Petty Cury was originally the bakers’ street in C14 and remains a principal shopping street today.

Petty Cury is an ancient street, recorded in the early C14 with a name that refers to the bakers’ stalls that originally lined the route from the crossing of the King’s Ditch to the market place. From C15 the street also housed the city’s major inns, the yards of which became the city’s worst slums in C19. These were demolished in the late C19 and early C20 at a time when the street was being redeveloped for new commercial buildings, many of which survive. This regeneration continued into the mid C20, conscientiously using architectural styles that conserved the street’s historic character. The south side of the street underwent major redevelopment in the 1970s for the Lion Yard shopping centre, which now dominates the street.

General Overview

This slightly curved street leads from Sidney Street to Market Hill and represents one of the historic routes to the market from the main crossing of the King’s Ditch. The street is one of the city’s primary shopping areas and national retailers occupy the majority of the ground floor units. The north side of the street is made up of mixed frontage of two and three storey buildings that date from between the late C19 to the mid C20 with a high level of architectural detail that makes an important contribution to the interest of the street scene.

Nos. 32-33 stand out as an historic building with a jettied frontage leaning over the street which confirms its age. The mixed pattern of broad and narrow building frontages adds to the variety of the street scene and in places preserves the medieval or early modern plot boundaries of the galleried inns that once dominated the street. Modern shopfronts have a considerable impact on the streetscene. The Lion Yard shopping centre makes up the entirety of the southern frontage as a single block of consistent appearance. It has a long colonnade frontage of white pillars supporting the upper storey which projects over a covered walkway or arcade with shopfronts set well back in deep shade.

The street is fully pedestrianised and is also a principal pedestrian thoroughfare between the market and the adjacent shopping streets. The upper storeys of the street are mostly in commercial use, with some used for storage or offices. The upper storeys of Lion Yard are all offices, except for the nightclub.
**Townscape Elements**

- All buildings on the north side are set against the footpath edge with shopfronts providing a busy, active frontage.
- The width of buildings varies but reflects the historical plot layouts created by the original, wide fronted medieval buildings, similar to the width of Nos. 32-33, the oldest building on the street.
- The detailing of historic building frontages provides interest in the street scene, including balconies and oriel windows leaning over the street. The complex roof line on the north side of the street provides an attractive backdrop to the street and acts as a visual draw.
- The use of ashlar stone for facades adds to the quality of the mid C20 buildings, particularly the Jacobean Revival Boots Chemists by Colin St Clair Oakes.

- Vistas eastwards are enclosed by Lloyds Bank on the end of Sidney Street and focus on the bank’s clock tower.

- The interesting vista to the west takes in the imposing Guildhall and continues along the line of the street to the pinnacles of King’s College Chapel, rising above buildings on the west side of the market.

- The street has a shared surface with a notional footpath marked in the paving on the north side – there are no plants or trees.
- The east to west alignment of the street, and the continuous three storey frontage along the south side, mean that the street is in deep shadow for most of the day.
**Building Enhancement**

Some of the upper storeys of buildings appear little used and there may be some potential for them to be converted into residential or other uses.

Given the high numbers of historic shopfronts elsewhere in the historic core, Petty Cury is not notable for well detailed historic shopfronts, with most being modern.

**Streetscape Enhancement**

Visually, the street surfacing is complex but reflects the regular pattern of building frontages and adds to the horizontal emphasis of the streetscene.

The complete lack of cars means that the street is pleasantly free of highway signage. It is important that this smooth, uncluttered surface is retained as this is one of the busiest pedestrian streets.

The timber bollards at the west end have a rather informal character for such an urban street; suitable bollards with a more sculptural quality could be an improvement.

A street café, including two gazebos, adds some activity within the street but might be better designed to have a less dominating impact on the streetscene.

**Archaeology / Historic Topography**

Anticipated deposit depth varies from 2.00m to >3.00m (but see below).

Potential for prehistory is low

Potential for Roman is low

Potential for medieval is high

This important medieval street has been much affected by redevelopment. Work on the extension to Boots in the 1950s, however, demonstrated that where not disturbed, there is a deep sequence dating back to the Saxo-Norman times. Investigation to of the area between the main north to south route of Sidney Street and the market would be of particular interest for understanding the early evolution of the town centre. South of Petty Cury, the 1970s development of Lion Yard destroyed most of the potential for archaeological remains in a large part of the city’s historic core. This included underground parking and a service area that extends under all the retail buildings, which is likely to have removed any remains that may have been present.

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### Building No./Name | Status | Age | Height (Storeys) | Wall Materials | Roof Form / Materials | Architect | Notes
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---
Lion Yard | none | 1975 | 3 + attic | concrete & buff brick | flat | Arup Associates |  
23 (Phones 4 U) | Positive building | late C19 | 3 | stone-faced | slate |
24 (Whittards) | BLI | late C19 / early C20 | red brick | slate |
25 (The Perfume Shop) | BLI | late C19 / early C20 | 3 | stone | flat | Baroque Revival detailing including wreaths, swags |
26-27 (Nationwide) | BLI | 1960s | 3 | brick | flat | Includes moulded brickwork forming a sculptural relief. The projecting clock is very prominent in views along the street. |
28 (Boots the Chemist) | Positive building | 1959-61 | 3 | stone | slate | Colin St Clair Oakes |
29 (Nana Mexico) | Positive building | C20 | 3 | stone | slate |
30/31 (Superdry) | Positive building | C20 | 2 + attic | stone | slate |
32-33 (Halifax) | Listed Grade II | C16 | 3 | plastered timber-framing | clay tile | Jettied frontage projects over the street. Casements at first floor level. |
34 (Pylones) | Positive building | C19 | 3 | painted brickwork | parapet |
35 (Timpsons) | BLI | C20 | 3 | red brick | parapet |
36 (The Body Shop) | BLI | late C19 / early C20 | 3 | red brick & stone dressings | slate |
37-38 (Sole Trader) | BLI | late C19 / early C20 | 3 | red brick & stone dressings | slate |
39-41 and 1 Market Hill (Optical Express) | BLI | 1890 | 3 + attics | red brick & stone dressings | tile |