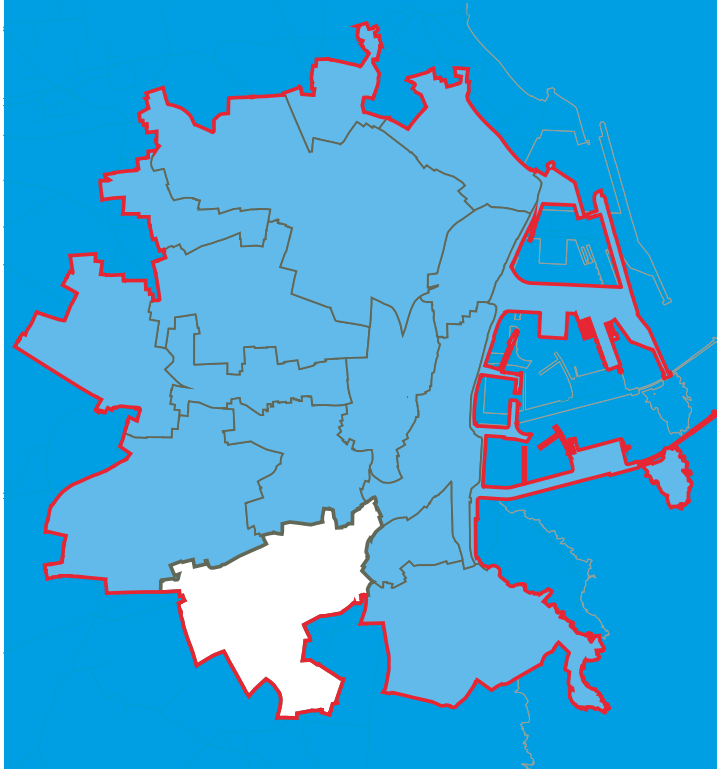


## Part Three Character Areas **15. La Charroterie Valley**

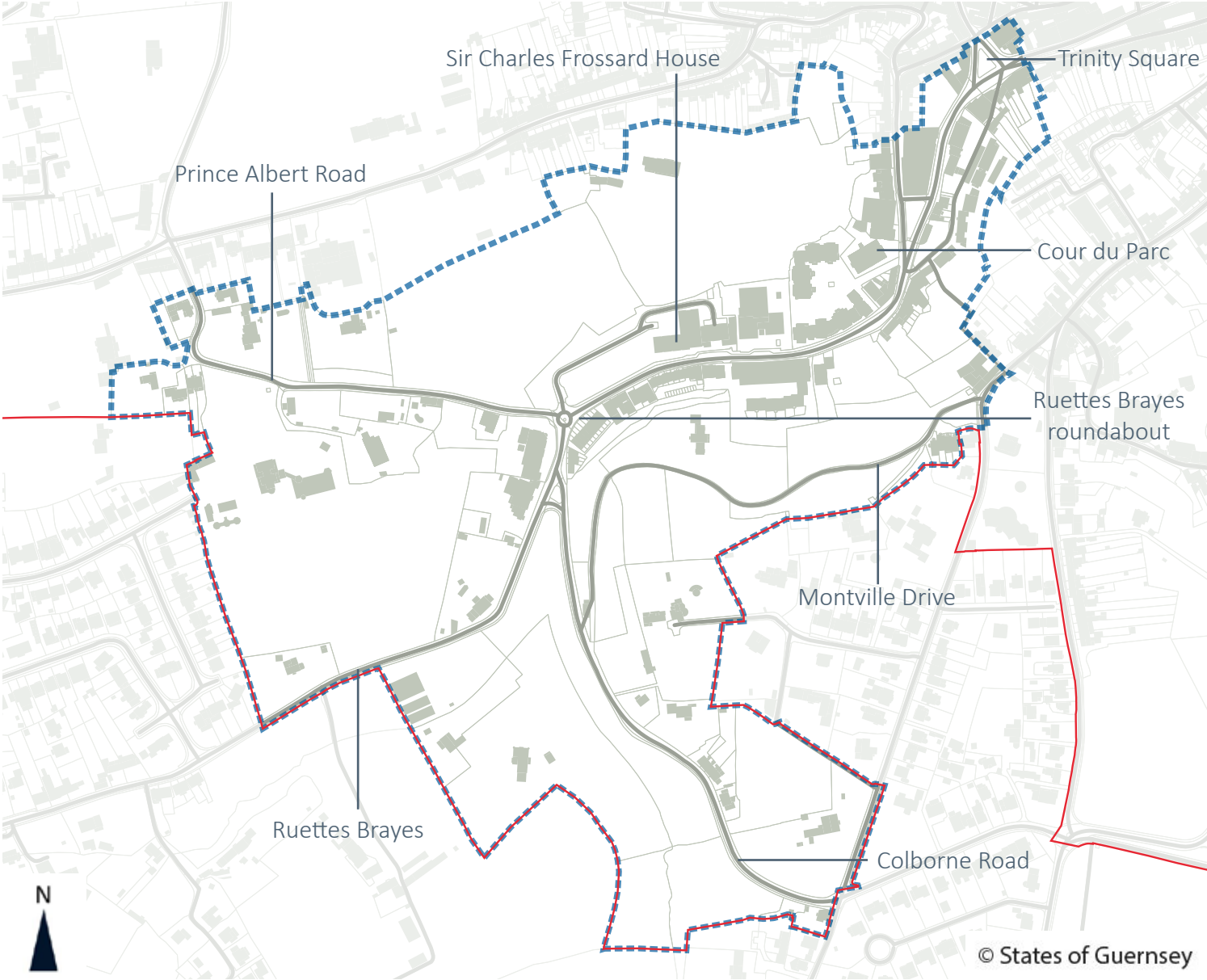


La Charroterie Valley Character Area extends south west from Trinity Square up the valley to Ruettes Braye and Colborne Road, including the flanking hillsides and encompassing Montville Drive, Prince Albert Road and Pierre Percée.

