
Coventry City Council Coventry Urban Design Study

Final Report



February 1999

urban initiatives://



Coventry by Design

Coventry Urban Design Study

“ A City is not simply
an amalgamation of buildings,
roads and open spaces -
it is also people and their
activities.”
Coventry UDP 1993

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Section 1: Executive Summary

1.1 Study Background

The study has focused upon three main tasks, which form individual sections of the report and from which policy recommendations have been derived:

- Evolving an urban design strategy for the city centre.
- Identifying areas of distinctive character across the city
- Analysing the character and improvement potential of transport/movement corridors.

The outcome has been a hierarchy of urban design policy recommendations and project proposals in respect of the Unitary Plan Review. The study has drawn upon Urban Initiatives work for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions on developing good practice guidance on design in the planning system.

1.2 Promoting Urban Design (see Section 3)

Good design can help to create successful places, where people will choose to live, work, play and invest. We can learn from the experience of places that are already successful. Government advice (Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 General Policy and Principles) identifies planning goals, which can be achieved through good design. They include making development sustainable by the careful use of resources; improving the quality of the environment; attracting business and investment; reinforcing civic pride and a sense of place; and creating mixed-use development.

Thinking about design at the start of the planning and development process is the best way to promote successful and sustainable regeneration, conservation and place making. Leaving design issues to the end can make the development process slow, frustrating and a source of wasteful conflict.

1.3 Using The Planning Tool Kit

The planning system has a kit of tools, which can help create the conditions for good design. The first of these tools is *planning policy guidance*, issued by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The second is the local authority's **development plan**, which sets out the policies against which development proposals will be assessed. Further detail is provided in **supplementary planning guidance (SPG)**. This guidance includes **urban design frameworks**,

design guides and development briefs. Primarily local authorities prepare most of these, but other organisations involved in development can also prepare them.

It is good practice for a local authority to show through SPG how its policies can be developed into clear design ideas in particular areas and sites, and in relation to specific planning and design issues. The resource implications of preparing SPG are likely to require a prioritised and phased approach reflecting firstly the need to update existing coverage to reflect the new design policy hierarchy in the plan, secondly the need to reflect a new corporate approach to the preparation, presentation and marketing of SPG and thirdly the availability of council resources. However, it should be noted that not all SPG need be prepared solely by the council. There may be a joint role for the Coventry By Design Initiative or other organisations in assisting in its preparation.

1.4 Adopting A Proactive Approach

The development control process will determine whether or not a development proposal will receive planning permission. The stages before a planning application is submitted are particularly important. A proactive approach resolves potential conflicts as quickly and easily as possible. Integrated working methods can break down bureaucratic and professional barriers. **Design statements, design audits and design panels** can help to ensure quality.

A proactive approach to development control depends on the local authority making its views and requirements about planning and design known at an early stage, rather than merely reacting to detailed development proposals. It equally depends on the potential applicant seeking advice from the council early in the process, and consulting widely when appropriate.

1.5 Monitoring and reviewing SPG

SPG should be monitored to check how it is being used, and how developers and planning applicants are responding to it. The content of the guidance itself may need to be reviewed, or it may be necessary to review its promotion, marketing and the associated training. For example in light of changes in legislation or other policy (national and local), changes in economic and market conditions or emerging best practice elsewhere, and as reflected in Government and academic sources.

1.6 Quality audits

The impact of design policy and guidance needs to be monitored so that the planning tools can be reviewed and revised as necessary. It is proposed that at regular intervals the City Council conduct audits of its management of the design and planning process in order to:

- Assess the impact of the council's intervention at every stage in the planning process.
- Ensure that the council's design policies are being applied effectively and that SPG is being followed.
- Contribute to the review of design policy and guidance.

Other methods of assessing the impact of design policy and guidance include visits by council members and officers, and others, to completed buildings and schemes, internal workshops and regular design surgeries, comments by a design advisory panel and design awards. It is suggested that the Coventry by Design Initiative be used to give a higher profile.

1.7 Recognising The Impact Of Small Scale Development

In preparing design guidance it should be recognised that a significant amount of development does not need planning permission, due to its small scale. It can, though, be influenced by local authorities' design guidance (such as design guides). Other initiatives could include council run seminars focusing on typical design problems and encouraging higher quality planning submissions. The cumulative effect of many small developments, such as house extensions, shop fronts and infill schemes, can have a dramatic impact in only a few years.

1.8 Factors, which influence or determine design

Everyone who carries out development wants smooth and rapid progress through the planning system, and a building and spaces that perform as intended. They are most likely to get that if the development is designed in line with **policy**, in the light of a clear understanding of what is **feasible**, in response to **context**, and with a sensitive and considered **approach** by its designers and managers. When any one of these four forces is not accommodated or not given sufficient recognition, good design is unlikely.

1.9 The Form of Development

The purpose of urban design is to ensure that the form of any development (buildings, structures and spaces) contributes to making vital, viable and successful places. The form of buildings, structures and spaces influences the pattern of uses; activity and movement in a place, and the

experience of those visit and live or work there. Form has several aspects including **layout** (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), visual appearance (details, materials), and landscape.

1.10 Urban Design Policy Recommendations (see Section 8)

1.10.1 City-wide General urban design policies

General urban design policies should be related to the following objectives. Appendix A contains policy recommendations in relation to urban design objectives.

1. Character
2. Continuity and enclosure
3. Quality of the public realm
4. Ease of movement
5. Legibility
6. Adaptability
7. Diversity
8. Sustainability

1.10.2 Policies for specific types of context

Policy recommendations are made in respect of the following specific types of context

- Corridors (including Coventry canal)
- Legible city gateways
- Character areas
- Suburban nodes

1.10.3 Corridors (see Section 6)

The following city movement corridors were selected for detailed urban design analysis and consideration of their potential for enhancement.

1. Foleshill Rd
2. Hollyhead Rd
3. Butts Rd/Spon End
4. London Rd
5. Walsgrave Rd / Ansty Rd
6. Coventry Canal

It is proposed that corridors be enhanced through the introduction of coordinated improvements designed to:

- Provide a better welcome and first impression to visitors
- Guide, orientate and inform visitors about areas, attractions and facilities both along the corridor and within the city centre before arrival
- Reinforce the character and identity of overall corridors, sections of a corridor and adjacent areas
- Promote the ease and convenience of bus travel for passengers
- Support the vitality and viability of local shopping frontages
- Enhance the public realm through co-ordinated environmental improvements reflecting corridor and local character identity.
- Promote higher standards of design in respect of frontage development of individual corridors through urban design frameworks, development briefs and design guides

1.10.4 Coventry Canal Corridor

It is proposed that 'Regenerating Coventry's Canal' produced by the City Council be updated to reflect the general design policies proposed for the UDP and changes in local circumstances relating to key development sites.

It is recommended that the heritage trail be 'plugged' into a city centre wide co-ordinated signing and information system. This would enable the trail to be promoted and signed at other locations such as car parks, the railway station and spaces within the city centre. Signing to the canal from main corridors should not be overlooked. Information could guide visitors to the canal basin via continuity pedestrian signing, to the most appropriate car park or bus route. It is further recommended that pedestrian routes to the basin, in particular Bishop Street, be enhanced including improvements to street furniture, lighting, paving and pedestrian crossings to improve their attractiveness and legibility.

Extending the city centre lighting strategy approach to the creation of a **lighting plan** for the canal which focuses on improving tow path lighting, the embellishment of landmark buildings and structures and festival / event lighting would significantly contribute to its visitor appeal.

1.10.5 Creating Legible City Gateways

It is proposed that a policy be developed to promote the enhancement of major city gateways (see figure 3). The aim is to:

- Create an enhanced sense of arrival and welcome.

- Improve the physical appearance of the public realm including the reduction of clutter and duplication of street furniture, signage and lighting and opportunities for enhanced soft landscaping.
- Create a co-ordinated series of gateway structures to act as landmarks to improve the legibility of junctions and spaces and improve clarity of way finding.
- Establish opportunities for contemporary place specific design, the integration of public art and lighting
- Establish appropriate levels of highway and pedestrian signage reflecting a city Legibility Initiative. This may include the integration of conventional Coventry City boundary signs.

It is recommended that individual briefs be prepared for each gateway, set within the framework of the Legibility Initiative, as the basis for progressing detailed designs.

1.10.6 Character Areas (see Sections 7 and 8)

A policy response could be developed which promotes design quality within identified character areas to reinforce local character and identity. This approach seeks to elaborate upon general design policies by developing context related policies based upon detailed analysis of local conditions

The following character areas have been identified as scoring well against the criteria outlined in Section 5, which include consistency/coherence of building forms and materials, historical significance, general environmental quality and erosion of such qualities.

1. Sowle Valley
2. Upper Stoke
3. Longford
4. Middle Stoke
5. Earlsdon
6. Stivichall (including Leamington Road)
7. Walsgrave Village - Woodway Lane - old village
8. Moseley Avenue/Coundon
9. Coventry Canal Basin
10. Lower Hollyhead Road
11. Nauls Mill/Coundon Street/St.Nicholas Street

It is recommended that one of the above areas be selected for a pilot character statement based upon the three-stage approach set out in section 5. (See Figure 51)

1.10.7 Suburban nodes (see Sections 7 and 8)

Suburban nodes form important elements in the city's structure contributing greatly to local identity in what could otherwise be rather monotonous residential areas. A policy response, which reflects their importance would emphasise that development at these nodes, should reinforce characteristics such as:

- The concentration of particular building forms or uses
- Local shopping frontage/centre
- Landmark buildings and structures
- Public uses and community facilities
- Landscape features and open space
- Road junctions marked by higher buildings
- Higher density development

It is proposed to reinforce the local character and identity of nodes outside character areas through the development of urban design frameworks for pilot character areas identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes, key development sites, potential site specific briefs and local design guides prepared in consultation with local communities and organisations based upon a detailed character statement.

1.10.8 Topic Based Policies

It is recommended that policies in respect of a range of topics be incorporated into the plan including advertising and signage, archaeology, conservation areas and listed buildings, cycling, house extensions and alterations, mobility, public art, lighting and shop fronts.

In most cases these policies will need to be supported by SPG (see Appendix B) in the form of design guides which will be prepared on a prioritised and phased basis reflecting firstly the need to update existing coverage to reflect the new design policy hierarchy in the plan, secondly the need to reflect a new corporate approach to the preparation, presentation and marketing of supplementary planning guidance and thirdly the availability of council resources.

1.11 Policies on aspects of the design and planning process (see Section 9)

It is recommended that a range of policies are incorporated in the plan which relate to planning application information requirements, pre-application design statements, application information requirements, design advisory panels, urban design frameworks, development briefs and design guides.

1.11.1 Planning application information requirements

Adequate plans and drawings must be submitted as part of a planning application so that the design can be properly assessed. They will be required for the benefit of planners, councillors (on planning and other committees), and residents' and amenity groups, among others. For full (as opposed to outline) applications, a location plan, a plan of existing site layout, a plan of proposed site layout, floor plans, elevations and cross sections are likely to be required.

1.11.2 Planning application design statements

It is recommended that the Council require the submission of a design statement with all planning applications. Government advice (PPG1) requires applicants for planning permission to provide a written statement, setting out the design principles they have adopted in relation to the site and its wider context. This allows the planning application to be assessed against design policies, and it encourages applicants to focus on design.

Design statements should include the following:

- An explanation of the design principles and design concept.
- An outline of how these will be reflected in the development's layout, density, scale, landscape and visual appearance.
- An explanation of how the design relates to its site and wider area (through a full site and area appraisal where appropriate), and to the purpose of the proposed development.
- An explanation how the development will meet the local authority's urban design objectives (and its other planning policies).

1.11.3 Pre-application design statements

It is recommended that the Council promote the use of pre-application design statements as an effective and flexible mechanism for structuring the design and planning process, in the case of a site, which is not the subject of a development brief.

The statement approach has many potential benefits including enabling the City Council to be more proactive, to highlight and resolve potential conflict at an early stage, to create the conditions for good design and to ensure that the developer has as much certainty as possible as the design process progresses, reducing the likelihood of unexpected delays, abortive work and unnecessary expense.

1.11.4 Design advisory panels

It is recommended that the City Council establish a design advisory panel to help achieve the policies and proposals of the UDP and as a mechanism to promote higher standards in the designs of buildings streets and spaces. The membership should be multidisciplinary drawn from a range of sectors and not dominated by a particular profession. The use of advisory panels is supported by both the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

1.11.5 Urban Design Frameworks

It is recommended that the Council prepare Urban Design Frameworks in respect of **inner area zones of change** and the identified **corridors**. Frameworks go well beyond the level of detail that is appropriate to include in the area-related design policies in a development plan. They draw on detailed area appraisals and express urban design ideas. Only some sites within the area will be potential development sites.

Frameworks are a means of applying development plan policies (particularly design policies) in particular areas where there is a need to control, guide and promote change. They can provide a framework by which policies can be evolved (in the light of the context of the area and of what is economically feasible) into area-specific policies; proposals; a comprehensive set of design principles for the area; sites which will be the subject of development briefs; action plans; and funding and implementation strategies.

1.11.6 Development Briefs

It is recommended that the Council prepare development briefs in respect of **sites over 1 hectare** in area, **sites that are identified in an urban design framework** and **gap/infill sites** which by nature of their scale and sensitivity require design guidance.

1.11.7 Design Guides

It is recommended that the council prepare design guides, and review existing guides to reflect the wider development plan review, or in partnership with developers, development partnerships or agencies and local community organisations in respect of a range of topics including advertising and signage, conservation areas and listed buildings, house extensions and alterations and shop fronts.

It is recommended that all urban design frameworks, development briefs and design guides be the subject of public consultation and if approved by the Councils Planning Committee adopted as supplementary planning guidance. It is proposed that the Council prepare guidance notes on the preparation of supplementary planning guidance. It should be recognised that the Council could prepare SPG in partnership with landowners, developers, development partnerships or agencies and local community organisations

1.11.2 Training in Urban Design Skills

To effectively promote and apply the policy framework it is essential that adequate training in urban design skills be an integral part of promoting quality of design in Coventry. Some of those whose needs for training are too rarely considered include:

- Councillors unfamiliar with planning and design issues.
- The people with little or no design training who prepare and submit many of the large numbers of more minor planning applications on behalf of individual householders, small businesses and small developers.

Most important of all is that town planners, and particularly those involved in development control, learn more about design. It is recommended that the council identify:

- Who requires training.
- What skills are required and what issues need to be covered.
- What courses, events, programmes and resources are appropriate.
- Who should be engaged to deliver the training

It is recommended that the council consider ways to improve the integration of existing urban design skills into the development control process and the development of policy. It is recognised that significant urban design input will be required to successfully deliver major city centre improvements.

1.13 'Coventry by Design' a citywide design initiative

To add value and support the achievement of the urban design policy recommendations a cross sector, collaborative city design initiative is proposed. A city wide design initiative would act as a high profile mechanism for consultation on major projects, contribute to their realisation and help promote good design across the city. The representatives of organisations from the business and voluntary sectors and city council directorates invited to the workshop events during the course of the study could form a useful resource for the initiative. Themes of the initiative, in which the City Council could take a leading role, include raising awareness of design, promoting higher standards, disseminating good practice and focusing on specific sites and topics.

1.14 Urban Design Study and UDP Consultation

It is envisaged that elements of the Urban Design Study will be incorporated into the Development Plan consultation process. In the process it is important that those elements of the study, which relate to non-policy areas, such as training and internal practices are not overlooked. It should be noted that innovative and good quality consultation material tends to attract greater public interest and project a more positive message to potential investors and developers.

1.15 City Centre Urban Design Strategy (see Section 5)

1.15.1 Creating a City Centre of Distinction

Work is already underway to establish a new positive image of central Coventry through committed and planned developments such as the Phoenix Initiative, Leisure World and improvements to city centre spaces. Combined with the impact of other complementary projects and outstanding assets such as the Cathedral environs the attractiveness of the city centre for residents, visitors and potential investors will be boosted.

However, if the full benefit of these projects is to be realised a strategy is now needed to develop the physical and perceptual linkages between them as major destinations and attractions within the city centre and city image drivers. An integrated and co-ordinated city centre strategy will add the glue to enable the city to exploit the full potential of projects, ensure their compatibility and manage visitors more creatively. Urban design has a key role to play in its evolution and delivery.

Competing cities within the region and nationally have recognised the benefits of improving the pedestrian environment, reducing the detrimental impacts of traffic and the role of urban design in helping to achieve and guide positive change. The city brand has become a crucial factor in the successful marketing of cities as places to live, work and invest in. Cities now need to promote local distinctiveness to differentiate their environments from other competitors and raise the quality of the physical environment.

1.15.2 City Centre Access Strategy

A first stage city centre access strategy was undertaken in parallel to the Urban Design Study and enabled the generation of proposals and policy recommendations with the benefit of more detailed information concerning vehicular and pedestrian movements.

The Access Strategy incorporate recommendations for such initiatives as:

- Improved pedestrian and cycle crossings of the Ringway
- Stricter but dynamic traffic management measures, including bus-only streets
- Enhanced provision for taxi services
- Rationalisation of off-street parking provision and management
- Changes to on-street parking provision and controls
- Segregation of pedestrian and cycle movements
- Better links between the station and city centre
- Improved signage, including variable message signing

These recommendations together comprise a co-ordinated and comprehensive strategy to guide action designed to improve movement within the city centre for the foreseeable future. As such, the strategy forms the context for the implementation of the movement and information components of the city centre legibility framework.

In developing recommendations, emphasis has been placed on promoting attractive and usable spaces and reducing the detrimental impacts of traffic. However, this has been set against the need to also promote a more attractive and better-used public transport system and efficient service and car park access arrangements.

1.15.3 Strategic Urban Design Analysis

The City Centre Urban Design Strategy has been informed by an analysis which has considered a range of issues including historical background, pattern of development, views, landmarks, public spaces - pattern and form, frontage conditions, potential zones of change, private vehicular and bus movements. The results of the analysis have been used to guide and inform policy recommendations and design proposals.

1.15.4 Legibility Framework

The ease and convenience with which people can find their way around an urban environment and the quality of that experience is crucial factors in providing choice and attracting increased diversity of uses. The quality and quantity of choice, service/management and design all influence the look, feel and experience offered by a place. The image, which Coventry projects to the outside world through its physical environment, is therefore vitally important to its future success.

It is recommended that a detailed legibility framework be developed for the city to underpin, guide and maximise the benefit of the above projects and others put forward in this report. The framework would be primarily targeted at improving people's understanding of the city and in particular the city centre through the implementation of a package of branding, identity, information, signing, movement, and character area enhancement measures.

Essentially, the initiative seeks to communicate what the city has to offer by introducing a range of components to assist residents, visitors and businesses. These include:

- A consistent range of **movement and information components** (including highway/pedestrian signing, visitor interpretation and public transport infrastructure) to help people understand and move around the city centre;
- A range of **place reference components** (including street furniture, lighting, paving and other items), primarily procured as a series of collaborative arts/design projects, to enhance the environmental quality and identity of the city centre and its distinctive areas.

1.15.5 Movement and Information Components

The main aim of the movement and information components is to assist vehicular and pedestrian movement and relay visitor information. Visitors

will need to be given sufficient information for them to understand the nature of what is on offer, to enable choices to be made and to find their way around and to plan an itinerary. At the most practical level this will include providing information before arrival, on how to get to Coventry, on arrival, how to find their way around the city centre and during their stay.

Components should have a co-ordinated design using a consistent presentation format for information. This will include the careful selection of materials, the aesthetic appearance and styling of the component and the graphic identity used to convey information. In this way each component will provide the opportunity to build and restate the Coventry brand.

The introduction of an imaginative and innovative signage and information system would contribute significantly to the vitality and viability of the city centre as part of a wider package of streetscape, space improvement projects and major developments. The opportunity exists to greatly improve the image of the city in terms of creating and then reinforcing a good first impression particularly for visitors and potential investors.

1.15.6 Place Reference Components

• Paving

The great variety of surfacing materials and the resultant number and variety of colours, textures and tones across the city centre contributes to a discordant and inharmonious character. Subject to funding, it is recommended that new spaces be paved in natural stone. Simplicity of design and the effective use of subtle textures and tones found in natural stones should be used to create a high quality setting to surrounding buildings. The connecting network of pedestrian routes could then be paved in natural stone or appropriate alternatives depending on the area. However, a limited palette of materials should be agreed early in the design process.

• Soft Landscaping

Analysis of the city centre has highlighted the poor level of green space provision and in particular the lack of street tree planting in certain areas. The introduction of more trees planting would make an important contribution to the attractiveness of the city centre. It can be used to form views, create shelter, enclose and define spaces, soften or screen hard building forms, provide seasonal variation and attract wildlife.

Semi-mature tree planting is proposed on civic spines and community/visitor routes where the width of the street and building frontages permit a consistent structuring approach to be taken. Trees should also be introduced within public space improvement projects as an integrated design element, subject to detailed design objectives for individual spaces, and taking into account underground service constraints.

It is recommended that pedestrian linkages between the city centre and significant green public spaces located outside the Ringway such as Swanswell Pool and Recreation Ground, Nauls Mill Park, and Spencer Park be improved including the introduction of street tree planting.

- **Street Furniture**

Reflecting the lack of co-ordination in the design, location, colour, and maintenance of all street furniture and signage consideration should be given to undertaking an audit to identify clutter, duplication, poor levels of provision, repair and maintenance and opportunities for improvements.

The audit should be considered in light of a preliminary scoping of potential procurement routes for visitor information and street furniture. In essence to ensure a co-ordinated approach and minimise abortive work.

Off the shelf catalogue purchasing should be avoided where possible in favour of developing bespoke designs that are unique to Coventry. The aim should be to promote place specific contemporary design approaches to reinforce the character and identity of the city. Colour of street furniture and other elements should be given careful consideration. In particular colour could form the core element of a new communications/ graphics system designed to guide people around the city centre.

The opportunity exists to attract the best of local, regional and national / international design skills if a more creative approach is taken to procurement. This in turn could help boost the city's image and the Coventry by Design Initiative. For example a pattern book of co-ordinated bespoke street furniture designs could be developed and owned by the Council from which components can then be selected as necessary for individual projects.

- **Streetscape Design Manual**

It is recommended that any pattern book form a major element of a comprehensive streetscape manual and set out detailed design specifications for a limited palette of surface treatments and street furniture, including colour references, location and installation requirements, maintenance guidelines and details of manufacturers. The principal objectives of the manual are to ensure consistency in the standards of selection, supply, installation and maintenance. The pattern book could be developed alongside the design of the first major city centre spaces project.

- **Advertising Company Supplied Street Furniture**

Further consideration needs to be given before any agreement with an advertising company that supplies street furniture (bus shelters, advertising drums, seats and litter bins) is reached. Many of these items can be seen in other cities and therefore contribute little to local distinctiveness. However, leading companies are more prepared to offer unique components but the ownership of designs and their use elsewhere in the UK or abroad needs careful consideration.

The Council would be in a more informed position to negotiate the best possible deal with any company if it first undertook the legibility study recommended. The capacity of city centre spaces, routes and city corridors to accommodate this type of advertising will need to consider levels of footfall as well as vehicular directed opportunities and the sensitivity of historic contexts where less advertising may be considered appropriate.

- **Lighting of Routes, Spaces and Buildings**

The city centre lighting strategy has been undertaken in parallel to the urban design study and promotes a number of major lighting projects. From an urban design perspective lighting is one of a range of components used in the design of external spaces. However, its full potential benefits are often unrecognised. The buildings and spaces that are unique to Coventry could be revealed to great effect with light during the night time.

Creative lighting can also be used to support and encourage the evening economy as part of a package of planning and urban design measures, which facilitate improvements to city, centre spaces and promote a vibrant mix of uses including residential development. Improvements to lighting

can help create a safer and more welcoming city centre. Lighting could also play a significant role in enhancing/ marking the gateways into the city and reinforcing character and identity along key radial routes into the city centre.

Recognising that spaces should be designed to accommodate different uses at different times of the day and into the evening it is essential that lighting design specialists be part of the multidisciplinary teams assembled to develop city space projects.

The need to improve levels of illumination in remoter areas of the city centre, along pedestrian paths linking residential areas outside the Ringway, remoter car parks and shopping and entertainment areas and within the University Quarter needs to be addressed. This should be done so in combination with other improvement works to routes and spaces including the removal of dark and over planted areas.

- **Public Art**

A public art strategy has been prepared in parallel to the urban design study and promotes a number of arts projects. Art works could not only benefit external spaces but also enrich and enliven multi-storey car parks and other points of arrival such as the railway station. Permanent major works could be located to enhance the legibility of the city centre, for example at key intersections of pedestrian paths or marking the junction gateways on the Ringway to act as landmarks to orientate and guide people around the city centre.

Any design team must include public arts commissioning skills to ensure that artists/crafts makers are integrated into the design process from the earliest stage. The proposed Coventry by Design Initiative could amongst other aspects be responsible for compiling and evolving a database of local, regional, national and international artists and crafts makers from which contributions could potentially be invited.

- **Opportunities Water Feature**

Considerable scope exists to introduce sculptural water features of various scales in the city centre to enliven pedestrian spaces, act as landmark features, provide visual interest and define spaces. Their design should respond to the context in which they are located; as integrated elements of public space design water features can make a valuable contribution to place making. In all cases their design needs to be considered at an early

stage in the design process. Water features could be procured by a number of different routes including competitions involving artists and crafts people.

1.16 City Centre pedestrian routes and spaces hierarchy

Flowing from the city centre urban design analysis a hierarchy of routes and spaces has been developed to structure and guide the evolution of the strategy and as a basis for generating design ideas and proposed interventions.

The hierarchy of pedestrian routes is composed of two **civic spines** and a supporting network of community/visitor routes. The civic spines are aligned north-south, linking the railway station to Swanswell Pool, and east-west linking Spon Street to Far Gosford Street. The spines, which intersect at Broadgate, are routes on which the strategy seeks to reinforce or achieve civic design qualities. Spon Street is one of the most important historic streets in the city centre and forms the western section of the east-west spine. It is recommended that early consideration be given to streetscape improvements including paving, lighting, street furniture and signage and visitor interpretation.

Community/visitor routes are those, which strongly relate to existing pedestrian linkages, which radiate from the city centre core areas across the Ringway to surrounding residential areas, and those which form the finer grain network within the city centre including those which attract visitors as well as local people within the precinct and Cathedral environs. Previous studies have highlighted the high levels of pedestrian movement along these routes.

The first level of the spaces hierarchy is made up of a single pivotal space located at the heart of the city centre - **Broadgate**. This space is currently under utilised as a public space but has significant potential for enhancement including the rationalisation of bus and taxi access, the removal of the canopy, the creation of a large area of paved pedestrian space as an extension to the Precinct which could be designed in such a way as to accommodate a range of activities including events and specialist markets, and the demolition of the ramp.

The second level is made of four **hub spaces** Bull Yard, the principle space of the Phoenix Initiative, the space formed at the junction of Spon

Street and Corporation Street, currently dominated by a roundabout and bus gate and the space in front of the Council House including Little Park Street. Located at key nodes where the civic spines cross the inner circuit road it is proposed that each space be designed to act as an arrival and orientation space, served by public transport, offering a high level of information and guidance about what the city centre and its attractions have to offer. It is proposed that these spaces are characterised by landmark buildings and enclosing buildings of commensurate scale, higher quality design of paving surfaces, street furniture, public art, lighting and building lighting. They are also places with high levels of ground floor activity, which positively interact with the space. In some instances the space will be a destination in its own right.

The third level of spaces is an important contributor to the image and perception of the city for visitors and residents alike and all have considerable potential for improvement. The potential for a new space, together with complimentary improvements within the cathedral environs, to improve the setting of the east front of the cathedral and create a better gateway into the university quarter is such as to be of national significance. It is recommended that this area be the subject of a more detailed study.

The following spaces and streets are identified for major environmental improvement schemes.

1. Broadgate (including Ironmongers Row and High Street)
2. Bull Yard / Shelton Square
3. Spon Street/Lower Precinct
4. Little Park Street/Council House frontage
5. Greyfriars Green
6. Priory Street
7. Station Square and adjacent spaces
8. Belgrade Square/Lower Precinct
9. Jordan Well Road/Far Gosford Street
10. New Union Street gateway

It is recommended that individual projects be progressed from design to implementation via a multi-disciplinary design team approach. Furthermore individual design briefs should be drawn up for each project; however it is essential that they are set within a co-ordinating framework. Given the interdependencies of many of the projects and the intensive project

management required to achieve successful implementation within the likely timescales adequate staff resources will be required. It is suggested that the initial stages of a three to five year programme include those projects focused on improvements to Broadgate, the hub spaces and civic spines.

Given the specialist nature of some of the above work the Council could consider compiling a select list of artists, crafts workers, designers, engineers and contractors in respect of individual projects for tender purposes subject to national government guidance and European directives on tendering procedures.

1.17 Inner Area Zones of Change

The following Inner Area Zones of Change are identified in recognition of the need to promote and guide positive change resulting from identified catalysts for change in each zone.

- Zone 1 Lower Foleshill Road / northern Ringway regeneration area
- Zone 2 Upper Spon Street / Windsor Street Estate
- Zone 3 Butts Road / Queens Road
- Zone 4 Station Environs
- Zone 5 Parkside
- Zone 6 Coventry University Precinct/Eastern Ringway

It is recommended that urban design frameworks be prepared for the following areas. Their purpose is to create confidence in the zones future economic prospects, to manage change, to unlock the full potential of each zone and its contribution to the viability and vitality of the inner area and to help realise action on the ground by providing a strategy for implementation. It is recommended that early consideration be given to preparing urban design frameworks for zones 1, 4 and 6. Zone 6 could be extended to include the Cathedral environs.

1.18 Northern Ringway Downgrading and Boulevarding

An incremental approach to downgrading the northern section of the Ringway and its replacement by an at-grade urban boulevard is proposed based upon an incremental approach. The creation of the boulevard would have a number of major benefits for the city centre, not least removing a divisive and ugly structure which for some perhaps personifies Coventry's drab and poor quality car dominated image.

It is recommended that a detailed feasibility study be undertaken. Benefits to the city include the following:

- Acting as a catalyst for new development and economic growth;
- Improved pedestrian linkages from surrounding residential areas to the city centre;
- Opportunities for improved public transport provision;
- Opportunities to promote mixed use development in particular the introduction of residential development;

The magnitude of the change envisaged demands a considered partnership approach key players could include the City Council, landowners, English Partnerships, local communities. Initial estimates put a cost on the engineering measures required at between £10 million and £15 million.

1.19 Southern Ringway Pedestrian Route Improvements

The nature of development opportunities around the southern section of the Ringway do not afford the same potential for future downgrading as in the north. Bearing in mind the long timescale associated with even the most easily foreseeable elements of change to the Ringway, the approach to bringing about improvements on the southern section has been one of identifying specific local measures designed to make an important contribution to increasing the ease of movement across the Ringway.

The existing at-grade pedestrian crossings, footbridges, and subways are generally highly unattractive and greatly discouraging of walking between the city centre and the residential areas immediately adjacent to it. Bringing about worthwhile change to the perceptions, value and hence use of the Ringway crossings, will require radical solutions. Limited improvements can be expected only to yield marginal benefits.

Four '**demonstration projects**' are proposed that encompass the full range of crossing facilities and which are recommended for prioritisation at the following locations.

- A. Junction 6/Railway Station.
- B. Hill Street/Junction 8.
- C. Spon Street.
- D. Junction 7/Moat Street Car Park.

Section 2: Introduction

2.1 Study Aims

The overall aim for the study and the policies and proposals which arise from it, as stated in the councils study brief, is 'to help Coventry regenerate and rejuvenate itself, create a quality of environment that will influence both specific developments and planning applications, and progress towards achieving the objectives of the Coventry Development Plan and City Centre Strategies. It is intended to do this in a positive rather than a constraining way.'

The study has focused upon three main tasks, which form individual sections of the report and from which policy recommendations have been derived:

- Evolving an urban design strategy for the city centre.
- Identifying areas of distinctive character across the city.
- Analysing the character and improvement potential of transport/movement corridors.

The outcome of focusing upon these tasks has been a hierarchy of urban design policy recommendations and project proposals in respect of the Coventry Unitary Plan Review (the plan). The development of this hierarchy has drawn upon Urban Initiatives work for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions on good practice guidance on design in the planning system.

The aim of the recommendations for urban design policy in the plan is to help Coventry become a city:

- That inspires through imaginative and sensitive design.
- That is lively and possesses a distinctive character.
- Whose streets and public spaces are safe, accessible and pleasant to use.
- With a flourishing economic life.
- That promotes sustainable development by using resources efficiently.

Creating those qualities depends on a vision of what a place might become. The planning system has a major part to play in generating and

achieving such a vision, not least by promoting best practice in urban design and helping to provide the conditions for good design. Every age designs in its own distinctive ways, and our own should be no exception. Good design meets people's enduring needs as well as the needs of the moment.

Whilst primarily targeted at urban design policies in the development plan, recommendations also relate to the need to prepare supplementary planning guidance in support of the authorities broad policies and proposals. It is good practice for a local authority to show through supplementary planning guidance how its policies can be developed into clear design ideas in particular areas and sites, and in relation to specific planning and design issues.

2.2 The Planning Tool Kit

The following section provides an introduction to urban design and its role in the planning system. It introduces the planning tool kit (UDP policies, Urban Design Frameworks, Development Briefs and Design Guides) the factors, which influence or determine design (policy, feasibility, context and approach) and urban design objectives, which can be used as the basis for developing general design policies in the plan.

Urban design policy recommendations are outlined in Section 8 and 9 in respect of the following:

- City wide general urban design policies
- General policies for specific types of context
- Area Specific Policies
- Topic Based Policies
- Policies on aspects of the design and planning process

2.3 Training In Urban Design Skills

The extent to which the planning process facilitates good design depends on the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the participants: the guiders and controllers; the people who express context; the initiators and implementers; and the designers and project managers. At present, many of these people lack the full range of skills and depth of knowledge that would make them more effective in achieving what they want, and which would inform their attitudes about design.

Most important of all is that town planners, and particularly those involved in development control, learn more about design. It is not enough for a local authority to have a corporate commitment to high standards of design and access to design expertise from staff urban designers (albeit limited) or consultants. The best design policies, frameworks, guides and briefs are likely to be ineffective if the planners dealing with planning applicants and applications are not interested in design.

Some of those whose needs for training are too rarely considered include:

- Councillors unfamiliar with planning and design issues.
- The people with little or no design training who prepare and submit many of the large numbers of more minor planning applications on behalf of individual householders, small businesses and small developers.

It is recommended that the council identify:

- Who requires training.
- What skills are required and what issues need to be covered.
- What courses, events, programmes and resources are appropriate.
- Who should be engaged to deliver the training

It is recommended that the council consider ways to improve the integration of existing urban design skills into the development control process and the development of policy. It is recognised that significant urban design input will be required to successfully deliver major city centre improvements.

2.4 Public Consultation

To guide the development of the policy recommendations and project proposals Urban Initiatives ran an interactive workshop involving invited representatives of organisations from the business and voluntary sectors and city council directorates and presented emerging ideas to the same organisations at a second meeting. Urban Initiatives produced a leaflet explaining the aims of the study, a summary report of the workshop and a synopsis of the emerging final report, which were sent to all invitees. These events would not have been possible without the support of officers with whom Urban Initiatives have worked closely during the study; in particular Andy Telford and Kevin Wilkins

The form of the public consultation which should be taken forward in respect of an approved final draft study report will require careful

consideration. Consultation will be influenced by the Unitary Development Plan Review consultation process; its time scales and form. However, given the encouraging degree of interest shown by those groups attending the above meetings and the need to clarify projects and programmes affecting the city centre in particular it is recommended that consideration be given to developing a consultation package based upon a reduced version of the report, a fold out leaflet or both. A leaflet could include a postage paid tear off reply card or envelope.

All material should be prepared to a high standard of graphic design and printed in full colour. In many respects they should be promotional and marketing in their style and content. The opportunity exists to establish a city design initiative, which could act as a mechanism to launch the consultation and contribute to the realisation of projects and help raise design standards across the city. **‘Coventry by Design’** is explained in more detail in section 8.

Our experience of public consultation, including an assessment of the Urban Design Campaign in 1997, has highlighted the importance of producing good quality consultation material in order to attract interest and capture the public imagination and project the right message to potential investors and developers. The leaflet and summary document should be supported by an exhibition(s) of comparable quality, which should be displayed in the Tower Block reception area; in other prominent public buildings and shopping centres.

The launch of the consultation exhibition could be to an invited audience including major stakeholders in the city from the business, voluntary and community sectors and local and regional media. Consideration should be given to the use of a display caravan, which could be used at a variety of outdoor locations including the Precinct in particular on a Saturday. Leaflets should be distributed to buildings within the Ringway and to inner area residential areas.

Section 3: Promoting Urban Design

3.1 What is urban design?

'Good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere,' says Government advice (Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 [PPG1], *General Policy and Principles* [para. 15]). This study refers to design in the context of planning policy as 'urban design'.

Urban design can be defined as the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes, which facilitate successful development.

PPG1 defines urban design as: 'The relationship between different buildings; the relationships between buildings and the streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces which make up the public domain; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; and the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established: in short, the complex relationships between all the elements of built and unbuilt space. As the appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings is often of comparable importance to the design of the buildings themselves, landscape design should be considered as an integral part of urban design' (PPG1, para.14). 'Urban design' in this study therefore includes building design, landscape design, and the design of roads and movement systems. All these are legitimate concerns for planning policy.

3.2 Why urban design matters

Good design can help to create successful places, where people will choose to live, work, play and invest. We can learn from the experience of places that are already successful. Government advice (PPG1, paras. 8 and 15) identifies planning goals, which can be achieved through good design. They include making development sustainable by the careful use of resources; improving the quality of the environment; attracting business and investment; reinforcing civic pride and a sense of place; and creating mixed-use development.

Thinking about design at the start of the planning and development process is the best way to promote successful and sustainable regeneration, conservation and place making. Leaving design issues to

the end can make the development process slow, frustrating and a source of wasteful conflict.

'Local planning authorities should reject poor designs, particularly where their decisions are supported by clear plan policies or supplementary design guidance which has been subjected to public consultation and adopted by the local authority. Poor designs may include those inappropriate to their context, for example those clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings' (PPG1, para. 17).

3.3 The planning system's role in design

The planning system has a kit of tools, which can help create the conditions for good design. The first of these tools is *planning policy guidance*, issued by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The second is the local authority's *development plan*, which sets out the policies against which development proposals will be assessed. Further detail is provided in *supplementary planning guidance* (see p00). This guidance includes *urban design frameworks*, *design guides* and *development briefs*. Most of these are prepared primarily by local authorities, but other organisations involved in development can also prepare them.

3.3.1 Unitary Development Plan

The Development plan is the most important elements of the councils planning toolkit. A development plan sets out the policies against which the local authority will assess the design (among other planning aspects) of proposed development. These will be aimed at ensuring that development conforms to the general urban design policies (derived from good practice research), as appropriate to the aims of the development and the site and its setting.

3.3.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) is additional advice provided by the council on a particular area, topic or site, elucidating and expanding on policies the development plan. It is consistent with the plan (and cross-referenced to the relevant policy or proposal), prepared in consultation with the public, and formally approved by the council. SPG status gives guidance additional weight as a *material consideration* in the planning process. Types of SPG include:

- **Urban design frameworks**

An urban design framework sets out how development plan policies should be implemented in a particular area where there is a need to control, guide and promote change. Such areas can include transport interchanges and corridors, regeneration areas, town centres, urban edges, housing estates, conservation areas, villages, new settlements, urban areas of special landscape value, and suburban areas identified as being suitable for more intense development. Urban design frameworks are also called a variety of other names, including urban design strategies, and planning and urban design frameworks. Such documents have long been part of planning practice, and are now widely recognised as an important element of the toolkit.

- **Design guides**

A design guide provides guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with a development plan's design policies. Design guides cover almost all types of development. Shop front design is the most common topic for guides published by district and unitary authorities, with the emphasis usually on how new shop fronts can harmonise with local traditional designs. Residential development is the subject of many of the most ambitious guides (usually published by counties), covering a wide range of issues from road layouts to building materials.

- **Development briefs**

A development brief is prepared by a district or unitary authority, a developer, or jointly by both, to provide guidance on how a site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed. A brief turns the development plan's design policies into tailor-made design principles, expressing a set of coherent design ideas about how development can make the most of the potential of the site and its setting.

3.4 Adopting A Proactive Approach

The development control process will determine whether or not a development proposal will receive planning permission. The stages before a planning application is submitted are particularly important. A proactive approach resolves potential conflicts as quickly and easily as possible. Integrated working methods can break down bureaucratic and professional barriers. **Design statements, design audits and design panels** can help to ensure quality.

A proactive approach to development control depends on the local authority making its views and requirements about planning and design known at an early stage, rather than merely reacting to detailed development proposals. It equally depends on the potential applicant seeking advice from the council early in the process, and consulting widely when appropriate.

It will be helpful for planners and the applicant to negotiate before any application is submitted (in cases where minor amendments will avoid a refusal of permission or result in improvements that the applicant may not otherwise have thought of). An application should be rejected if the design is unacceptable and cannot be remedied by minor amendments.

The aim should be to expose, in the early stages of the applicant's design process, as much as possible of the potential conflict that a development proposal might lead to. Resolving conflicts early in the design and development process helps to avoid confrontation, polarised attitudes and delay later.

3.5 The Impact Of Small Scale Development

In preparing design guidance it should be recognised that a significant amount of development does not need planning permission, due to its small scale. It can, though, be influenced by local authorities' design guidance (such as design guides). The cumulative effect of many small developments, such as house extensions, shop fronts and infill schemes, can have a dramatic impact in only a few years.

As well as developing guidance for larger scale development it is important that effective design guidance be targeted at those who initiate or respond to development at a small scale: householders, small builders and developers and their agents (including architects, plan drawers, surveyors and property agents), community organisations, interest groups, and the users and occupiers of buildings. Most development is designed by someone with little or no design training. Such people (including some plan drawers, house-builders and householders) are an important target audience for design guidance and for initiatives aimed at raising standards.

3.6 Preparing SPG

Planning tools (such as frameworks, guides and briefs) must be prepared in consultation with the public and formally adopted as council policy if they are to have SPG status. This status will lead to planning inspectors and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions giving the guidance greater weight in making planning decisions at appeal, or after an application has been 'called in' by the Secretary of State.

Any SPG document must include the consultation responses, usually as an appendix. SPG is not interchangeable between one place and another. It must be tailored to local circumstances in the light of careful study of the locality and public consultation. SPG will need to be monitored and reviewed in the light of experience, changes in policy, law and regulations, and planning appeals. The process of monitoring and review should be considered from the start. SPG should be prepared through a process that will assemble the necessary specialist and local information, and generate committed support from the people who will use the guidance, whether as planning applicants or planning staff.

3.6.1 Presenting SPG

Council officers, developers and others may find a council's supplementary planning guidance easier to use if they can become familiar with a consistent process of preparation and a consistent format. Much of the readership of SPG will be unfamiliar with the specialised language and concepts of planning and design. Where specialised language is necessary, it should be explained clearly in the text or in a glossary. Some local authorities make particular efforts to use clear language in all their publications and their work has been recognised by the Plain English Campaign. It might be appropriate to publish information sheets or leaflets summarising SPG, especially where a specialist audience requires considerable technical detail while a more general message needs to be communicated to a wider audience.

3.6.2 Implementing SPG

Supplementary planning guidance will be effective only if it transforms the development plan's design principles into a set of design ideas appropriate both to economic conditions and to the site and its setting. However, even the best ideas will be of little use if the document is left forgotten on a shelf. The effectiveness of a design guide, development brief, or any other supplementary planning guidance will also depend on:

- The degree to which all relevant departments of the council are committed to it.
- The vigour with which council members and officers support it.
- The effectiveness of public participation in preparing it.
- How logically it is structured, how clearly it is written, and how well it is illustrated.

3.7 Factors, which influence or determine design

Everyone who carries out development wants smooth and rapid progress through the planning system, and a building and spaces that perform as intended. They are most likely to get that if the development is designed in line with **policy**, in the light of a clear understanding of what is **feasible**, in response to **context**, and with a sensitive and considered **approach** by its designers and managers. When any one of these four forces is not accommodated or not given sufficient recognition, good design is unlikely. Similarly, resolving those four factors will be the key to producing an effective urban design framework or development brief. The planning system at its best manages the interplay between these four forces through helping to generate a shared vision and adopting a set of urban design objectives. This study focuses on the development of a hierarchy of design policy and guidance in the context of the Unitary Development Plan Review process.

The planning system at its best manages the interplay between these four forces through helping to generate a shared vision and adopting a set of urban design objectives. Each of the four forces is represented by a set of players in the design process. These people identified below can create the conditions for good design.

3.7.1 Policy

A policy framework is laid down mainly by central and local government through the planning tools described in above. The **guiders and controllers** of design include ministers and their civil servants, national agencies, and members and officers of local planning authorities. These people also guide the interaction between the other players through managing and designing the process. Their means are the planning toolkit of planning policy guidance, development plans, development briefs, design guides, urban design frameworks and development control.

3.7.2 Feasibility

Assessments of what uses of a site and approaches to development are appropriate in the light of economic and market conditions. The **initiators and implementers** of development in effect operate the on/off switch to the design process. Their attitudes and actions determine what is considered feasible (what budgets and economic and market conditions allow). They include developers, landowners, householders, utilities, transport operators, agencies procuring public buildings, and economic development and regeneration agencies and partnerships, and their agents. Their judgements of feasibility will vary according to their particular perspective and whether they are considering the short, medium or long term.

3.7.3 Context

The context includes the site, its setting and the people who may be affected by development. Information and views about the local context (the site, its setting and the people who may be affected by development) are provided by people who prepare records, surveys and appraisals of local conditions, and by local people themselves (through collaboration and participation). Expressing and interpreting the local context may involve local residents, amenity organisations, parish and town councils, and by people (including local authority officers and consultants) who appraise and assess local physical, economic and social conditions.

3.7.4 Approach

The approach includes the attitudes of the design team and of the people who manage the design process. The approach to design and management includes how the design and planning process is conceived and programmed; how people collaborate with one another; practice methods; design philosophies; approaches to issues such as traffic management and public participation; and how rules and regulations are applied. The designers and managers include planners, surveyors, architects, urban designers, and project managers in the public and private and voluntary sectors.

3.8 The Form of Development

The purpose of urban design is to ensure that the form of any development (buildings, structures and spaces) contributes to making vital, viable and successful places. The form of buildings, structures and spaces influences the pattern of uses; activity and movement in a place, and the experience of those visit and live or work there. The form has several aspects:

3.8.1 Layout

Layout is the way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other. The layout provides the two-dimensional structure on which all other aspects of the form and uses of a development depend. Layout includes:

- **Structure:** the framework or hierarchy of routes and spaces that connect in the local area and at wider scales.
- **Urban grain:** The pattern of the arrangement and area of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent (fine grain), or large and infrequent (coarse grain).

3.8.2 Density

Density is the mass or floor space of a building or buildings in relation to an area of land. Density determines the intensity of development and in combination with mixed uses contributes to a place's vitality. The density of a development can be expressed in terms of its plot ratio (for commercial development); the number of habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); the area of site covered plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; space standards; or a combination of these.

