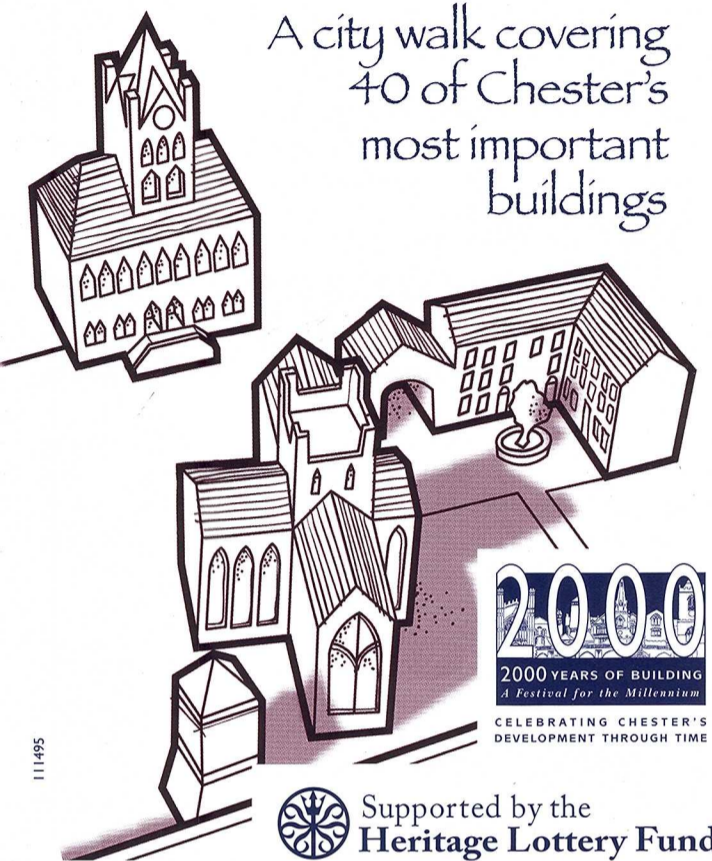


# The Chester Millennium Festival Trail

A city walk covering 40 of Chester's most important buildings



Welcome to the Chester Millennium Festival Trail, laid down in 2000 as part of the city's '2000 Years of Building' Millennium Festival.

All 40 buildings on this Trail were selected by local people as outstanding examples of Chester's architectural development over two millennia, from Roman times to the present day. They include many well known and much loved buildings. Others are less familiar – and some may surprise! They all contribute to the rich architectural heritage which makes Chester so special among British historic cities.

