

# 4. Chancery Lane Today



**The Street Today**

The wealth of architectural heritage and the intimacy of the streets and courts that has always been characteristic of the area remain today. The larger landmark buildings such as Lincoln’s Inn, The Maughan Library (former Public Records Office), The Law Society and buildings such as Chancery House, Stone Buildings and 5 to 7 Chancery Lane create a strong almost imposing structure to the street form. This historic structure has been further emphasised by changes that have occurred since the beginning of the 20th century when many of the finer grain buildings such as the tenement houses, shops and bars have been replaced by larger office blocks. These newer buildings reflect the existing but much older built form which generally ranged from 4 - 6 storeys high. Most of the buildings tend to form a consistent line at the back of the pavement emphasising the curve of the street.

Due to its linear nature the street offers long views which are punctuated by the red brick façade of Lincoln’s Inn, the neo-gothic towers of the Maughan Library and the columned façade of the Law Society. There are also many interesting short views from Chancery Lane to for example the gardens of Staple Inn and the former Patent Office, now 25 Southampton Buildings, the classical façade of Stone Buildings and the Victorian Gothic Royal Courts of Justice. Of great significance is the varied and often very decorative roofscape, in particular the chimneys, towers, turrets, cupolas and balustrades.



Above and left - Images showing the public realm today within the primary study area

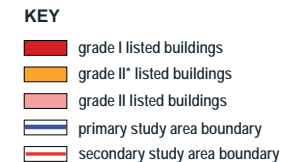
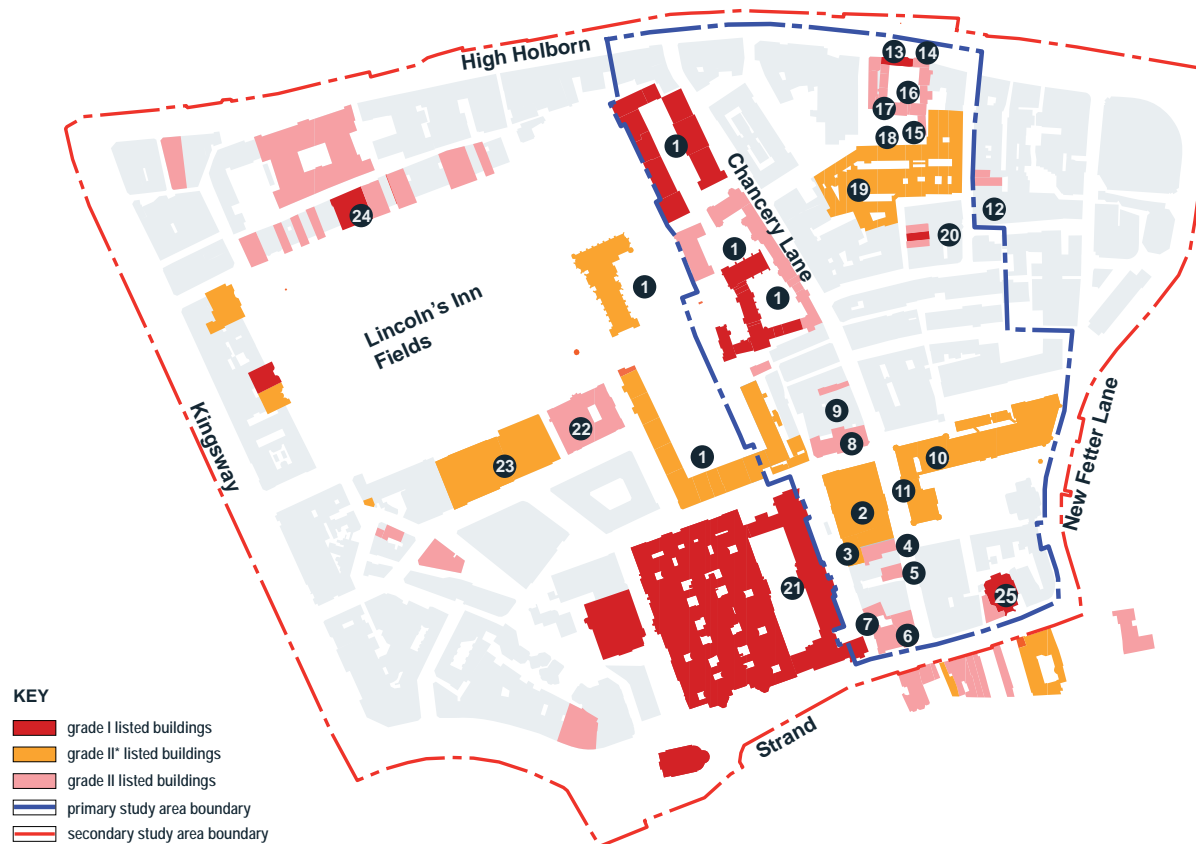
### Listed buildings

Chancery Lane and its surroundings has Conservation Area designation within all three of the adjoining Local Authorities. This includes the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the Chancery Lane Conservation Area and the Strand Conservation Area. A high proportion of the buildings and some of the railings, gateways and monuments have been listed by English Heritage. Chapter 3 discusses in more detail the evolution of the area and its architecture with the oldest buildings dating from as far back as the 15th century. All are in a good state of repair and all are used on a daily basis.

