

# HISTORY

Ancient Gloucester was situated on a hillock beside the Severn and, until the nineteenth century, dominated the main crossing point from England into South Wales.

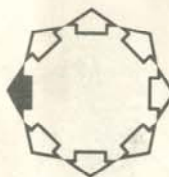
Although there is evidence of occupation in the area from prehistoric times, Gloucester's origins as a city can be traced to the generation following the Roman invasion of 43 A.D. The Romans established a military station at Kingsholm 1 mile north of the city centre and slightly later, a legionary fortress at the present city centre. Gloucester's urban life began with the settlement of traders and camp followers which grew up beside these military establishments. The city received its first charter in the reign of Nerva (96-98 A.D.). It was then given the official title of Colonia Nervia Glevensis, the usual name for the city being Glevum. Colonia was the highest status a Roman provincial town could attain: as far as we know at present, Gloucester shared this honour with only three other British cities, Colchester, Lincoln and York. Civic standards at Glevum, as elsewhere in the Roman empire, were at their height in the second century A.D. The city then had a planned street layout, piped water supply and main drainage, and a planned and architecturally imposing civic centre as well as other monumental public buildings. Many of its streets were colonnaded and there were private houses which could equal the grandeur and luxury of any in Britain.

Little is known about Gloucester in the centuries immediately following the Roman period, but by late Saxon times the city had become an important political centre for the Mercian dynasty. The palace at Kingsholm was probably established by the late ninth century and in 909 Ethelfleda, the Lady of the Mercians, founded St. Oswald's Priory and made it a national shrine by moving the saint's bones there. It was also almost certainly Ethelfleda who re fortified and revitalised the city as a Saxon burgh. Among other changes, a new planned street system was introduced in the former Roman walled area: most of the present streets at the city centre originated in this system. Gloucester's importance increased as England became more politically united and, in the reigns of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror, Kingsholm was a regular meeting place for the king and his council of nobles. It was in Gloucester, at Christmas 1085, that the decision was taken to compile the Domesday Book. The medieval city reached its greatest size and, probably, wealth in the thirteenth century. But although Henry III was crowned in the Abbey of St. Peter — the present cathedral — and Edward II was later buried there (his tomb can still be seen), government had become more centralised in London and Gloucester's political importance was in decline. Economic decline followed in the late medieval period. But it was never total. Gloucester was made the centre of a new diocese when the Abbey of St. Peter was dissolved in 1540.

The unsuccessful Royalist siege of 1643 was a turning point in the Civil War, but it led to the almost total destruction of the city's suburbs. The built-up area of Gloucester only expanded beyond its thirteenth century limits during the industrial revolution. This period has left us the superb dockyard and warehouses. In the city centre, sporadic rebuilding has taken place throughout the last two hundred years. The redevelopments of the last decade amount to Gloucester's third major replanning.

Published by

## Gloucester Civic Trust



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### OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

CITY MUSEUM

Brunswick Road

FOLK MUSEUM

Westgate Street

REGIMENTAL MUSEUM Westgate Street in 1979 due to move in 1980.

BASTION

Kings Walk

ST. MICHAEL'S TOWER MUSEUM OF BELLRINGING

The Cross

BLACKFRIARS PRIORY

Ladybellegate Street

For times of opening and city tours enquire at the TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE 6 College Street (off Westgate Street) Telephone 421188.

### CONDUCTED TOURS

The Cathedral and the Cathedral Precincts — organised by the Dean and Chapter — for times enquire at the Cathedral bookstall.

