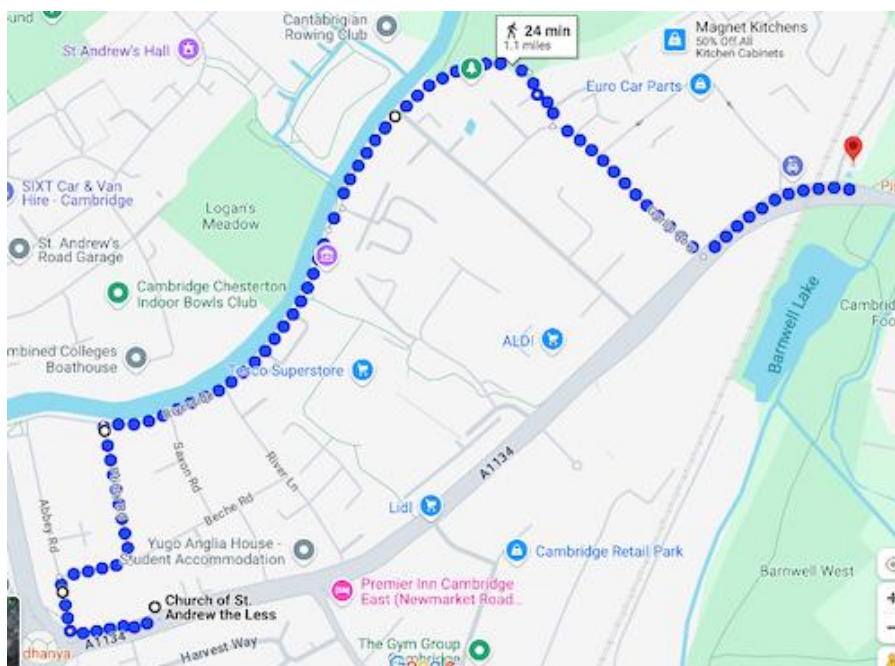


## A WALK THROUGH THE RIVERSIDE AREA

The area offers glimpses of many different eras, making it a fascinating destination away from the 'classic' Cambridge sights. Starting on Newmarket Road, today's visitor can explore the following local landmarks in addition to simply enjoying the river and riverfront:

- St Andrew the Less – 13th century church built for Barnwell village parishioners by the canons of Barnwell Priory, now a Grade II Listed Building
- Abbey House – 16th century house built on the site of Barnwell Priory, Grade II listed
- Cellarer's Chequer – also 13<sup>th</sup> century. The only surviving Priory structure, and a Grade II\* Listed Building
- Cambridge Museum of Technology – built in 1894, the Old Pumping Station is now a museum, community hub and Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Dinky Doors and the Riverside 'spiky' postbox
- Equino Bridge – named after writer and leading abolitionist Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797), a former slave who married and settled in Cambridge
- Stourbridge Common – site of Stourbridge Fair, first held in 1211 and once considered the largest fair in Europe
- Leper Chapel – 12th century Norman chapel, Grade I listed.
- Cambridge Gas Company War Memorial 1921 – Grade II listed monument, the only visible reminder of the giant gasworks that once dominated the area.



## St Andrews-the-Less



In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the church was built as a *capella ante portas* (chapel outside the gates) of Barnwell Priory, a once thriving Augustinian establishment founded a century earlier. It was built for the village that had grown around the priory, so survived destruction when the Priory itself fell victim to Henry the VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. Over the last half century, the church fell into disuse and is now closed. The St Andrew the Less Community Project has been established to revive the church for community benefit.

## Abbey House



Abbey House was once claimed to be the most haunted house in all England. The oldest part of the house was built in 1578 in the old Priory grounds. The Priory buildings were demolished and most of the stone given to build Corpus Christi College. Later owners extended and improved Abbey House up to the 1780s. In 1886 the house and gardens were walled off, the Cellarer's Chequer was given to Cambridge Antiquarian Society and the rest of the site was sold for housing. Abbey House is now home to a Buddhist community. It is open to the public one day every year, in September.

## Cellarers Chequer



This attractive single-vaulted chamber was built between 1213 and 1265. It is the only building from the Barnwell Priory grounds to survive destruction following dissolution in 1538. It may have been used as a store or barn due to its close proximity to Abbey House. The Cellarer made sure the Priory had the provisions it needed week to week. The Chequer was where he conducted his business and was also a trading point with villagers and suppliers. It is now owned by Cambridge City Council. Visitors can see inside one day each year, on the Abbey House open

day. The grounds are now used for monthly Sunday gatherings during warmer months, bringing together residents of all ages.

## Cambridge Museum of Technology



By the late 19th century Riverside was an overcrowded working-class district, widely viewed as a den of crime and vice. It was also where all the sewage of Cambridge washed up. In 1894 a fine pumping and waste destructor station was built – an early energy recycling plant. It burned domestic waste to power boilers which pumped the town's sewage away for treatment. The two engines in the main engine room pumped non-stop for 74 years, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, until the site shut down in 1968. They are the last of their kind in the world. The museum is holds regular steam days and displays celebrating local industry, including the huge gasworks that once dominated the area and the world-leading Pye company over the river, a vital early contributor to the Cambridge Phenomenon of high tech industry.

## Oludah Equiano Bridge and access to Logan's Meadow



This attractive bridge connects Riverside to Logan's Meadow across the river. Built in 2007 following a design competition, it was renamed in 2022 after Oludah Equiano who bought his freedom from slavery and was a leader in the anti-slave trade movement in the UK. He is generally acknowledged as the first political activist within Britain's African community in the 18th century. He lived and married in Cambridge. There is a moving memorial to his daughter at Chesterton Church.