For the full list of listed buildings within the study area see Appendix A.

Key listed buildings marked on the adjacent plan:

1. Lincoln's Inn, including Stone Buildings, Old Square, Old Buildings, Lincoln's Inn New Hall and New Square
2. 110-113 (The Law Society), Chancery Lane including 16-19 Bell Yard
3. 114 Chancery Lane, including 16 Bell Yard
4. 115 Chancery Lane
5. 119-120 Chancery Lane
6. 126 Chancery Lane;
7. 4-5 Bell Yard
8. 61 Carey Street
9. 87 Chancery Lane
10. Maughan Library, King's College (former Public Record Office)
11. Walls, railings and lamps fronting the Maughan Library
12. 32-33 Furnival Street
13. 335-336 Staple Inn Buildings north and south and attached railings
14. 337-338 High Holborn
15. 1,2 and 3 The Institute of Actuaries and attached railings, Staple Inn
16. 4, 5, 6 and attached pump, Staple Inn
17. Hall and attached railings, Staple Inn
18. Lamp Post and cobbled setts in Staple Inn Court
19. Patent Office Library and attached railings 25 Southampton Buildings and 10 Furnival Street
20. 14, 15 and 16 Took's Court
21. Royal Courts of Justice
22. HM Land Registry Building, Lincoln's Inn Fields
23. Royal College of Surgeons
24. Sir John Soane's Museum
25. St Dunstan in the West Church.



Plan showing the listed buildings in Chancery Lane area

Land Use

The primary study area has a variety of land uses ranging from retail, restaurants and cafés to educational establishments, but currently the predominant land use is as commercial office space. There is a small percentage of residential use which is generally concentrated within Lincoln's Inn and usually situated on the top floors of buildings that are associated with Stone Buildings, Old Square, Old Buildings and New Square. The main retail area is situated in the central section of Chancery Lane, between Cursitor Street and Carey Street, with a secondary cluster of wine bars, restaurants, banks and a few specialist shops at the southern end of the street. There are also a few shops at the northern end of the street which are linked to the retail frontages on High Holborn.

There are several educational establishments; of particular note is the Maughan Library which is part of King's College London and was formally the Public Records Office. Within the wider study area there is the Royal College of Surgeons and the London School of Economics. These all attract large numbers of students.