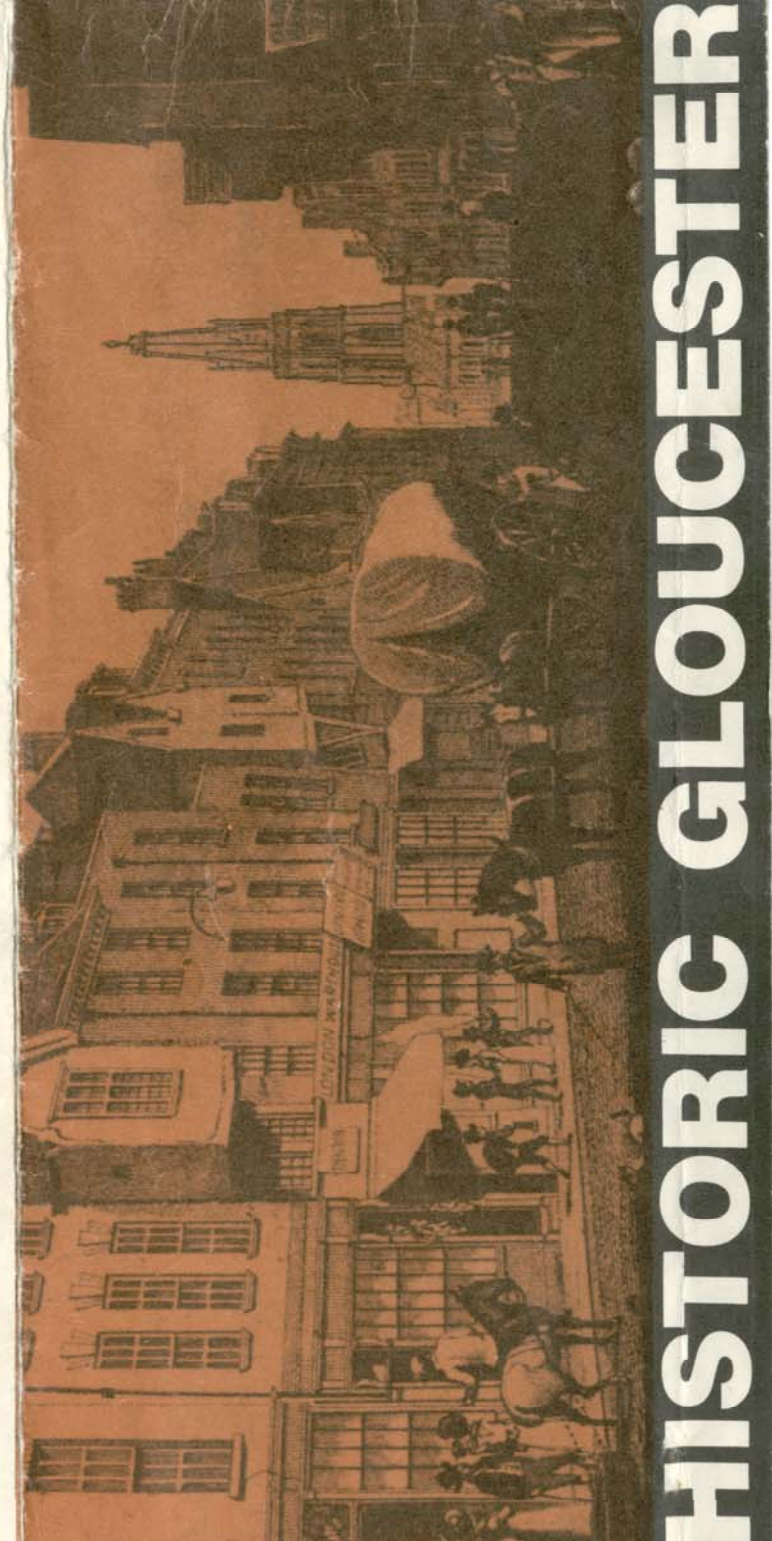
Historic Gloucester — organised by Gloucester Civic Trust starting from the Tourist Information Centre.

First Edition  
Second Edition (revised)  
Third Edition (revised)  
Fourth Edition (revised)

August 1974  
January 1975  
January 1977  
September 1979

The first edition was produced with the help of a grant from Gloucester City Council.

Printed in Great Britain by John Jennings, Printers, Gloucester.





