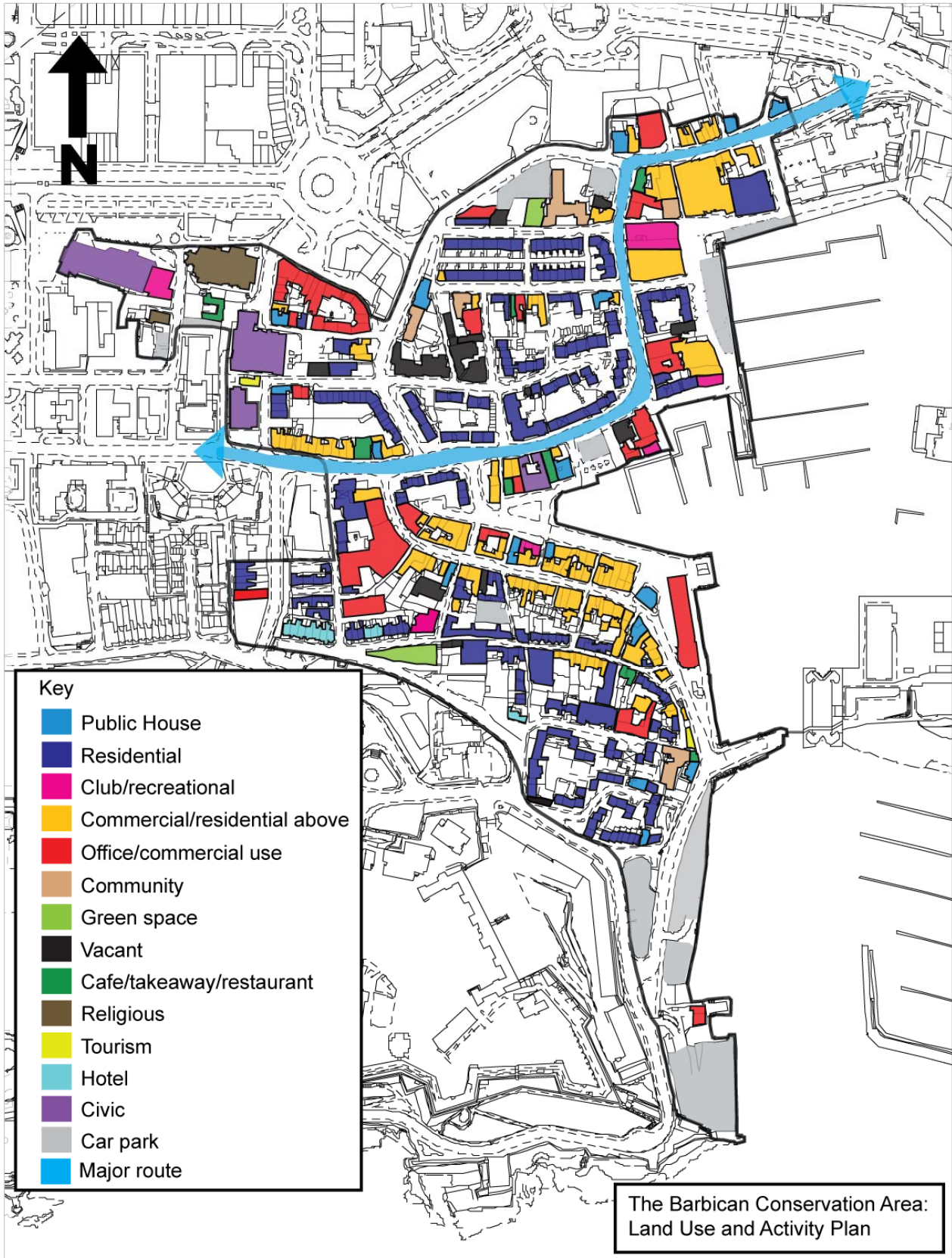


Land use and activity (Fig.9)

The divide between the northern and southern parts of the Conservation Area is most clearly seen in its uses.

