



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**



Welcome to Watford's Heritage Trail



This part of the High Street and Parade is the heart of Watford's civic history. From the hub of local government at the Town Hall to the heart of study at Central Library, the area includes a state-of-the-art college and leisure centre. The pond forms a focal point for events and celebration, and the buildings reflect centuries of history and links with nearby Cassiobury Park. This area continues to celebrate Watford's rich civic history.

The flags raised here represent our vibrant and diverse community, and the statues of the Peace Memorial and the Anne Frank tree remain a focus for remembrance. From the Town Hall to Bushey Arches, the High Street stretches about a mile in length.

Points of interest

1 Town Hall (Grade II listed)

The Town Hall is built on the site of a house named The Elms, which was purchased by the council in 1919. The foundation stone for a new Town Hall was laid in May 1938 and the building officially opened in January 1940. The building is listed for its interesting Art Deco style and was designed by C Cowles-Vosey.

2 The Colosseum

Opened at the same time as the Town Hall, it was originally known as the Assembly Halls, and was designed for music, dancing, general meetings and events. The Compton organ, originally from a Gaumont cinema in Chelsea

was installed in 1961. The Assembly Halls were renamed "The Colosseum" in 1994 and boast some of the finest acoustics in the country. The venue has been used for recording film scores including the Oscar winning The Lord of the Rings.

3 Watford Central Library

This library opened in 1928 to replace the old public library in Queens Road which shared a site with the School of Science and Art. Councillor F J B Hemming, chairman of the Watford Library Committee, laid the foundation stone of the new library in February 1928. The completed building was officially opened in December of the same year by Sir Frederick Kenyon.

4 The Peace Memorial (Grade II* listed)

These statues were designed by prominent sculptor Mary Pownall Bromet from Oxhey, who was a former pupil of French sculptor Auguste Rodin. They were unveiled in 1928 and originally situated in front of the Peace Hospital.

The hospital was opened in 1925 having been funded by public subscription, and is now Peace Hospice Care. The statues were initially designed to commemorate those killed during WW1 and are named "Fallen", "Wounded" and "Victory". These were rededicated and were moved to their current location in 1971. Nearby is a tree dedicated to Anne Frank and those lost in conflicts since this time.



High Street (Parade) 127-125 Top Rank 1960's

5 The Pond

This much loved focal point was a natural feature used by Victorians for watering horses and livestock brought to Tuesday market, the south end was sloped to enable animals to drink. The Pond also used to freeze hard enough for ice skating. Over many years, the pond has been adapted to different uses from the practical to a place to meet and relax, and to celebrate the success of Watford Football Club.