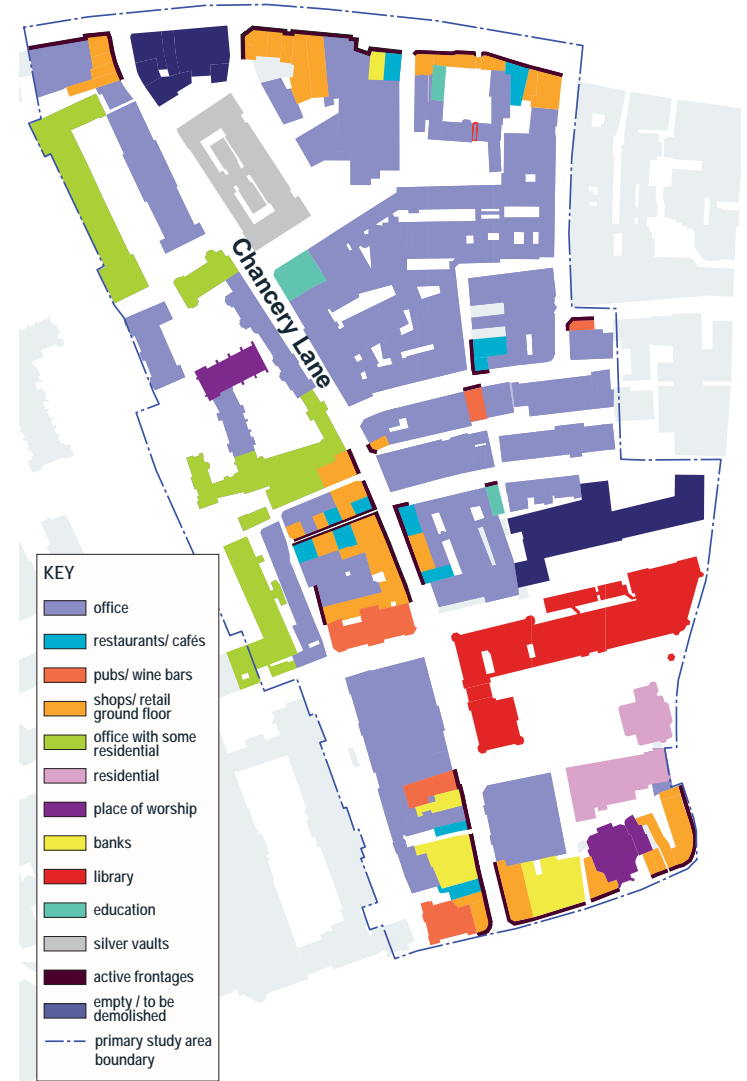
Hodgson's wine bar & restaurant



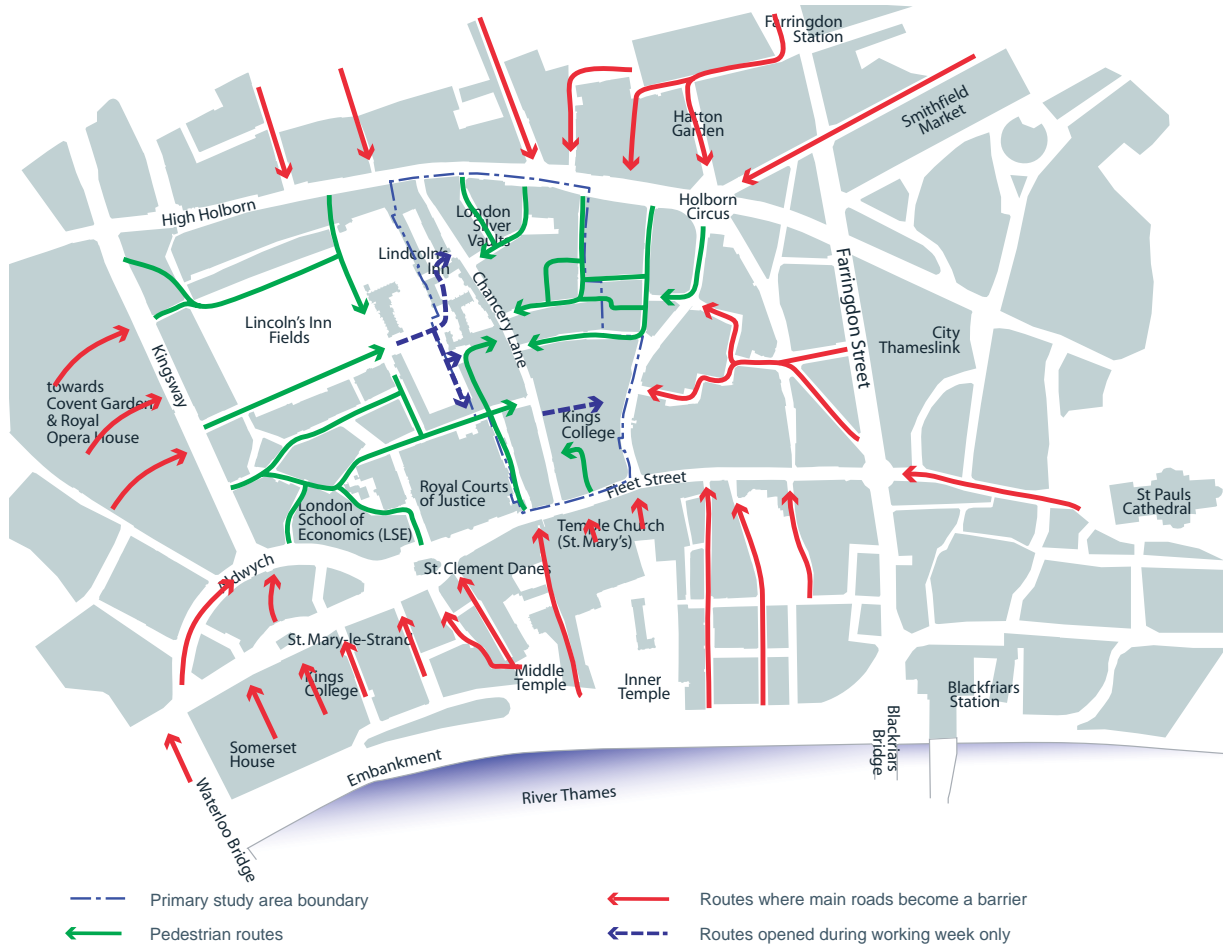
Shops



High quality offices



Land Use Plan



Plan showing pedestrian movement from the surrounding area leading to Chancery Lane

**Movement**

**Pedestrians:**

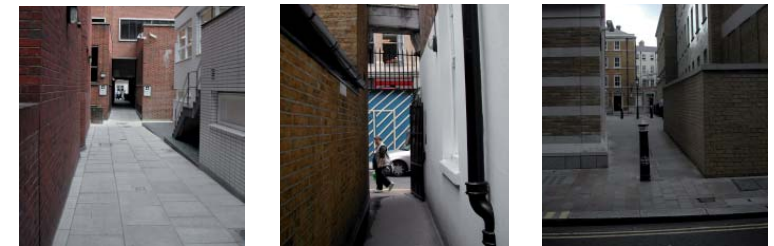
Pedestrian access onto Chancery Lane is possible via a number of routes, however legibility, or the ease with which the street pattern can be recognised, tends to be poor. From the north there is access from High Holborn via Staple Inn Building's to Southampton Buildings, from Southampton Buildings and from Chancery Lane itself. There is also access from Furnival Street onto Cursitor Street to the east, and from Fetter Lane and New Fetter Lane via Bream's Buildings

Carey Street provides the main route from the western side and from the south there is access to Chancery Lane via Clifford's Inn Passage, although the latter route is shut at dusk and feels less secure due to poor lighting and the lack of active building frontages. There are also several publicly accessible routes through the private land of Lincoln's Inn during the hours when they are open.