Key characteristics

- Predominance of residential use in the northern character sub-area and to the south of Castle Street.
- Predominance of buildings in mixed residential/commercial use in the southern character sub-area, particularly between Notte Street and Castle Street. ('Commercial/residential above' use includes a high incidence of pub/club/restaurant/takeaway uses).
- Few vacant properties except for a group of buildings undergoing redevelopment on Palace Street
- Extensive areas of car parking at the southern end of the Conservation Area, including quays.
- Notte Street/Vauxhall Street is a major route and barrier to easy pedestrian movement between the northern and southern character sub-areas of the Conservation Area.
- Little recreational public open space away from the quays.



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Fig.9: Land use and activity

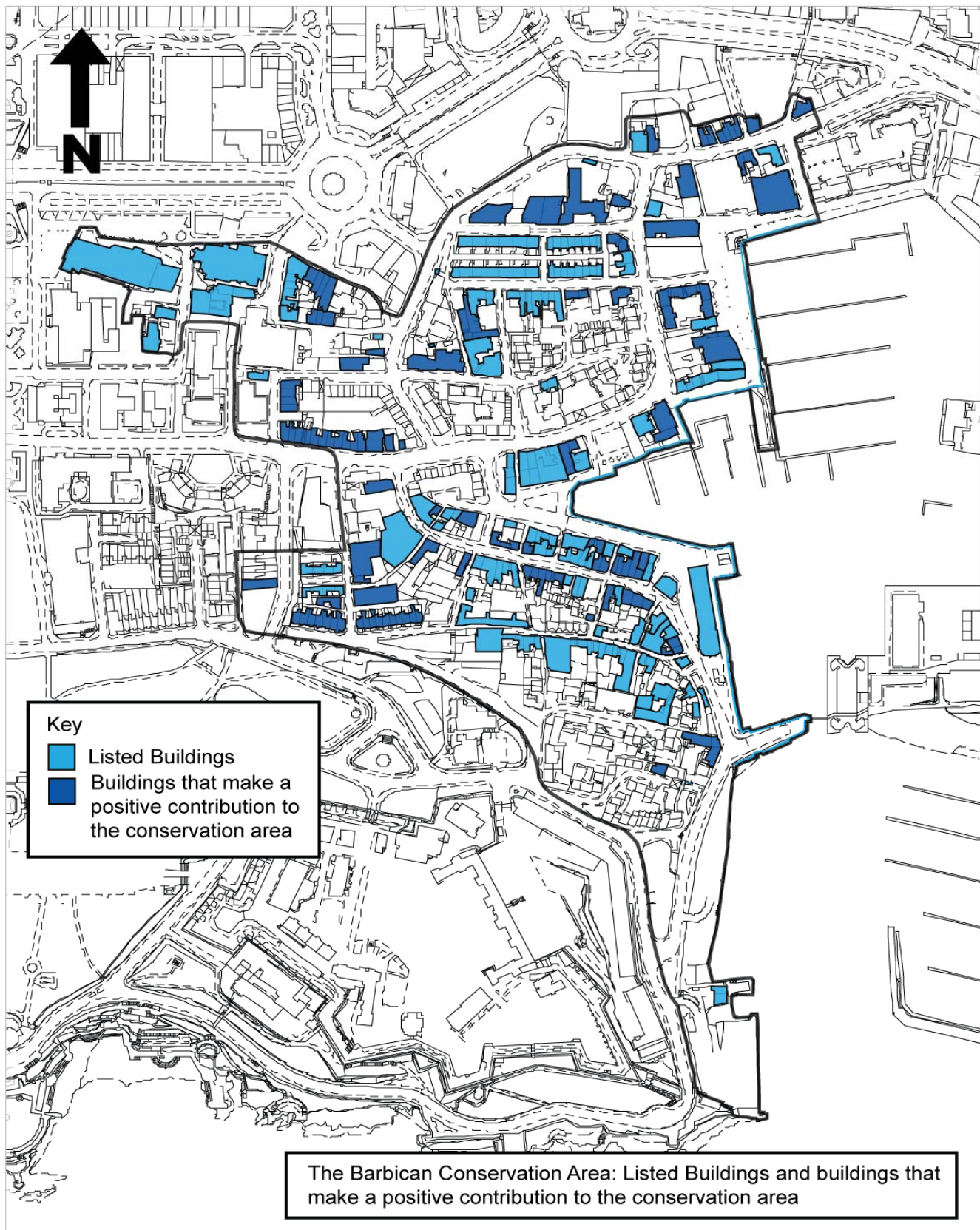
Quality of buildings

Within the Conservation Area there are 105 buildings (or groups of buildings) and structures which appear on the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, including the whole run of the harbour walls from North Quay to West Pier, and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. A further 68 buildings have been identified through the appraisal process as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. (Fig.10). These are listed in Appendices 1 and 2, and reflect the overall high quality of buildings in the Conservation Area. 19 buildings and the Batter Street car park and the Elizabethan Gardens are in the care of the Plymouth Barbican Association, which buys, restores and maintains historic buildings in the area (Appendix 3).

The earliest standing building is probably St Andrew's church, of mid-late 15th century date, though the nearby courtyard house in Finewell Street (the 'Prysten House') built for the wealthy merchant Thomas Yogge soon after 1498, is not much later. The Gin Distillery in Southside Street was also originally a merchant's house of c.1500, though it has subsequently been much altered. These are large high quality buildings in the local grey limestone which is such a characteristic of historic buildings in Plymouth.

