

Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans Supplementary Planning Document

February 2024

Consultation Draft



Quality Assurance	
Project title	Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans
Document title	Supplementary Planning Document
Client	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Checked by Project Runner	MH
Approved by Project Director	KS
Project number	5839
Location of file on server	TPUD - Main/Job Server/5839 Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans/5839 4.0 Design Work/5839 4.4 Reports & Output/5839 4.4 indd/InDesign

Revision History		
Revision	Date	Status
1	06-02-2024	Draft
2	13-02-2024	Consultation Draft
3		

Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design
30 King's Bench Street
London SE1 0QX

Telephone
020 7089 2121

mail@tibbalds.co.uk
www.tibbalds.co.uk



Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design



CampbellReith



Aspinall Verdi



Urban Movement

Contents

1. Introduction: Vision and Purpose	3	5. Southern Gateway	25
1.1 Purpose	3	5.1 Illustrative masterplan	25
1.2 Vision	4	5.2 Opportunities and constraints summary	26
2. Planning Policy Context	6	5.3 Southern Gateway strategy	30
2.1 Emerging / Existing policy	6	6. High Street Car Park	42
2.2 Supplementary planning documents (SPD)	7	6.1 Illustrative masterplan	42
3. Town Centre Context and Analysis	8	6.2 Opportunities and constraints summary	43
3.1 Introduction	8	6.3 High Street Car Park strategy	46
3.2 Heritage and character	10	7. Eastern Gateway	55
3.3 Movement and access	10	7.1 Illustrative masterplan	55
3.4 Open space and landscape	12	7.2 Opportunities and constraints summary	56
3.5 Heights	14	7.3 Eastern Gateway strategy	60
3.6 Land use and Ownership	15	8. General Design Principles	68
4. Town Centre - Wide Concept	18	8.1 Built form	68
4.1 Introduction	18	8.2 Public realm	73
4.2 Heights	20	8.3 Sustainability principles	77
4.3 Movement	22	8.4 Public art	79
4.4 Landscape and open space	24	9. Phasing and Delivery	80
4.5 Land use	24		

List of Development Principles

Southern Gateway		High Street Car Park		General Design Principles	
Development Principle		Development Principle			
SG1 – Movement	31	HSCP1 – Movement	48	GD1	68
SG2 – Key frontages and edges	33	HSCP2 – Key frontages and edges	50	GD2	70
SG3 – Heights	34	HSCP3 – Heights	51	GD3	71
SG4 – Land use	35	HSCP4 – Land use	52	GD4	72
SG5 – Play and Green Infrastructure	36	HSCP5 – Play and Green Infrastructure	53	GD5	73
SG6 – Market Square	38	HSCP6 – Public spaces	54	GD6	74
SG7 – Jubilee Gardens	40			GD7	75
SG8 – Central Spine	41	Eastern Gateway	55	GD8	76
		Development Principle		GD9	77
		EG1 – Movement	61	GD10	78
		EG2 – Key frontages and edges	62	GD11	78
		EG3 – Heights	63	GD12	78
		EG4 – Land use	64	GD13	79
		EG5 – Play and Green Infrastructure	65		
		EG6 – Town square	66		
		EG7 – Eastern Spine	67		

1. Introduction: Vision and Purpose

1.1 Purpose

This draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced in parallel with the (emerging) Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP) and will facilitate development of two strategic locations within Bracknell's town centre and a redundant multi-storey car park.

The purpose of the SPD is to build upon Local Plan policies and the Town Centre Vision 2032 (approved by Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) in January 2019) in order to add greater detail and facilitate delivery of the two strategic locations.

The three masterplans within this document cover the Southern and Eastern Gateways, that form key approaches to the centre and have direct links into the heart of the centre, and the High Street Car Park site. All three sites can significantly improve the town centre perception and connectivity.

Upon adoption, this SPD will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the sites.

Applicants for developments within these areas will be required to produce Design Codes, in support of their applications, in accordance with the Local Plan. The Design Codes should follow the development principles set out within this masterplan SPD.

The Southern Gateway Development Area is allocated for development by Local Plan Policy LP10, and consists of the land east of Station Way and north of Church Road, the Bus Station, Station Road, Station Green, Market Street and Jubilee Gardens, The Ring, Bracknell (refer to figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1: Site Ref LP10 - The Southern Gateway Development Area

The Eastern Gateway Development Area is allocated for development by Local Plan Policy LP9 and consists of the land at Town Square and The Ring, Bracknell (refer to figure 1.2).



Figure 1.2: Site Ref LP9 – The Eastern Gateway Development Area

Policy LP10

- Approx. 600 dwellings (35% affordable)
- 22,300 m² office floorspace (Class E – restricted)
- 1,500 m² floorspace for use within Class E (unrestricted)

Policy LP9

- Approx. 210 dwellings (35% affordable)
- 3,160 m² office floorspace (Class E – restricted)
- 8,600 m² sqm floorspace for use within Class E (minimum of 500 m² unrestricted) and Class C1 (hotel use)

The High Street Car Park site consists of the land between The Ring and Market Street. The current multi-storey car park structure is failing and has recently been closed and no longer functions as a car park; the site will therefore require redevelopment. The site is not allocated and sits outside the BFLP policy but guidance is included in the SPD given its proximity and significance as a natural continuation of the Southern Gateway development. It will also provide the opportunity for a key connection between the town centre to the east, and Market Street and Peel Centre to the west.



Figure 1.3: High Street Car Park Development Area

- 142 dwellings
- 2,284 m² commercial floorspace (TBC)

1.2 Vision

Following completion of the Lexicon, the Council published the Bracknell Town Centre Vision 2032 setting out the vision for the continuing redevelopment of the town centre. The document establishes high level approaches to future development including housing, retail and workspace.

The importance of connections and wayfinding is firmly established with an expectation that people will be able to get around Bracknell Town Centre safely and actively on foot, bicycle or by public transport.



Figure 1.4: Bracknell Town Centre Vision 2032

The Vision also defines a key legacy of the new town as one where landscape and the built environment are integrated, establishing the assumption that this be embraced as part of any new development.

It identifies a range of opportunities and interventions to help deliver this which will take some years due to the scale of development proposed.

Included in this and allocated within the Short-Term section of The Vision are the two strategic eastern and southern gateway locations covered by this SPD, with an expectation that development will come forward in the near future. Within the Vision, the Southern Gateway is referred to as the Station Quarter and the Eastern Gateway is addressed as the Civic Quarter.

The Southern Gateway Development Area (in the Vision referred to as the Station Quarter)

The framework for this area proposes:

- redevelopment of the bus station site by moving the bus stops to on-street locations to create a direct connection between the station and the town centre;
- realignment of The Ring and the introduction of new urban blocks establishing a network of two way streets and spaces; and
- predominantly a residential mix of uses.

The Eastern Gateway Development Area (in the Vision referred to as the Civic Quarter)

The framework for this area proposes:

- a strong pedestrian and cyclist connection with the town centre and integration with the existing and proposed network of streets and spaces; and
- mixed use development and new cultural activities if the library is to be replaced.

The High Street Car Park site is mentioned as an opportunity allowing the introduction of a connecting route from Market Street through to the town centre.

Overarching, relevant points from the Town Centre Vision are summarised below:

- Bracknell will realise its potential as a strong town centre, serving a prosperous and dynamic area.
- Bracknell will draw on its twentieth century New Town character and blend this with its deeper legacy as a historic town to create a hybrid which captures the benefits of both worlds.
- The strong retail centre which has been carefully developed will be extended with complementary uses, supporting a diverse and resilient economy.
- New cultural activities, leisure uses, hotels, high quality offices and homes will form a major part of ensuring that the town centre feels vibrant and welcoming.
- Bracknell will respond to its role as an important hub for tech industries by addressing the needs of a smart, modern workforce.

- The inner town centre road structure will be remodelled to establish a better-connected network of sites, encouraging walking and cycling routes, creating a more legible centre.
- A phasing strategy to accommodate medium and longer term development based on a flexible design to ensure buildings and their uses can evolve to suit the needs for future generations. One of these longer term sites is the High Street Car Park - its redevelopment will allow the introduction of a connecting route from Market Street linking the Peel Centre and the western industrial areas with the town centre.

- The car will continue to be accommodated, but in ways which anticipate the possibility of significant changes in mobility over the coming generation.
- The resilient urban form will help Bracknell to continue to adapt and develop. The result will be a welcoming, sociable and invigorating place which provides amenity, entertainment and excitement for all.



Figure 1.5: Bracknell Town Centre Masterplans – aerial view

2. Planning Policy Context

This section of the SPD provides an overview of relevant planning policy and guidance. Because the SPD is being produced in parallel with the emerging Local Plan, particular regard has been paid to emerging policy. Current spatial policy and guidance has also been summarised.

2.1 Emerging / Existing policy

Emerging Bracknell Forest Local Plan (2021)

The emerging Bracknell Forest Local Plan (BFLP) will replace the Core Strategy (2008) and the saved policies in the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002).

The emerging BFLP includes both site specific and general policies relevant to the SPD sites. Once adopted the BFLP will become part of the local development plan for Bracknell Forest borough and will set the policy framework for this SPD. The duration of the new Local Plan will run until 2037.

Key policy principles relevant to the SPD include sustainable development, design and character, tall buildings, green infrastructure, amenity space, trees, transportation and parking.

Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

Bracknell Town Council applied successfully for the designation of a neighbourhood area to cover the civil parish of Bracknell in 2014. In October 2021 the neighbourhood plan was 'made'. This means that the neighbourhood plan was adopted as part of the local development plan for the area. Neighbourhood plan policies hold equal weight with local plan policies in the neighbourhood area, though they must be in general conformity with local plan strategic policy.

The neighbourhood area covers Bracknell town centre and surrounding areas.

The neighbourhood plan contains policies which cover trees, gardens and open space (EV4, EV5, HO5), community facilities (EV12), streetscape (HO4) and design (HO6, HO7, HO8).

Policies support proposals which retain or offer alternative provision of Open Space of Public Value. There is an expectation that tree planting is incorporated as part of all new development, particularly at gateway locations such as the sites in this SPD.

2.2 Supplementary planning documents (SPD)

SPDs like this one build on and provide more detailed advice or guidance to development plan policies. Summarised below are other SPDs for Bracknell Forest which are relevant to the sites in this SPD.

Design SPD (2017)

The Design SPD sets out Bracknell Forest's commitment that good design is a fundamental quality of development. The SPD lists key principles and best practices for guiding development within the Borough, including the importance of:

- understanding context;
- integrating the site into its surroundings;
- arrangement and scale of developments; and
- setting out principles for streets, blocks, open spaces and landscape, as well as plots, frontages and edges.

Character Area Assessments SPD (2010)

A number of character areas are appraised, including within Bracknell town centre. The Bracknell character assessment describes the overall character of Bracknell as including pockets of Victorian development, housing estates of varying age, including those developed as part of the new town, and office developments. However, it mainly focuses on areas of Bracknell built before the new town designation in 1949.

The sites within this SPD are not located within any of the specific area assessments in the Character Area Assessments SPD. Though the Southern Gateway site is adjacent to Character Area A: Church Road, Larges Lane, Bracknell.

Streetscene SPD (2011)

The Streetscene SPD establishes principles for the streetscene and public realm. Its primary focus is on residential streets, but the principles can be applied to major routes too.

Highway and street design principles are established for new streets and include chapters on materials, street furniture, clutter, parking, lighting, landscaping, waste and services.

Designing for Accessibility in Bracknell Forest SPD (2006)

The Accessibility SPD outlines the importance of considering built environment design and its impact on disabled people, older people and parents with children.

3. Town Centre Context and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the opportunities and constraints provided by the wider town centre context, including:

- Heritage and character;
- Movement and access;
- Open space and landscape;
- Heights; and
- Land use and ownership.

This section applies to all masterplan areas. More site-specific analysis is included in sections 5, 6 and 7.

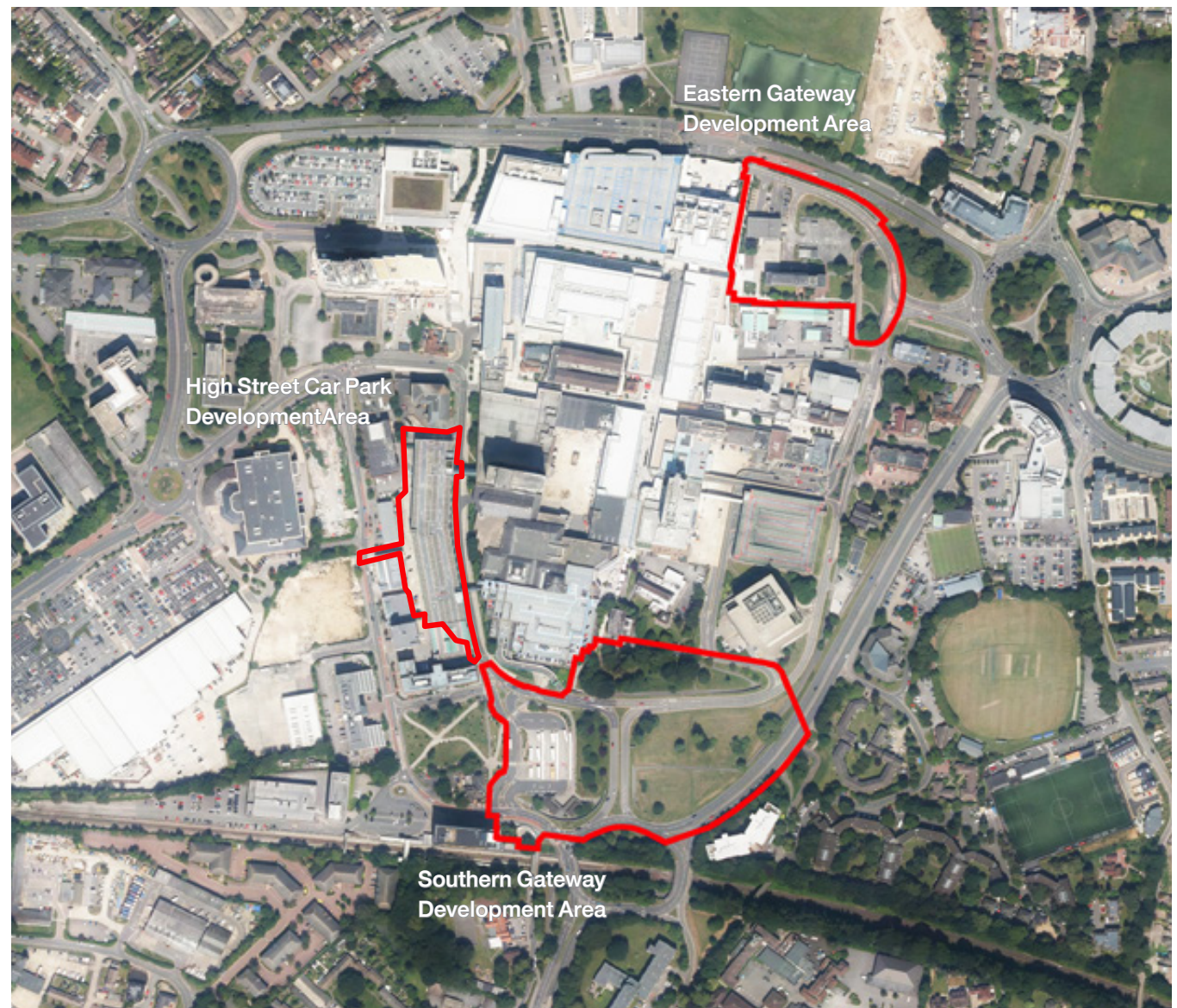


Figure 3.1: Town Centre aerial photo with masterplan site boundaries

Bracknell town was one of the first New Towns built in post-war Britain. Its layout is based on the town planning principles of that era with the Town Centre boundary clearly defined by the road structure separating it from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Employment areas form separate zones within the urban area and large areas of open space offer a rich and varied landscape to the whole borough.

The Town Centre lies in the heart of the borough and acts as a transport hub serving the whole of the borough area and further afield. It has seen little development apart from the 1980s when the Princess Square shopping centre was completed but more recently the completion of The Lexicon has fulfilled a large part of the continuing regeneration of the centre. Residential accommodation is increasing through the refurbishment of commercial buildings and further proposals for high density residential led mixed use developments are coming forward or are under construction both in and around the town centre.

All these proposals together with the enhancements of the shopping offer have made the town centre a more attractive place to visit and spend time in.

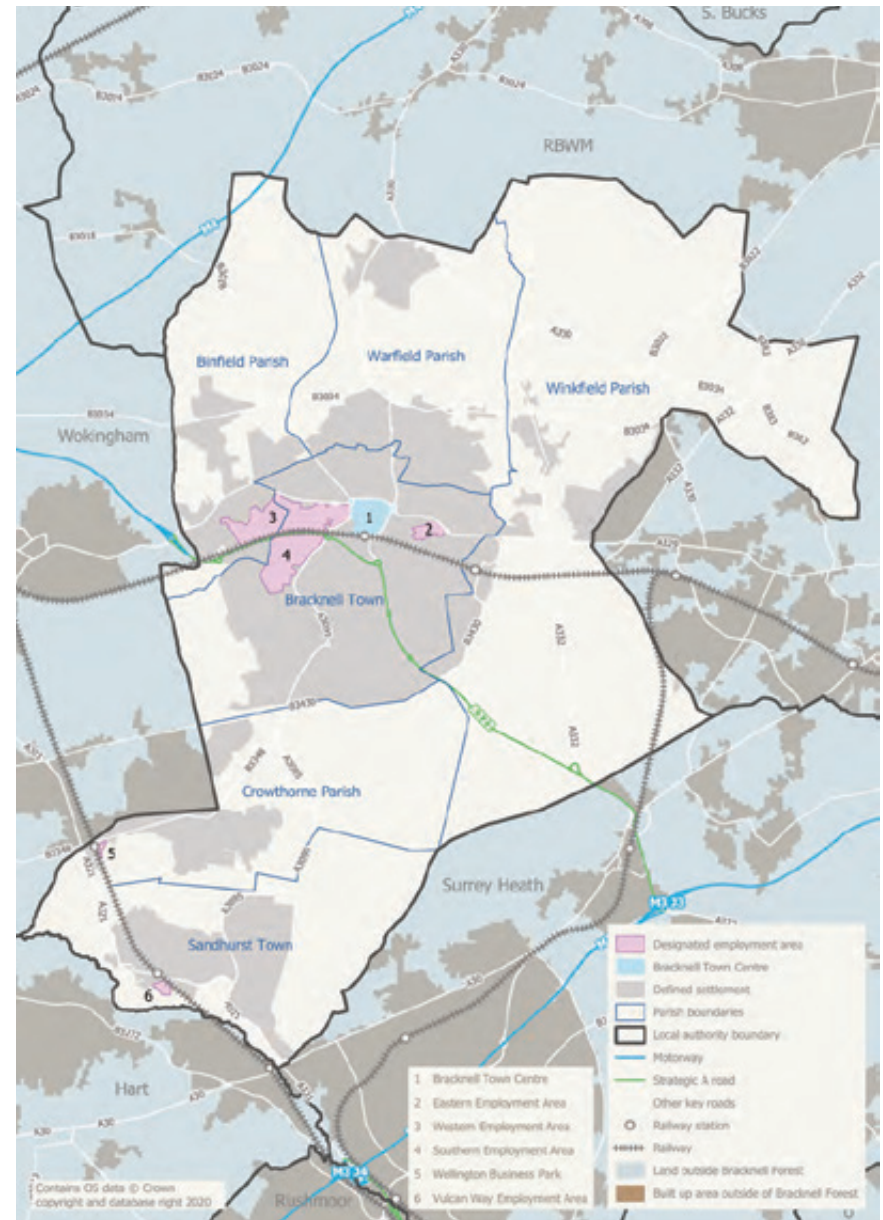


Figure 3.2: Bracknell Forest Council map (extracted from Pre-Submission Bracknell Forest Local Plan (March 2021), p21

3.2 Heritage and character

Bracknell was designated a new town in 1949 and developed around the existing small market town of Bracknell. The initial designation intended for a population of 25,000 which was revised to 55,000-60,000 in 1962. Today Bracknell Forest has an estimated population of 125,000.

The predominant built environment is post war, with few buildings and features which predate the new town designation.

There are no conservation areas within the immediate surroundings of the masterplan areas, however there are a number of heritage assets and character considerations, as listed below:

- New town heritage remains in the form of the library building and Easthampstead House. Both are modernist blocks on the Eastern Gateway site. They are considered unique in their architectural character and positive heritage features from Bracknell's new town heritage.
- In addition to the modernist new town buildings the Eastern Gateway site includes the Town Square which was the focal point of this former Civic Quarter which since the council offices have moved has lost its status
- The Market Inn which is adjacent to the current bus stop is a locally listed heritage asset.