# GLOUCESTER 1712





- 1 **St. Oswald's Priory.** The standing remains originated as the north wall of Ethelfleda's Free Chapel Royal, founded 909 (see History). One large round-headed arch is Saxon, the others are of the 12th and 13th centuries following the takeover of the church by Augustinian friars. The ruin has been in its present state since the 1643 bombardment.
- 2 **St. Mary's Street and Pelican Cottages.** The street — medieval Wateringstrete — approximately follows the line of a ditch or watercourse outside the precinct wall of St. Oswald's. The cottages are early 16th century.
- 3 **St. Mary de Lode Church.** 'Lode' means watercourse, possibly here the stream which supplied St. Peter's Abbey — the cathedral — with water before flowing into the now-vanished eastern channel of the Severn. St. Mary's is one of the city's ancient parishes. The church tower and some internal details are Norman, the rest early 19th century.
- 4 **Bishop Hooper's Monument.** 19th century memorial to Gloucester's martyred second bishop, set up on the site where he was burnt at the stake for his Protestant faith in 1555.
- 5 **St. Mary's Gateway.** The western entrance into the St. Peter's Abbey precinct. The houses either side are on the line of the precinct wall. This can be seen in places in St. Mary's Street and Three Cocks Lane. The gateway is of 13th century date with Transitional Norman vaulting.
- 6 **Parliament Room.** Late 15th century half-timbered hall at first floor level, set into 13th century stone building where Richard II held his Parliament in 1378. The building formed part of the domestic ranges of St. Peter's Abbey and was perhaps the Abbot's Hall. It can be seen from Miller's Green — the former Inner Court of the Abbey. Access to this is through the 13th century Inner Gate, west of the cathedral. You can continue walking round the back of the cathedral.
- 7 **Cathedral and Cathedral Close (College Green).** Twelve acres of historic Gloucester which have remained largely unchanged for the last 200 years. In addition to the cathedral and other monastic buildings of St. Peter's Abbey — a separate guide to these is on sale just inside the cathedral door — the close contains many fine 16th - 18th century houses. Visitors with only an hour to spend in Gloucester will make best use of their time within the cathedral precinct.
- 8 **St. Lucy's Garden and Pitt Street.** The garden was the north-east corner of the St. Peter's Abbey precinct. The only surviving piece of the precinct east wall can be seen in the corner of the garden behind the new Northgate Hall. The north wall, which is better preserved, runs along Pitt Street. In front of the King's School, at the far end of the street, a Tudor window of the Abbot's Lodging projects from the wall. St. Lucy's Garden contains the truncated spire of St. John's Church.
- 9 **Old People's Centre,** wrongly called The Raven Tavern, which was in fact in Southgate Street. Much restored timber-framed building built in the 16th century when Hare Lane was the main road to Worcester and the North.
- 10 **Sainsbury's Mural.** Cast concrete relief portraying some of the main characters and images of Gloucester's history. The originals of many of the objects shown can be seen in the City Museum (see 41).
- 11 **Ye Old Fish Shoppe, Hare Lane.** The "c.1535" notice isn't exaggerating. Unrivalled since the fire at the Black and White Restaurant (no. 39) as Gloucester's best preserved timber-framed fish and chip shop.
- 12 **St. John's Church.** On the site of one of the city's ten parish churches of pre-Norman-Conquest date. The tower and truncated spire (see 8) are 14th century, the rest of the building mainly early 18th century with fine internal details. Facade rebuilt in 1972.
- 13 **Statue of King Charles II.** Carved in 1662 by Stephen Baldwyn and set up in the Wheat Market in Southgate Street. It was removed in the middle of the 18th century and re-discovered in 1945, in a garden at Chaxhill near Westbury-on-Severn.
- 14 **Cherubs from Booth Hall.** 18th century carving of City Arms on wall of modern building: preserved from Booth Hall, the medieval ancestor of the modern Guildhall, which was situated beside the present Shire Hall (see 32) and demolished in 1957.
- 15 **St. Nicholas House.** Extensive early 16th century timber-framed building, behind a showy early Georgian facade. Potentially part of

