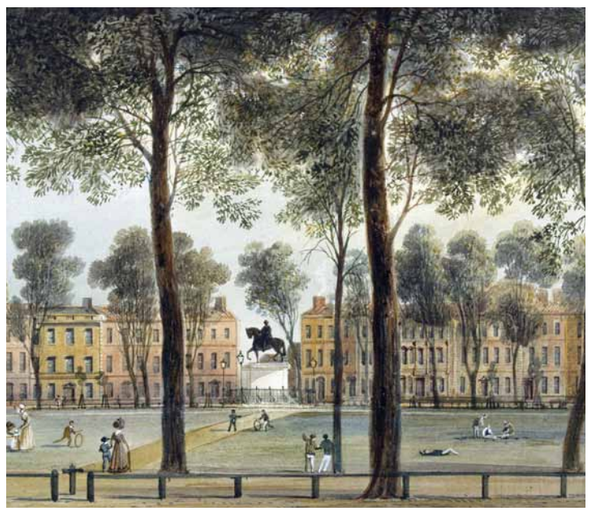
Fig 4
Hoefnagle's map of Bristol 1581













1 2 3 6
4 5

Fig 5
Historic changes (images courtesy of Bristol, Museums, Galleries and Archives)

1 The medieval core from Bristol Bridge

2 Early 19th century image of the cleansing of the Floating Harbour

3 The Civil War Royal Fort as depicted on Millerd's Map of Bristol, 1673

4 Early 19th century view of Queen Square

5 The Feeder Canal, 1920

6 South side of Wine Street, November 1940

Phase 1: Origins
(11th - 12th century)

2.3 Description

— Foundation
— Bristol Bridge
— Historic core and castle

Bristol was founded around 1000 AD with its focus on a precursor to the present Bristol Bridge. The late Saxon town was located on the higher ground between the rivers Frome and Avon and probably extended from the west end of Corn Street to the eastern end of Castle Park, suggested by the evidence for late Saxon settlement found during archaeological excavations below the later Castle.

The settlement was likely to have been defended, at least on its west, south and east sides by defensive works, perhaps of earth and timber, later replaced by stone structures in the 12th century.

After the Norman Conquest, in the late 11th century a timber castle was constructed, followed in the early 12th century by the construction of a stone keep. In succeeding centuries the castle was considerably extended and modified.

On the west side of the river Frome, St Augustine's Abbey was founded around 1140, but with evidence for late Saxon settlement in the area prior to this.

2.4 Surviving significant physical features

The layout of the historic core particularly the site of Bristol Bridge and associated street pattern centred on the cross roads of Broad Street, Corn Street, High Street and Wine Street. The route of the medieval town walls is preserved by the routes of the former intra-mural lanes (Leonard Lane, St Nicholas Street, Tower Lane and Bell Lane).

The southeast corner of this historic street structure has been degraded by road widening and the creation of the large block structure at the corner of Wine Street and High Street. The early historic street pattern to the east of this site consisting of Dolphin Street, Mary-le-Port Street and Peter Street has also been completely removed in the area of modern Castle Park.

Fig 6
Phase 1

Area of phase 1 urban structure















1 2 3 4 5

Fig 7
Phase 1 (1, 3, 4 courtesy of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives)

1 Ricart's Map of Bristol, 1479

2 St John's gateway

3 Early 19th century view of the entrance to Leonard Lane

4 The old city on Plumley and Ashmead's plan of Bristol, 1828

5 Aerial view of the old city
© Blom Pictometry 2012

Phase 2: Diversion of the Frome (13th - 14th century)

2.5 Description

- St Augustine's Reach
- Southward urban extension of Redcliffe and Temple
- Old Market

In the second half of the 13th century, Bristol expanded considerably, with the diversion of the River Frome around 1247 to its present course. The defended area was enlarged with the construction of new town walls to the south, towards the later King Street, to the north, along the River Frome, and encompassing Redcliffe, a separate settlement not formally unified with Bristol until 1373.

Old Market to the east certainly existed as a market by the 12th century and may have been so from the late Saxon period, but the present wide market street with its back lanes and still evident long narrow burgage plots, all enclosed by a large ditch, may have been laid out in the late 12th or early 13th century.

Outside the town, especially to the north and west of the river Frome there were a number of religious institutions, such as the friaries of the Dominicans (now Quakers Friars), of the Franciscans north of Lewins Mead and of the Carmelites, near the present Colston Hall.

2.6 Surviving significant physical features

The route of the Frome, although largely culverted up to St Augustine's Reach.

Old Market Street and back lanes.

The route of the Portwall through Temple Quay (marked by Rivergate) and along Portwall Lane in Redcliffe.

There has been significant erosion of the urban structure of this phase in Redcliffe, primarily around the area of Temple Gate, where Victorian and later road schemes have cut across the historic grain of Temple Street.

Fig 8
Phase 2

Phase 1 structure

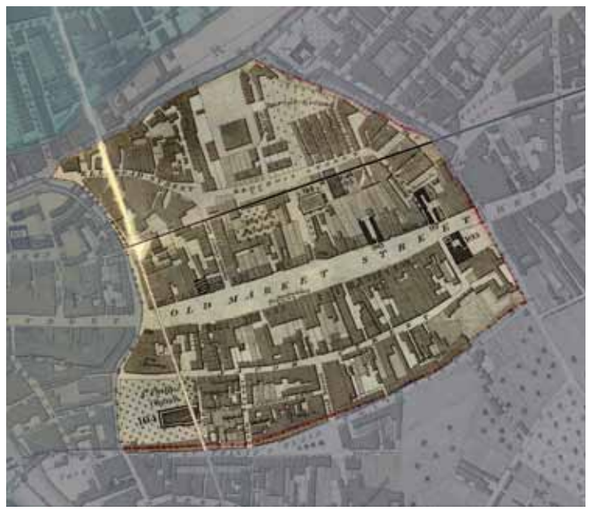
Area of phase 2 urban structure















1
2
3
5
4

Fig 9
Phase 2

1 Route of the Portwall, Rivergate, Temple Quay

2 Tower Harratz during excavation, 1995

3 St Stephen's Church

4 Old Market on Plumley and Ashmead's plan of Bristol, 1828 (courtesy of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives)

5 The now culverted route of the diverted River Frome © Blom Pictometry 2012

Phase 3: Dissolution and Civil War (15th - 17th century)

2.7 Description

- Merchant class residences/appropriation of church lands
- Densification and urban expansion

By the end of the 13th century, Bristol had almost reached its fullest extent before the major rebuilding and expansion of the city in the 18th century. Some new streets were laid out, such as King Street in the middle of the 17th century and the post Civil War demolition of the Castle in 1656 allowed the redevelopment of this area with new shops, houses and industries.

Major political and religious events, such as the Dissolution of the Monasteries, completed in Bristol by 1540, and the Civil War from 1642 to 1645 caused major reconstruction within the city and some expansion, especially to the north and west, with the construction of forts from Brandon Hill to Kingsdown.

The wealth of the city increased with new trade opportunities within Europe and to the New World. Combined with the acquisition of church lands following the dissolution this resulted in the beginnings of merchant class suburbs on St Michael's Hill and Redcliffe Hill.

2.8 Surviving significant physical features

King Street, Christmas Steps and structures on Colston Street and St Michael's Hill.

The Castle Street area has almost been completely eroded following wartime bombing and the conversion of the area into Castle Park in the later decades of the 20th century.