Otherwise the earliest surviving buildings are the fine late 16th and 17th century townhouses, often incorporating ground floor shops or other commercial uses, which survive particularly in New Street and Looe Street. These are generally narrow buildings on long narrow plots, of stone construction but with a timber and plaster façade, often jettied and elaborately decorated. Nos.32 and 33 New Street and Nos.27-33 and 36-38 Looe Street are particularly fine examples, though it should be noted that a number of these buildings were extensively rebuilt in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Other notable buildings from this period include the Old Customs House of 1586 on the Parade, and the Merchant's House in St Andrew's Street. The eastern side of Basket Ope incorporates the remains of a merchant's house of the 17th century providing an unusual view of what were originally internal fireplaces, and makes a striking contribution to the historic character of the immediate area.

The Conservation Area retains a wealth of good quality 18th and 19th century buildings, though it is known that a number of these such as Nos. 39 and 51-54 Southside Street are later frontages on earlier buildings. For the most part, these later buildings are three or four storeys, rendered with render detail, though a number are of brick. There are particularly fine late 19th century shop premises with accommodation above on Bretonside (Nos. 25-27, 44, and 46-48), along the northern side of Notte Street (Nos. 48-49 are particularly fine), along much of Southside Street and around the Parade and along Quay Road. Notable individual buildings of this later period include the 'Three Crowns' public house, probably 17th century in origin, but extended or remodeled in the 19th century; the new Customs House of 1810, and the Barbican Fishmarket of 1896 which is a landmark structure within the Conservation Area, and a good example of the restoration and adaptation of an important historic building to an alternative use.



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Fig 10. Listed buildings and buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

A particular characteristic of the 18th and 19th century town were the large limestone warehouses, built to house the loot from enemy ships taken as prizes during the 19th century, as well as the proceeds of legitimate trade. These exist throughout the Conservation Area, and there are particularly good examples along Vauxhall Street (Nos.54-62, including the particularly fine example of AE Monson's warehouse), and on New Street ('Palace Vaults' and Nos. 41-42). Many have been converted to alternative uses, often as pubs or clubs, or for residential use. One of the more interesting buildings from this period of Plymouth's trading past is No. 94 Vauxhall Street, an early 19th century warehouse with integral 'count' (accounts) house now converted into flats. It is a noteworthy building on a prominent corner site.