Orientation map showing key locations in La Charroterie Valley Character Area

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-  Conservation Area
-  Character Area
-  Today's buildings
-  Today's roads



# 1. Summary

**1.1.** The special character of La Charroterie Valley comes from a combination of elements which are summarised below and expanded upon later. Strengths, issues and opportunities are set out at the end of the Character Area Appraisal.

**1.2.** This part of the St Peter Port Conservation Area Appraisal was endorsed by the Development and Planning Authority in December 2021.

**1.3. Changes in level.** Cliff faces and sharp changes in level provide enclosure and a contrast in character between the often shaded built environment and sunlit hillside greenery

**1.4. Movement.** Much of the Character Area is dominated by La Charroterie and Rue du Pre, one of the main routes into Town from the south. The pedestrian experience is compromised by these busy roads but relieved by quieter lanes and a peaceful woodland walk. A mix of residential and office use influences movement.

**1.5. Public realm.** Fluctuations between enclosure and spaces are key contributors to the character of the area, complemented by features, including street furniture, and materials both modern and historic

**1.6. Historic interest.** The stream that runs down the valley supported the industries that resulted in development of this part of Town, evidence of which survives today in streets, spaces, buildings and place names.

**1.7. Materials.** Roofs are slate and pan-tile and walls are smooth rendered or of exposed stone, sometimes polished. Use of local stone is prominent in walls, kerbs and gutters.

**1.8. Architectural style and building form.** Buildings range from domestic in scale, of 2 to 3 storeys with attic rooms and classical window configurations, generally positioned on the back edge of the pavement to country houses in large grounds. Stone mill buildings and modern residential and office developments of a larger scale dominate the centre of the Character Area.

## 2. Introduction

### Location and Setting

**2.1.** La Charroterie Valley Character Area is in the south of, and forms part of the boundary of, the Conservation Area. It leads down the valley from Guernsey's higher plateau to the south and west to the south part of the Old Town and Harbour.

**2.2.** There are several areas within the valley bottom where the slope levels out and spaces open up. Predominantly a natural stream valley, excavation has exposed rock faces and historically created the room to use the area for industrial purposes. Quieter, more rural areas are present to the south and on the higher parts of the valley sides.

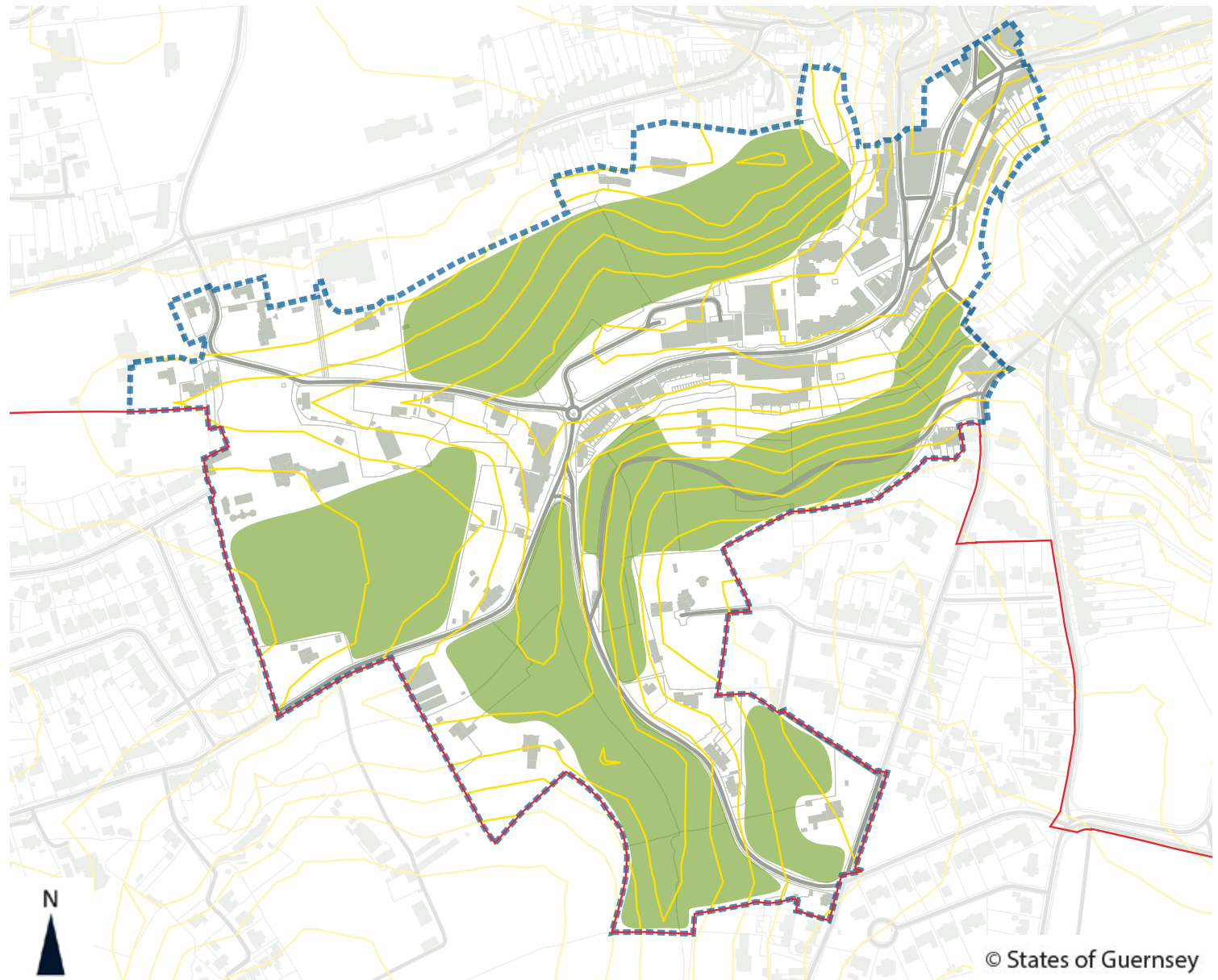


View from Cour du Parc Flats looking north east over La Charroterie Valley and the Old Town



The layout, topography and green spaces of La Charroterie Valley

- The area marks the south boundary of the Conservation Area
- Contours show the hills sloping up on each side of the valley
- Buildings line the valley bottom and are focussed along the road
- Greenery is mainly on the hillsides



## History and Development

**2.3.** Early industrial development depended on the streams which ran down Colborne Road and Ruettes Brayes, serving a mill and a *lavoir publique* before converging with a stream from Prince Albert Road to form a reservoir at the top of La Charroterie. Many dams were built below this point, serving industries including corn mills, paper mills, sawmills, blacksmiths and carriage-makers, all the way down to the sea. Even in the late 18th century few buildings were present although the reservoirs and mill ponds had existed for some time.

