



1 Hammonds of Hull

On the nights of 7th and 8th May 1941, the streets surrounding Hammonds were ablaze. At the time Hull was the third port city of Britain, and as a result sustained heavy bombing throughout the Second World War. Hammonds, a grand department store first opened in 1916, found itself at the centre of wartime air raids which left large swathes of Hull's city centre in ruins - observers at the time reported that the store was a 'burnt-out skeleton' that was 'completely wrecked'.

Hammonds was rebuilt and reopened eleven years later, in May 1952, with a glamorous opening day attended by crowds of thousands in Paragon Square. The name 'Hammonds' was lit up in bright green neon against the new store's distinctive concrete and glass frontage. In subsequent decades, the store's status as a landmark and Hull institution has been cemented by locals' fond memories of shopping in the popular record department and meeting friends and family for a meal at Picadish.



2 Festival House

As the city recovered from the impact of war, Hull's central shopping streets were steadily rebuilt in a mix of classical, neo-Georgian and festival styles.

The term 'festival' (a reference to a design, manufacturing, and culture festival held in 1951), also gave its name to this building, completed in the same year, which according to its foundation stone was 'the first permanent building to arise from the ashes of the centre of the city'.

Underneath the building, the City Corporation placed a time capsule of contemporary items, including stamps, coins, a copy of the day's newspaper and a programme for the Festival of Britain.

Notice the three crowns - the symbol of the city - above the entrance door.



3 Fletcher's Corner

Planning for post-war recovery began long before the end of the war. In 1944 the Hull Corporation commissioned renowned architect-planners Edwin Lutyens and Patrick Abercrombie to develop a new design for the modern city, which would guide development in Hull for years to come.

Visions for the post-war city were shaped by ordinary people's increasing consumer power and leisure time. A new pedestrianised shopping district was proposed to replace the heavily bombed network of traditional shopping streets that had existed between Hull's Paragon Station and Queen Victoria Square.

Queens House, an impressively large neo-Georgian block fronting Paragon Street, King Edward Street and Jameson Street, was designed by Kenneth Wakeford and completed in 1952. Many people fondly remember throwing coins into 'Fletcher's Fountain' which stood opposite, as well as stopping for a gossip or buying sausage rolls at the much-loved Fletcher's deli.