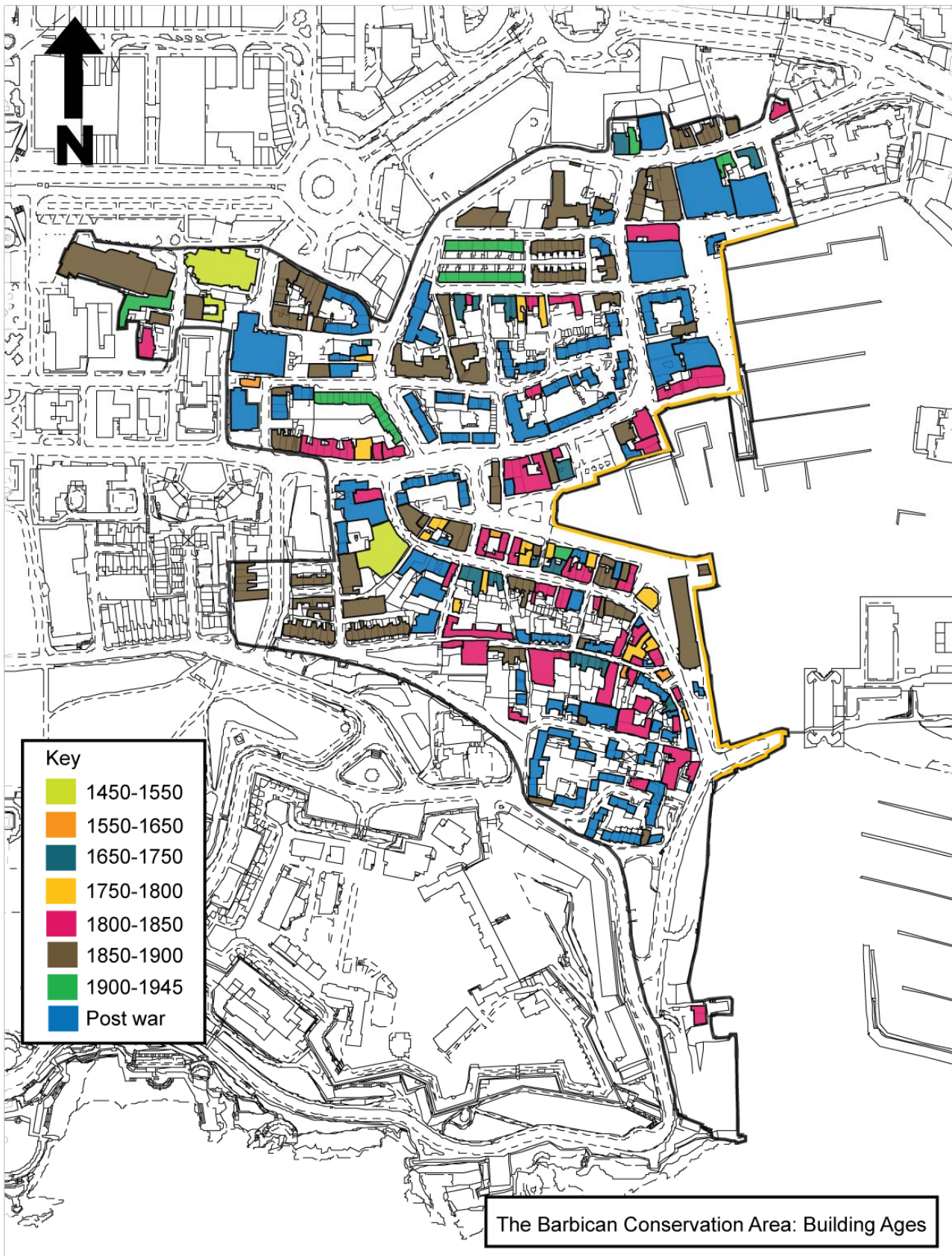
While most of the historic residential accommodation in the Conservation Area was provided within the mixed-use buildings of the historic core, townhouses developed around the periphery such as those on Citadel Road, or at Hoe Gardens off Hoegate Street, the latter a good example of the work of the prominent early 19th century architect John Foulston and his pupil George Wightwick.