Fig 10
Phase 3

Phase 1 structure

Phase 2 structure

Area of phase 3 urban structure

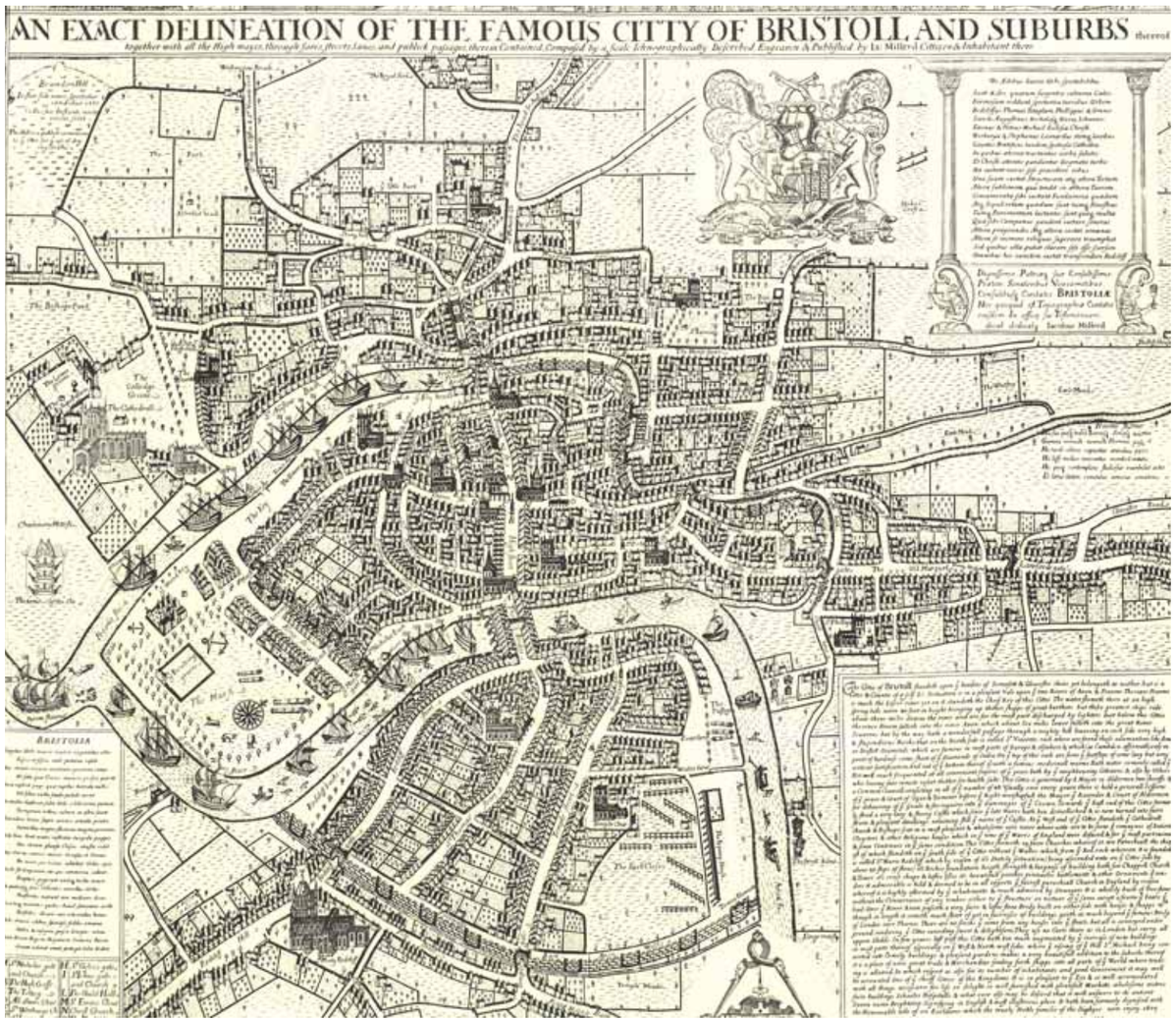












1
2
3
4

Fig 11
Phase 3 (1, 3, 4 courtesy of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives)

1 The Dutch House, 1910

2 King Street

3 Early 19th century view of St Michael's Hill

4 Millerd's map of Bristol, 1673

Phase 4: Queen Square and early industry (18th century)

2.9 Description

— Queen Square
— Riverside industry, particularly in St Philip's
— Urban expansion

Following the Restoration, Bristol prospered and underwent a transformation as the city expanded to the north into Kingsdown and to the north-east into St Paul's, much of the new wealth founded on slavery and trade with Africa and the New World.

Elegant new squares were laid out, such as Queen Square, St James Square and Portland Square. The Hotwells also developed into a fashionable resort and led to the establishment of residences in the area including Dowry Square.

New industries, such as glass working, copper working and brass manufacture were set up, allowing the expansion of the city into areas such as Broad Plain and St Judes. The port facilities were considerably expanded, with new slipways and dry docks constructed in Canons Marsh and to the north and south of the River Avon.

2.10 Surviving significant physical features

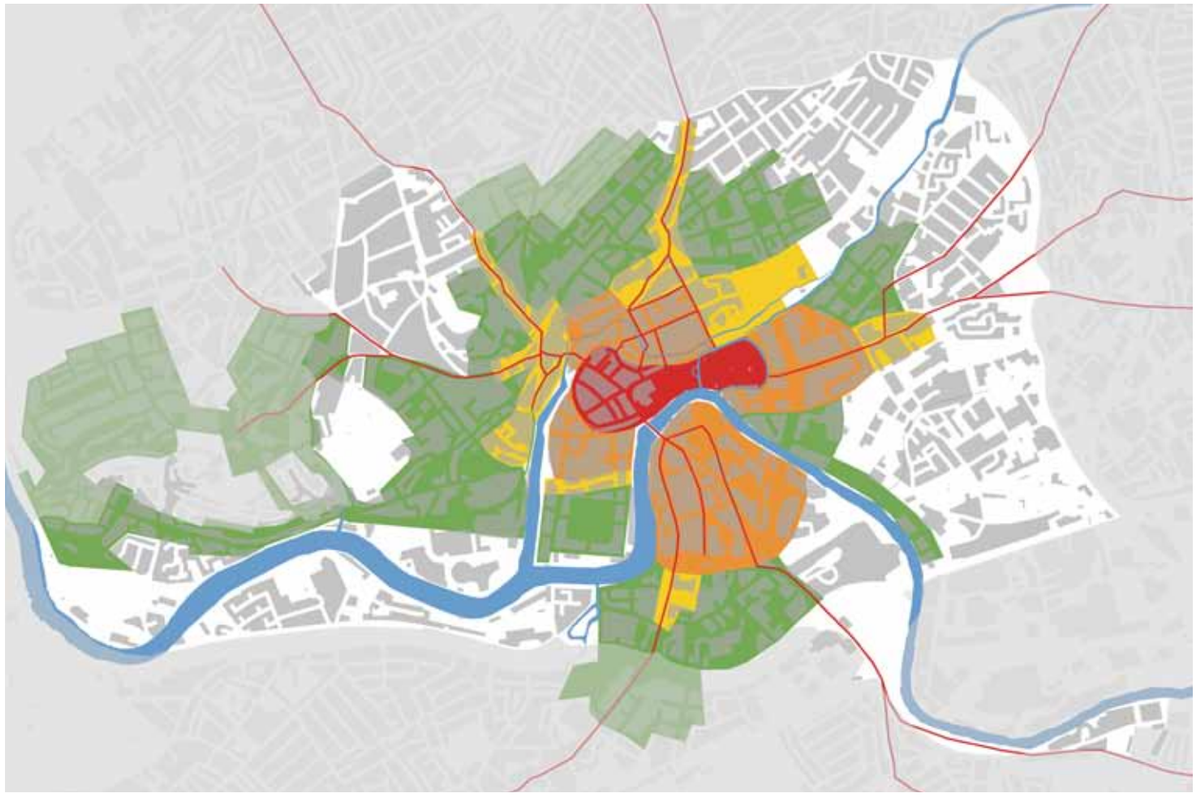
Queen Square (recently restored), Portland Square, structure of Hotwells including Dowry Square and dock side character.

Street pattern in Avon Street, St Philips, although the associated industrial structures have largely been lost to twentieth century redevelopment.

St James' Square was partially lost to wartime bombing then completely removed for post war developments along Bond Street and St James Barton.