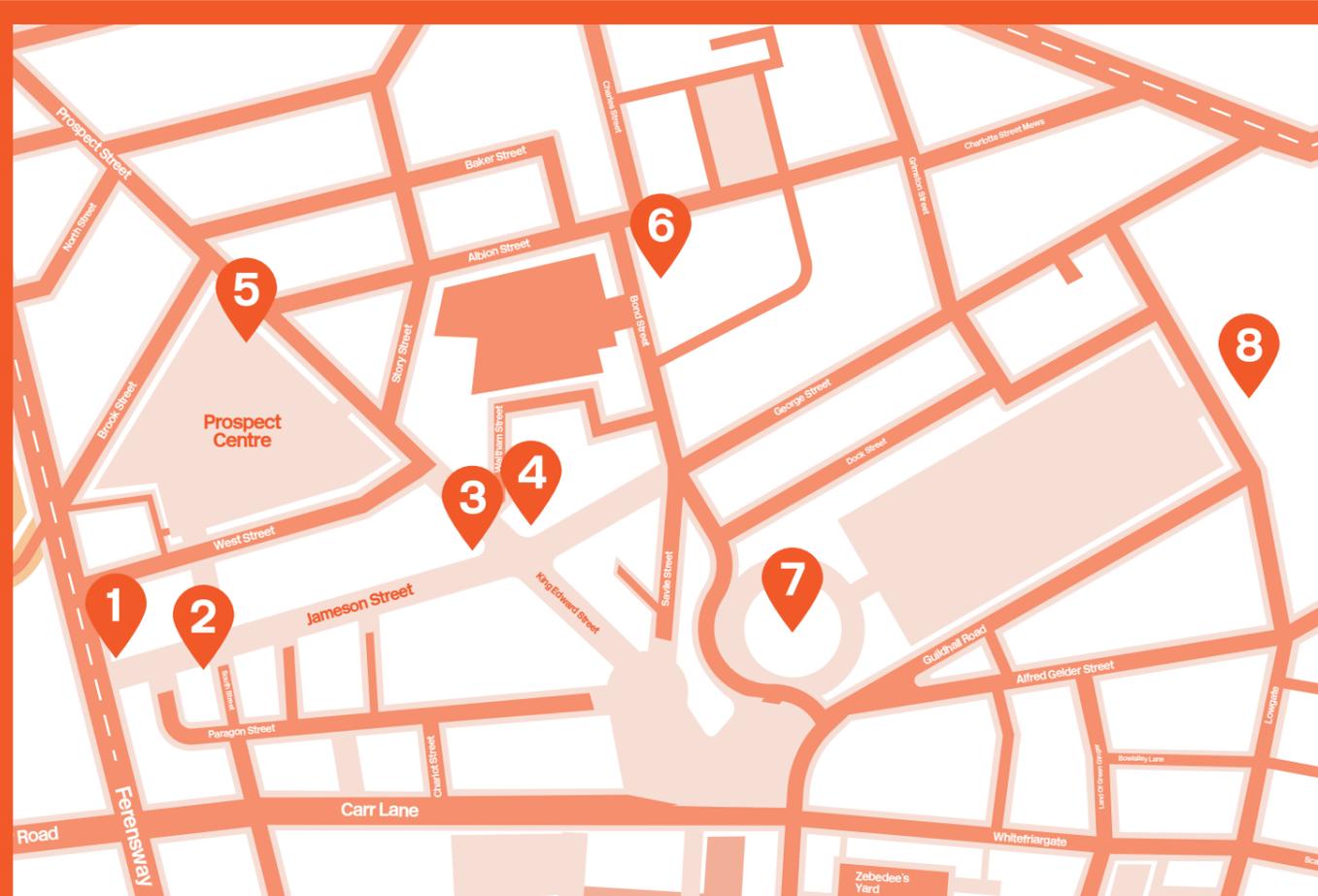


4 Three Ships

Across the road, 1960s rebuilding works were shaped by a commitment to modern design principles and the integration of public art, typical of urban development in this period.

In July 1965 the renewed Hull and East Riding Co-operative Society building officially opened, featuring 'the latest in modern store design', a ballroom with a state-of-the-art domed roof, as well as a 'fine restaurant' with luxurious walnut panelling, green marble walls and maplewood floors. Those who have lived in Hull in the decades since often tell stories of the building's entertainment spaces - first the Skyline Ballroom, then Bailey's, and later Romeo's and Juliet's.

Today, Alan Boyson's iconic Three Ships mural still stands thanks to a local campaign to save the work, which secured its Grade II Listed status in 2019. Completed in 1963, and commissioned by the Co-op to celebrate Hull's fishing heritage, the Three Ships mural is made up of a staggering one million Italian glass mosaic pieces.



The Half Life of the Blitz on Hull is a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The guide has been put together by Dr Charlotte Tomlinson and Dr James Greenhalgh, and designed by Joseph Cox, with thanks to Hull History Centre, Hull Daily Mail, and RIBA.

Learn more about the project and get in touch at: www.thehalfloftheblitz.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk

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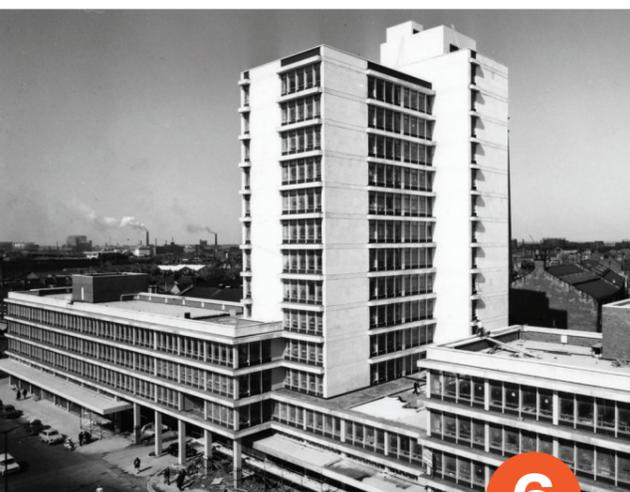
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Prospect Centre

Public art also adorned the entrances to Prospect Centre, built a decade later on the grounds of the former Hull Royal Infirmary.

The centre opened in the spring of 1975, a brand-new complex of covered shopping arcades between Brook Street, Mill Street and Prospect Street. It featured a striking octagonal ceiling design, carpeted floors and air conditioning, as well as 'islands' of plants and calming water fountains. At the time, the £2.3 million project was described as 'probably the largest rebuilding job in the city centre in post-war years'.

Prospect Centre's earliest tenants included shoe shops, a TV showroom, a 'Shirt and Tie Gallery', and national brands such as Boots and W H Smith. Two murals designed by the sculptor Walenty Pytel were added above the main entrances on Prospect Street and Brook Street, depicting an abstract combination of square and circle shapes in galvanised and enamelled steel.