The pavements along Chancery Lane are often very narrow and likely to cause congestion and may mean pedestrians have to walk into the road to pass each other.

**Cyclists:**

Part of the existing London Cycle Route (LCN) runs through the area via The Strand and Fleet Street, onto the LCN recommended 'quieter streets', starting at the southern end of Chancery Lane through to Carey Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields, and finally via Remnant Street where the route links up with a LCN route to Covent Garden. In spite of this there are very few facilities where bicycles can be securely locked during the day in the area, with the exception of Bell Yard.



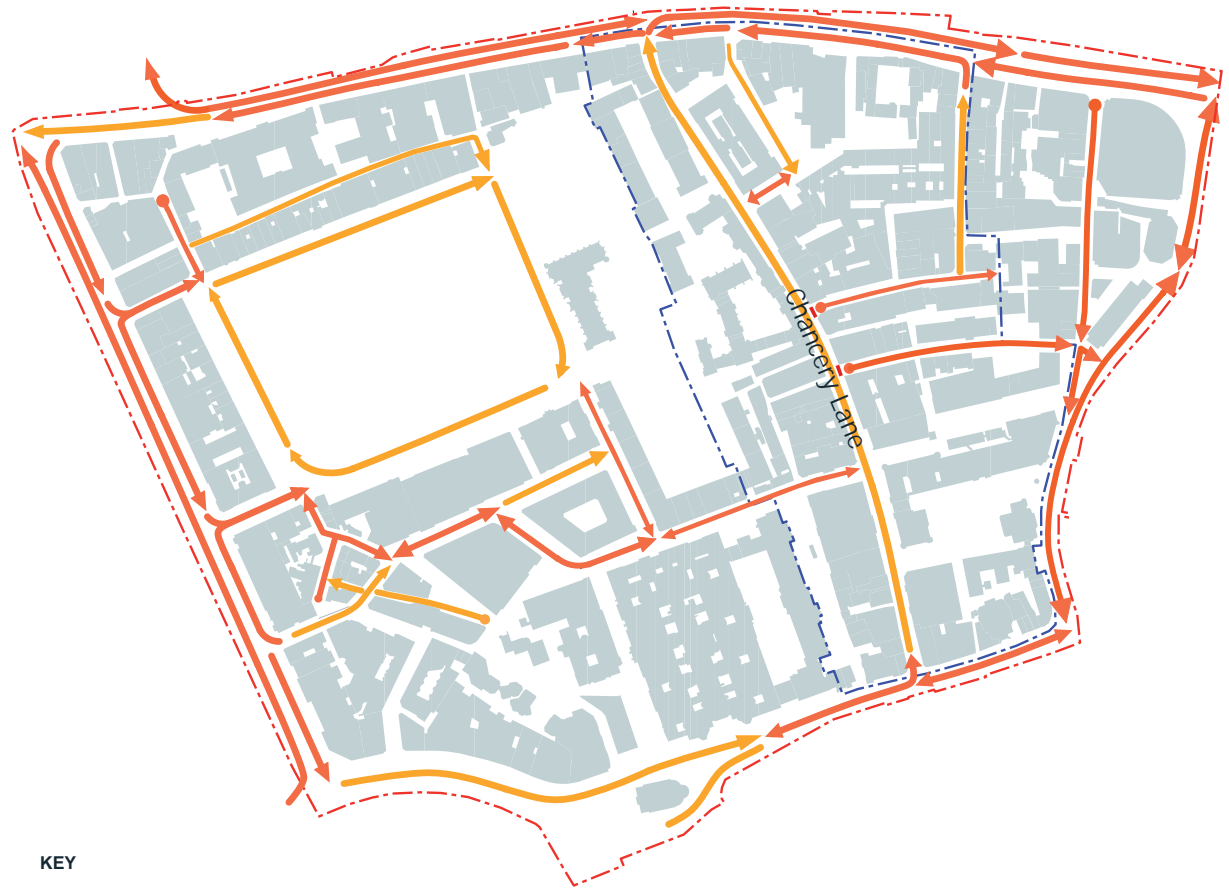
Some of the lanes and passages

**Traffic:**

Chancery Lane is a one way street with traffic flowing from Fleet Street in a northerly direction onto High Holborn. Vehicles can turn right and left from Fleet Street into Chancery Lane and can turn in both directions onto High Holborn. There are only two side roads with access onto Chancery Lane, Carey Street which has two-way traffic from the west and Southampton Buildings, which is a one-way route from High Holborn. Bream's Buildings and Cursitor Street are now closed to through traffic. There are no public transport links along any of the streets within the primary study area.