Fig 12
Phase 4

Phase 1 structure
Phase 2 structure
Phase 3 structure
Area of phase 4 urban structure





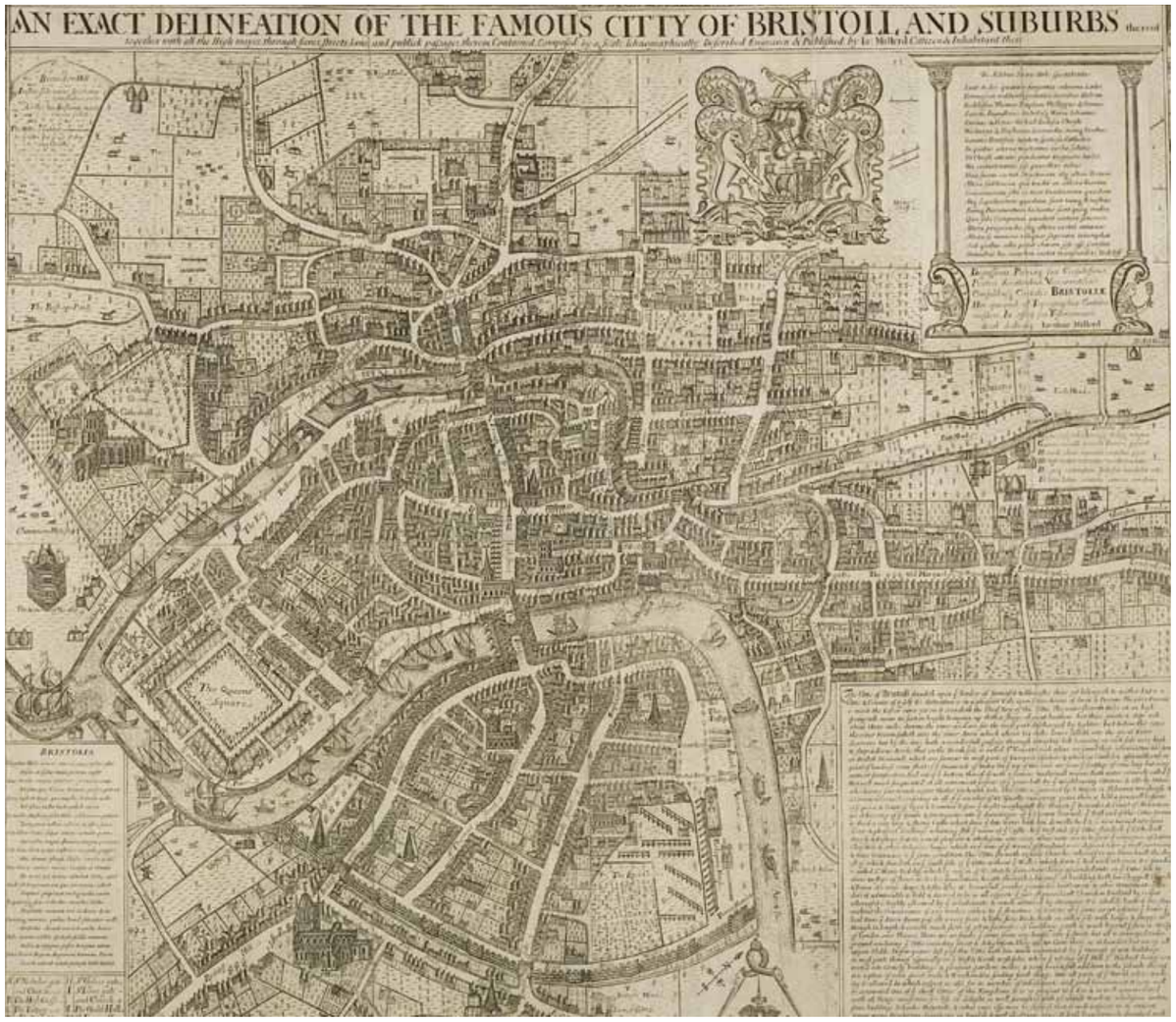












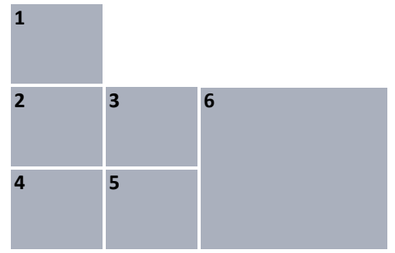


Fig 13
Phase 4 (3, 4, 6 courtesy of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives)

1 Portland Square
© Blom Pictometry 2012

2 Queen Square

3 Broad Quay, c.1760

4 Early 19th century view of Avon Street glassworks

5 18th century Great George Street, St Jude's

6 Millerd's map of Bristol, c.1710

Phase 5: Industrialisation and urbanisation (19th century)

2.11 Description

- Temple Meads
- The Floating Harbour
- Terraced Housing in present inner suburbs
- Industries and dock side warehousing

In the 19th century, the city expanded further, enlarging its administrative boundaries in 1835, 1895 and 1897. The population density within the historic core also increased, with the creation of small courts and alleyways, housing large numbers of people often in squalid conditions. This was to take account of its rapidly expanding population, which rose from 61,000 in 1801 to 329,000 by 1901, much of it caused by migration from the surrounding countryside and from Wales and Ireland.

The topography was radically changed by the construction of the New Cut and the creation of the Floating Harbour by 1809. New roads were created, such as Victoria Street in 1871, largely to ease the increasing volumes of traffic, especially to the new railway station at Temple Meads, and Perry Road in 1868 to facilitate the installation of the new tram system.

A further major alteration to the city's topography was the culverting of the river Frome. This was prompted by the increase in trapped sewage following the completion of the New Cut in 1809 and the consequent increase in problems for public health. Therefore in 1840 it was agreed to culvert the River Frome from Quay Head to Bridewell Street, allowing the creation of Rupert Street. By 1854 the river Frome running through Broadmead had been culverted, partly at the instigation of J S Fry, whose chocolate factory occupied the site adjacent to the Frome next to Union Street.







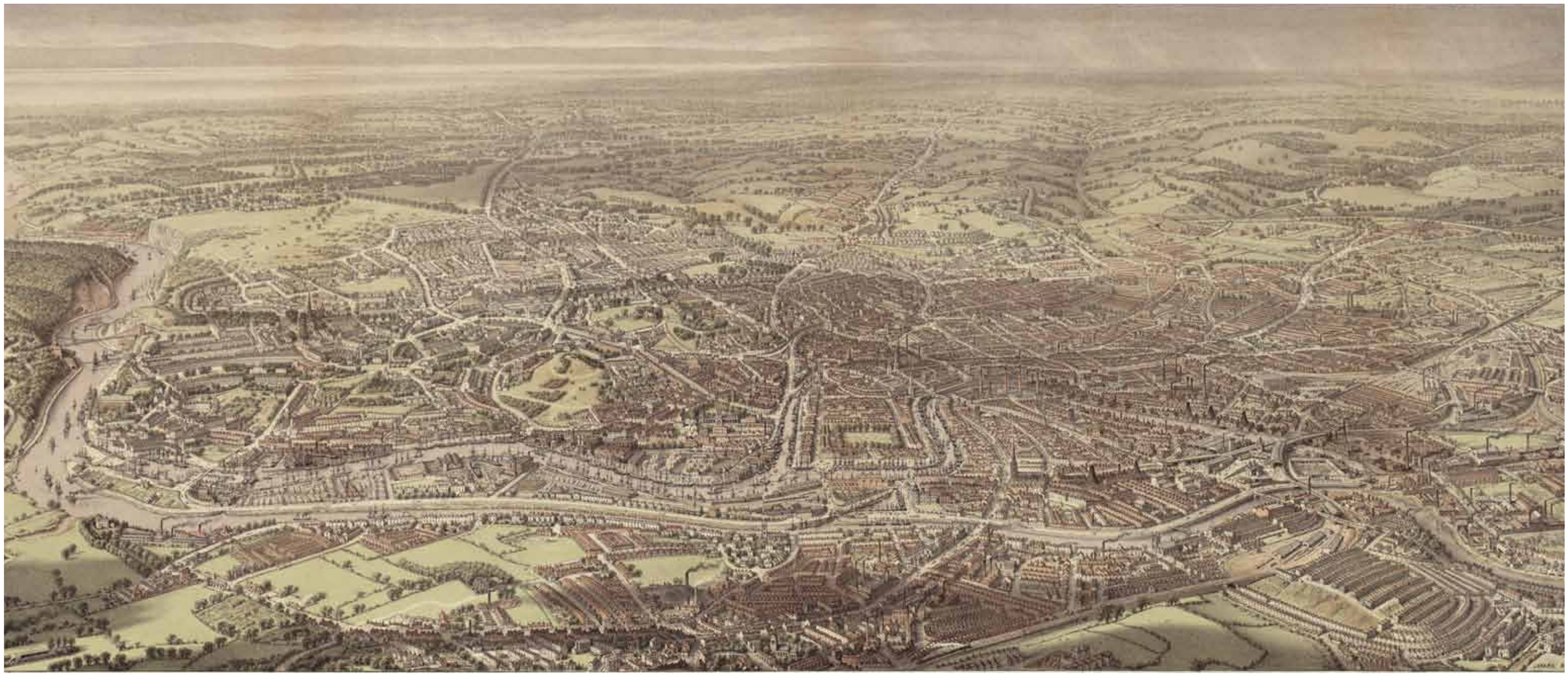
Fig 14
Phase 5 (images courtesy of Bristol Museum's Galleries and Archives)