3.8.3 Scale

Scale is the size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. The scale of a development as a whole and in its parts help to determine the character of the area. Ways of expressing scale include:

- **Height:** the overall height of a building or structure. The height of development determines the relationship between buildings and spaces and the visual impact of the development on views, vistas and skylines. The height of a building can be expressed in terms of a maximum number of floors; a maximum height of parapet or ridge; a maximum overall height; any of these maximum heights in combination with a maximum number of floors; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.
- **Massing:** the combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Massing is the three-dimensional expression of density.

3.8.4 Visual Appearance

The factors which (in addition to all the other aspects of form) contribute mainly to what a building or structure looks like include:

- **Details:** the craftsmanship, building techniques, facade treatment, styles and lighting of a building or structure. The richness of a building lies in its details, which contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character, quality and legibility of an area.
- **Materials:** their texture, colour, pattern and durability. A building's materials provide the texture, colour and pattern, which are important in determining its appearance and reinforcing local distinctiveness.

3.8.5 Landscape

Landscape is the appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecologies, natural features, planting, colours and elements, and the way these components combine and are combined.

The appropriate form for any particular development will depend on its purpose, the site and its setting.

3.9 Policy recommendations

The Urban Design policy recommendations are based upon the following objectives introduced at the first workshop event.

1. Character

Promote *character* in townscape and landscape by building on locally distinct patterns of development and culture. The positive features of a place and its communities contribute to its special character and sense of place. They include the landscape, building traditions and materials, culture and other factors that make one place different from another.

2. Continuity and Enclosure

Promote the *continuity* of street frontages and the *enclosure* of space by development, which clearly defines the boundaries between private and public space. Successful urban space (including streets) is defined and enclosed by buildings and structures. The relationship between buildings on a street, and between buildings and the street, are the key to this.

3. Quality of the Public Realm

Promote the *quality of the public realm* through providing spaces and routes that are safe, uncluttered, active and easily identifiable. The success of the public realm depends on the arrangement of its paving, planting, lighting, orientation, shelter, signage, street furniture, and the way it is overlooked, as well as the routes which pass through it and the uses in and next to it.

4. Ease of Movement

Promote ease of *movement* by making places that connect with each other and are permeable at local level. The convenience, safety and comfort with which people go to and pass through buildings, places and spaces play a large part in determining how successful a place will be.

5. Legibility

Promote *legibility* through development that is easily understood by its users. Legible places, from scales ranging from a whole city to a single building, present a clear image of their form and function, and of how they fit into their surroundings. Legibility makes a place easier to use.

6. Adaptability

Promote *adaptability* through development that can respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions. The most successful places have prospered in changing circumstances. Even though people may live, travel and work in very different ways, the basic structure of the physical fabric proves to be grounded in unchanging patterns of human life, rather than being tightly fitted to some immediate purpose.

7. Diversity

Promote *diversity* through a mix of uses that work together to create vital and viable places. The mix of uses (whether within a building, a street or an area) can help to determine how well used a place is, and what economic and social activities it will support.

8. Sustainability

Promote *sustainability* through development, which uses resources efficiently and reduces the need to travel.

Section 4: Historical Summary

4.1 Introduction

As the focus of the Warwickshire Sub-region, Coventry relates very closely to the nearby countryside and towns. Despite pressures for development during much of the century, Coventry has remained a compact City largely within its Green belt. It's size and radial road system and rail connections have helped to make it the centre of its sub-region, a natural focus for shopping and for employment.

In 1928 the city boundaries were extended taking in parts of Foleshill, Stoke Heath, Stoke, Whitley, Cheylesmore, Canley, Tile Hill, Westwood Heath, Eastern Green, Allesley and Stoneleigh. In 1932 Wyken, Walsgrave, Binley, Willenhall, Styvechale, Coundon and part of Keresley and Exhall were added.

The City Centre itself, largely contained within the Inner Ring Road, is built on a low hill to the south of the River Sherbourne and overlooking rising ground to the north of the River. The southern portion of the City Centre is developed on the level land of the original Mediaeval City with gentler slopes beyond the immediate confines of the centre. The three spires of St. Michael's, Holy Trinity and Christchurch remain as significant features dominating the immediate City Centre. Higher building blocks relate to axial vistas as in the Precinct.

4.2 The Medieval City

The Benedictine Priory of St Mary founded in 1043 played an important role in stimulating the early expansion of the city as a market town and influenced the street pattern in the area it controlled. The 11th century Norman motte and bailey castle of the Coventry/Cheylesmore estate was gradually dismantled from the mid 12th century onwards and a new town plan was laid over its site. In the period that followed the city witnessed unparalleled urban growth and became a major centre for the making and trading of cloth, particularly wool.

As a mercantile and manufacturing centre it became the midland centre of the woollen cloth trade and ranked with York, Bristol and Norwich as one of the four largest towns in the country outside London during the medieval period. Most important for trade was and still is the central location of Coventry and early maps show the city at the centre of a network of roads linking it with most major towns and ports.

By the 14th century Coventry was the fourth largest town in England and the scale and richness of buildings reflected its large size and the self-esteem of the ruling merchant guilds. The town wall, constructed over 180 years from the mid- 14th century, was less a defensive structure and more an expression of civic pride in a town, which had 'come of age'.

4.3 The Industrial City

Historians have commented that by the late 18th century Coventry was essentially a living museum - a medieval town packed with timber-framed buildings. Despite a second period of economic growth from the 19th century onwards, initially through ribbon weaving and watch making and then cycle and car manufacture, a historic town of national importance survived into the 1930s.

From about the middle of the 18th to the mid 19th century, the principal industries in Coventry were ribbon weaving and watch making. Top shops were characteristic of 19th century industrial buildings in Coventry, and many examples remain across the city. The watch making and silk ribbon weaving industries were small scale and workshops were built as an upper storey of a dwelling. The typically large windows allowed for maximum daylight.

By the early 1860s, the ribbon weaving industry was suffering from a serious slump. The cycle industry helped to bring Coventry out of its trade depression and the 1880s many firms had entered into cycle production. Coventry became the leading centre of this new industry. But by 1897 the industry was in severe depression.

The Locomotives on Highways Act 1896 finally made motor car production a worthwhile proposition in Britain and secured its future as a major industry in Coventry utilising the skilled workforce. Research has shown that over 130 locations throughout the City were associated with the motorcar industry at some time during the past century - more than in any other city in Britain. Many of the buildings in which they were made have been demolished and the sites redeveloped.

During the First World War the production of luxury goods ceased in the city, and Coventry became one of the largest producers of munitions.

During the first three quarters of this century Coventry experienced more growth, more prosperity and more change in its urban fabric than almost any other city in the United Kingdom. In 1901, the population of Coventry was 70,000. Seventy years later, despite two world wars and the blitz of

1940, the population had risen to 338,000. By 1988 the population had declined to about 305,000.

4.4 Spon Street

By the 14th century, the street pattern in Coventry has been established in a layout, which altered little for nearly 600 years. One of its most striking features was the west to east axial road running for nearly 1^{1/2} miles from Spon to Gosford Green. The suburb of Spon was one of four or more medieval suburbs outside the city gates. Spon or Bablake Gate was built soon after 1391 and survived until 1771. It was one of twelve gates on the town's defensive wall.

In 1812, Spon Street was one of six city streets to be turnpiked (improved as a toll road). The construction of Lower Holyhead Road in 1827-30 relieved the street from its longstanding role as a major route out of the city. By the beginning of the present century most of the houses were in use as shops, particularly towards the city centre. The street escaped major destruction during the bombing raids of 1940 and 1941, but after the war, in the 1950s and '60s; major changes took place with the redevelopment of the Spon End district and the construction of the inner ring road. Most of the surviving medieval houses along the western and central sections of the street were demolished and replaced by modern flats.

In the 1960s it was decided to preserve the best of the remaining buildings and to reconstruct timber-framed buildings, which have been, or would be, dismantled from other sites. The original scheme was launched in 1967. As a consequence Spon Street today is one of the most important in the city centre in terms of its vernacular architectural heritage.

4.5 The Second World War

One of the most devastating dates in Coventry's history was 14 November 1940. Overnight 45,000 homes and 75 per cent of Coventry's industry lost or severely damaged. Destruction on this scale had never been witnessed before, and the Germans coined a new word for it, 'Coventrated'. The bombing raid left the Cathedral in ruins and the city without the most basic services including the tram system, which was totally destroyed.

Although clearances of historic streets such as Great and Little Butcher Row began before the Second World War, largely to facilitate traffic schemes, the redevelopment of approximately two-thirds of the area within the town wall was, in the main, a direct result of the damage sustained. In

1929 work began to build Corporation Street (opened in 1931) resulted in a massive swathe of land being cleared. However, it should be noted that whilst some 350 buildings dating from before the seventeenth century survived the war by 1966 only some thirty-four remained.

4.6 City Centre Reconstruction

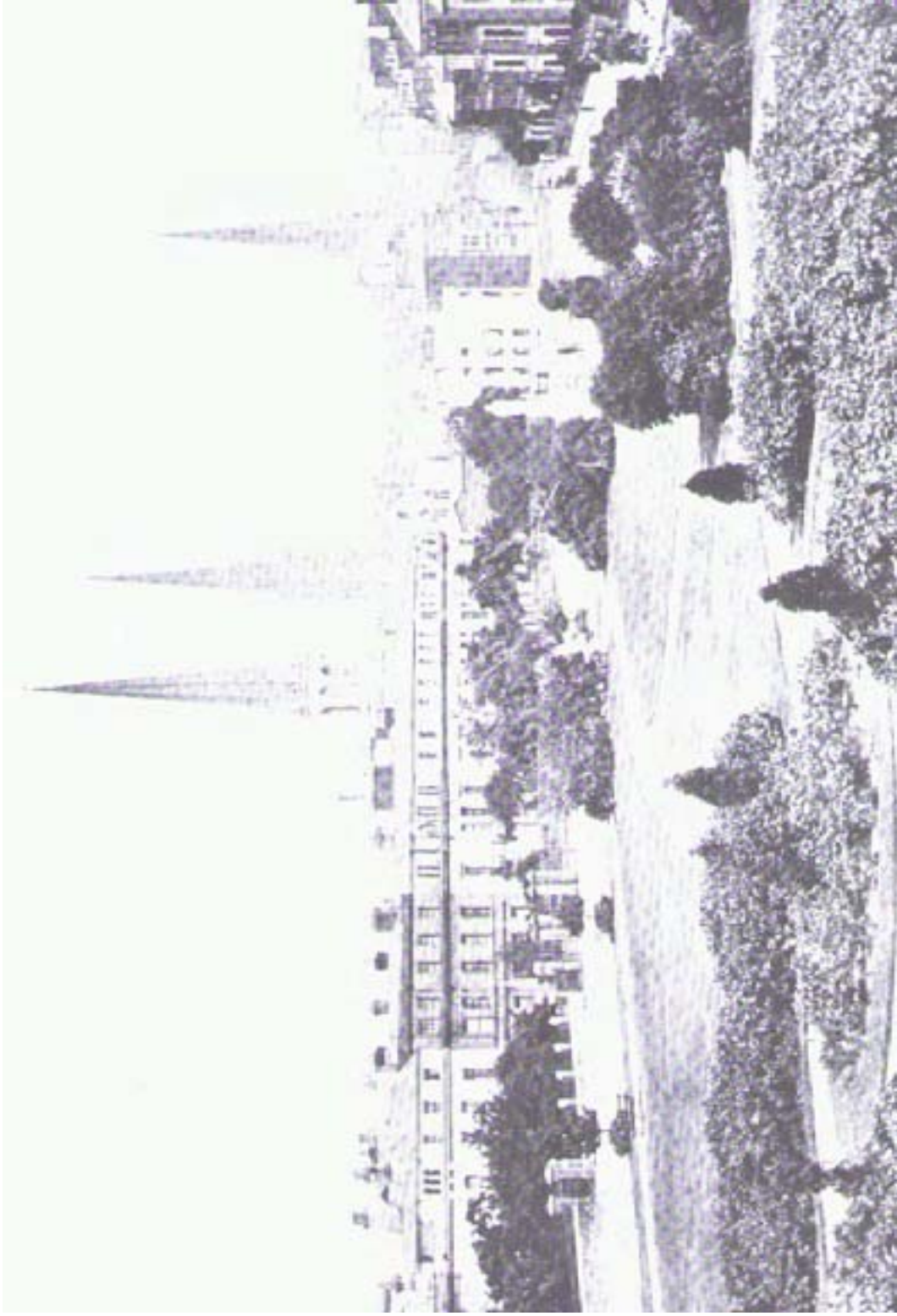
Reconstruction of the city centre was quickly under way, and by 1948 the new enlarged Broadgate was completed. The following year the statue of Godiva was unveiled. Several buildings, which survived the bombing, including the market clock tower, were demolished to clear the way for a pedestrian precinct, envisaged by city architect Donald Gibson. The building began with the construction of Broadgate House, opened in May 1953. This was followed by Woolworth's, Marks and Spencer and British Home Stores. In 1955 the Upper Precinct was completed. Gibson left the city in 1955, and the work was continued by Arthur Ling who extended the road begun by Gibson through the pedestrian area into Market Way, thus enlarging the precinct. Plans for the replacement of Coventry Cathedral received urgent attention. A competition was won by Basil Spence whose design for a new cathedral built on the burial ground of the old was completed on 26 April 1962.

Under the provisions of the Planning and Redevelopment Act of 1947 the city designated four comprehensive redevelopment areas. The most important being the central shopping area, where most of the air raid damage had been suffered. Gibson's plan for the central area combined the new with the surviving monuments in a way that captured the imagination of a war weary public. The tower and spire of St Michael's were to become the centre of a civic area, which would include the Council House, along with the future library, art gallery and college of art.

The most striking part of the plan was the pedestrian shopping precinct which was to arise on the other side of Broadgate leading towards St John's church, more or less on the line of the old Smithford Street. Broadgate itself, which had been a congested street with trams in it, was to be totally reconstructed so that in the centre there would be a green island with ornamental features, while around it on three sides would be important shopping buildings. One of Gibson's ideas had been to provide the central area with various works of art as street furniture to delight the eye of the passer-by. Perhaps the most important of these pieces of sculpture is an equestrian statue of Lady Godiva located beneath the canopy in Broadgate.



Map A Coventry GRCA 1750



View from Greyfriars Green of the three spires of St. Michael's, Holy Trinity and Christchurch (1880s)



Map B Central Coventry 1925

The plan as originally conceived was changed in a number of ways. For example the buildings on Broadgate were reduced from seven storeys to five and an attempt to straighten out Hertford Street in order to make way for a processional route from the railway station was abandoned. However, many of the fundamental principles of policy behind it remained the same. Behind it all was a generous vision of Coventry Corporation owning the whole of the city centre and letting the sites for commercial exploitation so that the rents should ultimately produce a profit for the benefit of the community, once the loan charges had been repaid. Under Arthur Ling the actual construction of the plan on the ground took a great step forward, since national policy was changing and shortages less problematic. Coventry Corporation itself contributed towards this by relaxing its principles on the involvement of property developers.

Arthur Ling's great increase in the total area of the precincts in the city centre coincided with a more general acceptance of the idea with the passage of time. Ling was also instrumental in introducing more variety into the city centre townscape in other ways. Shop fronts were no longer so rigidly controlled and were allowed to become more colourful. There was a measured introduction of white Portland stone, to contrast with the green Cumberland stone and brick of the Gibson era. Coming at a time when high-rise buildings were beginning to enter on a period of popularity, Ling also advised that the sky-line of the centre should become more diversified by the introduction of a number of high buildings at particular points. Mercia House, at the bottom of the Lower Precinct, was one of them, and Hillman House, at the end of Smithford Way, was another. In the period after Donald Gibson the traffic problem became exacerbated and multi-storey car parks, together with some rooftop parking, replaced the one-level parking.

4.7 The Post-War City

In the post-war years, the city had to meet the widespread demand for new housing. In addition to a number of smaller estates, Canley was extended, and Tile Hill and Willenhall were created on the edge of the city. The communal facilities often followed on more slowly, but the housing was good, rents were low. Innovation in housing design and layout was to continue in later developments in the outer areas of the city. Perhaps the most controversial has been high-rise flats.

The '50s and '60s were a boom period for Coventry: with massive car production and ownership, it earned the nickname 'Car City'. Industry brought immigration, swelling the population to over 300,000 in the 1960s, with over 60,000 working in the motor industry. Other industries were machine-tool makers, aircraft-engines, military vehicles, electrical components, telecommunications, the nylon and Rayon industry and rubber based industries.

In recognition of their historic importance and groupings of historic buildings four conservation Greyfriars Green, Lady Herbert's Garden, Spon Street and High Street have been declared in the city centre within the Ringway.

The 1970s saw a major collapse in the economic base of the City, with many major manufacturing companies going out of business. By the mid-1980s, a restructuring and a revival of the City's economy had begun. During the late 1970s until the present, economic recessions have bitten deeply into the city's industrial base, and many large firms have closed. The car industry has declined greatly, leaving only Jaguar-Daimler and Peugeot-Talbot. More recent development in the shopping area has had a considerable impact on the image and perception of the city centre. Cathedral Lanes shopping centre opened in November 1990, built on part of the original Broadgate and the site of Coventry Gaol. This was followed in April 1991 with the opening of West Orchard shopping centre.

Section 5: City Centre Urban Design Strategy

5.1 Introduction: Creating a City Centre of Distinction

Work is already underway to establish a new positive image of central Coventry through committed and planned developments such as the Phoenix Initiative, Leisure World, the arts and media centre, improvements to the Lower Precinct and enhancements to city centre spaces. These combined with other projects and outstanding assets such as the Cathedral environs will significantly improve the attractiveness of the city centre for both residents and visitors alike. The quality of the public realm and the vibrancy and vitality of the city centres offer will be improved as a result contributing to the achievement of economic growth into the next century.

However, if the full benefit of these projects is to be realised a strategy is now needed to develop the physical and perceptual linkages between them as major destinations and attractions within the city centre and city image drivers. An integrated and co-ordinated city centre strategy will add the glue to enable the city to exploit the full potential of projects, ensure their compatibility and manage visitors more creatively. Urban design has a key role to play in its evolution and delivery.

Competing cities within the region and nationally have recognised the benefits of improving the pedestrian environment, reducing the detrimental impacts of traffic and the role of urban design in helping to achieve and guide positive change. The city brand has become a crucial factor in the successful marketing of cities as places to live, work and invest in. Cities now need to promote local distinctiveness to differentiate their environments from other competitors and raise the quality of the physical environment.

5.2 Urban Design Analysis

The generation of urban design ideas and recommendations for policy or design intervention needs to be based upon a foundation of information about a particular place. Urban design analysis techniques can be used to identify certain characteristics and illustrate them in a way that can then be used to guide and inform policy and proposals. Accordingly the City Centre Urban Design Strategy has been informed by an analysis, which has considered a range of issues including:

- Analysis of historical sources including maps, photographs, books and periodicals and the **historic pattern of development** has influenced the routes and spaces hierarchy developed to provide a structure on which to base policy and proposals. For example the historic importance of the Spon Street - Far Gosford Street axis. A consideration of the location of listed buildings, conservation areas and areas of archaeological importance reveals the city centres historical legacy. Concentrations of surviving historic fabric have been protected through conservation area status.
- Analysis of **views and landmarks** has illustrated the importance of the three spires landmark, almost a city icon, but also the importance of post war towers which taken together create a varied skyline. Many of these landmarks are localised to certain areas of the city centre others have city significance by nature of their height. Other buildings are identified as landmarks but of poor quality in their of their appearance.
- Analysis of **nodes, paths, gateways** has influenced the routes and spaces hierarchy and by identifying the divisive nature of the Ringway influenced the Northern Ringway concept proposals.
- The location of **active ground floor uses** identifies those parts of the city centre, which are likely to attract more pedestrian footfall. Frontages are in the main retail and commercial in nature. The majority of frontage is contained within the inner circulatory road leaving large areas of the city centre unattractive to visitors Characterised by gap sites, surface car parks and poor quality pedestrian routes these areas present a poor image of the city centre.
- Identifying **poor enclosure and gap sites** has highlighted opportunities for new frontage development to re-establish street frontage continuity, create a better sense of enclosure and establish a coherent and more legible built environment.
- Analysis has shown the lack of **spaces**, which are predominantly soft landscaped in character. The dearth of such spaces in the western environs of the city centre is particularly notable.
- Through developing an understanding of proposed developments such as Leisure World, the Phoenix Initiative and the opportunities for other major catalysts a number of **zones of change** have been identified.
- Vehicular movements, in particular bus routes, car park and service arrangements have been the subject of detailed study in the City Centre **Access** Strategy and informed a fuller understanding of opportunities and constraints.

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS
HISTORIC BUILDINGS / CONSERVATION
AREAS

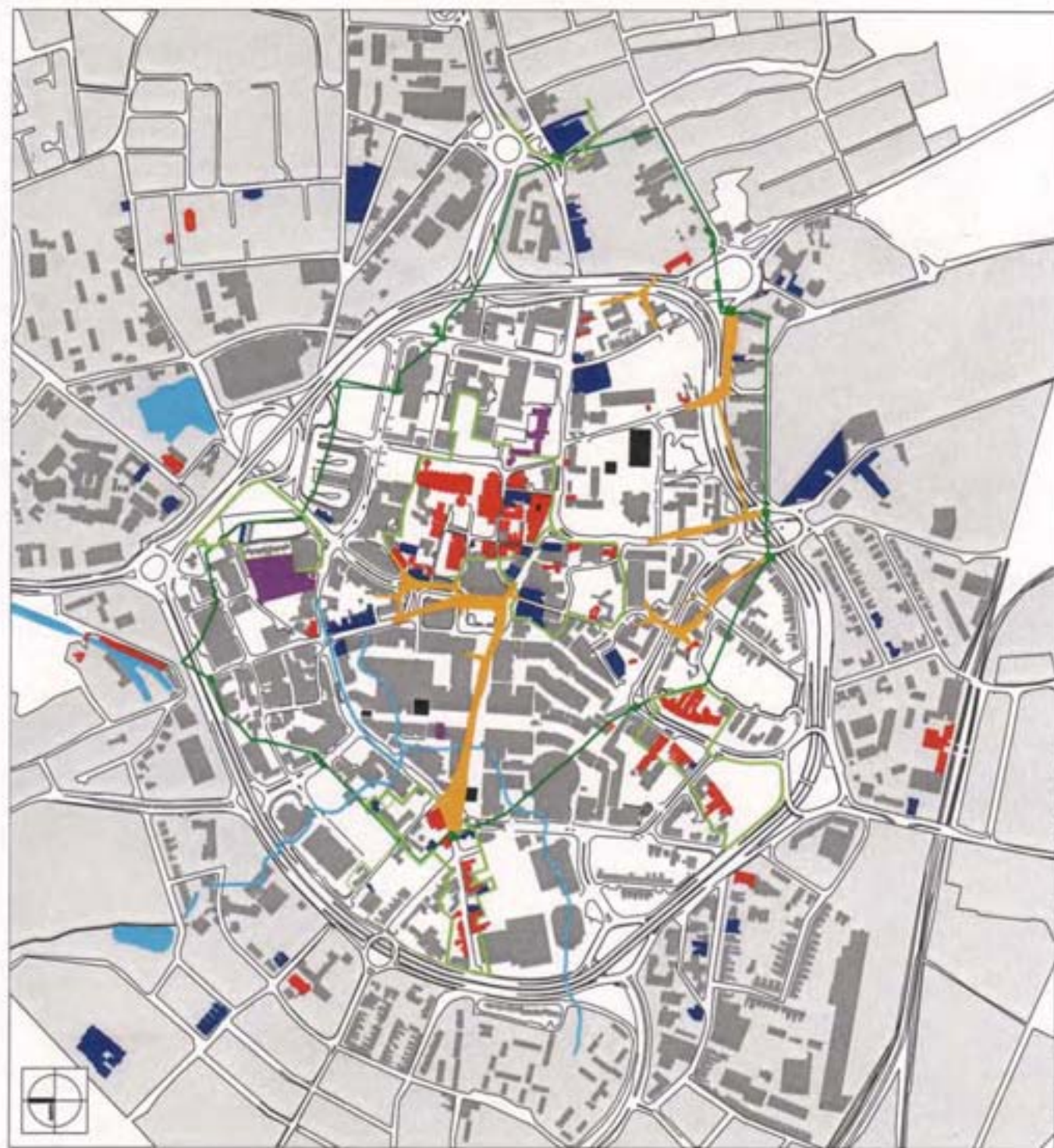


Figure 1

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS VIEWS AND LANDMARKS

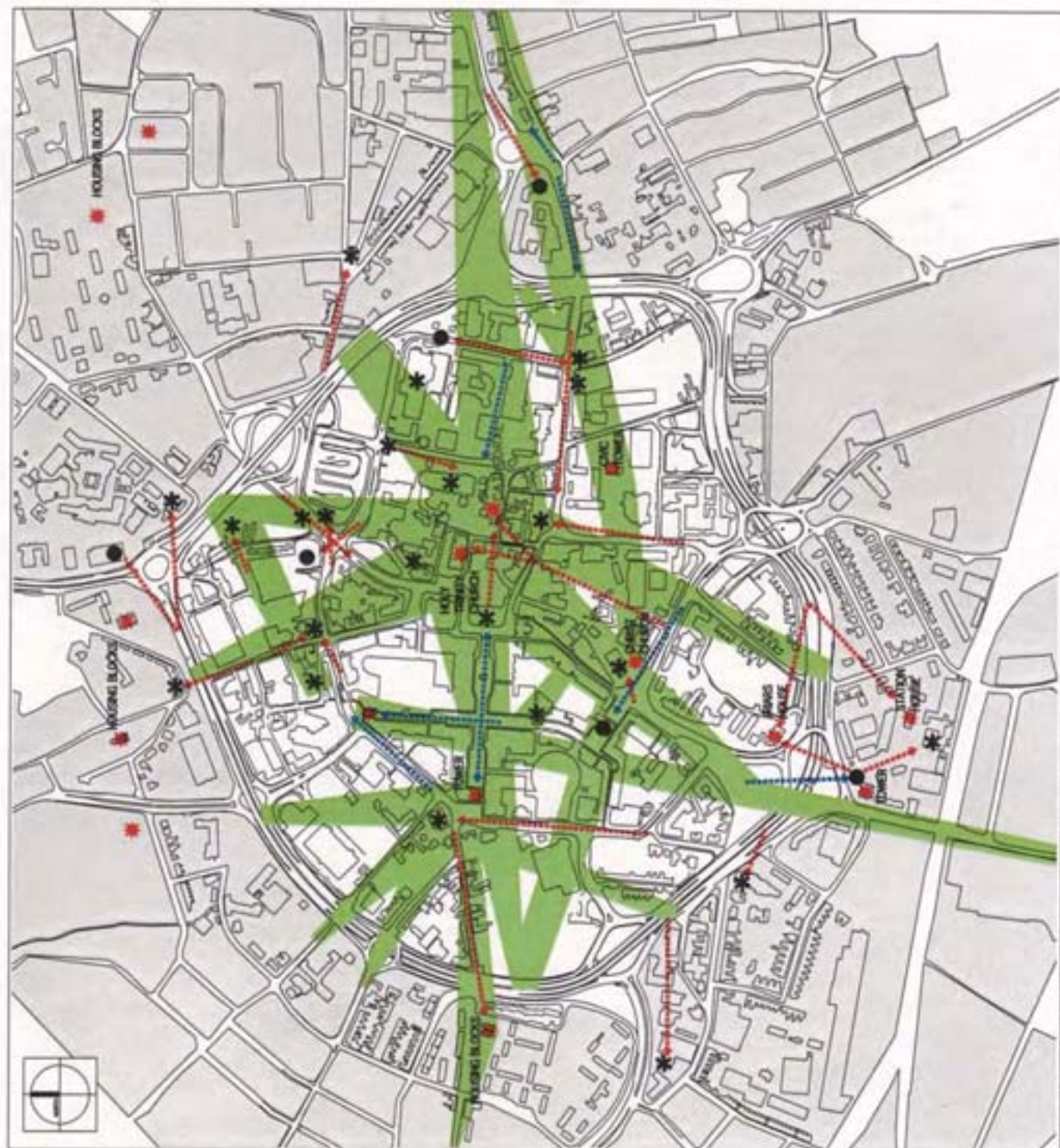


Figure 2

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS
LEGIBILITY

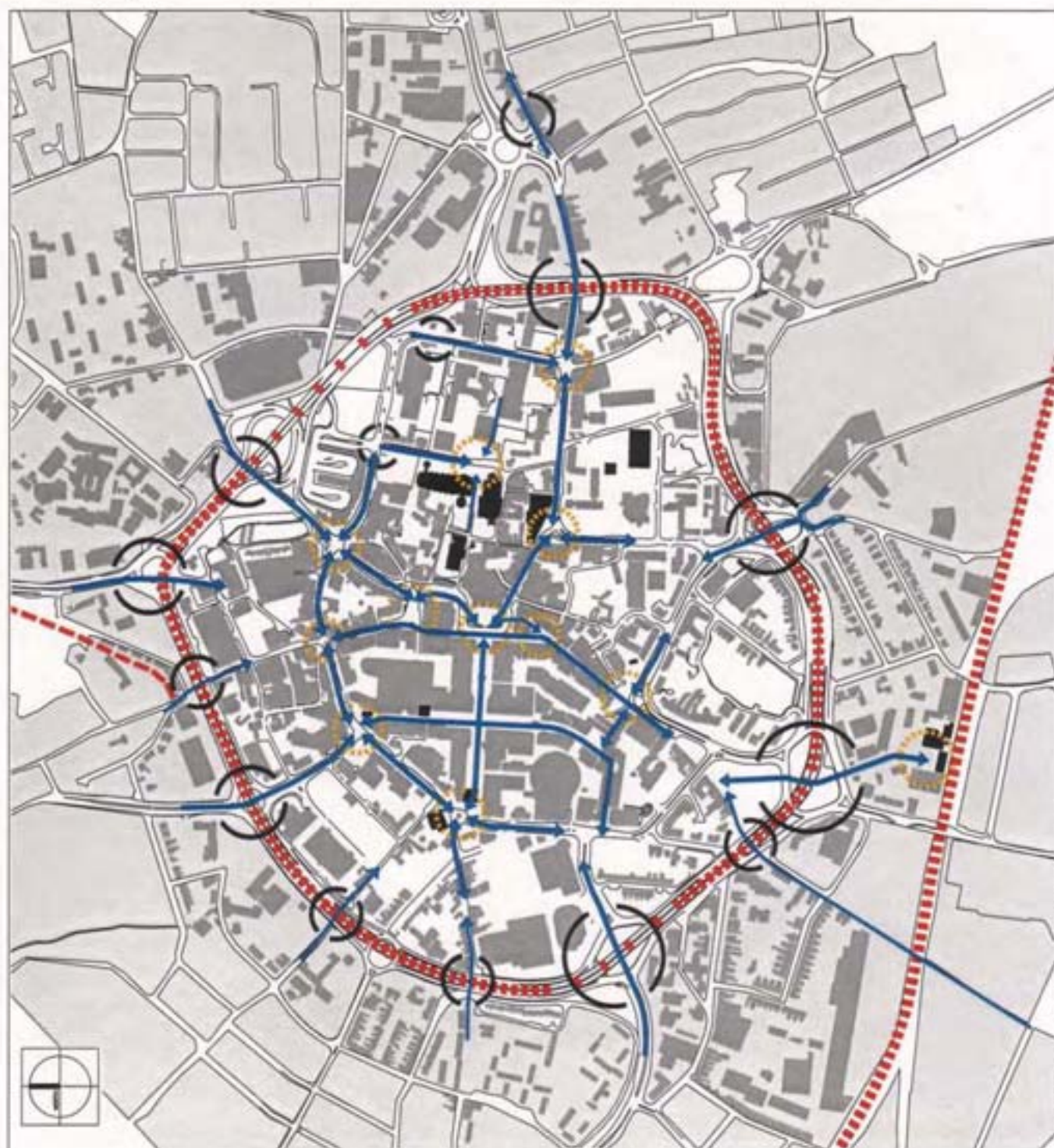


Figure 3

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS
ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR USES

Key



Active ground floor uses

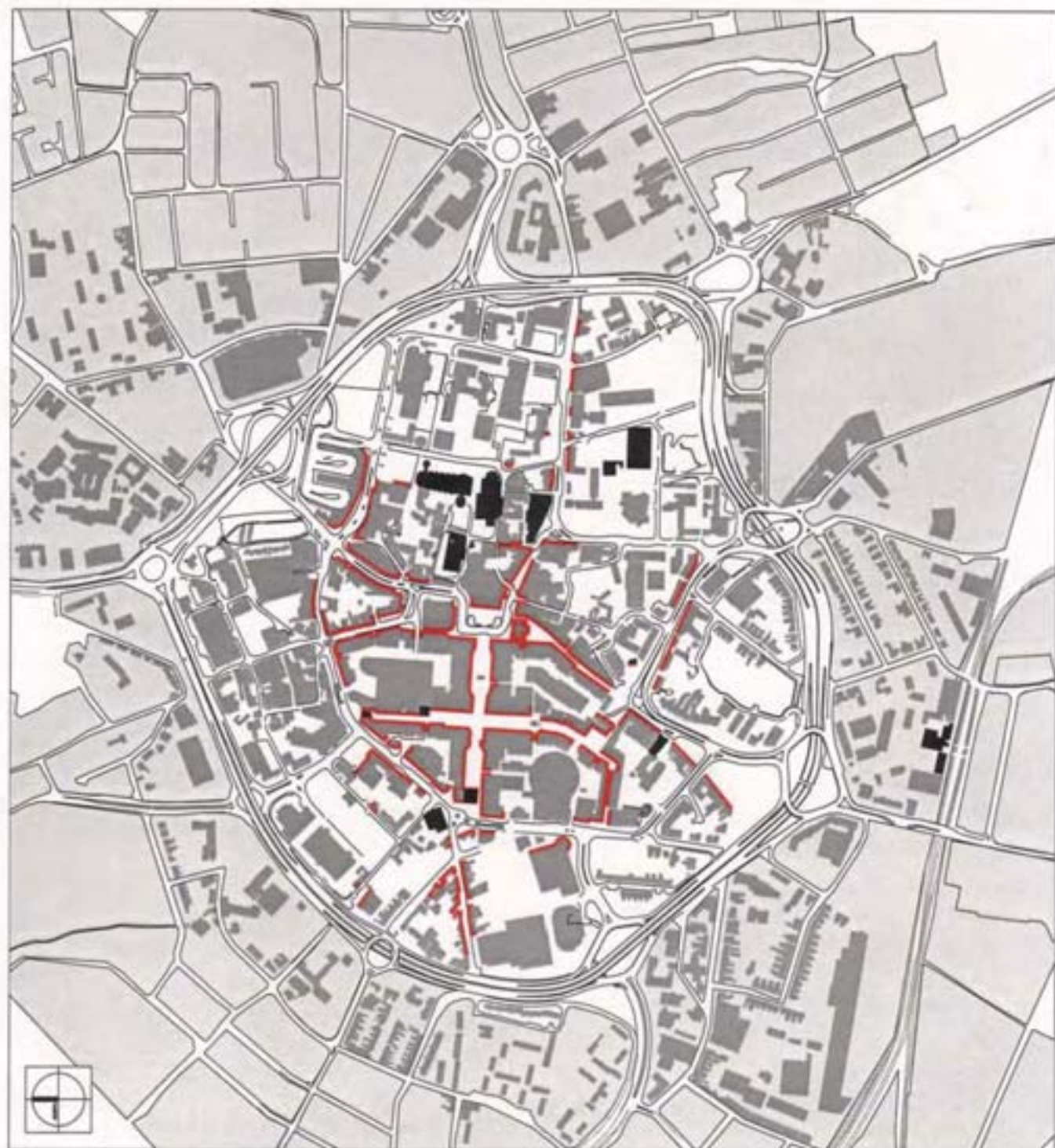


Figure 4

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS ENCLOSURE

-  Poor gaps in frontage
-  Poor sense of enclosure

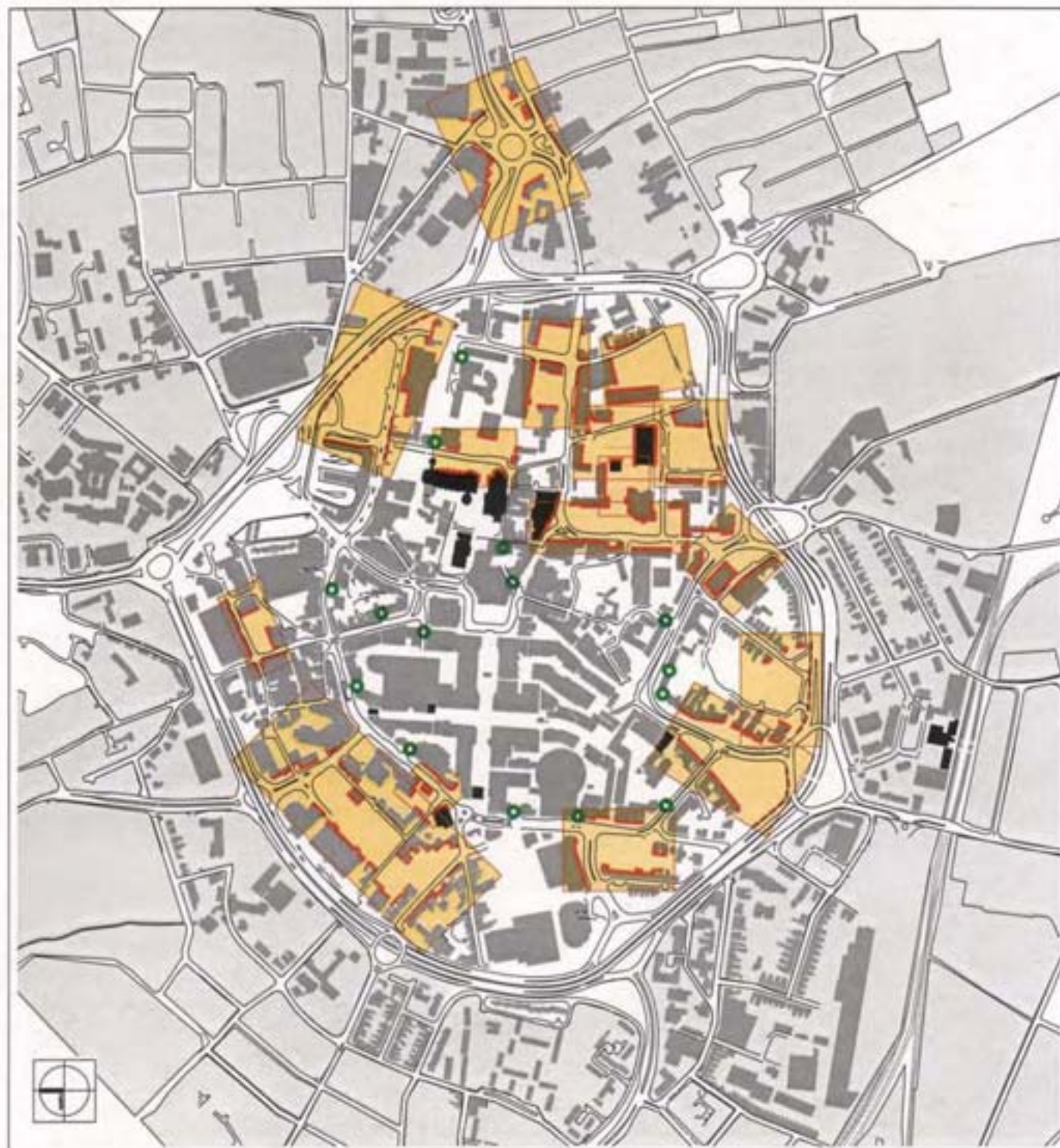


Figure 5

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS
CITY CENTRE SPACES

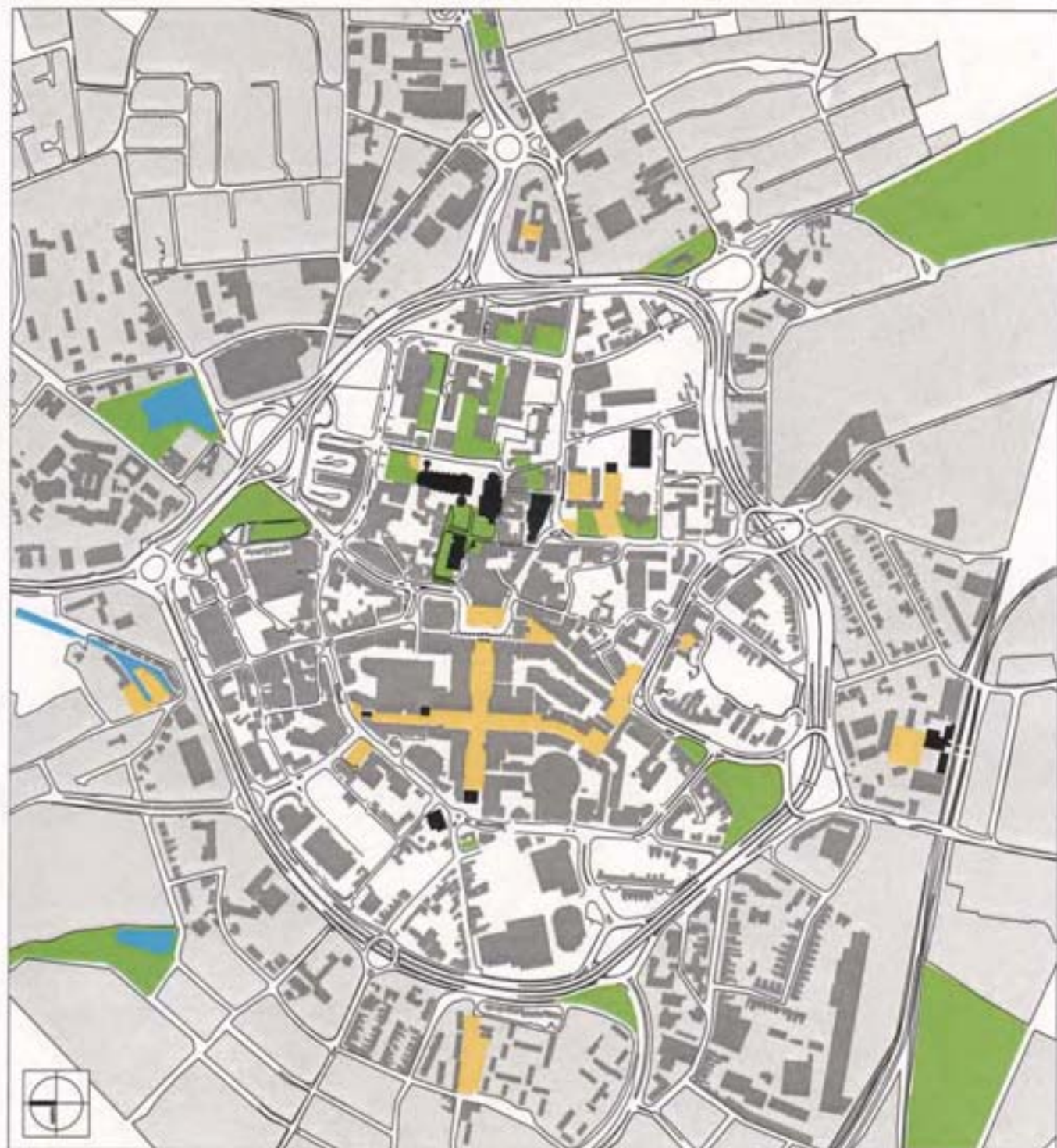


Figure 6

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS FRONTAGE CONDITION

Key

- Blank Facade : Lack of Visual Interest
- Lack of Visual Interest above Active Ground Floor

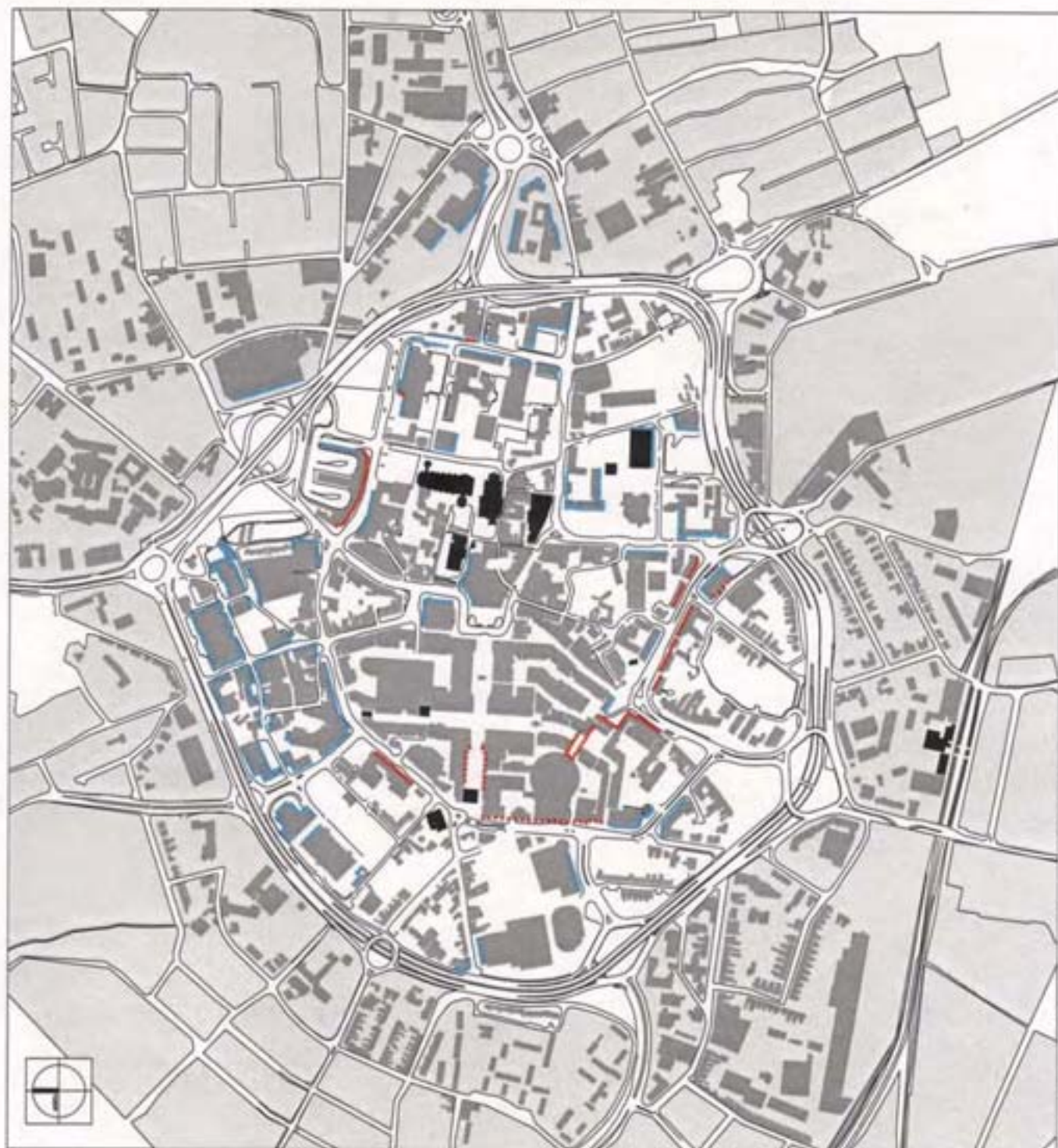


Figure 7

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS CITY BLOCK STRUCTURE

- KEY
-  Outer Area Blocks
 -  Key Public Buildings
 -  Opportunities for New Built Frontage to Increase Continuity and Enclosure
 -  Existing Built Frontage of Blocks

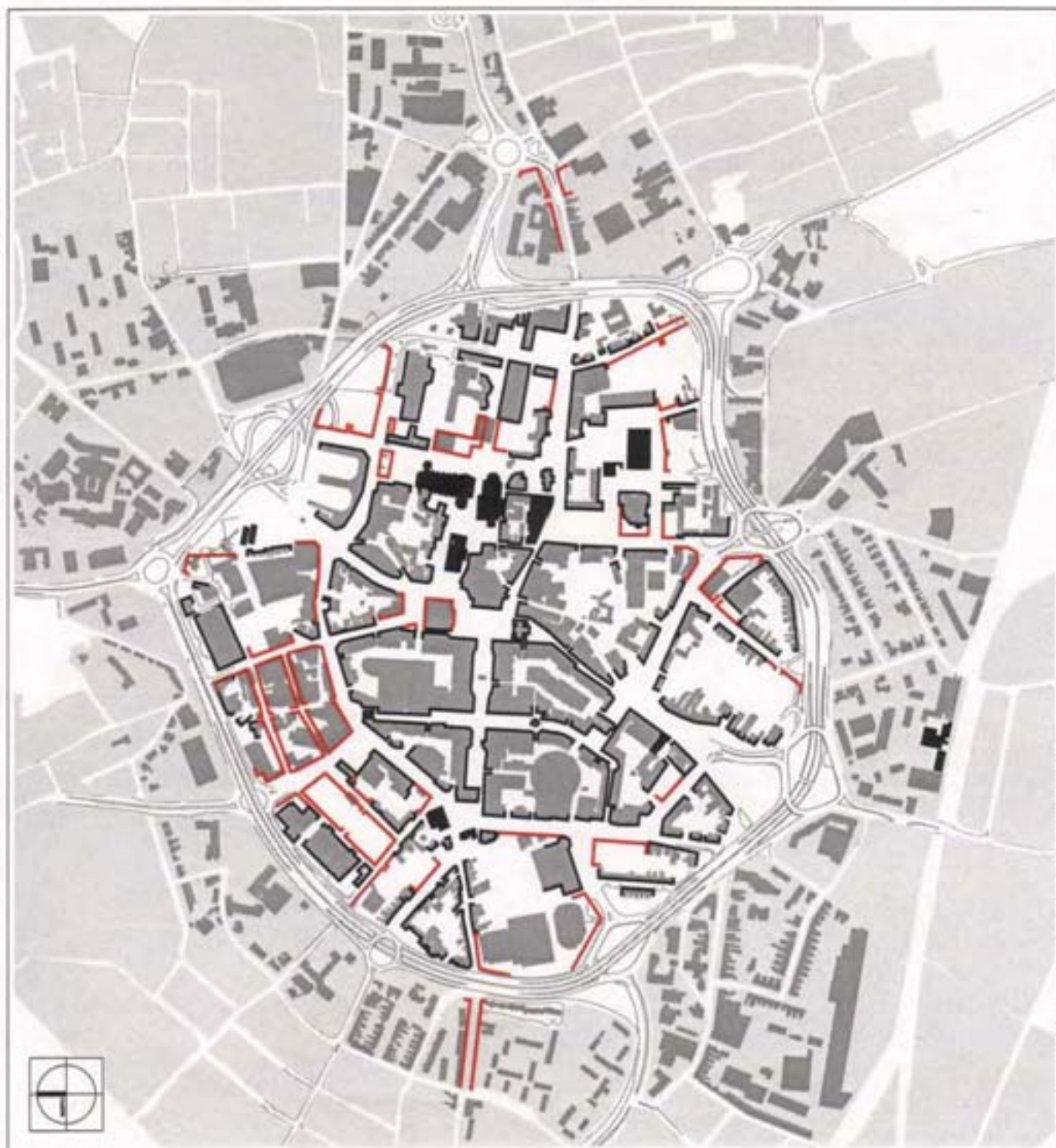


Figure 8

The analysis is illustrated on plans, with the exception of historical background material, see figures 1-8.

