

# Character Area Six: Lord Mayor's Walk



## Overview

Lord Mayor's Walk forms an important link with Gillygate/ Clarence Street and Monkgate/ Goodramgate at its western and eastern ends respectively. This area has been the site of continuous educational provision since the mid-19th century. St John's College, now part of York St John University, is the main feature of this linear area which runs along the northern side of the city wall. The green spaces of the College garden and ramparts sandwich a busy section of the inner ring road.

### Boundaries

The central section of Lord Mayor's Walk is examined here in character area 6, although the space extends beyond the boundary. The junctions at either end are examined in character areas 5 (Gillygate) and 7 (Monkgate) due to the traffic management issues within those areas.

On the southern side of Lord Mayor's Walk, the area is defined by the city wall and on the northern side by the historic educational buildings.

### Historical development

Lord Mayor's Walk was formerly called Goose Lane. In the Middle Ages it was undeveloped, although the area to the south east around St Maurice's Church on Monkgate was built up. North of Goose Lane was an area called The Groves consisting of a series of small parcels of land belonging to St Mary's Abbey. By the 17th century, maps show some houses between St Maurice's and Lord Mayor's Walk – an area called Newbiggin.

In 1718 Lord Mayor's Walk was planted with elm trees to create an avenue. The avenue is still a distinctive feature although the original trees have been replaced. At this time, the ramparts and ditch were used for grazing sheep.

In 1824, the section of wall overlooking Lord Mayor's Walk was leased to the Dean and Chapter of the Minster which undertook its

restoration. A few years later they obtained permission to create a route through the wall to link the Deanery and Lord Mayor's Walk but this was not carried out.

Population expansion in the early 19th century led to development north of Lord Mayor's Walk. Streets such as St John Street were for the middle-classes ❶ but others contain working class cottages.

The houses were joined by the York and Ripon Diocesan Training School, built 1845-6 to train schoolmasters. By the 1890s the institution was known as St John's College and was the largest of its type in the country ❷. The College grew and widened its subject base, and was re-named College of Ripon & York St John in 1974. Today there are almost 6,000 students and the campus is known as York St John University.

### Ambience and use





In the tranquil garden of St John's College birdsong competes with the background hum of traffic along the busy road. In term time, high numbers of students walk to and around the University campus creating a hive of activity.