1 St Augustine's Parade

2 Canon's Marsh Gas Works

3 Temple Meads by Samuel Loxton

Fig 15
Lavar's view of Bristol, 1887
(courtesy of Bristol Museum's Galleries and Archives)



Phase 5: Industrialisation and urbanisation (19th century)

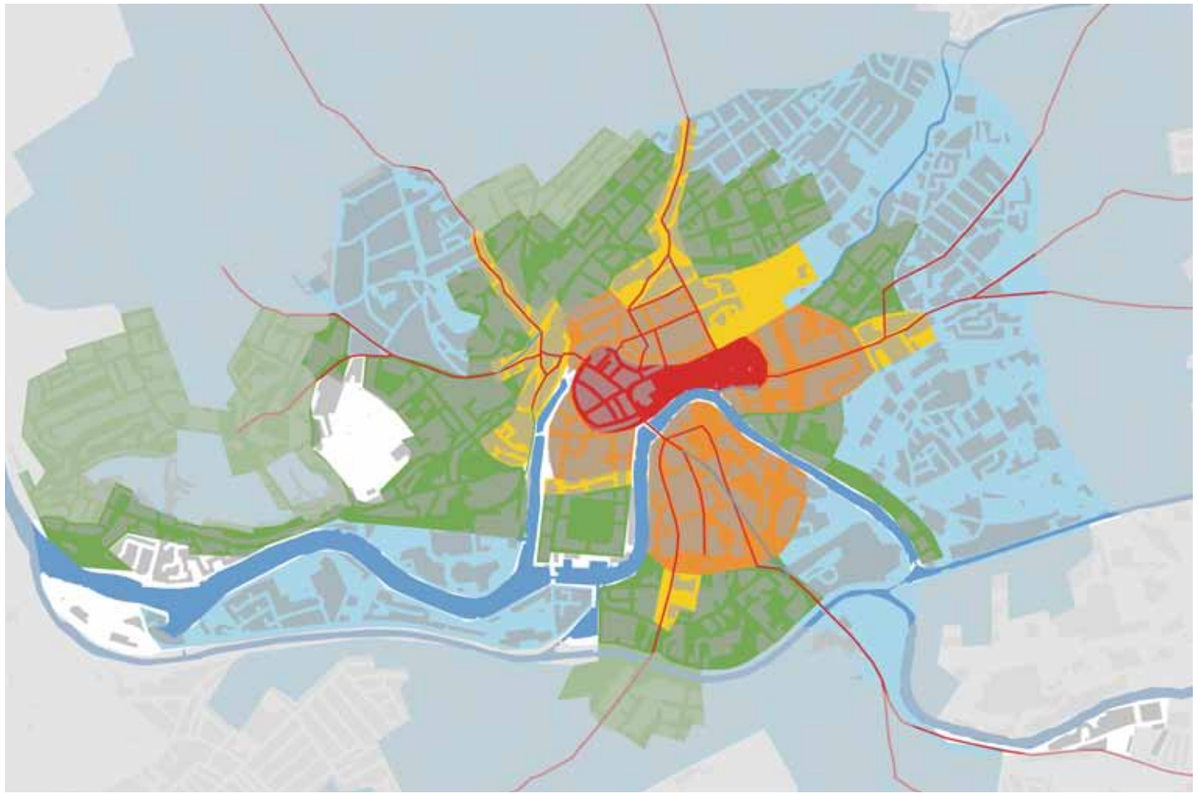
2.12 Surviving significant physical features

The Floating Harbour, warehouse buildings around the docks, Bathurst Basin, New Cut, Feeder Canal, Victoria Street, Perry Street, Rupert Street.

Much of the railway infrastructure survives as well the industrial areas of Silverthorne Lane.

The biggest impact to the Victorian fabric of the city has occurred in the eastern part of the central area through the insertion of highways and large blocks that have eroded the historic street pattern of residential terraced housing.

Fig 16
Phase 5













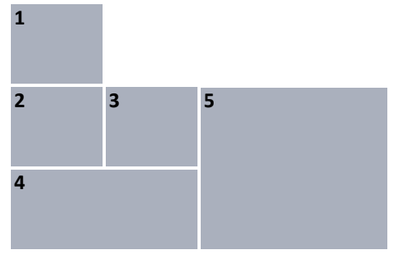


Fig 17
Phase 5

1 St Vincent's Works, Silverthorne Lane

2 Former harbour railway tracks, Wapping Road

3 Victoria Street cutting across medieval St Thomas Street, Redcliffe

4 Victorian terraced housing, Stapleton Road © Blom Pictometry 2012

5 St Philip's, 1885 (courtesy Bristol, Museums, Galleries and Archives)

Phase 6: ‘Slum’ clearance and suburbanisation (1900 - 1940)

2.13 Description

— Road schemes (Redcliffe Way, Temple Way)
— Institutions
— Low rise residential blocks

This period was marked by the decline of the Victorian industries (particularly with dock related industries moving to Avonmouth), and a decline in the central area population. This corresponded with the growth of the middle classes – upwardly mobile-people in trades and professions who were increasingly seeking to live in Bristol’s suburbs.

Prior to the First World War a series of large institutional buildings were added to the cityscape. These included the Edward VII Memorial Hospital on Marlborough Street and the architectural works of Sir George Oatley at the University of Bristol; the Wills Memorial Building and the Physics Building.

In the 1930s the City embarked on a road-building programme which included Redcliffe Way and the carriageway through Queen Square, and started a modest slum clearance and council house building programme (St. Jude’s/ Lawford’s Gate, The Dings, Clifton Vale).

This was also a period of railway expansion and Temple Meads was considerably expanded with the addition of several new platforms.

The final culverting of the river, alongside St Augustine’s Parade, was completed in the 1930s.

2.14 Surviving significant physical features

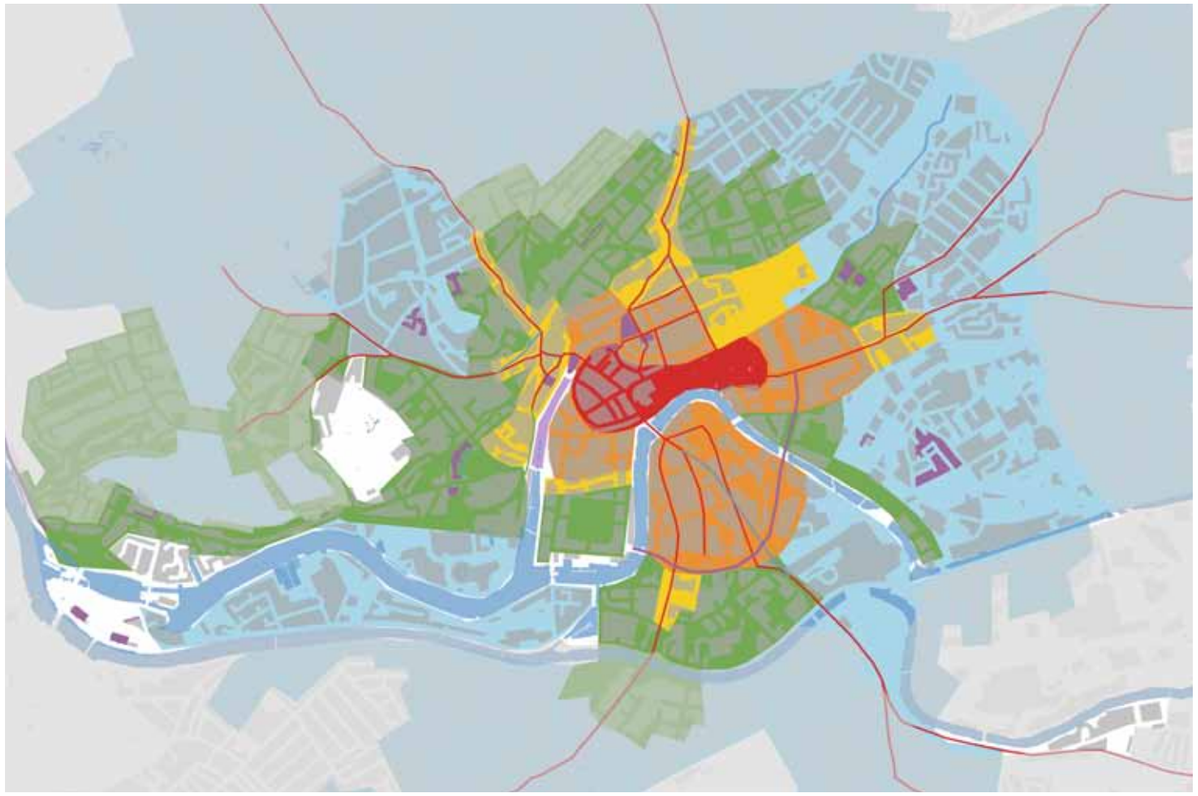
University and hospital buildings of the period, 1930s flats, Redcliffe/Temple Way though both considerably extended and the route through Queen Square is now removed.