## Logan's Meadow nature reserve

Formerly a grazing marsh, [Logan's Meadow](#) lies just across the river from the Riverside area and offers a delightful detour for nature lovers. It was designated as a local nature reserve in 2005. In

2025 the City Council constructed [two major new ponds](#), encouraging new wetland wildlife such as reed warblers, water vole, kingfishers, reed specialist moths and Daubenton's bats. The colourful [Swift Tower](#) sculpture was constructed in 2011 and aims to provide a home for up to 150 swifts. Swift calls are played from the tower in early summer to attract young returning birds to nest. The [Friends of Logan's Meadow](#) are very active, and run bat walks and moth identification events among others.

### The Engineer's House and Kerb Collective

The Museum of Technology hosts two local businesses which provide food, drink and excellent views of the river. The Engineer's House was built in 1898 to house the first Engineer of the Pumping Station. After decades of use as council accommodation it was reunited with the Museum and refurbished. It now houses a popular bar and pizza business. Next door, the Kerb Collective is a thriving café and bakery with outdoor tables.

### Dinky Doors and the Riverside 'spiky' pillar box



Dinky Doors' unique [miniature sculptures](#) are an increasingly popular feature of Cambridge, and Riverside has two: the 'emailerator' next to the postbox at the junction with Priory Road, and the space-craft outside the Museum of Technology.

The Riverside pillar box is a rare 'anonymous' model as it lacks the royal cypher and the words "Post Office", made all the more unusual because of the spikes on top. It is thought to have been located by the Riverside gasworks originally and that spikes were added to stop people using it to climb over the gasworks wall.

### Stourbridge Common



The Common is both part of the pedestrian and cycle corridor through Riverside, and a vital amenity in its own right for dog-walkers, runners and lovers of peace. Stourbridge Fair, was set up as a fundraiser for the leper hospital of St Mary Magdalene. Helped by its location at the point where the River Cam, then navigable by sea barges from the Wash, crossed the Newmarket Road, it became one of the biggest fairs in Europe, lasting for almost 2 months each year at its peak. John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Pepys and

William Thackeray all mention the fair, and Isaac Newton bought the prism there that led to his theory of optics. Many street names nearby have their origins in items traded at the fair, such as Oyster Row, Garlic Row, Mercers Row and Cheddars Lane.

### **The Leper Chapel**



Known locally as the Leper Chapel, this 12<sup>th</sup> century building is Grade I Listed and forms a beautiful oasis just off Newmarket Road. It is the only building that remains of the Hospital of St Mary Magdalene, which was located well away from the town to treat lepers. It is one of the best surviving examples of a Norman chapel in England, with much of its original structure intact. The chapel is significant for another reason as in 1199 King John granted the hospital a licence to hold Stourbridge Fair as a fundraiser. The fair's success went

far beyond fundraising: along with the university it is credited with helping make Cambridge so prosperous. The Chapel hosts occasional theatrical performances and is open on alternate Sundays to the public. On the first Saturday in September it is the venue for a re-enactment of Stourbridge Fair <https://cambridgeppf.org/etn/leper-chapel-open-day-10-2/> .

### **Cambridge Gas Company War Memorial**



Little trace remains now of the huge gasworks that once towered over Riverside – only this memorial. Now a Grade II listed monument, it was first erected in 1921 and pays tribute to the 22 gas works employees who died in two World Wars. It was relocated to Newmarket Road in 2003 when the site was redeveloped into a Tesco supermarket and apartments.

## **REVITALISE HERITAGE ASSETS FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

The historic buildings below are all important components of a future Heritage Walking Trail (see below). There is also potential to expand their role within the community.

### **Cambridge Museum of Technology**

A major renovation project will soon commence, with the dual aims of making the Engineer's House area an even more vibrant gathering spot for the community and uncovering more exhibition potential to supplement the main Museum space. Opening hours have been extended recently and further improvement initiatives are in the pipeline. The museum plans to open more – mainly during the school holidays – and to continue expanding its offer. It would benefit from new attractions in the area, and new infrastructure such as moorings.

### **St Andrews-the-Less**

This 13th century Grade-2 listed building, now deconsecrated, is currently on the Heritage-at-Risk Register and closed to visitors. Restoring and revitalising the building can help redefine the area as a cultural and economic centre, and a key part of Cambridge's historical story. The St Andrew the Less Community Project has been established to revive the church around three core ideas which could collectively create significant social impact:

- **Heritage:** Restoring the physical building of the church is vital to saving and sharing Riverside's heritage. St Andrew the Less has the potential to become an innovative and immersive heritage centre, linking up with other local heritage sites for both local people and visitors to Cambridge.
- **Community:** Once the church is restored, we will seek to create projects around community and belonging.
- **Biodiversity:** We hope to open up the garden for mental well-being and environmental learning and to connect St Andrew the Less with other environmental and biodiversity sites, such as Logan's Meadow, Abbey House Gardens and both commons.

### **Cellarers Chequer**

The Cellarers Chequer building, owned by the City Council, is open only one day each year at present. Visitors must be supervised as stone fragments, coffins and lids are scattered around inside. It also lacks mains supply or water. We would like to see appropriate uses come forward which could help restore this historic building to a more active life, both in its setting and use of the internal space.

### **Leper Chapel**

The Leper Chapel building and grounds could be further used for community events.

Cambridge Past Present and Future which owns the building are applying to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to fund essential roof repairs and install a toilet for use when the building is open to the public. See also biodiversity proposals later in this section.