Much of the historic town was overcrowded and notoriously unsanitary by the late 19th century, resulting in the condemnation of the north side of Looe Street and the construction of the Corporation flats. These comprise a westerly terrace of three-storeys of painted brick, with concrete floors and staircases under slate roofs with wooden sliding sash windows and doors, and a shorter easterly terrace of similar construction, though with greater decorative elaboration. How Street was more comprehensively rebuilt on both sides to the same pattern. Built in the years just either side of 1900, these are important early examples of local authority housing and are largely as built. They contribute enormously to the character of both Looe Street and How Street and demonstrate that 'character' is not defined by age alone. Further slum clearance followed, and by the inter-war years of the 20th century, included areas in Lambhay Street, Castle Dyke Lane, New Street and Buckwell Street. A large area on the north side of Vauxhall Street running to Palace Street and the rear of Looe Street was comprehensively redeveloped to provide a large block of social housing after the Second World War. Modern regeneration has seen a considerable amount of new development particularly around the northern and eastern sides of the historic harbour.

Building Age (Fig.11)

Key characteristics

- Mix of ages, particularly along Southside Street
- Predominance of 19th and 20th century buildings
- Large number of 20th century buildings, reflecting wartime damage and major public housing schemes



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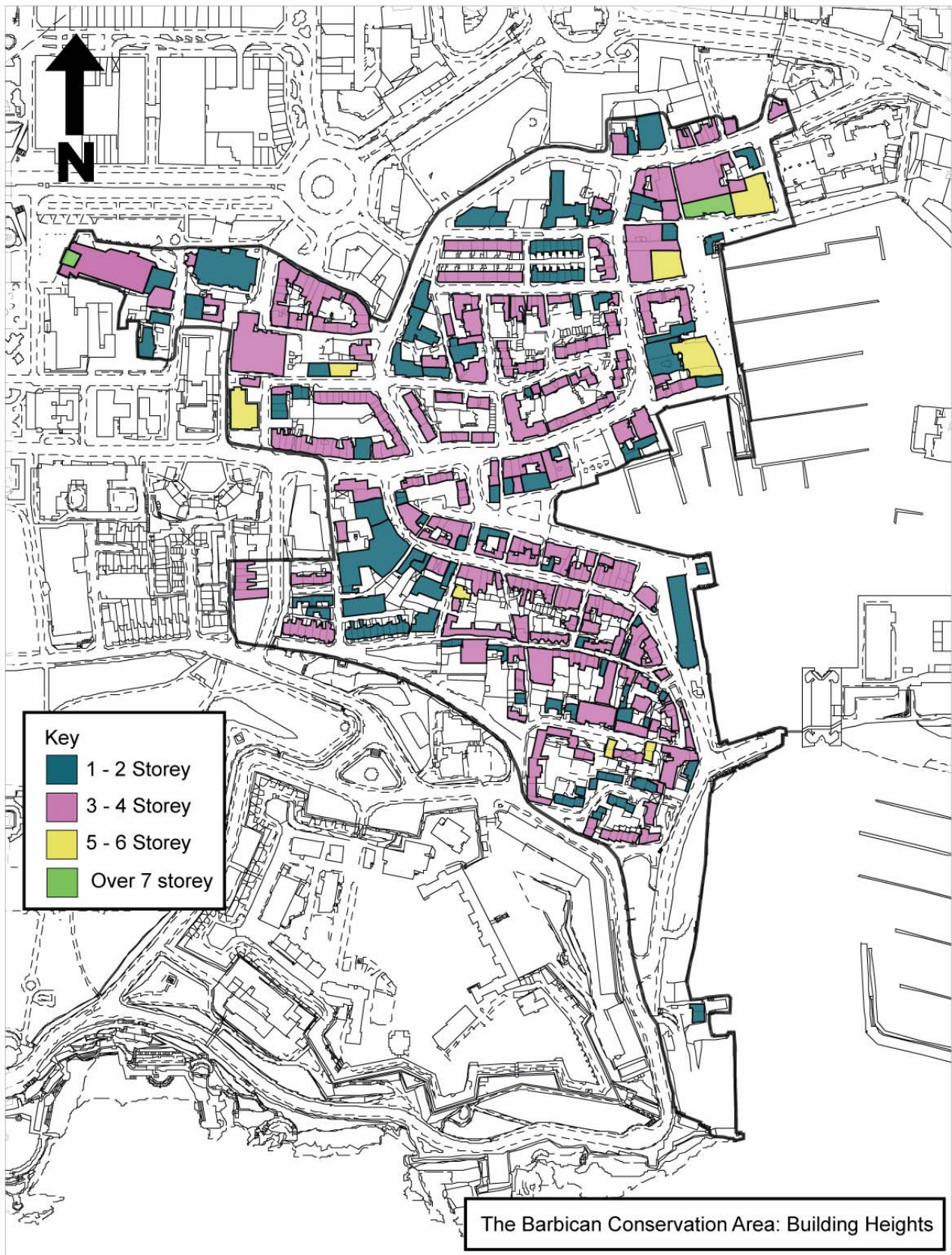