6

Kingston House

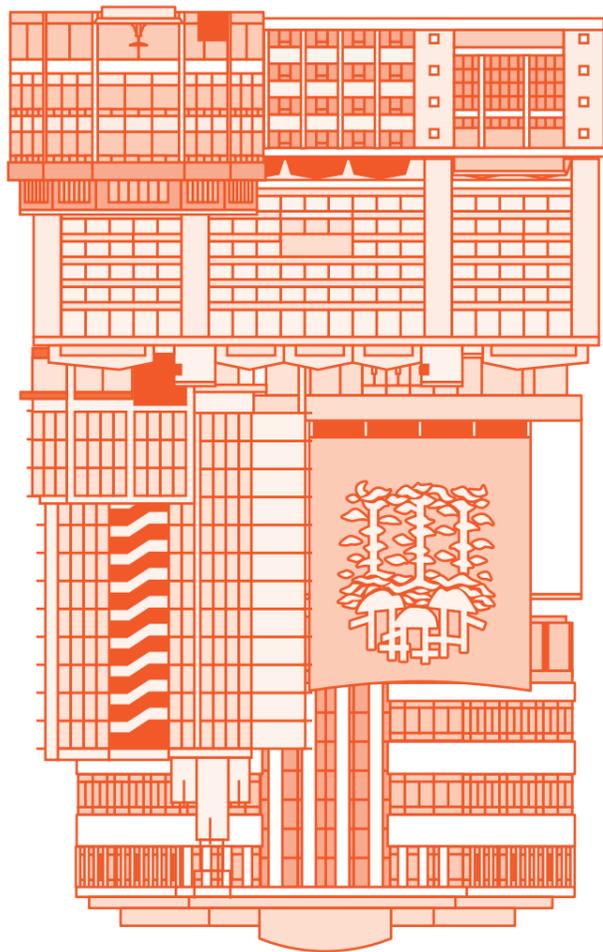
Kingston House was built in the 1960s on the blitzed ruins of Hull's Georgian New Town. Described by contemporaries as a 'space age' office block, it was designed by architects Fry, Drew & Partners.

The Georgian 'New Town' (as it was then, relative to Hull's medieval 'Old Town' within the city walls) was developed in the late 18th century on the land north of the recently created Queen's Dock. It was home to affluent business owners and merchants whose wealth often came from Hull's maritime industries. The area was heavily bombed during the Second World War and key public buildings such as Hull's Municipal Museum (which stood where the large car park is today) were lost. Since 1967, the surviving stretches of grand terraces along Albion Street have contrasted with the commanding modernist architecture of concrete and glass at Kingston House.

Behind the building's thirteen-story tower stands the former Hull Brewery, a major local business operating on this site until the 1980s. Within The Maltings, on Silvester Street, a statue now pays tribute to the brewery employees who once worked here.

A walking guide to the post-war city

Modernist Hull



7

Queens Gardens

Abercrombie and Lutyens' plan for the post-war city placed Queens Gardens at its heart. The former dock had first opened as a public park in 1935, and during the war provided space for air raid shelters, cooking demonstrations, and jubilant VE Day celebrations. Just a decade later, the city's post-war planners envisaged the gardens as a magnificent nucleus around which the rest of a modern city centre would revolve.

When renowned architect Sir Frederick Gibberd set about refurbishing the gardens in the 1950s and 60s, new pools and fountains were added to reflect their former maritime function. At the eastern end of the gardens, the new pond was overlooked by a set of concrete panels by Robert Adams (now said to be one of the only examples of English modernist sculpture in Hull), while another public art commission saw the introduction of six stone reliefs by Kenneth Carter on the garden's northern perimeter. Carter was a lecturer at the Hull College of Art at the time.



8

Hull College

Post-war visions for Queens Gardens' future included much more than the green space itself. Planners saw the area as a 'civic and cultural centre' where a new municipal museum, technical college, art school, library, assembly hall and winter gardens would also be added.

Although the plans set out were not fully realised - the winter gardens, for example, never came to fruition - they undoubtedly shaped how Queens Gardens and its surrounds were developed over subsequent decades. A new, landmark College of Technology was built to Sir Frederick Gibberd's designs in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Behind the Wilberforce Monument, don't miss the striking modernist panel by artist William Mitchell, which depicts a composition of mathematical and nautical references including a sextant, a seal, and an anchor. Today, the college still reflects the visions of the city's mid-century planners, and the enduring impact of post-war rebuilding on Hull's skyline.

Between 1939 and 1945, wartime air raids changed the face of Hull forever. Second World War bombing campaigns destroyed landmark buildings and beloved public spaces, and also kickstarted an era of rethinking the city that would last for decades to come.

On this tour you'll learn more about the buildings that 'rose from the ashes' of the war in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and post-war places that local people still think make Hull what - and who - it is today.

This trail is based on research, stories, and memories collected through a project called [The Half Life of the Blitz on Hull](#), which has been led by the University of Lincoln since 2021. This guide has been designed as a self-directed walking tour taking approximately one hour to complete. Please take care when exploring the city.