Left: *Lavoir publique* in use, c.1900 (Coysh & Toms)

Right: An early-19th century depiction of La Charroterie Valley, looking northward from the area of Ruettes Brayes (Toms)

Definition:

A ***lavoir publique*** is a public washing place



**2.4.** A gradual reduction in use of stored water in the 19th century saw an increase in industrial, residential and social (e.g. Victoria Homes) development, its ribbon form dictated by the valley. Mills, remaining into the 20th century, were interspersed by small houses of Georgian and Victorian-style and proportion. Grand country houses in large grounds, often with south-facing vinehouses, remained on the hillsides. New roads were built, older roads improved and formal spaces, such as Trinity Square, created.

**2.5.** Replacement of industrial units during the later 20th century saw redevelopment of run-down areas with residential and office buildings. Cour du Parc – Guernsey's only tower block – was built in the 1960s (one of a planned series of high rises stepping up the valley) and modern offices were constructed to the south west in the 1990s.

### Ambience and Use

**2.6.** The chiefly paved valley bottom varies between deep shade and glaring sunlight, depending on width and orientation of street, time of day and season. Its built-up nature has resulted in wind tunnels and extremes of temperature and exposure can make it inhospitable. Conversely, the upper parts of the hillsides are green and often present a sunlit view over the tops of and between buildings in the shaded valley. Broadly speaking, enclosure of the former is provided by buildings and in the latter by trees. Water is prominent in the south west.



Left: La Charroterie and Cour du Parc showing contrast in light between valley bottom and sides

Right: Montville Drive walk where flowers and greenery and the sounds of birdsong and the wind in the trees are noted

**2.7.** Traffic through the area is often heavy – both vehicular and pedestrian. It peaks during the 7:30-9:00 and 16:30-18:00 ‘rush hours’ and so varies with time and day. Off-peak, the combination of less traffic and tree cover gives a peaceful feel on the outskirts and at Montville Drive, where only distant vehicular noise can be heard and fumes avoided, the area has the feel of a countryside woodland walk.

**2.8.** Houses and offices predominate with shops and restaurants around Trinity Square. Evening activity is highest there, becoming less the further one moves from Town. Blank frontages occur, most notably in La Charroterie, where there are high walls and garages and office use means that frontages are inactive outside of working hours.





### 3. Designations

**3.1. Protected buildings.** When compared to other parts of Town, La Charroterie Valley has relatively few protected buildings. Those which are protected are generally early 19th century shops and a pub and the 1789 Trinity Church (PB 740) clustered around Trinity Square. Otherwise, they are former mills or large country houses of the late 18th and early 19th centuries which stand in relative isolation to the south and west.

**3.2. Buildings of merit.** Some buildings do not have sufficient special interest to be a protected building but contribute to the character, architectural and historic interest and appearance of the Character Area. These are particularly notable in terraces at Trinity Square and at the meeting of Rue du Pre and La Charroterie, also in clusters of houses on Colborne Road and Prince Albert Road. These buildings are shown on the following map.

Left: Trinity Church (PB 740),  
Trinity Square

Top right: Buildings of merit in  
Prince Albert Road

Bottom right: Terrace of non-  
protected houses in Colborne  
Road



**3.3.** Converted mill buildings provide evidence of former industrial uses. These retain their original proportions despite now being in use as offices. Other clues to the industrial past come from boundary walls and the pattern of development within the valley.

**3.4. Protected monuments and non-protected features.** Elements of the public realm add to the character. The pump and trough (PM34) at Trinity Square, the pump and lamp bracket (PM43) at Rue du Pre and the lavoir publique (PM40) at the bottom of Ruettes Brayes are all protected monuments. These are complemented variously by seating, paving and use of local stone in walls, kerbs and gutters.



**3.5. Trees and green spaces.** Prominent trees at Trinity Square and Rue du Pre are important features of these planned spaces. Trees are also prevalent in the south and west: at Montville Drive, Colborne Road, Prince Albert Road and Ruettes Brayes where they give an informal backdrop to development. Several areas of the valley sides are designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance in the IDP.