**Parking:**

Parking within the primary study area is limited. Prior to the current development of building numbers 67 – 73 at the top end of Chancery Lane and directly north of Chancery House there was off street parking for 18 cars. Most of the public and some private parking is situated near to the London Silver Vaults, this also includes some parking bays for motorbikes. There are five parking bays for disabled badge holders and some pay and display parking at the eastern end of Carey Street. Private parking for those associated with Lincoln's Inn is situated within its enclosure. The City of London is currently reviewing the management of parking within the area.



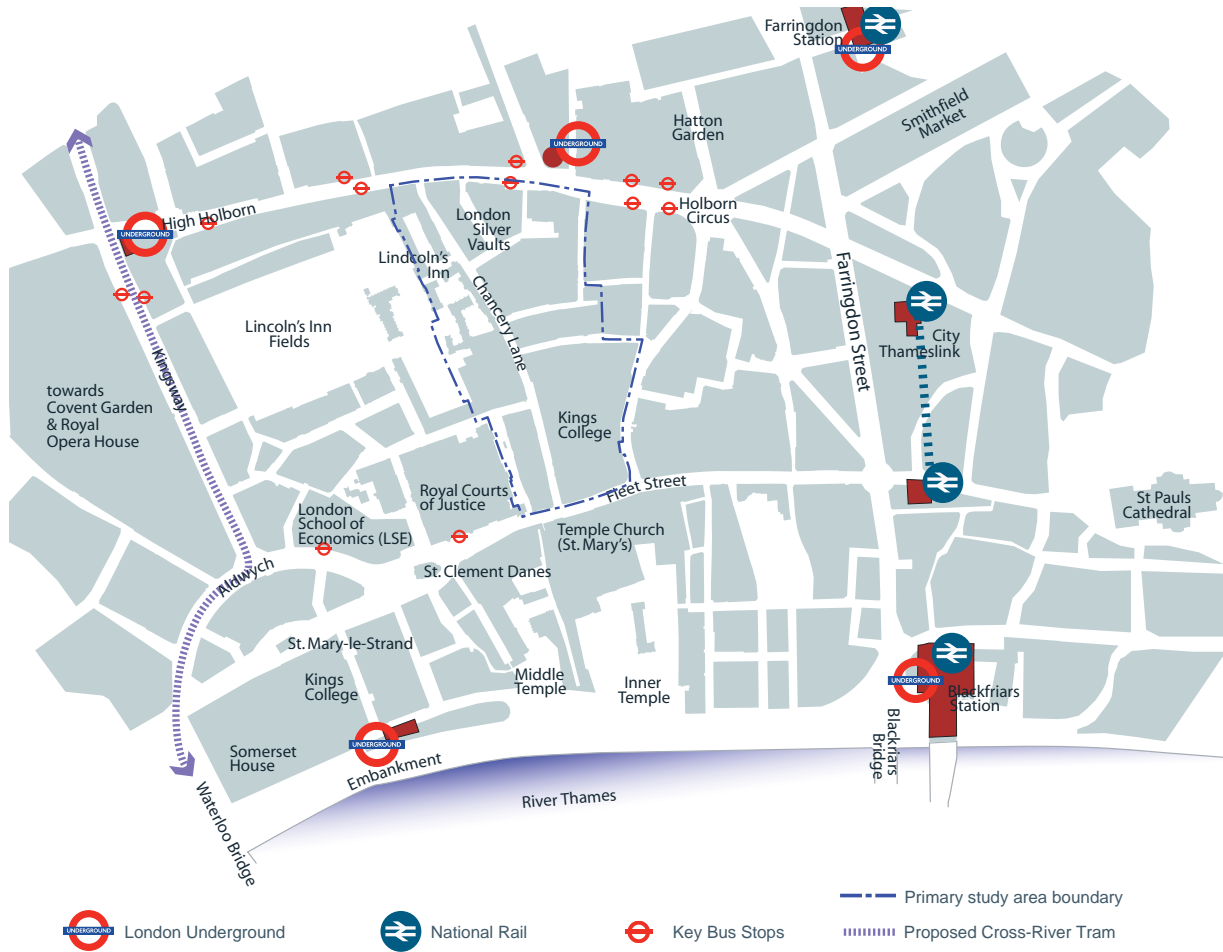
**KEY**

- one way traffic flow
- two way traffic flow
- gated barrier
- primary study area boundary
- secondary study area boundary

Plan showing traffic flow throughout the secondary study area



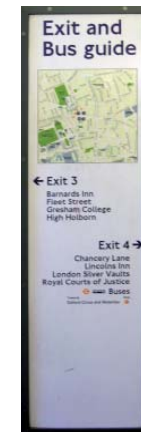
Cars parked on the pavement and in Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn



Plan showing transport links from the area surrounding Chancery Lane

**Public Transport Links**

The area surrounding Chancery Lane is well serviced by public transport, there are several bus routes along The Strand, New Fetter Lane, High Holborn and Kingsway. There are two underground stations: Chancery Lane, which is situated beside Staple Inn and is a few minutes walk from the primary study area, and Holborn, which is at the junction of High Holborn and Kingsway. Slightly further to the east is Farringdon Station and City Thameslink; to the south Temple Underground Station and further to the west Covent Garden Underground Station.