Figure 3.3: Library



Figure 3.4: Easthampstead House



Figure 3.5: Market Inn - Locally listed

3.3 Movement and access

The highway infrastructure is currently prioritising vehicle movement over the movement of people and town centre experience. This has resulted in the dominance of vehicles, in particular on the arrival into Bracknell town centre. The experience of moving around the pedestrianised shopping centre streets is very different, and it is an environment in which it is pleasant to spend time. Re-balancing town centre streets outside the pedestrianised area to offer a better balance between movement and place quality is a key opportunity.

Currently the ring road (Church Road and Millennium Way) is duplicating the movement function of The Ring for example. There are future opportunities to rationalise the highway network and reduce duplication in favour of creating active travel and public transport routes. The ring road is currently a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement.

Due to this extensive wide road network, pedestrians and cyclists are forced to use subterranean uninviting underpasses for their own safety and ease of movement. Like other new towns, there exists a clear segregation between people and vehicles. Pedestrians do attempt to cross the carriageway which presents significant safety issues. Between 2017 - 2021 there were 32 pedestrian collisions on roads within the town centre, 30 slight collisions, 1 serious and 1 fatal.

Bracknell has a network of cycle routes which are traffic-free, but this segregation often means routes do not arrive at destinations people want to get to such as shops and community facilities. This may mean only the most experienced cyclists use core routes through the town. The Bus Station covers a large area and dominates the southern part of the Town Centre and the station forecourt. It is adjacent to the train station and is part of a potential gateway area into the town centre. However, legibility for pedestrians is currently impacted by the dominance of roads and the bus stopping area which dominates and severs any direct connection between the two stations and beyond.

Car parking provision in the town centre is generous with a number of off-street parking options. These currently operate below their capacity and have an impact on the vibrancy of the streets around them which lack active frontages.



Figure 3.6: Pedestrian crossing Church Road



Figure 3.7: Existing bus movement



Figure 3.8: Existing pedestrian movement

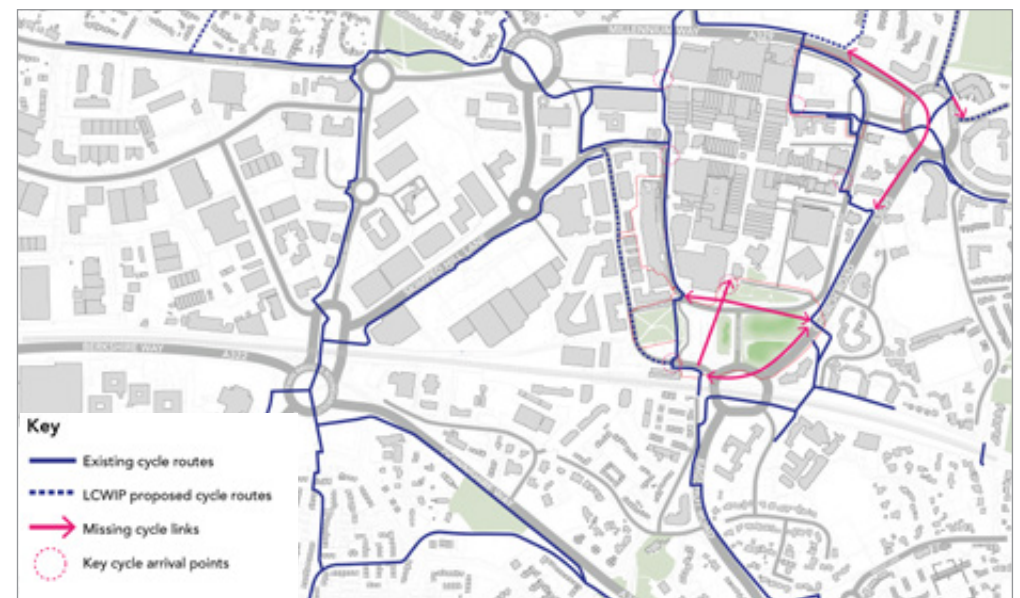


Figure 3.9: Existing cycle movement

3.4 Open space and landscape



Figure 3.10: Green infrastructure and walking and cycling accessibility

A key legacy of the New Town is the integration of landscape and nature, and Bracknell retains open spaces and extensive tree planting connecting the town centre with the surrounding landscape.

Woodland covers approximately 38% of the Borough, making it one of the most densely covered Boroughs in the UK.

The Borough has 17 key open spaces serving the population. These are predominantly green spaces and include parks, playing fields and other spaces. This mix includes publicly accessible and semi-public open spaces, including school grounds and a cemetery.

The Town Centre itself, however, consists mostly of hard surfaces with a few pockets of softer open space, most notably Jubilee Gardens and Station Green.



Figure 3.11: Bracknell Town Centre Vision 2032

Station Green is a park on an area of previously disused land near Bracknell railway station and bus station. The park was intended to provide public open space to replace Jubilee Gardens which at the time was expected to be developed as part of the regeneration of the town centre. It is 0.42 hectares - roughly half the size of a football pitch.

Jubilee Gardens is a green space located at the southern edge of the pedestrianised area. It contains mature trees and a small seating area and provides a unique pocket of nature within the town centre. The gardens site area is 0.51ha.



Figure 3.12: Station Green



Figure 3.13: Jubilee Gardens

3.5 Heights

Building heights within the town centre generally follow new town principles of lower building heights (around 3 storeys) with a few distinct towers (Ocean House at 14 storeys).

The surrounding residential areas generally comprise buildings of 2-3 storeys with a few exceptions where new residential apartments have been built.

Modern office buildings in the surrounding area like the Arlington Square Business Park tend to be around 4-5 storeys. Buildings tend to step up towards the station and the town centre.

Within the town centre, newer residential-led developments (built and permitted) reach heights up to 19 storeys (Royal Winchester House). Other recent, but not yet completed, residential developments in the area start at 5 and rise to 11 storeys high and Bracknell Beeches (approved subject to Section 106 legal agreement) is up to 16 storeys high.

A review of existing and permitted (some currently under construction) building heights within the area suggests a massing profile that concentrates taller buildings closer to the station and the town centre gateways, with Royal Winchester House marking the western gateway. This is currently the tallest building in Bracknell with the second tallest being Ocean House at 14 storeys.

Around the station area, commercial buildings are lower than the new residential-led developments and range from: One Station Square – 8 storeys, Columbia House – 6 storeys and Time square – 5 storeys.

The emerging Local Plan has listed criteria for defining tall buildings in the borough and includes a list of tall buildings which are predominantly on the outskirts of the town centre.

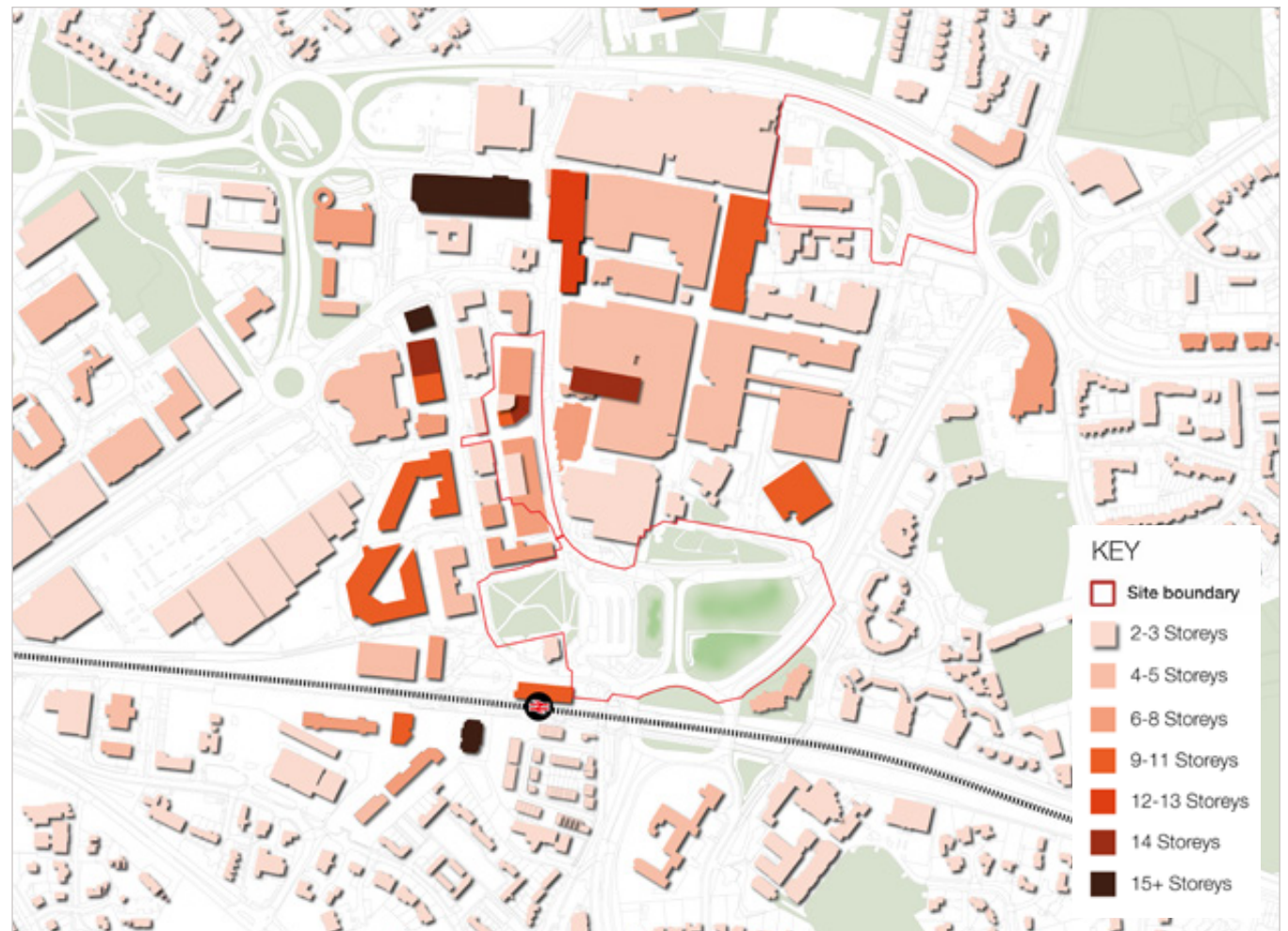


Figure 3.14: Existing and permitted heights

3.6 Land use and Ownership

Bracknell has undergone several periods of renewal over the years and the most recent wave has included a new shopping centre, The Lexicon completed in 2017.



Figure 3.15: Lexicon Shopping Centre

©TIBBALDS FEBRUARY 2024



Figure 3.16: Existing town centre uses

KEY

- | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Leisure | Retail | Education | Religious | Public car parking |
| Office | Food and beverage | Residential | Community | Private car parking |

Uses within the town centre have been diversifying as a result of ongoing regeneration projects. Bracknell remains an important retail centre and the core of retail uses is centred around the pedestrianised Braccan Walk. Several purpose-built office blocks are located within the ring road and Bracknell Forest Council is situated immediately to the west of the Southern Gateway area. Leisure and cultural uses complete the town centre offer.

The diagram above (figure 3.16) illustrates the dominance of large footprint retail and commercial uses within the town centre. On the edges, a number of multi-storey car parks support the town centre and commercial uses.

Market Street has become more mixed-use with residential accommodation amongst the offices and retail uses. Other residential-led schemes are being delivered, including two high density residential schemes with mixed uses at ground level just off Market Street.

Residential uses in the form of high-density urban apartment blocks are further adding to the town centre diversity. Demand for housing has increased in the town centre and several residential developments are under construction or in the pipeline. This is a response to demand for more central living both locally and nationally.

Both masterplan sites covered by the SPD are in the ownership of Bracknell Forest Council. The Council is committed to use its own land ownership to further facilitate town centre regeneration and deliver new homes.

Market analysis – to inform development proposals

A property market analysis has been undertaken to review the residential and commercial markets in and around Bracknell Town. The review aimed to identify the opportunities that exist for a new development and ensure that the proposed uses within the masterplans reflect demand over both the short and long-term future. The assessment relies on the analysis of property data and consultation with property agents active in the local market. Below is a summary of the conclusions of this analysis:

Residential summary

- Opportunity to deliver higher density flatted accommodation due to the location of the sites.
- There is an active rental market in the town centre which provides a diverse range of different products including individual private lets, managed blocks and build to rent schemes. The sales and rental markets demand appears to be driven by smaller units of up to two bedrooms
- Senior accommodation could present an opportunity.

Private Sales – There has been a reasonable amount of new build residential development over the past few years, the majority being studio and 1 & 2 bed flatted units mainly through conversion of commercial buildings. There is also a substantial number of new developments coming forward or under construction in the area. Notably there is a lack of larger 3+ bedroom properties suggesting that the demand for this type of unit is focussed in areas outside the town centre. As the town centre changes further, there may be some scope for a different style of residential product in the form of larger 2 bed and/or 3 bed flatted units, duplex apartments or town houses. Overall, the market analysis indicates that the delivery of flatted housing will present an opportunity within the town centre and can be promoted in the masterplan.

Rental market - In recent years, affordability limitations in the sales market have caused the proportion of private tenants to increase. This has been combined with a shifting perception of the rental market, which is now considered a more popular and flexible lifestyle choice. In addition recent growth in the rental market has also been attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic where people have adopted a 'try before you buy' attitude towards the residential market. Review of the rental market in Bracknell Town Centre has demonstrated that demand for rented flatted accommodation is strong.

Retail summary

It is anticipated that any new residential development could provide opportunities for new smaller-scale convenience floorspace, particularly to the south of the town as part of the Southern Gateway. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the emergence of a trend whereby the public have become more reliant on being able to access their centres primarily for convenience and the term ‘hyper-localism’ has been coined. With the proximity of the site to the rail and bus links, there may be an opportunity for a smaller, express-style convenience offer.

It is recommended that the retail needs are reassessed once the masterplan has been progressed to ensure that any retail space is proportionate and does not impact upon the existing offer.

Food & beverage summary

At present it is not anticipated that large volumes of F&B floorspace will be necessary. Over the longer term, and perhaps once new communities and local populations have arrived, F&B uses could play an increased role in maintaining and evolving a sense of place. This may create opportunities for the provision of F&B space as part of new mixed-use development, particularly on the Southern Gateway site which presents a more logical setting considering the proximity to transport links (and therefore a flow of pedestrians) as well as the size of the site.

Leisure summary

The provision of any such uses must be considered carefully to ensure that footfall is not attracted away from existing hubs. Health and fitness and other leisure uses (for example a nightclub, indoor cycling studio etc.) can be located on an ad-hoc basis. The provision of some of these uses at ground floor level of a residential block may provide an attractive location.

Commercial summary

The relatively recent completion of The Lexicon has meant the town centre is served by a contemporary and diverse offering that serves the town centre’s catchment. As such, the need for new commercial space is dependent on this catchment expanding or an influx of new permanent residents located within the ring roads. There may be scope for new small-scale convenience offerings and ideally, these can be accommodated as part of the new residential schemes. It is important that the existing centre benefits from the increased population and activity following redevelopment and that these new communities integrate well with the surrounding area to create a better quality of place and stronger local economy.

Office uses are also likely to be a longer-term prospect once the residential development has been delivered and communities are established. It is anticipated that the key to ensuring the vitality of any office space will be the creation of place; instilling a shift towards locally-based employment

uses as opposed to those to the west of the town centre. Given the volume and diversity of existing office spaces in wider Bracknell, it is not anticipated that office uses will drive the sites forward. However ancillary, flexible space could prove viable dependent on the type of residential development which comes forward.

Overall, commercial development is not seen as a primary driver for change across the town centre. That is not to say, however, that commercial uses will not play a role in integrating the masterplan sites with the wider town centre over the medium to longer term. Much will depend on the socio-economic changes instigated by any residential development and the demographic characteristics of prospective residents. Regardless, new residents will bring increased demand for local services, as will an influx of part and full-time working populations. This will be further strengthened by the proposed improved linkages between the key sites.

Hotel summary

For its size and number of annual overnight stays, Bracknell has a reasonable hotel offering. Consultations with various operators have revealed there to be preliminary interest from some of the mid-to-upper brands including Hilton and Jurys Inn. Hilton have expressed a particular interest in meeting with the Council to discuss procurement options should hotel uses be considered a viable use at either of the sites.

4. Town Centre - Wide Concept

4.1 Introduction

This section describes the town centre-wide concept which has influenced the masterplans for the Eastern and Southern Gateways and High Street Car Park and ensures that the sites are developed with a view towards the town centre as a whole. Specific design and masterplan requirements for each area are included within sections 5, 6 and 7 and detailed town centre-wide design principles in Section 8.

The following concept is shaped around the key objectives and principles set out in the Town Centre Vision:

- Bracknell will draw on its twentieth century New Town character and blend this with its deeper legacy as a historic town to create a hybrid which captures the benefits of both worlds.
- The strong retail centre which has been carefully developed will be extended with complementary uses, supporting a diverse and resilient economy.
- New cultural activities, leisure uses, hotels, high quality offices and homes will form a major part of ensuring that the town centre feels vibrant and welcoming.
- The inner town centre road structure will be remodelled to establish a better-connected network of sites, encouraging walking and cycling routes, creating a more legible centre.
- The car will continue to be accommodated, but in ways which anticipate the possibility of significant changes in mobility over the coming generation.
- The resilient urban form will help Bracknell to continue to adapt and develop. The result will be a welcoming, sociable and invigorating place which provides amenity, entertainment and excitement for all.

The key destination within the town centre is the pedestrianised Braccan Walk. The Southern and Eastern Gateways provide key gateways and routes into this area. On the southern edge, the station is another key destination, and connectivity between the railway and bus stations and the town centre facilities is essential. The High Street Car Park site offers opportunity for a key east-west link from the Peel Centre to the Lexicon and beyond.

The town centre in its nature is inward looking and the three masterplan areas provide the opportunity to create a more outward looking and welcoming approach. The key routes from the station into the town centre and the approaches from the east and west will be signified through a series of spaces.

Routes into the town centre will be clearly framed with attractive frontages and active ground floors. Gateways, landmark buildings, and key views will further enhance the legibility of the town centre as a whole.

Concept Diagram



Figure 4.1: Concept diagram

4.2 Heights

The following town centre-wide height strategy has been applied to the masterplan areas. Taller buildings will act as markers for movement to and through the sites and provide a clear sense of orientation within the urban environment. Proposals will also be expected to comply with the Tall Buildings policy in the emerging Local Plan.

The approach to building heights for the area is informed by:

- the consideration of existing building heights and those set by consented schemes;
- the topography of the areas; and
- microclimate and overshadowing.

Building heights should support the overall approach to movement and urban design and aid wayfinding by:

- locating buildings to respond to and terminate key views;
- creating a cluster of taller buildings close to the station to help provide a physical and visual landmark to signpost this destination;
- stepping down building heights close to the existing two-storey locally listed Market Inn;
- providing a tall building at the east end of the eastern gateway masterplan;
- providing a tall building at the junction between the east-west route and The Ring within the High Street Car Park site; and
- keeping the remainder of the masterplan area within a height range of 5 - 8 storeys in height.

At application stage, detailed height strategies for each site will have to be:

- tested through wind, overshadowing, sunlight and daylight studies; and
- justified in regard to the urban design strategy, views and their support of the legibility within the wider town centre.

Changes in height and massing should be used to create visual interest, long 'walls' of the same height should be avoided and building breaks and changes in height should be introduced.

Landmark locations including key corners, termination points of vistas and the edges along key approaches to the sites may be marked with localised increases in storey heights.

Broadly the strategy proposes an increase in heights towards each of the gateways. These increases in heights are delivered through a small cluster of taller buildings in the Southern Gateway a single landmark building in the Eastern Gateway, and a tall element within the development of the High Street Car Park site. This strategy works with the existing and committed developments and ensures that the existing Royal Winchester House building remains a localised high point.

The strategy also reflects the recent developments on the western side of the town centre – Amber House and the Bus Depot site, which also signify an increase in height towards the Southern Gateway.

The Massing strategy diagrams below also include future developments such as Bracknell Beeches and Market Street.