Left: Former mill building, now offices, at Rue du Pre

Top right: Plane trees at Rue du Pre

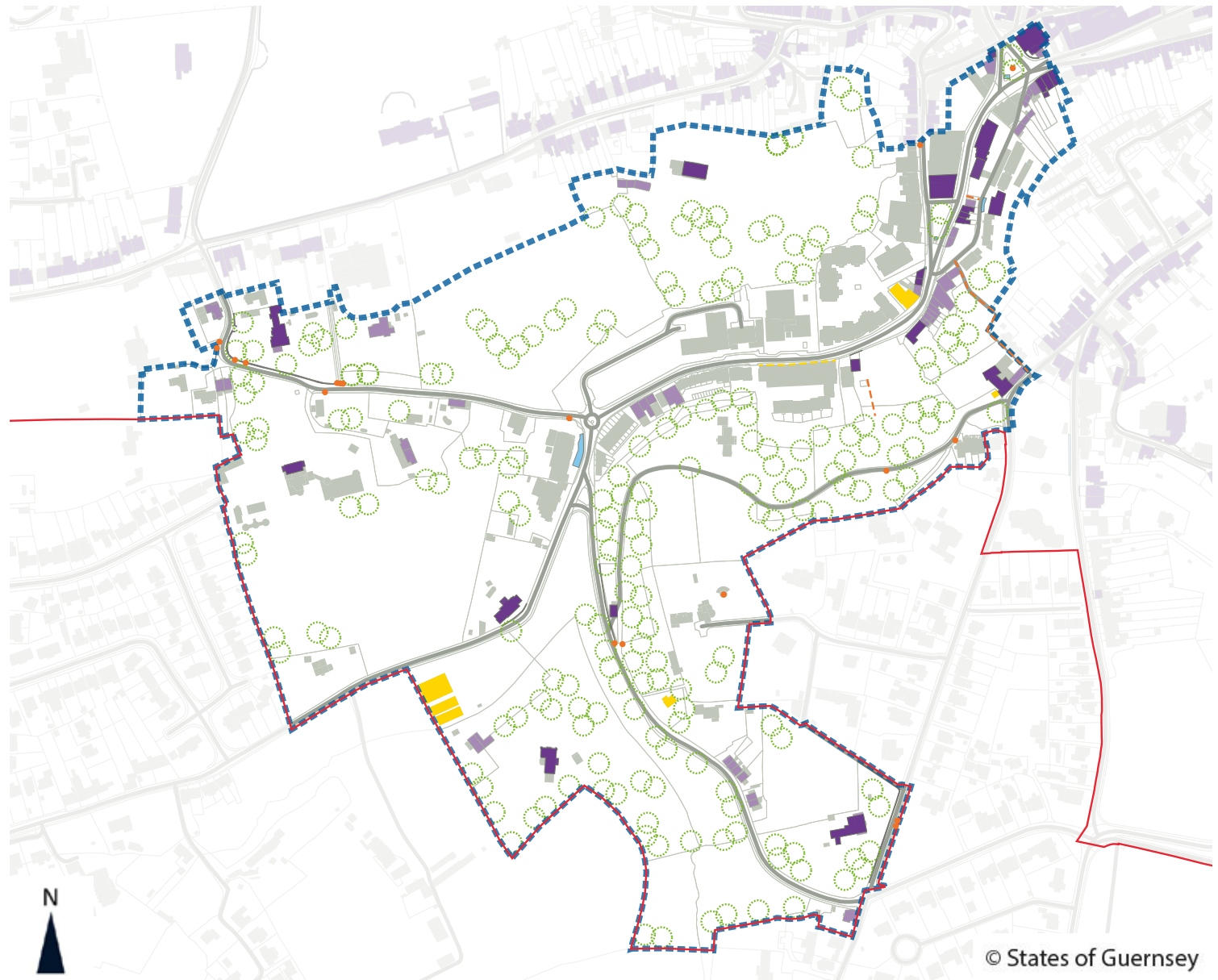
Bottom right: Lavoir publique at the bottom of Ruettes Brayes





Statutory and non-statutory designations and features of La Charroterie Valley

- Protected buildings and buildings of merit are clustered around Trinity Square or are more remote country houses
- Gap sites and 20th century office buildings detract in La Charroterie
- Trees contribute in the south and in clusters in the north east



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## 4. Streets, Spaces and Views



Left: Space at Rue du Pre, an opportunity site currently dominated by car parking

Right: Trinity Square - an important link between a number of Character Areas

**4.1.** The Character Area comprises seven streets, a venelle, steps and a footpath. These, and the spaces within and around them, have their own character and are described below. For practical reasons some are grouped.

### Trinity Square, Park Street and Rue du Pre

**4.2.** Trinity Square abuts the south end of the Old Town and was created during the 19th century. A formally arranged 'square' with paving, seating a pump and trough (PM34) and mature plane trees, it is a meeting point of routes. Traffic detracts from the pleasantness for pedestrians. Buildings are the main component and are generally historic. They stand on the back edge of the pavement giving enclosure. Although not uniform in appearance they are of a coherent style and are generally contemporary, including a public house, church and shop fronts.



**4.3.** The busy Rue du Pre runs south from Trinity Square as the main road through the Character Area. This superseded older routes on the valley sides which remain, running parallel to it along the contours. It becomes La Charroterie at a less formal space, also with a pump (PM43) and plane trees but otherwise overtaken by car parking. Former mill and factory buildings of a much larger scale than the Trinity Square shops and terraces of small houses to the south tend to dominate the space here. Notably, gables front the road and roofs are pitched. These design features are incorporated in modern buildings in an attempt to reflect older structures.





## La Charroterie

**4.4.** La Charroterie is a wide street which winds up the valley through alternating shade and harsh light. There are several older buildings but otherwise modern materials prevail in the large modern buildings, both office and residential, which line the road. Scale, proportions and design features, e.g. gable-to-the-road and pitched roofs, often attempt to reflect those of mill buildings to the east.

**4.5.** Exceptions include Cour du Parc, a 1960s tower block which has been recently renovated. Whilst large and quite prominent this building does not substantially overwhelm its neighbours because it is set against the cliff face. Its size and position, amongst the former mills and factories, helps to reduce any conflict between the different scale to north and south.



**4.6.** The grain of development is much coarser here than at Trinity Square and Rue du Pre with larger gaps between and in front of buildings. Enclosure is provided by tall buildings, often with narrow yards, and high walls built close to the highway although planters are provided in front of modern offices. High traffic and footfall is met by a number of inactive frontages, a prime example being the underground parking of Millmount which fronts directly on to La Charroterie, the houses above turning their backs to the street.

**4.7.** The car park for Sir Charles Frossard House and the adjacent roundabout and road management system provide an open space. This is urban and traffic-dominated but with wide views of hillside trees and open sky.

Top: Modern residential development on a busy road

Bottom: Roundabout at the junction of La Charroterie and Ruettes Brayes showing scale and form of development, open space and wooded valley sides







### Ruettes Brayes, Colborne Road and Prince Albert Road

**4.8.** These roads wind along the sides of the green valleys which lead into La Charroterie, each with a cutting through the rock to one side and a drop to the other. Streams, which still run and pool in the valley bottom, fed the industrial use of this part of Town and the lavoir publique (PM40) at the confluence. Here wooded valleys merge providing an important wide space and a focal point as one heads south from the roundabout. Enclosed roads, overhung by trees and with high stone walls, wind up out of Town.