The Culverhouse expansion at Bristol Temple Meads.

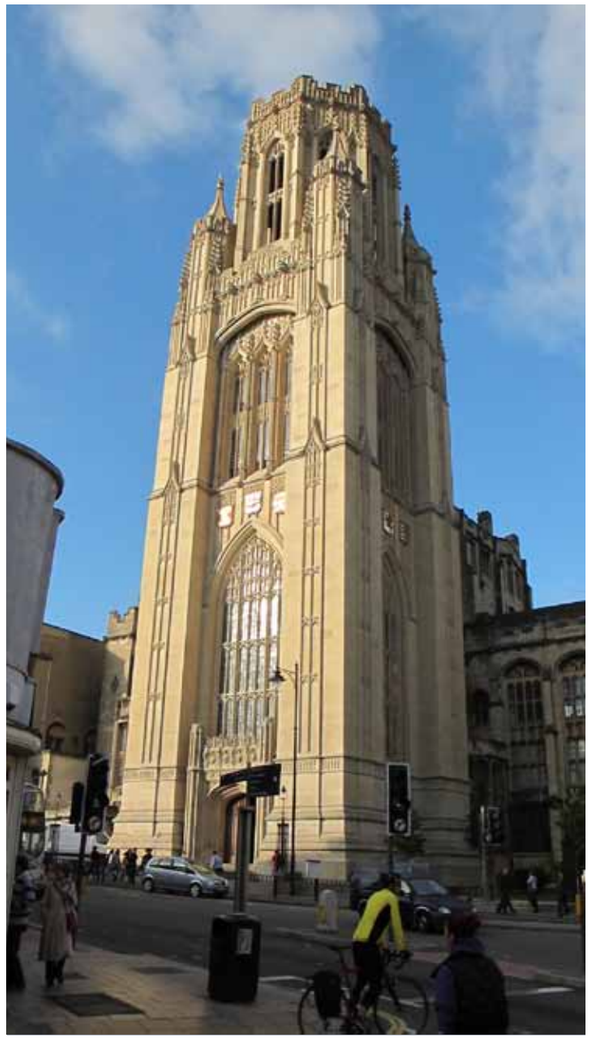
The Cenotaph and surrounding monuments in the centre including the surviving landscape of Magpie Park.

Fig 18
Phase 6

Phase 1 structure
Phase 2 structure
Phase 3 structure
Phase 4 structure
Phase 5 structure
Significant phase 6 structures



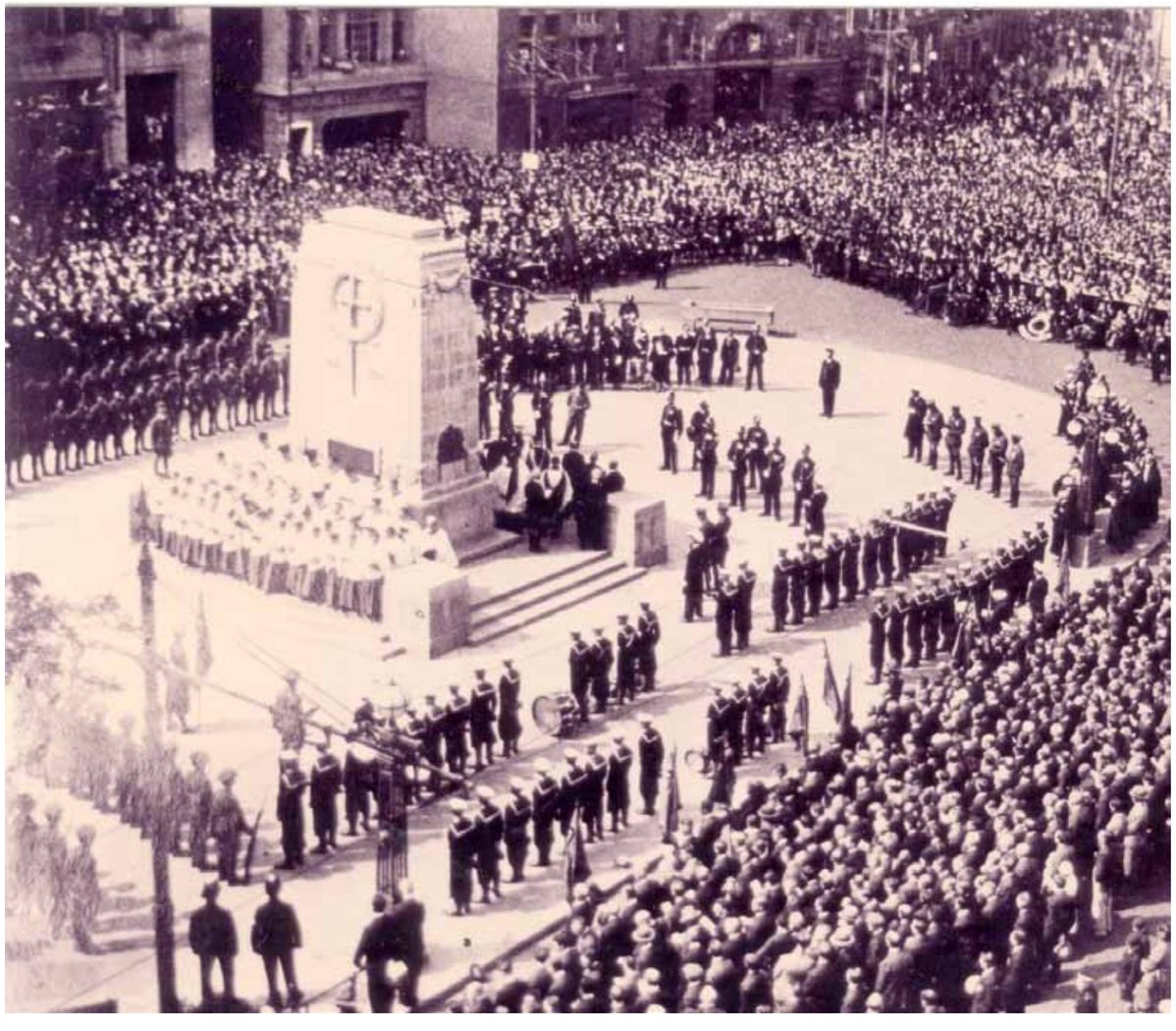












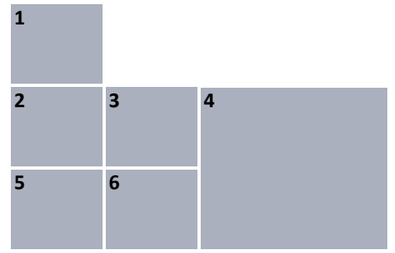


Fig 19
Phase 6

1 Will's Memorial Tower

2 Bridewell © Blom Pictometry 2012

3 Bascule Bridge, Redcliffe Way

4 Temple Meads, 1950

5 Unveiling of the Cenotaph, 1932 (courtesy Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives)

Phase 7: Wartime bombing and post war planning (1940 - 1975)

3.15 Description

— Broadmead
— M32/inner and outer ring roads
— Residential and commercial tower blocks

Wartime bombing raids from late 1940 had a considerable impact across the city. In many instances reconstruction of pre-War properties was undertaken such as along Park Street, however parts of the city were dramatically altered by wartime damage particularly the Castle Street shopping district (now Castle Park) including Peter Street, Wine Street and Bridge Street.