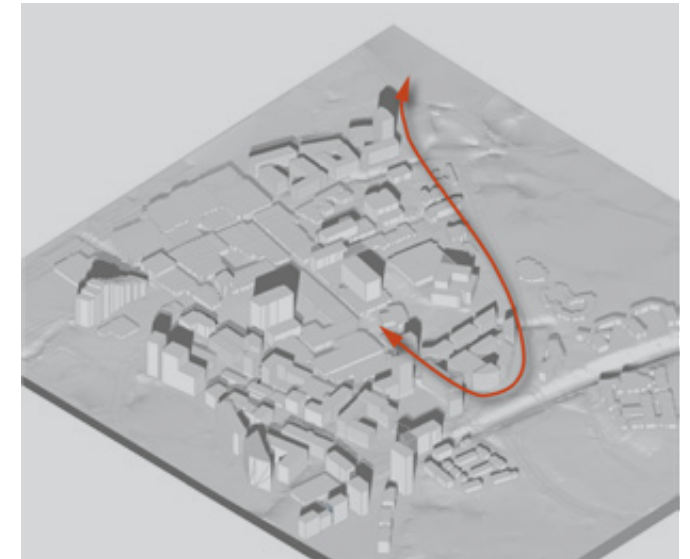


Figure 4.2: Massing strategy – aerial view from the south-west: tall buildings address the public square in the Southern Gateway (foreground) and in the Eastern Gateway (background) the Met Office roundabout

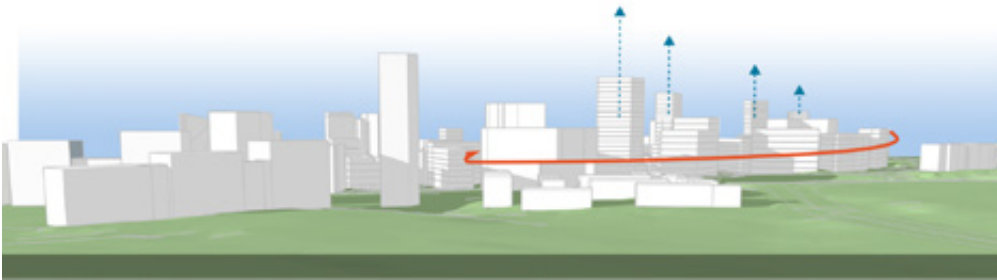


Figure 4.3: Massing strategy – view from the south-west; a series of vertical elements aid wayfinding throughout the town centre area

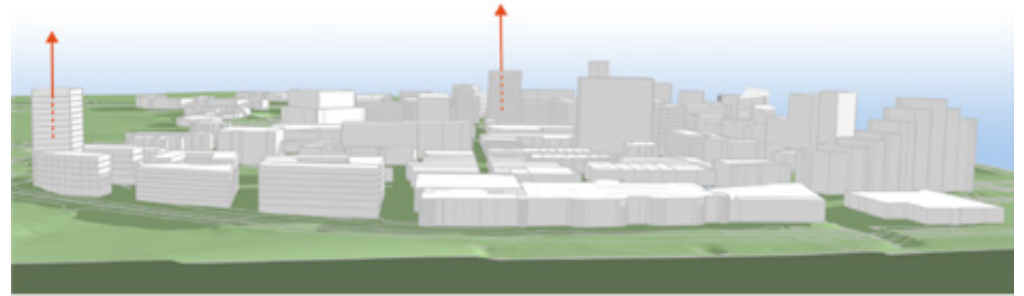


Figure 4.5: Massing strategy – aerial view from the north with the Eastern Gateway to the west and Southern Gateway centrally located in the background

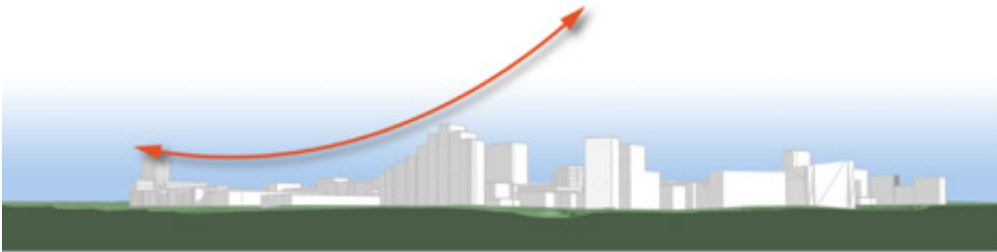


Figure 4.4: Massing strategy – view indicating the eastern gateway massing in relation to Royal Winchester the tallest building within the town centre area



Figure 4.6: Massing strategy – view from the north-west indicating height distribution within the town centre

4.3 Movement

The Southern and Eastern Gateway areas must contribute to and connect into the proposed movement network that is rebalanced towards walking and cycling. The overarching movement strategy is illustrated in figures 4.7 and 4.8.



Figure 4.7: Proposed movement

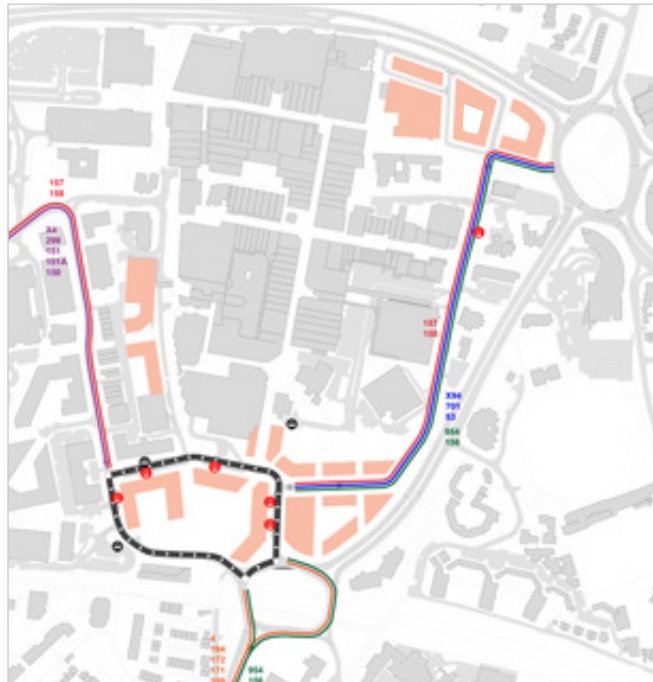


Figure 4.8: Proposed bus movement

Key

- Strategic roads
- Local Streets
- Pedestrian Priority
- Bus Stop/Stand
- Updated Cycling Network plugging into existing
- Ped/Cycle Surface level crossing
- Ped/Cycle Underpass improvements

General movement routes and connectivity

A key principle for town-wide movement is to create a network of two-way streets and replace the one-way streets, within the masterplan areas. The reasons for this are to increase permeability, especially for cyclists, as well as reduce vehicle speeds – with two-way streets having been demonstrated to reduce speeds compared with one-way streets.

Station Way and The Ring will be reduced in width to two lanes. Moving north from Station Roundabout, vehicles can move two-way along Church Road and/or Market Street, with the functionality of Station Road and Station Way now having been consolidated, to unlock development land and public space. General traffic (two-way) and buses (one-way northbound) will use Station Way to access the ring with buses turning west – stopping and standing – before moving north or back south on Market Street. Moving north along The Ring, all traffic is two-way with all accesses maintained. Vehicles can exit onto the strategic highway network at Weather Way and servicing vehicles can continue to access the shopping centre on a realigned access road.

Bus Station and movement

The bus station will be moved from its current location and replaced by new bus stops on Station Way/Station Road and Market Street. Buses will move in an anticlockwise way from the Station roundabout along Station Way/Station Road and onto Market Street (refer to Figure 4.8). Bus station facilities will be re-provided in a convenient location within the new development.

Walking and Cycling

All subways within the masterplan areas will be removed. Pedestrian and cycle movement will be at street level and facilitate travel along key desire lines via a direct route from the station to the town centre and the surrounding existing networks to maximise connectivity within the town centre and beyond (refer to Figure 4.7).

Cycling from the station or further south is now accommodated at grade with the spiral ramp being removed. Cycles will cross Market Street in a new Toucan crossing into the new piazza space, proceeding north until The Ring, where they can move into the town centre over a new crossing or move east along The Ring, crossing Church Road on a new crossing to join the existing cycle network.

Cycling east-west through the northern site is now accommodated at grade for as long as possible, with cycles descending into the Met Office Roundabout underpass east of The Ring.

Parking

The masterplan strategy is based on a consolidated parking model. Rather than each plot delivering its own parking, spaces will generally be consolidated within each area in a centrally located multi-storey car park which will provide parking for residents in line with council standards. This strategy has been market tested.

It is envisaged that most parking for the new development will be accommodated in accordance with this strategy, to minimise the number of vehicles on street and create a more car-free environment within the wider development whilst accommodating parking needs for residents and visitors.

Parking will be unallocated, to enable visitors to park when needed, providing 'off-street communal' parking as per the Manual for Streets (2007) parking classifications.

Disabled parking spaces will be provided within consolidated parking structures and on-street where suitable to ensure access for all is maintained. Disabled parking bays will be provided at a rate of 10% of the overall parking provision in accordance to BFC Parking Standards SPD 2016.

Although any parking space will be able to be allocated to blue badge holders at any time, accessible perpendicular parking bays will be provided, distributed across car parks. As these parking areas are off-street, potential conflicts with vehicles will be reduced.

Care will be taken to ensure that disabled parking spaces are provided in close proximity of building entrances, taking priority over non-disabled spaces.

Princess Square Car Park access and egress will remain unchanged.

4.4 Landscape and open space

The landscape and open space concept is formed around a series of new and improved spaces located along the key north-south route leading from the station into the town centre as well as the eastern approach and the introduction of a new east-west pedestrian priority street through the middle of the High Street Car Park site linking the Peel Centre to The Lexicon.

Spaces will be of varying scale, character and function, contributing to the richness of the town centre as a whole and forming a series of destination spaces visually interlinked with one another (refer to concept diagram Figure 4.1 above).

Station Green will be replaced by a new Market Square, which is centrally located and will enable the pedestrian and cycle desire line from the station to the town centre. This space will as a minimum be the same area as the existing Station Green (min. 0.42 hectares) and include green and hard landscape to provide a multi-functional urban space.

The concept establishes the following key spaces, which are described in more detail within sections 5, 6 and 7:

- New Market Square, replacing the existing Station Green;
- Jubilee Gardens retained and improved;
- Town Square retained and improved; and
- A new East-West route through the middle of the High Street Car Park site.

4.5 Land use

The Council's planning policy aims to regenerate the sites as vibrant and sustainable mixed-use areas that contribute to the town centres vitality. Care must be taken to ensure a good balance with the core town centre offer.

The Southern and Eastern Gateway areas are seen to be contributing to, but not competing with the core retail centre. At the planning application stage impact will need to be demonstrated.



KEY

■ Leisure	■ Food and beverage	■ Religious	■ Private car parking
■ Office	■ Education	■ Community	■ Residential with ground level workspace
■ Retail	■ Residential	■ Public car parking	■ Children and youth play

Figure 4.9: Proposed land uses within the town centre context

5. Southern Gateway

5.1 Illustrative masterplan

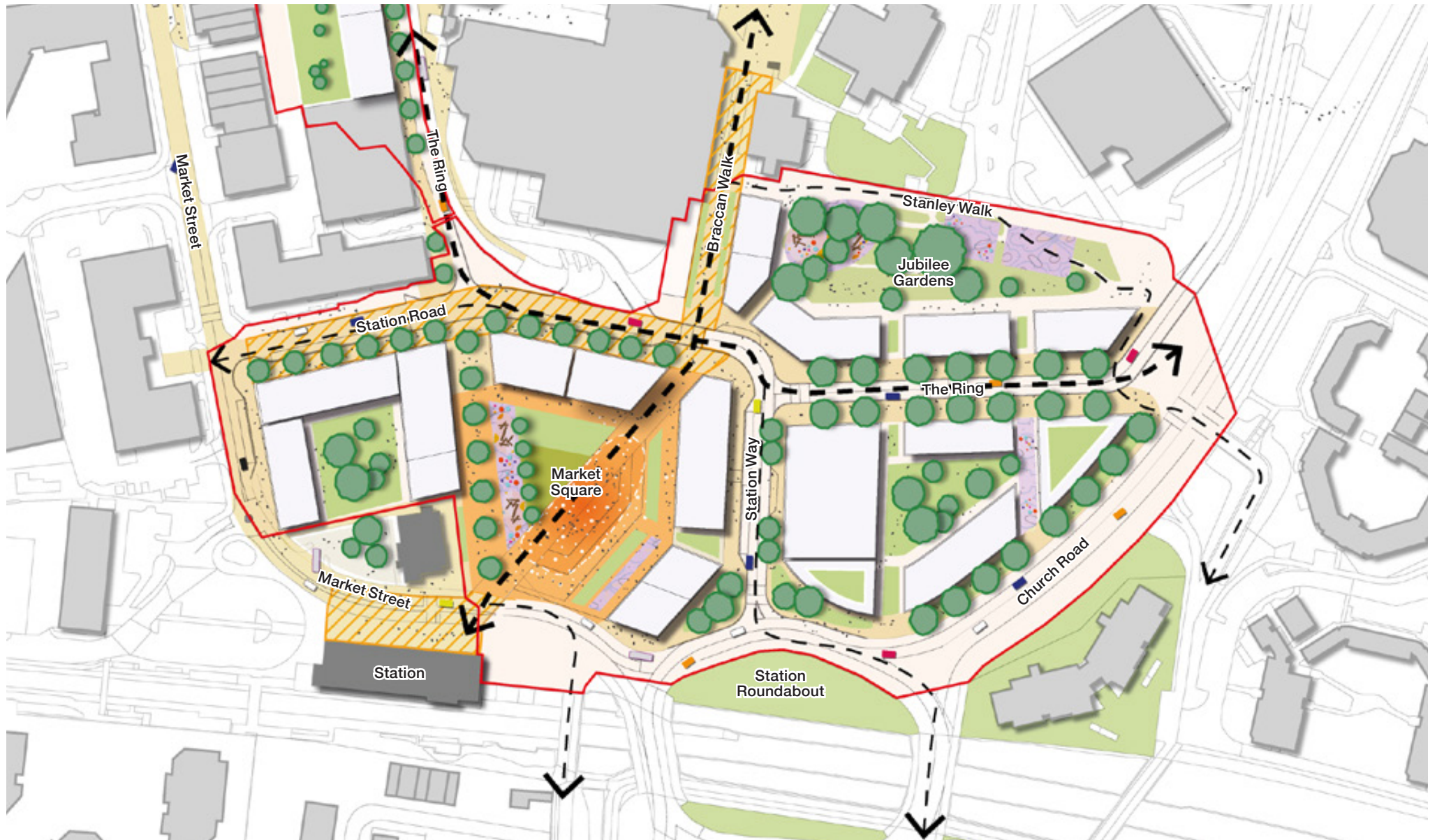


Figure 5.1: Illustrative masterplan

©TIBBALDS FEBRUARY 2024

5.2 Opportunities and constraints summary

This section sets out the specific masterplan strategy for the Southern Gateway, which is influenced by the following summary of constraints and opportunities.

Constraints

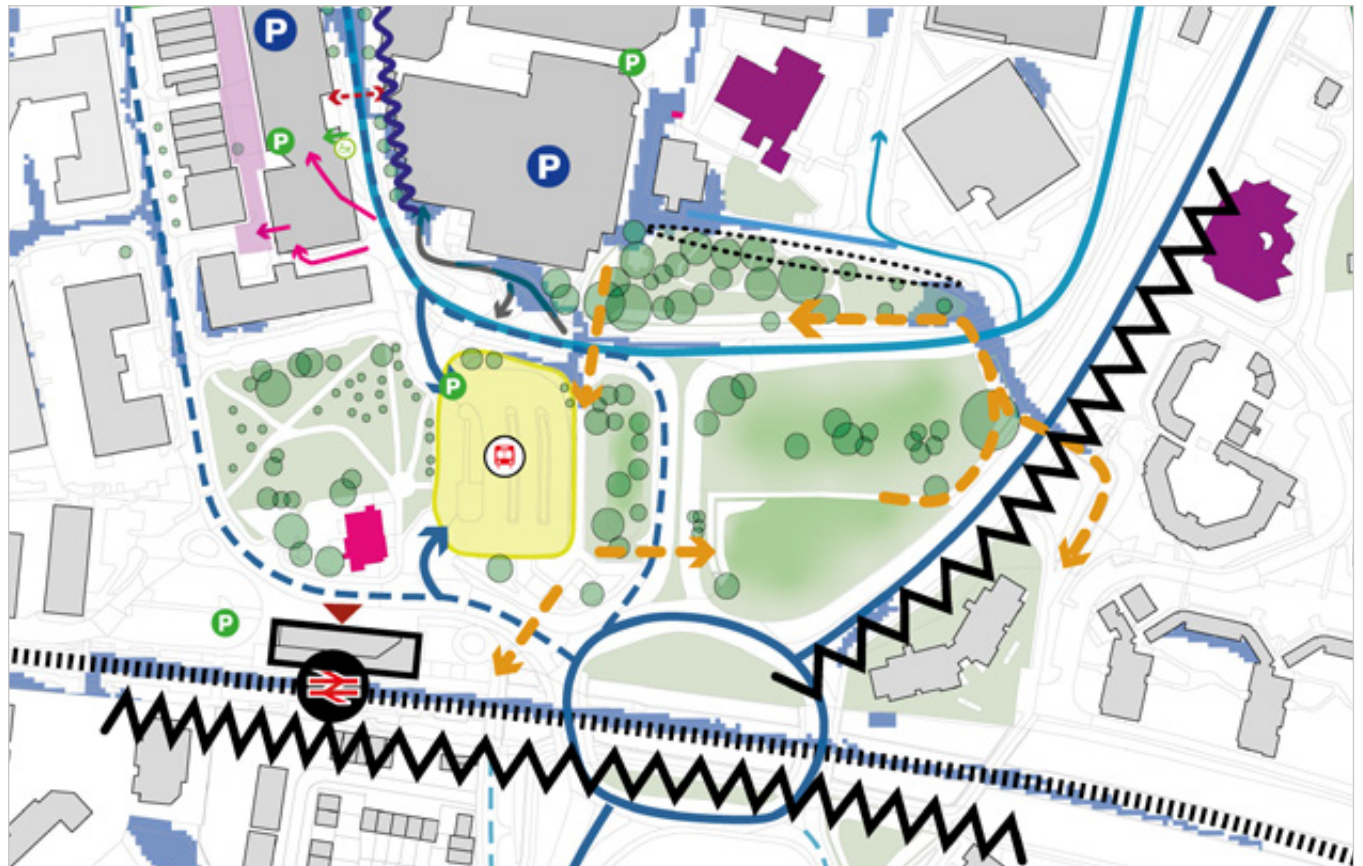


Figure 5.2: Southern Gateway - Constraints

KEY

Underpass	Access to Princess Square car park	Pedestrian access	Shop mobility	Drain
Green space	Major vehicle routes	Service roads	Bus stop	Noise
Trees	Secondary road	Zone made up of backs and fronts	Bus station	Heritage
Car parking	Flooding	Servicing edge	Railway station	Religious
The Ring	Car access	Cycle parking		

Topography

There are significant level differences across the site: ranging from +69.0 m at the corner of Station Road/Market Street rising to around + 80.0 m in front of the Station.

Across Jubilee Gardens levels rise from the north (+74.0 m along Braccan Walk to +80.0 m to the south-eastern corner (The Ring). The land between The Ring and Church Road has a gentle undulating profile with levels ranging between +81.0 to +83.0. The sharpest level difference of around 3m can be found between the bus station area and Station Way.

Existing trees

Jubilee Gardens, consists of areas of mixed woodland, semi-improved grassland and amenity grassland with shrubs and scattered broadleaved trees. The area is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations or Tree Preservation Orders.

There is the potential to enhance the biodiversity value and habitat connectivity of this green space together with the wider area and woodland habitat network.

The existing mature trees in Jubilee Gardens also have a function in relation to townscape quality and identity. Thus, Jubilee Gardens is suitable for retention, landscape enhancement and to continue to provide a soft mature green space on the edge of the town centre.

Station Green is a small (0.42 ha) park next to the rail station with distinct level difference from north to south rising by approx. 10m towards the station. The green space has a number of trees concentrated mainly along its edges but these are not mature or considered to be of significant quality.

Although, only recently created, this space is considered not to provide the most benefit and relocation of this space will give the opportunity for a better integrated and used space, located on the key desire line from the station to the town centre. It was created to compensate for the previously envisaged loss of Jubilee Gardens which it is now proposed to be retained as open space.

Flood Risk

Jubilee Gardens lies within Flood Zone 1. 27.5% of the site is at risk of surface water flooding during the 1 in 1000 year flood event and 64% of the site is at risk of groundwater flooding (depth of water level below ground surface 0.025 to 0.5m) during the 1 in 100 year flood event.

Flooding risk is present to the eastern boundary and northwest of Jubilee Gardens (route of a Thames Water surface water sewer). A risk-averse approach to development would be to retain around 20% of Jubilee Gardens' area for SuDS with swales and/or ponds along the route of the sewer with further enhancements provided by the opportunity to open up the sewer.