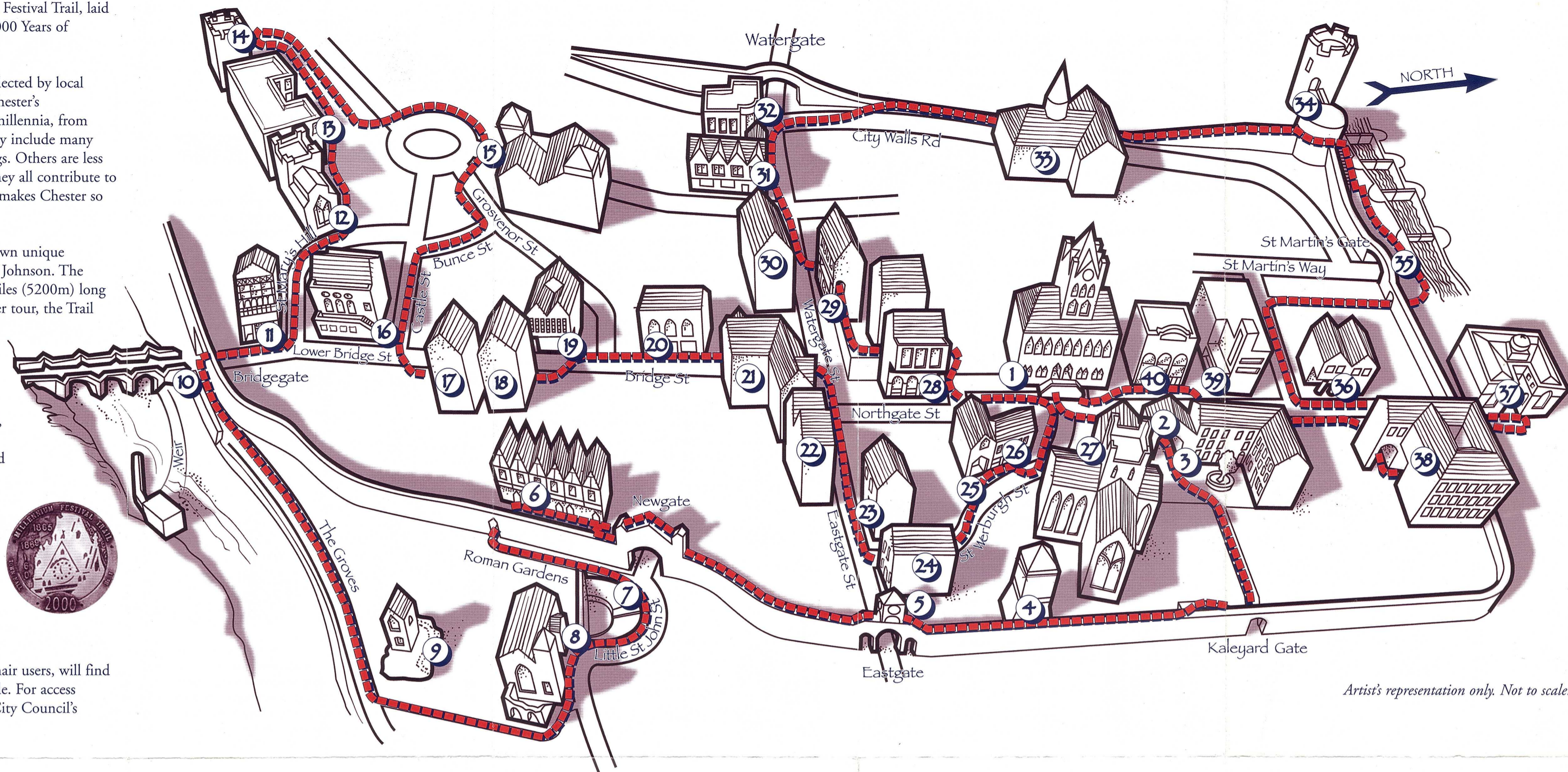
Each building is celebrated with its own unique waymarker, created by artist Michael Johnson. The complete route is approximately 3 miles (5200m) long and takes about 3 hours. For a shorter tour, the Trail can be divided into two routes, covering the southern section (waymarkers 1-27) and the northern section (waymarkers 28-40).

However you choose to use this Trail, you will explore some of the most beautiful architecture in Britain – and possibly discover your own favourite 'Millennium building' somewhere along the route!

The Trail begins and ends at Chester Town Hall and Tourist Information Centre. Look for the waymarkers set into the ground.

## Access

Disabled people, particularly wheelchair users, will find parts of this walking route inaccessible. For access information in Chester contact the City Council's Access Service on 01244 324324.



Artist's representation only. Not to scale.

**1 TOWN HALL**

Designed in the Gothic style by the Belfast architect WH Lynn and opened by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) in 1869. The grey and pink sandstone clock tower is 160 feet high (48.7m). Walk diagonally across Town Hall Square and stop outside the large arch of the Abbey Gateway.

**2 ABBEY GATEWAY**

A vaulted sandstone arch dating from the mid-14th century which was the main entrance to St Werburgh's Abbey (now the Cathedral). Walk through the gateway and turn left once in Abbey Square.

**3 ABBEY SQUARE**

Georgian terraced houses mainly built between 1754 and 1761 on the site of the old abbey kitchens, bake-house and brewery. Walk through Abbey Square to the opposite side. Continue along Abbey Street and at the bottom turn right up the ramp onto the City Walls to reach the Bell Tower.

**4 THE BELL TOWER**

Officially called the Adleshaw Tower, this remarkable freestanding tower designed by George Pace in sandstone and Welsh slate, has housed the Cathedral bells since 1975. Continue along the City Walls to the Eastgate.

**5 EASTGATE CLOCK**

Chester's most famous landmark was designed by the acclaimed local architect John Douglas to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1887 – but not actually erected until 1899. Continue along the City Walls and over the Newgate. Go down the steps on your left to street level, cross over and walk up Park Street.

**6 THE NINE HOUSES**

These tiny timber and sandstone cottages were built as almshouses in about 1650. Only six of the original nine survive. Cross the road and go through the gate in the City Walls. Turn left to walk through the Roman Gardens. At the main road turn right and cross narrow Souters Lane for the amphitheatre.

**7 ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE**

The partially excavated remains (including about 40% of the arena) of the largest Roman amphitheatre in Britain. It lay just outside the south-eastern corner of the fortress and may have seated 10,000 spectators at its height. Follow the road around the amphitheatre and head for the railings outside the church.