Urban Initiatives were also appointed by the City Council to undertake a study leading to a City Centre Access Strategy. This study has run in parallel to the Urban Design Study and enabled the generation of proposals and policy recommendations with the benefit of more detailed information concerning vehicular and pedestrian movements.

The city centre has considerable areas of pedestrianisation principally associated with the main shopping precinct. Further pedestrian-only space is envisaged within the Millennium/Phoenix Scheme in developing recommendations; emphasis has been placed on promoting attractive and usable spaces and reducing the detrimental impacts of traffic. However, this has been set against the need to also promote a more attractive and better-used public transport system and efficient service and car park access arrangements.

5.3 Realising the full potential

The image and identity of the city centre will have a considerable impact upon an individual's ability to read, understand, assimilate information and therefore make informed choices about whether to visit, live or invest in it. People's understanding of a place is conditioned by many interrelated factors, which are often difficult to define. Spending power, motivation, time/distance and critical mass of attractions are all important factors in influencing whether or not to visit a place. Equally, the ease and convenience with which people can find their way around an urban environment and the quality of that experience is crucial factors in providing choice and attracting increased diversity of uses. The quality and quantity of choice, service/management and design all influence the look, feel and experience offered by a place. The image which Coventry projects to the outside world through its physical environment is therefore vitally important to its future success.

It is recommended that a detailed legibility framework, drawing upon the Legible Cities concept developed by Urban Initiatives, be developed for the city to underpin, guide and maximise the benefit of the above projects and others put forward in this report. The framework would be primarily targeted at improving people's understanding of the city and in particular the city centre through the implementation of a package of branding,

identity, information, signing, movement, and character area enhancement measures.

Specifically, it would seek to:

- Strengthen the physical identity and character of the public realm within the city centre; and
- Co-ordinate the provision of signing and information to better connect the different parts of the city and city centre together.

The combination of proposed measures will assist access and orientation, integrate modes of public transport, and improve the environmental quality and image of the city centre, and link together character areas, shopping and tourist attractions. In particular the initiative will improve the convenience, efficiency and ease of movement to, from and around the city centre and emphasise the range, quality and value of attractions. This will enhance the experience offered by the city centre and enable it to differentiate itself from other competing regional centres and cities.

Essentially, the initiative seeks to communicate what the city has to offer by introducing a range of components to assist residents, visitors and businesses. These include:

- A consistent range of **movement and information components** (including highway/pedestrian signing, visitor interpretation and public transport infrastructure) to help people understand and move around the city centre;
- A range of **place reference components** (including street furniture, lighting, paving and other items), primarily procured as a series of collaborative arts/design projects, to enhance the environmental quality and identity of the city centre and its distinctive areas.

Collectively, the component ranges will provide a layering of legibility from direct, overt messages relayed through the movement and information components to the subtle or more subliminal messaging implied through the place reference components. Underpinning the provision of both is the desire to procure bespoke designs that are unique to Coventry (providing economies of scale and maintenance considerations can be justified).

The main aim of the movement and information components is to assist vehicular and pedestrian movement and relay visitor information. The type

of information required by visitors will vary in relation to the time and their location. Visitors will need to be given sufficient information for them to understand the nature of what is on offer, to enable choices to be made and to find their way around and to plan an itinerary. At the most practical level this will include providing information before arrival, on how to get to Coventry, on arrival, how to find their way around the city centre and during their stay. The information and the components used to convey the information should be presented in a consistent and co-ordinated way, enabling visitors to plan and undertake a continuous or 'seamless' journey.

Components should have a co-ordinated design using a consistent presentation format for information. This will include the careful selection of materials, the aesthetic appearance and styling of the component and the graphic identity used to convey information. In this way each component will provide the opportunity to build and restate the Coventry brand.

The approach will encourage visitors to stay longer, explore and visit other attractions, such as combining a shopping trip to the precinct with a visit to the cathedral or a meal in a restaurant located in a vibrant city square. In short, the framework provides the opportunity to expand people's ideas of what they can do in Coventry. In particular the provision of a co-ordinated range of movement and information components could be used to illustrate options that visitors otherwise might not have been aware of and inspire them to make more ambitious plans. This will add value to individual improvement schemes and attractions by improving the level and quality of service provided by the city to visitors, which in turn will help to increase visitor numbers, in particular return visits, and visitor generated revenues.

5.4 Movement and Information Components

5.4.1 The City Centre Access Strategy

The Coventry City Centre Access Strategy should be regarded as a key appendix to this Urban Design Study. It considers issues in relation to access to, from and within the city centre by each of the following modes:

- Bus
- Taxi
- Rail
- Coach

- People-mover
- Private Car
- Service Vehicles
- Walking
- Cycling

As far as has been possible, bearing in mind the ongoing uncertainty as to key issues affecting bus access in the heart of the city, detailed movement networks for each mode have been brought forward. These incorporate recommendations for such initiatives as:

- Improved pedestrian and cycle crossings of the Ringway
- Stricter but dynamic traffic management measures, including bus-only streets
- Enhanced provision for taxi services
- Rationalisation of off-street parking provision and management
- Changes to on-street parking provision and controls
- Segregation of pedestrian and cycle movements
- Better links between the station and city centre
- Improved signage, including variable message signing

These recommendations together comprise a co-ordinated and comprehensive strategy to guide action designed to improve movement within the city centre for the foreseeable future. As such, the strategy forms the context for the implementation of the movement and information components of the city centre legibility framework.

5.4.2 Legibility

Taken in its widest sense, the whole environment acts as a sign, which people use to orientate themselves in unfamiliar surroundings, by the recognition of distinctive areas and by their position in relation to important landmarks and points of interest such as buildings and other features. In the absence of a signing system people use these features to move from one point of interest to the next. Currently parts of the city centre fail to provide sufficient visual cues to enable the visitor to make the most of what it has to offer.

For example, a visitor standing in the centre of the shopping precinct and looking east towards where the Cathedral, Holy Trinity and University lie can see the very top of the Cathedral spire but otherwise the field of view is dominated by the upper precinct walkways, the escalators that lead up

to those walkways, the ramp connecting the upper levels with Broadgate (over the jeweller's shop), and glimpses of the Broadgate canopy and Cathedral Lanes Centre brickwork. Almost no clue is given to the attractions that lie beyond.

To develop better linkages within the city centre connecting attractions, spaces and areas, between the city centre and surrounding residential neighbourhoods and to identified zones of change and from points of arrival there is a need to supplement the limited visual cues that do exist with a more co-ordinated and self evident means of signing. Existing visitor information and signing for pedestrians is inconsistent, of a generally low level and poor in quality. The main problems are:

- There is no clear, co-ordinated strategy for signing and visitor information.
- There is no obvious hierarchy of information delivery.
- Only certain attractions and places are signed.
- Existing signs do not develop linkages and assist movement between areas.
- Outwardly there appears to be no overall design philosophy, hence no consistent signing provision is in place.
- Existing signs are not distinctive and do not develop the character and sense of place of particular areas.
- Certain signs are difficult to read and could be better sited.
- Visitors accessing the city centre from the motorway or regional road network must travel along road corridors of considerable length. It is important to ensure continuity of provision and co-ordination/consistency of information.

The introduction of an imaginative and innovative signage and information system will contribute significantly to the vitality and viability of the city centre as part of a wider package of streetscape, space improvement projects and major developments. The opportunity exists to greatly improve the image of the city in terms of creating and then reinforcing a good first impression.

5.4.3 Developing a Signage and Information Hierarchy

Gateways

- "Welcome to Coventry" - this could be in the form of a series of vertical arts/lighting features, which would not necessarily be placed slavishly on the administrative boundaries, but at appropriate locations where design would match the context.
- Information panel to include general location plan indicating 'you are here', public buildings, tourist information centre, shopping core etc.
- Pedestrian directional signage, column mounted
- Vehicular signage to direct drivers to the nearest car parking facility designated for their intended destination area or attraction.
- Vehicular signage to direct service vehicles to designated service areas along strictly controlled routes.

Civic Spines and Community/Visitor Routes

- Pedestrian directional signage at main path intersections and along paths at regular intervals, column mounted
- Continuity route markers - vertical arts features, banners, pavement markers
- Visitor interpretation panels at key locations or viewing points

Principal pedestrian spaces and squares

- Information panels to include town centre location plan indicating main buildings, faculties and spaces
- Pedestrian directional signage, column mounted
- Visitor interpretation panels - giving detailed information about the historical background of the city and/or particular spaces or artwork(s)

Car Parks

- Information panels to include a more detailed location plan and supporting information
- Colour-coded floor identification, exit and health and safety wall mounted signage
- Pedestrian directional signage, column- or wall- mounted
- Co-ordinated ticketing giving advertising/concessions, visitor route information, floor identification, help line telephone number
- City centre map dispenser
(Signage improvements should coincide with improvements to multi-storey car park entrances and stairwells as part of a general improvement programme)

Railway Station and Bus Station

- Information panels and location plan showing key buildings, facilities, spaces and identifying transport mode options to the city centre - bus, taxi, pedestrian and cycle routes giving time and distance information
- Pedestrian directional signage, column or wall mounted
- City centre map dispenser

5.5 Place Reference Components

5.5.1 Improving Paving Design

The great variety of surfacing materials and the resultant number and variety of colours, textures and tones across the city centre contributes to a discordant and inharmonious character. A coherent strategy for the paving of all external surfaces across the city centre is now required.

A clear distinction should be made between vehicular and pedestrian routes. Some streets and areas will be predominantly pedestrian but need to be designed in such a way as to enable emergency vehicle access and service or maintenance access at particular times of the day or week. The specification for paving therefore needs to take account of this not only in the surface material selected but also the foundation detailing. In some cases a more durable coloured or stone chipping dressed tarmacadam surface will be more appropriate than small element paving units. High Street requires early attention as part of a wider scheme for Broadgate. Its poor visual appearance and confused vehicular movements creates a low-grade environment for pedestrians and an inappropriate setting for building frontages.

Some predominantly pedestrian spaces may need to accommodate limited/controlled vehicular access along clearly defined routes and with control/management mechanisms to stop erratic movements. The range of dynamic traffic management techniques has been broadened over recent years. Management of access will be crucial if recently improved spaces are to retain their quality appearance and damage to surfaces and furniture is to be kept to a minimum. The uses which a particular space or street might accommodate should therefore be defined at the earliest stages of the design process with flexibility being uppermost in design evolution. How a surface might be cleaned and repaired should also receive early consideration.

Used creatively and sympathetically paving design can help unify disparate building forms, focus on major building entrances, and highlight thresholds between spaces. Paving and surfacing materials can also be used to reinforce a particular route or hierarchy of routes through the use of colour, textures, tones and the use of differing size paving units.

Different materials have different weathering characteristics; those of natural stone perhaps more than ever being appreciated. Despite the higher initial cost the appearance of natural stone seems to mellow and improve over the years; conversely artificial stone, concrete flags and blocks, or clay paving can appear too regular in shape, colour and texture. Pigments added to some artificial materials can fade contributing to a tired and worn appearance. By contrast natural materials like York stone have a much longer life and offer wide colour and textural variations within and between each piece. Because of their longevity natural stone sets and flags can offer value for money in addition to the aesthetic qualities. The use of granite and durable sandstones for surfacing roads, footways and public spaces has become more common over recent years as the qualities of stone materials compared to artificial alternatives have become more widely recognised.

Natural stone flags and setts were a common paving material in the city centre but as in so many cities it has been progressively removed or covered over with tarmac. What remains today is mostly to be found within the cathedral environs in the form of kerbs, drainage channels, setts and paving slabs. These stones can be effectively combined to create high quality pedestrian environments, which also compliment the architecture of surrounding buildings.

Traditional natural stone paving materials are an integral part of the character of many historic city centres. High quality environmental improvement schemes in cities such as Chester, Bristol, Birmingham and London have featured extensive areas of natural stone setts and flags. The simplicity, continuity and uncluttered nature of the paving design in some cases combined with lawns and tree planting contributes to an image of elegance and maturity. Much can be learned from this approach and applied to Coventry although not blindly copied given the clear difference in contexts.

Subject to funding, it is recommended that new spaces be paved in natural stone. The paving design should seek to provide a high quality setting to

the surrounding buildings and any water features or other works of art that are integrated into that space. Simplicity of design and the effective use of subtle textures and tones found in natural stone, and the use of grassed areas and tree planting should be uppermost in the design evolution. Each space will have its own particular character and each has great potential to create an outstanding impression for visitors as well as residents. The connecting network of pedestrian routes could then be paved in natural stone or appropriate alternatives depending on the area.

5.5.2 Soft Landscaping

Analysis of the city centre has highlighted the poor level of green space provision and in particular the lack of street tree planting. This has been echoed in feedback from the first workshop event being expressed in terms of the lack of soft landscape elements which could otherwise reduce the impact of what were regarded by some as harsh and monotone grey buildings and structures. The impression of the Ringway is that of a hard concrete structure particularly along its elevated sections. However, parts of the southern sections have been improved through the softening effect of climbing shrub plants on the retaining walls.

Trees can make an important contribution to the attractiveness of the city centre. They can be used to form views, create shelter, enclose and define spaces, soften or screen hard building forms, provide seasonal variation and attract wildlife. In designing streets, squares and other spaces trees with appropriate scale need to be selected.

Semi-mature tree planting is proposed on civic spines and community/visitor routes where the width of the street and building frontages permit a consistent structuring approach to be taken. Trees should also be introduced within city centre space improvement schemes as an integrated design element, subject to detailed design objectives for individual spaces, and taking into account underground service constraints.

Connecting city green spaces

The hierarchy of spaces and routes focuses design actions and policies on community routes. A principal aim is to improve pedestrian linkages between the city centre and significant green public spaces located outside the Ringway. These include Swanswell Pool and Recreation Ground, Nauls Mill Park, and Spencer Park. The potential to extend landscape structure into the city core such as the River Sherbourne

corridor should be explored. The routes to major spaces outside the Ringway could be characterised by high levels of street tree planting and pocket green spaces located at intervals along the street. A new community route of the type described above is proposed linking a major new space at the east front of the cathedral, Priory Street and Swanswell Pool/Recreation Ground. Avenue planting will also contribute to the achievement of a processional character and enhanced sense of arrival into the cathedral environs.

The at grade boulevard proposed as a replacement for the northern Ringway is characterised by almost continuous avenue tree planting. This tree structure could be introduced in a modified form along the spines and community routes which radiate from the city core to the boulevard as environmental improvement budgets and development opportunities arise. Where larger scale redevelopment is being promoted in Inner Area Zones of Change the redesign of streets should consider the potential for tree planting from the outset of the design process.

5.5.3 A New Approach to Street Furniture

Analysis of the city centre has highlighted the lack of co-ordination in the design, location, colour, and maintenance of all street furniture elements. The level and quality of provision varies greatly; the western environs exhibiting a particularly low level of provision. A general lack of seats/benches discourages people from lingering in certain spaces which could with other landscape remodelling be pleasant places to sit.

A detailed audit of all existing street furniture and signage, including seats, benches, litter bins, building, highway and pedestrian signage, lighting (amenity and building lighting) is urgently needed. The purpose of the audit would be to identify clutter, duplication, poor levels of provision, repair and maintenance requirements and opportunities for improvements. Such an audit and the subsequent phased introduction of new street furniture and the co-ordination of maintenance and aftercare would be greatly assisted by the use of a Geographical Information System (GIS). Any new street furniture introduced into the city centre needs to be co-ordinated in terms of its design, installation, aftercare and maintenance. It will have to perform to criteria established for the whole city centre. It will in particular need to be robust and easy to maintain.

Off the shelf catalogue purchasing should be avoided where possible in favour of developing bespoke designs that are unique to Coventry. The

aim should be to use street furniture to reinforce the character and identity of the city. Existing street furniture although co-ordinated in part was designed about 12 years ago reflecting a heritage design theme. This was at a time when choice of procurement routes was limited. Today there is considerable interest in street furniture design and many towns and cities are favouring place specific contemporary design approaches utilising the best of local, regional or national design skills and as a means to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Bespoke designed elements need not necessarily cost more than off the shelf components particularly if adopted across the whole city centre and therefore giving economies of scale. There maybe scope to use locally available materials, craft traditions or engineering and product design expertise. For example the skills of the Coventry University School of Art and Design, including product and information design, could be brought to bear in the design of street furniture, signage and information components.

Colour of street furniture and other elements should be being given careful consideration. Colour can enrich the public realm and provide visual stimulus. In particular colour should be the core element of a new communications/ graphics system designed to guide people around the city centre. Although predominantly pedestrian orientated the system could be extended in part to the introduction of pictograms onto highway signage identifying important attractions and facilities and their nearest car park. This will require discussion with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Ideally visitors using key corridors would be given consistent information on route prior to arriving at the Ringway to help inform choice of car park. The objective being to direct visitors to the most appropriate car park as efficiently as possible and then to manage them as pedestrians.

A **pattern book** of co-ordinated bespoke street furniture designs should be developed and owned by the Council from which components can then be selected as necessary for individual projects. The pattern book would form a major element of a comprehensive **streetscape manual** and set out detailed design specifications including colour references, location and installation requirements, maintenance guidelines and details of manufacturers costs and delivery timescales. Individual components would include a seat, bench, litter bin, lighting column and lantern, cycle parking rack, banner structure and flag pole. The pattern book could be developed in part alongside the design of the first major project.

A number of potential procurement routes should be explored to enable the design of bespoke street furniture. A co-ordinated suite of furniture could be designed as part of an arts collaboration, a competition or with the close involvement of a particular manufacturer(s) combined with product/graphic design expertise appointed from a select list for example. The involvement of a manufacturer would enable intimate knowledge of the production process and therefore the 'art of the possible' together with well founded understanding of the costs involved to be brought to the table. Early involvement is also likely to avoid abortive work and reduce costs.

It is our understanding that discussions have taken place with companies such as JC Decaux (UK) Ltd and Adshel both of whom supply street furniture (bus shelters, advertising drums, seats and litter bins) on the back of a poster format advertising strategy. Both companies are market leaders with interests in the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

For many local authorities the provision and subsequent maintenance and cleaning of street furniture is a financial burden lifted when resources are limited. However, very careful consideration needs to be given before an agreement, which may be in place for up to 20 years, is reached with a particular company. In most cases only standard items of furniture will be available. Whilst of a good standard of design and manufacture these items can be seen in other cities and therefore contribute little to local distinctiveness. The opportunity should be taken to explore the development of more place specific contemporary designs using the urban design strategy as a platform to promote additional advertising opportunities which may not have been considered by such companies in the past.

The **streetscape manual** should also be developed outlining the specification for all surface materials, street furniture and lighting (street, building mounted and flood lighting), and aspects of soft landscaping. The manual will not replace the need to seek specialist advice as and when necessary, such as a landscape and/or arboricultural adviser or urban designer. The principal objectives of the manual are to ensure consistency in the standards of maintenance and to enable more efficient and cost effective management of maintenance programmes.

Given the specialist nature of some of the above work the Council could consider compiling a select list of artists, crafts workers, designers and

contractors in respect of individual projects for tender purposes subject to national government guidance and European directives on tendering procedures. Such a list could be rotated/revised as necessary.

5.5.4 Lighting

Urban lighting should not be seen as just providing visibility and embellishment, it guides, orientates or moves objects farther away: it directs, exalts or conceals its subjects. Its role is multiple, it can treat buildings, sites, their environment and their functions with respect. The French city of Lyon, a centre of the lighting manufacturing industry, presents itself as showcase for the potential of urban lighting in all its forms to contribute to the vitality and image of the city. Co-ordinated lighting schemes have been designed to create atmospheres in light that take into account the nature and colours of the urban environment, be it the tones of facades, ground materials, green areas or water all elements whose appearance and colours play on light.

Good lighting is an essential component of the design of public and external spaces. Quality lighting design can enhance the appearance of the public realm. The buildings and spaces that are unique to Coventry could be revealed to great effect with light during the night time. By careful selection and accentuation they can present a new and stimulating perspective. Consideration of all the lighting elements gives the opportunity to present a comprehensive and controlled night time statement. These elements would include: amenity lighting, building lighting, feature lighting, modelling and spotlighting.

Creative lighting can also be used to support and encourage the evening economy as part of a package of planning and urban design measures which facilitate improvements to city centre spaces and promote mixed uses including restaurants, bars, cafes and cultural, arts and media facilities in part supported by an increased residential community. Public spaces must be designed with flexibility in mind and the potential of individual spaces to adapt to different uses at certain times of the day. The inclusion of lighting design specialists in the multidisciplinary team assembled to develop city space projects is therefore essential.

The recent 'Coventry City Lights' event and the City Centre Lighting Strategy designed by Speirs and Major has demonstrated the potential of creative urban lighting to animate or mark particular events or seasonal celebrations and have delighted visitors and residents alike. Contemporary

lighting events utilising new projection and laser technology have become increasingly popular. Exciting arts/architectural projects have involved amongst other aspects the projection of moving and still images onto buildings and have attracted large numbers of people.

The need to improve levels of illumination in the more remote areas of the city centre, along pedestrian paths, and to support and stimulate the evening economy needs to be addressed. This is particularly evident during the winter months when daylight hours are shorter and people are spending more time moving through the city centre after dark. Improvements to lighting can help create a safer and more welcoming city centre environment and should be done so in combination with works to major spaces and routes including the removal of dark and over planted areas.

The lighting strategy integrates landmark building/street lighting, opportunities for lighting features such as vertical light beacons in key spaces and along key routes, and improvements to the Christmas/New Year lighting. The strategy also identifies opportunities for lighting events, for example associated with Millennium celebrations or Son et Lumière productions, enhancing/ marking the gateways into the town centre and reinforcing the character and identity of particular areas.

5.5.5 Public Art

Artists and crafts workers can add a new and refreshing perspective to the design of outdoor spaces. They can bring an enriching and dynamic talent which when combined with other disciplines help to create places which are more relevant to their users and which have a unique identity and sense of place. Their involvement can be diverse from inclusion in the concept design of projects to the creation of individual works be they permanent or temporary. Art and craft works could include sculptures, murals, decorative metalwork, glass and ceramics; and even street furniture such as seats and litter bins.

High quality, site-specific artistic work can help personalise an area or space, giving it special identity and sense of place which can act as a local reference point. It can project a good impression to visitors, create a visually stimulating and diverse environment for residents, and foster a sense of civic pride. The city centre has a number of artistic works ranging from free standing figurative and abstract pieces to sculptures relief's on buildings and decorative motifs on the columns of arcaded building

frontages. Many of these works relate to the Gibson plan for the central shopping area. Art works could not only benefit external spaces but also enrich and enliven multi-storey car parks and other points of arrival such as the rail station.

Artists have visual, tactile and conceptual skills to offer in collaboration. It is worth noting that lottery funded projects now require that artists are included in the professional collaboration alongside the involvement of local communities. However the collaborative process is not easy for all and the integration of artists and craftsmakers into the planning and design process requires careful guidance. Any design team must include public arts commissioning skills to ensure that artists/craftsmakers are integrated into the design process from the earliest stage. In this way it may also be possible to avoid mismatching the collaborators and contribute to a longer lasting sense of community pride. The proposed Coventry by Design Initiative would amongst other aspects be responsible for compiling and evolving a database of local, regional, national and international artists and craftsmakers from which contributions could potentially be invited.

Permanent major works could be located to enhance the legibility of the city centre, for example at key intersections of pedestrian paths to act as landmarks to orientate and guide people around the city centre or along the canal further complementing existing work. These works could have a vertical or horizontal emphasis such as mosaic paving features or series of light beacons/towers. Together with temporary installations these works could form a sculpture/arts trail which could be promoted as a visitor attraction. A leaflet could be produced to give more detailed information about individual pieces.

Temporary artworks during a building programme can enliven the building site, and involve students and local people in the changes. In addition performance works such as music, drama, dance or film can be commissioned to punctuate certain stages of development or to commemorate important dates, occasions or people. Given the scale of new development over the next three to five years in the city centre there would seem to be scope for a range of temporary creative projects including the integration of art works onto building/site hoardings to improve visual appearance, create landmark features, provide opportunities to promote the city centre improvement programme and generally animate the street scene. In many cities whole scaffolding

structures have been used to support large format commercial advertising or an image of the building being worked on for example.

An artist in residence scheme linked to the implementation of one or more of the proposed major projects should be considered. This could be linked to an educational programme involving local schools. Recent research has shown that the involvement of local people in decisions about artistic work and actual participation in its making are factors which are likely to result in a more successful end result. The work is more likely to generate a sense of civic pride and respect for the art created. This sense of ownership also tends to reduce vandalism.

The integration of artistic contributions to the realisation of improvements to city centre spaces and along civic spines and community routes is a key objective. Where development opportunities arise fronting main pedestrian routes and city spaces the council should encourage the provision of artistic work through developers contributions. In seeking contributions to enliven and enrich the design of public spaces and buildings the council should be guided by the Public Art Strategy, recently produced by the Public Arts Commissions Agency (PACA).

It is recommended that the city council prepare a public art design guide focusing on the potential for public art in the city, encouraging developer contributions and giving advice on how public art can be commissioned utilising the skills of the Coventry by Design Initiative, the councils arts development officer and regional arts organisations.

5.5.6 Water Features

Water has many qualities which naturally attract people; it can soothe and relax, provide visual stimulus of colour and light and the sound of moving/falling water can create its own dynamic and sense of place. There is considerable scope for introducing sculptural water features of various scales in the city centre to enliven pedestrian spaces, act as landmark features, provide visual interest and define spaces. Many of the water features being constructed or restored around the country are more in the nature of public art. Sculptors or other artists are creating place specific unique designs using water as a medium of expression, creating special kinds of atmosphere and many seek to be interactive.

Water features strongly in some of the most recent and nationally acclaimed public space schemes. The centre piece of the recently reconstructed Victoria Square in Birmingham is 'the river' designed by the

sculptor Dhruva Mistry. The piece takes the form of a cascade which drops through a series of pools from a sandstone shell containing the bronze figure of a woman. Water springs from her outstretched hands. The people of the city appear to have taken her to heart and refer to her as the 'flooie in the jacuzzi' perhaps part of the reason why incidences of vandalism are low.

The water feature attracts people throughout the day and into the evening as it is lit up at night. People are drawn to the space and visitors, office workers and shoppers sit and gaze at the cascades and jets of water. As part of a wider arts strategy, public space improvement programme and major new developments, Victoria Square has radically improved people's image and perception of central Birmingham, in the minds of visitors and residents alike, and set new standards in the design of the public realm. Such improvements have also seen a new flourishing of civic pride and confidence. There is considerable scope for the integration of water features into Coventry city centre spaces including Broadgate and Station Square.

What is clear is that the design of water features needs to respond to the context in which they are located rather than being 'parachuted in' and should be robust with minimum maintenance requirements. Regular cleaning is essential and needs to go hand in hand with regular surveillance and improved lighting to discourage vandalism. For Local Authorities maintenance costs are an important factor. Regrettably budgets for statues, monuments and water features are often early casualties of corporate financial cuts. However, as integrated elements of public space design water features can make a valuable contribution to place making. Water features could be procured by a number of different routes including competitions involving artists and crafts people. In all cases their design needs to be integrated into the wider space design process at the earliest stage possible.

5.6 The Ringway

The Ringway is a major transport corridor and its design and physical appearance reflects both a particular response to urban transportation and planning from the 1960s and the car manufacturing heritage of a proud and forward-looking city. It forms a major element in the city structure, but its combined elevated, at grade and in cut sections and nine junctions now present a vehicle dominated, harsh and grey concrete image.

The poor image it projects has a detrimental impact upon the image and perception of the city centre for both visitors and local people alike. This mega-structure acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement between the attractions and employment uses of the city centre and surrounding residential areas. As a consequence, pedestrians are funnelled into oppressive underpasses, across exposed bridges, or highly unattractive non-signalised crossing points where vehicles clearly have priority.

Consultation as part of this study has revealed the widely-held opinion that the Ringway works very efficiently almost all of the time. However, the concern has been expressed that this may be to the detriment of the city centre in that the Ringway is regarded as part of the preferred route for longer-distance trips from one side of the city to the other, and for which elements of the strategic road network (i.e. the A45 and A46) would be more appropriate in terms of the highway hierarchy.

In addition to the potential environment, non-motorised movement, and image benefits that can easily be envisaged were the dominance of the Ringway to be addressed, it is believed that such a course of action could also deliver significant economic, regeneration and general development opportunities. It is desirable that any 'extraneous' traffic currently using the Ringway should be encouraged to use more appropriate parts of the network. If it is also feasible to divert this traffic, the opportunity to release the numerous potential benefits of downgrading parts of the Ringway would present itself.

The northern section of the Ringway, between Junction 3 to the east and Junction 9 to the west, is both easier to downgrade in engineering terms (the lowering of elevated sections as opposed to the raising of highway in cut) and runs through an area of much greater development potential than the southern section. It is felt that it is more likely, therefore, that the economic benefits of downgrading the northern section could meet the costs.

Before proceeding further, however, it is essential to emphasise that the identification of the type of potential benefits which would accrue from downgrading the Ringway, and of the possible costs associated with such a project, is brought forward here as merely the first step in what would require to be a very substantial process. In essence, the general idea and a potentially feasible way in which it could be brought to fruition, is simply being presented for consideration.

If this package is regarded as attractive in principle, the next stage of the process would be a traffic analysis designed to inform decisions as to whether or not downgrading can be accommodated. Concerning such decisions, it is strongly recommended that the City Council takes for itself the pivotal role and does not, as has so often been the case throughout Britain over recent decades, subordinate its desires for a better city to the 'god' of traffic demand and growth predictions. The transport agenda is changing and being on its cutting edge means to be prepared to put the imperative for a viable and sustainable future first and the often abstract and clearly flexible notions of traffic demand second.

5.6.1 Northern Ringway

An incremental approach to downgrading the northern section of the Ringway and its replacement by an at-grade urban boulevard is proposed, based upon the concept drawings shown below which illustrate a potential four increment approach, Figs 9-13.

1. Signalisation of Junction 1 together with improvements to all approach roads, especially lower Foleshill Road. This would also open up greater opportunities for direct access to the city centre from Junction 1 via Tower Street. It is clearly desirable that the enormous potential of Junction 1 to act as a major city gateway for people arriving from the north (including the M6) is released.
2. Boulevarding of the Ringway westwards from Junction 1 to Junction 9.
3. The demolition of Junction 2 and the boulevarding of the Ringway to the east of Junction 1 up to junction 3. The demolition of the majority of the existing Junction 3 structure, to be replaced by new ramps leading to Junction 4 and appropriate new at-grade junctions.
4. The possible future extension of boulevarding west from Junction 9 as far as Junction 7.

The creation of the boulevard would have a number of major benefits for the city centre, not least removing a divisive and ugly structure which for many people both residents and visitors alike personifies Coventry's drab and poor quality car dominated image.

Benefits include :

- Acting as a catalyst for new development in inner area zones of change;
- The higher density redevelopment of existing low value sites;
- Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities including at-grade crossings and segregated cycle paths;
- Improved pedestrian linkages from surrounding residential areas to the city centre;
- Opportunities for improved public transport provision;
- Opportunities to promote mixed use development in particular the introduction of residential development in zones of change;
- High levels of vehicular access to frontage sites and integrated on-street car parking;
- The introduction of a green structuring framework of tree planting significantly enhancing the appearance of the boulevard and softening the impact of adjacent development;
- Opportunities for coherent frontage development; and,
- Could unlock the full potential of development sites either side of the boulevard and the co-ordinated promotion of positive change in the hinterland of the boulevard.

The relationship of new development to an at-grade boulevard can be very positive providing conditions in which the achievement of urban design objectives are more straightforward. The width of boulevard suggests buildings of up to six storeys rising to eight a corners fronting junctions. Achieving the appropriate scale of development along its length will determine to a large degree how successful the boulevard will be. Frontage development will also need to be continuous with breaks in the building line formed by junctions, pedestrian routes/cycle paths and public spaces.

Drawing on the inspiration of the boulevard model in other European cities and the strategy developed to break the concrete collar in Birmingham, the vision of breaking the ring needs to be further evolved. The benefits to the city in terms of potential economic growth that could be sustained into the next century, the ability to introduce a broader mix of uses to improve the image and perception of Coventry City Centre making it a more attractive place to live, work and invest in are such as to suggest further feasibility study.



Figure 9



Figure 10

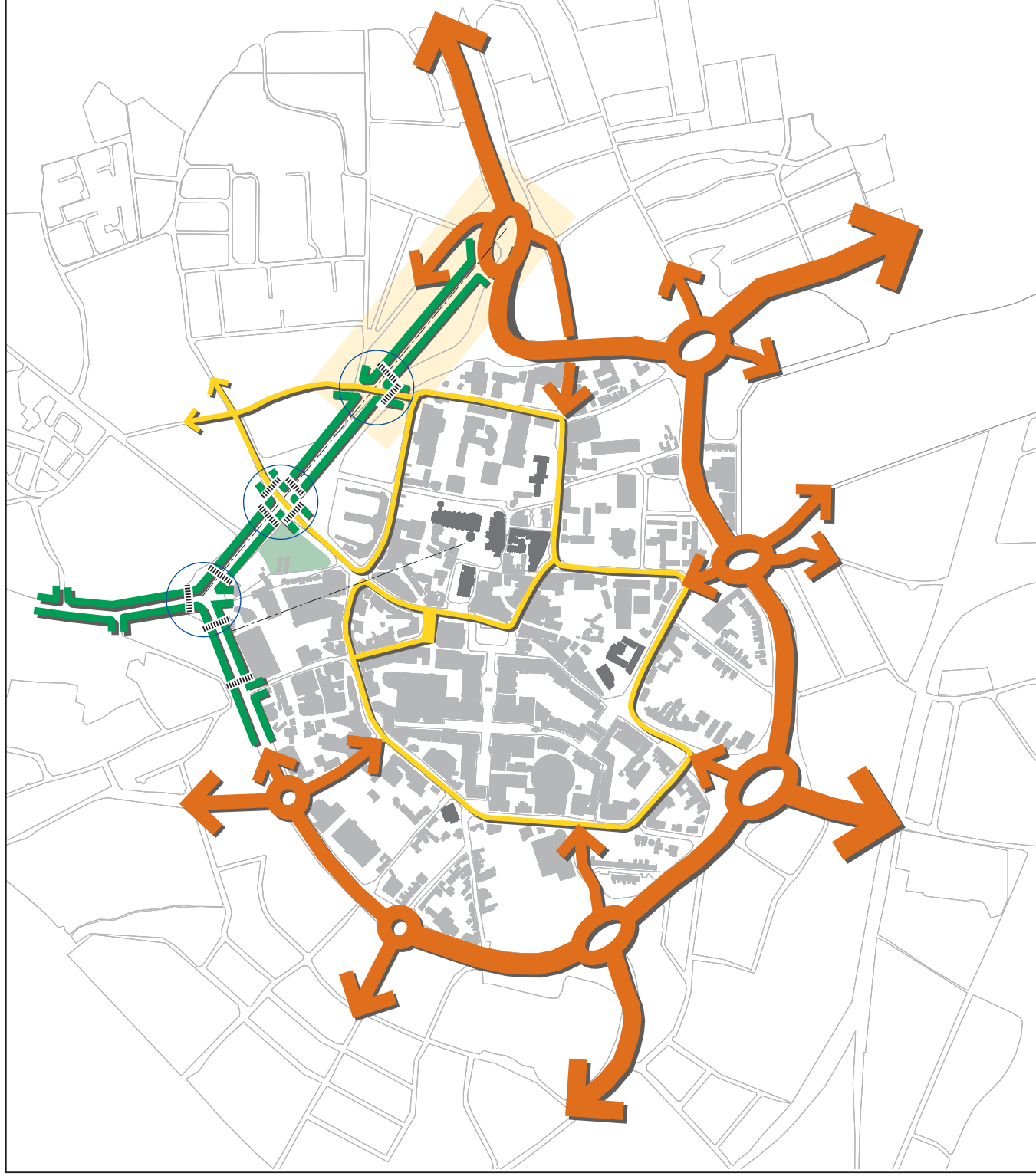


Figure 11

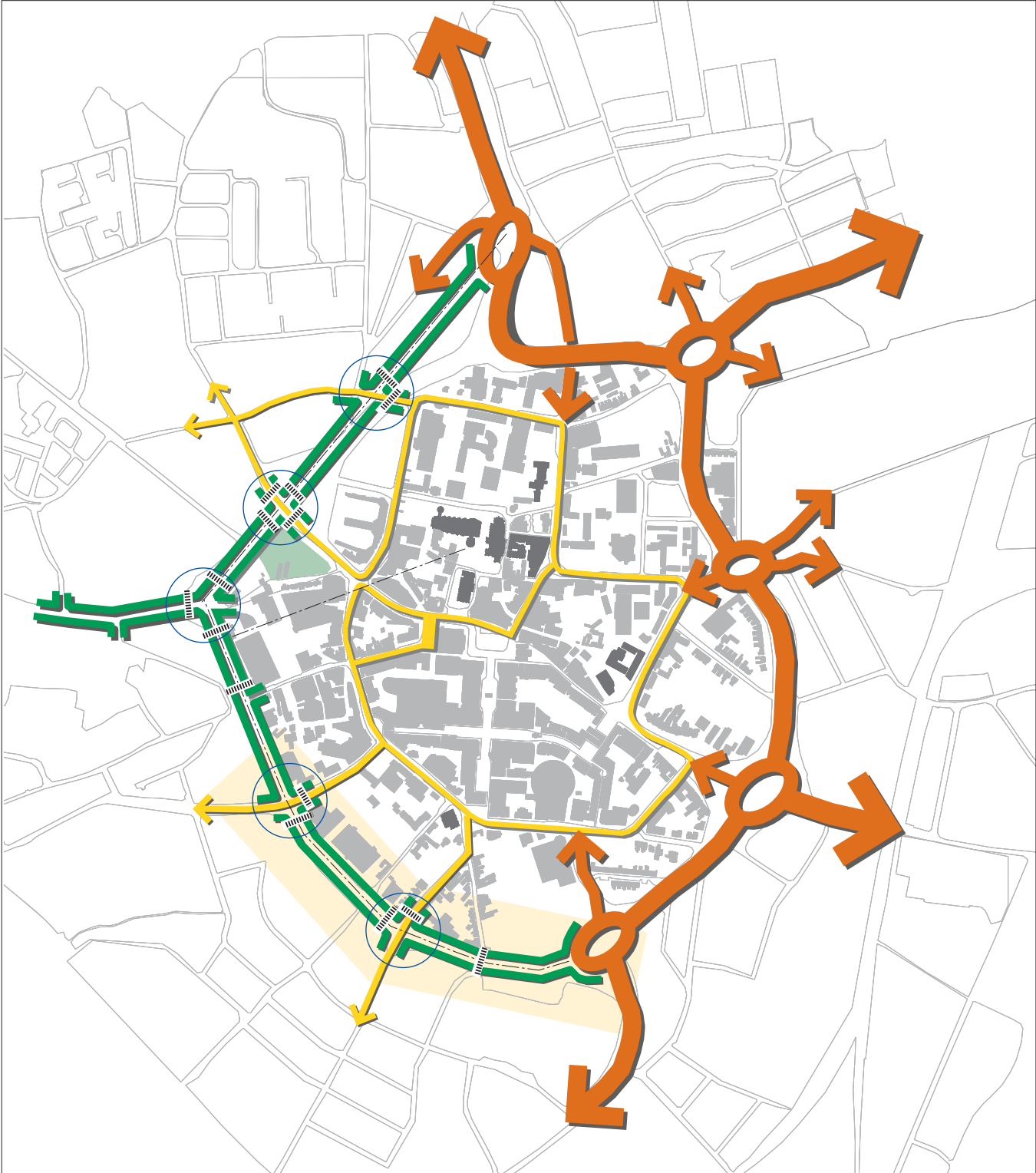


Figure 12

The magnitude of the change envisaged demands a considered partnership approach involving the City Council, land owners, English Partnerships, local communities and other key stakeholders. Initial estimates put a cost on the engineering measures required to achieve stages 1, 2 and 3 at between £10 million and £15 million. This applies to the scheme described in the drawing 'Northern Ringway Design Concept'.

The vision is a bold one and its realisation perhaps longer term. However, the initial steps in terms of considering its feasibility have been taken. It should be noted that the Highbury Initiative in Birmingham first raised the issue of breaking the concrete collar in 1989. It is only in the last 2 years that the first phase of the project introducing a road at grade and improving pedestrian crossings have been implemented. Coventry has a reputation for innovation and design and the City Council has outlined its vision for the city in the Unitary Development Plan Review. The incremental removal of the northern Ringway would be a major contribution to achieving this.

5.6.2 Southern Ringway Strategy

As has been mentioned, the nature of and development opportunities around the southern section of the Ringway do not afford the same potential for future downgrading as in the north. For this reason, and bearing in mind also the long timescale associated with even the most easily foreseeable elements of change to the Ringway, the approach to bringing about improvements on the southern section has been one of identifying specific local measures designed to make an important contribution to increasing the ease of movement across the Ringway.

The existing at-grade pedestrian crossings, footbridges, and subways are generally highly unattractive and greatly discouraging of walking between the city centre and the residential areas immediately adjacent to it. In locations where there is no practical alternative to the existing basic crossing method, there may nevertheless be scope for improving that existing facility. In other locations, the opportunity to replace the existing facility with a new one may present itself. The key has been to treat each situation on its own merits.

The details of each identified opportunity for improvement are contained within the City Centre Access Strategy. What is presented below are four 'demonstration projects' which encompass the full range of crossing facilities and which are recommended for prioritisation.

A.

Junction 6/Railway Station. Replacement of the existing subway under the southern section of the Junction 6 roundabout between Eaton Road and the footbridge over the main Ringway carriageway by an at-grade signal-controlled crossing. The City Council has previously satisfied itself that a two-stage signalised pedestrian crossing facility at the intersection of Warwick Road (south) with the Junction 6 roundabout is feasible.

However, what is proposed here is a single-stage crossing directly on the main desire-line (and direct line of sight) between Eaton Road and the footbridge. (This footbridge is actually at grade for the pedestrian, because the Ringway carriageway is in cut at that point.) It is felt that were pedestrians required to divert from this line in order use a two-stage facility at the top of Warwick Road (south), this latter facility would neither prove sufficiently attractive nor represent a great enough improvement in pedestrian crossing facilities to justify the necessary expenditure.

Examination of the scheme originally investigated by the Council suggests that, other than in respect of the size of the queuing reservoir downstream of the stop-line for the pedestrian crossing(s), the impact of this newly-proposed measure on traffic flows should be almost identical to that of the

B.

Hill Street/Junction 8. At present, the pedestrian crossing facility here is a most unattractive subway which requires people to make two major dog-leg diversions from their desire line. The discouragement to walking is exacerbated by the fact that, on walking down upper Hill Street, the pedestrian can clearly see lower Hill Street ahead but knows (or will find out) that the route between the two is far from direct.

The proposal is to make the walk route as direct as it can be by, in effect, reconnecting the two severed parts of Hill Street. This could be done by the construction of a foot/cycle 'landbridge'. Using the local topography to best advantage, the northern end of this bridge could be no further up upper Hill Street than the point at which pedestrians presently have to turn off down to the subway. Depending on the exact location of this north end, there would be little or no gradient necessary to allow the bridge to span the Ringway at the required clearance height. On the south side, there

would be a choice between implementing fairly standard switch-back ramps to bring the structure to grade as soon as possible, or extending the bridge in a direct line down Hill Street, using a gentle gradient to bring the structure to ground level much further down the street.