**4.9.** Buildings beyond the roundabout become increasingly secondary features and are more widely spaced, often being large country houses in extensive grounds where the overriding impression is one of greenery. Terraces and retaining walls are formed with local stone, both along and stepping down with contours. High stone walls often conceal buildings and timber garden doors provide access from the bottom of gardens on to the road. There is a small, informal space on the bend at the top of Prince Albert Road, formed by a historic widening of the street and framed by buildings.

Top: Terraced land on the valley sides, bounded and retained by local stone walls

Bottom: Green stream valley and hillside trees viewed from Ruettes Brayes



**4.10.** Spaces at the junctions are traffic-dominated, characterised by seemingly fast moving vehicles and smooth tarmac. Modern street furniture proliferates. Whilst the valley is not publicly accessible it provides a large, peaceful open space which counteracts the busy impression of the adjacent roads.



### Park Lane and Park Lane Steps

**4.11.** Park Lane and Park Lane Steps are narrow, ancient routes through the south part of Town. Park Lane is a small, chiefly pedestrianised street which runs parallel to, but above, Rue du Pre using the contours to elevate it above what would have previously been the marshy valley bottom. Victoria Homes is an important contributor to character. The Steps provide access up to Les Vardes in the south. Both have high buildings or walls on each side and so are often shaded, rarely receiving direct sunlight.



Left: Victoria Homes, Park Lane

Top right: Park Lane showing enclosure by high stone walls

Bottom right: Park Lane Steps, note the use of local stone and a metal hand rail



**4.12.** Views out are glimpsed, and increase with elevation. Local stone is prominent in walls and pillars and the survival of metal hand rails positive. There is an unfortunate area of paving and railings at the north end of Park Lane and numerous downpipes fixed to walls in the vicinity, all of which tend to detract.





### Montville Drive

**4.13.** Montville Drive formerly provided access through a large estate, most of the buildings of which are gone but the unpaved pedestrian woodland walk remains. Rural and green, Montville Drive provides an enclosed space, albeit with glimpsed views out across the valley. This is because of the dense tree cover which grows on both sides, overhanging and providing a near-continuous “tree tunnel” which makes the space shaded. It is an important edge-of-Town informal space, elevated above the busy valley, where flowers, greenery, birdsong and the sound of the wind in the trees preside.

Top left: Montville Lodge,  
Colborne Road

Bottom left and right: views of  
woodland walk at Montville  
Drive



## Views

**4.14.** In the north winding streets and changes in level provide unfolding views of open spaces, framed by buildings. This is most notable on approaches to Trinity Square and the triangular space at Rue du Pre. Likewise, this occurs at Prince Albert Road though the enclosure here is also created by overhanging trees.



Top left: Ruettes Brayes stream with backdrop of tiered development on the hillside flanking Colborne Road

Bottom left: Glimpsed view of Ruettes Brayes and valley through tree trunks at Montville Drive



Right: The green, wooded backdrop above Park Street, viewed from the top of Hauteville

**4.15.** Gaps between and above buildings reveal the, sometimes sunlit, green and wooded hillside backdrop. Elevation influences the proportion of greenery versus buildings. Rooftop views are had from Park Lane Steps and Montville Drive, the former glimpsed between high walls and the latter through foliage.

**4.16.** Unobstructed views up and across the green valley from Ruettes Brayes and Colborne Road are important contributors to character and are complemented by glimpsed views from Montville Drive, including through the trunks beneath the tree canopy.