Chancery Lane Underground Station

### Existing Surface Materials

Throughout the primary study area there are a variety of paving materials, although there seems to be a precedent within the historic sites, such as Staple Inn and Lincoln's Inn, for the use of riven Yorkstone, granite and cobbles stones.

Recently within the City of London boundary on the eastern side of Chancery Lane the paving has been replaced by diamond sawn Yorkstone and at the junctions of Bream's Buildings and Cursitor Street there are raised tables or crossovers with a fine picked mid-grey and silver-grey granite. There are a few areas where sections of pavement, immediately in front of buildings, are privately owned here concrete has been used breaking up the continuity of surface materials. Within the City of Westminster and London Borough of Camden boundaries the main street is a mixture of concrete paviors, pre-cast concrete with an aggregate finish, asphalt and Yorkstone. Where Yorkstone is used this can also be subdivided into diamond sawn and riven.

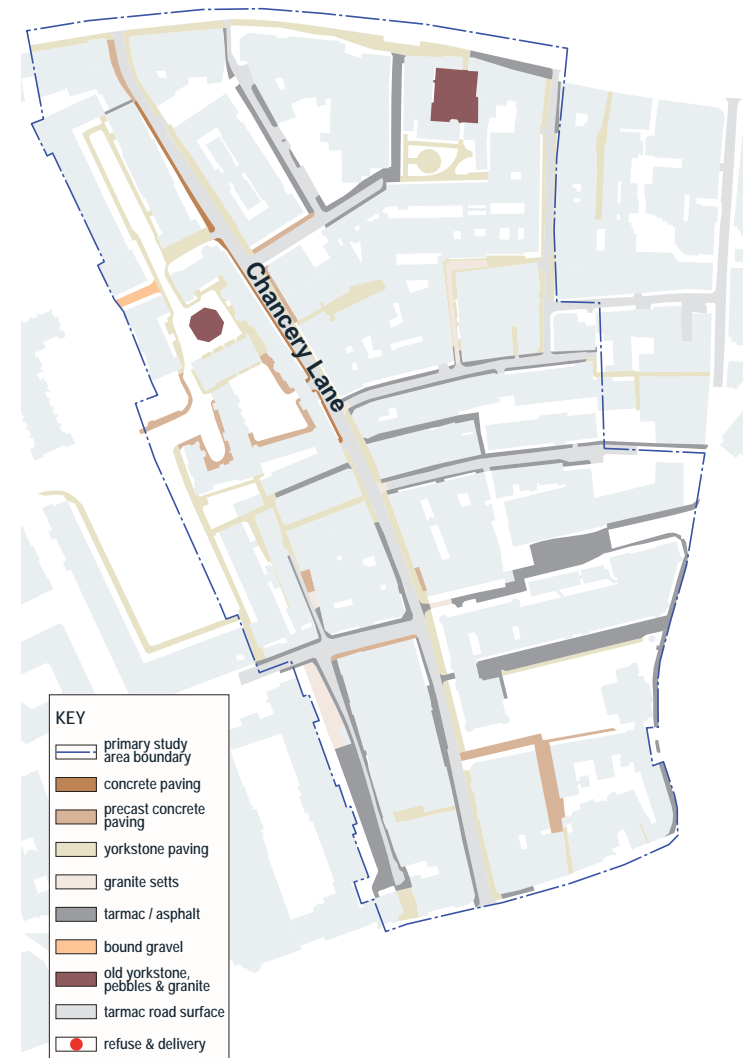
The majority of the side street pavements are of asphalt with one or two areas of concrete. Exceptions to this are Took's Court which has recently been resurfaced using Yorkstone for the pavement and traditional granite setts for the road surface.

The main road surface throughout the area is asphalt.

It is very important that the paving materials are considered as one high quality composition, this would help to provide a back-drop for the variety of historic architecture and other elements within the streetscape. The quality of the paving material should not only frame the buildings but enhance the character of the whole area.