Such a structure should be attractive to those with impaired mobility and to cyclists, although, as elsewhere, the effective segregation of pedestrians and cyclists should be ensured by design.

The key with this scheme, as with others, is to have a vision of an innovative, attractive and bold response to the given problems. The simple replacement of the existing subway with a more direct but otherwise standard footbridge structure would not justify the expenditure, even though it be much less than for the landbridge. Bringing about worthwhile change to the perceptions, value and hence use of the Ringway crossings, will require radical solutions. Limited improvements can be expected only to yield marginal benefits.

C.

Spon Street. Spon Street forms one of the four key radial civic spines defined in Coventry city centre, and is part of an east-west route of historic importance. However, the existing subway crossing under the Ringway is depressing indeed and precludes the street from performing its proper role of a major conduit for (pedestrian and cycle) traffic between the city centre and areas to the west.

With the Ringway in its present form, there is no practical alternative to the crossing at Spon Street being some form of underpass. Since the existing subway is at least directly on the desire line, a footbridge would offer few if any advantages. There is no opportunity to exploit the local topography as at Hill Street. What is more, it should be accepted that subways, especially those which do lie directly on desired routes of travel, can offer benefits such as the lack of interruption by vehicular traffic, at any time of any day, and protection from the weather.

Consequently it is proposed that the City Council launches a competition for what might be termed a "Subway Showcase" project. Consideration should be given to improving the perception of safety at the approaches to the subway. This may be done

through: lighting (of both subway and approach); maintenance of trees and shrubs; improving sight lines and; new surface treatments. The purpose of this would be to challenge the design and engineering communities to come up with the best possible solution to the Ringway crossing problems at this location. Solutions should accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring that the two flows are adequately segregated.

Again, this is a bold initiative, one which recognises the need radically to alter the *status quo*, but one which is nevertheless a practical and appropriate solution given the local circumstances.

D.

Junction 7/Moat Street Car Park. As part of the car park rationalisation plans brought forward by the City Centre Access Strategy, the potential to close the Moat Street Car Park within the junction roundabout has been identified. Given the very poor existing pedestrian crossing facilities at Junction 7, this opportunity could and should be exploited for the benefit of the many pedestrians using this area to travel between the city centre and nearby residential areas and other key locations such as the Technical College.

The existing facilities give pedestrians a choice between an uncontrolled at-grade crossing at the south end of the junction roundabout or a dual-subway route on the northern edge of the car park. The former often requires pedestrians to take their lives in their hands; while the latter is rather circuitous and particularly unattractive after dark.

Extinguishing the car park would allow its conversion to a simply-landscaped pocket-park. Access from the east could be facilitated by the existing wide car park access underpass, which could be greatly improved by lighting and painting. Links to the west could then be via the existing subway which would bring people out on the north side of Butts Road.

This solution does perpetuate the need to use subways. However, the introduction of the Leisure World development immediately to the east, the opportunity to link Croft Road to the existing parkland around the River Sherbourne remnant on Meadow Street, and the naturally high demand for pedestrian movement along this route

NORTHERN RINGWAY DESIGN CONCEPT

KEY

Potential Development sites

Potential Frontage Developments

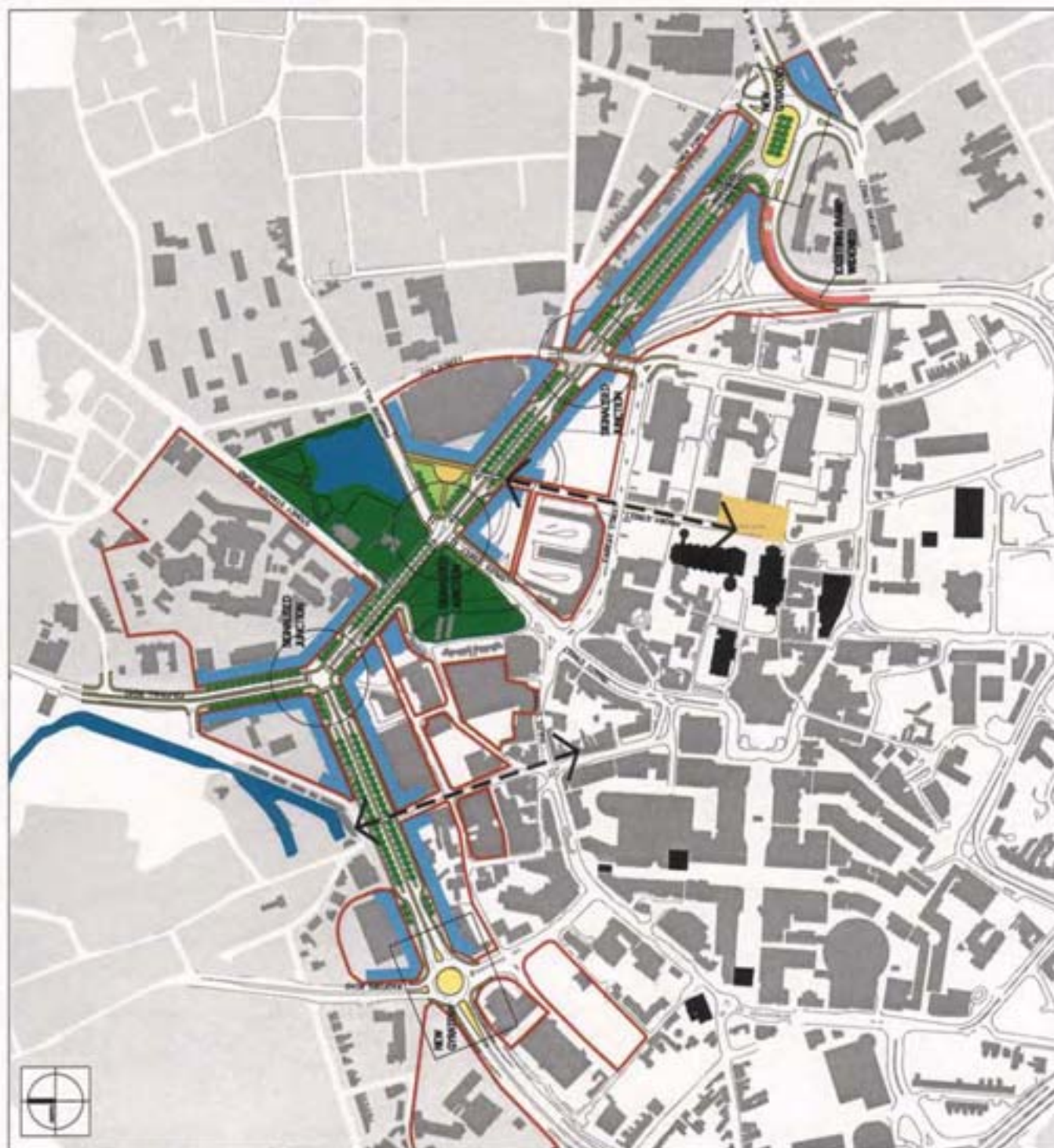


Figure 13

CITY CENTRE STRATEGY
CONCEPT STRUCTURE DIAGRAM:
HIERARCHY OF ROUTES AND SPACES



Figure 14

HIERARCHY OF ROUTES AND SPACES CIVIC SPINES

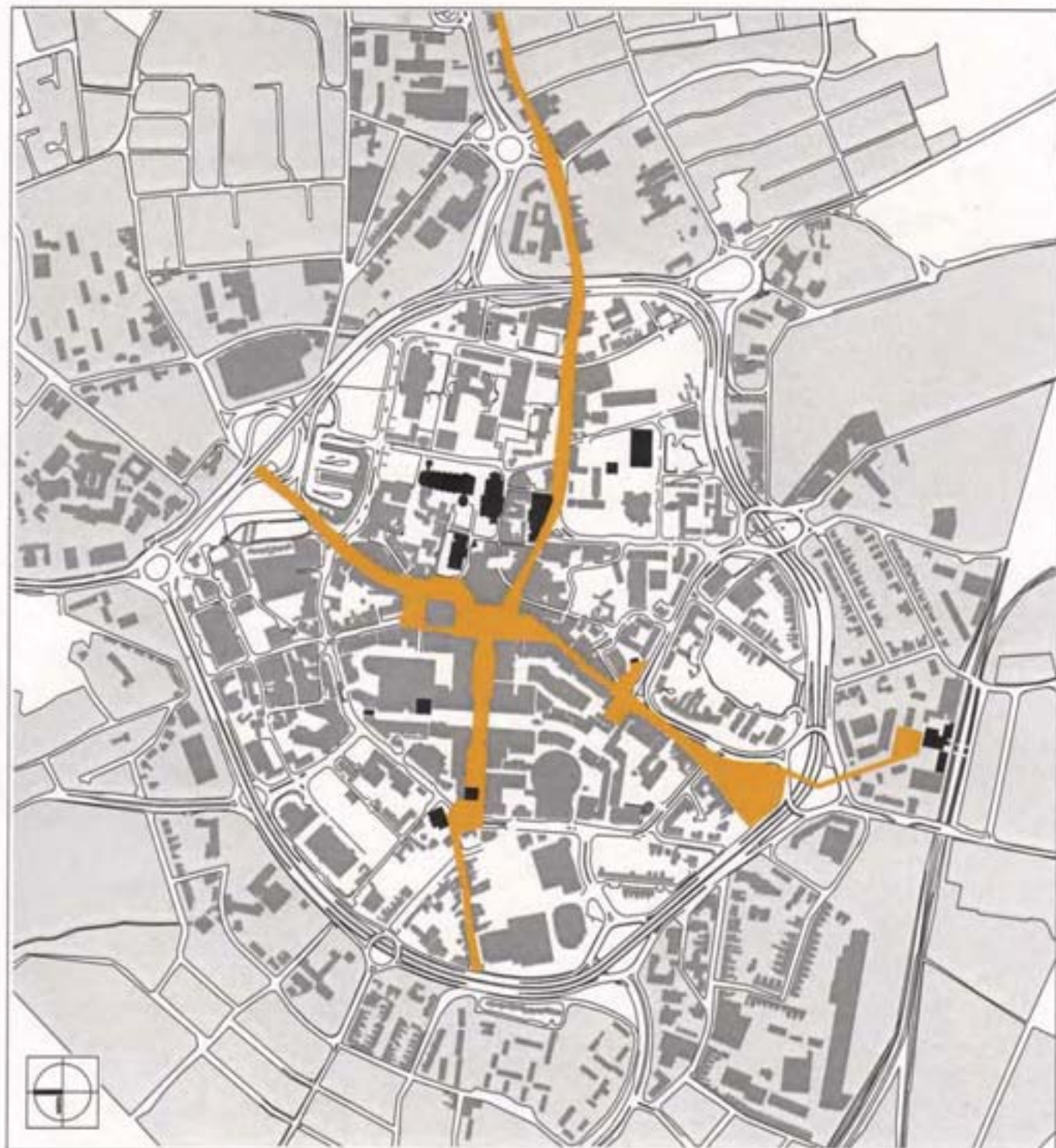
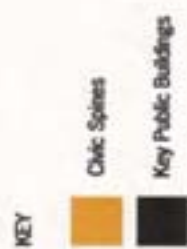


Figure 15

should create the conditions where the creation of a green link, albeit one reliant on (improved) subways, could be considered attractive.

At any rate, this proposal offers an innovative potential solution to a pedestrian crossing situation which should be regarded as intolerable. The accident record for pedestrians crossing at grade is not known, but could help to influence change in this location.

5.7 Evolving a hierarchy of routes and spaces

On the basis of the urban design analysis a hierarchy of routes and spaces has been developed. This hierarchy has been used to guide the evolution of the strategy and will underpin the further refinement of proposed design ideas and interventions, Figs 14-15.

The hierarchy of pedestrian routes is composed of two civic spines and a supporting network of community/visitor routes. The civic spines are aligned north-south, linking the railway station to Swanswell Pool, and east-west linking Spon Street to Far Gosford Street. The spines, which intersect at Broadgate, are routes on which the strategy seeks to reinforce or achieve civic design qualities. Spon Street is one of the most important historic streets in the city centre and forms the western section of the east-west spine. It is recommended that early consideration be given to streetscape improvements including paving, lighting, street furniture and signage and visitor interpretation. Ideally these improvements should coincide with those to the underpass crossing of the Ringway.

Community routes are those which strongly relate to existing pedestrian linkages which radiate from the city centre core areas across the Ringway to surrounding residential areas, and those which form the finer grain network within the city centre including those which attract visitors as well as local people within the precinct and Cathedral environs. Previous studies have highlighted the high levels of pedestrian movement along these routes.

The first level of the spaces hierarchy is made up of a single pivotal space located at the heart of the city centre - Broadgate. This space is currently under utilised as a public space but has significant potential for enhancement through remodelling including the rationalisation of bus and taxi access, the removal of the canopy, the creation of a large area of paved pedestrian space as an extension to the Precinct which could be

designed in such a way as to accommodate a range of activities including events and specialist markets, and the demolition of the ramp.

The second level is made of four hub spaces Bull Yard, the principle square of the Phoenix Initiative, the space formed at the junction of Spon Street and Corporation Street, currently dominated by a roundabout and bus gate and the space in front of the Council House including Little Park Street. These spaces are located at key nodes where the civic spines cross the inner circuit road. Each space is designed to act as an arrival and orientation space, served by public transport, offering a high level of information and guidance about what the city centre and its attractions have to offer. These spaces are characterised by landmark buildings and enclosing buildings of commensurate scale, higher quality design of paving surfaces, street furniture, public art, lighting and building lighting. They are also places with high levels of ground floor activity which positively interact with the space. In some instances the space will be a destination in its own right.

The third level is made up by a range of city centre spaces which form the remaining major elements of the hierarchy. These spaces are important contributors to the image and perception of the city by both visitors and residents alike and all have considerable potential for improvement. The potential for a new space, together with complimentary improvements within the cathedral environs, to improve the setting of the east front of the cathedral and create a better gateway into the university quarter is such as to be of national significance.

The following spaces and streets are identified for major environmental improvement schemes. Potential improvements are illustrated for each to show one way in which the space could be treated and how in principle surrounding building blocks should be sited. It is recommended that a design brief be prepared for public realm improvements and agreed as the basis of detailed design and implementation. Emphasis should be placed upon the use of multidisciplinary integrated design teams which include public art commissioning skills. It is understood that prioritisation of city centre projects will be the subject of internal discussion within the council. However, it is suggested that the initial stages of a three to five year programme include those projects focused on improvements to the civic spines and hub spaces.

1. Broadgate (including Ironmongers Row and High Street)
2. Bull Yard/ Shelton Square
3. Spon Street/Corporation Street
4. Council House Square/ Much Park Street
5. Greyfriars Green
6. Cathedral Square/Priory Street
7. Station Square and adjacent spaces
8. Belgrade Square/ Upper Well Street
9. Jordan Well/ Gosford Street
10. New Union Street
11. Upper Spon Street/Windsor Estate (see Figs 16, 18-29)

5.8 Inner Area Zones of Change

It is recommended that urban design frameworks be prepared for the following areas to create confidence in their future economic prospects, to manage change to unlock the full potential of each area and its contribution to the viability and vitality of the inner area, by establishing collaborative methods of working creating confidence in the areas future. Frameworks can also help realise action on the ground by providing a strategy for implementation. (Fig 17)

Zone 1. Lower Foleshill Road / northern Ringway regeneration area

Catalysts for change :

- incremental removal of the Ringway and replacement by an at grade tree lined boulevard, enabling frontage development, improved pedestrian linkages, significant potential development sites and the improvement of city centre gateways
- consolidation and potential expansion of the hospital
- the development of an arts and media centre on Upper Well Street
- The Phoenix Initiative

Objectives :

- to remove the detrimental visual and physical impact of the Ringway
- to create major opportunities for new mixed use development including housing, employment and leisure uses which will enable the economic growth of the city centre in the future
- reweaving the city centre core with the surrounding city structure creating improved pedestrian links to surrounding residential areas including at grade crossing facilities
- to facilitate university integration

Zone 2. Upper Spon Street / Windsor Street Estate

Catalysts for change :

- improving the pedestrian linkage between Spon Street and Spon End via Upper Spon Street
- potential extension of Ringway scheme

Objectives :

- in the short to medium term to significantly improve the subway crossing under the Ringway
- to improve the pedestrian environment through streetscape design measures including improved street furniture, lighting, tree planting and paving
- to introduce frontage development along the link as part of a comprehensive estate improvement masterplan which seeks to increase residential density, resolving poor definition of public and private spaces by providing greater enclosure through perimeter development and promoting improvements to the River Sherbourne corridor. Environmental improvements to this corridor could influence the remodelling of the central space at junction 7.

Zone 3. Butts Road / Queens Road

Catalysts for change:

- leisure world development
- potential in the long term to reconfigure junction as later phase of Ringway scheme
- creation of improved city centre gateway at junction 7
- the conversion of the former technical college building on Queens road to residential use

Objectives :

- to increase the scale (height, massing and density) of development along Butts road approaching the junction
- to establish a more continuous and harmonious frontage of new development that responds to the street providing visual interest and activity at ground floor reflecting its importance as a key pedestrian route
- to improve the pedestrian route across junction 7 and under the elevated sections of the Ringway

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

KEY

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Broadgate - Iron Mongers Row |
| 2 | Bull Yard / Shelton Square |
| 3 | Spoon Street / Corporation Street |
| 4 | Council House Square |
| 5 | Greyfriars Green |
| 6 | Cathedral Square |
| 7 | Station Square |
| 8 | Upper Well Street / Belgrade Square |
| 9 | Jordan Well / Gosford Street |
| 10 | New Union Street Gateway |
| A | PHOENIX INITIATIVE
Millennium Place |
| B | Priony Place / Priony Garden |
| C | Lady Herberts Garden |

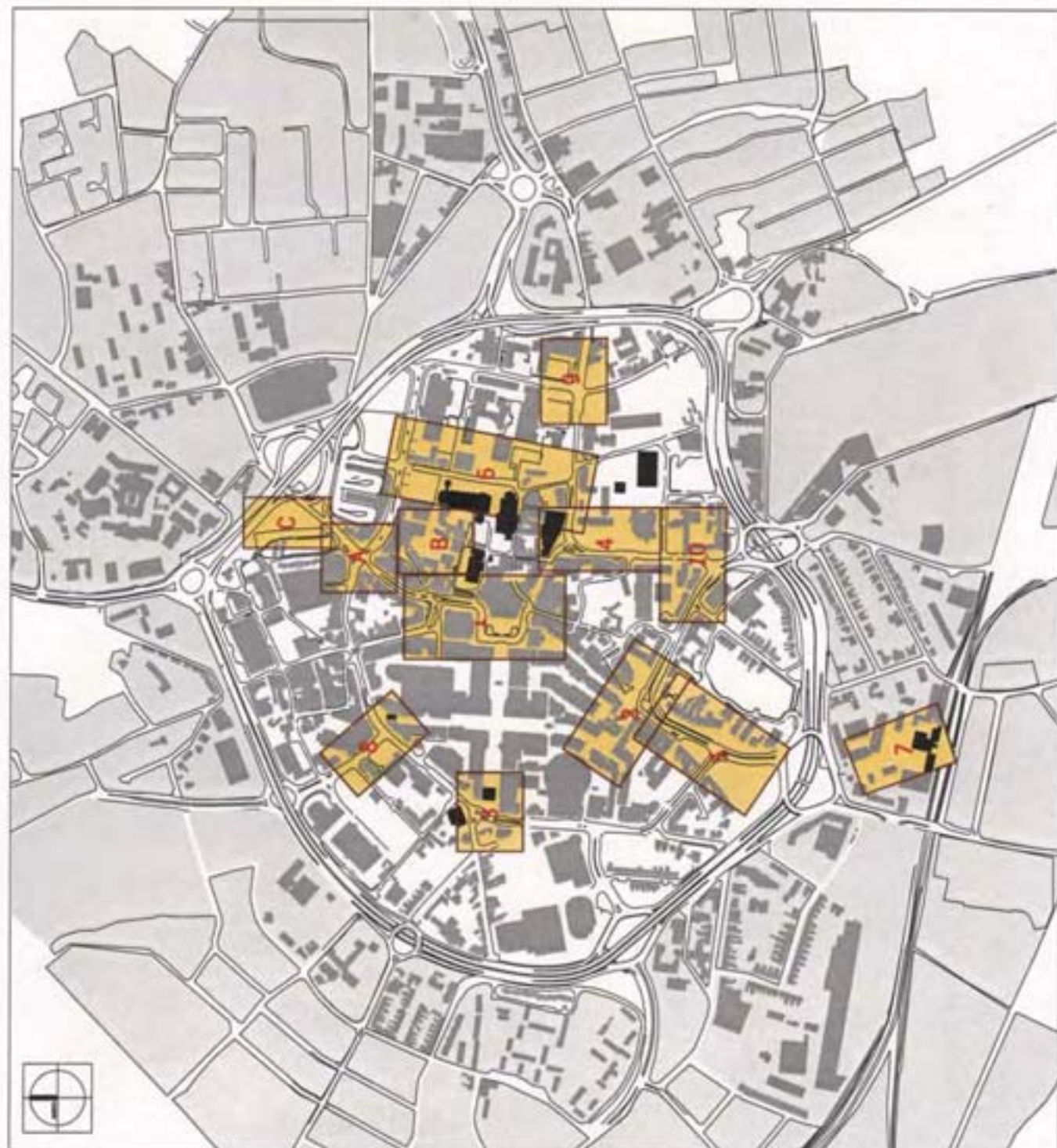


Figure 16

INNER AREA ZONES OF CHANGE

KEY

- Zone 1** Lower Foleshill / Northern Ringway
- Zone 2** Upper Spoon Street / Winsor Street Estate
- Zone 3** Butts Road / Queens Road
- Zone 4** Station Environs
- Zone 5** Parkside
- Zone 6** Coventry University Precinct / Eastern Ringway

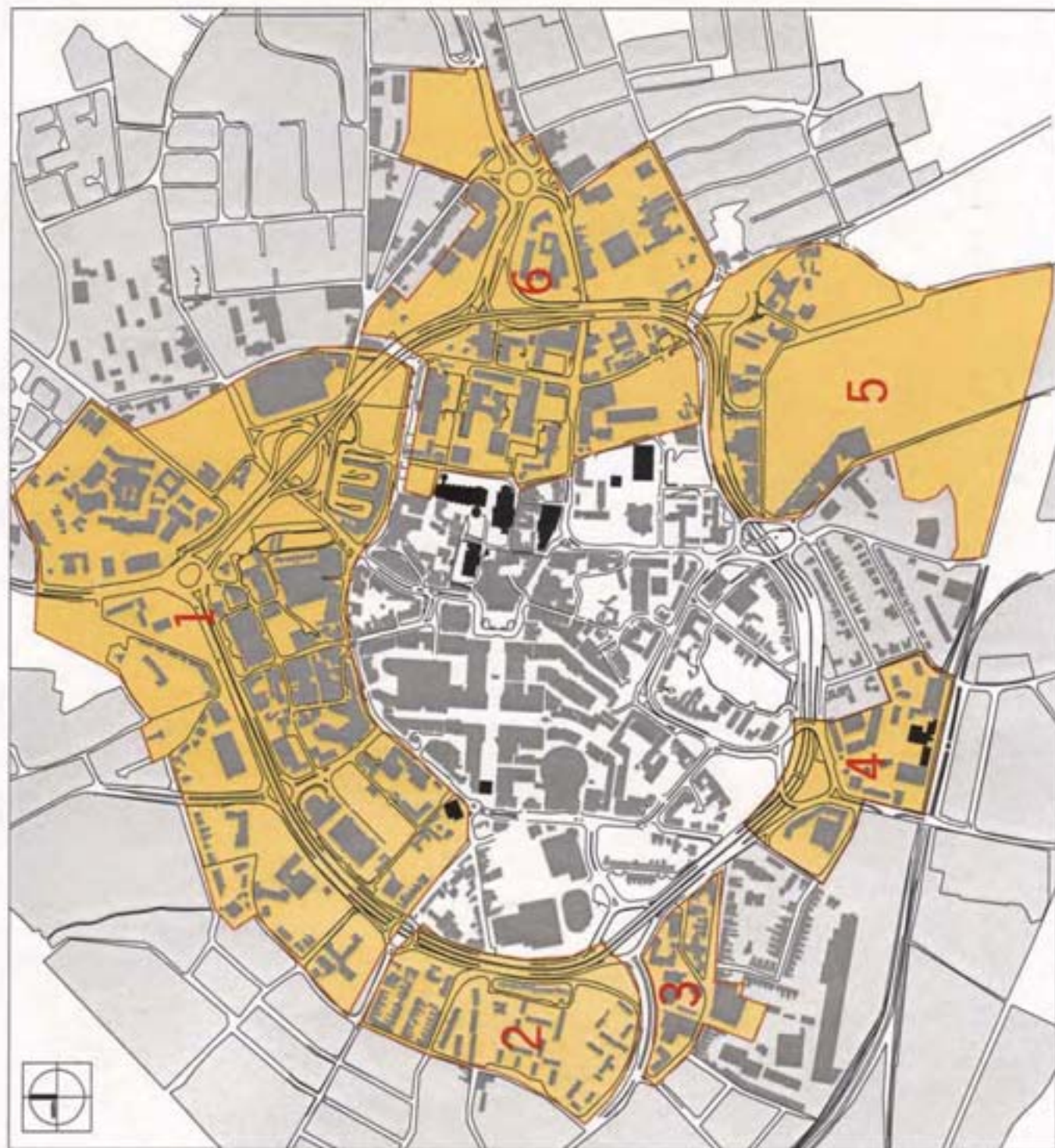


Figure 17

PROJECT 1 BROADGATE

KEY

- 1 New paved square
- 2 Reconfigured frontage
- 3 Groundfloor redevelopment
- 4 Bus only street
- 5 Bus stops
- 6 Reconfigured road junction / New paving, planting
- 7 Site redevelopment
- 8 Limited access road

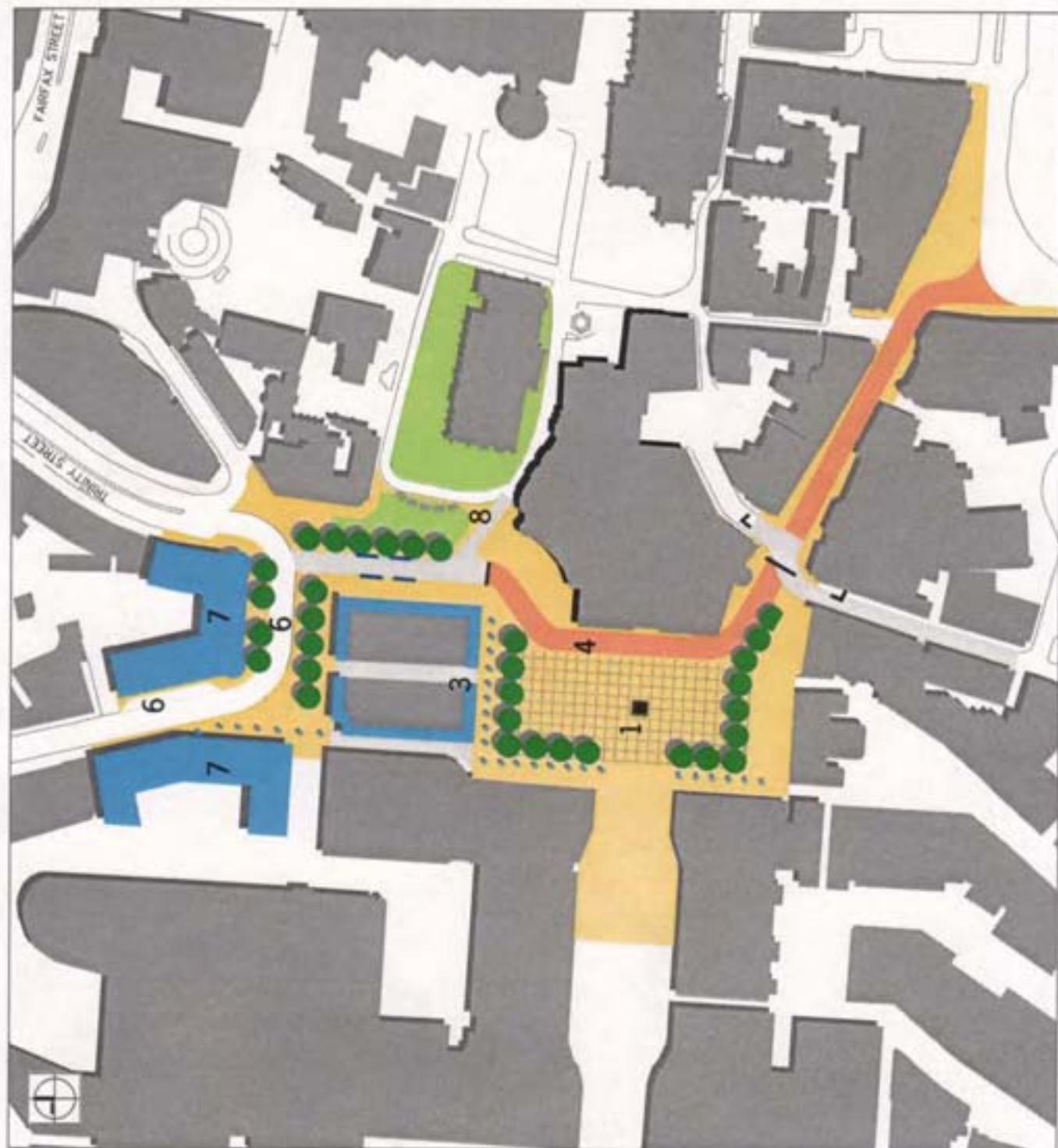
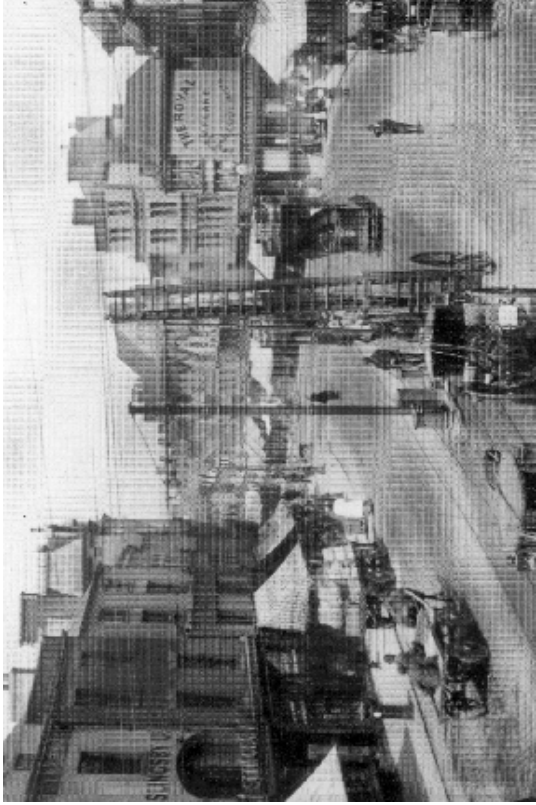


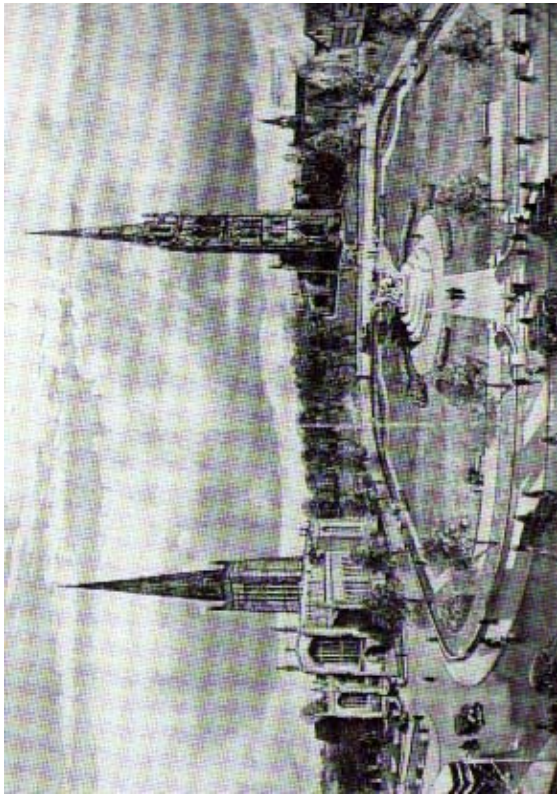
Figure 18



Broadgate 1889



Removal of the canopy is proposed



A vision for Broadgate 1939



The setting of Post War buildings can be greatly improved



Rationalisation of the bus and taxi access is allowed



Axial views are a core element of the central shopping area



Congestion creates a poor quality environment



Arcaded walkways should be retained and improved



Ironmonger Row has significant potential for improvement



High Street requires urgent attention as part of the Broadgate project

PROJECT 2 BULL YARD (PHASE 2) MARKET GATWAY

KEY

- 1 Demolish OOC buildings & replace with 4 / 6 storey buildings / residential over
- 2 Demolish existing buildings / New entrance to market
- 3 Retain access to carpark
- 4 Possible road realignment (see access study)

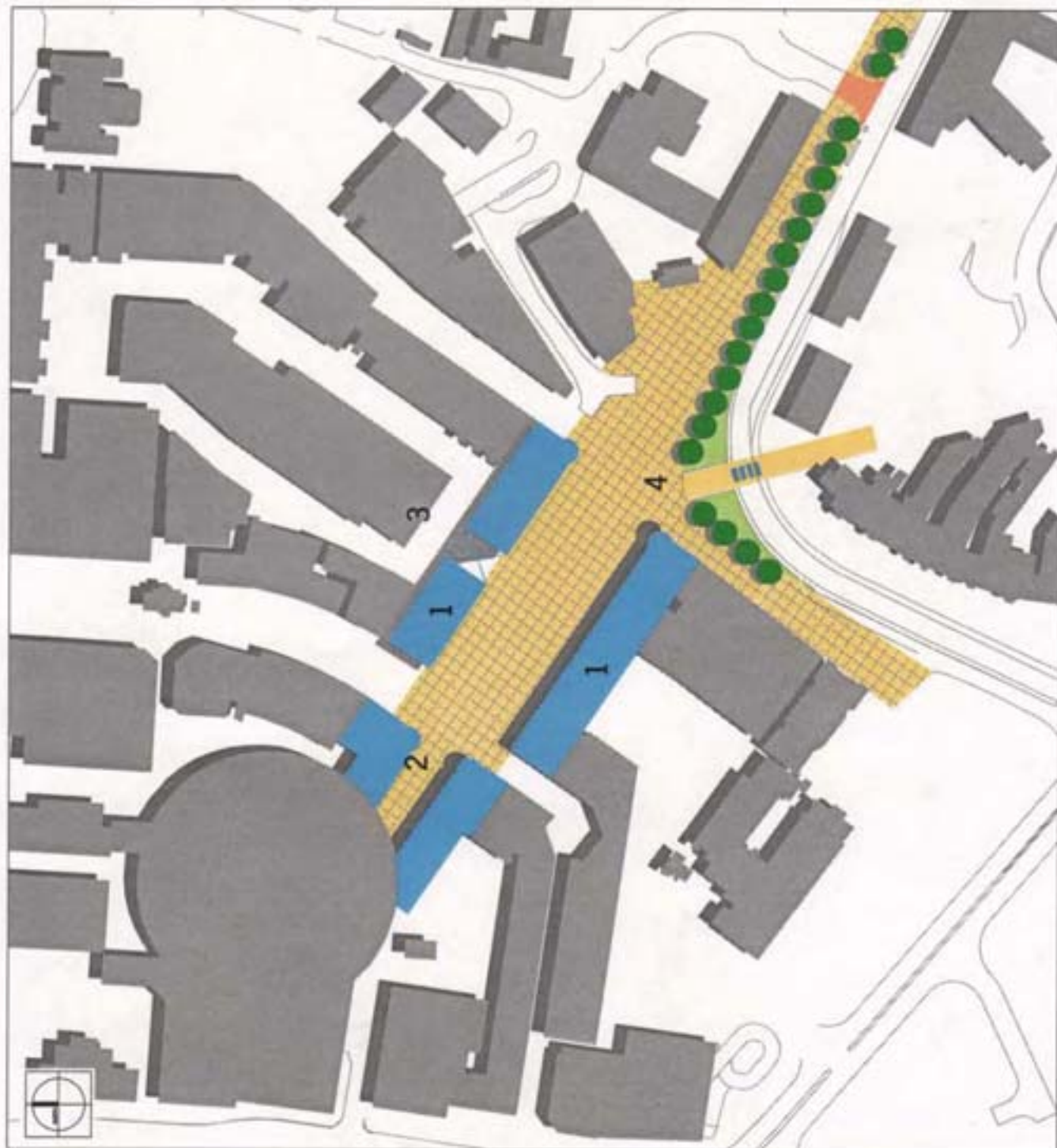


Figure 19

PROJECT 3 SPON STREET / CORPORATION STREET

KEY

- 1 Reconfigure Junction
- 2 Bus Facilities / Information
- 3 Corner Site Development
- 4 Housing Brief
- 5 Streetscape Improvements:
Paving, Lighting, Street Furniture,
Signage



Figure 20

PROJECT 4 COUNCIL HOUSE SQUARE / MUCH PARK STREET

KEY

- 1 New central landscaped square with small pavilion
- 2 Entrance canopy structure to raised concourse
- 3 Improved Pedestrian Links to Remodelled Sculpture Court
- 4 Improvements to High Street - paving, street furniture, lighting
Controlled / Limited Access Only

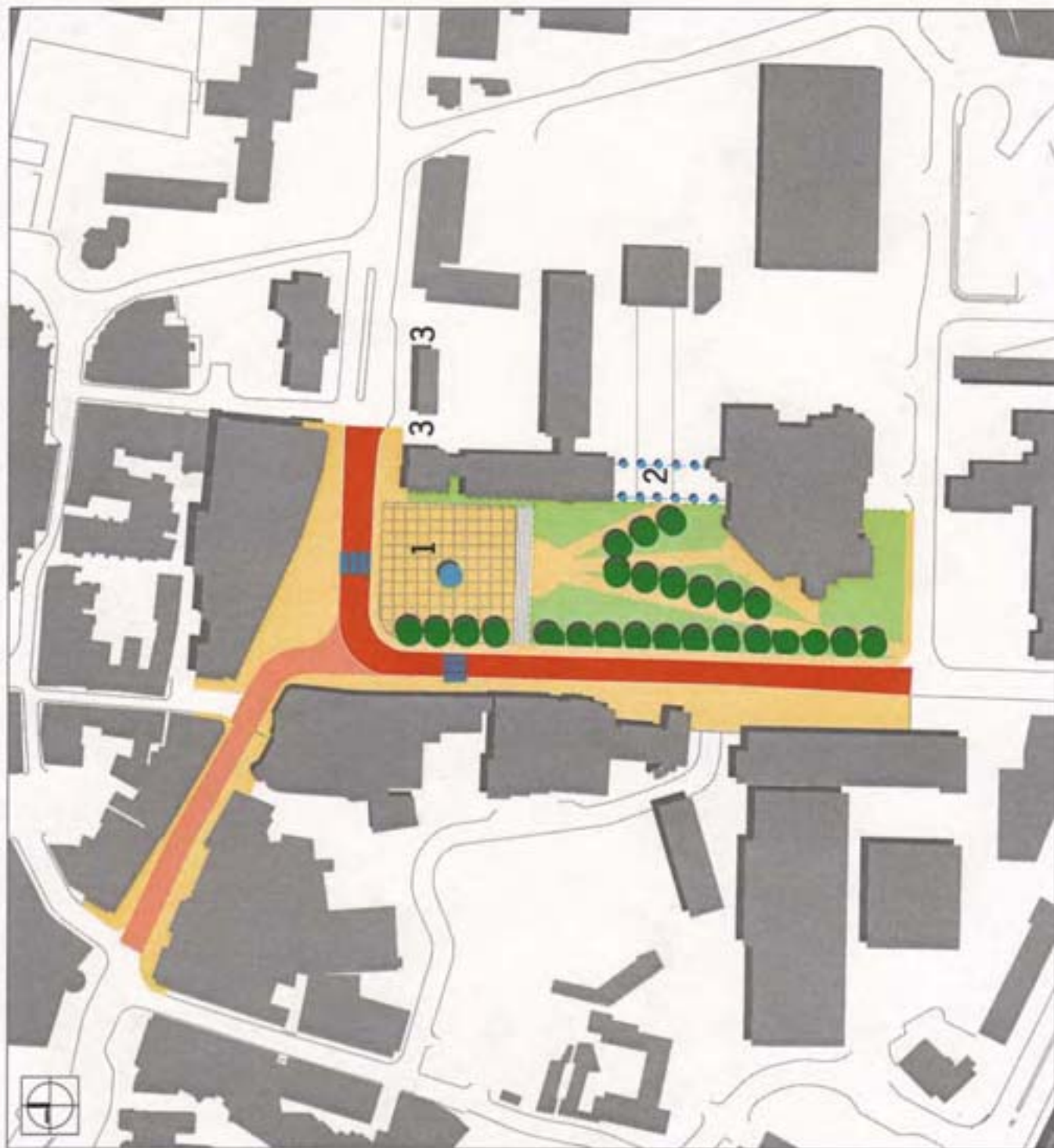


Figure 21



Removal of the existing junction is proposed



Recent tree planting could be integrated into the proposals



The setting of St. Michael's Church could be greatly enhanced

PROJECT 5 GREYFRIARS GREEN / STATION APPROACH

KEY

- 1 Subway replaced by at grade crossings
- 2 Path realigned - new tree planting / paving / street lighting
- 3 Environmental improvements under bridge - opportunity for arts / lighting project
- 4 Subway Improvements
- 5 Remodelled Space Opportunity for Water Feature and / or Retail Kiosk



Figure 22



The underpass link to the Green requires significant improvement



The existing bridge link should be improved

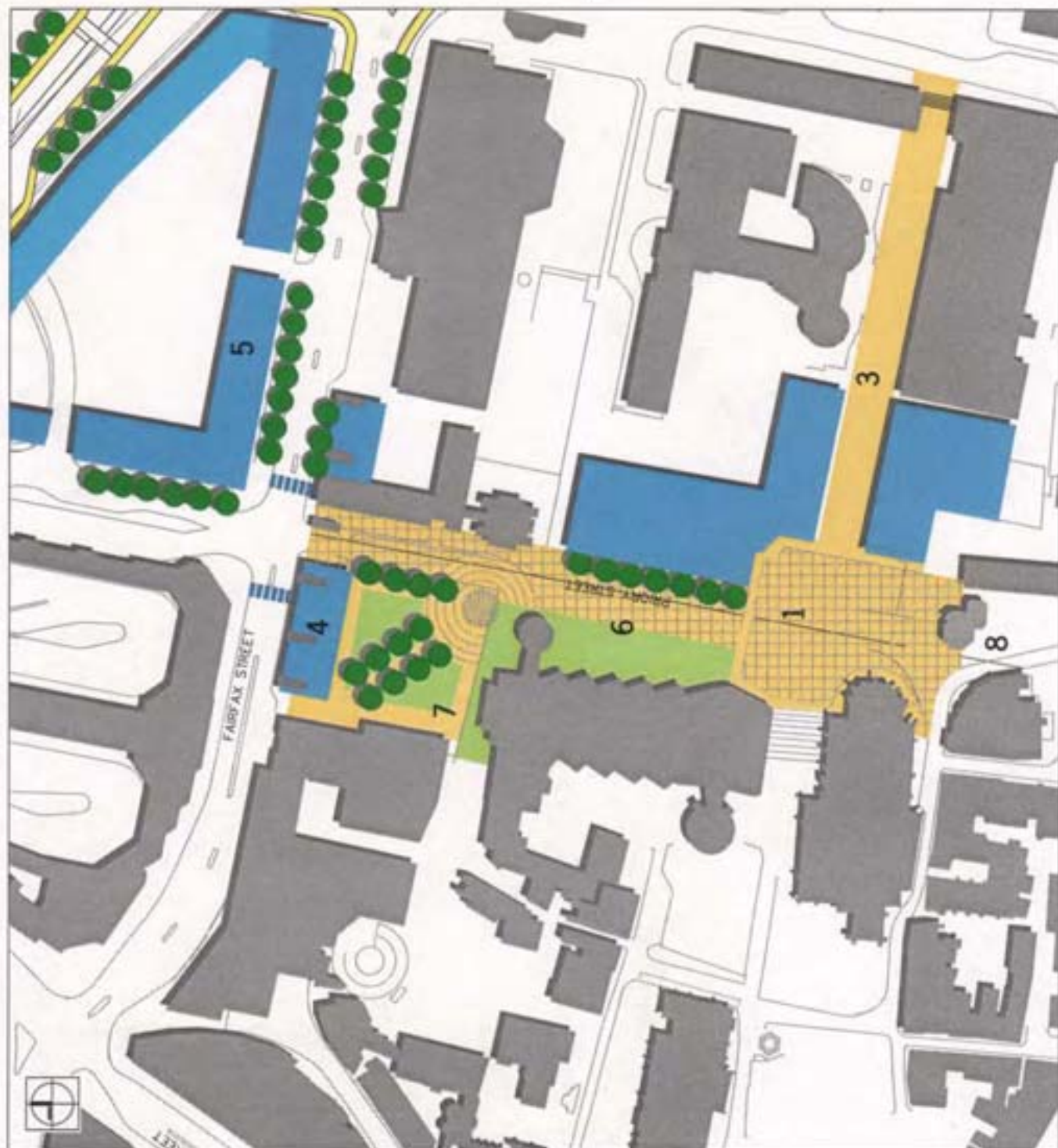


Some underpasses should be replaced by at-grade crossings



Environmental improvement will be beneficial to frontages

PROJECT 6 CATHEDRAL SQUARE PRIORITY STREET



KEY

- 1 New Cathedral Square
- 2 Potential for New University buildings to frame and enclose square
- 3 Improved pedestrian link
- 4 New building infill at ground level opportunity for restaurants / retail
- 5 Comprehensive site redevelopment
- 6 Grassed Areas and tree planting integrated into design
- 7 Existing Space Remodelled
- 8 Potential Relocation of TIC
- Potential Limited Access Vehicular Route

Figure 23



The space between the university and cathedral buildings could become one of national significance



View along Priory Street towards Fairfax Street



Existing university buildings create poor enclosure



The improvement proposals include the full length of Priory Street

PROJECT 7 STATION SQUARE / STATION APPROACH

KEY

- 1 New station square - opportunity for vertical arts / water feature
- 2 New forecourt for taxi / private vehicular drop-off
- 3 New commercial development
- 4 New station buildings- ground floor retail
- 5 Road realigned / taxi waiting / parking
- 6 Pedestrian crossing
- 7 Bus stops