- 21 **14 Westgate Street** (corner of St. John's Lane). As with much of Westgate Street, the antiquity of this building is concealed. A room on the first floor at the back — now the ladies' and children's department of a shoe shop — contains a fine early 17th century plaster ceiling.
- 22 **New Inn.** Built as an inn by St. Peter's Abbey c.1450 to accommodate pilgrims visiting the shrine of Edward II. Remarkably intact behind fake black-and-white street facade. Interior concealed by modern bric-à-brac but still the finest galleried courtyard inn of its age in England.
- 23 **Guildhall.** Late nineteenth century Renaissance style building and a fitting expression of civic pomp and circumstance. On the site of the original Bluecoat School (Sir Thomas Rich's), one of the city's oldest schools founded by a wealthy native in 1666.
- 24 **Bastion, King's Walk.** Roman city wall showing the meeting-point of stretches built in 3rd and 4th centuries. The 4th century build has lower courses of massive blocks of stone (re-used from earlier Roman buildings) and small rectangular 'putlog' holes on the inside where the horizontal staging of the builders' scaffolding was set. The semi-circular tower on the outside of the wall was added in the 13th century.
- 25 **Market Portico.** The entrance portico of the former Eastgate Market, originally situated just west of its present site, dismantled in 1969 and rebuilt in 1973. Exuberant Victorian monument to the earth's abundance, in pleasing contrast to its neighbours.
- 26 **The Cross and St. Michael's Church Tower.** The Cross has been Gloucester's focal point since its origin: here was the entrance to the Roman Forum, which extended beneath Southgate Street, and from Saxon times the junction of the city's main streets. Four churches once stood close to it. Now only the 15th century tower of St. Michael's survives.
- 27 **5 Southgate Street** (Baker's). Clockmaker's shop with chiming clock of 1904. The chimes are attended by the figures of an Irishwoman, John Bull, Father Time, a Scotsman and a Welshwoman.
- 28 **9 Southgate Street** (Saxone's). Restored Jacobean timber-fronted town house of the Berkeley family. A room on the first floor retains its fine original panelling and richly-carved fireplace displaying the Berkeley coat of arms quartered with those of Box and Yate.
- 29 **Cross Keys Inn and Cross Keys Lane.** 16th century timber-framed inn. The lane, like nearby Longsmith Street, Bell Walk and St. Mary's Lane, formed part of the early 10th century street plan (see History, 40 and 43).
- 30 **Fleece Hotel.** The Abbey of St. Peter owned an inn here in the fifteenth century for visitors to the shrine of King Edward II (see also New Inn, 22). Most of the present hotel is 16th century and later, except notably for the Monks' Retreat — currently the Bierkeller — a 12th century barrel-vaulted undercroft. This was perhaps originally part of a merchant's house.
- 31 **The Fountain Inn.** The 'Signe of the Fountain' was an inn at least as early as the 17th century. The present building dates from that period or earlier, though it has been restored. A feature of its exterior is the relief portrait of King William III on horseback.
- 32 **The Shire Hall.** Designed by Sir Robert Smirke in 1816 but much altered since. Of Smirke's work only the huge Ionic portico and the polygonal court building at the rear (access from Bearland) now survive.
- 33 **Folk Museum, 99 Westgate Street.** Early 16th century building with exposed timber framing: compare nos. 93-97 Westgate Street, which are timber buildings of about the same date but hidden behind uninspiring later facades. Also called Bishop Hooper's Lodging because the martyr supposedly stayed here the night before his execution (see 4). In the 18th century it was used as a pin factory, pin-making then being one of Gloucester's main industries.

