

King Street

Towards the west of the Old City is King Street, a 17th century street which runs from the Floating Harbour to the Centre and neighbours the Georgian park of Queen Square. The street was laid out in 1650 to develop the Town Marsh, the area then lying between the south or Marsh Wall and the Avon. The north side was developed first and the south side in 1663, when the street was named after Charles II.

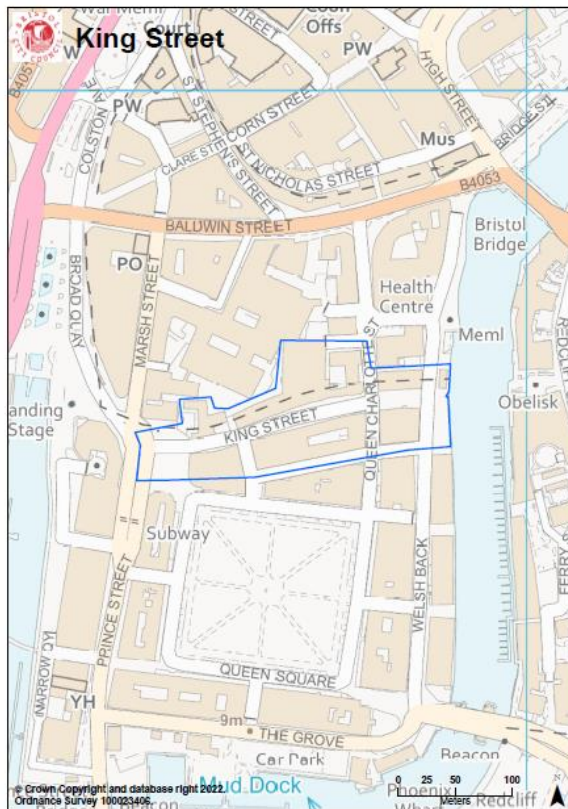
There are a number of listed buildings on the street, including numbers 7 and 8, which were built using recycled ship's timbers, with barrel staves used as lathes. Number 35, built around 1870, is a former cork warehouse and an example of the Bristol Byzantine style. The Merchant Venturers Almshouses (now private accommodation) was built around 1696 by the Society of Merchant Venturers for convalescent and old sailors to see out their days, often after fever or blindness during service in the ships of the Bristol slave trade.

Among the historic buildings in the street are two of the oldest pubs in Bristol, the Llandoger Trow, a public house dating from 1664 named by a sailor who owned the pub after Llandogo in Wales which built trows (flat-bottomed river boats), where tradition has it that Daniel Defoe met Alexander Selkirk, his inspiration for *Robinson Crusoe*, and Robert Louis Stevenson's was inspired to create the Admiral Benbow in *Treasure Island*; and The Old Duke, a jazz and blues venue where live music is played every night of the week. The name is a reference to the classic American jazz musician Duke Ellington, though the pub has held the same (or similar) name since it was built 1775, it most likely previously referred to The Duke of Cumberland.

Bristol Old Vic is a theatre company based at the Theatre Royal on King Street. The present company was established in 1946 as an offshoot of the Old Vic in London. The Theatre Royal, the oldest continually operating theatre in the English-speaking world, was built between 1764 and 1766. The Coopers' Hall, built 1743–44, was incorporated as the theatre's foyer during 1970–72. Together, they are designated a Grade I listed building. In 2012, the theatre complex completed the first phase of a £19 million refurbishment, increasing the seating capacity and providing ten flexible performance spaces.

Two listed buildings, number 33 King Street, which was originally a merchant's house, and No. 34, which operated as a grain store, date from the 1650s. They are the only surviving buildings of the original development and boast ornate 17th-century plasterwork depicting pomegranates, winged cherubs and a frieze of dogs and fruit. Today, the buildings house La Taverna dell'Artista, or Renato's, a popular bar and pizza restaurant frequented by artists and theatre goers.

King Street is a popular destination in evenings and weekends with events such as an annual jazz festival.



35 King Street
Photo William Avery

Merchant Venturers
Almshouses



Renato's
Photo C Crofts





Bristol Old Vic
Image Charcoal Blue



The Llandoger Trow, sketch by Samuel Loxton

La Taverna dell'Artista, or Renato's