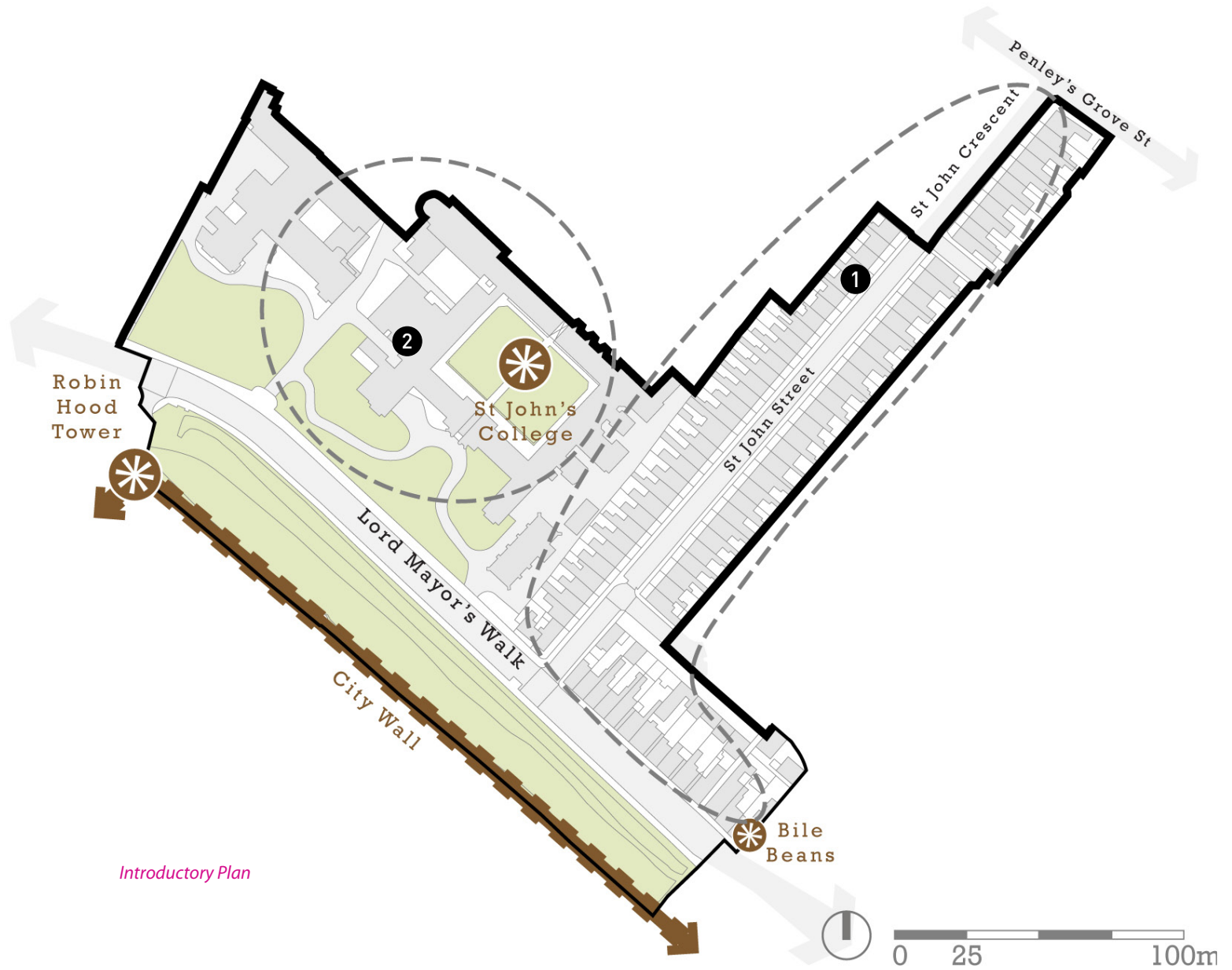
Residential St John Street is quieter than Lord Mayor's Walk as vehicular access is restricted.



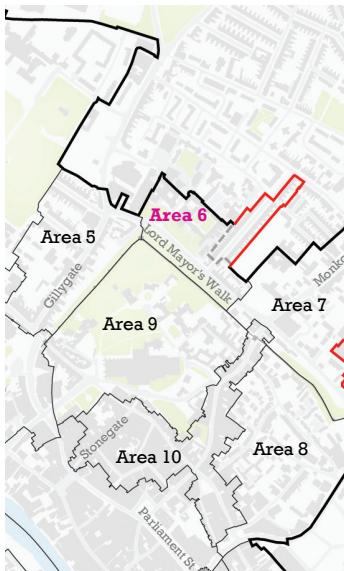
*This early 20th century photograph shows the ramparts were once used to graze sheep*

© Imagine York

- 1 19th century terrace housing
- 2 St John's College - 19th century educational buildings
-  Landmark
-  City Wall
-  Conservation Area boundary
-  Character area boundary



Area 6 location plan



Introductory Plan

## Designations

Due to the late development of the area there are few pre-19th century buildings. As a result all listed buildings are Grade II.

St John Street and St John's Crescent are considered locally significant. Their inclusion within the Conservation Area is discussed below.

### Boundary changes









At present the boundary of the Conservation Area excludes residential streets adjacent to St John's College. However, St John Street and St John's Crescent in particular possess high quality buildings with a largely uniform appearance and survival of original features. This, together with attractive front gardens and iron railings, forms a street scene which contributes positively to the Conservation Area.