In the rest of the site localised flooding occurs in relation to the subways.

Potential noise from railway and nearby roads

Due to the site's proximity to the railway and A roads, detailed development proposals must be accompanied by, and take account of, an acoustic report.

Bus station – It occupies a prime location in the centre of the site preventing safe direct connection from the station to the town centre and it will be relocated to an on-street bus station arrangement.



Figure 5.3: Bracknell Bus Station

Heritage

The Bracknell War Memorial is Grade 2 listed. Any development would need to be designed sensitively in order to not negatively impact the memorial. There is an opportunity, however, to relocate the War memorial into for example the new Market Square to give it a more prominent position.

The Market Inn is locally listed and will be retained in its current place and form. There is an opportunity for it to provide a positive landmark building on the route from the station to the town centre.



Figure 5.4: Bracknell War Memorial

Utilities

There are a number of existing services that will require minor diversion to deliver the masterplan. However, none of them is considered significant enough to undermine the delivery of the proposals. These utilities include:

- Cadent (Gas Network) - 6in and 10in diameter low pressure mains along the north side of The Ring and on the eastern side of The Green;
- British Telecom cables;
- SSEN (Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks) - service cable running n/s under the mound to the west of Station Way;
- South East water – 4in and 6in mains; up to 450 mm surface sewer and 150mm foul sewer; and
- Virgin Duct trench and Vodafone cables.

5.3 Southern Gateway strategy

This section provides a specific coordinating framework for all new development within the masterplan area. All planning applications and projects are expected to accord with the principles in relation to the following:

- Movement and public realm;
- Layout;
- Land use;
- Green infrastructure; and
- Key public spaces

Section 8 contains general principles that apply across both masterplan areas and that also must be met.

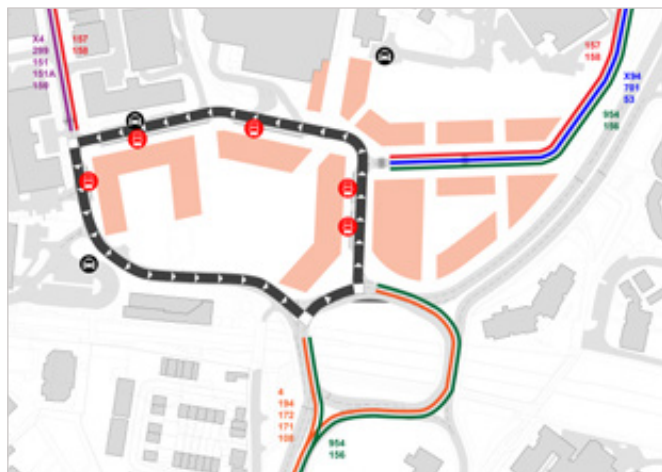


Figure 5.6: Proposed bus movement

Movement and public realm strategy

Please note that, where appropriate, Manual for Streets (MfS) and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) have been used to inform the design of the streets and junctions that comprise the development. Unlike Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which is produced primarily for application to the trunk road network, these documents have been produced specifically for use in urban environments. Guidance on visibility splays, junction spacing, corner radii, swept path analysis and lane widths have all been taken from these documents.



Figure 5.7: Proposed car movement



Figure 5.9: Proposed pedestrian movement

Two-way operation will be returned to all streets in the area, specifically along Station Road and the section of The Ring east of this.

Station Way will be humanised to reduce the severance this currently causes and will accommodate two-way movement in addition to northbound (anticlockwise) bus operations.

Car parking for the site will be accommodated in the car park at F1 accessed from the north off The Ring as well as at ground and basement levels of blocks D1 and D2 at the eastern end of the square accommodated within the level difference that exists between the square and Station Way.



Figure 5.8: Proposed car parking

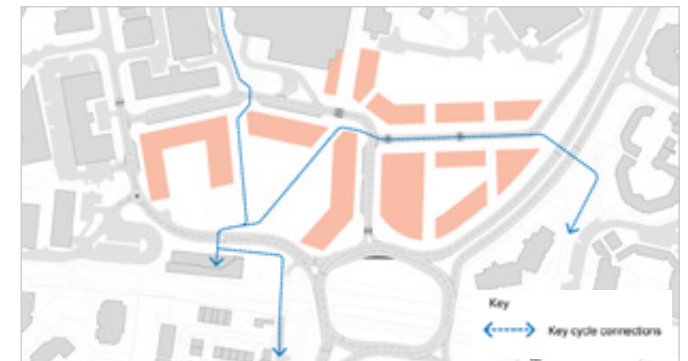


Figure 5.10: Proposed cycle movement

Development Principle: SG1 – Movement

To enable improved cycle and pedestrian movement through the site (refer to figure 5.11), proposals will need to deliver:

- Improved connections with a new formal zebra crossing (1) connecting people walking and wheeling from the town centre to the new public realm over The Ring, and on to the station;
- Improved crossing points (2) along Station Way and The Ring to better connect people through the site;
- New formal signalled crossing point (3) on Church Road to connect people at grade from the site to walking and cycling networks to the east;
- Realigned Market Street pedestrian crossing (4) to better connect people to the new public realm and to the town centre, with the option of upgrading this facility to a zebra crossing being explored;
- Parallel facilities at the crossing of Market Street to enable station access by cycle;
- Enabling safe and slow cycling through all new public realm; and
- The main pedestrian spine through the new public realm and accommodate the principal cycling route – both connecting cycles through a new parallel crossing facility (1) to the town centre as well as connecting cycles along cycle street conditions on The Ring and through a new parallel crossing facility (3) to the east.



Figure 5.11: Proposed movement - key

The new public realm and open spaces provided within the site will deliver on healthy street principles as well as advancing biodiversity and habitat creation and utilising SuDS as the primary source of managing surface water.

Key street types

Figure 5.12 sets out the different street types, that contribute to a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment within the masterplan. This includes:

The Ring (1)

The Ring will be reimagined as an Enhanced Street environment, with tree planting incorporated where possible, alongside seating and placemaking interventions at key moments along the street.

Station Way (2)

Station Way will be rationalised and reimagined as an Enhanced Street, accommodating two-way operation for general traffic (6m) and a northbound / anticlockwise bus station consisting of bus stops and stands. Delivering an attractive and inviting bus stop waiting environment will be key – maximising placemaking opportunities along the street.

Market Street (3)

Market Street will remain an Enhanced Street but attention will be focussed on the crossing point from the rail station into the new public realm. This key crossing point will be raised to footway level and deliver pedestrian priority across the street – through material choice and through the provision of a zebra crossing ideally.

See section 8 for general design principles for each street type.

Layout

The Movement and Public Realm Strategy must be supported by positive building edges defining and overlooking the key routes and spaces within the site. Taller buildings and landmark points reinforce the important destination of the station and town centre. This section sets out principles for:

- key frontages and edges; and
- key views, landmarks and opportunities for height.

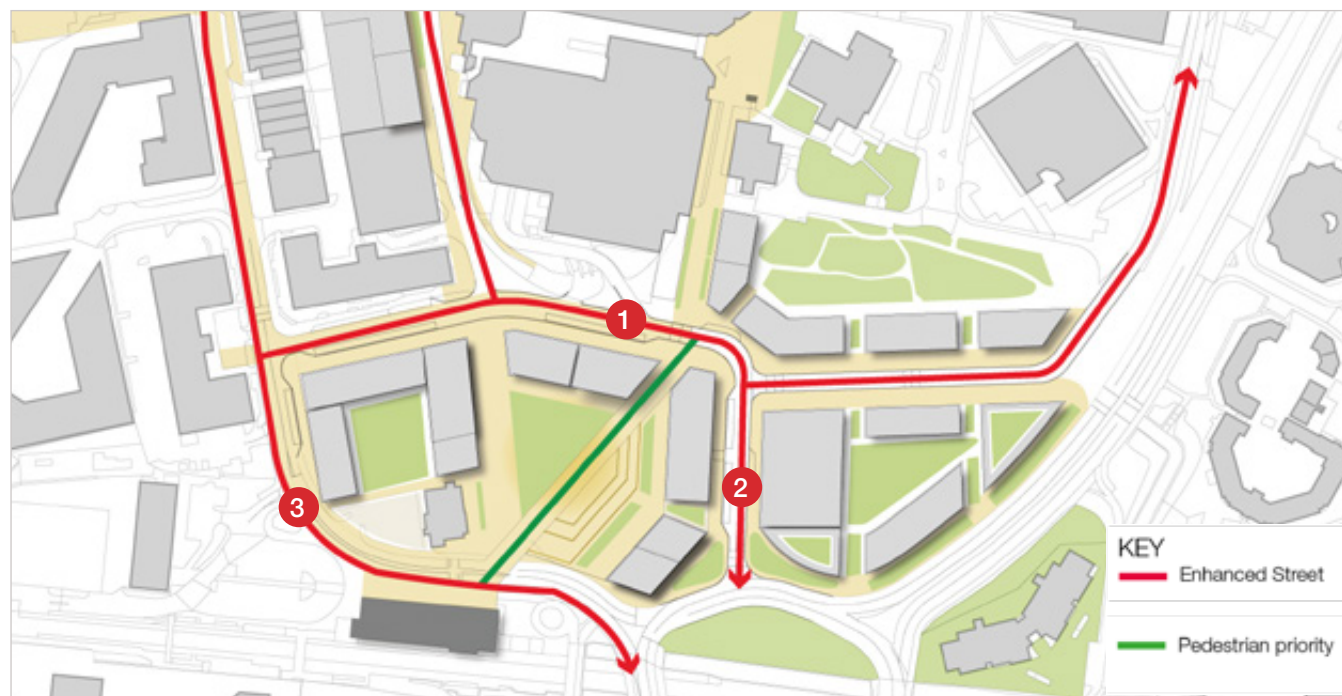


Figure 5.12: Street types

Development Principle – SG2- Key frontages and edges

Figure 5.13 sets out a range of different building frontages, that each have a role to play in creating a sense of place. This includes:

- Active frontages with predominantly non-residential ground floor uses will be concentrated around the Market Square and along the main Pedestrian Spine between the station and the town centre;
- Positive frontages consisting of regular entrances to residential uses will form the majority of the remaining edges along streets;
- Marker edges, which define special edge treatment of town wide importance, include frontages overlooking the roundabout and Church Road;
- Potentially inactive frontages – A multi storey car park providing parking spaces for the whole of the allocation must be sensitively integrated into the southern urban block, by:
 - being a building of a well-considered architectural merit;
 - minimising negative impact on the outlook of new apartments;
 - avoiding blank, unattractive façades onto Station Way as much as possible;
 - integrating, where possible, active ground floor uses on the corner to the realigned Ring; and
 - utilising creative façade design and planting and create an architecturally high-quality building that contributes to the area.

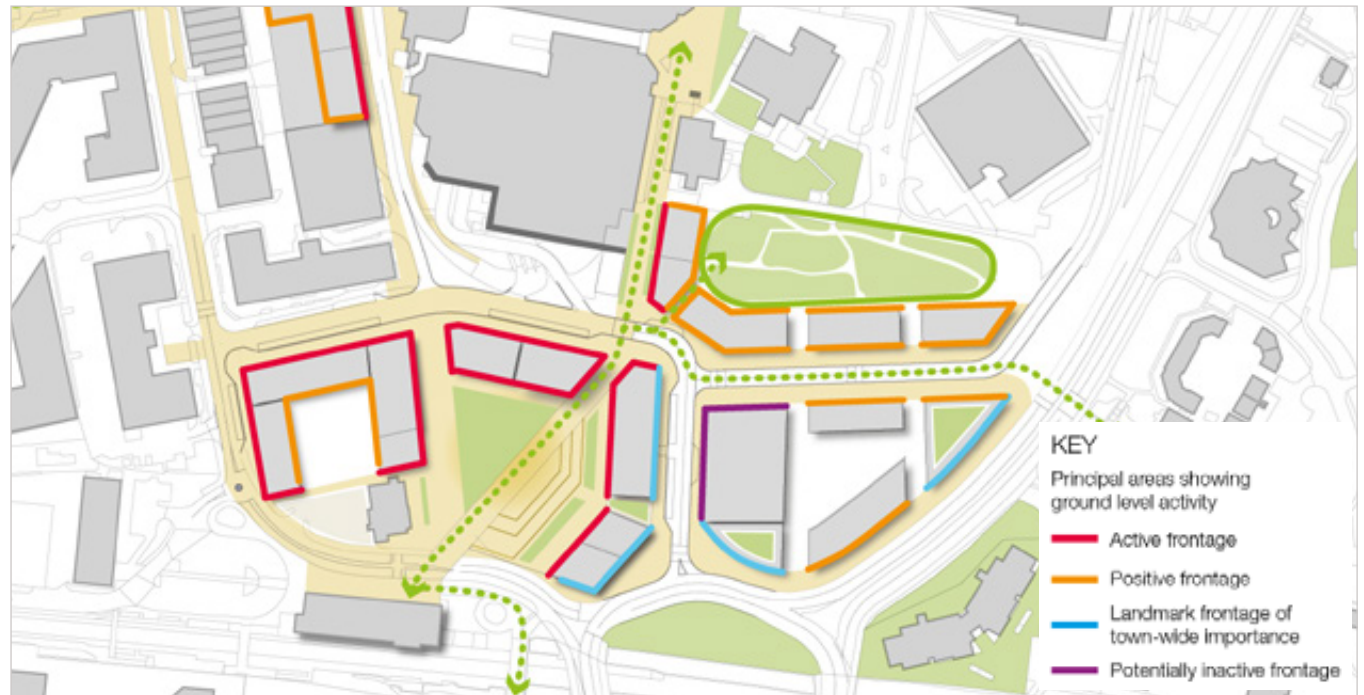


Figure 5.13: Key frontages and edges

See section 8 for specific design principles for each frontage type.



Figure 5.14: Multi-storey car park – 'Cheesegrater' Sheffield

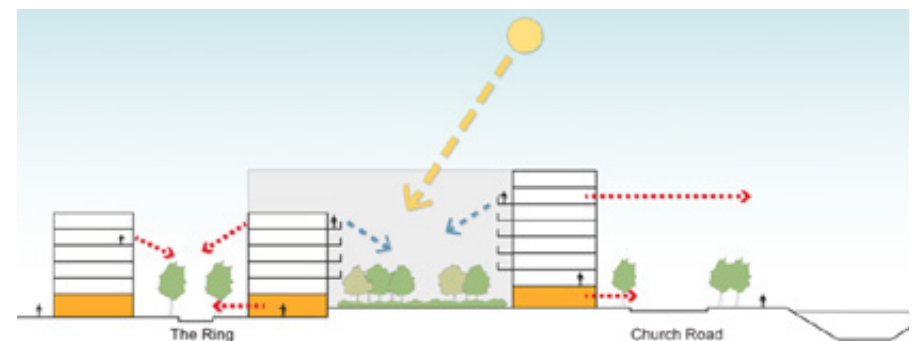


Figure 5.15: Section. Showing positive frontages at street level

Key views, landmarks and opportunities for height

New buildings should support the overall approach to movement and connections through the area. Figure 5.17 sets out principles for building height across the core area as follows:

Development Principle: SG3 – Heights

- Taller buildings should be clustered at the north end of the Market Square within the centre of the Southern Gateway masterplan up to a maximum of 17 storeys;
- As part of the central cluster, there is potential for a taller building up to 12 storeys in the western corner of Jubilee Gardens marking the entrance to the town centre and stepping down to maximum 6 storeys towards the British Legion building;
- The southern edge of Jubilee Gardens will be clearly defined with maximum 6 storey high buildings;
- Building heights stepping down to 4 storeys towards the Market Inn;
- The majority of the remainder of the area may be up to 8 storeys in height;
- Changes in height and massing should be used to create visual interest and avoid long ‘walls’ of the same height; and
- Where there are opportunities for landmark / focal points located on key view-lines these should be designed to respond positively to these views. Height should not increase above 8 storeys.

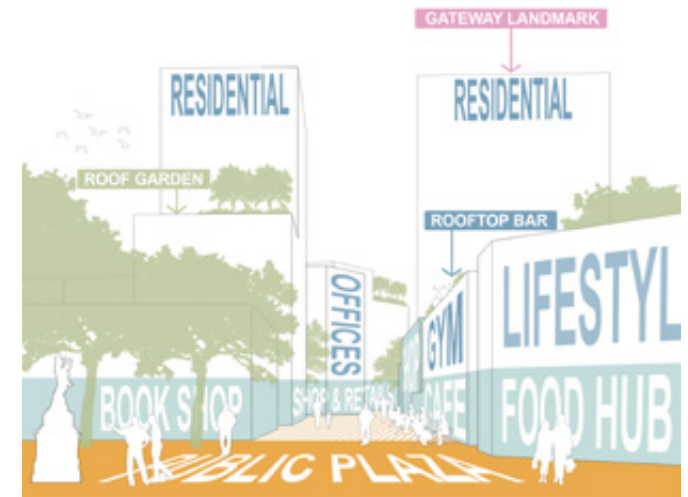


Figure 5.16: New pedestrian route at Princess Square entrance looking at the tall buildings marking entrance to the public square. The route is defined and framed by tall buildings.



Figure 5.17: Proposed building heights

Land use

The Council's planning policy aims to regenerate the area as a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use area. The Southern Gateway's excellent location to the transport hub appeals to a high-density mixed-use development with employment space incorporated within the lower floors of mixed-use buildings as well as stand-alone buildings if the demand is there. This mix will contribute positively providing active edges along the streets and spaces helping to animate the public realm and contribute to the safety and security of the area.

Development Principle: SG4 – Land use

New development should:

- provide employment / commercial uses on the ground and lower floors, defining and overlooking adjacent streets and spaces, with residential above;
- focus 'active' commercial frontages, community and leisure uses onto the Central Spine to maximise footfall, activate the public realm and enable uses to spill out into the Market Square;
- locate less active commercial / employment uses, such as offices onto vehicular rather than pedestrian / cycle priority streets as employment tends to be less sensitive than residential uses to noise from passing vehicles;
- create the opportunity for a mixed development including 3 bed units, town houses and older peoples housing; and
- Enable the opportunity to provide community space both within and outside of buildings with a dedicated external space for youth facilities.

KEY

 Leisure	 Food and beverage
 Office	 Education
 Retail	 Residential
 Religious	 Private car parking
 Community	 Residential with ground level workspace
 Public car parking	 Children and youth play



Figure 5.18: Proposed Land uses

Play and Green Infrastructure

The Council acknowledges that the open space requirements will not be achieved in such a central town centre location.

The proposed open spaces of Jubilee Gardens and Market Square together achieve 0.9 ha but the design principles that are ingrained within the overall masterplan aim to achieve more by maximising connectivity. This will be achieved through the creation of new green routes linking into the existing green infrastructure network and proximity to existing open spaces within 10 min walk from the site (refer to Figure 3.10). There will also be enhancement of existing routes and the provision of small amenity areas within the local street network created within the development as well as the communal and private open spaces associated within the development blocks. Children's and youth play spaces will play a major part throughout the public realm and will be fully integrated within both the hard and soft landscape areas to maximise the opportunity for play activities.

Development Principle: SG5 – Play and Green Infrastructure

New development should provide:

- children's and youth play spaces integrated throughout the public realm with informal opportunities for play with key focus in Jubilee Gardens and Market Square;
- green and blue infrastructure integrated into the public realm, alongside streets, movement corridors and within public spaces;
- retention of mature trees within Jubilee Gardens;
- relocation of Station Green in its new form as Market Square with increased quality of Market Square through its new location and higher quality public realm; and
- green infrastructure in the form of communal and private gardens, green roofs and walls.



Figure 5.19: Jubilee Gardens: existing mature open space



Figure 5.20: Green roofs

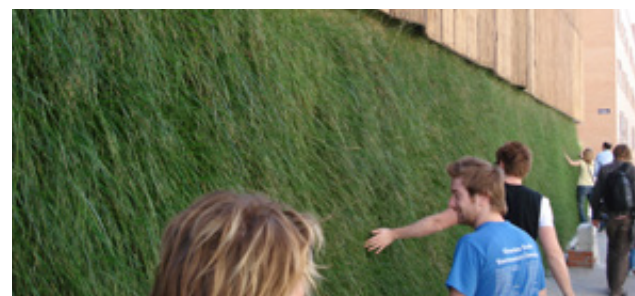


Figure 5.21: Green walls



Figure 5.22: Children's play along a pedestrianised route



Figure 5.23: Children's playground



Figure 5.24: Boules tournament in Lewis Cubitt Square, Kings Cross



Figure 5.25: Play within courtyard



Figure 5.26: Callisthenics within a neighbourhood park

Key public spaces

The Southern Gateway masterplan is made up of several spaces, that each have their particular character and design requirements. These are:

- Market Square
- Jubilee Gardens
- Central Spine

In order to deliver the overall masterplan and meet the Council's aspirations the following development principles for each area must be met.