In 1944 a Reconstruction Plan for Bristol was proposed which included designated zones of development; warehousing, industrial, residential, business and shopping. Partly as a result of this plan the Broadmead shopping area was developed during the 1950s and 60s and the inner city ring road network was completed (Inner Circuit Road). This road network resulted in the Cumberland Basin flyovers (opened in 1965) and new segregated road system at Rupert Street, Bond Street and Temple Way by the early 1970s where pedestrian movement was intended to be in 'walkways in the sky'.

The construction of the Outer Ring Road was envisaged in the 1966 Development Plan. This was predicated on presumed growth of office development, the rise in private car ownership and the general move of the population to the suburbs. There was considerable and well-orchestrated opposition to its construction, which managed to halt major sections of the road being built. However, 550 homes were demolished in Totterdown in anticipation of its construction and the section of road in Easton was built after properties had been compulsorily purchased along the route. This section cut through long-established neighbourhoods such as Baptist Mills and Upper Easton, characterised by tight residential streets and a strong Methodist tradition.

Proposals for rebuilding this area (Lawrence Hill) appear heavily influenced by planning theory of that time, and in particular Le Corbusier's Radiant City ideas that envisaged fast moving cars travelling along an elevated road, passing through clusters of tower blocks sitting in park land. The M32/Newfoundland Street was built in 1973.

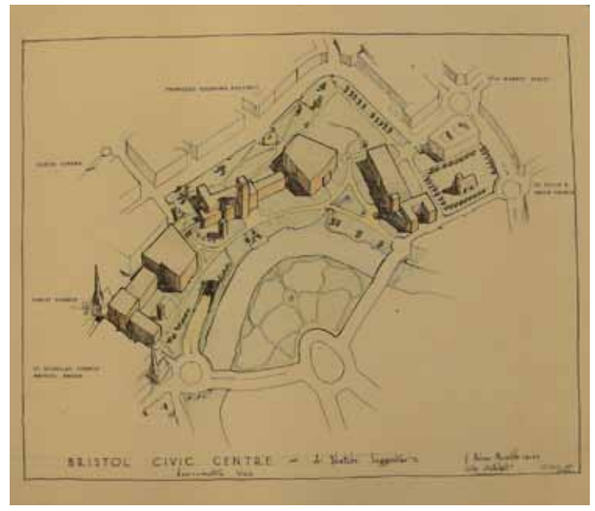
Fig 20
Phase 7 (images courtesy of Bristol Museum's Galleries and Archives)

1 Ruins of former properties on Castle Street, 1940

2 Proposals for civic quarter, Castle Green, 1944

3 Plan of the proposed redevelopment at Castle Green, 1944



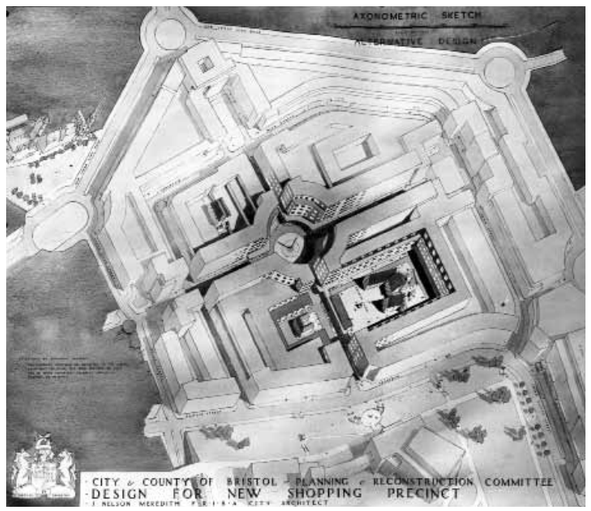














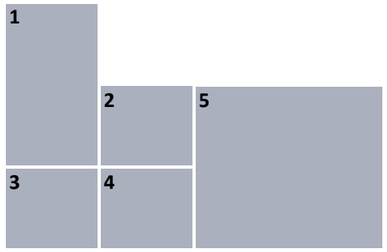


Fig 21
Phase 7

1 Plan of proposed outer ring road, Easton Way, 1965

2 Broadmead

3 Proposed design for Broadmead, c.1950

4 Old Market roundabout

5 Central area showing the new commercial and residential towers, 1974

Phase 7: Wartime bombing and post war planning (1940 - 1975)

2.16 Surviving significant physical features

Castle Park, Broadmead, concrete structural context of Lewins Mead/Rupert Street and associated road infrastructure that includes Bond Street, St James Barton and M32.

Outer ring and Cumberland Basin.

Hospital expansion. Tower blocks – No. 1 Redcliff Street, Castlemead, residential blocks to east and Kingsdown escarpment/Dove Street blocks.







Fig 22
Phase 7

1 Cumberland Basin © Blom Pictometry 2012

2 Castlemead, Marriott Hotel and Harvey Nichols

3 View from Wapping Wharf

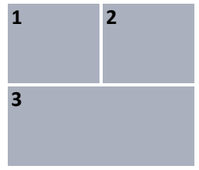
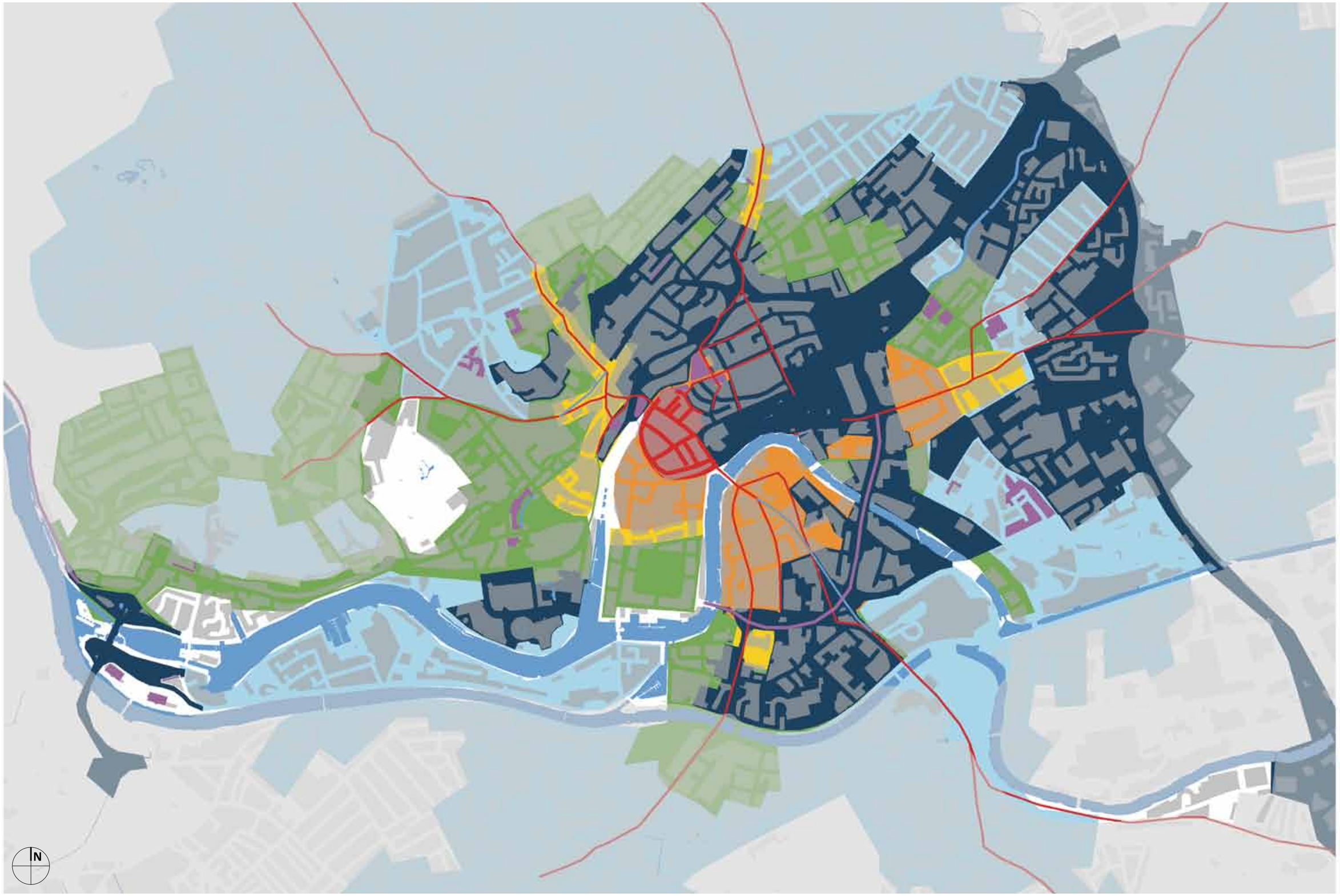