Other potential development sites

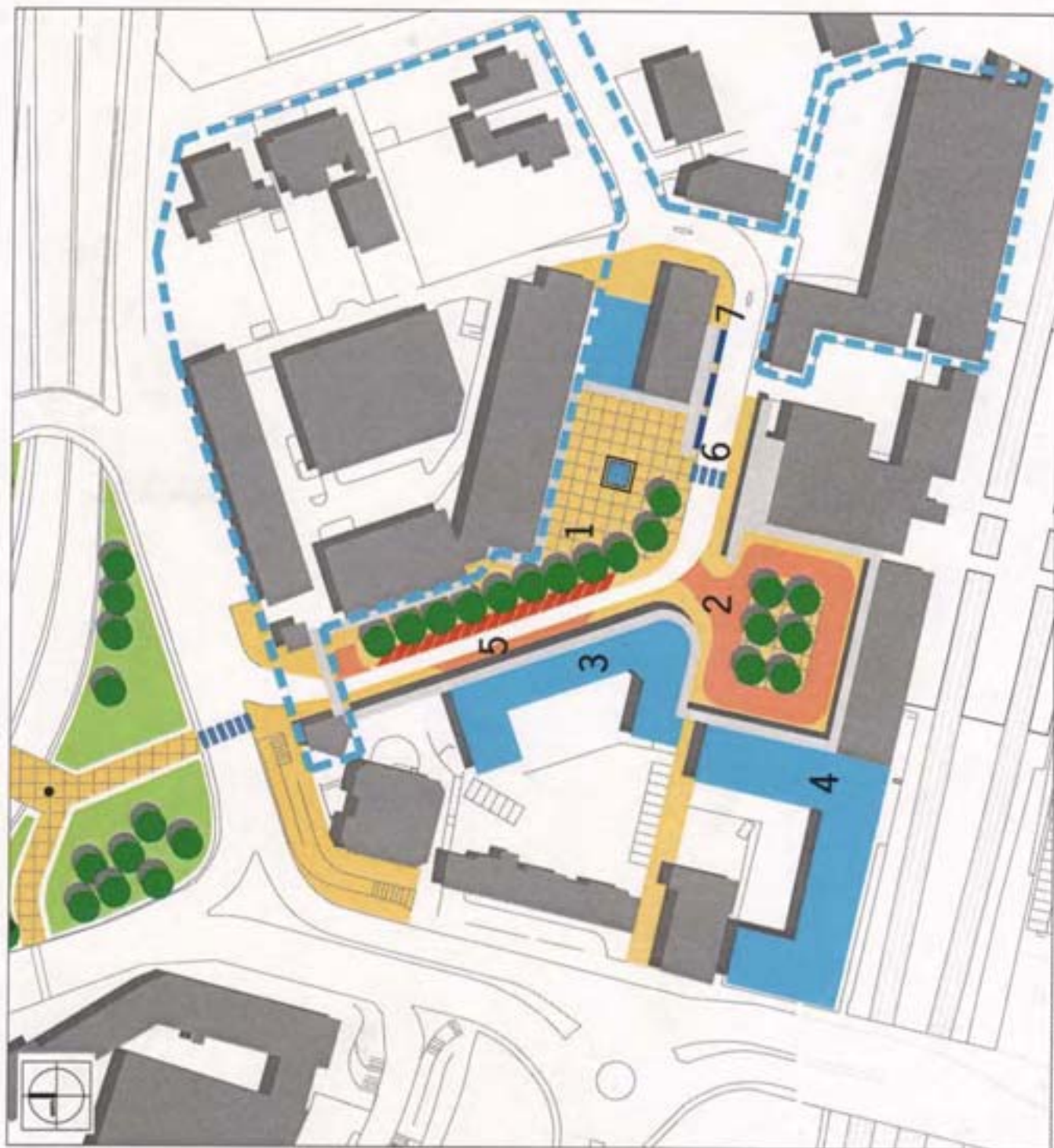


Figure 24



Rationalisation of existing taxi/car parking and drop-off is proposed



Opportunity exists to create a new public space with an improved sense of arrival



Improvements to the station approach pedestrian route are proposed



The detailed design should integrate artistic work to enrich the space

PROJECT 8 BELGRADE SQUARE / UPPER WELL STREET

KEY

- 1 New Arts / Cultural Centre
- 2 Enhancement of Belgrade Square
- 3 Creation of new entrance to The Precinct
- 4 Improvements to theatre frontage
- 5 Site Redevelopment



Figure 25



The theatre square needs to be better integrated



Major remodeling to the square and junction will reinforce gateway qualities

**PROJECT 10 JORDAN WELL /
GOSFORD STREET**

KEY

- 1 New paved space at ground level
- 2 New building opportunity
- 3 Frontage improvements
- 4 Street tree planting
- 5 Footway expansion

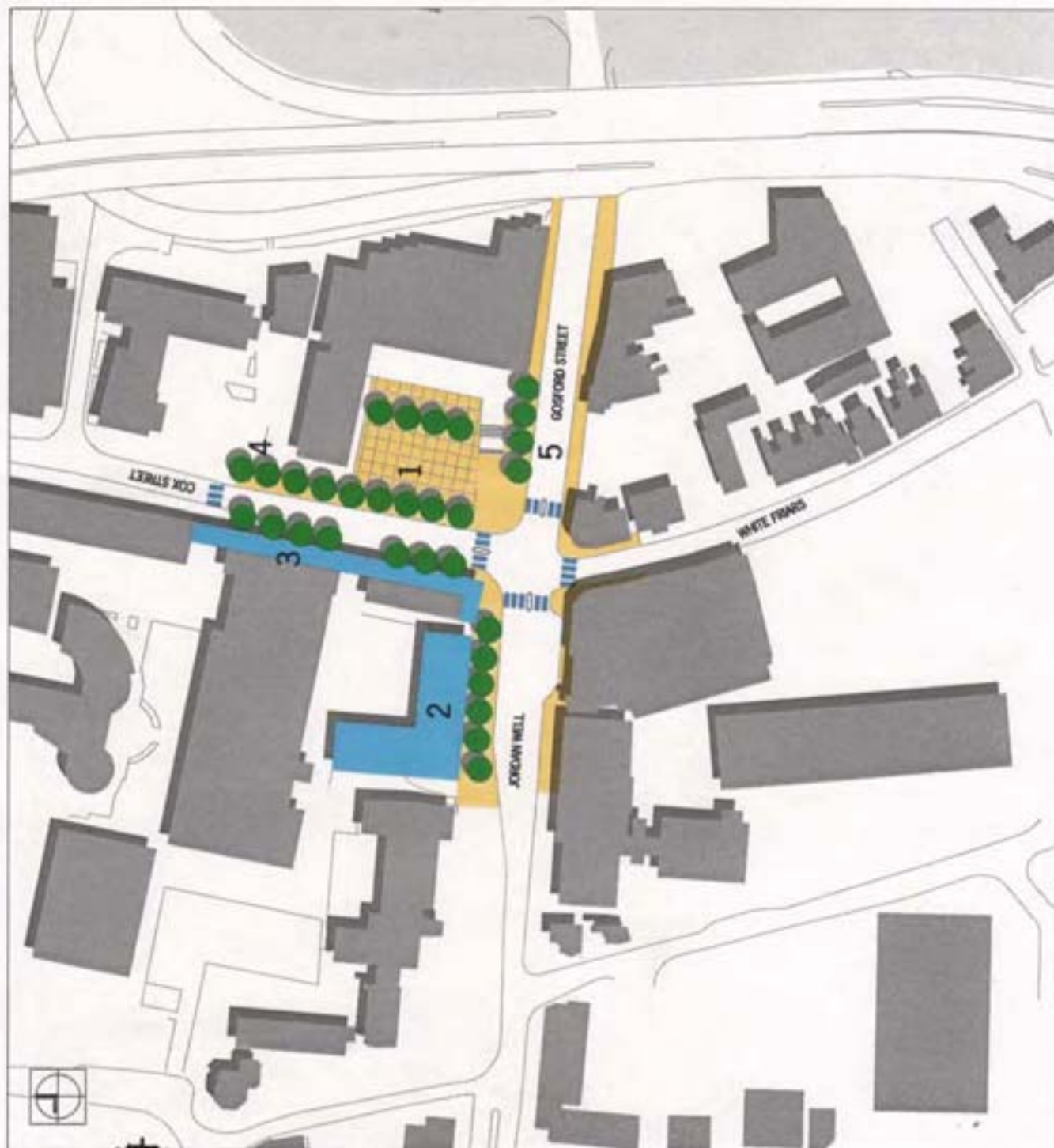


Figure 26



Improvements to pavements and the introduction of co-ordinated street furniture is proposed



Cox Street is a drab and uninviting environment

PROJECT 10 NEW UNION STREET

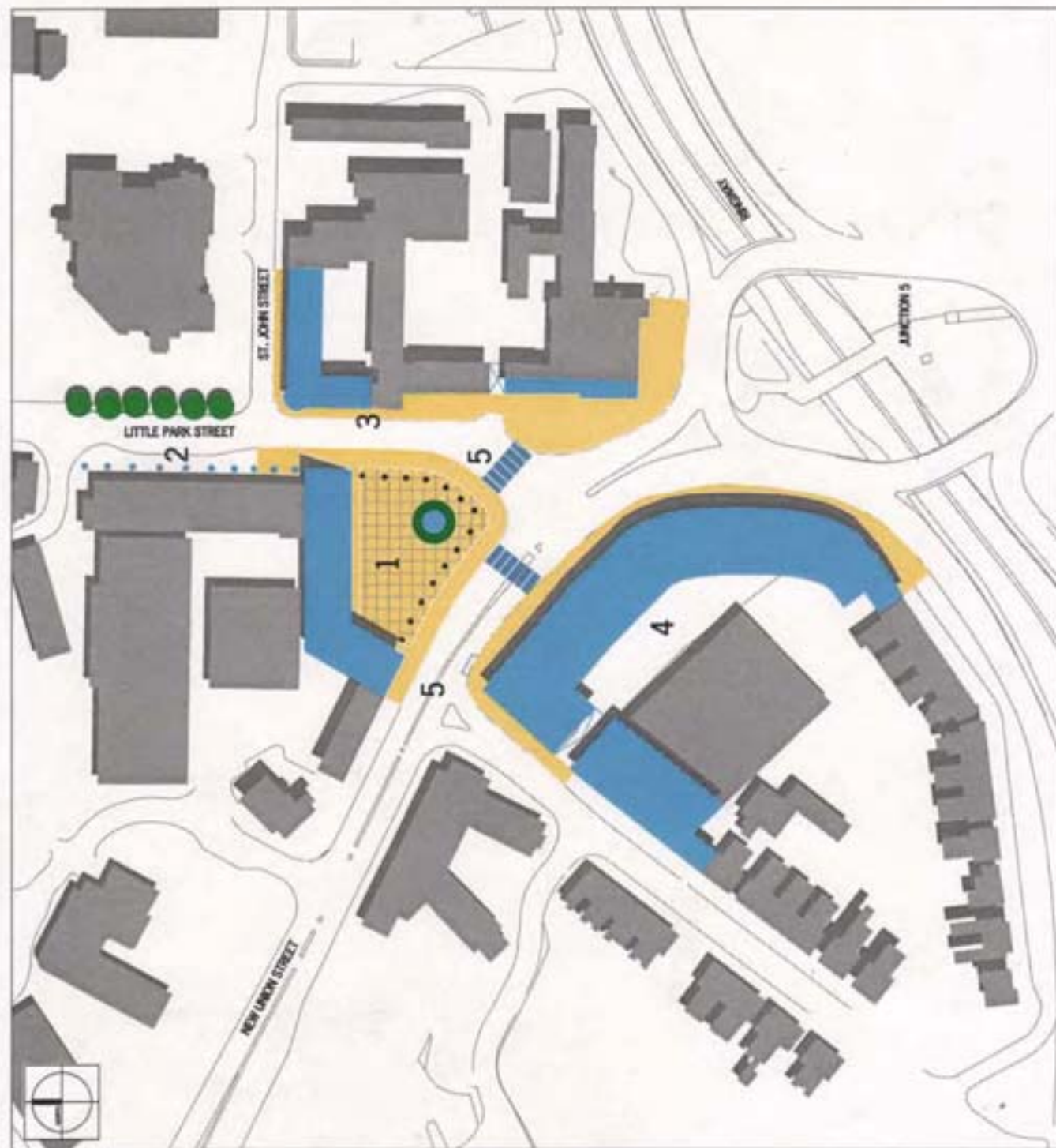


Figure 27

PROJECT 11 UPPER SPON STREET / WINDSOR ESTATE

KEY

- 1 Subway showcase project
- 2 Environmental improvements / on-street parking
New one-way road
- 3 New residential development opportunity
- 4 Public space focus
- 5 Frontage and boundary treatments
- 6 Improvements to shop forecourt
- 7 Refurbishment / development of corner sites

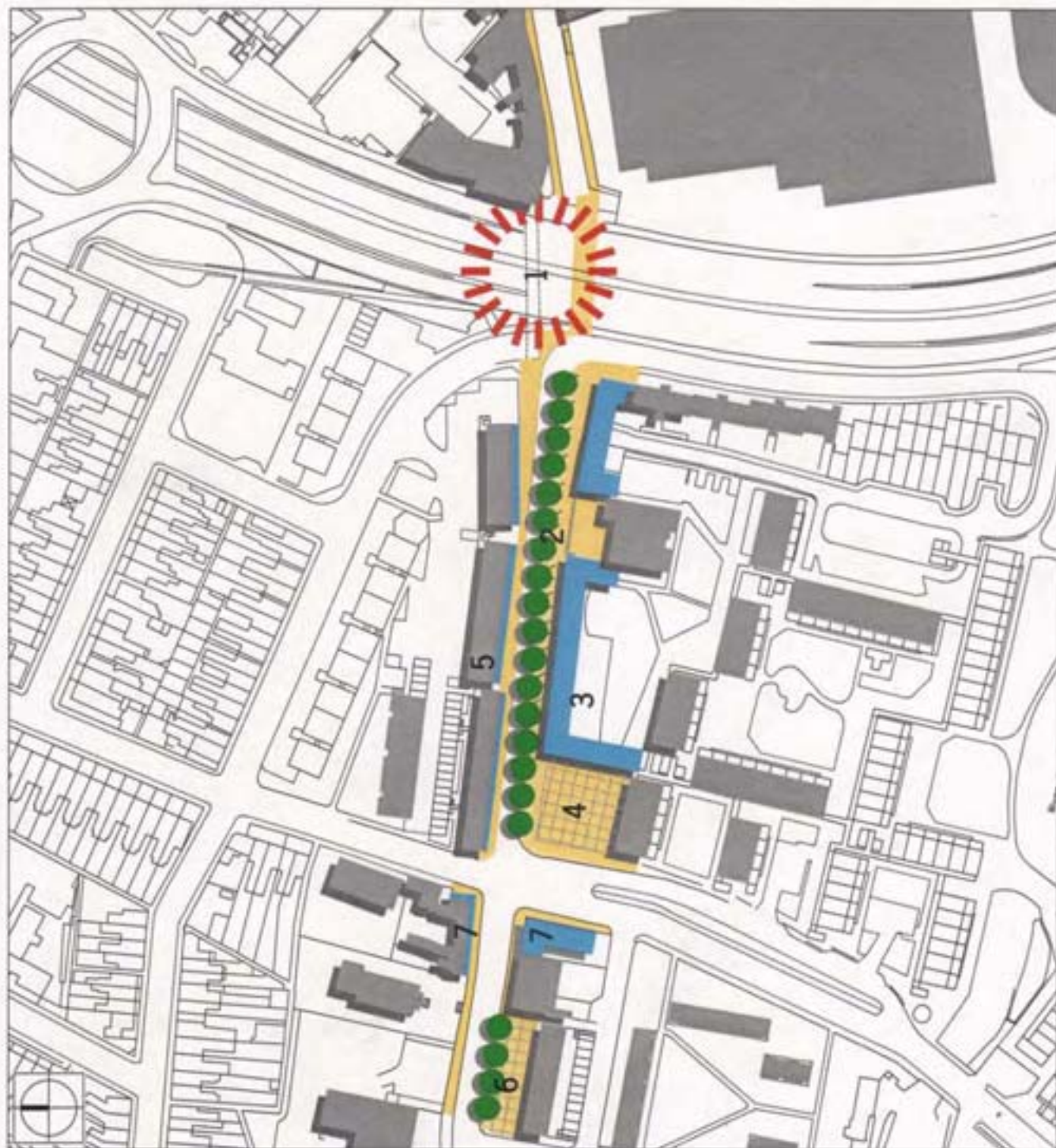


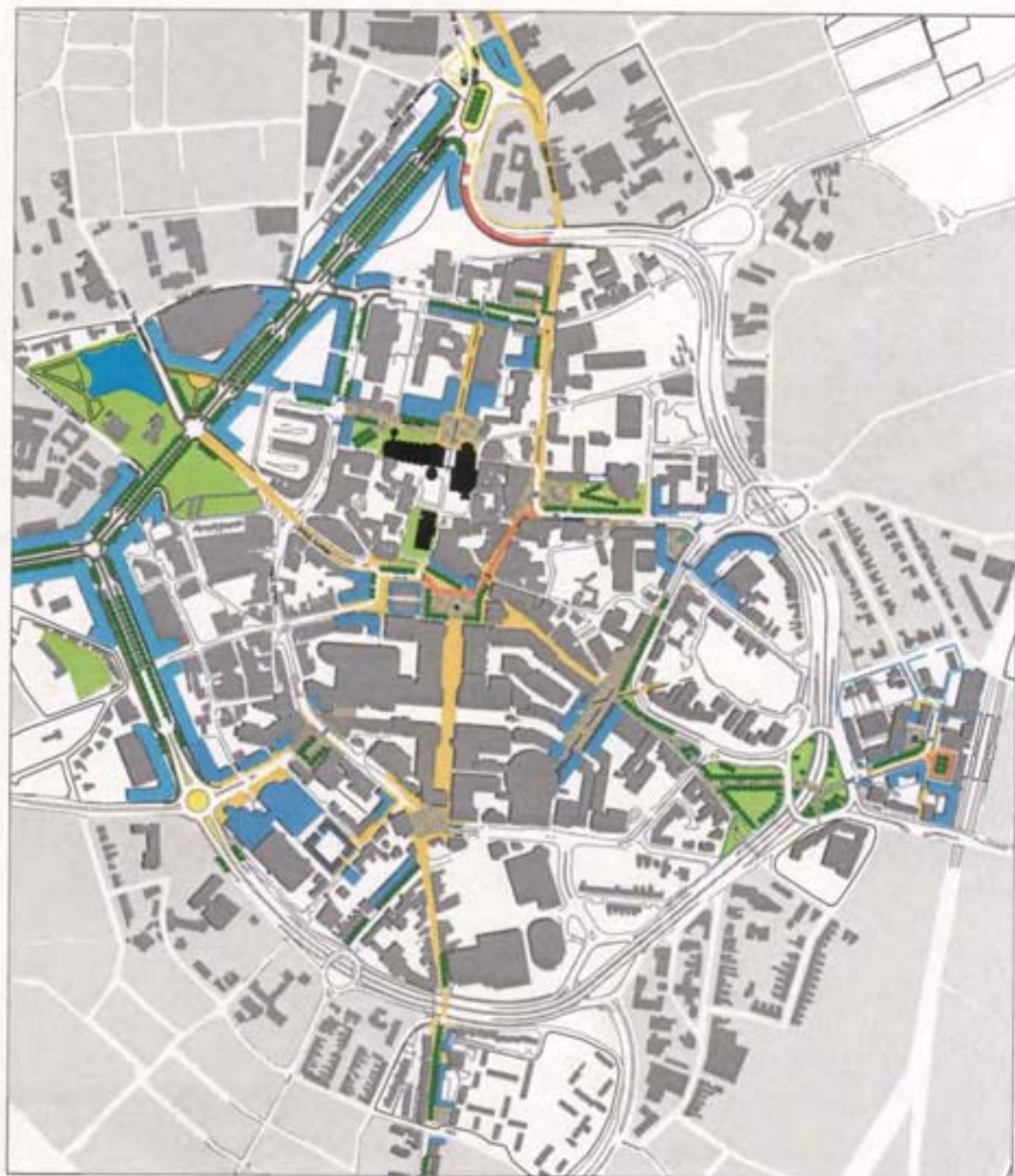
Figure 28

COVENTRY URBAN DESIGN STUDY
City Centre Strategy

Design Interventions

KEY

Potential Frontage Developments





The existing underpass at the western end of Spon Street is a very poor quality environment



Upper Spon Street is a well used pedestrian route



Semi-detached buildings in need of refurbishment on Upper Spon Street

CITY CORRIDORS

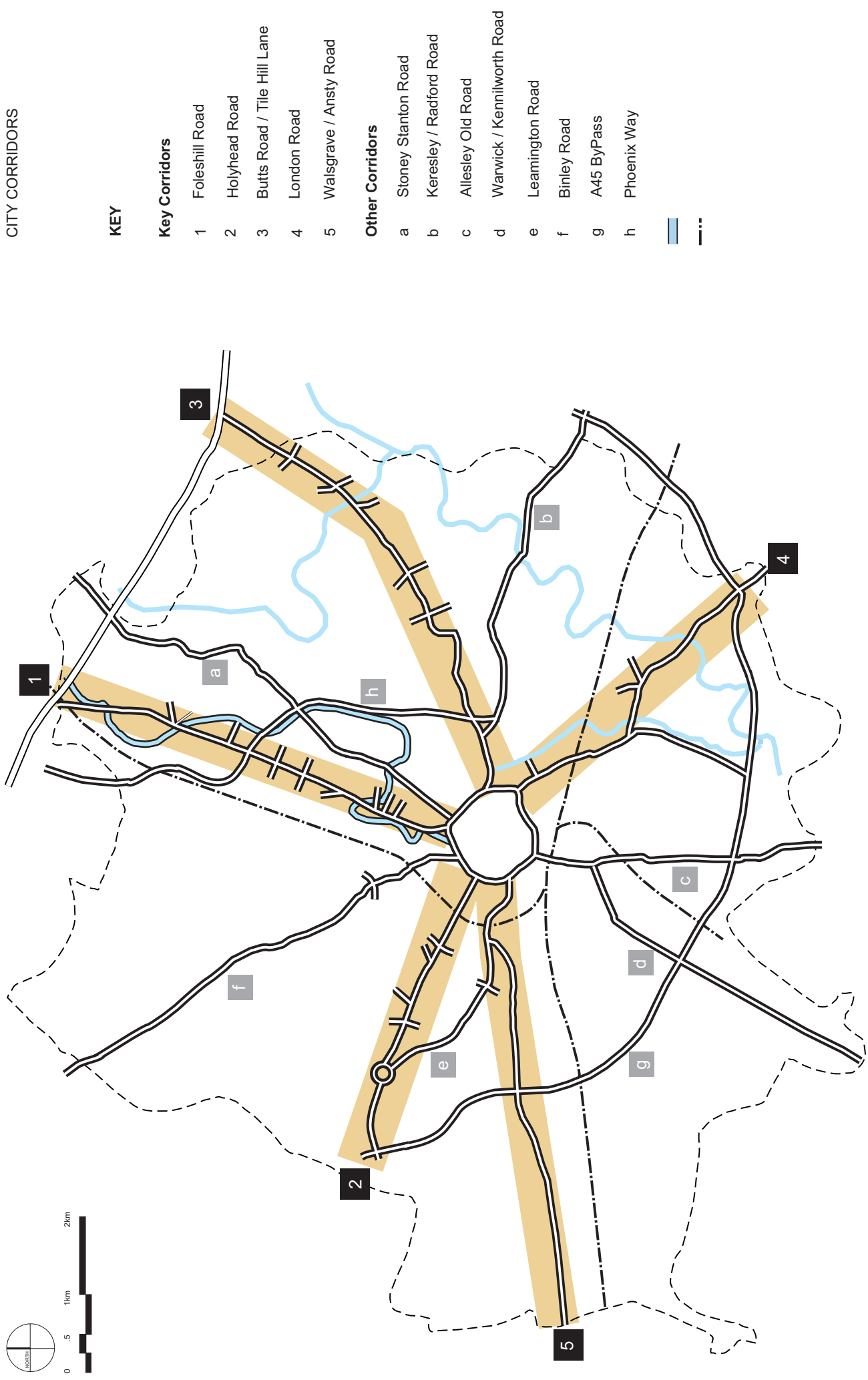


Figure 30

- in the short to medium terms to remove surface car park within the centre of the junction and create landscaped space with public art and dynamic lighting to create an enhanced sense of arrival and reinforcing character and identity. As part of these improvements the subways are to be substantially improved and realigned to better respond to pedestrian desire lines

Zone 4 Station Environs

Catalysts for change :

- environmental improvements to spaces adjacent to the station including the rationalisation of bus and taxi access arrangements
- the improvement of the pedestrian link between the station and Greyfriars Green including the replacement of the underpass beneath the southern arm of the roundabout at junction 6 by an at grade crossing, environmental improvements to the pedestrian bridge across the Ringway and under the northern arm of the junction
- demolition of the multi storey car park owned by Railtrack adjacent to the main station building

Objectives :

- to capture the development potential offered within a 400m radius of the station
- to enable substantial increases in development density (residential and commercial) in proximity to the city's principle transport interchange possibly by promoting a Transport Development Zone approach currently being considered by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
- to promote the removal and/or recladding of poor quality buildings or their replacement by buildings of greater height to give enhanced enclosure and continuity of street frontage
- to enhance junction 6 as a city centre gateway
- to significantly improve the civic spine pedestrian route into the city centre
- to remodel the existing square north of the station building to create a high quality arrival space integrating public art, lighting, street furniture and paving. Opportunities to increase active ground floor uses that interact with the space such as cafes and restaurants should be explored.
- to rationalise taxi, bus and drop off arrangements and reduce the impact of through traffic on the pedestrian environment.

Zone 5 Parkside

Catalysts for change :

- English Partnerships office park development
- modifications to junction 4 designed to improve access to the development off the junction

Objectives :

- the mixed use redevelopment of blocks on the northern side of Parkside fronting the Ringway and subdivided by Short Street and Paradise Street
- development of increased scale to provide an improved built edge to the Ringway

Zone 6 Coventry University Precinct/Eastern Ringway

Catalysts for change :

- University development and environmental improvement aspirations
- University acquisition of former hospital site
- New library building
- Phase 3 of the Ringway Scheme

Objectives :

- to enable the integration of the University precinct
- to improve pedestrian connections between the city centre and adjacent residential areas
- to remove the detrimental visual and physical impact of the Ringway by creating a tree lined urban boulevard linking the Foleshill Road and Sky Blue Way
- providing a positive new image for this corridor, creating opportunities for new frontage development
- to enhance existing spaces and create new ones including a new space on the east side of the Cathedral
- to improve the appearance of streets within the area through paving, street furniture, lighting and semi-mature street tree planting emphasising the importance of the civic spine
- to promote the replacement and/ or recladding of poor quality buildings
- to promote the development of prominent gap sites along key routes
- to rationalise car parking and access arrangements

- to identify opportunities to increase building heights where current buildings contribute little to enclosure and continuity of street frontage
- to promote a more vibrant mix of uses including residential accommodation
- to promote greater visual interest and activity at ground floor minimising the impact of long building frontages

Section 6: City Corridors

6.1 Introduction

Coventry's City Corridors are made up of street, canal and railway with the Sowe Valley pedestrian path covered as an Area of Distinctive Character. Of these, streets make up by far the predominant number of corridors and are the focus of this section.

The pattern of streets in general epitomises the typical growth of a medieval city, beginning with a Cartesian axial road pattern and developing into a radial configuration running from the city edge/boundary into the centre. In this regard the radial routes are similar but each exhibits differing characteristics, be they topography, adjacent uses, period of development, spatial enclosure or tree planting to name a few. In some cases the characteristics of a street are clear, resulting in an easily identifiable, themed image (Holyhead Road), while others are more ambiguous (Stoney Stanton). The modern By-Pass can also be found running across these radial corridors and is typically a fast dual carriageway.

6.2 The Street within its Context

Within the wider physical and theoretical context of an urban settlement, a street constitutes a particular type of urban form. This form must serve dual roles of both thoroughfare and place to linger, the extremes of these two being the motorway and urban square. Achieving the right balance for the intended purpose of the street is a determining factor in how well liked it is perceived to be.

The elements of the street, the roadway, pedestrian way (the two a relatively recent separation) and flanking buildings exist interdependently of one another. Because of this interdependence streets tend to act as places as well as links. We tend however to think of streets more as roads rather than places and this is as a result of a breakdown in relationships between structure and function.

Whether a street can function as a place should not be determined solely by its own configuration, local context is of equal significance. In addition to spaces for activity, the street also links functions within the urban environment resulting in it being the common shared element in the city fabric. Place and 'link' qualities are contiguous for contextual continuity, for widespread pedestrian use and the understanding of the public urban

environment - the quality of 'getting there' is central to the quality of 'there'. The street character subsequently depends upon its ability to create quality in terms of place and quality in terms of continuity (link).

6.3 Objectives

This section of the study aims to identify the "distinctive character of the primary movement corridors and the areas which are influenced by them", as outlined in the brief. Further to this possible improvement potentials are put forward.

In order to achieve this the following objectives were set:

1. To identify the generic qualities present in good streets generated from an understanding of basic urban design principles
2. To develop methodologies for analysing movement corridors (streets) based on the good street qualities
3. To identify the primary movement corridors into and across the city and analyse these at a strategic level
4. To select five key corridors for more detailed study using the methods in 2 above
5. To suggest possible design interventions based on the outcome of the analysis and present a summary table of the five key corridors

6.3.1. Good Street Qualities

We have established that streets must operate as both place and link. In respect of 'place' the following general principles of urban design apply:

1. Character
Promote character in townscape and landscape by building on locally distinct patterns of development and culture.
2. Continuity and enclosure
Promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines the boundaries between private and public spaces.
3. Quality of the public realm
Promote the quality of the public realm through providing spaces and routes that are safe, uncluttered, active and easily identifiable.

4. Ease of movement

Promote ease of movement by making places that connect with each other and are permeable (easy to move through) at local level.

5. Legibility

Promote legibility through development that is easily understood by its users.

6. Adaptability

Promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions.

7. Diversity

Promote diversity through a mix of uses that work together to create vital and viable places.

8. Sustainability

Promote sustainability through development which uses resources efficiently and reduces the need to travel.

6.4 Street Characteristics

The street, as an urban form, therefore must take on these principles but in a way that corresponds to the way in which we experience a street. In this regard there are four primary factors which constitute the physical characteristics of 'street' and influence our experience of it:

- Pattern
- Variety
- Figure
- Hierarchy

6.4.1 Pattern (of the enclosing fabric and activity nodes)

For a street to be well liked it must 'hang together' in some way. It can do this through patterns which themselves exist at a number of levels, made up of different types of physical elements. At a fine scale fenestration and detail may provide repetition as may frontage width and solid to void pattern in a street edge. Semi-detached dwellings or Victorian terraced frontage provide different kinds of pattern while particular elements such as lighting, paving may help tie a whole street together.

Land uses also provide patterns along a street where nodes of retail activity may occur within residential areas. Nodes themselves form a pattern over a street's length.

6.4.2 Variety (of built form)

Change in experience is also essential for a street to be interesting and not monotonous. Variety may occur by virtue of change in the grain of a street or simply a break in skyline pattern. Colour and material also provide visual foci within a monotonous street frontage. Over an entire street variety may be provided by landmark buildings, thresholds and the like.

6.4.3 Figure (spatial configuration in section and axial)

The space formed by a street's enclosing walls may either feel too open and therefore lose its 'street' quality or be so narrow that it is not possible to appreciate the buildings either side and restrict views. This is a combination of height to width ratio and axial configuration. The latter may be symmetrical, straight, curved or stepped which changes the quality of the movement experience and determines what is visible at one time.

6.4.4 Hierarchy (of movements)

The control and order of movement strongly affects a street's status and role, and assists in wider legibility and way finding. How movements are organised also determines how usable a street space may be. Fast dual carriageways may present impenetrable barriers to pedestrians and restrict the choices available to certain user groups. The balance of this hierarchy therefore has a significant impact on street experience.

6.5 Place and Link

The above factors can be translated in terms of place and link. Qualities of place occur either as discrete points along a street (landmarks, nodes, gateways) or as sections of particularly consistent character (similar uses, similar period of development, boundary conditions). These serve to reinforce character, create interest, local context, configuration, function and are dominantly private responsibility.

As an environment that is also passed through a number of other qualities become important. Link qualities offer contextual continuity over the entire length of a street. A route may thus be themed using certain transferable elements of streetscape development creating the experience of 'getting

there'. These occur in the zone between plot boundaries and are thus public responsibility.

The qualities which are present in successful streets are universal but appear in different forms modified by location. They are a combination of urban design principles and factors which affect street experience and which together form a good street.

6.6 Methodologies for Analysing Streets

The evolution of ideas for ways of analysing streets was an iterative process which sought to examine the qualities identified in 1 above.

• Generic Street Types

Due to the breadth of the study area and number of corridors involved it was necessary to identify common denominators across all corridors as a first level of categorisation and to simply reduce the information. It was found that the streets fell into a limited number of physical and spatial patterns which was also restricted by examining only major corridors (excluding smaller residential streets, mews, lanes and the like). These patterns were termed '*generic street types*'.

• Characteristics of Good Streets

Each of the identified five key corridors (see 3. Strategic Analysis) are then analysed using methodologies evolved to examine the qualities believed to constitute good streets. These operate at three levels, each allowing examination of the different physical and spatial characteristics.

The levels of analysis are:

- Character Sections
- Link Elements
- Place Elements

6.6.1 Generic Street Types

The generic types used in this study include the following:

Type 1 - Motorway

Type 2 - Boulevard

Type 3 - High Street / Main Street

Type 4 - Other (eg. Retail Park, Open Landscape)

Type 5 - Hybrids of the above

1. Motorway

- Vehicle dominated movement
- Fast road / dual carriageway
- Separated pedestrian / cycle access paths adjacent
- Crossings separated from motorway grade as follows
 - motorway in cut - pedestrian / cycle crossing at grade
 - motorway at grade - pedestrian / cycle crossing in subway
 - motorway flyover - pedestrian / cycle crossing at grade
- Built form set back from road, separated by solid barrier (fence/ wall) and generally backing onto the motorway
- Hard landscaped
- Minimal planting
- Acoustic and visual screening from adjacent development

• Junctions

Typically roundabouts with landscape features, minimal frontage and poor enclosure

2. Boulevard

Boulevards occur with varying status. Large urban boulevards with dual carriageway and access lanes or smaller residential boulevards which exhibit only single carriageway but generous street width.

- Dual and single carriageway
 - Vehicle access lanes on one side or both sides separated by planting strips
 - Pedestrian / cycle access separated from road by planting strips
 - Crossings occur at junctions
 - Spatial pattern defined by tree planting rather than built form
 - Roads tend to be straight or with gradual curves
 - Street height to width ratios often 1:8 or greater
 - Planting is regular and mature, consistent within view corridors
 - Planting provides sense of street enclosure
 - Development has generous front yard/garden with well defined boundaries
 - Largely residential uses from inter-war / post-war periods
 - *Junctions*
- Break in tree line, frontage stepped forward, crossings and active ground floors, corners marked

3. High Street / Main Street

The nature of this type is driven largely by activity and use. Purely residential uses form main residential streets while a mixture of retail with residential over form the more civic high streets.

- Integrated pedestrian and vehicular movement
- Limited speed
- Frequent pedestrian crossings
- Occasional parking to street sides
- Residential or mix of uses
- Street height to width ratios of 1:2 to 1:4 providing good enclosure
- Minimum building set back with small front yards
- Ground floor conversion of terraced frontage to shop uses, canopies and forecourt definition
- Hard landscaping / paving to shopping areas with increased pavement width
- Minimal street planting
- Older period of development (Victorian frontage is common)
- Highly active street edge, no level change, visually permeable interface with buildings (High Street)
- Fine grain of form and use
- Junctions
- Form key nodal points of activity, corners marked, good enclosure, intensification of form and use, pedestrian crossings

6.6.2 Character Sections

Within individual street types there exists noticeable changes in character. These changes are defined by the following qualities.

- **Spatial configuration**

The degree of enclosure provided by the built edge, its height-to-width ratio

The effect of tree planting on perceived enclosure

The axiality of the street space - are views linked along a street or cut off

The effect of topography on the spatial experience

The effect of width on how much of a street edge we can perceive at one time

- **Period & Form**

The physical appearance of the street edge

Continuity of frontage

Skyline

Fenestration pattern / repetition

Frontage width (grain)

Change in height / vertical emphasis

Colour / material and detail

Period of development (Medieval, Victorian/Edwardian, Inter-war, Post war planned, Retail park etc.)

Definition of the boundary between public and private realms

- **Activity and Use**

The land uses occurring along the street edge

Patterns in groups of like uses or nodes of shop frontage

Nature of activity conveyed to the street by adjacent buildings

- Highly active retail
- Less active office or residential
- Transparent (glass)
- Level change (too high to see in)
- Solid wall

Physical nature of the interface to communicate internal activity

6.6.3 Link Elements

Along the length of a corridor continuity in streetscape elements can provide a unique image, improving strategic legibility across all corridors.

The following elements may combine to form this image:

Trees

Planting

Surface treatments

Lighting

Signing

Street furniture

Barriers

Public Art

6.6.4 Place Elements

These form discreet points along a corridor which combine to form a pattern or simply memorable events. Place elements are :

Nodes

Most nodes occur at locations exhibiting the following characteristics:

- Intersections with other roads
- Intensification of public activity types (shopping, pedestrian / vehicular movement)
- Highly active ground floor frontage
- Well enclosed by buildings (continuous, minimum setback)
- Visually permeable interface to buildings

Depending upon the status and role of the intersecting streets and the relationship to other nodes, different emphasis should be given to each node. The following classification assists in this regard:

A1	Major community spine - cross junction
A2	Major community spine - T junction
B1	Minor community spine - cross junction
B2	Minor community spine - T junction
C	No intersecting roads - activity only
M	Motorway junction

Each node is then scored against a set of physical characteristics which should exist at good nodes. These include:

Minimum building setback
2 storey on corner or greater
Concentration of form/use
Landmark structure
Active frontage
Public Uses

A1 class nodes should score highly while M and C class nodes may score below 50%. The following score rating is used:

0	Total lack of particular quality
1	Some existence of particular quality
2	Min 50% presence of particular quality
3	Quality well represented

Gateways

Giving a corridor a beginning and an end is important to enhance local character and identity as well as creating good first impressions. Gateways give physical definition to these qualities and therefore are identified as place elements

Each gateway along a corridor is assessed against the ideal characteristics of 'gateway'. At the city end of a corridor the gateway operates both into the city and into the route while to the outer end the gateway operates into the route only.

The following physical characteristics are operative for gateways:

Through access
Landmark structure
Physical edge definition
Character change - form/use
Visual axis
Positive landscape / topography
Positive immediate context
Information / meaning

Landmarks

As memorable events along a corridor landmarks are invaluable. These may occur within nodes, giving further emphasis to a junction or gateway or they may help in providing interest between nodes. Landmarks have characteristically vertical emphasis allowing them to stand out from the 'rest' and may be large buildings, towers, spires or other structures such as bridges.

Thresholds

Also providing points of reference are thresholds. These typically serve to define changes in character or mark progression along a corridor. Thresholds may be gaps in fabric, rivers, bridges and the like.

6.7 Strategic Analysis

To be read in conjunction with Figures 30 and 52 which shows a strategic analysis of Gateways. The corridor in this instance is seen as a line of movement through the urban fabric. It is characterised by visual continuity, defined by adjacent districts. It is an important structuring

element of the urban structure and is inherently civic in nature. It is therefore the most universally used of public spaces serving both connection and mobility. Consequently corridors are also the most difficult to implement or influence because they are by definition strategic. In terms of this study the corridor length is taken as being from city edge to city centre except where they are non radial and traverse the city fabric.

Of the four criteria identified above in 'making successful streets', classification of the street corridor is a direct consequence of hierarchy, figure, pattern and variety, with the former two inter-related, particularly at the strategic level. Identifying corridor form and function quality is excluded. The current status of streets complies with this and it is on this basis that the street corridors were identified.

Using these criteria thirteen street corridors were identified, radiating out from the city centre to the city edge. The A45 was also included, primarily due to its proximity to the city centre and the fact that it connects with six of the identified corridors. Of the thirteen corridors five were selected for more detailed analysis and this was done on the following basis:

- Radiating out, connecting the inner Ringway with the outer city By-Passes (A45, M6)
- Overlap with Bus Showcase route (Foleshill Road and potentially Binley Road)
- Collectors for major suburban areas
- Interfacing with areas identified as having distinctive character

The rail corridors and the canal are both included in this framework of major city corridors. This identified the strategic framework from which key corridors were than analysed in detail.

1. A444 Foleshill Rd - B41133 Longford Rd/Bedworth Rd
2. A4114/A45 Hollyhead Rd/Pickford Rd/Birmingham Rd
3. B4101 Butts Rd/Spon End/Hearsall Lane/Tile Hill Lane
4. A4114/B4110/A45 London Rd
5. A4600 Sky Blue Way / Walsgrave Rd / Ansty Rd / Hinckley Rd Leicester Rd
6. B4109 Stoney Stanton Rd/Bell Green Rd
7. B4098 Radford Rd / Keresley Road / Tamworth Rd
8. B4106 Allesley Old Road
9. A429 Warwick / Kenilworth Rd

10. B4113 Leamington Rd / Martins Road
11. A4600 Sky Blue Way / A428 Binley Rd / Brandon Rd
12. A45 Dunchurch / Fletchamstead / Kenpass / Stonebridge Highways
13. A444 Phoenix Way

The corridors identified, particularly the street corridors, at a strategic level raise some interesting characteristics. It is probably no coincidence that the radial nature of the routes is a direct reflection of the historical growth of Coventry. This is also reflected in the nature of the routes; their alignment, intersection frequencies, nodal developments and direction. These elements were more noticeable on the 'northern' sector routes as opposed to the 'southern' sector routes. The corridors tend to be at regular intervals at the outer edge of the city with concentration more obvious north of the east/west rail corridor. Again as a result of historical development. Of the nine routes three share common city centre gateways, whilst one shares a common city edge gateway. Virtually all the routes are within urban environments along their entire lengths.

In terms of detail at this scale, it is noticeable that the routes are in the main fairly direct, except for corridors 2, 3 and 4 where some change of direction is evident. Positive on route experiences as identified above tend to favour the 'older' routes (1,2,3,4) which seem to have finer grain developments along their length judging by the number of intersections and nodes. They also tend to have more landmark structures, thresholds and the like than the newer routes. Access from the strategic regional network is split between those accessing off the A45 and routes 1 and 3 off the M6. The next scale of analysis will determine the impact of this.

Dividing the corridors into zones (kilometre lengths) radiating out from the city centre two facts are noticeable; firstly there are a limited number of intersections within the first section close to the city centre and as a consequence (it is assumed) there are few place elements along each route. The concentration of place elements is broadly speaking central to each route.

The result of this strategic review of the street corridors is as follows:

- Place elements should be encouraged along the lengths of the southern routes
- Routes are sufficiently remote from each other to use common link elements
- On route gateways should be considered for corridors that 'divide'

- Gateway statements should not only be confined to regional network junctions
- Attention should be given to the 'first zone' close to the city centre

6.8 Key Corridor Analysis

The following five corridors are analysed in detail using the above techniques. The remainder of the thirteen corridors are also presented in an abridged format but using the same criteria. Presented below is the analysis for the Foleshill Road. The same methodology may be used to analyse other corridors within the city.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foleshill Rd - Longford Rd/Bedworth Rd 2. Hollyhead Rd/Pickford Rd/Birmingham Rd 3. Butts Rd/Spon End/Hearsall Lane/Tile Hill Lane 4. London Rd 5. Walsgrave Rd / Ansty Rd / Hinckley Rd Leicester Rd 6. Coventry Canal |
|---|

6.9 Foleshill Road

To be read in conjunction with Figures 31-34.

A radial route 5 kilometres in length, connected to the inner Ringway at junction one and intersecting with the M6 motorway to the north north-east. The road first came into existence at the beginning of the nineteenth century and included squatter type settlements to the northern end. The section closest to the city core, Leicester Row, terminated in the Canal Basin and still exists today. The Foleshill Road, however, was redirected at the time of the Ringway construction (1960-72) to serve junction one. Coventry Canal intersects at three points: Prince William Henry Bridge, New Inn Bridge and Longford Bridge. All offer access to the canal tow path.

6.9.1 Generic Street Types

Two major street types occur along the route. These include:

- Type 1 - Motorway fast road within the first half kilometre off the Ringway.
- Type 3 - High Street over remainder until the railway bridge.

6.9.2 Character Sections

While the motorway section exhibits a single typical character (1a), the High Street type breaks into 4 sections of noticeably different character (3b, 3c, 3d and 3e)

6.9.3 Spatial configuration

The spatial configuration of section 1a is discontinuous, asymmetric and poorly enclosed. Section 3b is similar in this respect though of High Street category, slower with greater continuity of built edge. Section 3c from Lockhurst Lane to Longford park is straight and exhibits high continuity and symmetry of space. Enclosure is moderate and mostly 2 storey giving height to width ratio of 1:4 / 1:3. The topography of the route is undulating and allows long vistas along straight sections to local landmarks.

6.9.4 Period & Form

The period of development along the route varies from Victorian terraced housing (section 3c) to post WW2 light industrial development and 1970's large single use retail buildings and petrol stations (sections 1a and 3b). A majority of the mid to late nineteenth century housing stock still fronts onto the road over most of its length.

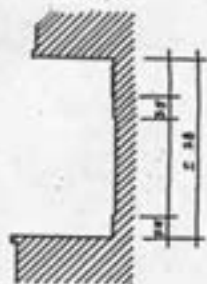
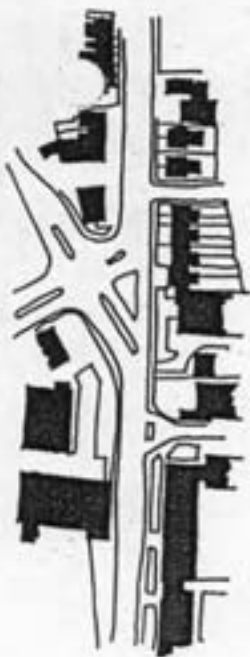
Section 3d exhibits good inter-war housing to the west side but to the east more recent housing development perhaps influenced by Design Bulletin 32 principles turns its back on the road.

Changes to the buildings have mostly entailed ground floor shop conversions and new in-fill. Scale and grain to sections 3b,c and d is 2/3 storey, small frontage length and plot area with regular vertical emphasis. Section 3b exhibits a coarser grain, larger scale and horizontally aligned blocks.

6.9.5 Activity and Function

Section 1a exhibits little or no active frontage with slight improvement in section 3b. All light industrial commercial use with some residential. Section 3c contains largely shop use at ground floor with residential over contributing high activity to the street, though roller doors negate this at certain times of the day. Sections 3d and 3e are predominantly residential though the east side of 3d is noticeably inactive.