- 34 **The Old Custom House.** Early 19th century building situated on the former quayside. Gloucester was first granted the rights of a port with its own custom house by Elizabeth I but there was a city quay — not always on the same site — as early as the Roman period.
- 35 **St. Bartholomew's.** Medieval and later hospital founded in the late 12th century. The domestic buildings of the medieval hospital stood on exactly the same spot as the present structure which dates from 1788-9 and is Gloucester's main example of Georgian Gothick. Until recently the building was used as almshouses.
- 36 **Bearland House (36) Bearland Lodge (37) and Ladybellegate House (38).** Three of the city's finest 18th century town houses, all dating from the early years of the century. The exterior of Ladybellegate House has been much changed from its original appearance but its interior, restored by Gloucester Civic Trust, is still magnificent with the original staircase and lush Rococo plasterwork.
- 39 **Black and White Restaurant, Longsmith Street,** Early 16th century timber-framed building, restored in 1976.
- 40 **Bell Walk.** The shopping precinct is the most recent use of a planned street in Ethelfleda's 10th century layout. For a long time bell-makers had their foundries here, among them William Hanshaw, Mayor of Gloucester five times between 1503 and 1520.
- 41 **City Museum and Art Gallery.** Archaeology is an important part of the Museum's collections, which also include geology, natural history, furniture, china and glass. Finds from the city are well represented: especially noteworthy are the displays of Roman sculpture, the Saxon cross shafts from St. Oswald's and Wotton Pitch and the medieval door-knocker from St. Nicholas Church. The column in the entrance hall is a reminder of the scale of monumental Glevum, and the Roman city wall can be seen below the floor of the gallery.
- 42 **Addison's Folly.** Built in 1864 by Thomas Fenn Addison, a solicitor who lived in Bell Lane — now Bell Walk — in memory of Robert Raikes. From the roof, Addison could see Hempsted Church, where his wife was buried.
- 43 **St. Mary de Crypt Church and School.** The plan of the church is Norman, though the structure is mainly in the Perpendicular style with some 13th century features. Gloucester's famous 18th century preacher George Whitefield delivered his first sermon after ordination in 1734, from the mid-17th century pulpit recently restored to the church. The school built onto the north of the church dates from the 16th century with a stone street facade and brickwork at the back. The arched way is the former St. Mary's Lane, one of the 10th century streets (see History, 29 and 40).
- 44 **Robert Raikes' House, Southgate Street.** A fine late 16th century timber-framed house with 18th century additions to its rear. Interior still impressive despite modern clutter and additions. Robert Raikes, a pioneer of the Sunday School movement, lived here from 1768 to 1801.
- 45 **Blackfriars.** The best preserved medieval Dominican friary in Britain. Church and cloister buildings mainly 13th century, though the latter obscured by later buildings. The cell windows of the unusual first-floor study dormitory of the south range can be seen from a lane off Ladybellegate Street.
- 46 **Greyfriars.** The ruined part is the nave and north aisle of the early 16th century friary church: the facade facing Southgate Street — Greyfriars House (now the Record, Music and Junior Libraries) — is c.1800. The house of the Greyfriars at Gloucester was founded c.1230, and the precinct originally extended over the whole area now covered by the Technical College.
- 47 **East Gate.** Remains of Gloucester's successive Roman, medieval and post-medieval East Gates have recently been excavated here and will be on permanent display when the redevelopment of the site is completed.





15 present Shire Hall (see 32) and demolished with the building, behind a showy early Georgian facade. Potentially part of a splendid group together with the church (see 16) but in need of restoration.