Figure 5.27: Key public spaces

Market Square

The Market Square, lies on the promenade between the rail station and the town centre. This should be both an everyday community space for life to unfold and town centre celebration space, accommodating markets and events. Alongside these events, children's, youth and play activities for all ages will contribute to make this a truly multi functional space. Seating should be designed to be both flexible and fixed, providing opportunities for adjacent cafés to spill into the space as well as offering people a chance to sit, relax and take in the life of the town. The square should be softened through extensive tree planting and SuDS to deliver a calming and attractive place to spend time and support increased biodiversity.

Development principle: SG6 – Market Square:

New development should provide:

- A public space of min. 0.57 ha in size, of good proportions, comfortable and attractive microclimate;
- Visual and physical connections between the station and town centre;
- A high degree of enclosure and active, positive ground floors;
- Sensitively and discreetly integrated servicing and emergency access;
- Landscape and public realm strategy incorporating tree planting and at least 30% soft landscape;
- Create the opportunity for children's and youth play space in the town centre;
- Seamlessly integrate level differences along its eastern edge to accommodate underground parking, stairs and seating opportunities; and
- Retain and sensitively integrate the Market Inn.

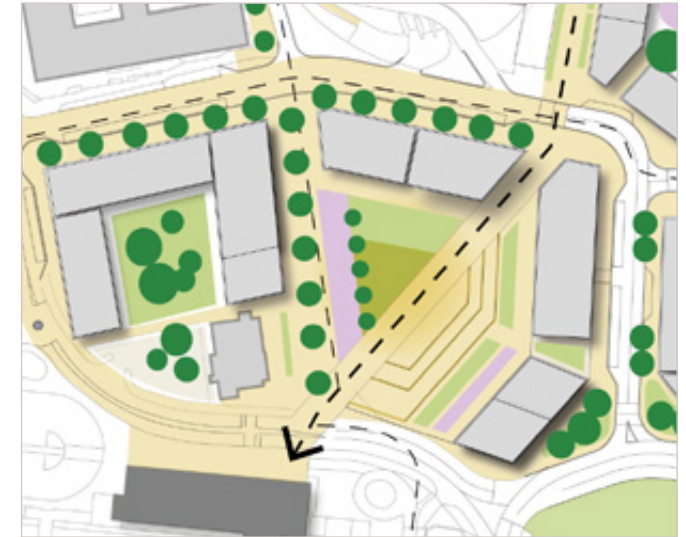


Figure 5.30: Market Square plan – children's and youth informal play



Figure 5.28: Pancras Square, Kings Cross, London



Figure 5.29: Informal play as part of public art



Figure 5.31: Canalside green steps – Granary Square, Kings Cross, London



Figure 5.32 Cafe and restaurant external seating animate the public realm



Figure 5.33 Swings seating in public square

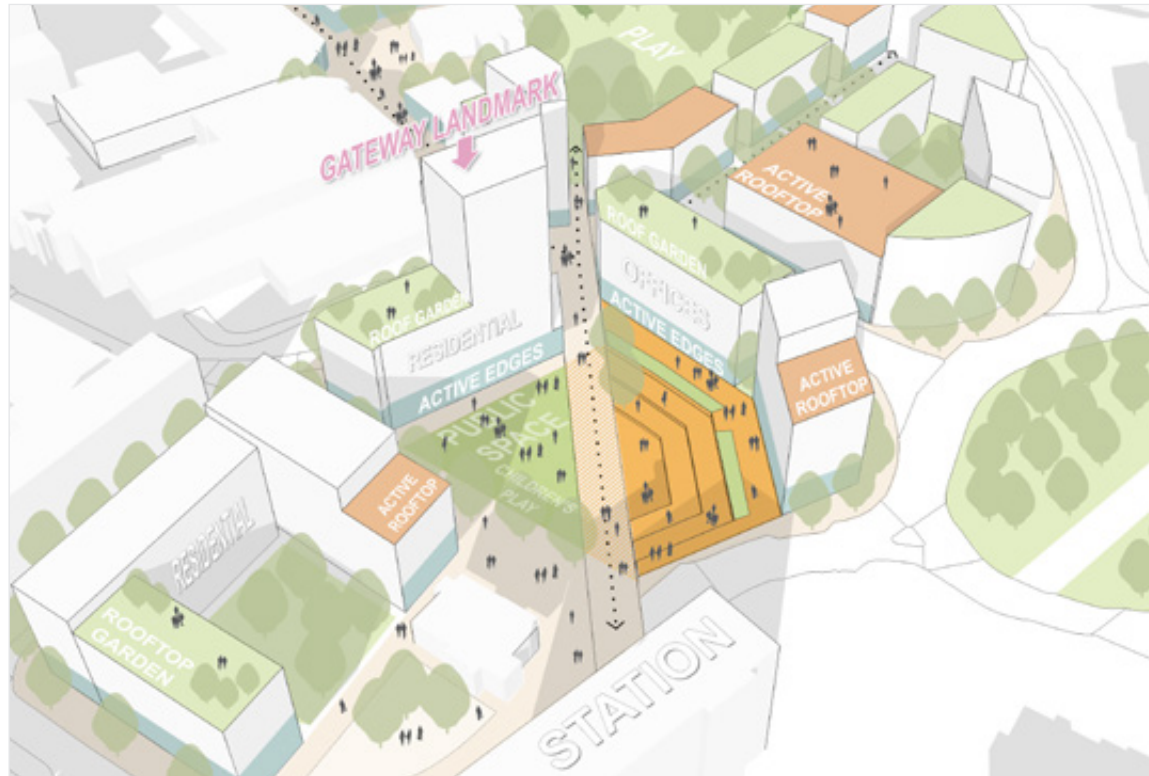


Figure 5.34: Market Square plan and aerial view from the south-west

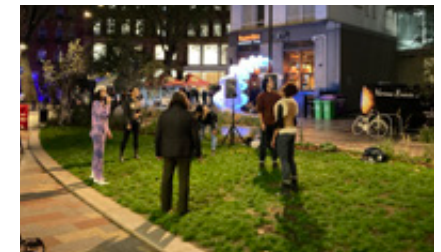


Figure 5.37: Community events and performances



Figure 5.35: Exchange Square and water feature , Manchester



Figure 5.36: Pop-up public screening



Figure 5.38 Christmas market

Jubilee Gardens

Jubilee Gardens the mature green space at the northern end of the Southern Gateway development will provide an alternative area for seating and relaxing within a natural environment. A children's playground will occupy the western area of the gardens closer to the pedestrianised route. Along the northern edge of the gardens and fronting Stanley Walk a MUGA and calisthenics will attract the youth and other ages to provide an active edge along this part of the development. The space can also accommodate small community fêtes during the year.

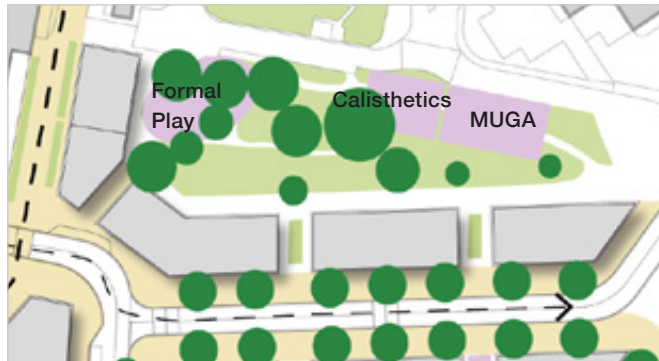


Figure 5.39: Jubilee Gardens plan – children's and youth play space

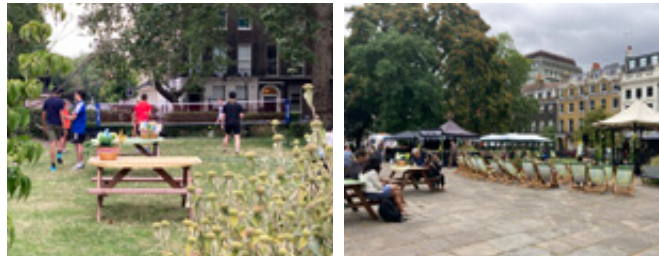


Figure 5.40: Bloomsbury square gardens fête with food/singing/volleyball games

Development principle: SG7 - Jubilee Gardens:

New development should provide:

- Existing public gardens and mature trees to be retained and enhanced for public use including the provision of play space;
- Care must be taken to allow regular gaps between buildings and not to overshadow Jubilee Gardens inappropriately;
- Create the opportunity for children's and youth play space in the town centre;
- Where ground floor residential accommodation is fronting onto Jubilee Gardens a minimum 5m secure privacy strip in the form of private outdoor space must be provided;
- Transition in levels between buildings along the town centre route (Braccan Walk), which are located at +74.0m and the gardens at +80.0m may be achieved through the detailed design of buildings where public uses may occupy the lower two levels; and
- A direct pedestrian connection must be ensured at the western corner where there is a direct visual and physical link with the Market Square and town centre route.



Figure 5.41: Youth play



Figure 5.42: Well articulated façades with balconies and large openings will provide natural surveillance to the gardens

©TIBBALDS FEBRUARY 2024

Central Spine

Development principle: SG8 – Central Spine:

New development should provide:

- Direct, visually and physically connected, at grade pedestrian and cycle route between the town centre and the station;
- The route and associated Market Square will be lined by active and animated commercial and / or residential ground floor frontages;
- Physical, accessible and visual links to bus stops must be ensured from this route; and
- The detailed design must follow a coherent and unifying public realm strategy to aid legibility and meet the aspirations, including:
 - pedestrian priority crossings at street intersections must ensure ease of movement for pedestrians;
 - trees lining the route to help with legibility as well as providing adequate shade and shelter;
 - appropriate width of the pedestrian / cycle route to accommodate the number of people using it, with safe space designated for those pedestrians that do not want to mix with cyclists or people scootering;
 - seats and benches lining the route, to allow adequate space to rest for those less able, and bottle fills (drinking fountain) should be provided; and
 - informal play elements should be worked into the route to enable play-on-the-way activities and encourage families to use the route – using public transport and active modes to reach the town centre.



Figure 5.45: City North Place, Finsbury Park



Figure 5.43: Pedestrian crossing at Goods Way/King's Boulevard, Kings Cross



Figure 5.44: Street furniture within the public realm



Figure 5.46: Street furniture within the public realm

6. High Street Car Park

6.1 Illustrative masterplan

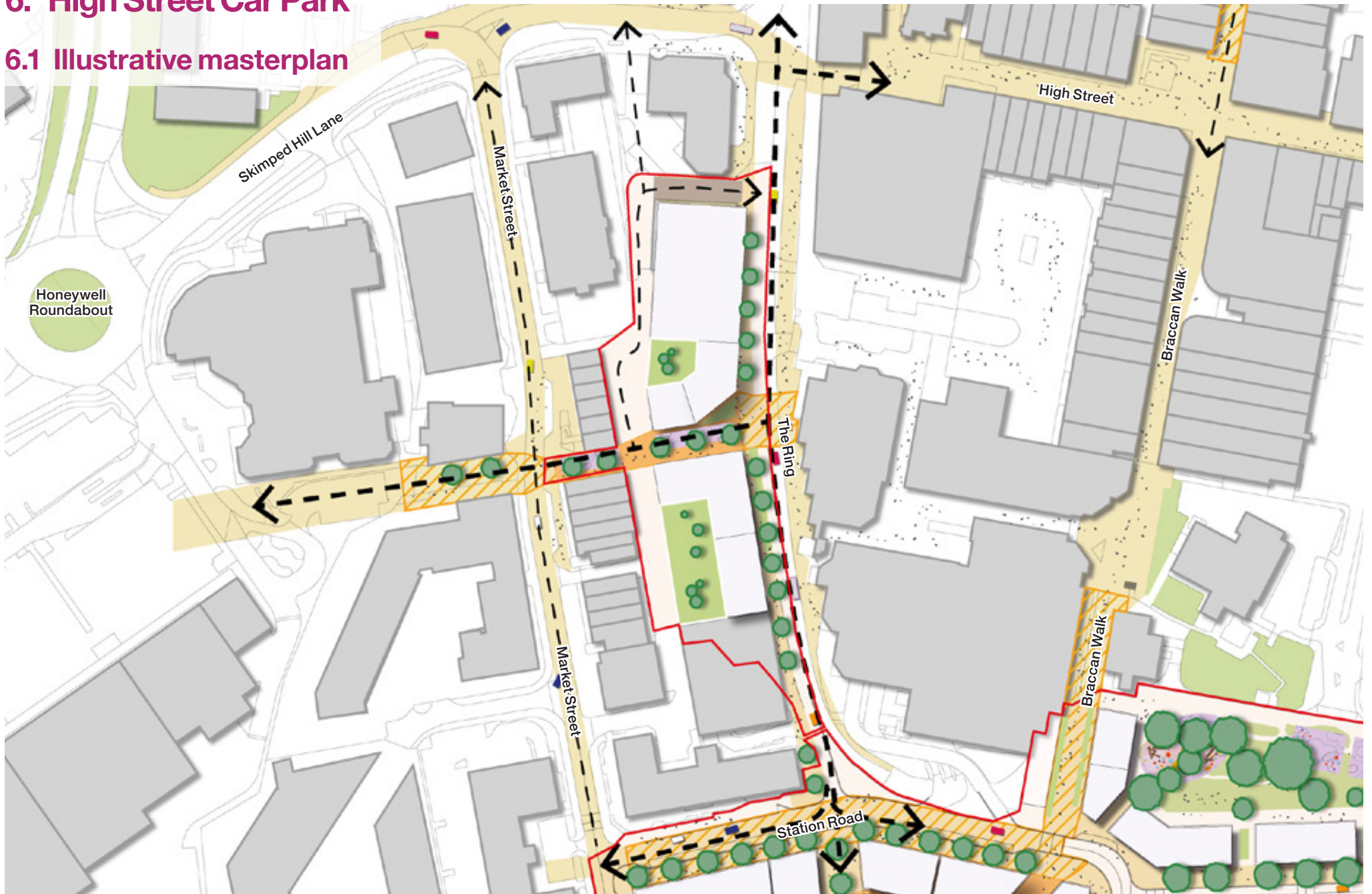


Figure 6.1: Illustrative masterplan

6.2 Opportunities and constraints summary

This section sets out site-specific masterplan principles for the High Street Car Park masterplan, based on a summary of constraints and opportunities.

Constraints



Figure 6.2: High Street Car Park - Constraints

Topography

The site has to deal with a mixture of natural and man made level changes ranging from 4.2m at the deepest end to as shallow as 0.8m depending on where you are on the site. The highest levels occur along The Ring, with the highest level situated at the southern end of the site close to Station Road at +72.34m AOD. Moving north along The Ring the road drops by around 3.5m half way along the length of the building to +68.82m AOD. The level in this area corresponds best with the levels on Market Street with approx 0.8m difference between the two streets.

The Ring then rises again by about 2m reaching 70.75m AOD at the northern end of the car park building where the exit from the car park is currently located. The site lacks any greenery.



Figure 6.3: Existing service area at the rear of Market Street

Flood Risk

Flooding risk is present at the north eastern boundary along The Ring. A risk-averse approach to development would be to introduce SuDS along the improved access at the north end of the development as well as extending the greening of The Ring with SuDS, planting and trees.

Market Street service area

The area to the west side of the site and accessed from Market Street provides servicing for the retail units fronting the main road and parking for the residential accommodation above. This arrangement will need to be taken into consideration in any future development.

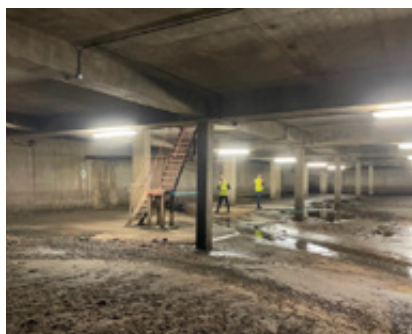


Figure 6.4: Thames Water attenuation tank in the basement of the car park



Utilities

Due to the site being a car parking facility, there are a limited number of services that would require diversion, including:

- SSEN (Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks): LV service cable running east-west through the middle of the building.

However, there is one significant constraint that could undermine the viability of the development and would require early stage engagement with Thames Water during the design development proposals:

- Thames Water culverted surface water attenuation tank in the basement of the car park put in place for storing surface water run-off from within the town centre. The same capacity and Thames Water access will need to be maintained within any future development and kept separate from the attenuation required for new development.

Access road north of the site

Existing vehicular egress from the car park is currently shared with access to the parking of the residential block fronting The Ring. This needs to be taken into consideration in any future development.

Opportunities

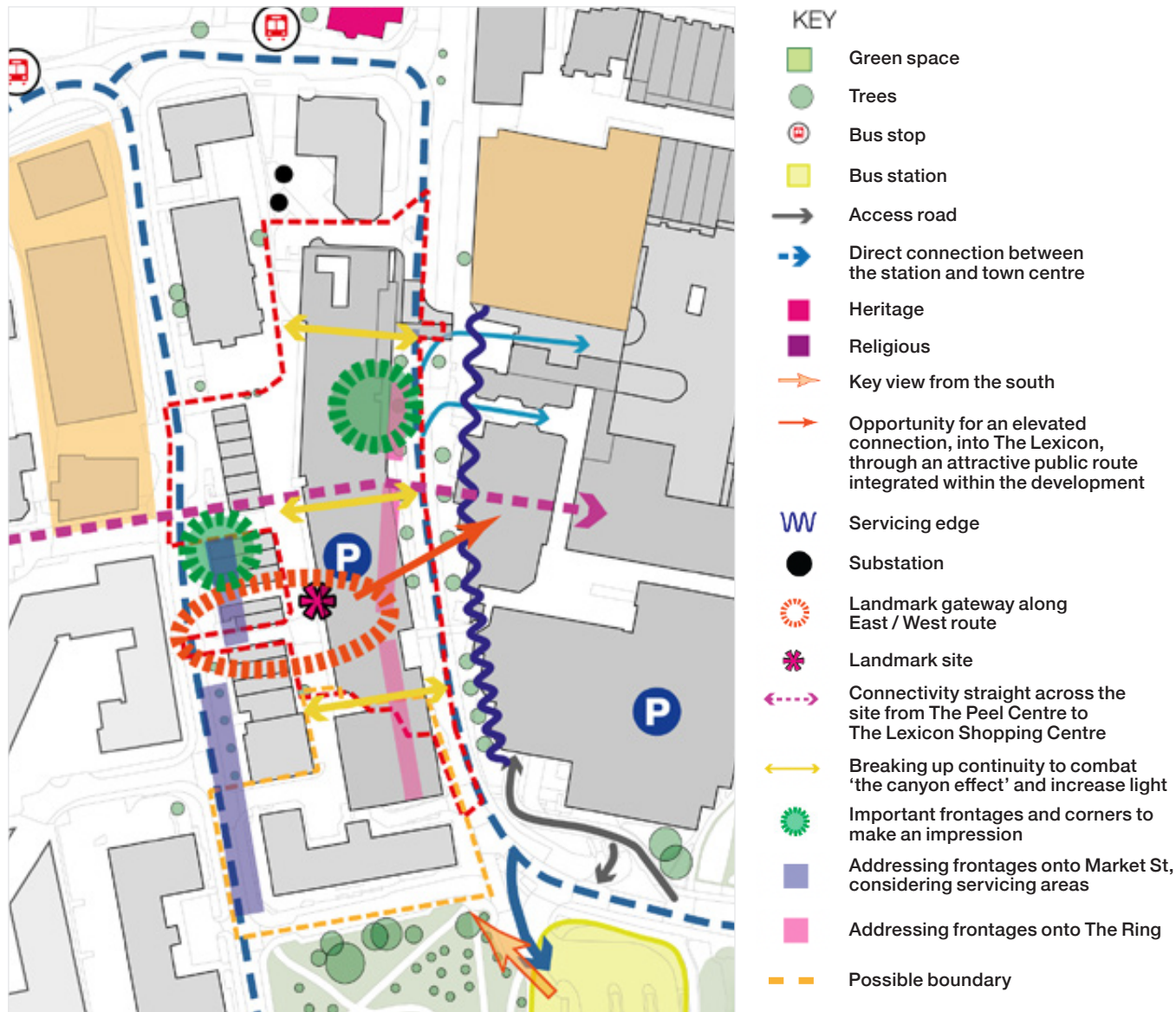


Figure 6.5: High Street Car Park - Opportunities

The opportunities for the comprehensive development of the High Street Car Park comprise:

- break down the canyon effect that the current structure imposes on The Ring by its continuous and impermeable form;
- create a new east-west pedestrian and cycle route connecting The Peel Centre and western areas with The Lexicon shopping centre and the eastern areas of the town centre - opportunity to connect the two spaces through the new development taking advantage of the minimal level difference that exist half way along the site;
- tying together the new developments by creating a strong new neighbourhood - the strategic location of this site opens up opportunities to connect and knit together the new (present and future) developments in the area with the surroundings and beyond;
- making an impact on key frontages and corners - opportunity to create strong edges both on The Ring and Market Street, addressing key corners and contributing positively to the street scene enriching the streetscape and adding to the visual impact and experience for residents and passers by;
- landmark/gateways along east-west route - opportunity to mark the east and west approaches to the site with landmark buildings, creating a gateway and celebrating this important connection and establishing a visual connection;
- key view to the site from the south - opportunity for an attractive built form to connect visually with the Southern Gateway; and
- ensure the integration of green and blue infrastructure throughout the site.