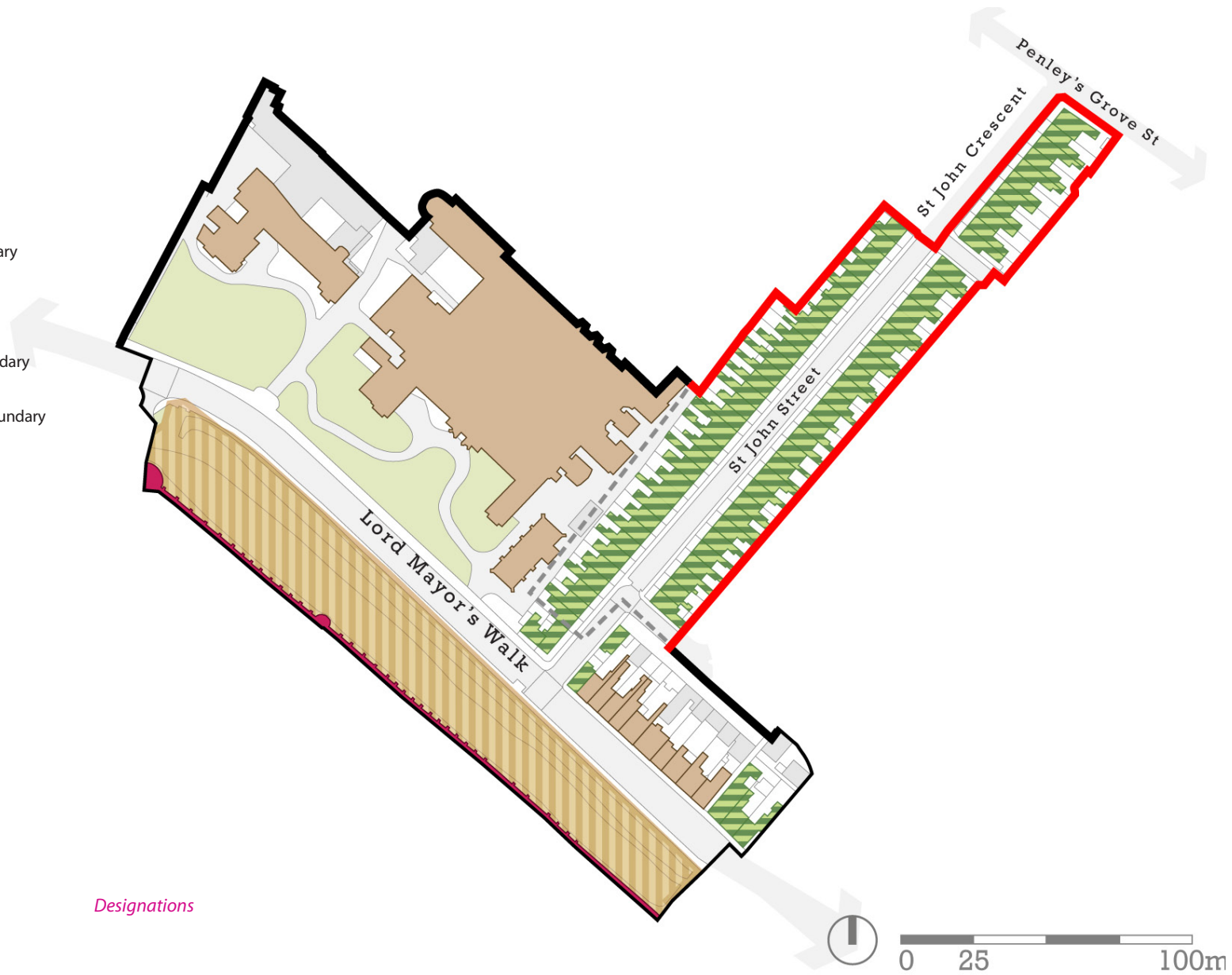
These streets are also important because of their close proximity to the Grade II listed College and the city wall. The houses on each side of St John Street form a very distinctive framing view of the Minster. Therefore, it is recommended that they are included within the boundary of the Conservation Area.

Other neighbouring streets were considered for inclusion but were determined to be of lower architectural quality and lacked the attractive setting of front gardens.



*St John Street has been included within the Conservation Area because of its strong cohesive character and well preserved front gardens*

-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Building of merit
-  Existing Conservation Area boundary
-  Character area boundary
-  Proposed Conservation Area boundary
-  Superseded Conservation Area boundary



*Designations*

## Streets & Spaces

Lord Mayor's Walk is a busy road lined with mature trees providing a sense of enclosure. It is framed by green spaces - the formal garden of St John's College on the northern side and the city wall ditch and ramparts on the southern side. It is a significant space where the city wall can be seen, unlike neighbouring Gillygate where it is hidden behind houses. The College gardens are well maintained and a very attractive setting for the buildings.