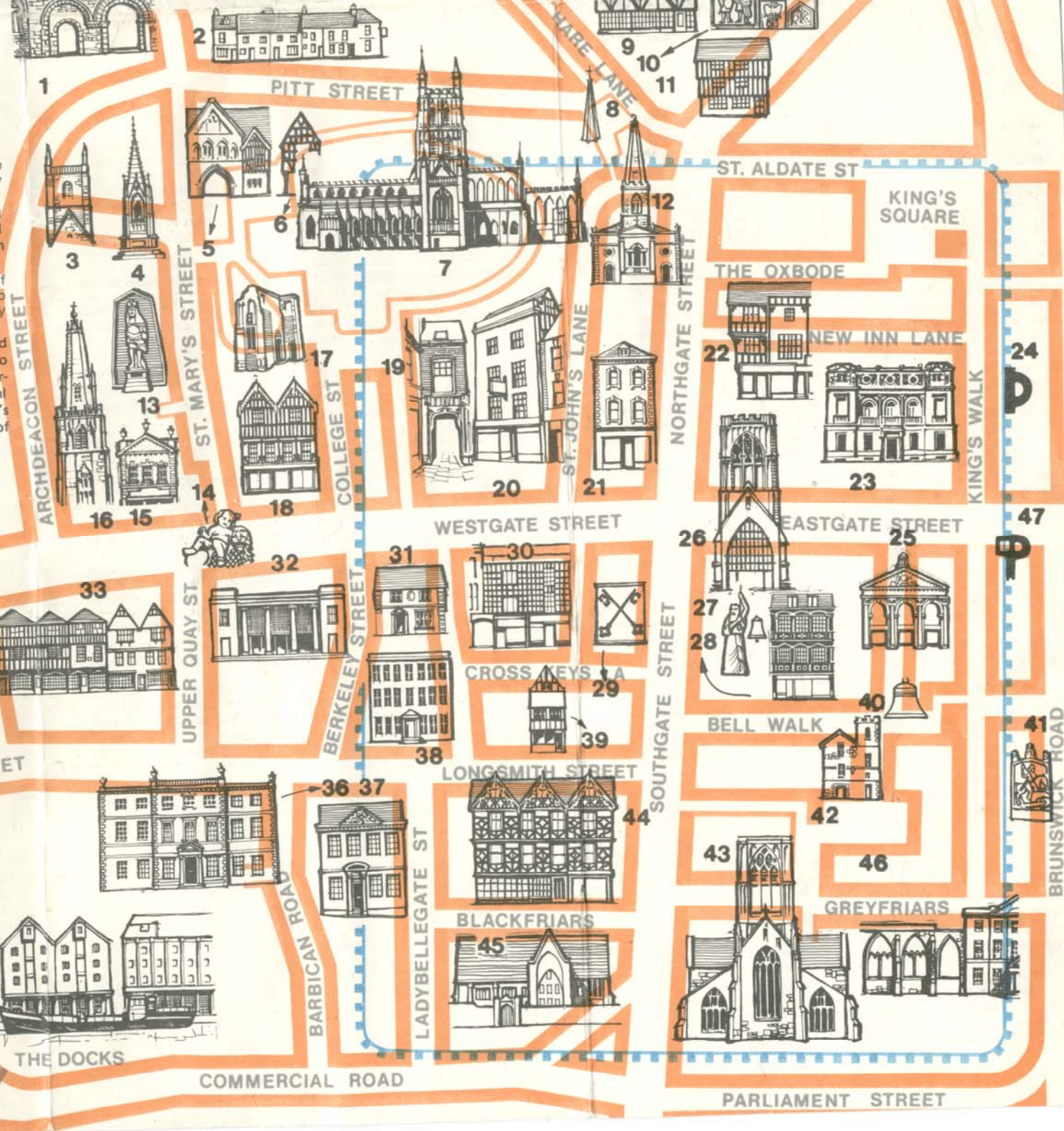
16 **St. Nicholas Church.** The rival of St. Mary de Crypt (see 43) for Gloucester's finest medieval parish church. Structure of Norman date and later. The truncated leaning spire in the Perpendicular style is one of the city's most handsome landmarks. A fine 14th century bronze knocker from the south door can be seen in the City Museum (see 41).

17 **King Edward's Gate.** The main entrance from Westgate Street — the main street of medieval Gloucester — into the St. Peter's Abbey precinct. Only the west side of the gate now survives.

18 **66, Westgate Street.** Early 16th century timber framed building with 18th century windows inserted at first floor level. Restored by Gloucester City Council in 1975 as a contribution to European Architectural Heritage Year.

19 **College Court and St. Michael's Gateway.** Beatrix Potter's Tailor of Gloucester lived here. The gate, in the late Perpendicular style, is to the lay cemetery within the St. Peter's Abbey precinct. Immediately inside the gate look to the right for the Abbey wall.

20 **26 Westgate Street (Winfield's).** Georgian street facade, but behind it the city's finest timber-framed building. Access by side door to narrow alley, the medieval Maverdine Lane. 16th century four-storey elevation onto this, with carved overhangs and rich original detailing. Known as the Old Judges' House or Colonel Massey's Lodging, but it now seems that the Parliamentary Governor of Gloucester did not stay here during the siege of 1643.



The Roman City Wall — built in the 3rd and 4th centuries — followed the earlier earth defences of the legionary fortress established in c.67 A.D. None of the wall is now visible above ground but its line — including the curve of its south-east corner — is closely followed by Parliament Street, Brunswick Road, King's Walk and St. Aldate Street. Stretches of the wall are visible in the City Museum basement (see 41) and in King's Walk (see 24).