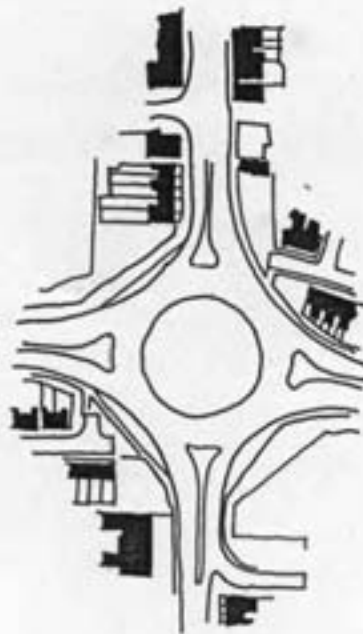
Foleshill Road



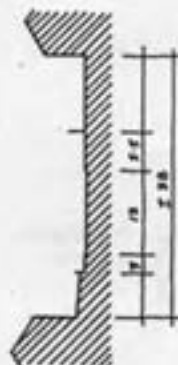
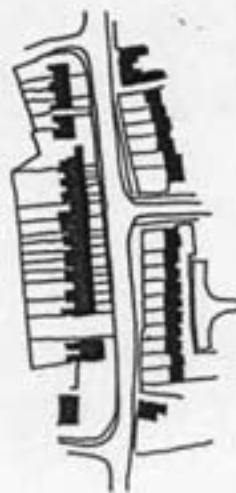
High Street Type, Character Section 3b, Node 1



High Street Type, Character Section 3c, Nodes 2 and 3

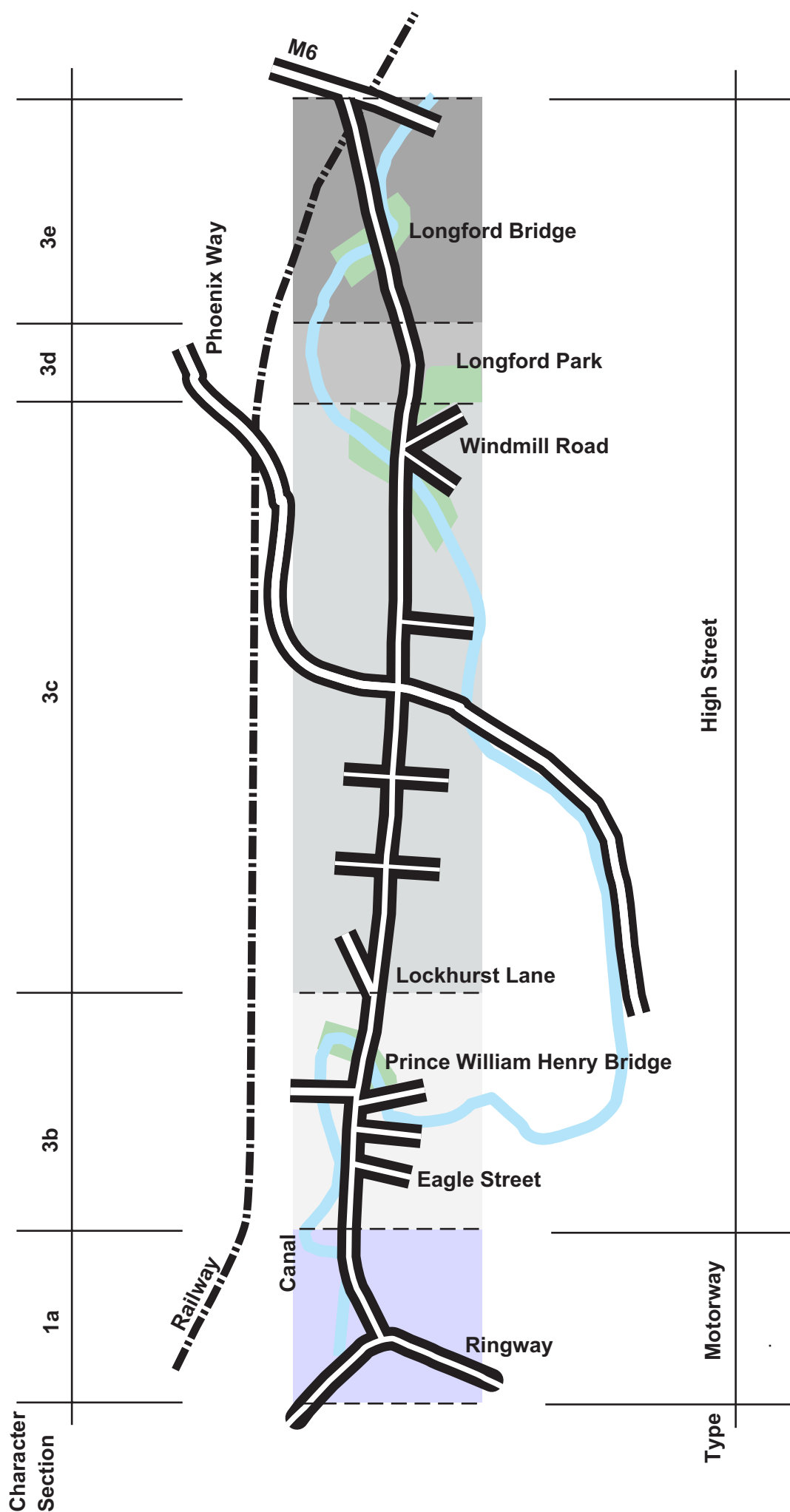


High Street Type, Node 4



High Street Type, Character Section 3d

Figure 31



Corridor 1 : Foleshill Road

Character and Type

Not to Scale

Figure 32



Typical high street



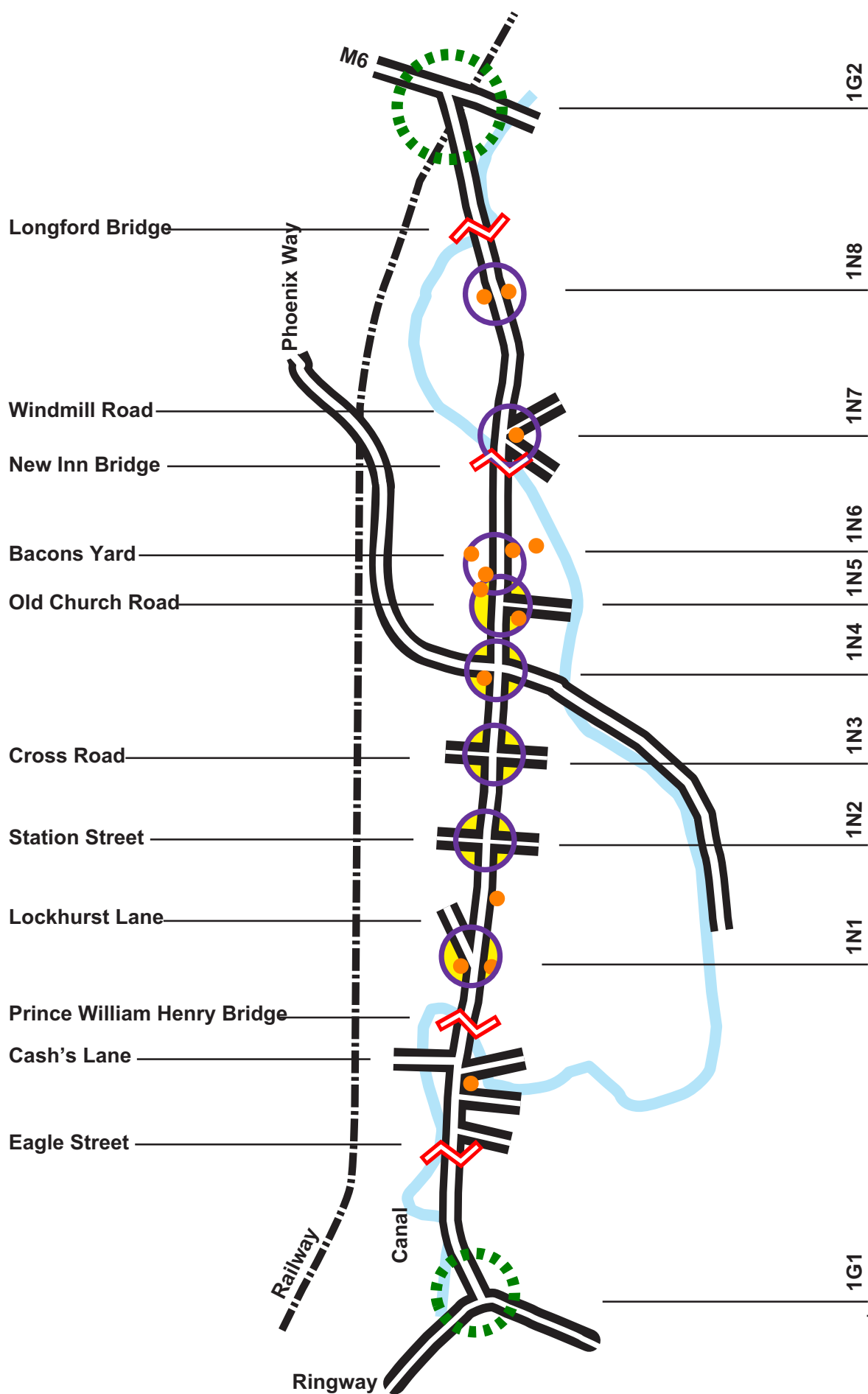
Typical terrace house frontage



Typical radial street form

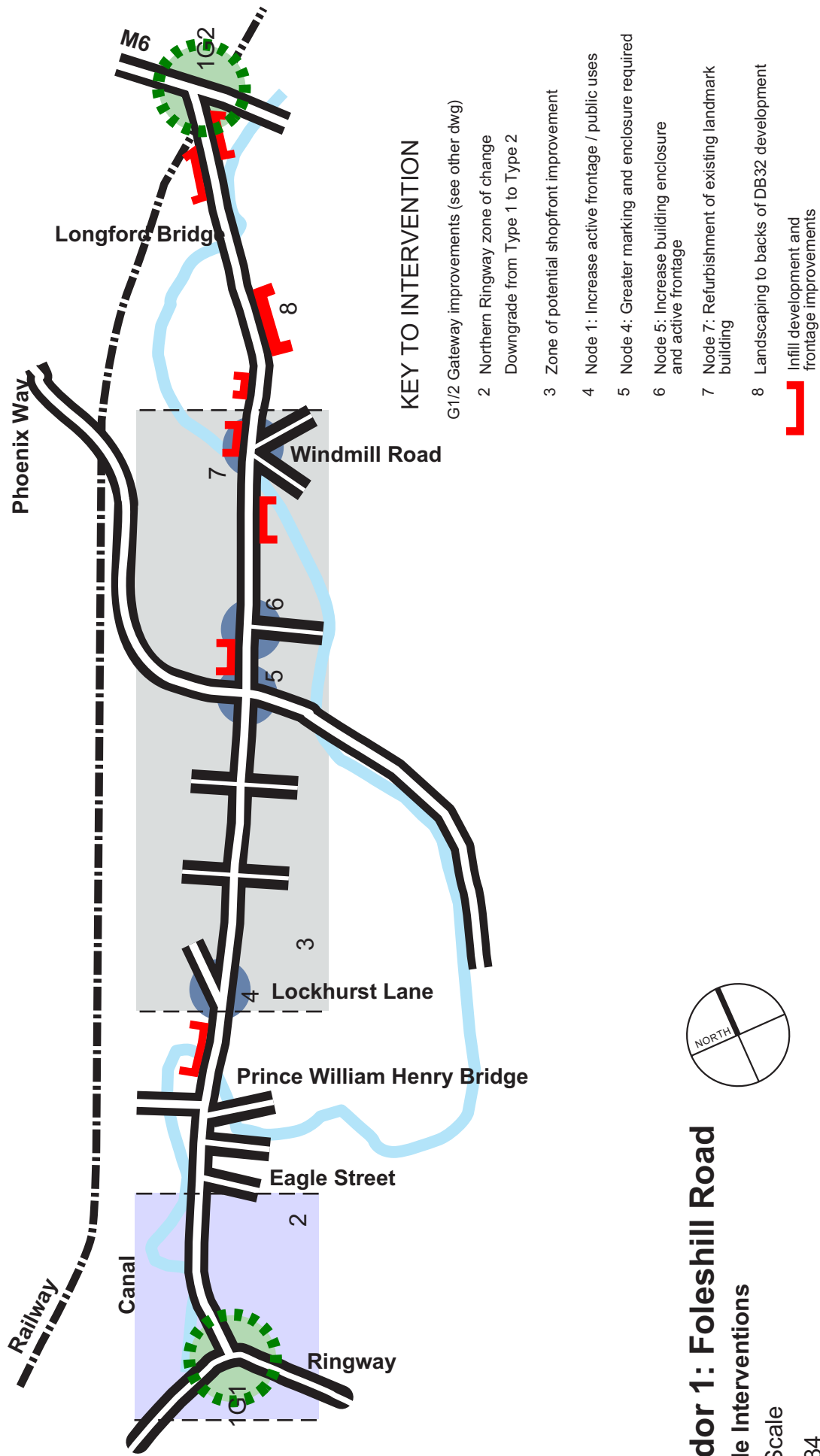


Junctions with dual carriageways can be of poor quality and featureless



Corridor 1 : Foleshill Road
Place Elements
 Not to Scale
 Figure 33





Corridor 1: Foleshill Road

Possible Interventions

Not to Scale

Figure 34

6.9.6 Link Elements

Fences, paving and trees are sporadic and offer little to theme the route. Link elements become continuous (e.g. barriers and hard landscaping) over distinct areas, in particular shopping nodes within section 3c.

6.9.7 Place Elements

Nodes

The route exhibits eight nodes in a fairly regular rhythm though there is a noticeable concentration of these towards the centre and a thinning out at either end.

Of note is the occurrence of nodes within a section (e.g. 3c) rather than between sections contributing to the continuity of experience along large parts of Foleshill Road.

Of the A1 class nodes (major community spine - cross junction), node 1 scores poorly in terms of publicly oriented activities though compensates with large landmark buildings. Node 4 scores badly overall given the status of the intersecting routes (Phoenix Way) though this is a motorway junction. In addition all nodes except 3 exhibit buildings of local landmark significance (church, bank on corner, pub).

Quality		Node							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Class	A1	A1	A1	M	A2	C	B2	B2
Min Bldg Setback on Corner		1	3	3	1	0	2	2	1
2 Storey on Corner or Greater		3	2	2	1	1	1	2	3
Concentration of Form / Use		3	3	3	0	0	2	1	2
Landmark Structure		3	1	0	1	3	3	3	3
Active Frontage		0	3	2	0	0	1	0	2
Public Uses		0	3	2	0	2	2	0	3
Total		10	15	12	3	6	11	8	14
Percentage		56	83	67	17	33	61	44	78

Gateways / Thresholds

Quality	Gateway	
	1route	1city
Through Access	3	1
Landmark Structure	0	0
Physical edge definition	0	0
Character Change- form/use	1	0
Visual Axis	1	2
Positive landscape / topography	1	0
Positive Built Context	0	0
Signage and Information	1	1
Total	7	4
Percentage	29	17
		50

Gateway 1G1 into the city scores particularly poorly in all respects, while entering into the corridor, though weak, is strengthened by its through access and rise in gradient. The transition in and out of the Foleshill Road at the northern 1G2 end is defined by a rail bridge and serves more strongly as a physical gateway.

Four thresholds are noticeable over the entire route. The first at the junction with Eagle Street where the fabric closes up and others at the canal bridges where the fabric opens out and then again later at Longford Park which forms a memorable break.

Landmarks

Landmark buildings along the route are predominantly local and serve to reinforce nodes or as points of interest. Of particular note are the pubs which tend toward a common thematic (setback 10-15m, pavilion type structure, car park in front). There is a notable lack of landmarks at the city gateway, contributing to its featureless quality. Thresholds which mark a transition in form and/or use appear without landmarks though this does not detract from their effect. Landmarks also occur outside of nodal points and provide memorable events between nodes.

6.10 Coventry Canal

Coventry's canal formed an important economic role in the city's early history and was thus a central influence on urban growth. Not surprisingly two of the older routes into the city, the Foleshill Road and Stoney Stanton Road intersect with the canal at a number of points. Both these street corridors run through what were old squatter / manufacturing settlements (Longford, Aldermans Green/Hawkesbury Lane). Hawkesbury Lock formed the outer terminus where the Coventry Canal and Oxford Canal split and as such is the outer canal gateway. This is a designated conservation area and remains a popular recreational/historical attraction. To the southern end the Canal Basin formed the city terminus and is also a conservation area, exhibiting early eighteenth century buildings. The Canal Basin is an important element within the wider strategic context of the urban design strategy for the city centre, although it is currently isolated from it by the Ringway.

Not only is the canal an important corridor in itself, for leisure and recreation involving boating and the tow path for walking and cycling, but it serves an important role in relation to those street corridors it crosses. In this regard it adds local character, reinforcing place elements along the street and contributes to overall legibility. Both the Foleshill Road and Stoney Stanton Road benefit in this way. Bridges over the canal become landmark thresholds and offer physical access to the canal. Unfortunately and equally important, visual access is often denied due to the physical form of the bridge, leaving little impression of the experience.

Priestley's Bridge on the Stoney Stanton Road has become a focus for local arts projects and these have mutually benefited both the canal and street. Such opportunities exist at other points and should be the focus for intervention. Such points are: Navigation Bridge; Prince William Henry Bridge; New Inn Bridge and; Longford Bridge. Whilst improvements may have an arts emphasis consideration should also be given to improving lighting, paving and street furniture.

Promoting new development which responds positively to the waterside opportunity should be actively encouraged. New development along the corridor should:

- Create frontage development with appropriate continuity and enclosure
- Generate activity and or visual interest at ground floor

- Create or improve connections between bridges/ tow paths and the surrounding network of streets and other pedestrian paths
- Contribute to the enhancement of the public realm formed by the tow path environment
- Introduce mixed uses on key development sites
- Reinforce nodes of activity

6.11 Design Intervention

Both the form of possible design intervention and where it should occur, if at all, is informed directly by the analysis. **Table X** presents a summary of the problems identified through analysis of the five key corridors and corresponding possible design interventions. A policy recommendation in respect of corridor enhancement is outlined in Section 6. This must be set within the context of city Legibility Initiative. Improvements to the corridors should not therefore be seen separately to the achievement of major city centre projects.

Based upon generic street types, character sections, place and link elements, this stage of analysis has informed a broad consideration of corridor improvement potential. Whether design intervention is appropriate, where it should occur and the form it should take are driven by the analysis.

Whilst recognising the need to create legible gateways into the city the adopted approach has also considered the entire length of corridors in terms of those aspects of townscape, movement and uses which contribute to overall corridor character, identity and city legibility. The analysis and possible design interventions provide an initial basis from which to develop more detailed proposals which should consider the corridors in a co-ordinated 'end-to-end' manner. The opportunity exists to introduce improvements which will:

- Provide a better welcome and first impression to visitors
- Guide, orientate and inform visitors about areas, attractions and facilities both along the route and within the city centre before arrival
- Reinforce the character and identity of overall corridors and particular areas and sections of a corridor
- Promote the use of public transport
- Enhance the public realm through co-ordinated environmental improvements reflecting corridor and local character identity.

- Promote design quality through the application of UDP design policies and the development of individual corridor urban design frameworks, development briefs and design guides.

Remaining Corridors Analysis

6.12 Holyhead Road

This route connects into junction 8 on the Ringway and to the A45 (Dunchurch Highway) just under 4 kilometres away to the north-west. Holyhead Road existed from around the mid to late nineteenth century and connected directly into Spon Street / Fleet Street. That link was severed by the Ringway creating an abrupt level change with the only through route being via a pedestrian subway into Hill Street. (Figs 35-38)

Generic Street Types

Four major street types occur along the route. These include:

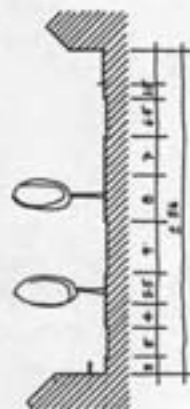
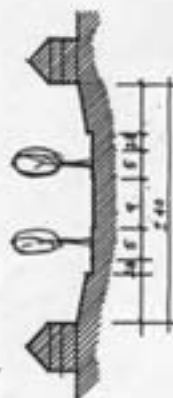
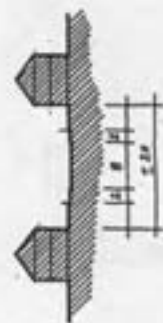
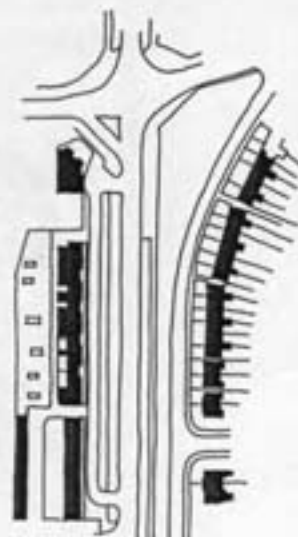
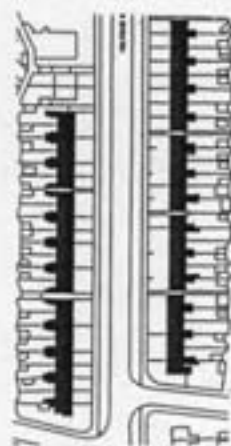
- Type 1 - Motorway fast road (Pickford Way) at north eastern end.
- Type 2 - Boulevard Street from Moseley Avenue intersection to roundabout.
- Type 3 - High Street from Ringway until railway bridge.
- Type 4 - Retail park from railway bridge to Moseley Avenue intersection.

Character Sections

In general sections of character match the street types except within type 2 where noticeable changes occur above Southbank Road (sections 2c, 2d and 2e).

Spatial configuration

- Of particular note is the strong thematic of enclosure provided by tree planting rather than building edge along much of the route.
- Section 3a (First 400m) - Feeling of enclosure by continuous and symmetrical building edge (narrow road and tall frontage giving H:W of 1:3/1:2). Topography is noticeable strengthening views down into the city.
- Section 4b (400m-1km) - No enclosure, no continuity through pavilion style buildings, car parks and large setbacks. No tree planting, hard landscaping only.
- Sections 2c, 2d, 2e (1km-3km) - Strongly axial space creating view corridors. Continuous trees and wide grass verge both sides. Building enclosure only 1:8 but compensated by tree line. Section 2e exhibits buildings one side only and adds to feeling of leaving the city.



Holyhead Road

High Street Type, Character Section 3a

Retail Park, Character Section 4b, Node 1

Boulevard Type, Character Section 2c

Boulevard Type, Character Section 2d, Node 2

Figure 35



Victorian city centre expansion



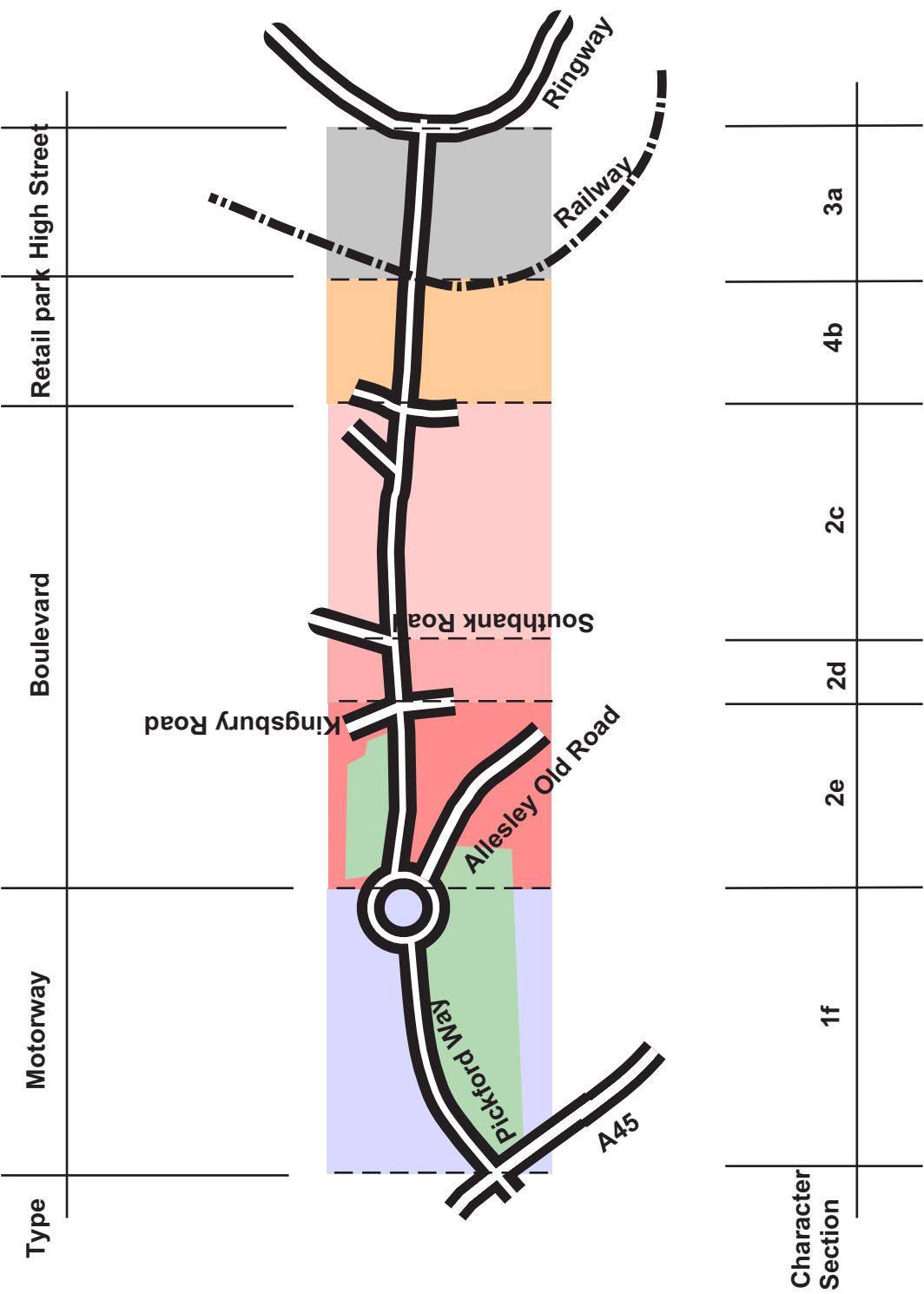
Recent retail warehouse development



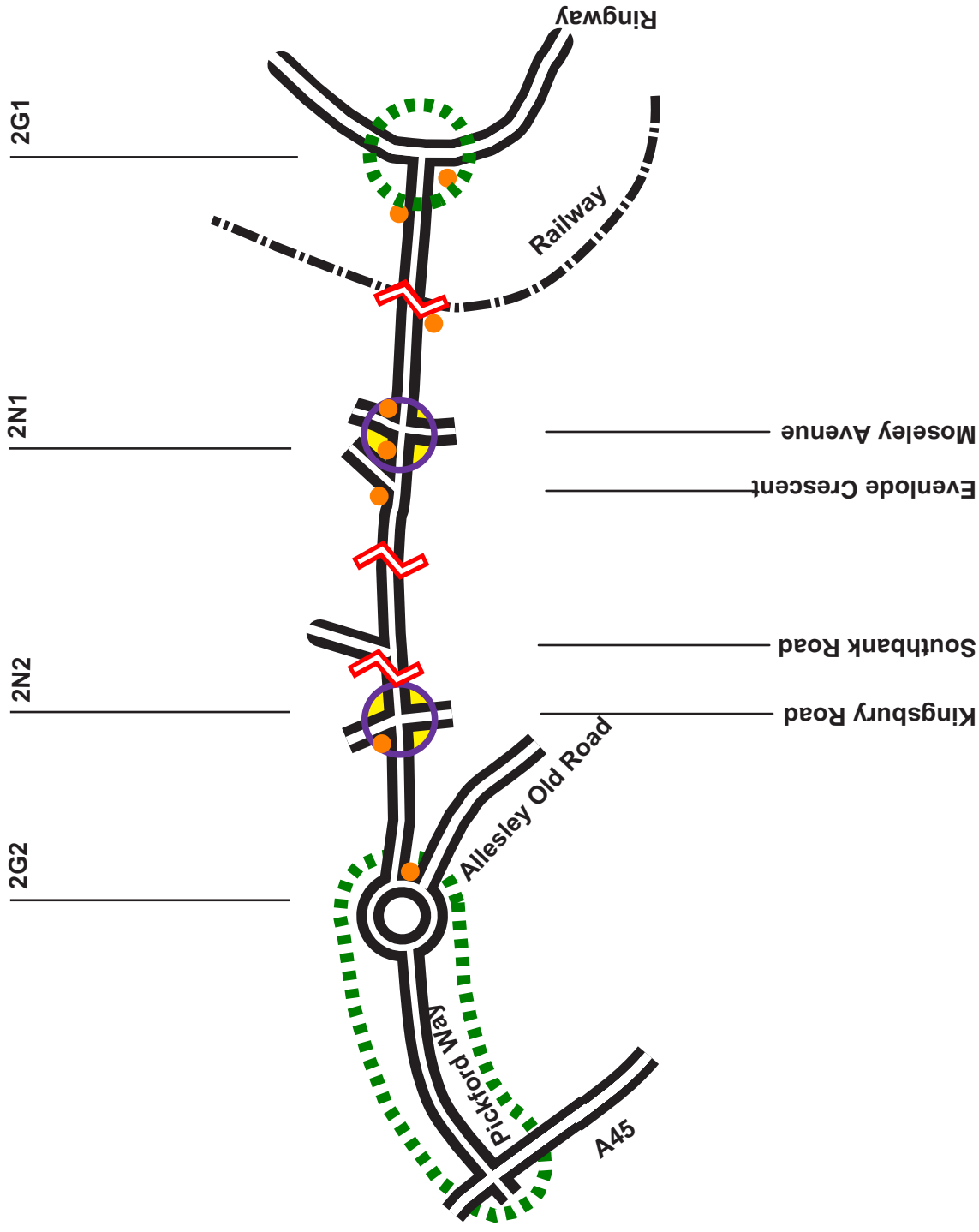
Boulevard planting



Typical local shopping centre frontage



Corridor 2 : Holyhead Road
 Character and type
 Not to Scale
 Figure 36



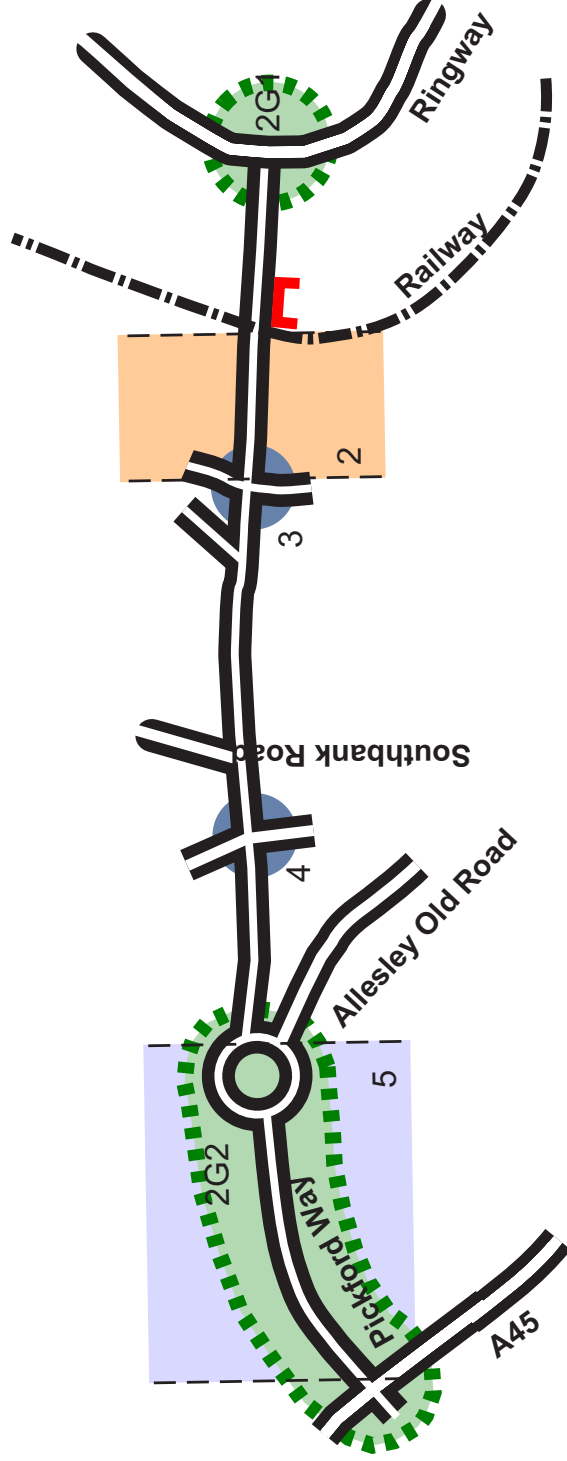
Corridor 2 : Holyhead Road

Place Elements

Not to Scale

Figure 37





KEY TO INTERVENTION

G1/2 Gateway improvements (see other dwg)

- 2 Continue Boulevard planting
- 3 Node 1: Increase building landmarks / enclosure / active frontage
- 4 Node 2: Increase building enclosure / active frontage
- 5 Tree planting scheme to mark gateway approach

 Improve boundary definition / landscaping

Corridor 2: Holyhead Road

Possible Interventions

Not to Scale

Figure 38



Period & Form

The route is clearly demarcated in terms of the period of development along its edges and the corresponding pattern of form is strong. This varies from Victorian residential stock (section 3a) to an area of modern single use building development (section 4b). Beyond this inter-war frontage resumes (section 2c), breaking into post war terraced and semi-detached development at the 2km mark (section 2d, 2e)

Activity & Use

Changes in use are relatively abrupt and influence perceived levels of activity. Section 3a is primarily a mixture of residential and hospitality use with some professional offices. Though retail use dominates section 4b, activity remains minimal due largely to building setback. Beyond this residential use resumes with a zone of shopping activity defining section 2d.

Link Elements

This is one of the strongest routes for link elements though these are not continuous over its entire length. Link elements reinforce the division into street types with the boulevard section having most clarity through tree planting. The Retail Park and High Street types are both devoid of planting and the former exhibits a theme of open paved areas.

Place Elements

Nodes

Only two major nodes exist along the entire route. The first after 1 kilometre at the junction with Four Pounds Avenue and Moseley Avenue. The second node is occurs at the 2 kilometre mark junction with Grayswood Avenue. Both these intersect with those sections which include retail activity.

Quality	Node	
	1	2
	Class	A1
Min Bldg Setback on Corner	0	1
2 Storey on Corner or Greater	1	1
Concentration of Form / Use	0	1
Landmark Structure	3	2
Active Frontage	0	1
Public Uses	1	1
Total	5	7
Percentage	28	39

Nodes 1 and 2 are also poor given their A1 category, primarily through lack of enclosure.

Gateways / Thresholds

Entrance off the Ringway is reasonably well defined with a narrowing, rising road marked with a landmark building on the left. At the NW end the entry off the roundabout junction with Pickford Way is weak, though marked by the Tollgate pub. Junction eight does not work as a gateway into the city from the Holyhead road due to split level and no through access. The railway bridge marks the only strong threshold along the entire route though subtle changes are noticeable in form (terraced / semi-detached) within type 2 sections.

Quality	Gateway	
	1route	1city 2
Through Access	3	0 3
Landmark Structure	1	0 2
Physical edge definition	1	1 0
Character Change- form/use	2	2 0
Visual Axis	1	3 2
Positive landscape / topography	2	0 0
Positive Immediate Context	1	1 0
Information / Meaning	1	1 0
Total	12	8 7
Percentage	50	33 29

Landmarks

Few landmarks exist along the route but those that do coincide with thresholds, nodes and gateways. Much of the fabric is uniform and corners are often not given any special treatment hence the infrequency of local landmark buildings.

6.13 Tile Hill Lane / Hearsall Lane / Butts Road

This corridor connects to the Ringway via Butts Road (junction 7) and crosses the city boundary approximately 6 kilometres to the west. The old route from Spon End into the city (pre-Ringway) was via Spon Street which is now a pedestrian route through Windsor estate with a subway only link to city. Spon End, part of medieval Spon Street, formed the major East-West route through the city from early 1600's. The corridor runs past the edge of Earlsdon along the back of Chapelfields. Beyond this it enters Hearsall Common and then runs adjacent to the new business / retail parks connecting into the A45 after 2.5 kilometres. (Figs 39-42)

Generic Street Types

Five major street types occur along the route. These include:

- Type 1 - Motorway fast road (Butts Road).
- Type 2 - Boulevard from Tile Hill College west to intersection with Station Avenue. This is a weak residential type of Boulevard that does

not have the same width as an urban Boulevard nor is the tree line as strong.

- Type 3 - Main Street (Hearsall Lane, Spon End, Tile Hill Lane until Tile Hill College).
- Type 4 - Open park (Hearsall Common) and Retail Park before A45
- Type 5 - Suburban / Rural Lane from the city boundary east to Station Avenue intersection.

Character Sections

The corridor breaks into 6 different sections of character which mostly reflect the street types. The exception being Main Street which has two different character sections (3b and 3d).

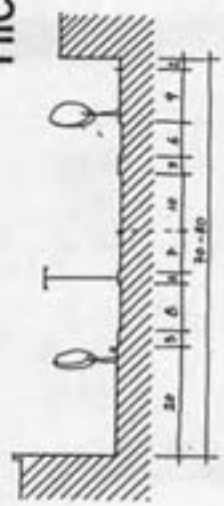
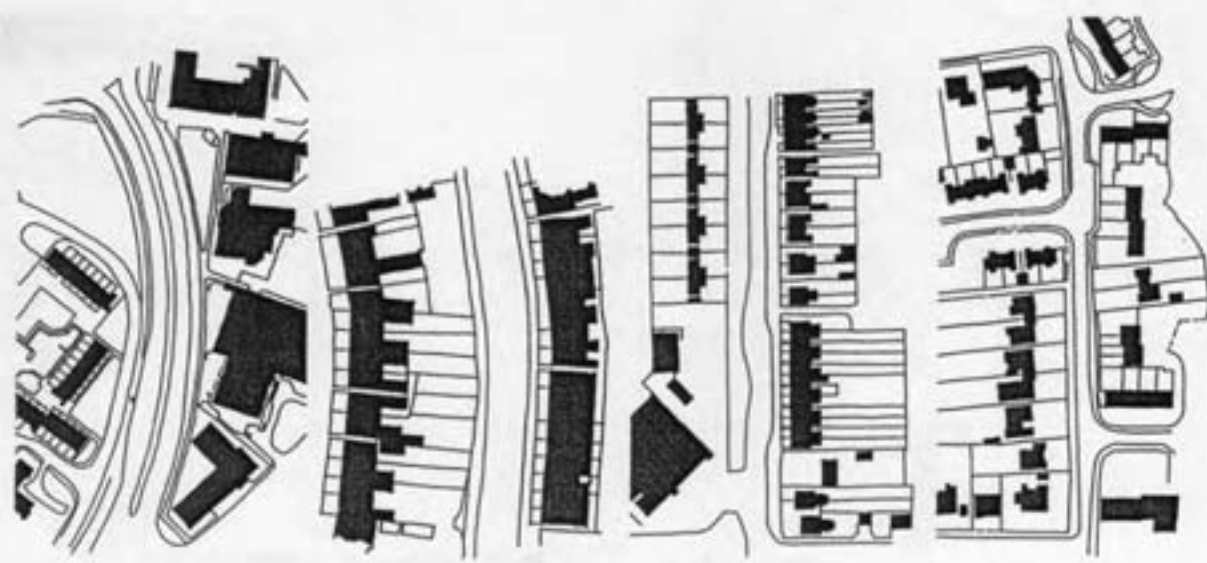
Spatial configuration

- Butts Road (section 1a) is fast dual carriageway, poorly enclosed with a lack of continuous frontage. Buildings are oriented in different ways to the street resulting in frontage to frontage distances of 60-80 metres. The minimal planting does not improve the poor sense of enclosure.
- Section 3b exhibits continuous 2 storey frontage onto one side of the street with Chapelfield's Top Shops backing onto the other with the edge heavily planted. Similar spatial pattern is found along the eastern end of Tile Lane.
- The Main Street section 3e is characterised by its width and clear low wall boundary definition. Planting exists and increases the sense of enclosure though this is irregular. Gentle undulating, curving topography allows axial views.
- Section 2f has a regular pattern of tree planting and straight sections giving a Boulevard type quality. The narrow road width and absence of access roads however downgrade this to a 'residential' boulevard. The final section of suburban / rural lane has no particular spatial configuration due to the absence of regular planting and residential development is set back from the road.

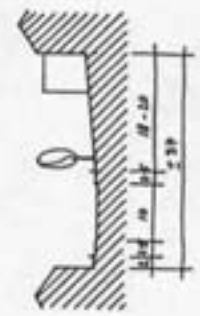
Period & Form

- Much of Butts Road is modern pavilion type development while Spon End includes some medieval buildings (<1800's). As a result the grain changes dramatically from Butts Road (coarse) to Spon End (fine). The Tech College is only quality modern building of note (inter-war).
- Section 3b (Hearsall and Tile Lane) is distinguished by its continuity of Victorian terraced frontage. Plot widths are narrow leading to a fine

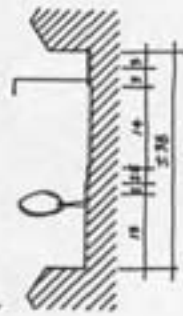
Tile Hill Lane / Butts Road



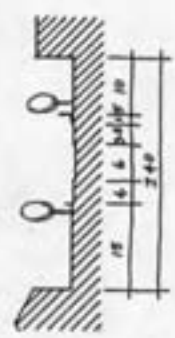
Motorway Type, Character Section 1a



Main Street Type, Character Section 3b



Main Street Type, Character Section 3e



Suburban Lane, Character Section 5g

Figure 39



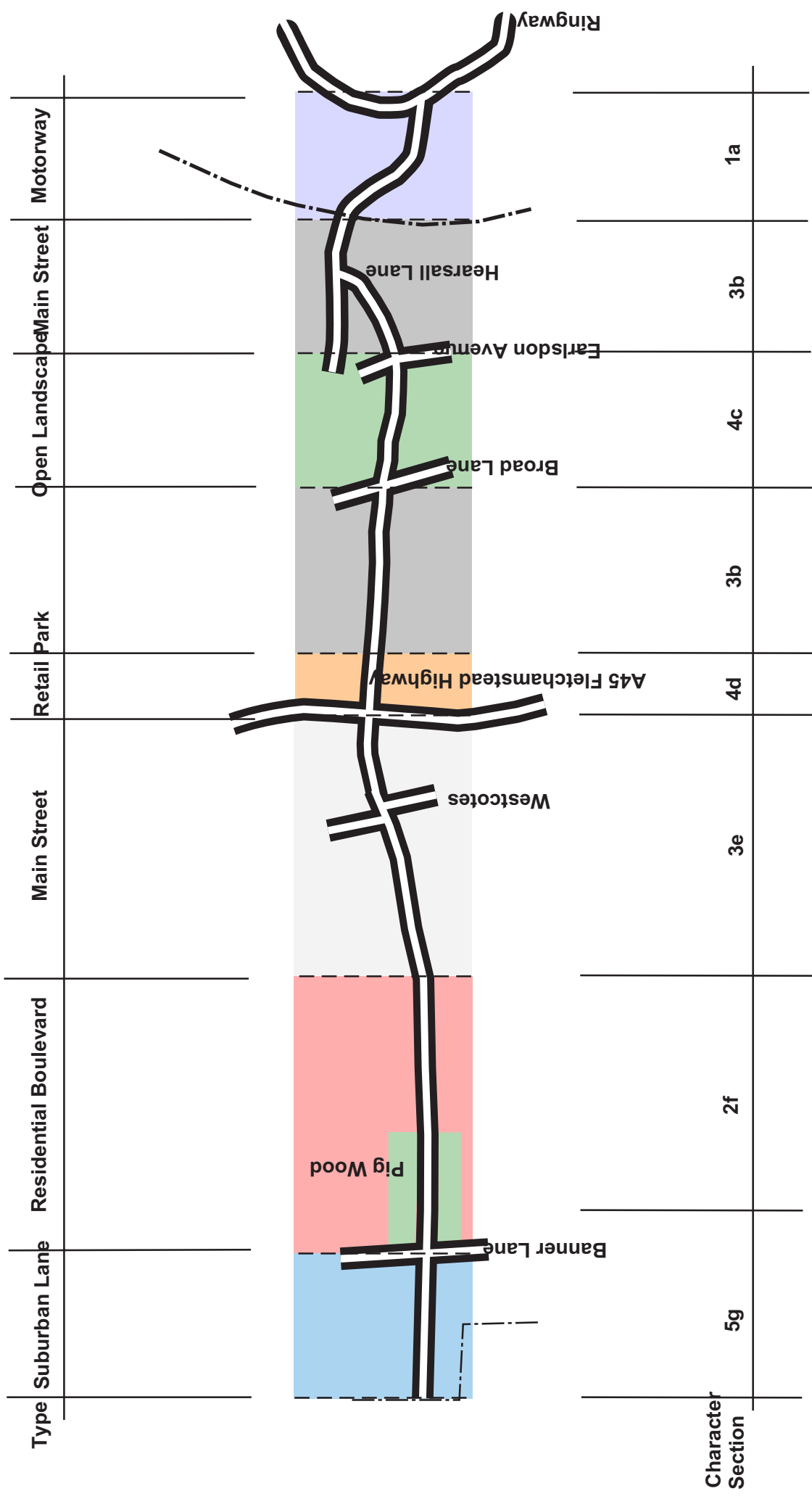
Typical terraced street: one-sided frontage development



Typical residential road section: tree planting, semi-detached housing



Frontage development all but disappears at the city edge



Corridor 3: Tile Hill lane
 Character and Type
 Not to Scale
 Figure 40

grain pattern and front yards are small (1-2m) though well defined with low walls and planting.

- Section 3e contains predominantly semi-detached inter-war housing with some areas of terraced frontage. The former are large with 7-10m front yards and boundaries are well defined. The terraced frontage tends to be converted to shops at ground floor with inconsistent shop frontage including uncoordinated signage. Beyond this development has a weak presence on the street, the majority being post war council housing estates that are set back behind a strong tree line. Section 5g is similar in that the DB32 type development is inward looking with a weak street frontage.

Activity and Use

Butts Road lacks active ground floor frontage due to its form types and lack of public uses. In comparison Spon End presents a highly active ground floor to the street, containing predominantly shops with minimal set back. Section 3b is mainly residential in use, though presents a clear front onto the street, unlike sections 2f and 5g which turn away from the street. Tile Hill Lane west of the A45 (3d) contains a mix of uses, with highly active shopping nodes and quieter residential areas.

Link Elements

The overall corridor generally fails to exhibit continuity in link elements and contains independent sections of particular link element configuration. Lighting is the most continuous with two principal designs, one type west of the A45 and the other east. The residential Boulevard section has a strong tree line but this breaks down east of Tile Hill College. Hard landscaping is nondescript and limited to paving in active shopping areas.