Historic granite paving and new Yorkstone



Plan showing paving material throughout the study area



### Architecture and Architectural Features

The area is characterised by its wide variety of architecture, and the many subtleties of detail within each building. Architectural styles range from Elizabethan to neo-gothic, high Victorian and the more contemporary. Materials used range from red and yellow brick to Portland stone and limestone. Whilst the buildings themselves provide a strong vertical element to the streets, the horizontal lines of some of the decorative features on the façades all create a welcome contrast, for example the decorative brick work to the Royal Courts of Justice, and the stone work beneath the windows to the Knights Templar on the corner of Carey Street, Chancery House and the Maughan Library. There are however a few buildings along Chancery Lane and within the surrounding area where the design and use of materials detracts from the general quality of the area.



Amongst the wealth of architectural features there are many examples of intricate iron work generally associated with the gateways, railings, old lanterns and street lights, all of these contribute to a positive and distinctive character.



Architectural features and decorative ironwork

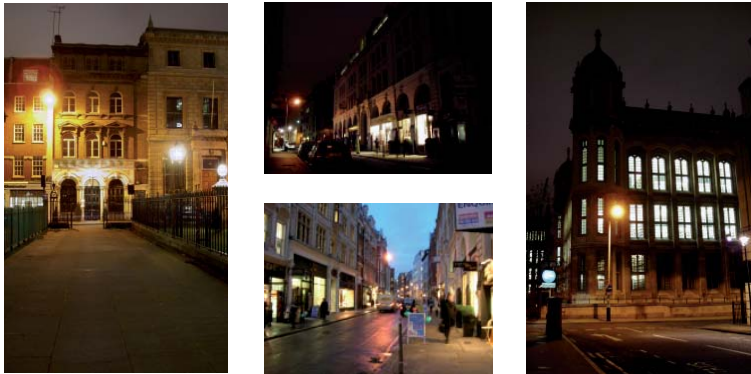
**Lighting**

Chancery Lane and its surroundings contain a wide choice of lighting styles. Along part of the road the light columns are grey and utilitarian, although these are gradually being replaced, within the City of London's boundary, by a more modern black lamp post of a style that blends more easily with the surroundings.

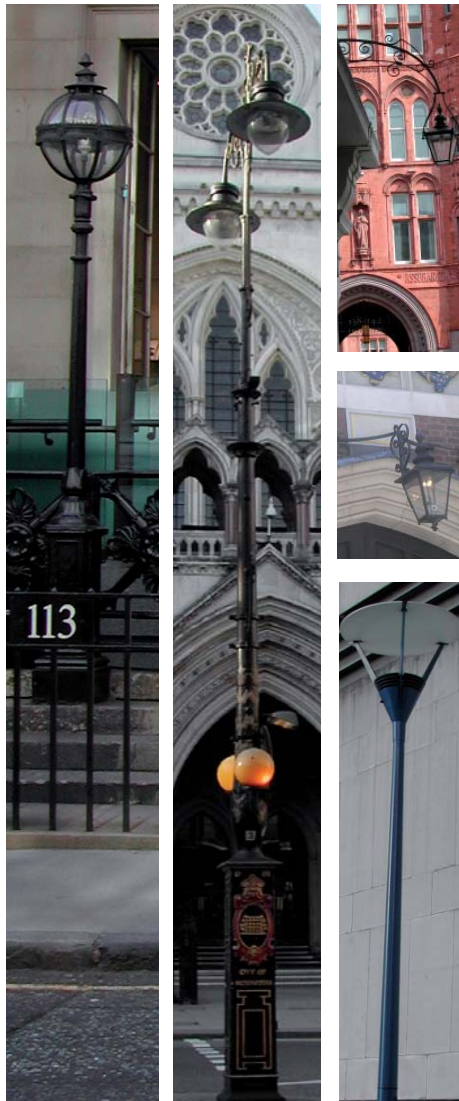
There are several traditional and more decorative styles of lantern that can be seen throughout the study area, for example within the streets of Lincoln's Inn, attached to the railings of the Law Society and attached to the railings of the Maughan Library. There are also wall lights and lanterns over doorways and on gate posts at entrances to several of the older buildings.

Within the wider study area the lights range from an attractive modern blue light associated with the Peacock Theatre and LSE, and a highly decorated lamp post associated with the Royal Courts of Justice.