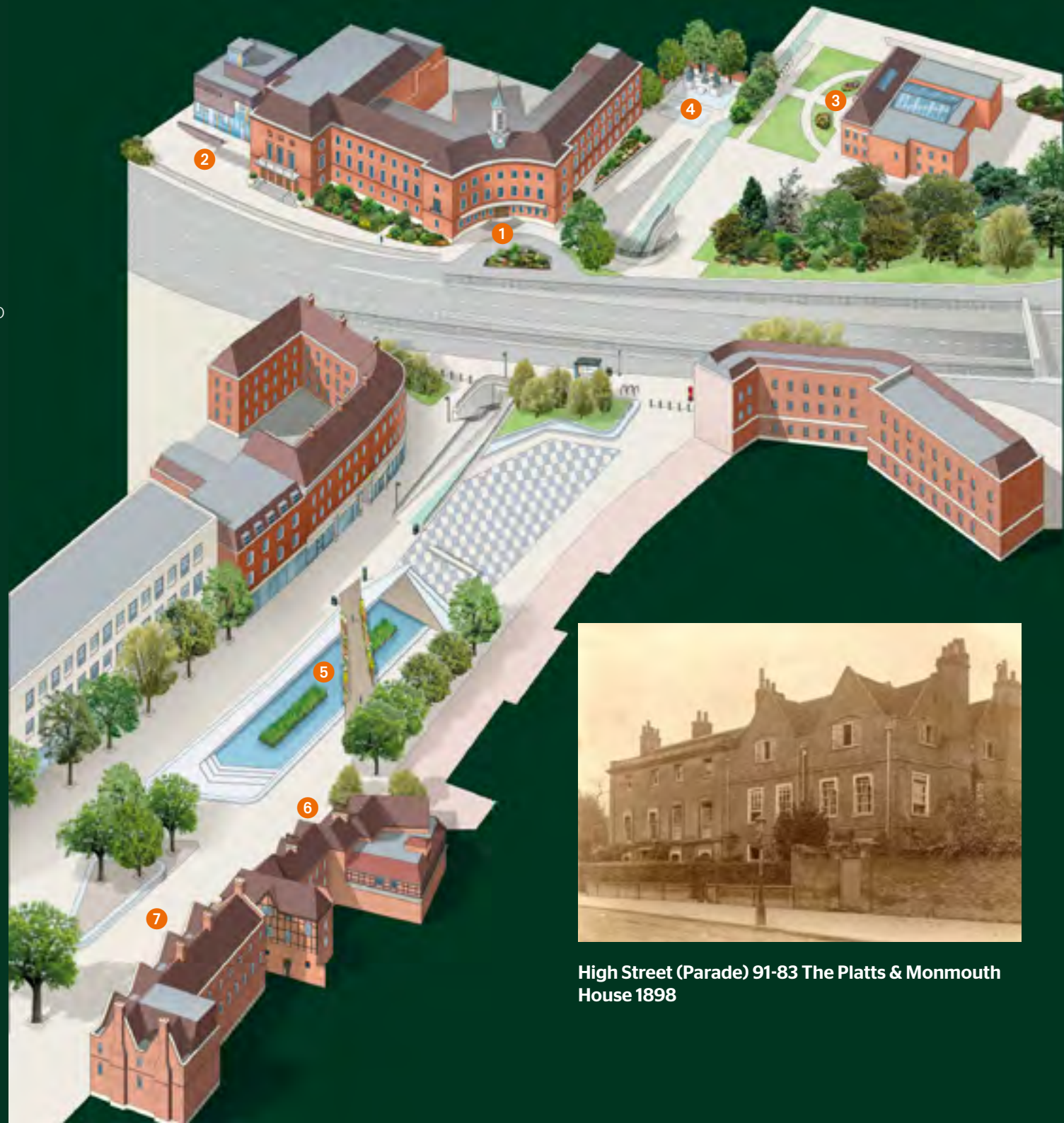
6 Monmouth Place

This building dates to 1928, but it is thought the building materials are much earlier and come from Cassiobury House, which was demolished in 1927. Once the seat of the Earl of Essex, Cassiobury is now one of the most popular public parks in the country.

7 Monmouth House (Grade II listed)

This house was built in the early 1600s by Sir Robert Carey. He had taken the news of the death of Queen Elizabeth I to James VI of Scotland and announced him King James I of England in 1603.

Sir Robert became the Earl of Monmouth and came to live at Moor Park in Rickmansworth. Whilst, there he commissioned Monmouth House where his widow lived after his death. Of particular interest is the fire insurance mark from the days before a public fire service.



High Street (Parade) 91-83 The Platts & Monmouth House 1898

The history of Watford as a settlement began close to this spot in the 12th century, when the Abbot of St. Albans who owned the land here, was given permission to hold a weekly market. He chose a site on a slight rise above the ford over the River Colne, along a route already used by travellers. The market was used by travellers, and the market continued to be held until 1928.

The Abbot also arranged for the first church to be built adjacent to the market: St Mary's, the parish church of Watford. From then onwards, the High Street became the focal point of much of the town's rich heritage stretching about a mile in length from Bushey Arches to the Town Hall.

Points of interest

8 Anthony Joshua Gold Letter Box

Joshua was born in Watford and the letterbox was officially painted gold to celebrate his winning gold in the superheavyweight boxing category at the London 2012 Olympics.

9 Learning Curve

Gateway feature to Sensory Garden. Installed in 2002.

10 Fig Tree Tomb (Grade II listed)

One of 11 listed tombs in the churchyard and a Victorian tourist attraction due to the legend.

11 Gravestone of George Doney a black servant from Cassiobury (Grade II listed)

Watford's black history goes back over 300 years. George Doney had been enslaved as a child, but as a free man at Cassiobury he made a great impact and encouraged the take up of the abolitionist movement.

12 St Mary's Parish Church (Grade I)

Watford's oldest building, the origin of Watford's parish church go back to the 12th Century. Most of the building that stands today dates from the 15th Century.

13 Free School (Grade II* listed)

Founded in 1704 by Mrs Elizabeth Fuller, who devoted her life to charity: "For the teaching of 40 poor boys & 14 poor girls of Watford in good literature & manners". When she died in 1709, the school continued with funds left in her will and with other endowments.

It closed in 1882 and pupils transferred to a newly built school constructed in Derby Road, which then became the Girls and Boys Grammar Schools.



58 High Street (Market Place) on left behind fencing

14 Bedford Almshouses

Built in 1580 by Bridget Morison for: "8 poor women to be chosen from Watford, and from Langley & Chenies in Buckinghamshire".

15 St Mary's Square Millennium Feature

Friendship columns denoting twin towns and festivities.

16 Hornet Sculpture

Installed in 2001, the sculpture celebrates Watford Football Club who have been known as 'the Hornets' since 1960 after changing to a yellow and black kit the previous year. The history of the club can be traced back to 1881 when Henry Grover approached the Earl of Essex for permission to play football in Cassiobury Park

17 Atria Centre

Watford's major shopping destination opened as the Harlequin Centre in 1990.