6.3 High Street Car Park strategy

This section provides a specific coordinating framework for all new development within the masterplan area. All planning applications and projects are expected to accord with the principles in relation to the following:

- Movement and public realm;
- Layout;
- Land use;
- Green infrastructure; and
- Key public spaces.

Section 8 contains general design principles that apply across the three masterplan areas and that must be met.

Movement and public realm strategy

Please note that, where appropriate, Manual for Streets (MfS) and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) have been used to inform the design of the streets and junctions that comprise the development. Unlike Design Manual for Roads and Bridges these documents have been produced specifically for use in urban environments. Guidance on visibility splays, junction spacing, corner radii, swept path analysis and lane widths have all been taken from these documents.



Figure 6.6: Proposed bus movement



Figure 6.8: Proposed car movement

The Ring, running east of the site, will remain one way northbound. The junction at the northern boundary of the site will be simplified and reduced to one lane northbound, with rain gardens and SuDS being used to separate turning traffic from passing traffic. North of this junction the carriageway could be reduced to one lane to reduce severance and reduce speeds.

The street running to the north of the site will be widened to accommodate effective footways on both sides of the street, along with SuDS and tree planting.

Car parking for the site and surrounding developments will be accommodated in the parking house at block C1 providing 320 parking spaces and accessed from the north off The Ring. Additional parking for blocks A and B will be accessed from Market Street and will be at ground level only in block B4 and at ground and first floor levels in block A1.

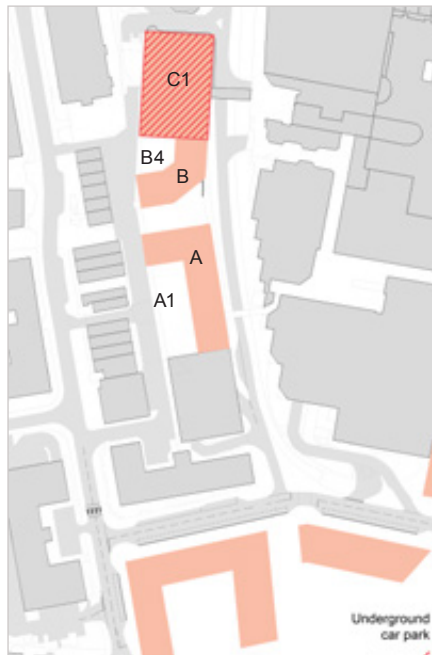


Figure 6.9: Proposed car parking



Figure 6.10: Proposed pedestrian connections

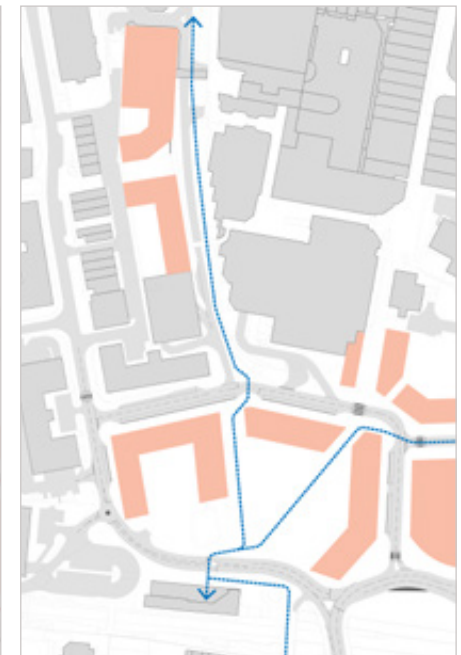


Figure 6.11: Proposed cycle connections



Development Principle: HSCP1 – Movement

To maximise connectivity in the area and enable improved cycle and pedestrian movement through the site (refer to figure 6.12) proposals will need to deliver.

- a new pedestrian priority street through the middle of the site (1) linking the Peel Centre to the Lexicon; The pedestrian connection will link across Market Street via the existing signalised pedestrian crossing on the desire line before linking through to the new courtyard service area which will be designed as a pedestrian priority space;
- a new Zebra Crossing facility to connect to the east side of The Ring (3). The recently widened footway will then connect pedestrians to the Lexicon through High Street and Edge Lane;
- safer and improved pedestrian movement around and through the site by the introduction of continuous footways along The Ring;
- the main pedestrian route through the site will invite cycling within this new connection with pedestrians having priority; with cyclists joining Cycle Street conditions along The Ring to access the Lexicon. As The Ring forms a key part of the wider cycle network the cycle user will be given a sense of priority within a mixed street environment where motor traffic will be treated as ‘guests’ within this environment.
- a widened street running to the north of the site to accommodate effective footways on both sides of the street, along with SuDS and tree planting (2).
- servicing the site will be accommodated both in the rear servicing courtyard as well as on The Ring (4), with the formalisation of the existing loading bay, which will be raised to footway level and incorporated in the verge strip, between trees.

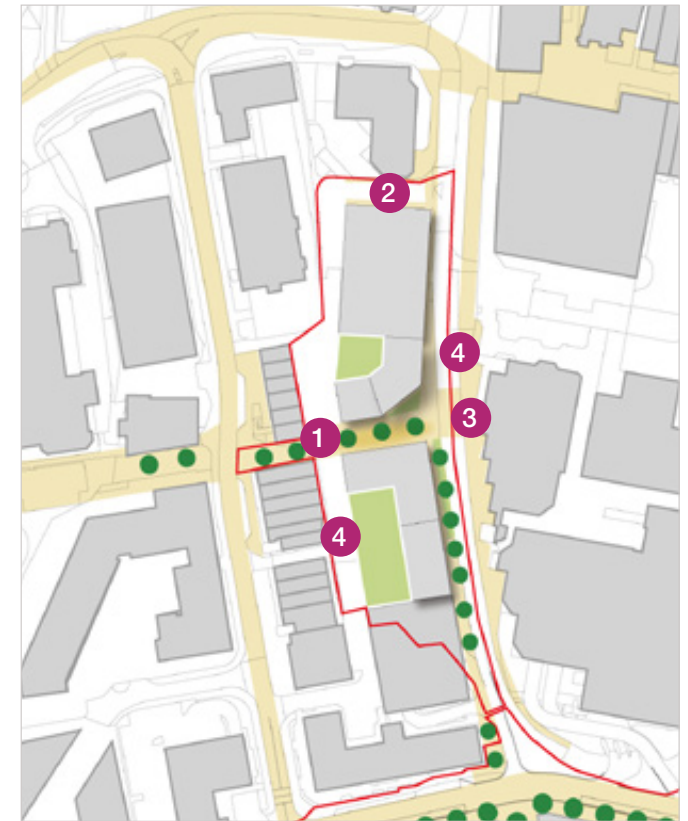


Figure 6.12: Proposed movement - key

The new public realm and open spaces provided within the site will deliver healthy street principles as well as advancing biodiversity and habitat creation and utilising SuDS as the primary source of managing surface water.

Key street types

Figure 6.14 sets out the different street types, that contribute to a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment within the masterplan.

East-west link

The new pedestrian priority street through the middle of the site linking the Peel Centre to the Lexicon will be a pedestrian/cycle environment with level surfaces and no traffic passing through it. There will be a consistent ground-plane building to building with tree planting.

The Ring

Recent public realm improvements along The Ring have created more space for pedestrians. The verge space with tree planting along the western edge of the street should continue the length of the site to create a better walking environment as well as providing a valuable SuDS facility, with space for seats and bike stands within the strip to support new adjacent uses.

New access to car parking building

The street running to the north of the site will be widened to provide access and egress to/from the new multi-level car parking facility located here and accommodate effective footways on both sides of the street, along with SuDS and tree planting.

See section 8 for general design principles for each street type.



Figure 6.13: The Ring as it is today following public realm improvements

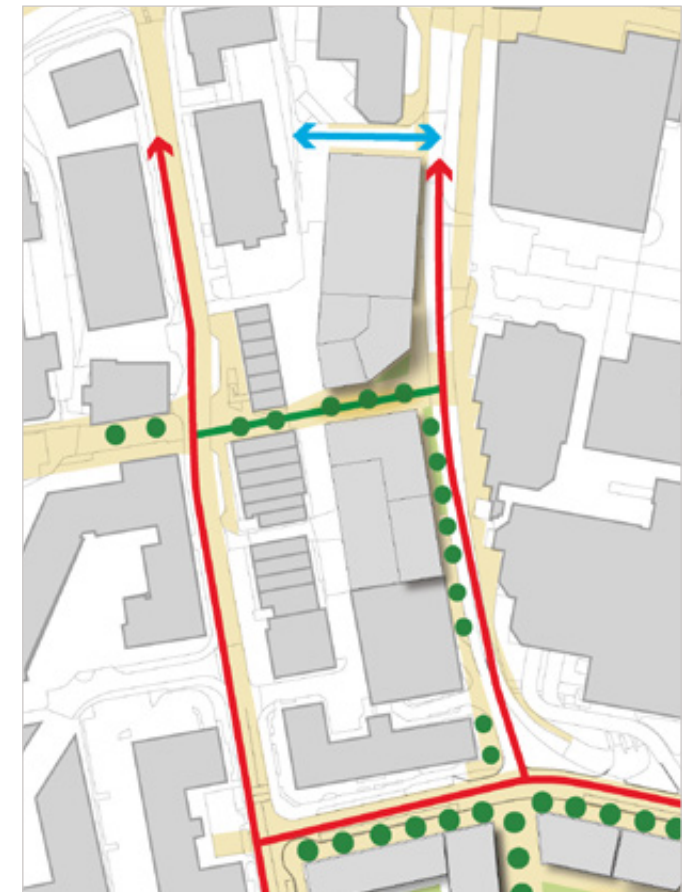


Figure 6.14: Street types

KEY	
	Enhanced Street
	Informal Street
	Pedestrian priority

Layout

The Movement and Public Realm Strategy must be supported by positive building edges defining and overlooking the key routes and spaces within the site. Taller buildings and landmark points reinforce the important destination of the station and town centre. This section sets out principles for:

- key frontages and edges; and
- key views, landmarks and opportunities for height.

See section 8 for general design principles for each frontage type.

Development Principle: HSCP2 – Key frontages and edges

Figure 6.15 sets out a range of different building frontages, that each have a role to play in creating a sense of place. This includes:

- **Active frontages** with predominantly non-residential ground floor uses will be concentrated along The Ring and fronting the main pedestrian / cycle route to Market Street;
- **Positive frontages** consisting of regular openings will form the remaining edges facing Market Street;
- **Marker edges**, which define special edge treatment of town-wide importance, include frontages directly visible from the southern gateway; and
- **Potentially inactive frontages** - A multi storey car park providing parking spaces for the allocation and the nearby developments must be sensitively integrated into the northern urban block:
 - Minimise negative impact on the outlook of new apartments;
 - Avoid blank, unattractive façades as much as possible;
 - Integrate, where possible, active ground floor uses; and
 - Utilise creative façade design and planting and create an architecturally high-quality building that contributes to the area.



Figure 6.15: Key frontages and edges

KEY

Principal areas showing ground level activity

- Active frontage
- Positive frontage
- Landmark frontage of town-wide importance
- Potentially inactive frontage

Key views, landmarks and opportunities for height

New buildings should support the overall approach to movement and connections through the area. Figure 6.17 sets out principles for building height across the core area as follows.

Development Principle: HSCP3 – Heights

- A landmark building up to a maximum of 12 storeys should be located along the east-west route fronting The Ring and in direct view from Southern Gateway. The design of the building must respond positively to this view;
- The majority of the remainder of the area may be up to 8 storeys in height in the southern block and up to 9 storeys in the northern block. Changes in height and massing should be used to create visual interest and avoid long ‘walls’ of the same height.



Figure 6.16: Massing study - view from the east



Figure 6.17: Proposed heights



Land use

The Council's planning policy aims to regenerate the area as a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use area. The site's proximity to the Southern Gateway and the station appeals to a high density predominantly residential mixed-use development with commercial uses at ground level and the re-provision of the existing facilities at the ground level of the car park currently accessed from Market Street. This mix will contribute positively to the town centre vibrancy and provide active edges along The Ring helping to animate the public realm and contribute to the safety and security of the area.

Development Principle: HSCP4 – Land use

New development should:

- provide a range of residential types and tenures including some 3 bedroom units;
- provide commercial/ community uses on the ground floor, defining and overlooking adjacent streets and spaces, with residential above;
- Create active roof spaces to create some private green space; and
- focus 'active' commercial frontages onto the east-west route and The Ring to maximise footfall and activate the public realm.



Figure 6.18: Proposed land uses

KEY

Leisure	Food and beverage
Office	Education
Retail	Residential
Religious	Private car parking
Community	Residential with ground level workspace
Public car parking	Children and youth play

Play and Green infrastructure

The site proposals offer an opportunity to integrate with the existing green infrastructure network by the introduction of a new east-west link, which will deliver an element of public open space including informal play as well as communal and private open spaces associated with the development blocks.



Figure 6.19: Public space – children's play

©TIBBALDS FEBRUARY 2024

Development Principle: HSCP5 – Play and Green Infrastructure

New development should:

- introduction of a new east-west link connecting to the green link along The Ring and the wider green infrastructure network;
- planting of trees along the east-west route;
- introduction of SuDS and tree planting along the enhanced street to the north of the site;
- green roofs and communal gardens; and
- Within these streets and spaces play should be a feature throughout and be well integrated to achieve an informal environment to play.



Figure 6.20: Informal play integrated within a green link

Key public spaces

The High Street Car Park masterplan is made up of a single space that has a particular character and design requirements. This is the east-west route.



Eastern-West route

Figure 6.21: Key public spaces

Development Principle: HSCP6 – Public spaces

New development should provide:

- Direct, visually and physically connected, at grade pedestrian and cycle route between the Peel Centre/Market Street and The Ring; where people will feel comfortable walking and wheeling;
- A new zebra crossing facility on The Ring will directly correspond with the alignment of the new route and at the Market Street end the new route will line up with the existing signalised crossing to provide a seamless connection between the two thoroughfares;
- Cycling will be accommodated as part of the pedestrian space to encourage low speeds and considerate behaviour;
- The route will be lined by active and animated commercial and / or residential ground floor frontages;
- The new courtyard service area will be designed as a pedestrian priority space and zebra crossings will be used where necessary to give pedestrian /cyclists priority over service yard movements; and
- Trees lining the route will help with legibility as well as contributing to the green infrastructure network in the area.



Figure 6.22: East-west route



Figure 6.23: Zebra crossing forming a safe seamless connection

7. Eastern Gateway

7.1 Illustrative masterplan



Figure 7.1: Illustrative masterplan

7.2 Opportunities and constraints summary

This section sets out site-specific masterplan principles for the Eastern Gateway masterplan, based on a summary of constraints and opportunities.

Constraints



Figure 7.2: Eastern Gateway - Constraints

KEY

Development area	Car parking	Flooding	Drain	Private land
Site boundary	The Ring	Overpass	Noise	Private car park
Underpass	Access to Princess Square car park	Service roads	Heritage	
Green space	Major vehicle routes	Bus stop	Religious	
Trees	Secondary road	Cycle parking		

Topography

There are notable level changes within the site ranging from +74.0/75 around the town square falling to +73.0m around the library/Millennium Way frontage and rising to +77.0/80.0m next to the Met Office roundabout. An existing pedestrian underpass located to the south of the site enables crossing underneath roundabout and will be retained.

There are also level changes due to the decked pedestrian area between the library and Easthampstead House. The impact of these localised changes depends on the strategy taken for Easthampstead House.

Existing trees

There is a limited number of trees on the site with small clusters in the east and alongside The Ring. Most of these are not expected to be retained. New tree planting as part of the redevelopment is expected to connect this site into the wider landscape network.



Figure 7.3: Existing surface car park fronting Easthampstead House and the library



Figure 7.4: Subway on approach to the town centre from the east with Easthampstead House in the background



Figure 7.5: Existing trees

Flood Risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 with 11.6% of the site at risk of surface water flooding during the 1 in 1000 year flood event.

Surface water ponding occurs during a 1 in 30 year event, increasing to minor flow routes in the 1 in 1000 year event with surface water ponding in distinct access routes. Going forward this could be managed through SuDS and into green infrastructure.

Noise and Air quality

The site fronts onto Millennium Way (A329) on its northern frontage and is located next to the Met Office roundabout. Both are having a negative impact on the environmental quality of the site in terms of noise and air quality. Both issues will have to be dealt with through the detailed design approach and a well thought out and fully integrated landscape strategy. Surveys and mitigation strategies are required at planning application stage.



Figure 7.6: Millennium Way

Utilities

There are a number of services that will require minor diversion. These are not considered significant enough to undermine the viability of the development and include:

- Cadent (Gas Network): 6in SI LP Mains along the north side of Weather Way and a 63mm PE LP Mains on the south side of Weather Way;
- British Telecom cables;
- SSEN (Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks): service cable running along the southern edge of the teardrop site and across Weather Way; and along route east of Fenwicks and across the town square;
- Vodafone - underground route runs along The Ring (north-south) opposite Weather Way;
- South East Water: east of surface car park/across Weather Way and along the south side of teardrop site; and
- There is an existing substation within Easthampstead House. The retention and refurbishment of the building will avoid the removal of this.

Access to Fenwick Store

A 24hr access to Fenwick's servicing yard must be maintained along The Ring. The western end of The Ring (approx 40 m length) fronting the surface car park is privately owned and will need to be taken into consideration in any future development.

Private car park

The car park consisting of 29 car spaces, of which 8 are disabled spaces, needs to be taken into consideration in any future development. An option to relocate the car park spaces to another location or the car park in block E1 (refer to figure 7.14 for location of this) should be considered, this will allow the development to provide a full frontage onto Millennium Way.



Figure 7.7: Fenwick store service route



Figure 7.8: Town Square



Figure 7.9: Route along south side of Easthampstead House

Opportunities

The opportunities for the comprehensive development of the Eastern Gateway comprise:

- The retention of Easthampstead House and Town Square to keep part of the New Town's history and celebrate the architectural style of that era.
- The refurbishment and / or retention of Easthampstead House provides a more sustainable and less carbon intensive opportunity. Potential uses include hotel accommodation with a roof level extension providing bar/terrace to guests and visiting public as well as cafés/ restaurants at ground level to reinforce the building's presence as a focal point along the axial route approach from The Lexicon.
- Reinforcing the existing pedestrian connection from the east to the town centre by providing at grade connections overlooked by positive frontages and an attractive public realm.
- Provision of communal internal shared courtyards within the blocks for residents.
- Create a positive gateway into the town centre from the east and strong positive frontages onto Millennium Way.