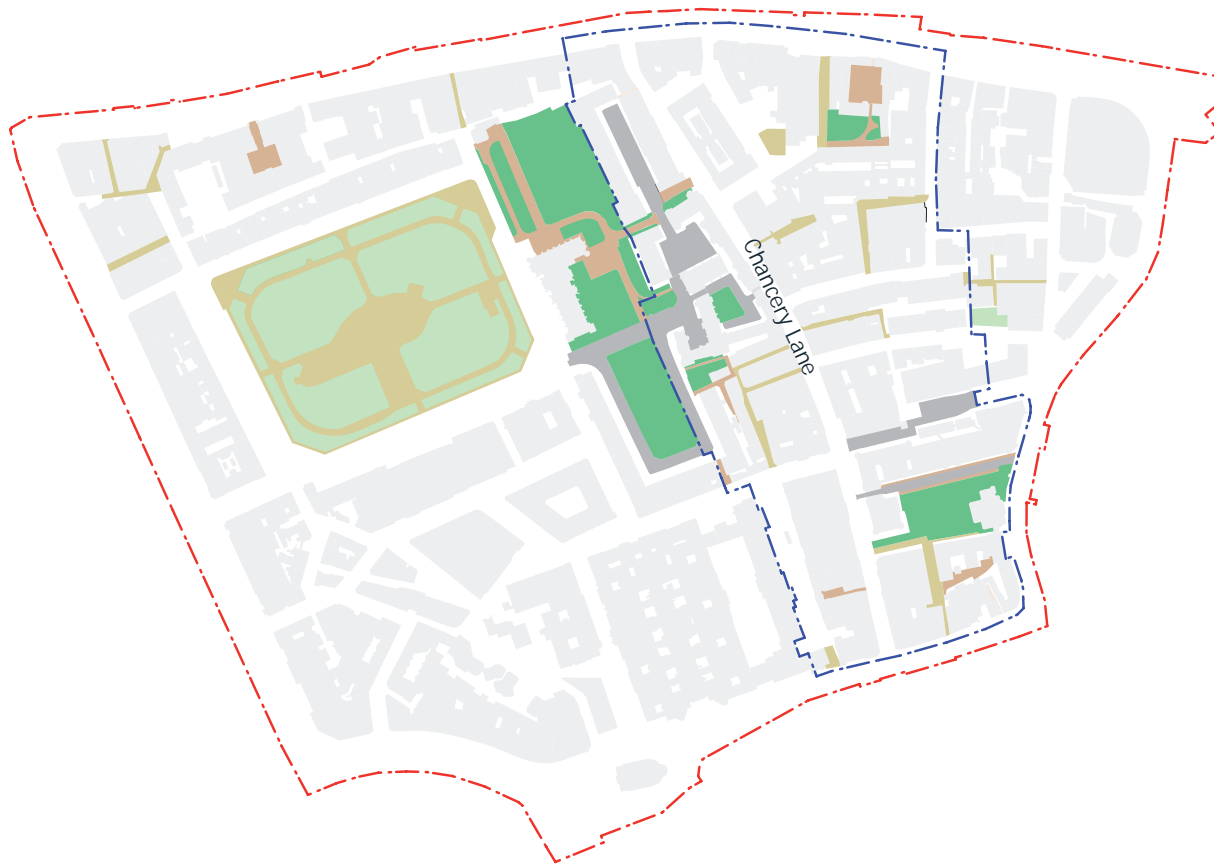
Architectural lighting has only been used on the recently refurbished former Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings. The Maughan Library however looks very dramatic and imposing when the interior lights shine through its large gothic windows at night.



Chancery Lane at night



Lighting and lamps



**KEY**

<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> public open space	<span style="color: orange;">■</span> private pedestrian routes / courts / lanes	<span style="color: grey;">■</span> private squares / routes with shared vehicular use	<span style="color: blue;">- - -</span> primary study area boundary
<span style="color: green;">■</span> private green space	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> public pedestrian routes / courts / lanes		<span style="color: red;">- - -</span> secondary study area boundary

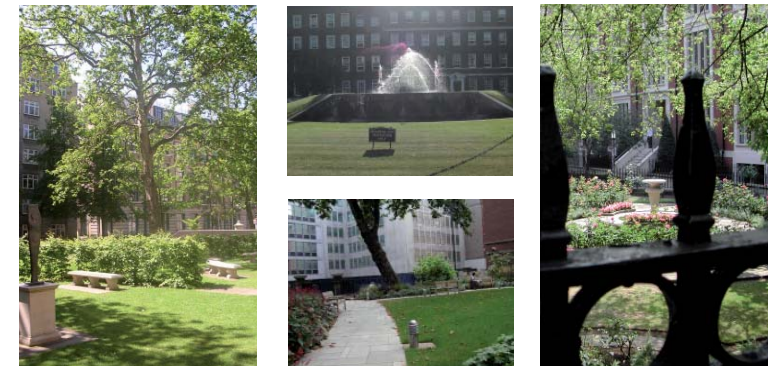
Plan showing open space throughout the study area

**Open Space**

There are a number of open spaces associated with the study area. The areas of green space are situated within Lincoln's Inn and the Maughan Library, both of which are privately owned, although they are accessible to the public during the daylight hours of the working week. Both areas have attractive features and are well maintained. There is a small rose garden belonging to Staple Inn which is private but can be seen from the public walkway Staple Inn Passage. The largest area of public green open space is Lincoln's Inn Fields, an important and historic town square surrounded by a number of 18th and 19th century buildings many of which are listed.

The City of London recently opened the more intimate Memorial Gardens on Bream's Buildings, which is open to the public during daylight hours.

Other open spaces are associated with the pedestrian routes between buildings such as Rolls Passage, Clifford's Inn Passage and Chichester Rents or with areas such as Quality Court and the internal courtyard of Staple Inn.



Green spaces associated with Chancery Lane