*Mature trees provide a sense of enclosure along Lord Mayor's Walk*

St John Street is a narrow, well enclosed residential street of terraced houses. Property boundaries are defined by attractive metal railings and hedges with small front gardens. The size of the gardens makes them unsuitable for conversion to parking spaces and this has ensured their preservation.

The main landmarks within the character area are St John's College and the city wall. Two views are notable; from the end of St John Street to the Minster and along the tree lined ditch of the city wall.



*View towards Minster from St John Street*

## Buildings

### York St John University

St John's College was originally the York and Ripon Diocesan Training School, built 1845-6 by G.T. Andrews. It is a Tudor style building, originally on an H shape plan, built in red brick with slate roof. There is a lively roofline with tall diagonal chimney stacks. In 1903, a quadrangle was created to the rear by the addition of a new red brick building by W. H. Brierley.

To the north west of the College, a Yeoman School was opened in 1846 as a middle-class boarding school for sons of yeoman farmers. It was also designed by Andrews in a similar style to the College.

The College's small Gothic chapel is located to the south east of the main building. Dating from 1854, it is built in stone and has some good mid-20th century stained glass windows.

### St John Street and St John's Crescent

These streets contain mid-19th century terraces of uniform design. They are two-storey red brick houses with bay windows. The doors are set back within shallow panelled porches. Many original sash windows and cornices remain. Some roof alterations have taken place, such as the insertion of windows for loft conversion and addition of solar panels.



*19th century St John's College is set in landscaped gardens*



*Solar panels have been added to a house on St John Street*

### Lord Mayor's Walk

Nos. 26 - 42 (even) are early 19th century brick terraced houses of three storeys. Although sections were built at different times, the row has a cohesive character with interest provided by a variety of window and door types. For example, arched and square headed doorways and bow windows on the first floors.

No. 18 is a mid-19th century two storey terraced house, one of three which have been converted for retail use on the ground floor. There is an interesting advertisement painted on the side advertising Bile Beans which is a local landmark.



*Nos. 18-22 Lord Mayor's Walk, with "Bile Bean" advertisement on side*

## Traffic & Movement

Lord Mayor's Walk is part of the inner ring road and is therefore heavily used. There is some congestion at the junction with Gillygate and Clarence Street. Lack of crossings between this junction and that at Monkgate restricts pedestrian movement.

St John Street has restricted vehicle access and is much quieter than the main road despite the southern end leading to Monk Bar car park. However, parking on either side of the street reduces its width and limits its visual appeal.



*High volumes of traffic along Lord Mayor's Walk*



*Large numbers of parked cars along St John Street*

## Issues & Opportunities

### Strengths

- The green spaces of the College garden and the ditch provide an informal 'breathing space' in an area of the city which is dominated by traffic.
- St John Street possesses many original features, for example attractive sets of iron railings on low walls. These are characteristic of York terraces outside the walls and should be preserved. Therefore, an article 4 direction should be applied to control permitted development on this street.

### Weaknesses and opportunities

- The depth of the medieval ditch and height of the rampart can be fully appreciated in this area. The 'Lord Mayor's Walk: Enhancement. A feasibility study for the Minster Quarter Committee' (8 February 2011) included some ideas for the informal ditch path. The viability of this as an alternative for pedestrians walking at traffic level would depend on very careful design, potentially including lighting at night.
- Some houses on St John Street have been altered by roof extensions and the addition of solar panels. These need to be managed to preserve the uniformity and appearance of the street.
- One building is at risk – No. 32, Lord Mayor's Walk. The house is Grade II listed and is vacant pending a change of use.
- No. 22 Lord Mayor's Walk is a building of merit with a distinctive local landmark advert painted on the side. In order to protect this feature, an Article 4 direction should be applied.