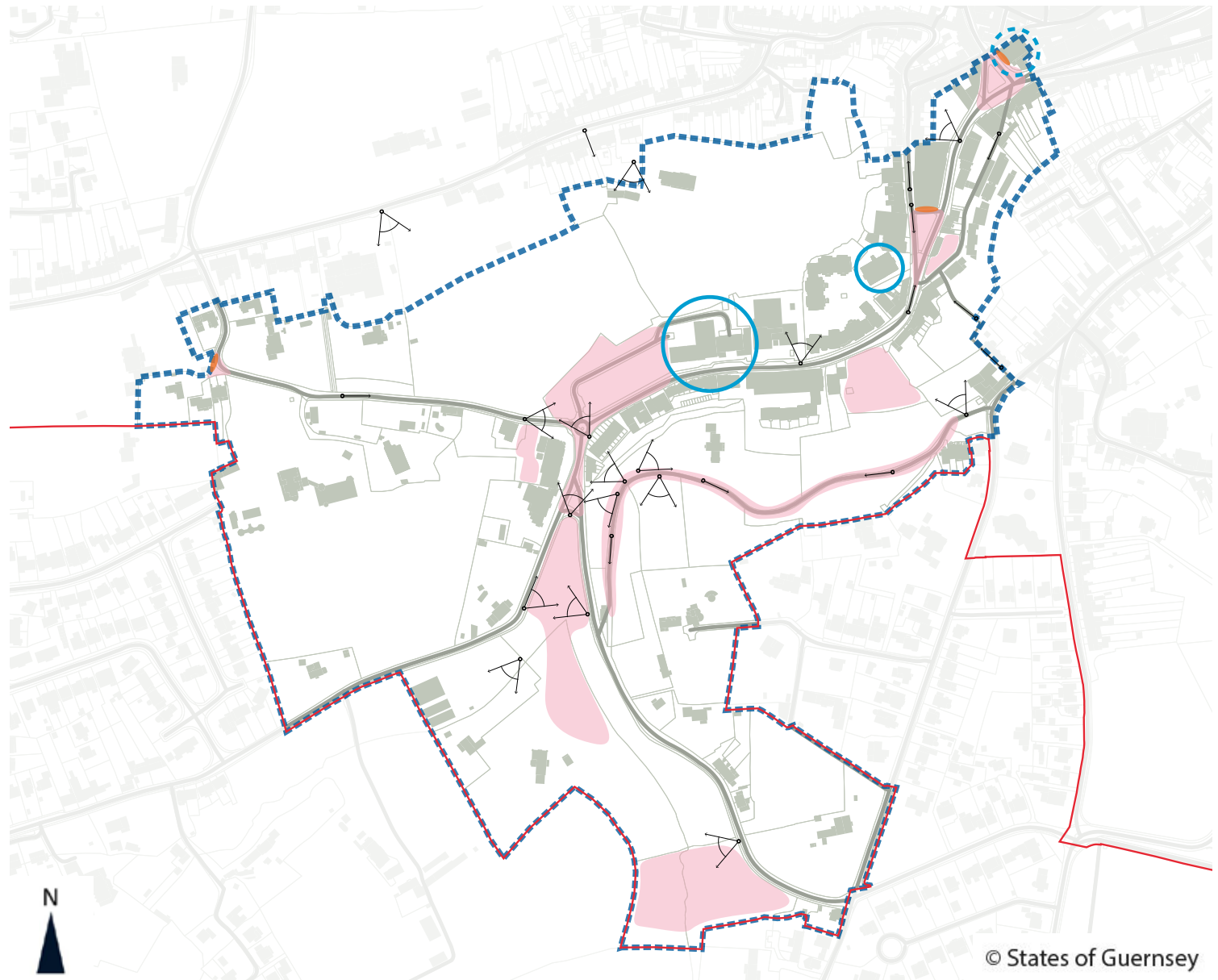
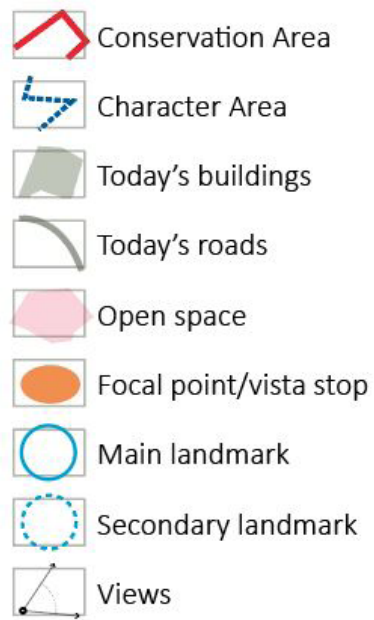
**4.17.** Tiered development on the valley sides is evident in the stepped roofscape which features in views from other Character Areas. Car parks at the top of Hauteville give views over, and down into, this Character Area, as do glimpses from the upper part of Mount Durand.





Spaces, focal points and landmarks of La Charroterie Valley, and views into, out of and through the area

- Other than Montville Drive, spaces are mainly focussed in the valley bottom
- Views are channelled along roads and between buildings and planting



## 5. Architectural Quality, Built Form and Important Buildings

**5.1.** The extent of planning of development and the influences of former uses, fashions and social wants and constraints of topography vary throughout the Character Area and have affected uniformity.

**5.2.** Steep valley sides, water and the main road have historically dictated the position of buildings. More recent redevelopments and conversion of former industrial sites have influenced the external appearance of buildings and spaces. The grain of development, and so space between buildings, is increasingly less fine the further one travels from the historic core of Town, culminating in country estates of the 18th and 19th centuries in the south and west of the study area.

Excerpt from the 1898 map showing large industrial buildings in La Charroterie, along the route of the stream valley, and smaller residential building towards the north east. Country houses can be seen in the south west and the elevated wooded Montville Drive in the south east





### Architectural Style

**5.3.** The style of buildings reflects their age and the period in which they were built: traditional and early 18th century houses where Rue du Pre becomes La Charroterie; Georgian-style shops and a church at Trinity Square; Georgian-style country houses; small terraced Victorian-style cottages and large 19th century mill buildings, and; modern residential and office buildings of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Top left: Pont Renier, a Georgian-style country house at Ruettes Braye



Bottom left: Modern office buildings in La Charroterie



Top right: Modern residential units at junction of La Charroterie and Ruettes Brayes



Middle right: Terraced buildings on the south side of Trinity Square



Bottom right: traditional buildings at Rue du Pre





### Typical Built Form

**5.4.** Construction in the Charroterie Valley has generally followed the contours with the heights of buildings and retaining walls accommodating, and highlighting, changes in level. Mill buildings are easily identified as such due to their scale, proportions and positioning and pattern of windows.



A mix of modern and older buildings positioned traditionally with gables fronting on to the back edge of the pavement and with traditional window pattern and proportions

**5.5.** The following elements are typical of buildings in this Character Area:

- Scale and proportion – small workers cottages, through larger country houses to mill buildings all of proportions appropriate to their use and importance
- Pitched roofs – sometimes aligned with the highway, sometimes gable to the road, position is often dictated by use
- Vertical sliding sash windows – 1-over-1, 2-over-2, 6-over-6, regular pattern of timber or sympathetic PVCu, proportions of openings rarely altered
- Doors – often of a traditional appearance (sometimes with fanlights) but varied in design, as are the buildings; generally a mix of timber and PVCu  
Dormer windows – captains, flat roofed and ridged

**5.6.** Introduction of modern materials and design is evident but generally extensions and alterations have been sympathetic. This is more so in the north, around Trinity Square and Rue du Pre. Larger buildings in La Charroterie are arguably less successful in this regard.