**8 ST JOHN'S CHURCH**

Within the Victorian exterior is one of the region's finest Norman churches, once Chester's first cathedral. The eastern ruins are open for exploration. Follow the path alongside the church and at the ruins turn right down the slope and steps towards the river. Turn right along The Groves.

**9 ANCHORITE'S CELL**

Probably built in the mid-14th century to house an anchorite or hermit – a recluse who locked himself away for a life of prayer and contemplation.

**10 NORMAN WEIR**

This massive stone Weir across the river was built in the 11th century to provide water power for the Dee Corn Mills, situated on the city side of the Old Dee Bridge. Turn right and go under the Bridgegate. The Bear and Billet is on the opposite side of the road.

**11 BEAR & BILLET**

The historic inn name has been changed recently, but there is no mistaking the many-windowed black and white frontage of this famous 17th century house, once owned by the Earls of Shrewsbury. Continue up Lower Bridge Street.

**12 ST MARY'S CHURCH**

One of Chester's nine medieval parish churches, this dates mainly from the 14th and 15th centuries and is an excellent example of the Perpendicular style. Take the path beside the church between two black bollards. Walk through the archway and across the car park to the statue of Queen Victoria.

**13 CHESTER CASTLE**

Built between 1788 and 1822 by Thomas Harrison and largely replacing the medieval castle, these neo-Classical buildings have been described as the best examples of the Greek Revival style of architecture outside London. Continue across the car park and through the archway in the corner. Once in the courtyard, turn left.

**14 AGRICOLA TOWER**

Built in the 12th century as the gatehouse to the inner bailey, the Agricola Tower is one of the oldest surviving parts of the great medieval castle. On the first floor you can see the medieval chapel of St Mary de Castro. Before leaving the Castle, it is worth visiting the Cheshire Military Museum for a fascinating insight into the Regiments of Cheshire over the past 300 years.

**15 MAGISTRATES' COURT**

Built in 1991 to replace the old Magistrates' Court in the Town Hall, this is an excellent example of how a truly modern building can make a positive contribution to a historic setting. Take the first road on your left, using the crossing to reach the opposite side of the road. Don't miss the award-winning Grosvenor Museum, re-opened in August 2000 following major improvements. An excellent introduction to Chester's past. Just past the museum, take the first right into Bunce Street and then left into Castle Street. Gamull House is at the junction with Lower Bridge Street.

**16 GAMULL HOUSE**

Behind the 18th century brick frontage lies a late medieval Great Hall, once owned by the Gamull family. The entrance at first floor indicates that the building once had an elevated Row walkway, similar to those in Chester's main streets. Cross Lower Bridge Street (take care). Park House is half-way up.

**17 PARK HOUSE**

This elegant Georgian town house was built in 1715 by Madam Elizabeth Booth and

**18 TUDOR HOUSE**

Although the wall plaque states 1503, this important timber framed town house was built for a wealthy Chester merchant in the early years of the 17th century. Continue up Lower Bridge Street, and turn left, using the crossing to reach The Falcon.

**19 THE FALCON**

Formerly the town house of the Grosvenor family, this largely 17th century timber building was the first in Chester to lose its elevated Row walkway. Cross Grosvenor Street at the crossing and walk up Bridge Street. The Three Old Arches is on the left hand side.

**20 THREE OLD ARCHES**

The three arches at Row level are some of the earliest structures to be seen in the Rows and provide a vital clue to what Chester's medieval stone houses looked like from the street. Continue to walk up Bridge Street towards St Peter's Church and The Cross.

**21 1 BRIDGE STREET**

These corner buildings at The Cross are the most famous of Chester's Victorian 'black-and-white' revival. They were designed by the local architect TM Lockwood and are dated 1888. Turn right down Eastgate Street, keeping on the right hand side.

**22 BROWNS OF CHESTER**

Built in two very different styles – one Classical, the other High Victorian Gothic – these adjacent buildings represent two phases in the development of Browns, Chester's leading store in the 19th century. Cross to the left hand side and continue down Eastgate Street to the corner of St Werburgh Street.

**23 33 EASTGATE STREET**

Now the National Westminster Bank this was built as Dixon and Wardell's Chester Bank. The Classical design by George Williams was much criticised when it opened in 1860. Take the next street on your left, keeping to its right hand side pavement.

**24 ST WERBURGH STREET EAST**

Built 1895-97 by John Douglas, the buildings on the eastern side of the street are widely acknowledged to be the finest examples of Chester's Victorian 'black-and-

**25 ST NICHOLAS'S CHAPEL**

A much altered medieval chapel which at various times has been used as the city's Common Hall, Wool Hall, Georgian theatre, Victorian Music Hall and early cinema before becoming a shop. Continue walking up St Werburgh Street, under the arcade of St Werburgh Row.