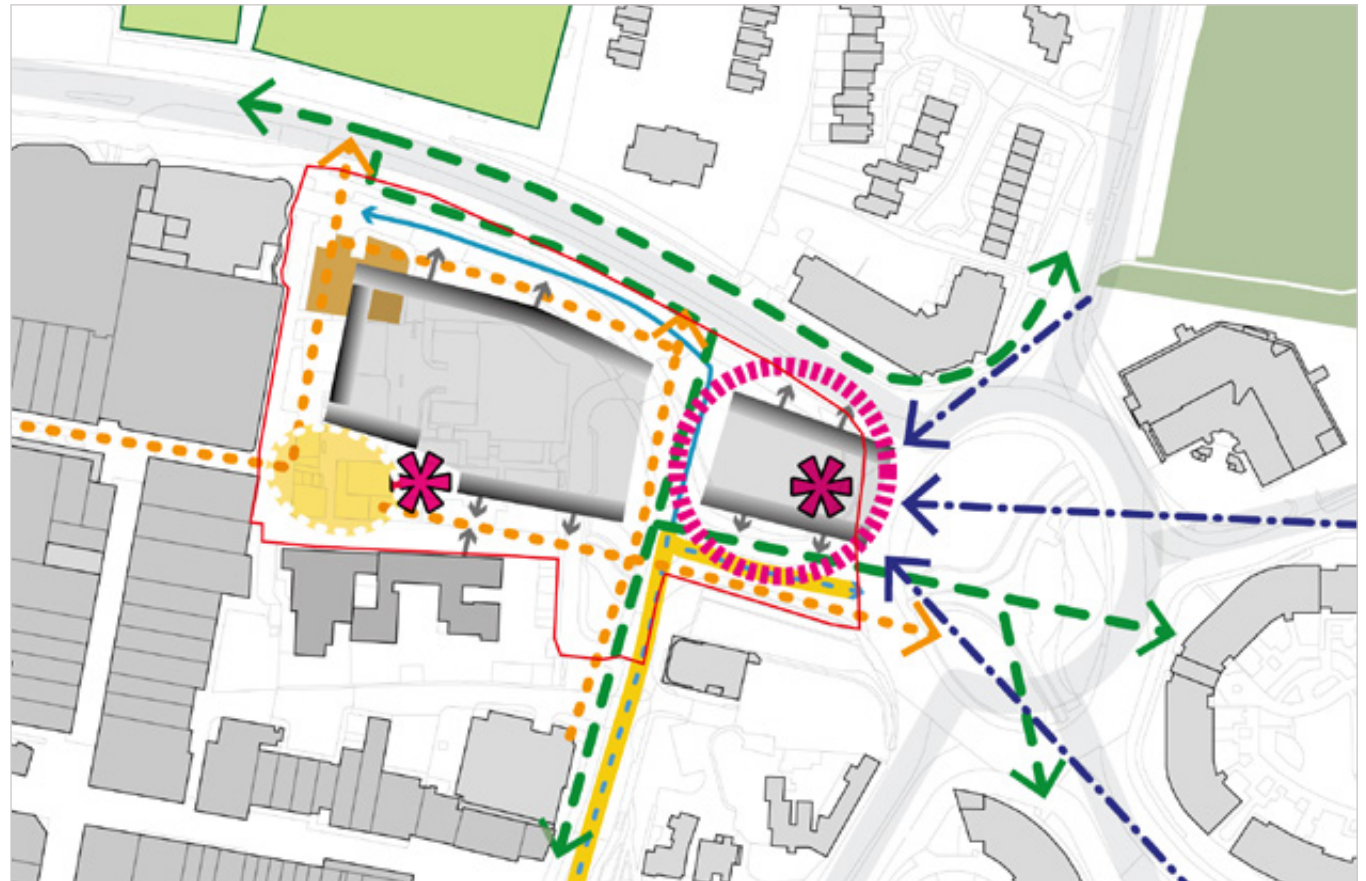


Figure 7.10: Eastern Gateway - Opportunities

KEY

	Site boundary		Access road		Direct connection between the station and town centre		Gateway
	Green space		Pedestrian		Frontages		Public space
	Trees		Cyclist		Landmark		
	The Ring		Views				

7.3 Eastern Gateway strategy

This section provides a specific coordinating framework for all new development within the masterplan area. All planning applications and projects are expected to accord with the principles in relation to the following:

- Movement and public realm;
- Layout;
- Land use;
- Green infrastructure; and
- Key public spaces.

Section 8 contains general design principles that apply across both masterplan areas and that must be met.

Movement and public realm strategy

Please note that, where appropriate, Manual for Streets (MfS) and Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) have been used to inform the design of the streets and junctions that comprise the development. Unlike Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which is produced primarily for application to the trunk road network, these documents have been produced specifically for use in urban environments. Guidance on visibility splays, junction spacing, corner radii, swept path analysis and lane widths have all been taken from these documents.

The street network around the site is currently fragmented and uses town centre land inefficiently, with large radii and wide roads dissecting land parcels that now will be bought into better use.

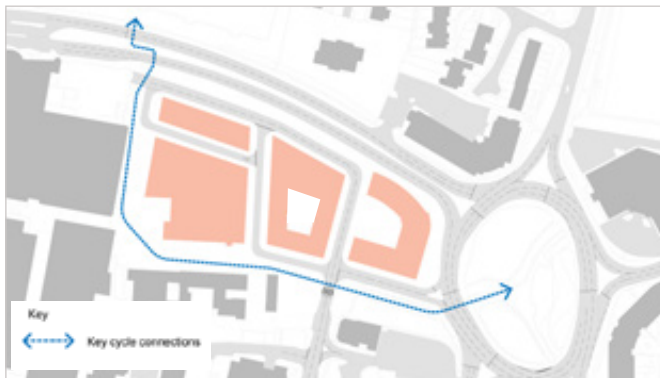


Figure 7.11: Proposed cycle connections



Figure 7.12: Proposed pedestrian connections



Figure 7.13: Proposed bus movement



Figure 7.14: Proposed car parking

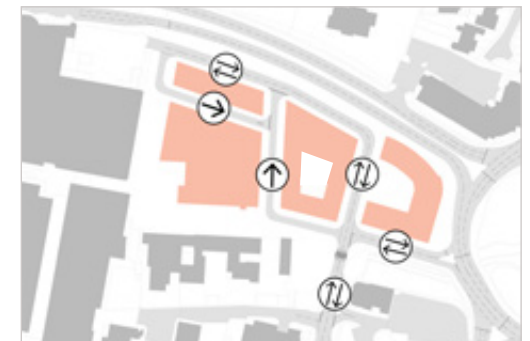


Figure 7.15: Proposed traffic movement

Development Principle: EG1 - Movement

To enable improved cycle and pedestrian movement through the area (refer to figure 7.16) the proposals will need to deliver:

- realignment of The Ring as it runs through the northern site (1) to create a more urban street grid that enables lower speeds and provides more space for public realm and development;
- two-way operation along The Ring and within the Town Square service streets (2) for a more simplified traffic management system;
- two-way operation along Weather Way (3) as a rationalised carriageway occupying the southern / westbound spur of the existing arrangement;
- consolidated car parking within a single car park (block E1 – 275 car parking spaces) (4) accessed off The Ring;
- service streets through Town Square to be designed as at-grade pedestrian priority spaces, effectively acting as additional public realm most of the day; and
- the east-west route cycle route (5) remaining at surface level through the site and only entering the underpass network at the Met Office Roundabout. This will make cycling more attractive to more people, as well as generally improving the public realm as it will be less fragmented by grade changes. The shops and commercial businesses that line the walking and cycling network will benefit from additional footfall.

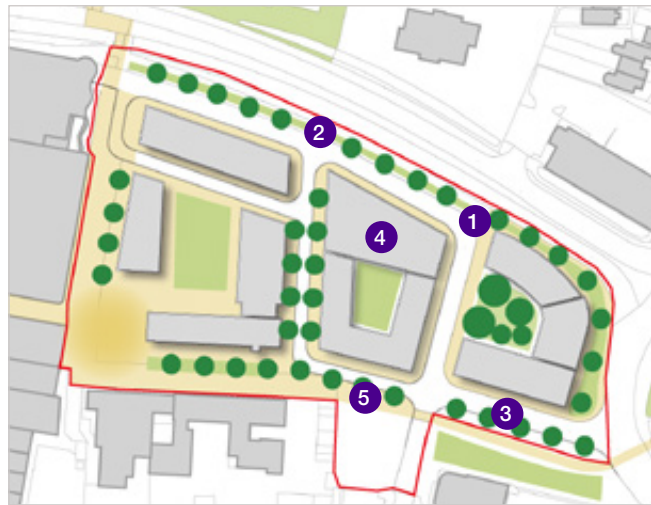


Figure 7.16: Proposed movement - key

Pedestrian movement through the area will be dramatically improved and benefit from the rationalisation of carriageway space and creation of new public realm space. Crucially, movement through from The Avenue into the site's new public spaces and commercial offerings will be greatly improved and as a result allow people to access shops and amenities on foot more easily and enjoyably. Rationalised highway space will deliver more space on footways for people walking, wheeling and relaxing.

The new public realm and open space provided within the site will deliver on healthy street principles as well as advancing biodiversity and habitat creation and utilising SuDS as the primary source of managing surface water.

Key street types

Figure 7.17 sets out the different street types, that contribute to a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment within the masterplan.

Eastern Gateway Access Streets

The streets around the existing Town Square will be designed as pedestrian-priority environments with level surfaces – operating as public space more than streets, through which vehicles will be allowed to pass at restricted times. Tree planting, SuDS, seating areas and informal play spaces will be key features within the public realm here, alongside cycle parking and maintenance stations. The ground-plane will not indicate notional carriageway or footway space, instead presenting a consistent ground-plane building to building.

See section 8 for general design principles for each street type.



Figure 7.17: Street types

Layout principles

The Movement and Public Realm Strategy must be supported by positive building edges defining and overlooking the key routes and spaces within the site. Taller buildings and landmark points reinforce the important destination of the station and town centre. This section sets out principles for:

- key frontages and edges; and
- key views, landmarks and opportunities for height.

See section 8 for general design principles for each frontage type.

Development Principle: EG2 – Key frontages and edges

Figure 7.18 sets out a range of different building frontages, each of which will have a role to play in creating a sense of place. This includes:

- **Active frontages** with predominantly non-residential ground floor uses will be concentrated around the Town Square and along the main pedestrian / cycle route to the east;
- **Positive frontages** consisting of regular entrances to residential uses will form the remaining edges along streets;
- **Landmark frontages**, which define special edge treatment of town-wide importance, include frontages overlooking the roundabout; and
- **Potentially inactive frontages** - a multi storey car park providing parking spaces for the whole of the allocation must be sensitively integrated into the southern urban block, by:
 - minimising negative impact on the outlook of new apartments;
 - avoiding blank, unattractive façades as much as possible;
 - integrating, where possible, active ground floor uses; and
 - utilising creative façade design and planting and create an architecturally high-quality building that contributes to the area.



Figure 7.18: Key frontages and edges

KEY

Principal areas showing ground level activity

- Active frontage
- Positive frontage

- Landmark frontage of town-wide importance
- Potentially inactive frontage

Key views, landmarks and opportunities for height

New buildings should support the overall approach to movement and connections through the area.

Development Principle: EG3 – Heights

Figure 7.20 sets out principles for building height across the core area as follows.

- A single taller building should be located on the eastern edge, overlooking the roundabout up to a maximum of 16 storeys;
- The majority of the remainder of the area may be up to 8 storeys in height. Changes in height and massing should be used to create visual interest and avoid long ‘walls’ of the same height; and
- Where there are opportunities for landmark / focal points located on key views, design of buildings must respond positively to these views. Building heights should not exceed 8 storeys.

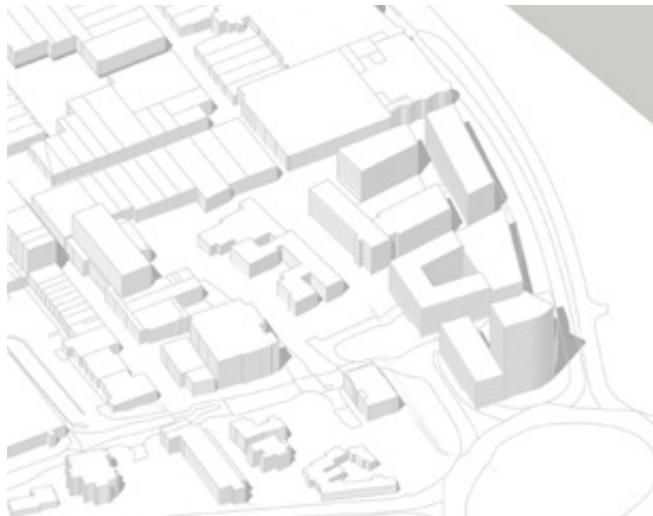


Figure 7.19: Massing study - view from the east



Figure 7.20: Proposed heights



Land use

The Council's planning policy aims to regenerate the area as a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use area. The Eastern Gateway, formerly the Civic Quarter, provides an opportunity for hotel, leisure and residential uses as well as employment space incorporated within the lower floors. This mix will contribute positively to the town centre vibrancy and provide active edges along the streets and spaces helping to animate the public realm and contribute to the safety and security of the area.

Development Principle: EG4 – Land use

New development should:

- explore in detail the opportunity to retain and refurbish Easthampstead House into a hotel, continued commercial uses or residential uses;
- provide a range of residential types and tenures, including Extra Care;
- provide employment / commercial uses on the ground and lower floors, defining and overlooking adjacent streets and spaces, with residential above;
- focus 'active' commercial frontages, community and leisure uses onto the Town Square to maximise footfall, activate the public realm and enable uses to spill out into the square; and
- locate less active commercial / employment uses, such as offices / workshops onto Millennium Way as employment tends to be less sensitive than residential uses to noise from passing vehicles.



Figure 7.21: Easthampstead House can be refurbished and extended at roof level with terraces providing long distance views, example: ex Camden Council Office, London

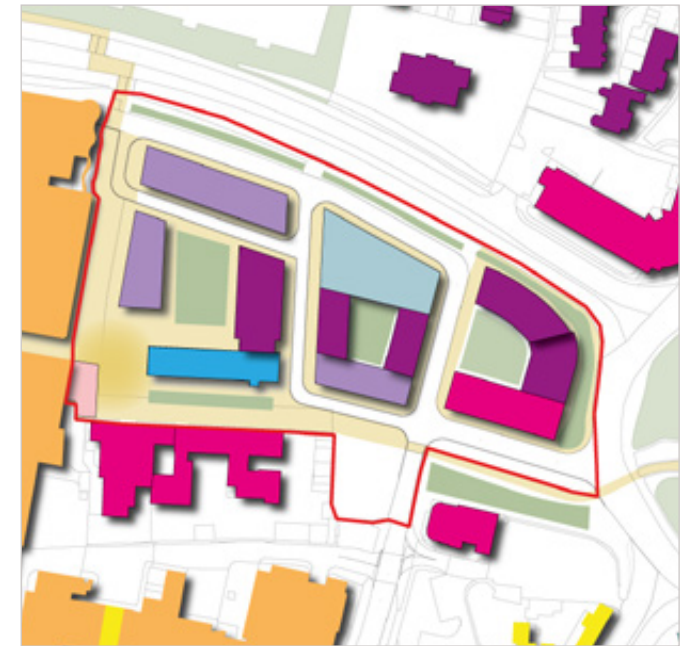


Figure 7.22: Proposed uses

KEY

 Leisure	 Food and beverage
 Office	 Education
 Retail	 Residential
 Religious	 Private car parking
 Community	 Residential with ground level workspace
 Public car parking	 Children and youth play

Play and Green infrastructure

Where new or improved green infrastructure is proposed, the maximum benefit should be achieved by designing it to serve a variety of functions.

The site proposals offer a major opportunity to integrate with the existing green infrastructure network through improvements along the Eastern spine the delivery of an amount of open space incorporating an element of formal and informal play in addition to communal and private open spaces associated with the development blocks.

Development Principle: EG5 – Play and Green Infrastructure

New development should:

- Trees, planting and SuDS along the Eastern spine;
- Within these streets and spaces play should be a feature throughout and be well integrated to achieve an informal environment to play;
- children's play focused within the town square animating and contributing to the vibrancy of the space;
- Planting along the streets; and
- Green roofs and communal gardens.



Figure 7.23: Town Square plan - children's play



Figure 7.24: Informal seating in the square



Figure 7.25: Children's play activities

Key public spaces

The Eastern Gateway masterplan is made up of several spaces, that each have their particular character and design requirements. These are:

- Town Square.
- Eastern Spine.

In order to deliver the overall masterplan and meet the Council's aspirations the development principles for each space must be met.



Figure 7.26: Key public spaces

Town square

New development must retain the original layout of the New Town's civic quarter maintaining Easthampstead House or a replacement building in its location and setting. The space will function as a community focus and space that invites relaxation, meeting and community interaction away from the buzz and bustle of the core town centre.

Development Principle: EG6 – Town square

The following principles will need to be met to achieve the aspiration for this square and surrounding development:

- Seating should be fun and convivial, with a mix of formal and informal seating opportunities;
- Play opportunities should be incorporated into the space to invite children and families to use the space, and should not be a segregated, fenced off play area;
- Trees must be specified to calm the space, offer shade and shelter; and
- SuDS will be incorporated into the space to both soften the space and protect the town from flooding, and the space should deliver the maximum protection against surface water flooding possible.

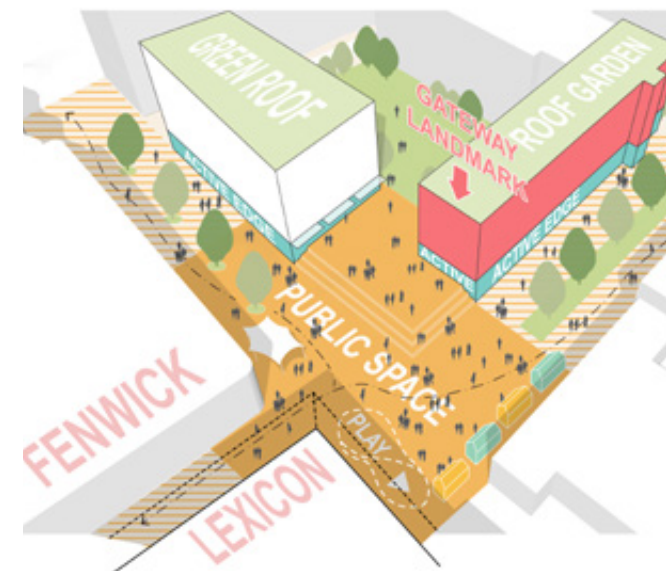


Figure 7.27: Town Square plan and aerial view from the south-west



Figure 7.28: Easthampstead House and Town Square as viewed today on approach from the town centre along The Avenue

Eastern Spine

This route provides the main pedestrian / cycle approach into the town centre from the east.

The following principles must be met to deliver the aspiration for this square and surrounding development.



Figure 7.29: Eastern spine route

Development Principle: EG7 – Eastern Spine

New development should provide:

- The link will create a pedestrian priority space, where people feel comfortable walking and wheeling.
- Cycling will be accommodated as part of the pedestrian space to encourage low speeds and considerate behaviour.
- Safe space away from any moving cycles will be created at the building edge, delineated by tactile paving to ensure access for all.
- Trees, planting and SuDS should line the link in a way that breaks up the linearity, providing increased legibility but creating a more relaxed procession – pockets of space joined up to create a link, rather than a formal Avenue.
- The walking and cycling access to the underpass network at the Met Office Roundabout will remain at surface level until east of The Ring.
- Servicing routes will be accommodated from Weather Way into the site's pedestrian priority street network around Town Square. These streets will be at grade and operate effectively as public space through which vehicles can pass at restricted times to service buildings.
- Access to the Police Station and Magistrate's Court will remain unchanged.



Figure 7.30: Linear park offering space to relax and enjoy



Figure 7.31: Soft landscape, public art, old and new buildings contribute to form a quality environment



Figure 7.32: Pavilion cafe within a square



Figure 7.33: Cyclists

8. General Design Principles

8.1 Built form

The masterplans establish an urban pattern of development creating a clearly defined and permeable structure comprising suitably sized blocks.

Frontages and edges

To meet the aspiration of creating a vibrant new urban mixed-use neighbourhood it is essential that the design of ground floor frontages ensures attractive and active street edges.



Figure 8.1: Active frontage – ground level uses animate the façade and public realm

Development Principle: GD1

The following frontage typologies have been defined and design principles must be met in line with the framework plans included in sections 5, 6 and 7:

- **Active frontages** - these define the edge of the new pedestrian routes linking the site to the town centre in the south as well as to the east and around the public spaces they pass through with strong, almost continuous building edges. The ground floor of the buildings along these frontages will predominantly comprise non-residential uses which will help animate the frontages and, in some cases, spill out into the public realm. These must include active ground floors, windows and doors for at least 50% of the frontage.
- **Positive frontages** - these frontages will accommodate regular entrances to residential and have an important role to play in defining and overlooking all the routes and spaces. This can be achieved by integrating maisonettes at ground level where possible to allow individual front doors onto street level and a regular animation and activity.
- **Landmark frontages** – these are of town wide importance and are placed at key locations on approach to the town centre along main key routes. These should have special architectural treatment with distinctive detailing and use of special materials to emphasize their visual prominence.
- **Potentially inactive frontages** – in both masterplans there are multi-storey car park buildings which may not be able to achieve active ground floors for large parts of the building frontage. These buildings must be considered carefully and must fit well within the new urban quarters created here, they must:
 - have a strong architectural design that introduces human scale and vertical rhythm through the use of materials and detailing;
 - incorporate graphics and signage into the design of the building in a creative way and integrated way (rather than being an add-on); and
 - incorporate small amounts of active ground floor uses where possible - e.g. making the most of staff entrances and office functions.