Fig 11 Building Age in the Conservation Area

Building heights (Fig.12)

Key characteristics

- Predominance of 3-4 storey buildings. This produces a marked sense of enclosure, especially along the narrower more historic streets. It also provides a very efficient height/street width ratio, reflecting the need to make efficient use of restricted space, and of the combination of commercial ground floors with residential upper floors.
- The tallest buildings are mostly modern developments. These have had a marked effect particularly on the character of the eastern side of Sutton Harbour.



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Fig 12. Building heights in the Conservation Area

Prevalent and traditional building materials and the public realm

The traditional building materials in Plymouth are limestone, granite, and the soft sedimentary shales known locally as 'shillet'. These materials are common throughout the Conservation Area. Limestone and granite was often cut and dressed, especially in grand and public buildings such as St Andrew's or the Guildhall, whereas limestone rubble and shillet buildings were usually rendered, and render therefore often predominates as a finish in the city's historic areas. Brick is not used until the 18th and 19th centuries and then not extensively within the Conservation Area, and with the exception of the timber and plaster fronts noted above, there is little tradition of timber building. Stone and render predominate, as they do in the wider historic townscape to this day. While the limestone, granite and shillet does not lend itself to decorative detail, the render facades were often elaborately decorated as can be seen particularly in 19th century frontages along Southside Street, St Andrew's Street and Whimble Street.

The traditional street surfaces within the Conservation Area were granite setts with granite kerbs and drain channels, and these survive in many streets particularly south of Notte Street, though they have been replaced along Southside Street. Pavements were commonly of limestone or granite flags, and areas of historic paving still survive, as around 'The Navy' public house at the south end of Quay Road, at the east end of St Andrew's Street, along the east side of Batter Street and along Hawker's Avenue, as well as at many other locations within the Conservation Area.

Most of the quay walls are of dressed granite with granite copings. Railway lines still survive along North Quay and Sutton Wharf, and there are small cranes on both Sutton Wharf and Commercial Wharf as reminders that this was once very much a working harbour. Little historic street furniture remains, though there are a number of granite and cast-iron tying-up bollards along the quays, including two reused cannon on Vauxhall Quay, and three 19th century obelisk-shaped cast iron bollards across both Parade Ope and Southside Ope. Similar bollards can be seen in other historic locations around the city. The three granite columns outside No.24 New Street appear to be of some antiquity, though their function is not obvious. They may have been moved from an original site.