## Materials

**5.7.** Although architectural style varies, there is a limited palette of materials, including:

- Buildings
  - Walls - smooth render; local stone; occasional use of brick and rough render; imported stone cladding; glazing
  - Roofs - predominantly natural slate and clay pan-tile; brick chimneys with clay pots
  - Windows - timber, often historic and sometimes with old glass; PVCu generally sympathetic; large sheet glass in new offices
  - Doors - timber, often historic and sometimes with fanlights; PVCu

Clockwise from top:

Slate and clay pan-tile rooftops of Rue du Pre

Render and cladding in modern buildings at La Charroterie Mills and Court du Parc Flats

Replacement window units in former industrial openings at The Town House, Rue du Pre

Authentic timber window of 2 Trinity Cottages, Rue du Pre

Modern stone cladding, sheet glass and canopy at Mill Court, La Charroterie



- Boundaries

- Walls - local stone, some capped with brick; retaining and garden walls with timber garden doors
- Railings - metal (decorative and functional)
- Natural - stone cuttings and exposed rock faces, mature vegetation and trees

- Surfaces

- Pavement - tarmac; local stone kerbs, gutters and steps; flagstones; scratched clay tiles; concrete setts; hoggin/grit
- Carriageway - tarmac
- Pathways - gravel/grit; earth/mud

Clockwise from top left:

Exposed rock face and stone retaining wall with hoggin surface in Montville Drive

Mixed paving, stone walls and metal handrail at Park Lane Steps

Timber garden doors in Prince Albert Road

Stone paving at Trinity Square



**5.8.** Modern materials have been introduced in places, but for the most part this has been sympathetically done and is not intrusive.



## Buildings that contribute to the townscape

**5.9.** The following buildings make an important contribution to the townscape:

- Trinity Church – a vista stop for those travelling down Rue du Pre and, also from within Trinity Square, a focal point. Trinity Square, a local landmark, is of high importance in association with the Church
- Buildings edging Trinity Square – frame and provide enclosure to the formal space. The Ranch and The Britannia are of particular note
- Victoria Homes – a notable building on tiered land above the valley bottom
- Mill buildings – large scale stone structures which retain their early proportions and provide enclosure to the roads; reminiscent of the former use of the area
- Cour du Parc – notable use of a rare high-rise building in a sensitive urban setting
- Modern office buildings in La Charroterie – whilst generally not highly valued for their appearance, and some are openly derided, it is the scale of the buildings and positions relative to the open valley sides and spaces to the south that make a striking impression thereby contributing to townscape
- Le Pont Renier and Montville Lodge – prominent buildings on the valley sides which recall the former country houses and estates on the hillsides above Town



The Ranch, on the west side of Trinity Square

### Buildings that detract from the townscape

#### 5.10. Some elements detract from the townscape:

- Street-level frontage of Millmount – inactive and makes the area appear harsh and uninviting
- The former Channel Island Tyres site – at present forms a notable gap but is in line for redevelopment
- Building at entrance to La Charroterie Mills – in a poor condition but is in line for development
- Dilapidated structures – greenhouses at the Iris and Dora site and corrugated shed at the old quarry on Colborne Road



Top right: Former CI Tyres site in La Charroterie, recently cleared and pending redevelopment

Bottom right: Corrugated building in the former quarry in Colborne Road

Left: Rear of building at south east entrance to La Charroterie Mills



Buildings are generally in a good condition with the exception of several buildings in La Charroterie and some dilapidated outbuildings in Ruettes Brayes and Colborne Road.



## 6. Traffic and Movement

**6.1.** Park Lane is likely to have been the early route out of Town, skirting the marshy valley bottom, and subsequently superseded by Rue du Pre. Throughout the Character Area the roads wind, either following the valley floor or contours on the hillsides.

**6.2.** Often traffic is busy and pedestrian footfall high. This fluctuates, predominantly with time of day rather than season, and alters at weekends but peaks notably at rush hour. Traffic speeds appear high from Ruelle Braye down to Trinity Square but this is also observed to a lesser degree at Prince Albert Road and Colborne Road.

**6.3.** Roadside car parking dominates Trinity Square and Park Street. Vehicles often double park on the east side of Trinity Square due to drivers visiting convenience shops there, or to make deliveries. Loading/unloading at Trinity Square is a continuation of former uses.

Left: Inactive frontage in La Charroterie, formed by basement garages

Top right: The winding upper part of Colborne Road

Middle right: Leaving the Conservation Area via Ruettes Brayes

Bottom right: Roadside parking dominates at Trinity Square



**6.4.** The junctions of Ruelle Braye and Colborne Road and at the roundabout are traffic-dominated spaces. There is a proliferation of painted road markings but street signs are not overwhelming and most are appropriately positioned.

**6.5.** Public enjoyment of streets and spaces can be compromised by inactive frontages such as are noted in La Charroterie, but also by the high walls of Park Lane and Steps. Inactivity varies with use of the buildings, offices rarely being open on other than weekdays.

**6.6.** Use of the area by pedestrians is compromised by a lack of formal crossing places and by relatively fast-moving traffic. Traffic slowing measures are few other than the speed limit. Bends in the roads impact visibility and pedestrian routes are sometimes unclear despite pavements: the triangle at Rue du Pre is a notable example. The public realm at Trinity Square is uneven and not easy to negotiate if mobility or sight impaired and the tarmac surface of Park Lane is broken.