Figure 8.2: Public uses at ground level spilling out and animating the public realm

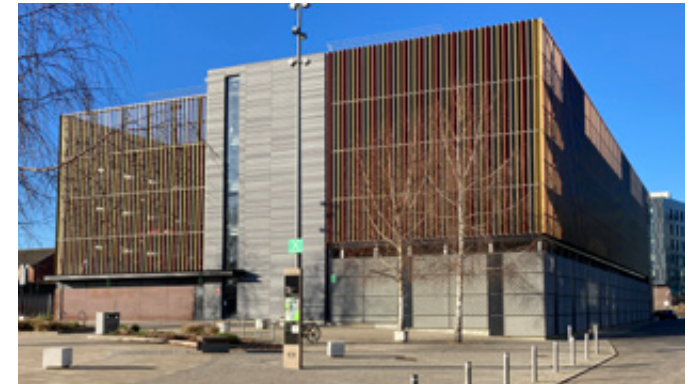


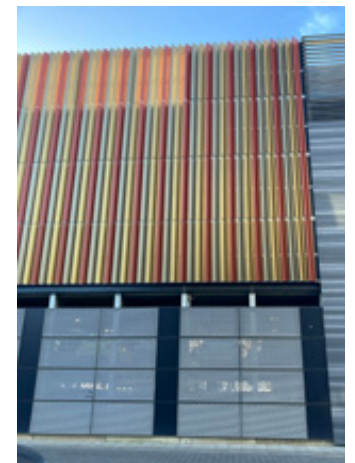
Figure 8.3: Multi-storey car park positively contributes to the streetscape - Bittern Way MSCP, Fletton Quays, Peterborough



Figure 8.4: Regular entrances to residential accommodation/maisonette entrances with flats above



Figure 8.5: Multi-storey car park positively contributes to the streetscape - London City Island, Leamouth Peninsula



Articulated façade treatment

Building façades should be varied both horizontally and vertically in order to achieve proportions that relate to human scale.

Development Principle: GD2

In order to achieve this the following design principles should apply:

- monolithic façades must be avoided. Breakdown of the façade helps to reduce their scale and help to integrate them within the development;
- façades should clearly articulate their use and commercial buildings should be articulated differently from residential buildings;
- apartment blocks must have a regular pattern of accommodation expressed externally to provide a vertical rhythm to the street scene and break down the horizontality of the block. This sets apart the new residential buildings from the New Town heritage and non-residential uses in the core of the town centre;
- materials should be high quality and carefully selected to reflect the character of Bracknell; and
- simple clearly articulated building forms, with limited decoration, well-proportioned elevations and high quality detailing.

Acceptable and unacceptable Façade treatments:



Figure 8.6: Buildings with unarticulated form must be avoided



Figure 8.7: Clearly defined base and top of building

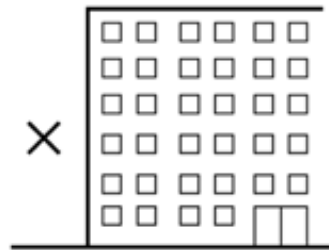


Figure 8.8: Monolithic façades 'hole in wall' must be avoided

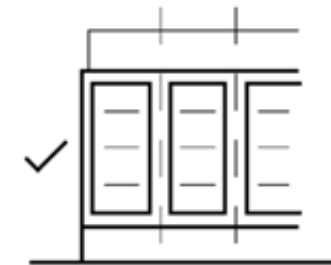


Figure 8.9: Regular vertical bays break down the building mass and provide rhythm

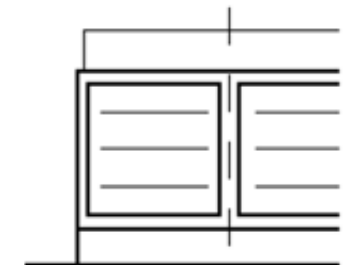


Figure 8.10: Wider commercial grid differentiates from residential scale



Figure 8.11: Different treatment to building façades provides a well considered approach and a variety and interest in this courtyard development - Scape Phase 2, Student accommodation, Guildford © Stephen Marshall Architects

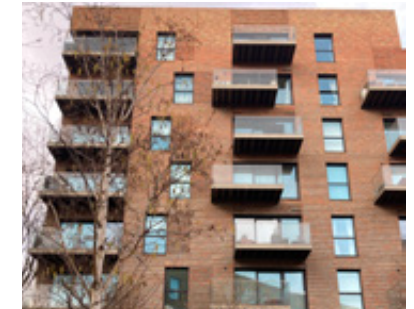
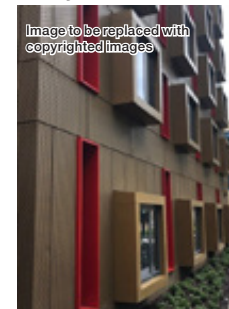


Figure 8.12: Interesting play of aperture opening and projections on a brick facade

Landmark buildings

Landmarks do not need to be taller but should be carefully designed and articulate their location within the wider urban fabric. They should make a positive contribution to the legibility of the wider area and reinforce local identity through their scale, use, detailed design and materiality.

The introduction and location of tall building is to provide a clear sense of orientation locally and town-wide. The residential nature of the building will allow the elevations to be strongly modelled incorporating features such as balconies which will add animation and variety to the appearance of the block.

Development Principle: GD3

The following principles should be followed:

- the tall building should be sited so that it enhances views and vistas as well as provides a landmark from street level;
- achieve a slender, elegant and articulated profile that demonstrably minimises the visual bulk and mass of the building - a blocky and inarticulate form must be avoided; and
- they should contribute to an interesting, variable and memorable skyline.

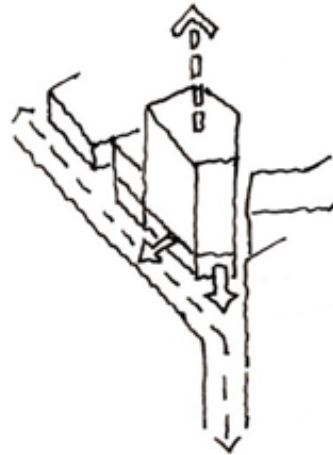


Figure 8.13: Opportunity at the end of the block along Braccan Walk to create a marker at the corner by accentuating the height and addressing the two routes with public uses at ground level



Figure 8.14: Corner articulation gives the opportunity to address two streets creating a marker



Figure 8.15: Corners can be used to accentuate vertical form, or define an entrance

Landmark and taller elements must be integrated into the wider block structure:

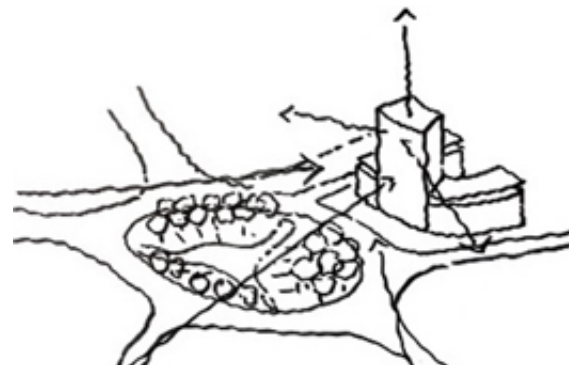


Figure 8.16: The Forge

Horizontal block terminated by a taller element creates a strong townscape statement:

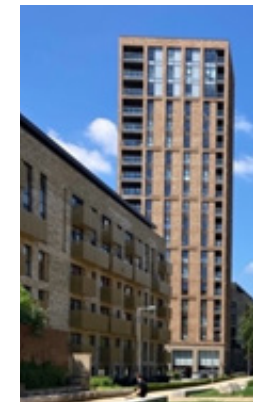


Figure 8.17: Surrey Canal, Deptford



Figure 8.18: The Forge

Variable roofline

Rooflines should be broken to avoid long stretches of monotonous roofscape. Variations in building heights and roof shape will enrich the skyline. The following design principles must be met:

Development Principle: GD4

- accommodate steps in massing. Any height changes should also be reflected in an appropriate elevational treatment for the typology being used;
- use of projections such as vertical circulation towers and setbacks at top levels; and
- green roofs and roof terraces where possible.



Figure 8.19: Examples of variation in rooflines

8.2 Public realm

It is important to note two key points in regard to highways and transport networks. Firstly, that highways and transport networks are recognised as having two key functions that of enabling the movement of people and goods, but they should also make a positive contribution to the place in which they sit. Secondly, the scale of contribution that good public realm design can make to achieving better places.

Streets and Junctions

The masterplans reimagine the existing road network and set out new or narrowed streets that contribute to a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment. The street types proposed are taken from the 2018 CIHT publication, 'Creating better streets: Inclusive and accessible places' and form the framework for the delivery of the streets for these masterplans.

The following street typologies have been defined and design principles must be met in line with the framework plans included in sections 5, 6 and 7.

Pedestrian Priority Environments

This type of street is designed as a pedestrianised space in which vehicles (often filtered) are permitted to use but at low speeds.

Development Principle: GD5

- Street furniture should be placed to loosely define the vehicle movement corridor but there is no 'carriageway' or 'footway' in the typical sense;
- There should be a pedestrian-only clear zone next to the building edge, defined by tactile paving to allow it to be used by visually impaired people and other pedestrians who do not feel confident being in a space with moving vehicles.



Figure 8.20: Examples of pedestrian priority environment



Figure 8.21: New Lion Way, Elephant and Castle

Key features of Informal Street Environments

Development Principle: GD6

- Some of the typical ‘segregation’ measures (for example contrasting colours and materials and signalised crossings) are removed to create a slower more relaxed, pedestrian and cycling friendly environment.
- Measures to assist with informal crossing, like central medians, should be used.
- Low kerbs (25 - 60 mm) separating the footway and will incorporate trees, raingardens, seats, areas for outdoor dining and the legal minimum amount of road markings, as behaviours should be more intuitive in line with the changed streetscape character.



Figure 8.22: Examples of informal street environment



Figure 8.24: New Lion Way, Elephant and Castle



Figure 8.25: Sayer Street, Elephant and Castle

Key features of Enhanced Street Environments

Development Principle: GD7

- There is a distinct carriageway separated from the footways with a 100 – 125 mm high kerb
- Typical road markings such as double yellow lines and centre lines on an asphalt carriageway.
- The ‘enhancement’ comes from new paving, trees, seats and street furniture, in a decluttered environment that afford more pedestrian priority and space for urban life.



Figure 8.26: An example of an enhanced street environment

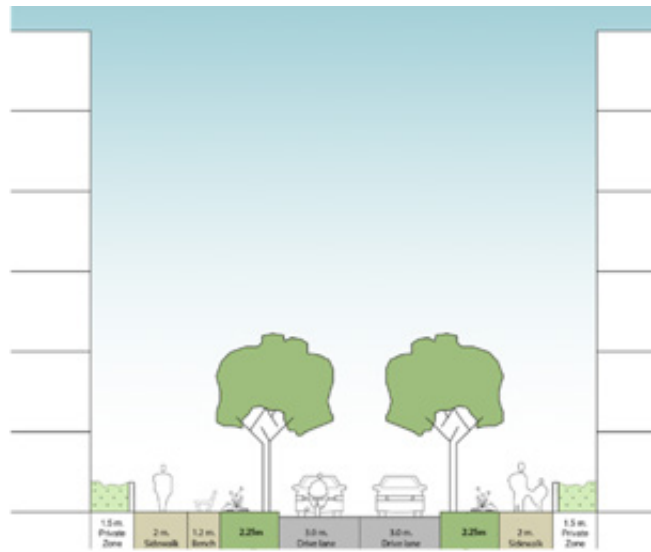


Figure 8.27: Section through The Ring



Figure 8.28: SuDS incorporated within the public realm

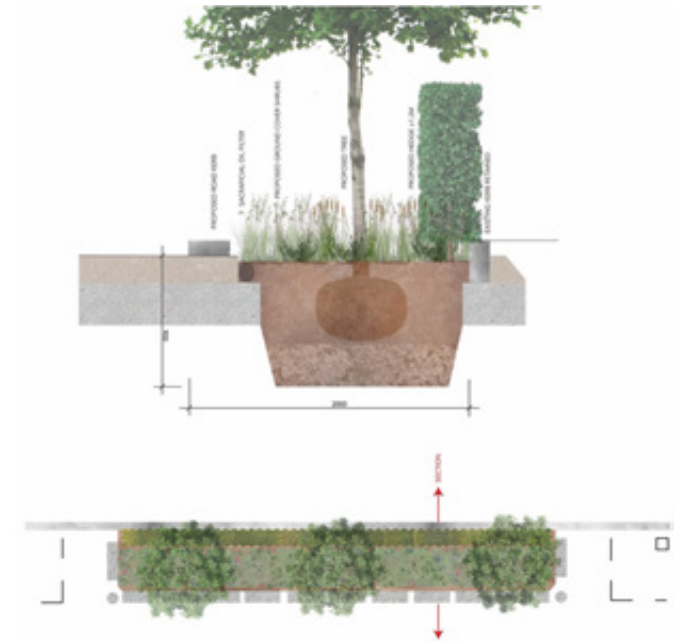


Figure 8.29: An example of a similar carriageway SuDS Solution



Figure 8.30: SuDS incorporated within Heygate Street, Southwark



Figure 8.31: Section through Station Road



Figure 8.32: Examples of an enhanced street environment

Planting

Development Principle: GD8

- Planting design must be mindful of the effects of climate change both in respect of providing shade for people as well as in the selection of drought tolerant planting, ecology and storm water management;
- Biodiversity and climate resilience must be a priority when composing planting palettes by including a large percentage of UK native species and wildlife of documented beneficial value, along with species more likely to flourish in the anticipated future climate;
- Planting should focus on deciduous species, but should include some evergreen species and must engage the senses by providing year-round seasonal interest in the form of foliage, bark, colour, flowers, fragrance, fruits and berries;
- Any plants known to be associated with destructive diseases or harm to people and wildlife must be avoided; and
- Planting beds areas must be designed to ensure an adequate growing medium for sustained healthy plant growth.

8.3 Sustainability principles

Active travel

Development Principle: GD9

- The design of streets and public spaces will be delivered in line with the hierarchy of vulnerable road users principles set out within the new Highway Code and within Manual for Streets meaning that streets should meet the needs of pedestrians first, then accommodating cycles and then vehicles.
- The use of active and sustainable modes should be prioritised throughout the sites to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of the mobility network, with access to public transport being key for longer journeys.
- Footways throughout the site should have a minimum clear width of 2m, meaning that any furniture zone would be in addition to this. In areas where higher pedestrian flows are expected, pedestrian comfort level analysis should be undertaken to calculate the effective width required in addition to 2m clear.
- Footways gradients should be a maximum of 1:20 to enable suitable access to be achieved in line with mobility requirements.
- Cycling within the sites should take place within the general carriageway. The design of these streets, including the carriageway width and their general character, must achieve a naturally low-speed environment. Gradients would be a maximum of 1 in 20.
- Cycle parking must be provided throughout, with different techniques being used at different locations. In commercial areas, Sheffield Stands should be prioritised to allow people cycling to access shops conveniently, whilst in residential areas secure cycle parking should be incorporated into the public realm.



Figure 8.33: Examples of cycling incorporated within public realm

Green and blue infrastructure

Within the public realm SuDS and tree planting are required throughout, and the mix of planting should prioritise habitat creation and biodiversity support. Surface water should be managed on site through a network of SuDS. Planting should be maximised around existing larger streets to mitigate noise and air pollution whilst being mindful of perceived safety and antisocial behaviour.

For areas of hardstanding, permeable materials must be prioritised to support the surface water management plan on site.

Development Principle: GD10

An emphasis is to be placed on optimising green space within built areas, through:

- incorporating SuDS for conveyance and water treatment, and also provide biodiversity value;
- providing foraging opportunities, edible produce, inclusion of pollinator species and allowing movement of species through urbanised areas;
- maximising use of water features which create a sense of place in some key set-piece public realm areas;
- clear measures for the reduction of the Urban Heat Island effect through tree planting, greening, providing adequate shading, through natural and artificial means, water features and light coloured surfaces that minimise heat absorption; and
- provision of shared, public open spaces of varying types for recreation, communal activities and contribution to community health, wellbeing and social cohesion.

Buildings

Development Principle: GD11

Design all buildings to reduce the demand for energy by:

- orientating them to take advantage of winter solar gains, prevent overheating and to provide roof orientations suitable for PV panels;
- improving building fabric and insulation beyond minimum Building Regulations requirements;
- installing windows with improved performance;
- improving air tightness;
- specifying low-flow taps and showers;
- installing smart meters and technology to control energy provision with every residential dwelling; and
- providing 100% low energy lighting.

Materials

Development Principle: GD12

- Materials for construction should follow a reuse and recycle programme, where materials that are lifted are considered for reuse before being replaced, and if not reused should be considered for changing to satisfy another requirement – old kerbs being laid as barrel runs or loading bays for example. New materials should be specified from as local as possible.

8.4 Public art

Public art is freely accessible to everyone. It reflects society and can strengthen the sense of place by being site specific. It is a communal activity that can reach a wide variety of people. It can be engaging, inspiring and challenging and can help stimulate conversation between a diverse range of individuals and groups.

Traditionally public art was permanent with monuments, memorials, civic statues and sculptures commemorating or celebrating historic people and events, such as the Bracknell War Memorial. The intention of Art in Bracknell must be to move beyond more traditional notions, working where possible with local communities to commission artworks, temporary and permanent, that respond to site and situation.

More recently the scope of public art has expanded to include more transient activities, such as performance, dance, theatre, and installations. Street art, including murals and graffiti, whether permanent or temporary, embraces political themes and protest, adding energy and interest to the public realm.

Permanent art works remain in the public eye and require a great deal of care in commissioning, conceiving, delivering and maintaining. Temporary art is more ephemeral and works may linger in the memory but do not generally provide a permanent physical record. Whether permanent or temporary, the best and most engaging public art should be planned from the outset of any public realm project to ensure it provides meaning for people and value for money.

Development Principle: GD13

The following principles apply:

- Ensure the delivery of appropriate public art in Bracknell;
- Promote the early integration of public art within development proposals;
- Clarify the requirements for, and processes involved in, the development and delivery of public art;
- Encourage partnership working in delivering public art; and
- Establish an agreed management and maintenance procedure for public art.



Figure 8.34: Public art in Bracknell town centre

9. Phasing and Delivery

High Street Car Park

The High Street Car Park site is concise and the development quantum of space being delivered across the site is of a realistic size to consider it to be delivered in a single phase. This is illustrated in figure 9.1 and as listed below:

- Phase 1: Left parcel of the site, encompassing blocks A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, B4 and C1.

The timescales of the phasing for the High Street Car Park scheme, will be as follows:

- Pre-construction: 6-months
- Construction: 24-months
- Sales: 18-months



Figure 9.1: High Street Car Park phasing plan

Southern Gateway

The Southern Gateway site is quite a large area of development and the quantum of space being delivered across the site may be more reasonable and realistic to consider it to be delivered through multiple phases. This is illustrated in figure 9.2 and as listed below:

- Phase 2: Bottom right parcel encompassing blocks F1, F2, G1, G2 and G3.
- Phase 3: Bottom left parcel encompassing blocks A1, A2, A3, C1, C2, D1 and D2
- Phase 4: Top right parcel encompassing blocks E1, E2, E3 and E4.

These are based on the assumption that key infrastructure works for the Southern Gateway will be undertaken before commencement of the first phase. Further detailed analysis of the infrastructure required and associated phasing will need to be undertaken to understand the infrastructure phasing as well as the impact on the wider town centre traffic during phased work stages.

It is assumed that the Multi Storey Car Park in block F1 will be delivered in the initial phase of the development so that it is available to service subsequent phases of development as well as making the residential offer a more attractive proposition for buyers.



Figure 9.2: Southern Gateway phasing plan

The timescales of the phasing for the Southern Gateway scheme, will be as follows:

- Pre-construction: 12-months
- Construction: 24-months
- Sales: 12-months

Eastern Gateway

Similar to the Southern Gateway, the development in the Eastern Gateway will be delivered in phases.

As illustrated in figure 9.3 there will be two phases as follows:

- Phase 2: Left parcel of the site, encompassing blocks A1, A2, B1, C1, E1 and E2.
- Phase 3: Right parcel of the site, encompassing blocks F1, F2 and F3.

All infrastructure works for the Eastern Gateway scheme will be undertaken before the commencement of the first phase and similarly to the Southern Gateway Site the Multi Storey Car Park (block E1) will be delivered in the initial phase of the development so that it is available to service the second phase of the development as well as making the residential offer a more attractive proposition for buyers.

In addition to the adopted phasing for the Eastern Gateway scheme the timescales for the respective phases will be as follows:

- Pre-construction: 12-months
- Construction: 24-months
- Sales: 12-months



Figure 9.3: Eastern gateway phasing plan