**26 ST WERBURGH ROW**

This range of arcaded shops and offices is a rare example of 1930s architecture in Chester. Built in 1935 by Maxwell Ayrton, who also designed Wembley Stadium. Cross over the road to the Cathedral entrance.

**27 CHESTER CATHEDRAL**

Founded as a Benedictine Abbey dedicated to St Werburgh in 1092, this great building became the Cathedral in 1541. Inside are some of the best preserved monastic buildings in the country. Continue in the direction of the Town Hall, turning left when you reach the square to walk down the right hand side of Northgate Street.

**28 COMMERCIAL NEWSROOM & INN**

Designed by Thomas Harrison, architect of Chester Castle, this fine Classical building opened in 1808 and housed a newsroom, coffee room and subscription library. Behind it, the Commercial Hotel was also built by Harrison at the same time. Turn right up the steps into St Peter's Churchyard to the Commercial Hotel. Leave the churchyard by the archway in the far left hand corner. This leads on to Chester's famous Rows, where you should turn right.

**29 38-42 WATERGATE STREET**

The buildings on this side of Watergate Street include some of the best preserved medieval stone town houses in Britain. No. 38-42 is the largest, spanning three tenement plots and dates from the early 14th century. At the end of the Row descend the steps to street level, cross over and continue a short distance down Watergate Street.

**30 BISHOP LLOYD'S PALACE**

Chester's most ornately carved timber-framed town house was built for George Lloyd (d. 1615), Bishop of Sodor and Man and then of Chester. Open to the public Monday-Thursday (noon-2pm) and at other times by arrangement. Continue down Watergate Street. Use the crossing over the ring road to reach the opposite corner.

**31 STANLEY PALACE**

This late Elizabethan town house is dated 1591. It is named after the Stanley family, custodians of the nearby Watergate, who were responsible for collecting tolls on goods brought into the city from the Port of Chester. Continue down the hill, Watergate House is on your left on the corner of the next street.

**32 WATERGATE HOUSE**

Thomas Harrison, architect of Chester Castle, designed this house for his friend Henry Potts, Clerk of the Peace for the County of Cheshire in 1820. At the Watergate, cross the road to turn right into City Walls Road.

**33 QUEEN'S SCHOOL**

EA Ould, a pupil of John Douglas, designed this school in 1883. The site was formerly occupied by the City Gaol and House of Correction. Continue along the road and follow the upward slope of the City Walls.

**34 WATER TOWER**

Dating from the time when Chester was a major port, the Water Tower was built at the edge of the river to protect the harbour in 1322-26. Leave the City Walls by the next main steps (on your left) turn right and walk beside the canal and under the railway to reach the top of the locks.

**35 NORTHGATE LOCKS**

An impressive staircase of three deep and wide lock chambers on the present Shropshire Union Canal. These date from the 18th century when Chester was a canal and river port. Continue past the locks and up the slope or the steps on your right. Go through the gateway in the City Walls and straight ahead along Pemberton Road. Turn left into King Street and left again onto Northgate Street.

**36 BLUE BELL**

Once an inn, this splendid little building is dated 1494 and formed part of a range of buildings known as 'Lorimer's Row'. The detached cabin was used as a barber shop in the 18th and 19th centuries. Continue up Northgate Street and under the Northgate.

**37 BLUECOAT SCHOOL**

Built in 1717 to house a charity school for poor boys, the first of its kind outside London. The Blue Coat boy over the main entrance wears the distinctive uniform worn by pupils until the school closed in 1949. Cross Northgate Street and return to the Northgate. Climb the steps on your left and enjoy one of the most spectacular stretches of the Roman/medieval City Wall. After a short distance the steps on your right lead down to Rufus Court.

**38 RUFUS COURT**

An award-winning development of the 1980s, tucked between the City Wall and Northgate Street. Go down the spiral stair and through the court. Turn left into Northgate Street, crossing over to the Odeon Cinema on the corner.

**39 ODEON CINEMA**

One of the most prominent buildings in Chester, the Odeon Cinema of 1936 was designed in the typical Art Deco style by the Odeon Company's architect, Harry Weedon. Cross the road in front of the Odeon and walk towards the Town Hall Square, building number 40 is on your right.

**40 WESTMINSTER COACH & MOTOR CAR WORKS**

This splendidly decorated brick and terracotta façade of the Edwardian Baroque motor works has been retained as part of Chester Library. In the future this will become the entrance to the new market hall. See the reverse of this leaflet for more information about these buildings.