Fig 23 (right)
Phase 7 plan

- Phase 1 structure
- Phase 2 structure
- Phase 3 structure
- Phase 4 structure
- Phase 5 structure
- Significant phase 6 structures
- Area of phase 7 urban structure


N

The historic legacy

2.17 The impact of highway infrastructure

Until the 1930s central Bristol was a densely populated urban area with diverse land uses situated within a physical structure and street pattern that was little changed since the medieval period. Historic arterial routes led directly to key movement nodes near the centre of the city; at the top of Corn Street, St James Barton and the Tramway Centre. Gateways into the city, although no longer the medieval arches of the town wall were generally situated at the bridging points over the Avon and Frome. From the late 1870s these arterial routes were served by a public transport system predominated by an electric tram network.

Long distance transport to and from the city was through Bristol Temple Meads station. The southeast of the city was dominated by railway infrastructure that sprawled across vast areas of St Philip's to accommodate the space needed for the movement of goods in and out of Bristol. In the 1930s Temple Meads more than doubled in size to cater for the increase in railway transport.

In 1930 central Bristol was the home of many industries including iron, soap, chocolate, tobacco and glass. These were mostly situated in the southern and eastern central areas of Redcliffe, St Phillip's and Broad Plain near the water and rail transport links.

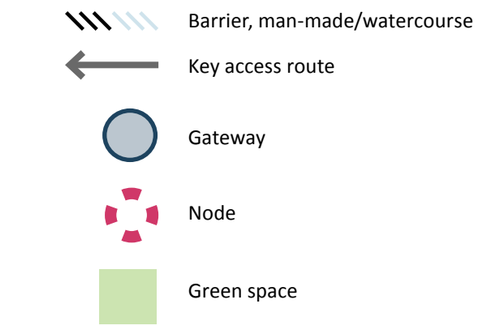
From the mid 1930s the structure of the city began to become dramatically influenced by the dominance of the motorcar. Where Bristol had retained a dense urban structure with only significant changes to the built form, strategic transport planning began to eroded the physical fabric of the city.

Wartime bombing partly contributed to the erosion of the urban fabric, although bomb damage impacted the urban blocks rather than the street pattern of the urban structure.

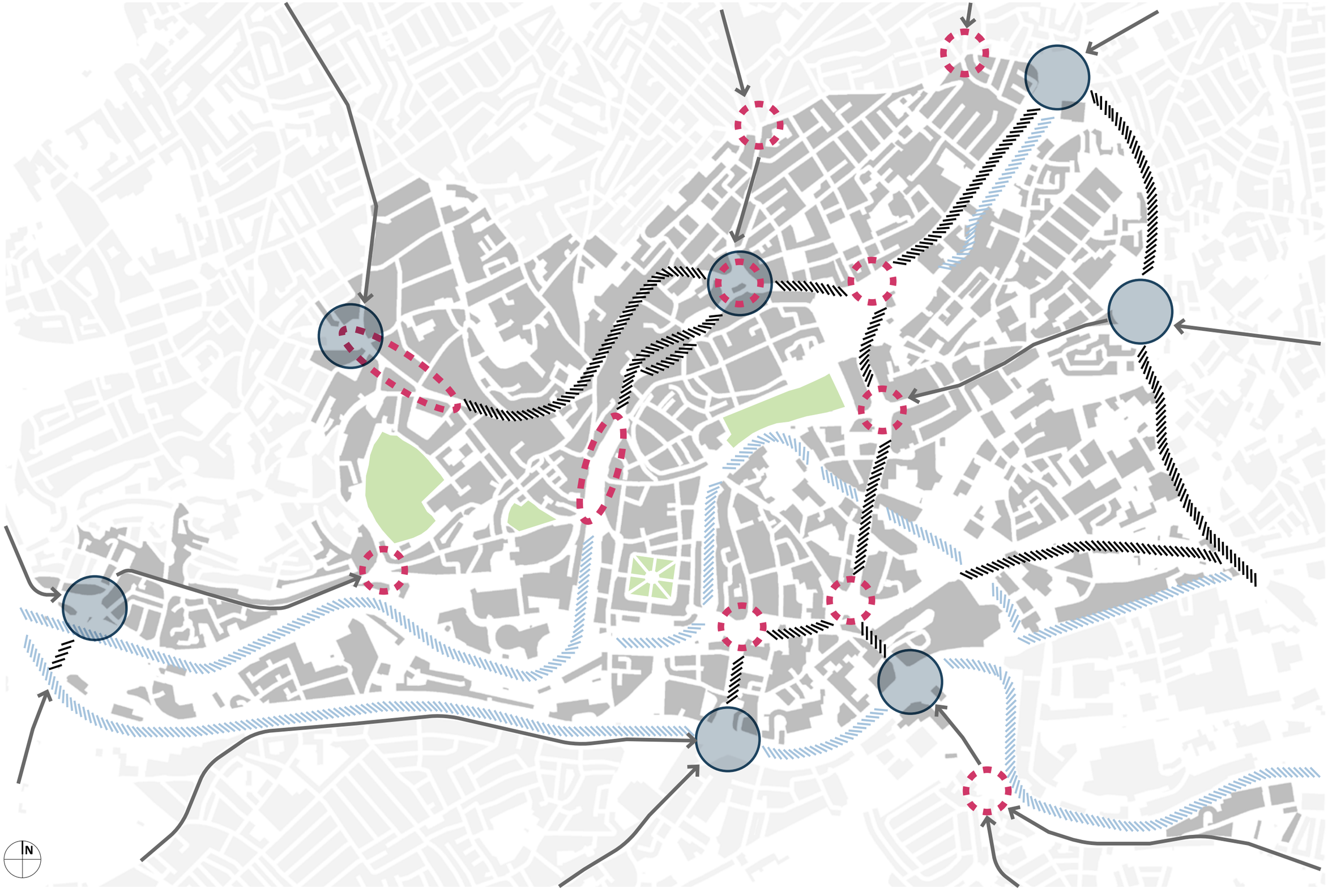
Bomb damage certainly affected land values that enabled the comprehensive post war highway infrastructure and adjoining large scale commercial and residential blocks to be created. These joint impacts have resulted in severance of the historic street pattern in many locations. The result has been a series of twentieth century man made barriers to movement that are only effectively interrupted by seven key gateways. These gateways tend to centre on large highway junctions. The modern urban environment is dominated by the motor car.

With the exception of Cumberland Basin the west area of the city has retained more of its historic character around the docks and West End neighbourhood. The northern fringe has also been less impacted beyond the inner ring road elements of Upper Maudlin Street, Rupert Street and Lewins Mead.