Place Elements

- Nodes**

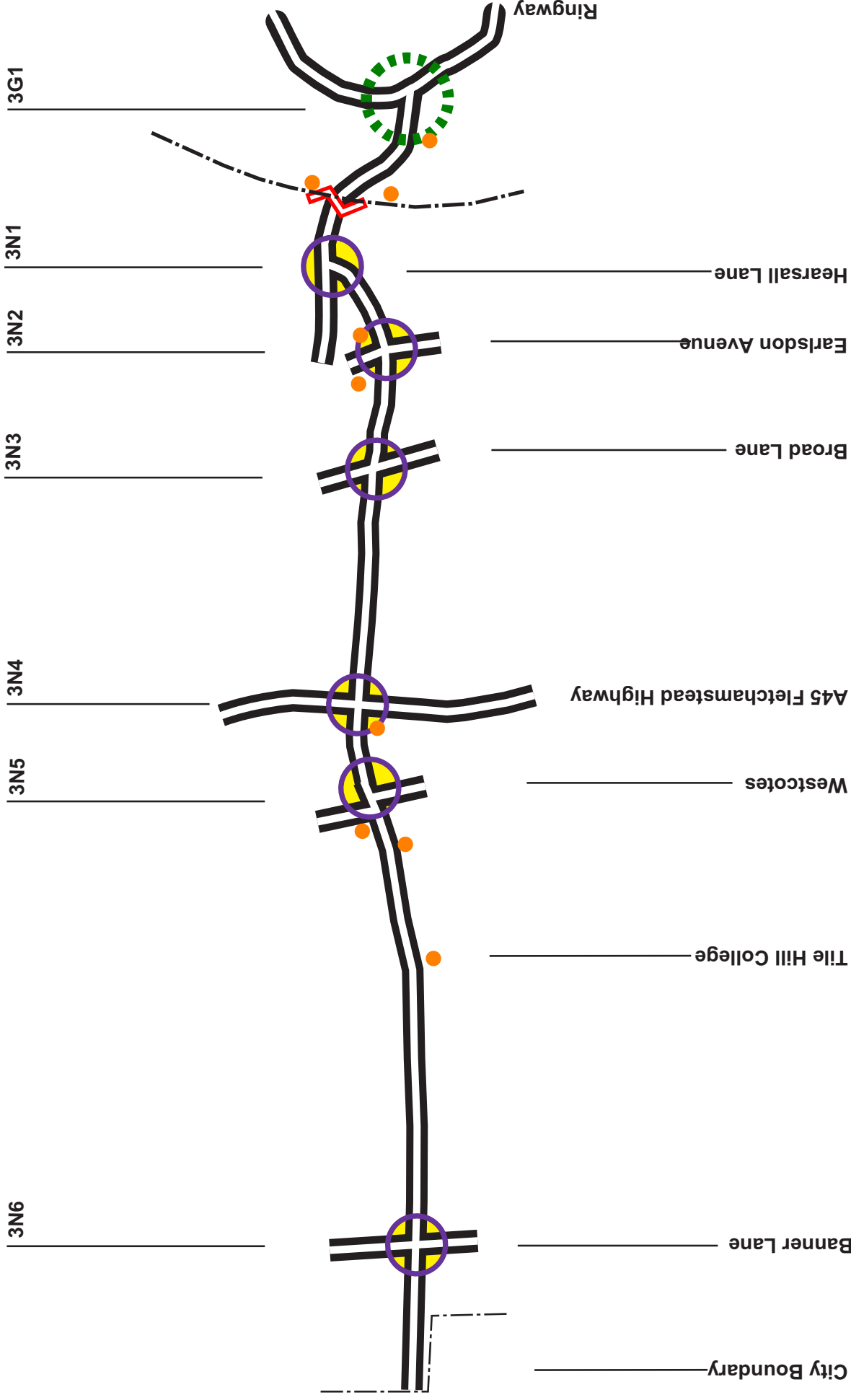
This corridor contains 6 nodes of varying status. They generally occur between character sections, enhancing the feeling of discontinuity over the corridor as a whole. Two of the nodes (3 and 4) are formed by motorway intersections and consequently score poorly, including a lack of landscape / sculptural features.

Quality	Node					
	Class	1	2	3	4	5
		A2	A1	M	M	B1
Min Building Setback		2	2	0	2	2
2 Storey on Corner or Greater		3	2	0	2	1
Concentration of Form / Use		2	2	0	1	2
Landmark Structure		0	1	0	0	3
Active Frontage		2	1	0	1	2
Public Uses		2	1	0	2	2
Total		11	9	0	8	12
Percentage		61	50	0	44	67
		50				50

The A1 class nodes score averagely, due mainly to their lack of enclosure on all sides and lack of landmark features. Nodes 3 and 4 require marking with landmark features.

Gateways / Thresholds

Quality	Gateway	
	1route	1city
Through Access	2	2
Landmark Structure	1	0
Physical edge definition	3	3
Character Change- form/use	1	1
Visual Axis	2	1
Positive landscape / topography	0	0
Positive Immediate Context	1	0
Information / Meaning	2	1
Total	12	8
Percentage	50	33

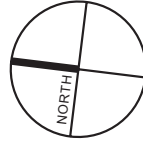


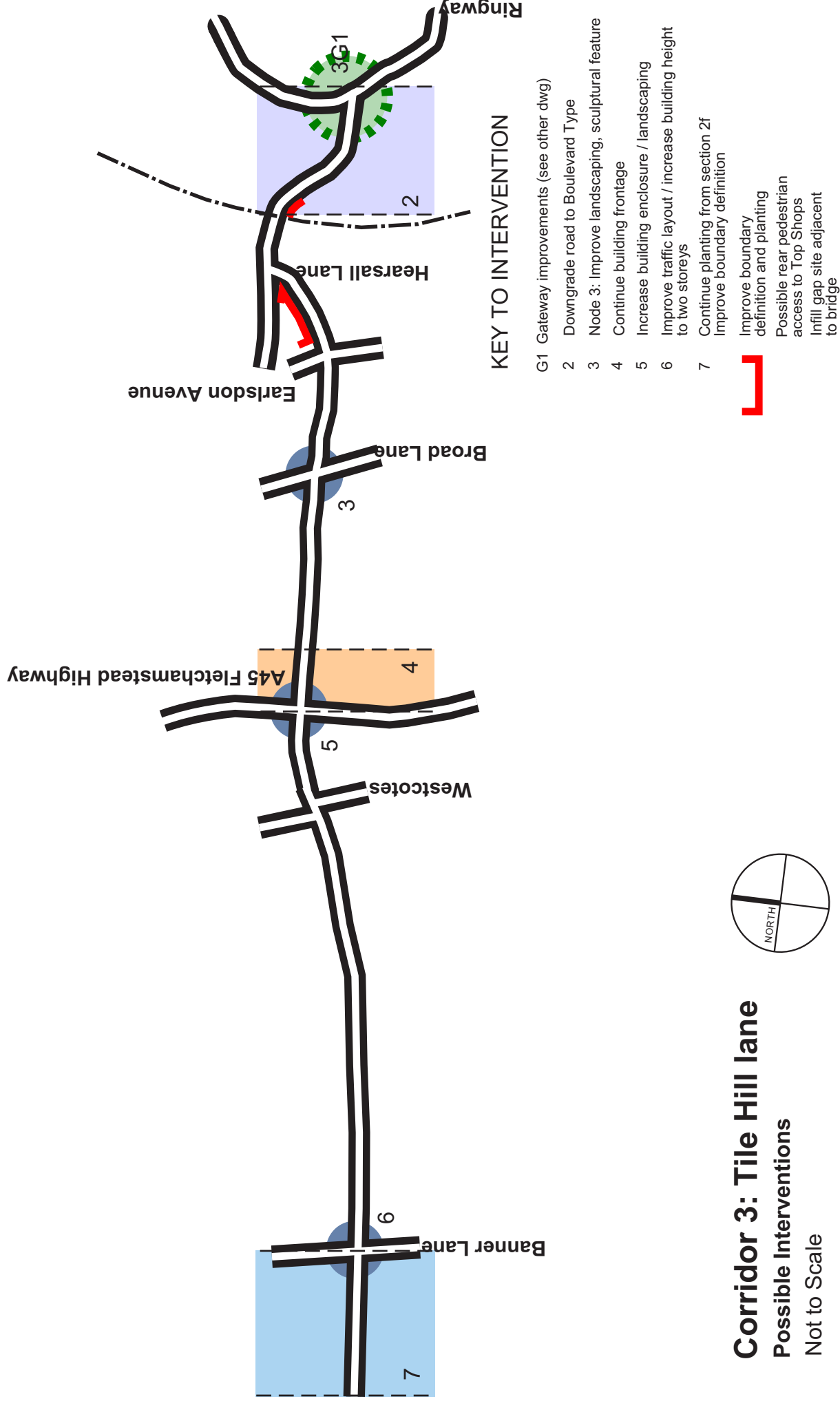
Corridor 3 : Tile Hill lane

Place Elements

Not to Scale

Figure 41





The at grade connection at junction seven, with the Ringway over strengthens the feeling of 'city gateway' and the large scale buildings, though thinly distributed, add to this. Entering into the corridor is weak due to the lack in change of form and use, and the poor enclosure at junction seven. Railway bridge (Spon End) demarcates progression along the route and acts as a threshold. The western end of the corridor is weakly defined in terms of entrance / exit (gateway 2)

Landmarks

Ten local landmarks, two occurring in Butts Road (Tech College and tower) with the railway bridge acting as a strong landmark to Spon End. Landmarks overlap with nodes in two instances only (nodes 2 and 5) but generally are poorly distributed throughout the corridor.

6.14 London Road

Four kilometres in length running south east in a radial orientation to the city centre. Connects into junction four on the Ringway, the Cheylsmore By Pass after 1.5 kilometres and the A45 By Pass to the south. The route existed under the same name from the early 1700's beyond the city wall from New Gate at the end of Much Park Street. That connection was terminated by the Ringway and no through access currently exists other than pedestrian subway. A strong feature of the route is the cemetery that runs for a kilometre along the west side and is a designated conservation area. (Figs 43-46)

Generic Street Types

Three major street types occur along the route. These include:

- Type 1 - Motorway fast road at southern end off junction with A45
- Type 2 - Boulevard extends from St James Lane intersection to southern end of London Road cemetery
- Type 5 - Hybrid of the Boulevard / Motorway through remainder of corridor until the Ringway. This is dual carriageway fast road with no continuous tree line and little frontage development.

Character Sections

The route is characterised by a pattern of built up sections and open spaces rather than continuous built form. Of this 4 distinctive character sections are noticeable. The motorway exhibits a single character 1d while the Boulevard breaks into characters 2b and 2c. The hybrid section exhibits a single character 5a.

Spatial configuration

Within 5a the cemetery wall provides the one continuous space defining element. Enclosure is poor and provided mainly by landscaping. Built form does little to define a spatial pattern. Moving into section 2b tree planting becomes regular to both sides creating a Boulevard type with central planting strip and dual carriageway. Section 2c maintains the tree line but varies with its loss of central strip and development gives way to open landscape which includes the River Sowe. The road undulates with gentle turns generating visual axes along the boulevard. Section 1d is poorly enclosed through a lack of tree planting and irregular frontage development.

Period & Form

Development is sporadic, occurring in clusters along the corridor and with the exception of Willenhall also tends to front one side of the road at a time. Within section 5a the only built form is located close to the Ringway and is a council estate of the inter-war period. The next major development (Whitley) occurs in sections 2b and 2c and is also from the inter-war period. That development occurs at the transition between sections 2b and 2c and fronts onto the road with generous forecourts. The final cluster of development in 1d is modern post-war exhibiting a variety of form from semi-detached housing, medium density flats to pavilion type car showrooms. The latter exhibiting poor definition between public and private realms.

Activity and Use

Development near the Ringway in section 5a presents an active edge to the road from a mix of residential and ground floor shop use. The same can be said of Whitley though activity is reduced by the large set-back. The beginning of section 1d exhibits a finer grain of uses than the end and as a result is a more lively street edge. Uses include shops, pub and residential whereas the latter half of the section is dominated by retail show rooms.

Link Elements

There is little continuity over the entire corridor but elements such as tree planting provide strong continuity within certain sections (eg. 2b, 2c). Within 5a the cemetery wall is the strongest link element while section 1d lacks link elements altogether apart from some hard landscaping to forecourts.

Place Elements

Nodes

Four nodes occur along the corridor, the first two of which are purely junction nodes formed by the Cheylesmore By-Pass and Allard Way respectively. Both of these score very poorly (under 50%) given that they are formed by major roads. Nodes 3 and 4 score better with the former scoring 60% despite the fact it forms no junctions. Both are defined by shop front activity and occur between different character sections.

Quality	Class	Node			
		1	2	3	4
Min Building Setback	M	0	0	1	1
2 Storey on Corner or Greater		0	1	3	2
Concentration of Form / Use		0	2	3	2
Landmark Structure		0	1	0	1
Active Frontage		0	1	2	2
Public Uses		0	2	2	2
Total		0	7	11	10
Percentage		0	39	61	56

Gateways / Thresholds

Quality	Gateway	
	1route	1city
Through Access	3	0
Landmark Structure	1	2
Physical edge definition	1	0
Character Change- form/use	2	2
Visual Axis	3	3
Positive landscape / topography	0	0
Positive Immediate Context	1	0
Information / Meaning	2	2
Total	13	9
Percentage	54	38

Entering the city at Gateway one is poor due primarily to lack of through access, though Whitefriars and a public house help define the image of the junction as a gateway. Entering into the corridor the gateway works slightly better with through access and a visual axis down the road. The stone structure to the cemetery entrance helps mark this gateway. The only two notable thresholds along the corridor are the railway bridge in section 5a and Whitley bridge in section 2b. With relatively few nodes along this corridor these help to provide points of reference within long sections of similar character.

Landmarks

Six landmark structures exist along the corridor which are either buildings or bridges. Of these only two coincide with the location of nodes or gateways and section 2c is devoid of landmarks altogether.

6.15 Walsgrave / Ansty Road

A radial route running north-east for 5.5 kilometres. Shares Sky Blue Way with Binley Road as the connection to junction three on the Ringway. At the outer end the route intersects with junction two of the M6 motorway and crosses the city boundary. (Figs 47-50)

The western end of Walsgrave Road existed as Gosford Terrace in the early 1800's and ran into the city via Far Gosford Street. That connection is now downgraded and limited to Binley Road.

Generic Street Types

Sky Blue Way (arguably not part of Walsgrave) is fast Motorway type 1. The corridor itself contains Types 1, 2 and 3. The large middle section being a combination of 2 (Boulevard) which has poor tree enclosure and verges towards High Street.

- Type 1 - Motorway - Wigston Road intersection to M6
- Type 2 - Boulevard - Ansty Road
- Type 3 - High Street - Phoenix Way intersection to beginning of Ansty Road

Character Sections

Apart from the motorway type which exhibits a single character, both the High Street and Boulevard types break down into a number of character sections (3a, b, c and 2d and e respectively).

Spatial Configuration

The most significant change in spatial configuration occurs with the transition from building enclosed High Street to the Boulevard type street. A change in character is also noticeable between sections 2d and 2e with the latter exhibiting poor boundary definition (no wall/fence) between pavement and front yard and an absence of tree planting. Section 1f exhibits undefined space through no enclosure from either building or planting.

Period & Form

Section 3a and b at the bottom end of Walsgrave Road contains the predominant amount of early 1900's Victorian building on the corridor. Beyond this (section 3c and 2d) begins what is the majority of inter-war small scale development until Clifford Bridge Road with a notable large scale single building opposite Church end.

Development above Clifford Bridge Road (section 2e) contains small sections of pre-1800 and Victorian buildings but with the greater majority being post-war housing.

Section 1f (motorway type) runs through expansive modern retail parks consisting of large single use pavilion structures.

Activity and Use

The lower end sections of Walsgrave (3a, b, and c) are characterised by their dense mix of residential and shopping uses leading to a very active street. In contrast the Boulevard sections exhibit distinct pockets of active shopping area within long residential only strips. Section 1f containing retail buildings is never-the-less inactive due to its layout.

Link Elements

Poor continuity of link elements such as trees and lighting within the context of the street as a whole. Distinct sections however are given clear themes through good continuity though in some cases sections links could be improved if more than one element was continuous. In particular 2d and 2e have continuity of lighting though not of planting or boundary definition.

Place Elements

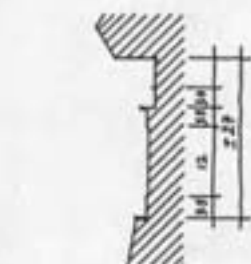
Nodes

The route exhibits seven nodes, all fairly well distributed over its entire length.

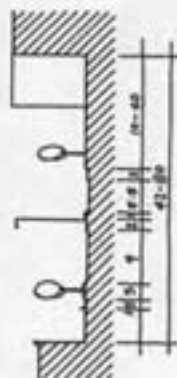
Quality	Class	Node						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Class	C	A1	C	A1	A2	A1	A1
Min Building Setback		3	2	2	1	1	1	1
2 Storey on Corner or Greater		3	3	2	2	1	1	1
Concentration of Form / Use		3	3	2	2	1	1	2
Landmark Structure		1	3	0	1	1	3	0
Active Frontage		3	2	2	2	0	1	1
Public Uses		3	3	2	3	0	2	3
Total		16	16	10	11	4	9	8
Percentage		89	89	56	61	22	50	44

London Road

Hybrid Type, Character Section 5a



Boulevard Type, Character Section 2b, mode 2



High Street Type, Character Section 3d



Motorway Type, Character Section 1e

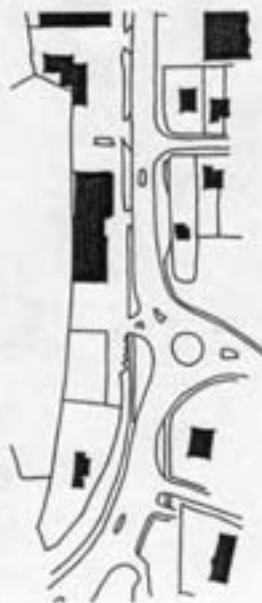
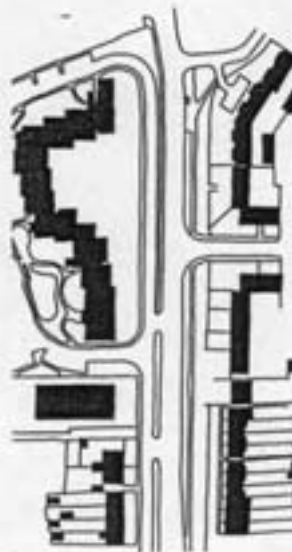
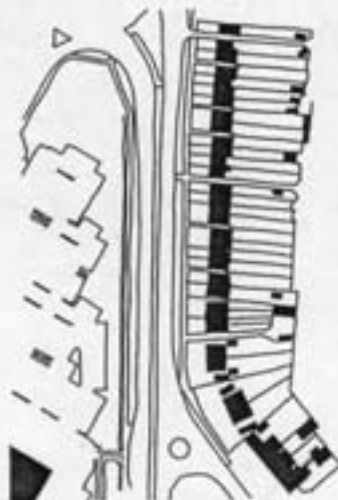
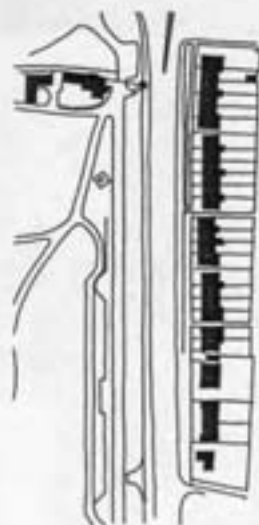
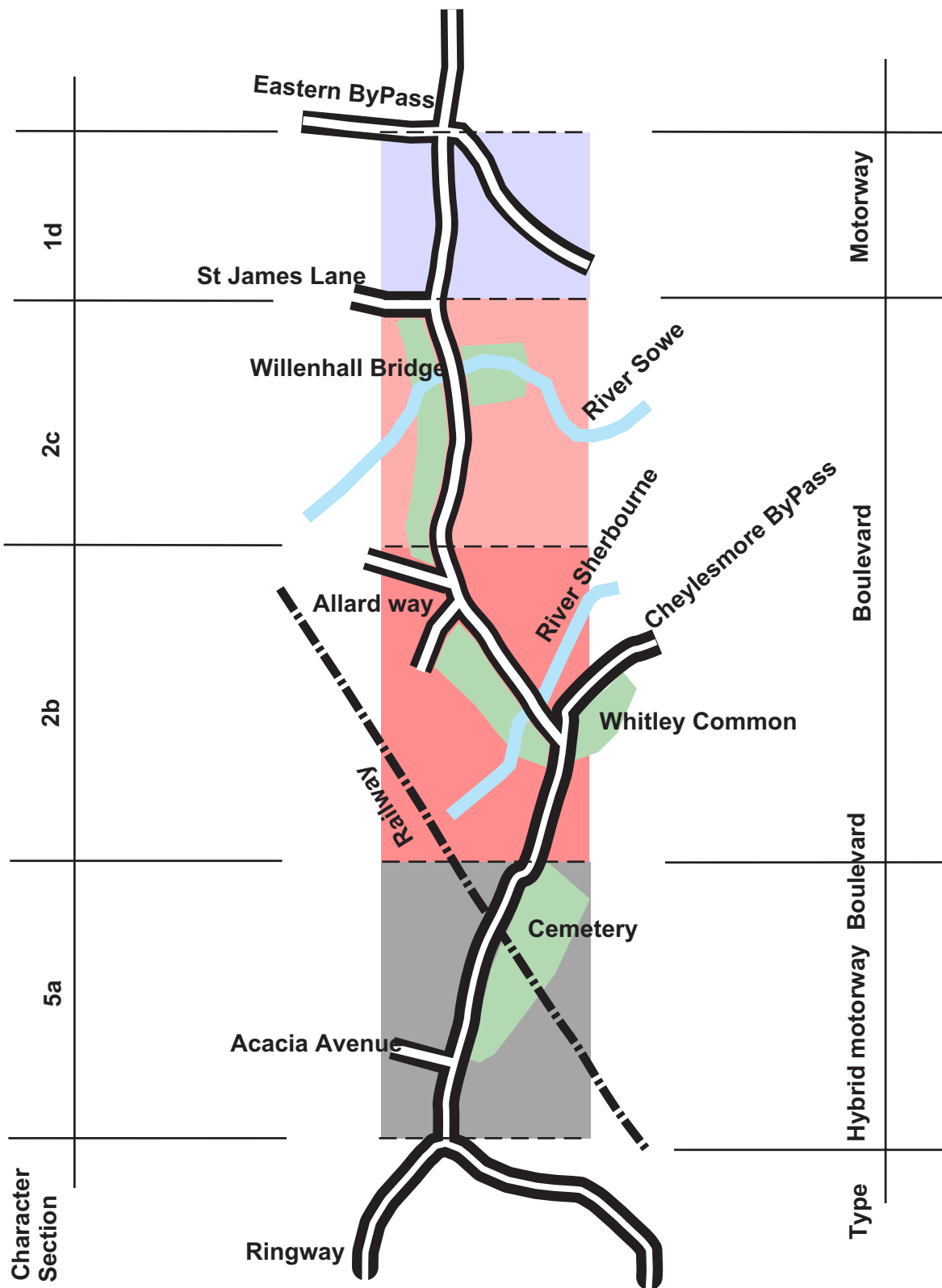


Figure 43

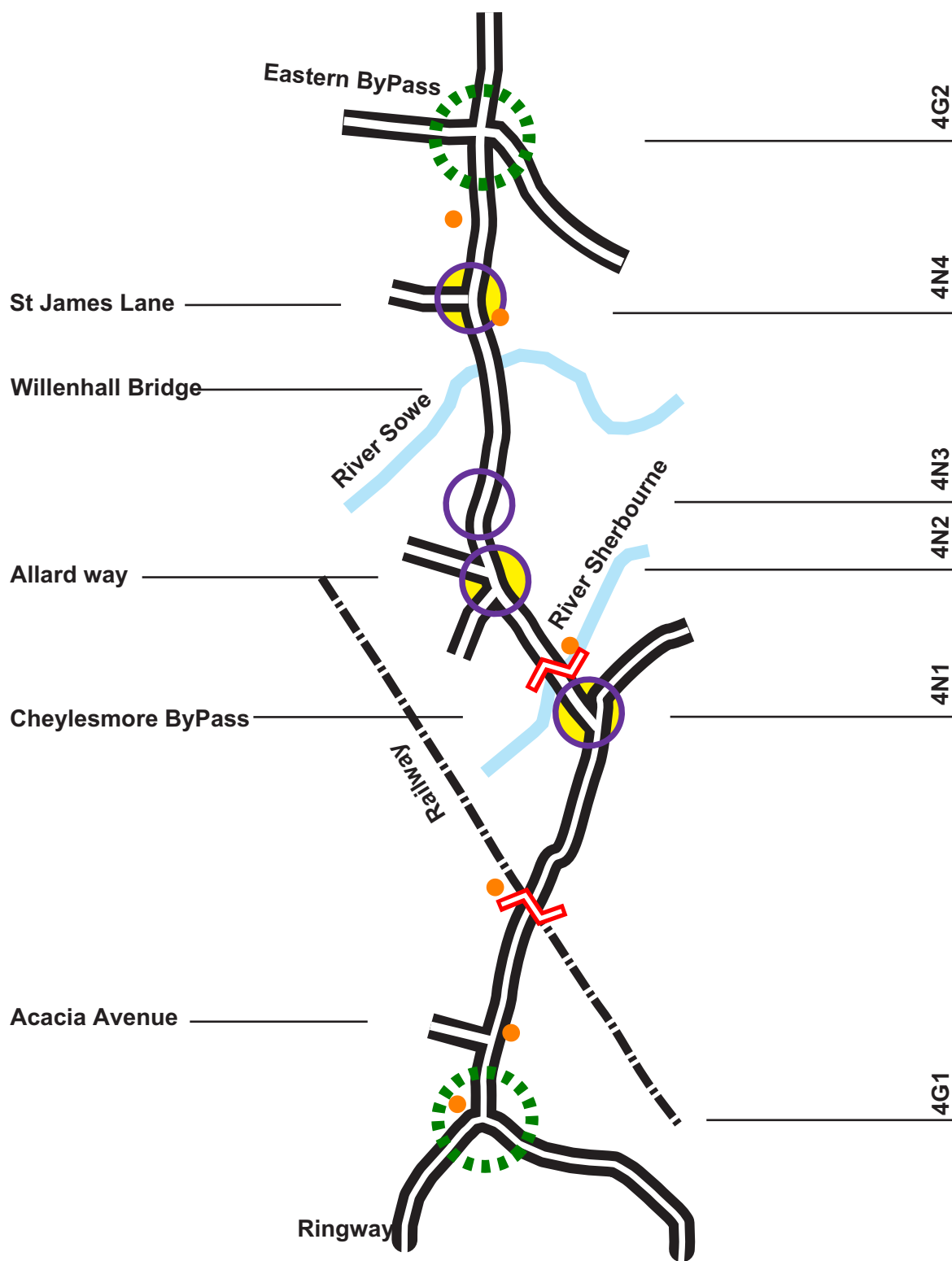


Corridor 4 : London Road

Character and Type

Not to Scale

Figure 44

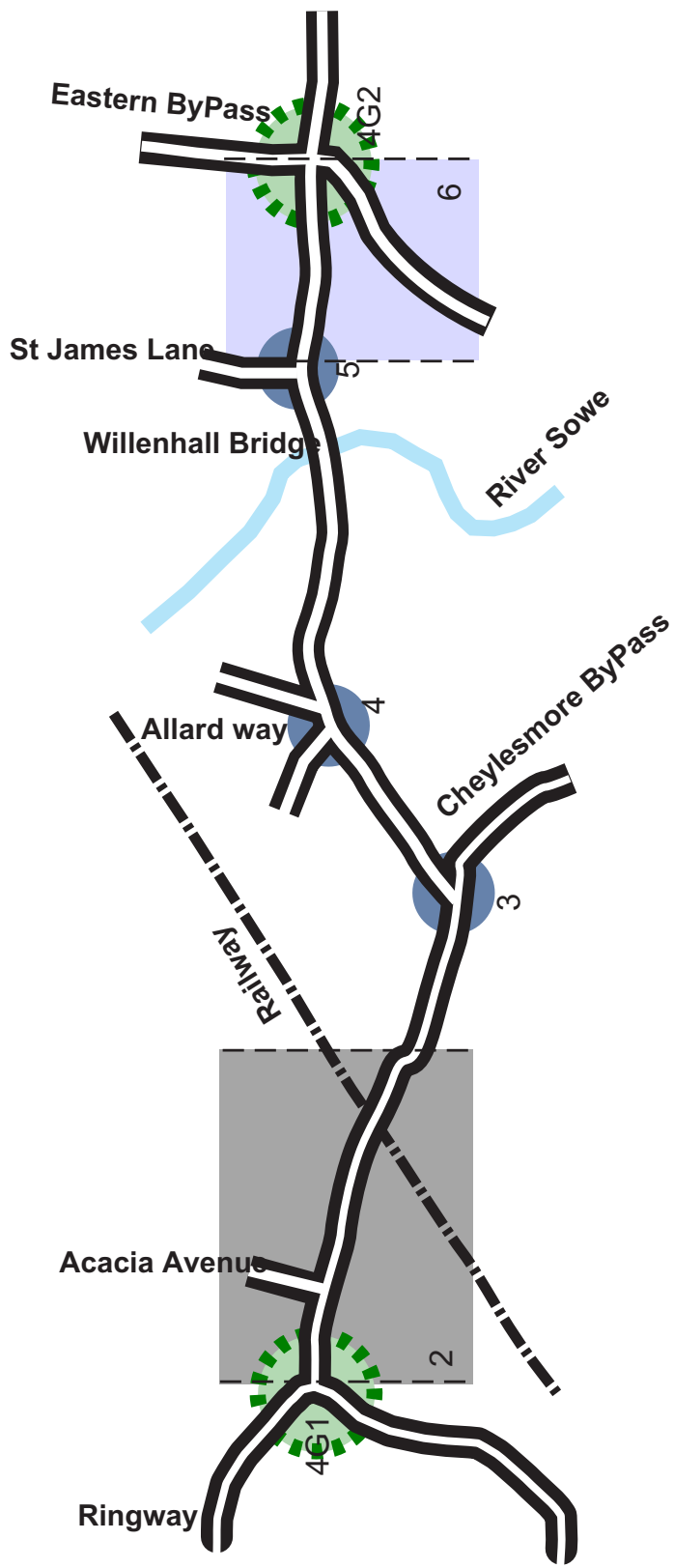


Corridor 4 : London Road

Place Elements

Not to Scale

Figure 45



KEY TO INTERVENTION

G1/2 Gateway improvements (see other dwg)

- 2 Enhance Boulevard type qualities -
Regular tree planting to sides / central planting
- 3 Improve landscaping, sculptural feature
to node 1
- 4 Increase building enclosure/ active
frontage / landmark structure to node 2
- 5 Increase building enclosure / active
ground floor to node 4
- 6 Improve boundary definition / landscaping



Corridor 4: London Road

Possible Interventions

Not to Scale

Figure 46

Nodes 5, 6 and 7 are weak, primarily through a lack of building enclosure and active frontage. Nodes 5 and 7 require the most intervention for improvement. In comparison nodes 1 to 4 all score well with node 1, a 'C' class node, and node 2 both working the best.

All Gateways on this corridor are weak, lacking physical definition as well as the other qualities necessary for a 'Gateway'. The poorest is Gateway 2 which is little more than a motorway junction. Both Phoenix Way and the River Sowe form thresholds and are important as memorable points along the corridor's length.

• Gateways / Thresholds

Quality	Gateway		
	1route	1city	2
Through Access	3	3	3
Landmark Structure	0	1	0
Physical edge definition	1	1	0
Character Change- form/use	2	1	0
Visual Axis	1	3	3
Positive landscape / topography	1	1	0
Positive Immediate Context	0	0	0
Information / Meaning	1	1	2
Total	9	11	8
Percentage	38	46	33

Landmarks

The ten local landmarks identified on the corridor coincide well with the nodes, with only nodes 3 and 7 missing out in this regard. The landmarks are predominantly buildings (pubs, churches, tall buildings).

6.15 Stoney-Stanton Road

Stoney Stanton runs in a north-easterly direction, intersecting with Phoenix Way after 2.5 kilometres, Bell Green at 3.5 kilometres and under the M6 to the city boundary after 6 kilometres. The route existed from around 1830, picking up the end of Cook Street from the old Cook Street Gate. At

present the city end has no direct connection to the Ringway or the to city. The canal intersects at two points: Priestley's Bridge and Navigation Bridge. Both offer access to the canal tow path.

The corridor is largely High Street in type though this steps down towards the upper sections above Bell Green. Significant change occurs at Hamall Lane with comparatively open unenclosed space (Swanswell pond contributing to this condition) contrasting with the good enclosure extending up to the first canal bridge. The gradient drops down back towards the city creating strong view corridors. Much of the route is similar until the Phoenix Way roundabout and adjacent new retail parks.

Development along the route varies considerably. The lower section is distinguished by the 1960's high rise apartment blocks which then move into the predominant amount of Victorian, continuous frontage that extends to the notable post-war mixed-use precinct at Bell Green.

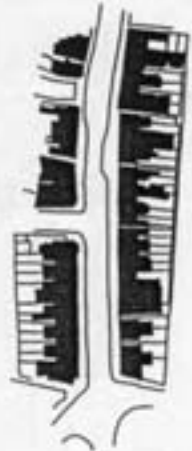
The upper section (Aldermans Green) is notable for its nineteenth century squatter settlements, exhibiting ribbon type development with good examples found in Co-operative Street.

Predominantly residential use below Hamall Lane with little opportunity for active frontage due to high rise block design. Victorian frontage exhibits predominantly ground floor shop conversions of residential buildings. Upper sections are largely residential apart from major shopping precinct at Bell green. This however contributes little to the street in terms of activity due to an inward looking layout.

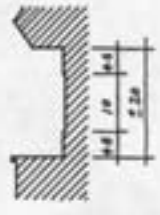
Four identifiable nodes equally spaced along the route within the first 3.5 kilometres only. Remaining sections 5 and 6 have no major nodal points. Nodes occur both between sections and within sections

Poor sense of entry into Stoney Stanton Road due to convoluted road connection across the Ringway. Northern end boundary gateway marked by beginning of built frontage however the feeling is incremental rather than abrupt.

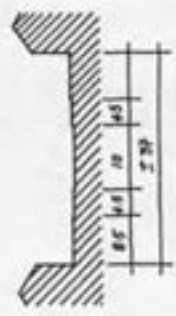
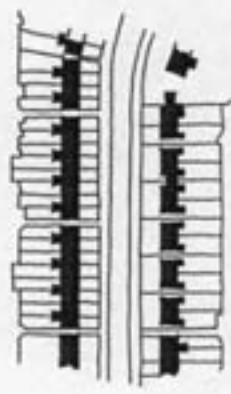
Three key threshold points. First at initial canal crossing, second at canal / Phoenix Way crossing and third at the M6 flyover.



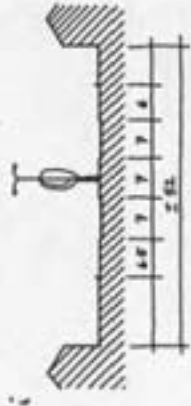
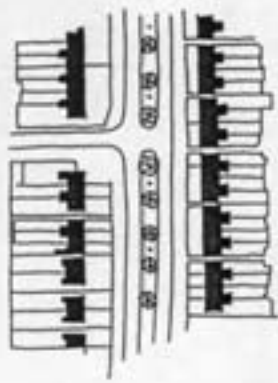
Walsgrave / Ansty Road



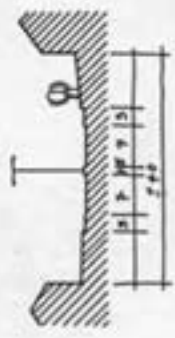
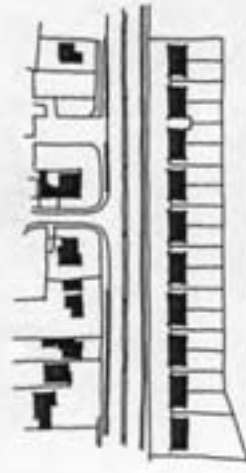
High Street Type, Character Section 3b



Boulevard Type, Character Section 2b



Boulevard Type, Character Section 2e



Boulevard Type, Character Section 2e

Figure 47



Typical high street frontage



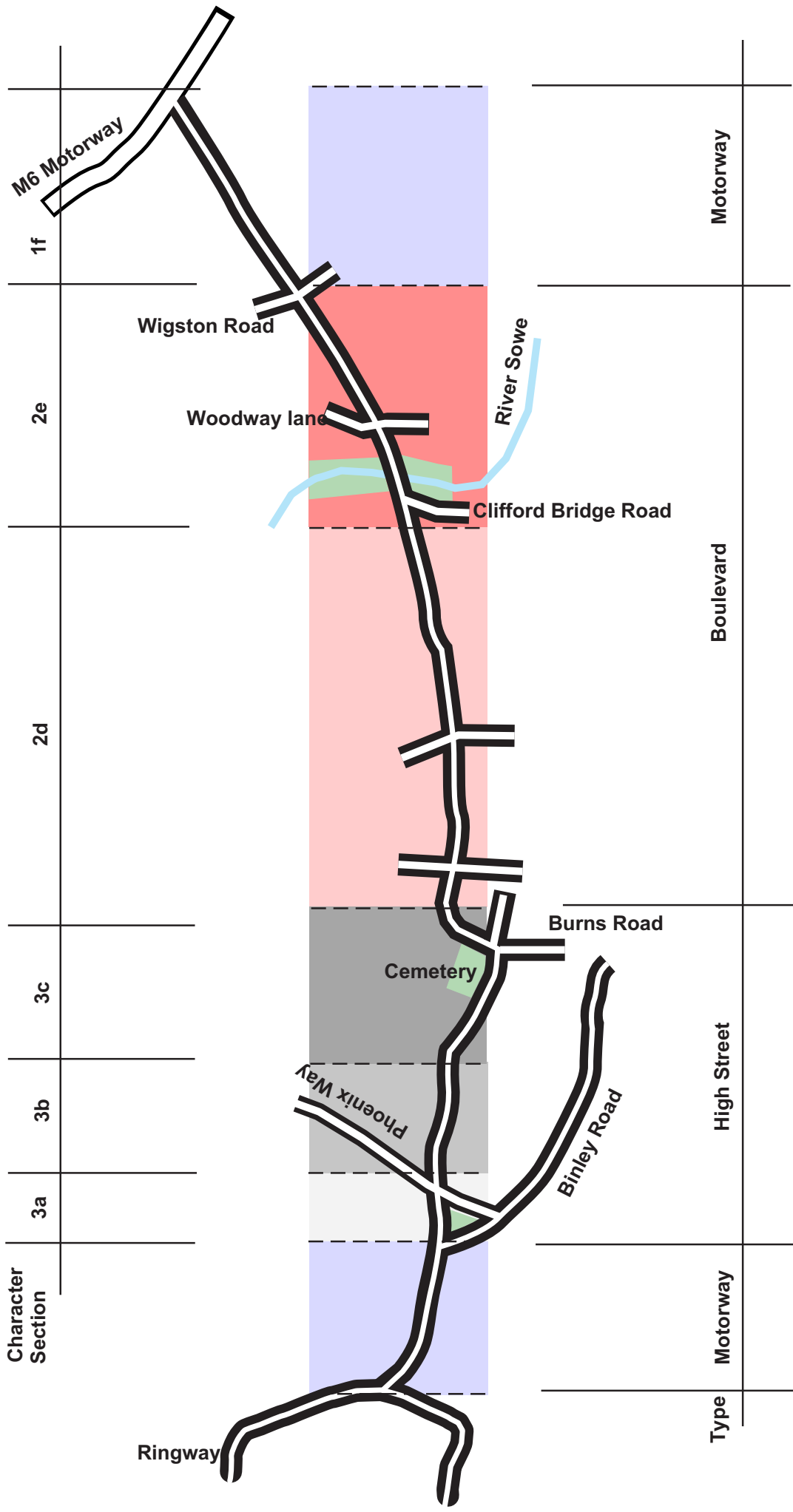
Poor enclosure and legibility nearing the Ringway junction



Typical local shop form



Typical dual carriageway section

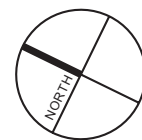
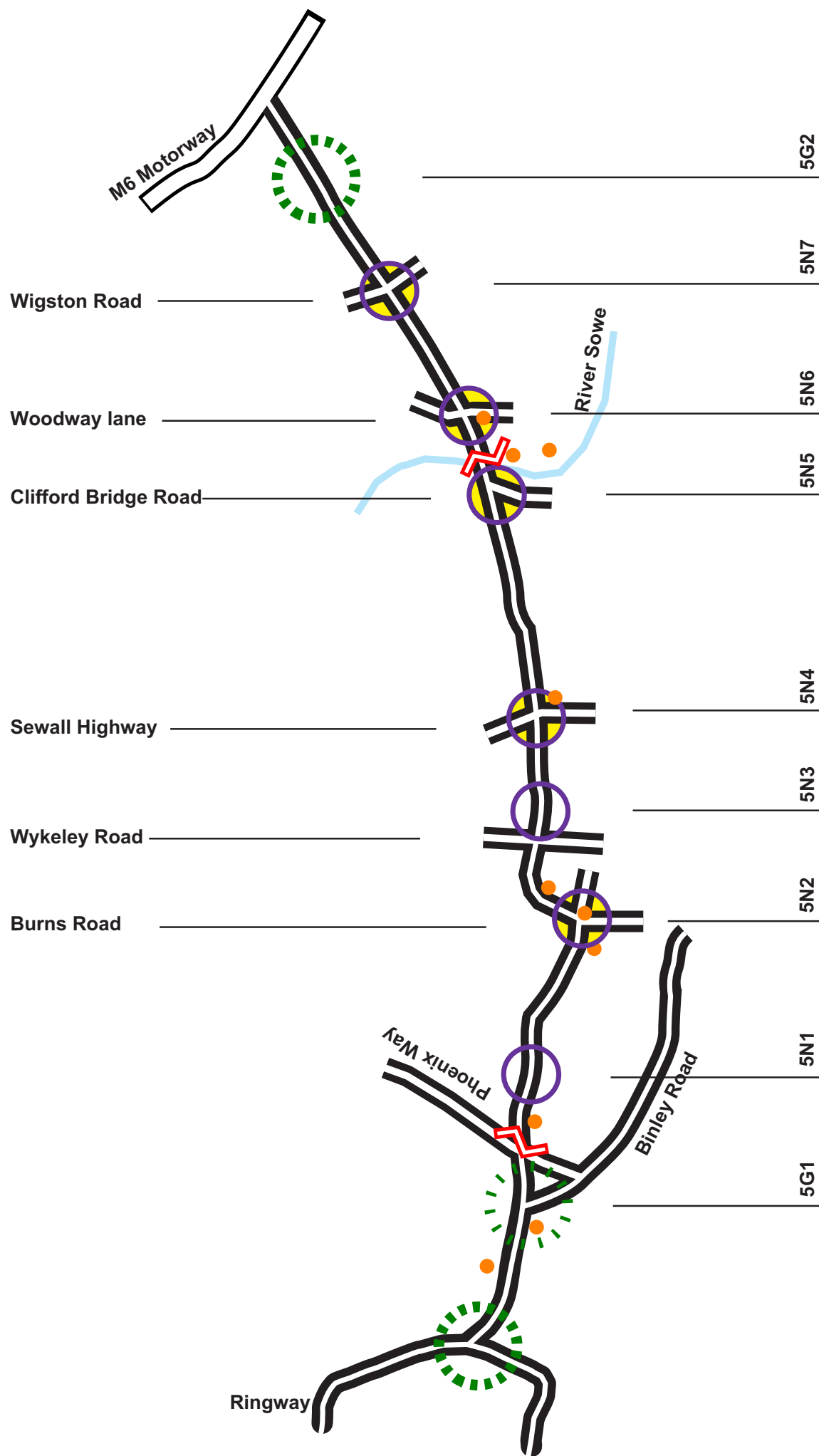


Corridor 5 : Walsgrave Road

Character and Type

Not to Scale

Figure 48

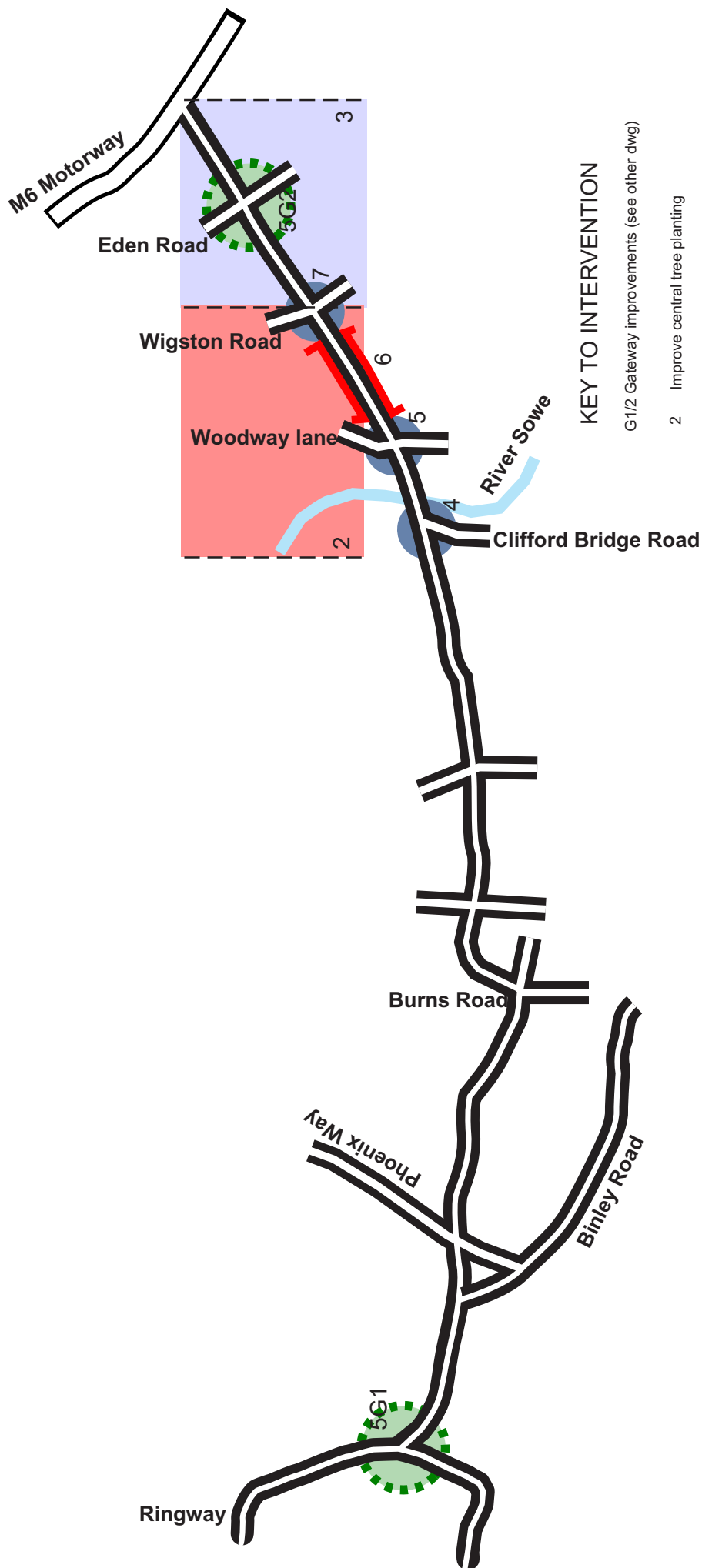


Corridor 5 : Walsgrave Road

Palce Elements

Not to Scale

Figure 49



Corridor 5: Walsgrave Road

Possible Interventions

Not to Scale

Figure 50

Noticeably few landmarks along entire route (four only). These include large estate blocks in section 1; church tower to section two; first canal bridge and the outer M6.

6.16 Keresley / Radford Road

Keresley Road runs north west, connecting into junction nine on the Ringway and crossing the city boundary after some six kilometres. It is a directly radial corridor which exhibits a clear intensification of form and use towards the city Ringway. The earliest recording of the road dates to the mid eighteenth century in its lower section running parallel to St Nicholas Road with the Radford Radial added in 1965 to connect to the Ringway.