Left: Traffic-dominated junction where Colborne Road meets Ruettes Brayes

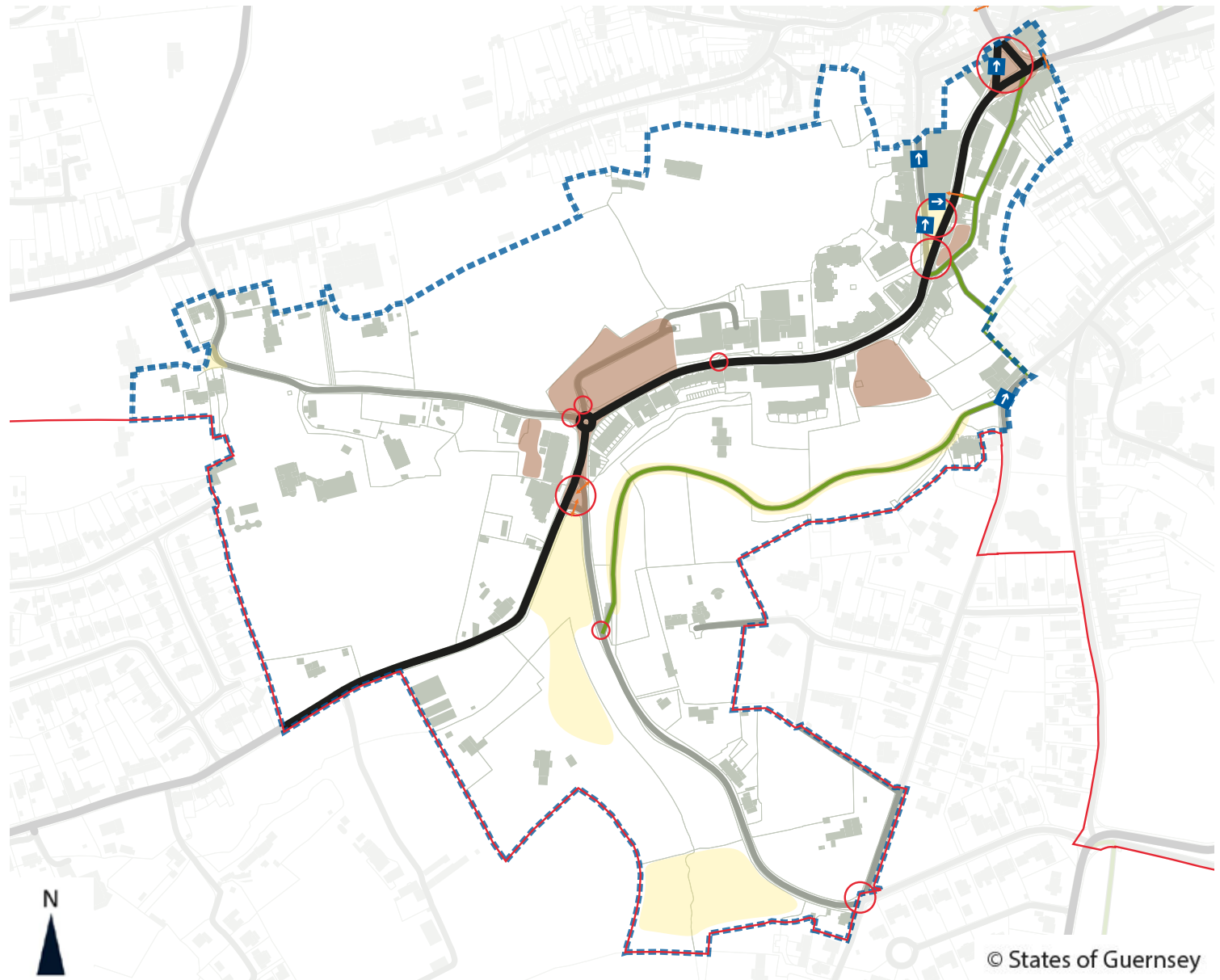
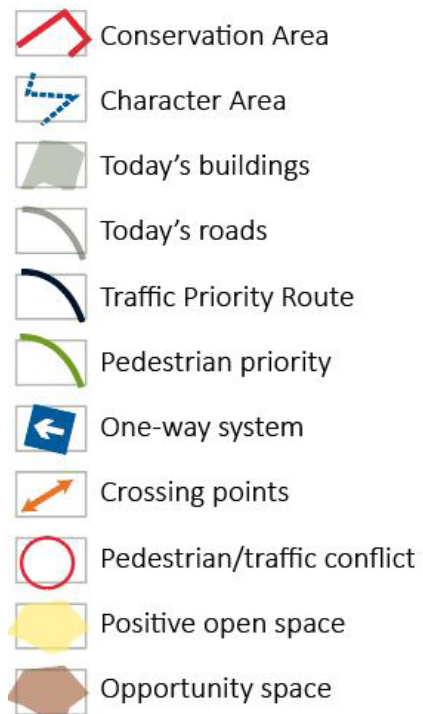


Right: Trinity Square, where the public realm can be difficult to access and negotiate



### Movement, quality of spaces and accessibility in La Charroterie Valley

- The dominance of the busy main road is evident, as are conflicts at junctions
- Pedestrian paths are valuable alternative routes
- Spaces give opportunities for improvements





## 7. Strengths, Issues and Opportunities

*Please note: this part of the document is subject to change over time due to the effects of alterations and development within and around La Charroterie Valley*

**7.1.** The area has the following strengths and issues which present a number of opportunities.

### Strengths

- Valley setting: contrast between the shaded, enclosed valley bottom and the higher, often wooded, valley sides which highlights the underlying topography that influenced development of the area
- Evidence remains of the area's former industrial use: the presence of water, former mill buildings and historic routes
- Fluctuations between openness and enclosure: open green spaces and tree-lined routes, formal spaces and built-up environment
- High level of activity: the area is both a draw and a through-route to other destinations

View westward over valley from Colborne Road



### Issues

- Traffic and parked vehicles dominate the public realm and this reduces the quality of the experience on what is a busy route for pedestrians
- Inactive frontages result in a harsh street environment which is unwelcoming, in particular to pedestrians
- Presence of gap sites
- Lack of cohesion in street furniture detracts from the individual character of the area
- Encroachment of development into green spaces
- Incremental felling of non-protected trees



Top: Relationship between elements of street furniture, traffic and the public realm at Rue du Pre.

Bottom: Traffic dominates the public realm at Trinity Square





## Opportunities

- Redevelopment and infill of gap sites. Ensure building lines, heights, roofscape and underlying topography and spaces are respected. Take care to avoid creation of inactive frontages
- Alterations to buildings and structures. Ensure care is taken with regard to replacement of details and features, such as windows and doors, and to traditional/historic built proportions
- Consider improvements to pedestrian environment and public realm. Trinity Square and Rue du Pre, in particular would both benefit from improvements to the public realm through change in emphasis. Carefully consider approach to works and potential impact on existing features, e.g. paving and trees, and character, and introduction of new street furniture, e.g. lampposts
- Take advantage of topography to sympathetically incorporate taller buildings in relation to existing structures and the skyline

An opportunity exists to improve accessibility to, and so the experience of, the public realm at Trinity Square