Fig 24
Urban structure analysis






N

Repairing the city

3

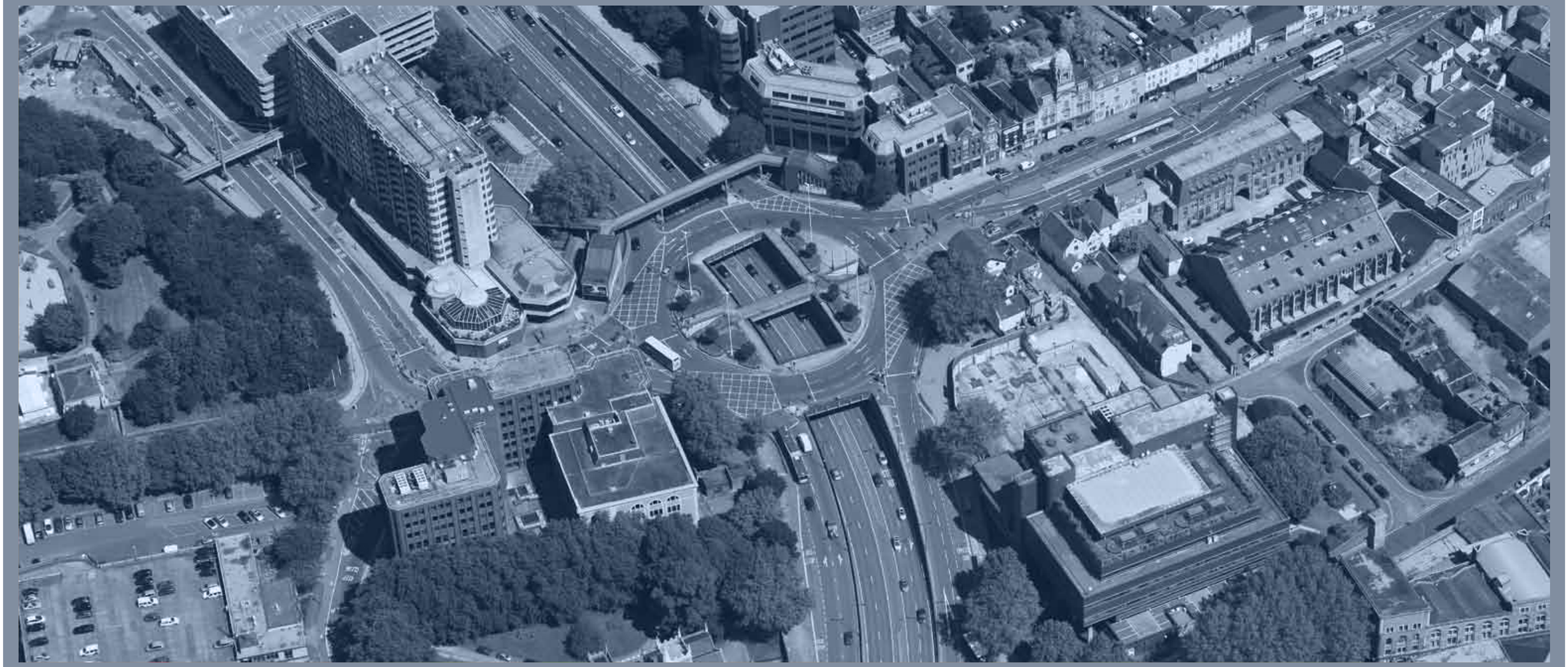


Fig 25
Historic buildings within the central area

Pre 1880s buildings

Built 1880 - 1900

Built 1900 - 1914

Towards an urban design response

Based on the evidence and understnding provided by the context study two strategic urban design concepts have been derived. These concepts can be used to guide a strategic approach to the development of the modern city as outlined below:

The Restored City

The thoughtful and creative reinstatement of historic street patterns, building lines and public spaces and the enhancement of important views in areas where significant historic building fabric and street pattern remains. This often involves replacing mediocre development from the post war period with new high quality development and the imaginative reuse of historic buildings that enhances the distinctive townscape of the central area and delivers the environmental performance requirements of the Core Strategy. This approach does not advocate pastiche rather the contemporary design of new buildings that respond positively to the local historic context.

The Reinvented City

The creation of new and often large scale development on sites and in areas where the local context has a lower historic fabric content and capacity for significant new development that responds to Bristol's unique context in a more overtly contemporary and often bold manner. This does not mean a non-contextualised response as strategic context considerations such as views, topography and landscape features are all important influences in the shaping of proposals for new development.

It is suggested that in combination with the Legible City concept (see below) these can guide the development of an integrated urban design approach within the Bristol Central Area Plan.

The Legible City

The spatial organising concept highlighting the pivotal role of the public realm as a canvas for public life, and as an accessible and welcoming environment for all, that positively promotes sustainable travel, healthier lifestyles, and the City's competitive advantage. The rebalancing of streets and spaces in favour of pedestrian cyclist and public movement, by reducing or removing the detrimental impacts of vehicular traffic, are key aspects of this concept to physically connect the central area.

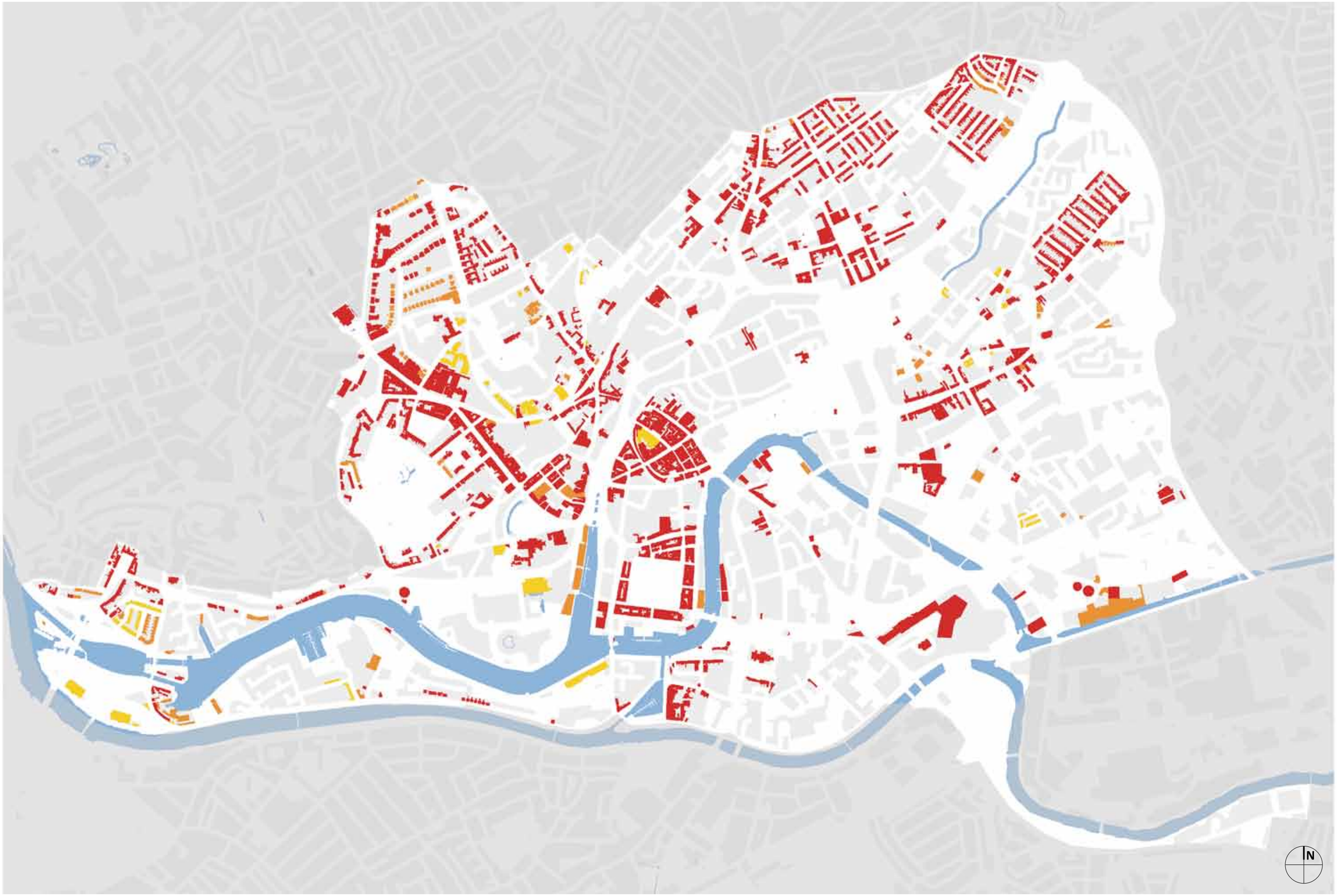
Bristol Legible City was devised to improve people's understanding and experience of the city through the implementation of identity, information and transportation projects. The Public Realm and Movement Framework (2012) develops and extends the Legible City concept and sets out an ambitious agenda for change illustrating how streets and spaces can be transformed through a range of interventions.

These three strategic urban design concepts have been used to organise the challenges and opportunities section for each character area in this study.

As a result these challenges have been categorised into two urban types:
— Routes and spaces
— Structure and form

This will help to inform the urban design response to any area of change.

Further detail of the urban design concepts and the delivery approach to these strategic objectives will be provided in subsequent urban design guidance.


N