*No. 32 Lord Mayor's Walk is a building at risk. It has been used as offices in the past*




*There is an opportunity to formalise the path along the city ditch*





Existing

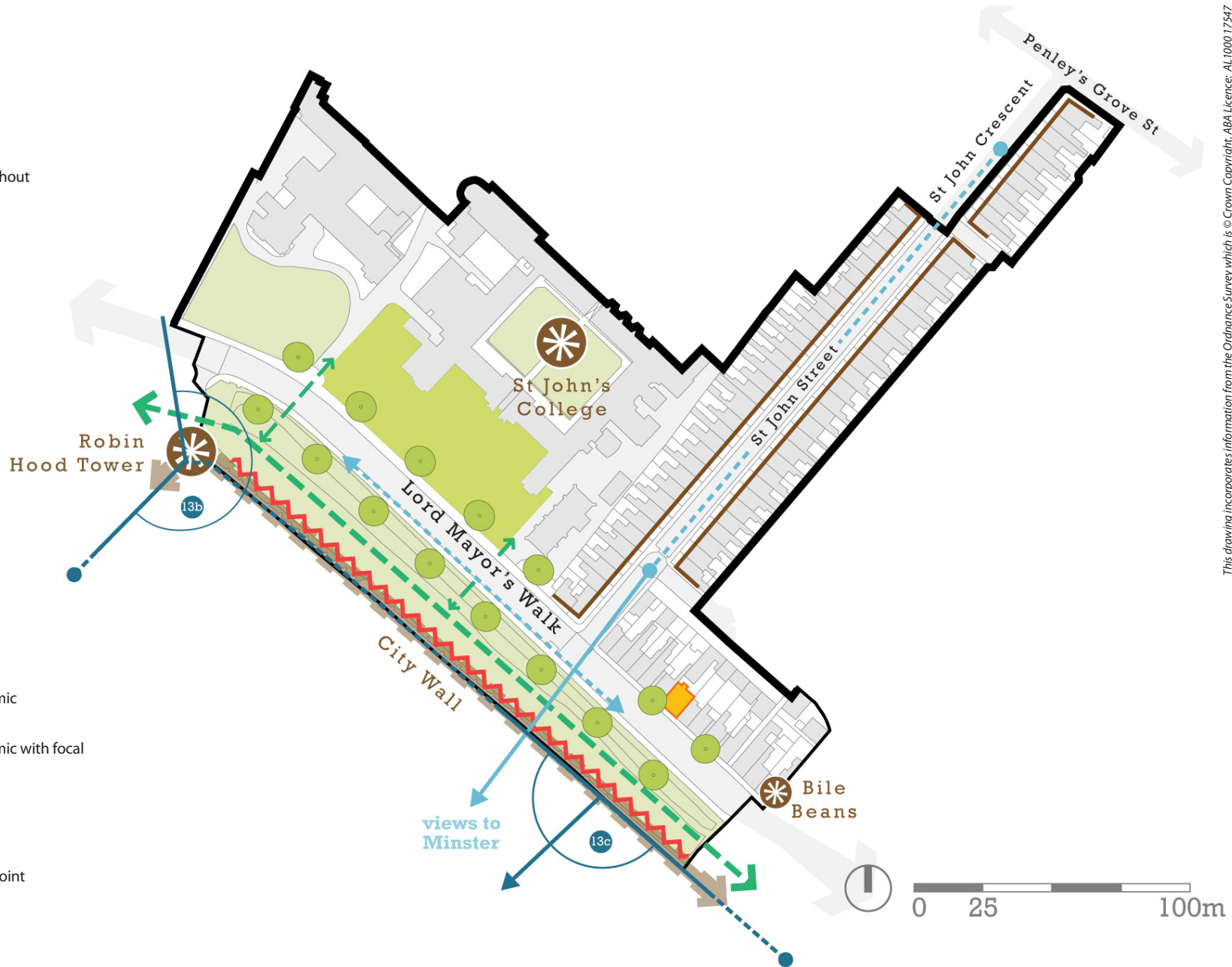
-  Well enclosed street
-  Significant street trees
-  Long stretch of City Wall without opening
-  Building at risk
-  Well maintained gardens
-  Landmark
-  City Wall

Opportunities

-  Opportunity for pedestrian pathway and crossings

Views

-  Strategic dynamic panoramic
-  Strategic dynamic panoramic with focal point
-  Local dynamic
-  Local dynamic with focal point



This drawing incorporates information from the Ordnance Survey which is © Crown Copyright. ABA Licence. AL1000 17547