A variety of street types are found from Rural Street outside the urban area to Boulevard between The Scotchill Burnaby Road junction and Engleton Road junction, to High Street until the final fast motorway type section (Radford Radial).

The Boulevard type section exhibits the characteristic width between frontages and planted central strip but has a weak tree line contributing to an unenclosed feel. In comparison the High Street reduces in width with front yards removed and loss of the central island strip. Long axial views are afforded of the city towers. The Radford Radial is typically open with poor frontage and planting. Of note is the pattern of open green linear spaces adjacent to the road which add to the variety of experience along the corridor.

The outer rural street is heavily planted, shielding the large detached dwellings from the road. Within the urban Boulevard section the majority of development is large modern inter-war housing with very regular and monotonous frontage. The lower section of High Street exhibits some older nineteenth century building intermingled with relatively newer development such as the Bingo Hall. Much of this is residential at first floor with ground floors converted to retail. Shop fronts show little order within the street context and signage is random, though the street however has a very active feel.

Four nodes occur in the southern half of the corridor, all at busy junctions and are generally marked by landmarks such as a pub or a church. The pubs are dominant landmarks due to their sheer size and siting within open space. Gateways into the corridor are poor with the southern motorway section offering little to change the experience off the Ringway.

The northern boundary has the standard Welcome to Coventry sign but the road is strongly axial and tree lined with views to local landmarks which create a feeling of approach.

6.17 Allesley Old Road / Butts Road (see also corridor 3)

Approximately 3.5 kilometres in length connecting to the Ringway via Butts Road (junction 7) and intersects with Pickford Way roundabout at the end of Holyhead Road.

The corridor runs adjacent to the conservation area of Chapelfields and existed in part in the early nineteenth century as a continuation west of Spon End. Spon End was part of medieval Spon Street which formed the major east-west route through the city from early 1600's until the 1960's.

The main street types include a hybrid of the Motorway and Boulevard types from the Pickford Way junction until Grayswood Avenue; a section of strong Boulevard between Grayswood Avenue and Maudslay Road and; High Street until the fast Butts Road section beyond the railway bridge.

The outer fast section is dual carriageway and poorly enclosed through the split level motorway with development on one side only. The character changes markedly to a Boulevard pattern, straight axial space tree lined, central strip with strongly continuous building line. The lower High Street is a typically narrower space with greater enclosure though remaining straight allowing visual links to the railway bridge.

The city end, including Spon End, exhibits some early and pre-1800's buildings with the notable conservation area of Chapelfields. Beyond this until Kingsland Avenue Victorian frontage development is dominant, mostly converted to retail at ground floor as is the Chapelfields frontage though this also includes what were the original Top Shop manufacturing buildings. The remainder of the route contains inter-war residential development in semi-detached form.

The corridor contains three nodes at relatively regular intervals. The first occurs at the Hearsall Lane intersection; the second at the intersection with Maudslay Road and; the third at the junction of Grayswood and Brookside Avenues. These mark changes in street types leading to a disjointed experience of the overall corridor. Local landmarks are few, most occurring in Butts Road (eg. Tech College, tower, bridge) thus poorly distributed throughout entire route. No overlap of landmarks with nodes.

The north west end of the route is weakly defined in terms of entrance / exit, being a continuation of fast Pickford Way and marked only by a landscaped roundabout. The railway bridge serves to define the end of Butts Road and beginning of Spon End / Allesley Old Road.

6.18 Warwick / Kennilworth Road

This is a south west running corridor approximately 5.5 kilometres long, connecting into junction 6 at the Ringway and with the A45 mid-way. It shares Warwick Road with Leamington Road as the connection into the city. Kennilworth Road is perhaps the most splendid processional route into the city, very green with a topography that allows strong views at both ends. It is also a designated conservation area and runs past the War Memorial Park.

The dominant street type for Kennilworth Road is Boulevard while Warwick Road is more of a Main Street, though some planting continues and Top Green prevents it becoming a narrow High street. The spatial qualities of Kennilworth Road are consistent (strong enclosure through regular tree line) throughout its length with only two main visual axes. The latter allows a view to the tower block landmark and begins to build up a sense of arrival into the city, completed by the view down Warwick Road. There is little to distinguish the journey with an absence of landmarks and built form set well back and shielded from the road. The buildings are all Victorian and inter-war large houses while on the Warwick Road these are mostly converted to accommodation use. Of note is the splendid King Henry VIII school which contrasts with the new Centre Six retail development nearer the Ringway.

There are few nodes (three) and these are mostly junction defined with little activity or building enclosure. The gateway element is strong at the southern end through the beginning of the tree line while at the city end the same is helped by the natural topography rising up out of the city. Continuity along the corridor is assisted by regularity of link elements such as verge, footpath and Lighting.

6.19 Leamington Road

Sharing Warwick Road as the connection into the city with Kennilworth Road, this corridor runs directly south connecting with the A45 after 2.5 kilometres and the city boundary and A46 flyover at just under 4 kilometres. Warwick Road was the historical route to Warwick while

Leamington Road is relatively new and runs through the planned housing area of Stivichall.

This corridor exhibits 3 varying street types, including general Main Street from the Kennilworth Road intersection to Stivichall Croft intersection; residential Boulevard south to the A45 junction and; Motorway / Boulevard hybrid south again until the A46 flyover. The spatial pattern becomes more regular, symmetrical and enclosed in the transition from Main Street to Boulevard with the latter exhibiting typical tree line and continuous frontage rhythms. Boundaries are well defined and uniform in their treatments (low wall, controlled planting). The hybrid section has access roads either side separated by level change and heavy planting thus hiding the building frontage.

The built form through which this corridor runs is of very good quality, consisting of large detached and semi-detached dwellings from the inter-war period of planned layouts. The houses are all well maintained with minimal alterations and additions from their original states. The newer housing found south of the inter-war development is smaller, sometimes with front garages and set off the access roads, reducing their impact on the street.

There is little in the way of mixed use along the Leamington Road, apart from some large retail at the A45 junction. This node is one of only four along the route and all are primarily formed by junctions rather than building activity. The A45 junction node is weak, poorly enclosed though does contain some public uses. There are few landmarks to speak of apart from the railway bridge and church at the Stivichall Croft junction. The A46 forms a strong physical gateway to the south though signage is poor.

6.20 Binley Road

A strongly radial corridor that shares Sky Blue Way with Walsgrave Road as the connection into the city via junction three. From the intersection with Phoenix Way at the eastern end the corridor continues west for five kilometres until the city boundary and Binley Village. The road is recorded as existing on the 1837 plan of Coventry.

An alternate pattern of Boulevard and High Street types occur along the route with other areas of open landscape at the River Sowe crossing and Brandon Road intersection. The final kilometre runs through a new retail /

business park and here the street exhibits the characteristic pattern of poor enclosure and frontage.

The two Boulevard sections (Humber Road intersection to Empress Arcade and Crescent Avenue to Allard Way) are typically straight with a strong regular tree line providing space enclosure. Of note are the linear parks and Stoke Green which run adjacent to the corridor in these sections. The High Street sections provide variety of experience and exhibit a narrower space with buildings in a more immediate relationship to the street.

Development is predominantly large semi-detached residential dwellings to the Boulevard sections from the inter-war and post-war periods. The High Street sections have smaller terraced frontages which have in some instances been converted at ground floor for shop use. A key node along the corridor occurs at the Empress Building which has a very active frontage and is well marked by the building itself and The Bulls Head pub opposite. A similarly important node, marked by a pub and church occurs at the Brandon Road intersection though this is rather weak in terms of building and active frontage.

To the western end the retail park forms a poor approach to the Binley Road, bearing little in similarity to the lower sections. At the city end the gateway is similarly poor, beginning with fast motorway type road and not improving until the start of the first Boulevard section.

6.21 A45 By-Pass

This corridor is not radial but connects between a number of radial routes, namely Holyhead Road (Pickford Way) to the north west, Tile Hill Lane, Kennilworth Road, Leamington Road, Stivichall By-Pass, London Road, Binley Road and the M6 to the north east. Parts of the route at one stage were normal street, evident by the building frontage that still exists but all of the route is now urban clear-way of either motorway or Boulevard status.

The sections of major building frontage occur briefly to the west of Kennilworth Road and continue eastwards until the Leamington Road junction. Throughout this section the road is of Boulevard type, tree planting occurs on both sides with access lanes. The north western section from Pickford Way south is faster motorway type with variations of trees and/or lighting on a central strip and no frontage development.

Major nodes are primarily junctions with poor building enclosure, landscaped and open. Landmarks are few with the junction with Parks Road only marked by the Fire Station tower.

6.22 Phoenix Way

The Phoenix Way runs north-south, connecting into the M6 to the north and terminating at Binley Road to the south. It is characteristically fast dual-carriageway of motorway type with landscaping. Parts of the route are in cut while others run past the backs of residential development.

Junctions tend to be large open roundabouts with landscaping only such as those at the Foleshill Road and Stoney Stanton Road intersections.

Section 7 : Character Areas

7.1 Introduction

The issue of character areas and in particular their status within the statutory plan needs careful consideration. The implications on council resources and the prioritisation of some areas over others and the limitations of current government guidance need to be balanced against the need to develop design policies which respond more sensitively to individual contexts and promote higher standards of design in areas where local character and identity is gradually being eroded. This process of erosion is characterised by small scale alterations and extensions which over time have a cumulative and detrimental impact.

The rapid suburban expansion of Coventry between the wars has created an outer city area with many similarities in terms of individual building forms, street layouts, patterns of development. The general lack of diversity in this areas is punctuated at the junctions of key local routes by concentrations of active ground floor frontages, higher distinctive building forms, public buildings, facilities and open space. These concentrations or nodes vary in size and are a structuring element in the spatial organisation of large residential areas and help to establish area legibility.

However, the expansion also subsumed older and smaller settlements into the city structure the vestiges of these environments can be seen in a number of locations breaking up the monotony of some areas and again contributing to area and city legibility. This surviving fabric is diverse although predominantly domestic in form and in some cases having historic character and interest. Some of these areas have been further recognised through Conservation Area designation. Consideration of existing conservation area boundaries has confirmed that they are well drawn and appear to have included relevant buildings, building groups and spaces of an architectural and historic quality, character and coherence.

7.2 Examples From Elsewhere

The UDP for Sheffield identifies Areas of Special Character which have 'special architectural or historic qualities to justify considering future designation as an Conservation Area'. In this case areas have been identified to give interim protection until designation can be considered. The policy requires the submission of more detailed plans and drawings than would normally be asked for, including in cases where outline permission is sought, the retention of buildings, walls, trees, open spaces and other features that contribute to the areas character and new development which respects the appearance and character of the area.

The reasons for the policy states that their potential to become conservation areas could be lost by allowing inappropriate development and the loss of any building or features which could adversely affect their special character and appearance. Controls on new development and demolition will be less rigorous than in a fully designated Conservation Area which is a statutory designation. It should be noted however that general design policies in this UDP are limited in their scope compared to those recommended for the Coventry UDP review.

7.3 Evolving a Coventry approach

A policy response could be developed which promotes design quality within identified character areas to reinforce local character and identity. This approach seeks to elaborate upon general design policies by developing context related policies based upon detailed analysis of local conditions. This staged approach would involve the following :

Stage 1

The preparation of character statements through detailed area analysis. These could be used to further consider/reinforce the potential for conservation area designation in some cases. In any event the character statements would be used to support the development control function by providing detailed local information. These should be adopted as supplementary planning guidance and therefore involve consultation with local communities.

Stage Two

The further development of the character statements to include design guidelines which reflect the specific local context including the following :

- alterations to buildings
- roof extensions
- rear extensions
- painting and rendering
- windows and original features
- telecommunications equipment
- boundary treatments
- floorscape design and street furniture
- soft landscape design and open space
- shopfronts
- views, vistas and landmarks

Stage 3

Subject to the outcome and recommendations of individual character statements the development of urban design frameworks identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes, key development sites, and potential site specific briefs and local design guides prepared in consultation/collaboration with local communities and organisations.

The following broad criteria have been used to identify an initial tranche of character areas in the city area outside the Ringway.

- A) Consistency/coherence of building forms and materials
- B) Particular uses or mix of uses
- C) Historical significance(built form, pattern of development, activities, landscape structure, movement corridor)
- D) Significant element in the development of the city
- E) General environmental quality
- F) Evidence of erosion of the above qualities

The following character areas have been identified as scoring well against the criteria :

1. **Sowe Valley**
2. **Upper Stoke**
3. **Longford**
4. **Middle Stoke**
5. **Earlsdon**

6. **Stivichall (including Leamington Road)**
7. **Walsgrave Village - Woodway Lane - old village**
8. **Moseley Avenue/Coundon**
9. **Coventry Canal Basin**
10. **Lower Hollyhead Road**
11. **Nauls Mill/Coundon Street/St.Nicholas Street**

It is recommended that one of the above areas is selected for a pilot character statement. It is also recommended that consideration be given to identifying character areas which score poorly against the criteria as a means to inform design interventions and environmental improvements as part of a housing estates regeneration project for example. (Fig 51)

7.4 Suburban Nodes

Suburban nodes form important elements in the city's structure. They contribute to local identity in what could otherwise be rather featureless residential areas, in a way that is distinctive to this city. A policy response which reflects their importance would emphasise that development at these nodes should reinforce one or more of their characteristics:

- the concentration of particular building forms or uses
- local shopping frontage/centre
- landmark buildings and structures
- public uses and community facilities
- landscape features and open space
- road junctions marked by higher buildings
- higher density development

It is proposed to reinforce the local character and identity of nodes outside character areas through the development of urban design frameworks for pilot character areas identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes, key development sites, potential site specific briefs and local design guides prepared in consultation with local communities and organisations based upon a detailed character statement.



Typical tree lined residential street



Typical two storey terraced housing



An Earlsdon lane



CHARACTER AREAS

KEY

- 1 Longford
- 2 Upper Stoke
- 3 Earlsdon
- 4 Stivichall
(inc limington road)
- 5 Walsgrave Village -
Woodway Lane -
Old Village
- 6 Middle Stoke
- 7 Moseley Avenue/Coundon
- 8 Sowe Valley
- 9 Coventry Canal Basin
- 10 Lower Hollyhead Road
- 11 Naul's Mill / Coundon Street
- 12 St. Nicholas Street

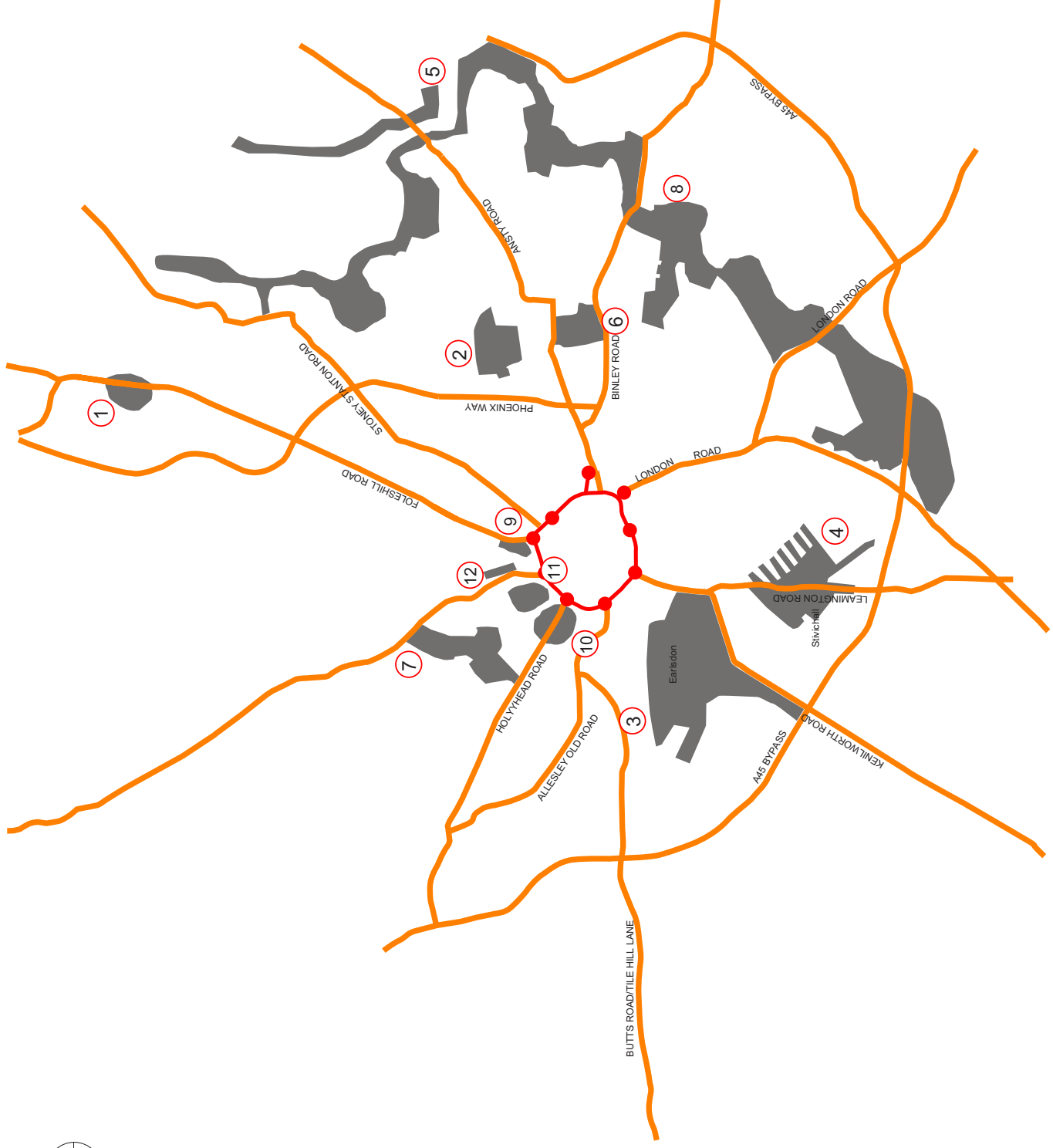


Figure 51

Section 8 : Urban Design Policy Recommendations

8.1 Coventry by Design - a city design initiative

Creating favourable conditions for good design involves more than just the people directly and regularly involved in the planning process. Many people become involved in planning and design unexpectedly: through deciding to extend their business premises or home, through having the chance to respond to a development proposal or a draft plan, or through being appointed to the planning committee, for example.

Much will depend on their attitudes towards design, and their expectations of what design can achieve. Those who operate the planning system have an interest in developing those attitudes and expectations. A wide range of design initiatives have been established in cities such as Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow. They have contributed to those aims in response to the local circumstances of particular places. They have been organised by, among others, local authorities, developers, landowners, regeneration agencies, professional bodies, and community and amenity groups.

To add value and support the achievement of the urban design policy recommendations a cross sector, collaborative city design initiative is proposed. The aim of 'Coventry by Design' would be **'to promote the highest standards in the design of buildings, streets and spaces throughout Coventry, making the city a better place to live, work, visit and invest in.'**

- Making a city that inspires through imaginative and sensitive design.
- Creating lively places which enhance the distinctive character of different areas of Coventry.
- Helping to make Coventry's streets and public spaces safer, more accessible and pleasant to use.
- Promoting sustainable development which uses resources efficiently.

Themes

- Raising awareness of design
- Promoting higher standards
- Sharing information
- Disseminating good practice
- Providing or supporting education programmes for children and adults
- Focusing on specific sites and topics

- Facilitating neighbourhood character statements

Methods

- Local collaborative projects
- Publications
- Awards
- Competitions
- Exhibitions
- Media campaigns
- Workshops, seminars, conferences and forums
- Design centre(s)
- Education programmes
- Design guides
- Design audits
- Database of local, regional, national, and international architects, product designers, design specialists, artists, craftspeople's and specialists

Potential Participants

- Coventry City Council
- Coventry and Warwick Universities
- Schools and higher education
- Commerce and industry
- Other major employers
- City Centre Company
- English Partnerships
- Professional bodies
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Training and enterprise council
- Coventry and Warwickshire Promotions
- Arts organisations
- Coventry Evening Telegraph
- other local/regional media

Planning and managing the initiative

- Terms of reference or constitution
- Organisational structure
- Resources and funding
- Programme and timescale
- Facilitating the programme and events

8.2 The Unitary Development Plan : Developing a hierarchy of design policy and guidance

It is good practice for a Unitary Development Plan to:

- set out all the policies against which the council will assess the design (and all other planning aspects) of proposed development.
- ensure that development conforms to urban design objectives.
- provide the policy foundation for supplementary planning guidance.
- not be overloaded with detail about how its policies should be applied.

Through a logical hierarchy of policies and guidance it is proposed that the Coventry plan :

- Make clear how its design policies relate to its strategies (on conservation, regeneration, economic development, sustainability, social equity or environmental quality, for example).
- Explain how good design and high standards of environmental quality can support economic development.
- Set out strategic design issues (reflecting regional and strategic planning guidance, structure plan policies and district-wide analysis) as a basis for issue-based and area-specific design policies.

As well as setting out general design policies, it is recommended that the plan include policies relating to specific contexts, specific sites and areas, design topics, development control, and aspects of the design and planning process.

• **Specific contexts**

Policies should set out the design principles to be applied in contexts such as the countryside, the urban fringe, villages, suburbs and town centres.

• **Specific Sites and areas**

The plan should formulate area-specific design policies (and principles) in response to appraisals of the regional or local context, and explain in the plan what sort of appraisals they were derived from.

Policies should identify:

- Specific areas for which *urban design frameworks* are required.
- The type of area for which other urban design frameworks will be required.
- The processes to be followed in preparing urban design frameworks (whether by the local authority, a developer or other agency, or jointly).

- Specific sites for which *development briefs* are required.
- The type of sites for which other development briefs will be required.
- The processes to be followed in preparing development briefs (whether by the local authority, a developer or other agency, or jointly).

• **Design Topics**

Other policies should refer to specific design topics and set out the principles on which development control decisions are taken. These principles can later be elucidated in design guides and other SPG. Some common topics for design policies and SPG relate to types of development (such as house extensions and shopfronts) which are both generally minor but also among the most common, and so are important topics for policy and guidance.

• **Development control**

Other policies should specify or recommend processes to be followed in relation to design. These may include policies on:

- The content of *design statements* required during the pre-application process or with a planning application.
- Other *information* required with a planning application .
- The use of *design advisory panels* .

• **Aspects of the design and planning process**

It is recommended that the plan :

- State what degree of scale or sensitivity will make it appropriate to prepare a development brief. For example, the plan might specify that a brief will be required for any housing development of more than a specified area.
- Describe the processes to be followed (by the local authority, a developer, or jointly) in preparing a development brief .
- Specify the local authority's approach to collaboration and consultation in relation to SPG .
- Specify how the impact of design policies and SPG will be monitored and reviewed .
- Specify how design should be dealt with in planning applications, and in particular outline what the council expects applicants to include in their accompanying design statements.

8.3 General urban design policies

General urban design policies should be related to the following objectives. Appendix 1 contains policy recommendations in relation to urban design objectives.

1. **Character**
2. **Continuity and enclosure**
3. **Quality of the public realm**
4. **Ease of movement**
5. **Legibility**
6. **Adaptability**
7. **Diversity**
8. **Sustainability**

8.4 General Policies for Specific Types of Context

General policies for corridors, including Coventry Canal, legible city gateways, character areas and suburban nodes should be incorporated into the plan.

8.4.1 Corridors

It is proposed that the following city corridors be enhanced through the introduction of co-ordinated improvements

1. **Foleshill Rd**
2. **Hollyhead Rd**
3. **Butts Rd/Spon End**
4. **London Rd**
5. **Walsgrave Rd / Ansty Rd**
6. **Coventry Canal**

Such improvements should be designed to :

- Provide a better welcome and first impression to visitors
- Guide, orientate and inform visitors about areas, attractions and facilities both along the corridor and within the city centre before arrival
- Reinforce the character and identity of overall corridors, sections of a corridor and adjacent areas
- Promote the ease and convenience of bus travel for passengers
- Support the vitality and viability of local shopping frontages
- Enhance the public realm through co-ordinated environmental improvements reflecting corridor and local character identity.

- Promote higher standards of design in respect of frontage development of individual corridor urban design frameworks which will identify opportunities for development briefs and design guides, which will form supplementary planning guidance, and set the co-ordinating structure for the detailed design and implementation of improvements. Design guides for shopfronts and residential alterations and extensions will be particularly relevant and their promotion and marketing will form an important aspect of individual corridor frameworks.

Design interventions should focus upon the introduction of co-ordinated movement and information components and place reference elements to reinforce the character and identity of a) the overall corridor and b) the nodes, gateways and character sections along it. (Interventions will be guided initially by the character analysis contained in section 6 and Appendix C of this report.) It is recommended that components and elements be bespoke designs procured through a collaborative/multi-disciplinary design process responding to a brief as part of a wider city Legibility Initiative.

In cases where a key corridor is straddled by a character area the approach to nodes, gateways and character sections will be influenced by the character statement for the wider area.

As a first phase the following should be undertaken:

- detailed audits of existing signage and street furniture which will enable first phase removal/replacement of poor quality signage and street furniture and reduction of clutter and duplication
- a landscape audit identifying condition of tree structure which will enable proposals for maintenance and the filling of gaps in the existing street tree planting structure

Improvements could include the following:

- co-ordinated pedestrian and vehicular signage and information system
- street furniture, paving, and public art (located at regular intervals to aid way finding)
- development of corridor lighting plans - 'Corridors of Light'
- tree planting and other soft landscape
- shop forecourt enhancement
- integrated car parking bays
- enhanced pedestrian crossings
- improved pedestrian routes to adjacent areas

- threshold treatments at the junction to adjacent side streets
- pavement improvements including drop kerbs, colour/texture contrasting paving and widening

8.4.2 Creating Legible City Gateways

It is recommended that a policy be developed for creating legible city gateways. Such a policy would reflect the councils desire to develop a city gateways improvements project which to:

- create an enhanced sense of arrival and welcome.
- improve the physical appearance of the public realm including the reduction of clutter and duplication of street furniture, signage and lighting and opportunities for enhanced soft landscaping.
- create a co-ordinated series of gateway structures to act as landmarks to improve the legibility of junctions and spaces and improve clarity of way finding. Such structures are likely to have a vertical emphasis.
- establish opportunities for a collaborative design approach which emphasises contemporary place specific design and promotes the integration of public art and lighting where appropriate including projection and new media design techniques.
- establish appropriate levels of highway and pedestrian signage reflecting a city Legibility Initiative. This may include the integration of conventional Coventry City boundary signs.
- reflect the enhancement strategies for individual city corridors.
- respond to development opportunities on adjacent sites.

The proposed city gateways locations are shown in Figure 52 and relate to locations which are :

- at the city fringe formed by major road junctions and corridor sections
- at the nine junctions on the Ringway which act as gateways into the city centre
- at the railway station including its immediate setting formed by station square
- at Hawkesbury lock

It is proposed that the council prepare individual briefs for each gateway, set within the framework of the Legibility Initiative, in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors.

8.4.3 Coventry Canal Corridor : Promoting Design Quality

The city council and British Waterways published 'Regenerating Coventry's Canal - Opportunities for Improving Coventry's 7 Miles of Canal and Surrounding Land' in May 1993. This authoritative study includes design and development guidelines under nine headings :

1. Buildings and development
2. Repairs to historic structures
3. External spaces
4. Nature Conservation
5. Soft Landscape works
6. Canal side furniture
7. Boundaries
8. Access
9. Water quality

The study recognises the canal is an under-utilised resource with significant potential for improvement. Since its publication much work has been done and proposals are currently being evolved to establish a Public Art Trail along the canal involving the work of numerous artists and co-ordinated by Groundwork Coventry.

The enhancement of the canal corridor through the use of sculpture and other artistic work such as mosaics and tableau and canal side furniture have been undertaken to great effect. Underlying the approach has been the use of artistic work to help convey and interpret the history and traditions of the canal and the surrounding areas including the cultural identities of present day communities. However, to further improve and open up to residents and visitors one of the city's most interesting and historically important corridors as a recreational resource the City Council commissioned a more overt signing, interpretation and orientation strategy to evolve a Heritage Trail. Subject to approval and funding the strategy and its proposals will be detailed for implementation.

The policy response should therefore reflect the councils commitment to update the Regenerating Coventry's Canal document to reflect the general design policies in the UDP and changes in local circumstances relating to key development sites. In particular sites where refurbishment or development has not taken place and where new / emerging development opportunities are located. Particular emphasis will be placed on the further evolution of the design and development guidelines.

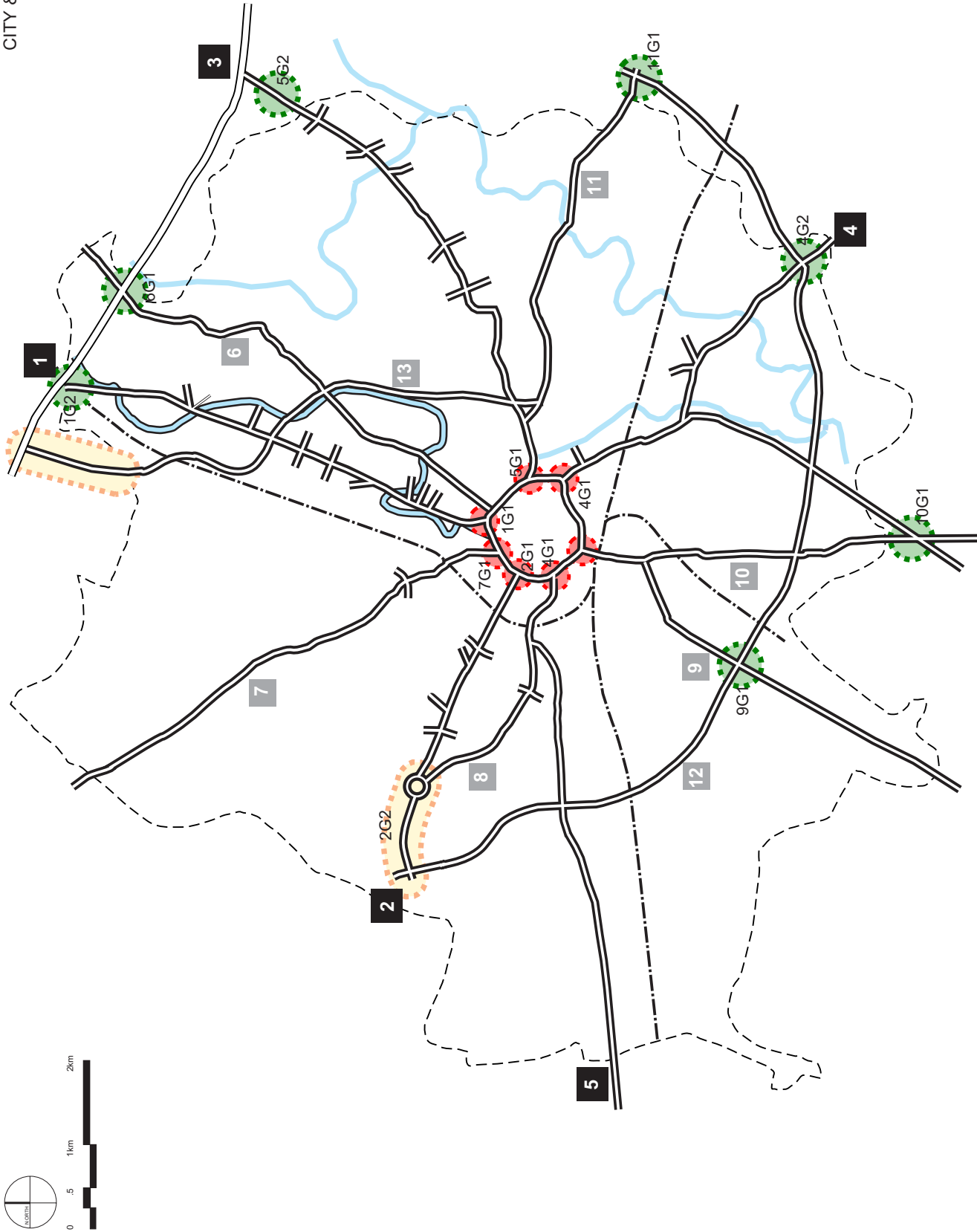


Figure 52

The updated document should be the subject of public consultation and adopted as supplementary planning guidance. Promoting new development which responds positively to the waterside opportunity by creating frontage development with appropriate continuity and enclosure, activity and or visual interest at ground floor, creates or improves connections between bridges/ tow paths and the surrounding network of streets and other pedestrian paths, contributes to the enhancement of the public realm formed by the tow path environment, introduces mixed uses on key development sites and reinforces nodes of activity will be an important aspect of this work.

It is recommended that the heritage trail be 'plugged' into a city centre wide co-ordinated signing and information system. This would enable the trail to be promoted and signed at other locations such as car parks, the railway station and spaces within the city centre. Signing to the canal from main corridors should not be overlooked. Information could guide visitors to the canal basin via continuity pedestrian signing, to the most appropriate car park or bus route.

It is further recommended that pedestrian routes to the basin, in particular Bishop Street, be enhanced including improvements to street furniture, lighting, paving and pedestrian crossings to improve their attractiveness and legibility.

The opportunity exists to extend the city centre lighting strategy approach to considering a lighting plan for the canal which focuses on improving tow path lighting, the embellishment of landmark buildings and structures and festival / event lighting.

The Council is committed to working in partnership with British Waterways and other private and voluntary sector organisations and interests to enhance the canal corridor through the implementation of the signage and interpretation strategy and its proposals and the integration of public art. However, these elements need to be considered in the broader context of an urban design framework if their potential is to be fully realised and to ensure a co-ordinated holistic approach is taken. A multidisciplinary working group made up of representatives of key organisations and council departments would facilitate this approach. Reflecting the Councils commitment to promoting design quality urban design skills will play a key role.

8.4.4 Character Areas

A policy response could be developed which promotes design quality within identified character areas to reinforce local character and identity. This approach seeks to elaborate upon general design policies by developing context related policies based upon detailed analysis of local conditions. This staged approach would involve the following :

Stage 1

- preparation of character statements through detailed area analysis.
- adoption as supplementary planning guidance to support the development control function

Stage Two

- further development of the character statements to include design guidelines.

Stage 3

- development of urban design frameworks identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes, key development sites, and potential site specific briefs and local design guides

The following character areas have been identified as scoring well against the criteria outlined in Section 5 and should be considered as the first tranche only for further assessment and prioritisation:

1. **Sowe Valley**
2. **Upper Stoke**
3. **Longford**
4. **Middle Stoke**
5. **Earlsdon**
6. **Stivichall (including Leamington Road)**
7. **Walsgrave Village - Woodway Lane - old village**
8. **Moseley Avenue/Coundon**
9. **Coventry Canal Basin**
10. **Lower Hollyhead Road**
11. **Nauls Mill/Coundon Street/St.Nicholas Street**

8.4.5 Suburban Nodes

Suburban nodes form important elements in the city's structure. They contribute to local identity in what could otherwise be rather monotonous residential areas, in a way that is distinctive to this city. A policy response

which reflects their importance would emphasise that development at these nodes should reinforce one or more of their characteristics:

- the concentration of particular building forms or uses
- local shopping frontage/centre
- landmark buildings and structures
- public uses and community facilities
- landscape features and open space
- road junctions marked by higher buildings
- higher density development

It is proposed to reinforce the local character and identity of nodes outside character areas through the development of urban design frameworks for pilot character areas identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes, key development sites, potential site specific briefs and local design guides prepared in consultation with local communities and organisations based upon a detailed character statement.

8.5 Area Specific Policies

Area specific policies in respect of the City Centre (defined as that area of the city within the Ringway), the Ringway, Inner Area Zones of Change and the North West City Fringe should be incorporated in the plan.

8.5.1 City Centre Hierarchy of Routes and Spaces

a) Routes : Civic spines

The city centre urban design strategy identifies two civic spines one north - south linking the railway station to Broadgate and Swanswell Pool /Recreation Ground and the second east - west linking Far Gosford Street to Broadgate and Upper Spon Street. Along these spines a number of environmental enhancements should be undertaken at identified spaces and street sections to improve the pedestrian environment, reduce the adverse impact of traffic and enhance the setting of landmark buildings and structures.

As the higher level of pedestrian routes within the spaces and routes hierarchy greater emphasis will be placed upon the use of higher quality bespoke street furniture and lighting, floodlighting of landmark buildings and structures, the integration of artistic work to enrich the pedestrian environment and aid legibility, continuity of pedestrian signage and

information, reduction of duplication and street clutter, consistency of paving design and materials.

Along the spines the objective should be to secure high levels of visual interest and activity at ground floor along building frontages, with particular concentrations and mix of uses around nodes and spaces. Maintaining and ensuring the continuity and enclosure of building frontage to the spines should be an important factor in reinforcing their character and identity. The spines are enclosed by a variety of building scales which contribute to an overall diverse character. However, concentrations of building forms and heights exist along sections of the spines and where development opportunities arise the scale of new building should reinforce and complement that of surrounding buildings. New development should increase building heights where prominent sites fronting spaces and streets have poor enclosure, where sites have prominent corners or present an opportunity to enhance an existing skyline or form a new distinctive skyline.

b) Routes : Community/visitor routes

These routes form the fine grain network of routes which connect the city centre to surrounding residential areas outside the Ringway and those routes associated with the Cathedral environs and Precinct and therefore well used by visitors. Improvements could include the following :

- co-ordinated street furniture, lighting and paving
- pedestrian signage and information
- visitor interpretation/ city maps panels
- flood lighting of prominent buildings
- structured street tree planting
- improved pedestrian crossings
- the integration of public art to mark key junctions and intersections of routes

c) Routes : inner circulatory route

The inner circulatory route whilst an important vehicular corridor and in particular bus route it is also an important pedestrian route connecting community/visitor routes and city centre attractions and facilities. The objective should be to enhance the pedestrian environment and reduce the impact of traffic and improve the location and access to bus stops. Environmental improvements are proposed along street sections which

connect the four Hub spaces including the introduction of co-ordinated street furniture, lighting and paving.

Breaks in the building frontage formed by access roads to car parking and rear service yards should be enhanced. For example through the introduction of gate structures or covered archways to minimise their visual impact and improve the streetscene. Building frontages are diverse in form along the route. Where redevelopment opportunities arise new buildings should reflect existing building heights, increasing height to create improved enclosure and to mark corners. New development should provide activity and/or visual interest at ground floor.

d) Spaces : Broadgate

The city centre strategy identifies Broadgate as the first level of the spaces hierarchy located at the junction of the civic spines. This pivotal space located at the heart of the city centre is under utilised. As a public space it currently suffers from the effects of traffic - noise, pollution, visual intrusion and severance of key pedestrian routes. However, it has significant potential for improvement through remodelling including :

- the rationalisation and improvement of bus and taxi access
- the removal of the canopy,
- the creation of a large area of paved pedestrian space as an extension to the Precinct designed to accommodate a range of activities including events and specialist markets at different times of the day, week and year
- the demolition of the ramp closest to Broadgate, maintaining pedestrian access via lower escalators/stairs
- the introduction of co-ordinated street furniture, lighting, pedestrian signing and information system and high quality paving materials
- the integration of artistic work
- semi - mature street tree planting
- improved pedestrian crossing facilities

The shop dominated ground floor uses offer little evening activity and the introduction of bar/café/restaurant uses to complement improvements to the space should be encouraged :

- along the northern and eastern frontages of Alders department store
- within the space in the form of kiosk structures.

- Along the east frontage of the Cathedral Lanes Shopping Centre. Once the canopy structure is removed the opportunity exists to introduce such uses in conjunction with other building frontage improvements including a new colonnade/projecting canopy to give greater weather protection for pedestrians.

e) Hub spaces

Hub spaces are proposed at key nodes where the civic spines cross the inner circuit road. These spaces are dominated by the adverse impacts of traffic and suffer from a poor quality pedestrian environment. These spaces are characterised by landmark buildings and enclosing buildings of commensurate scale. They are also places where high levels of ground floor activity which positively interact with the space will be encouraged during the day and into the evening. In some instances the space will be a destination in its own right.

- 1. Phoenix Initiative (Millennium scheme)**
- 2. Council House/ Much Park Street**
- 3. Bull Yard/Shelton Square**
- 4. Spon Street / Corporation Street Junction**

The area around the Hales Street/Fairfax Street junction will be the subject of major improvements as a result of the Phoenix Initiative. Improvements to the remaining Hub spaces should be introduced to reinforce their role as arrival and orientation spaces served by public transport offering a high level of information and guidance about what the city centre and its attractions have to offer. Their character and identity as inner gateways to the city core will be reinforced through :

- high quality natural stone paving surfaces,
- co-ordinated street furniture,
- signage and information systems
- creating a focus for public art
- street lighting
- flood lighting to accentuate the night-time appearance of landmark buildings and structures
- improved bus stops and facilities for bus passengers
- concentrating cycle parking
- the redevelopment of poor quality, vacant or underscaled building frontages

- the promotion of a mixed uses in surrounding building frontages (vertically and horizontally) creating and maintaining activity into the evening
- measures to reduce the impact of through traffic, public transport and essential access

f) City centre spaces on civic spines and community/visitor routes

The third level is made up by a range of city centre spaces which form the remaining major elements of the hierarchy. These spaces are important contributors to the image and perception of the city by both visitors and residents alike and all have considerable potential for enhancement. Improvements to the following spaces identified in figure 6 should reflect the city centre strategy :

Spaces on civic spines

1. Station Square
2. Greyfriars Green
3. Ironmongers Row
4. Lower Precinct/The Precinct
5. Lady Herberts Garden (as part of the Phoenix Initiative)
6. Space at the junction of Jordan Well and Far Gosford Street

Spaces on Community/visitor routes

1. Phoenix Initiative spaces linking to the Cathedral environs
2. Friars road link space to pedestrian bridge crossing
3. East front of the Cathedral / University quarter gateway space
4. Priory Street Square
5. Belgrade Square
6. Market Way/Smithford Way
7. Shelton Square (as part of the Bull Yard extension)

The potential for a new space, together with complimentary improvements within the cathedral environs, to improve the setting of the east front of the cathedral and create a better gateway into the university quarter is such as to be of national significance.

8.5.2 The Ringway

The feasibility of the incremental approach put forward in the city centre strategy to demolish the northern Ringway and introduce an at grade urban boulevard should be developed in detail as an integral component of the urban design framework envisaged for the Lower Foleshill Road /

Northern Ringway Regeneration Area. It is acknowledged that the potential scale of such a change, the costs involved and resulting new development are such as to make the realisation of this concept longer term. In considering a policy response at this stage great care must be taken not to create a climate of uncertainty and potential blight within affected and nearby areas. This would be alleviated by the early commencement of an urban design framework and associated feasibility studies.

A suitable policy response would therefore relate to the designation of the Lower Foleshill Road / Northern Ringway Regeneration Area within which improvements to the Ringway corridor over the short, medium and longer term should be a core objective. The framework would consider a range of options from the incremental downgrading of the northern Ringway and its replacement by an at grade boulevard acting as a catalyst to regenerating the northern city fringe and enhancing the pedestrian environment of the city centre to introducing improvements to the existing or a modified Ringway to improve the pedestrian environment and enhance key pedestrian routes.

These improvements could include the following.

- upgrading existing pedestrian subways and foot bridges to include improved lighting, paving, a co-ordinated pedestrian signing and information system, public art and path widening
- introducing a new pedestrian foot bridge on an axis with Hill Street
- removing underpasses and their replacement by at grade crossings at Junction 6 and Corporation Street
- the introduction of co-ordinated and improved highway signage reflecting a new signing strategy for the city centre and city corridors. For example identifying car parking facilities in relation to city centre attractions and facilities.
- relighting the Ringway as part of the city centre lighting strategy with particular emphasis on the nine junctions which act as vehicular and pedestrian gateways into the city centre and the embellishment of adjacent landmark buildings and structures
- measures to reinforce the identity of the nine junctions through the introduction of place specific public art and enhanced lighting

8.5.3 Inner Area Zones of Change

The policy response in respect of Inner Area Zones of Change should relate to the commitment to prepare Urban design frameworks for the

following areas to guide future development, manage change, positively unlocking the full potential of each area and its contribution to the viability and vitality of the inner area and by establishing collaborative methods of working creating confidence in the areas future. Frameworks can also help realise action on the ground by providing a strategy for implementation. Reference could be made to the primary catalysts for change and the broad objectives for each area as outlined in Section 3. (See appendix B Supplementary Planning Guidance)

- Zone 1. Lower Foleshill Road / northern Ringway regeneration area**
- Zone 2. Upper Spon Street / Windsor Street Estate**
- Zone 3. Butts Road / Queens Road**
- Zone 4. Station Environs**
- Zone 5. Parkside**
- Zone 6. Coventry University Precinct/Eastern Ringway**

It is recommended that early consideration be given to preparing urban design frameworks for zones **1,4** and **6**.

8.5.4 Coventry's Ancient Arden Landscape

The Design Guidelines for Development in 'Coventry's Ancient Arden - An Historic Landscape' were published by the Council in May 1995. This landscape is considered to be 'especially significant as it is now the only remaining relatively unspoilt area of ancient countryside left in Warwickshire.'

The guidelines, which were commended by the Countryside Commission, are in two parts. The first a background assessment and the second design guidelines for development. It is recommended that area design policies for the north west city fringe be derived from the guidelines distilling key areas of design consideration and reflecting general design policies in relation to :

- new dwellings
- house extensions
- conversion of redundant farm buildings
- new farm buildings in the landscape
- other built development
- highways in the landscape

Such a raft of policies would be given much more weight in the development control process if they become embodied within the plan and their relationship to other policies in the hierarchy clearly demonstrated rather than being wholly SPG. As a consequence it is recommended that the design guidelines be updated to correspond with the new design policy hierarchy and to reflect a new consistent approach to the preparation and presentation of all SPG. Given the complex and sensitive nature of the Arden landscape and the ability to draw policies from a good level of existing information and guidance it is recommended that the guidelines are revised at an early stage.

8.6 Topic Based Policies

It is recommended that policies in respect of the following topics be incorporated into the plan.

1. Advertising and signage
2. Archaeology
3. Conservation areas and listed buildings
4. Cycling
5. House extensions and alterations
6. Mobility
7. Open spaces and play areas
8. Public art
9. Residential development
10. Safety and security
11. Telecommunications equipment
12. Shopfronts
13. Landscape design and development

In most cases these policies should be supported by SPG (see Appendix)in the form of design guides which could be prepared on a prioritised and phased basis reflecting firstly the need to update existing coverage to reflect the new design policy hierarchy in the plan, secondly the need to reflect a new corporate approach to the preparation, presentation and marketing of SPG and thirdly the availability of council resources. However, it should be noted that not all design guides need to be prepared solely by the council and their may be a role for the Coventry By Design Initiative or other organisations in assisting in their preparation. Few local authorities in the country have the full spectrum of design policy recommended as a consequence Coventry would be at the forefront of integrating design into the planning system at local level.

The following topic policy examples illustrate the types of policies that would be included in this section.

Example 1 : Sites of Archaeological Significance

- Presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance whether scheduled or not.
- Development proposals which could adversely affect sites structures landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require the submission of a desk top assessment study and if considered appropriate a field evaluation
- Should evidence of archaeological remains be demonstrated development will not be permitted except where it can be shown that the features of the site can be preserved in situ or a satisfactory mitigation strategy is submitted
- If this is not possible provision for adequate recording of the site is made prior to any destruction of the archaeological resource
- Ideally this should be achieved through the negotiation of a suitable planning agreement detailing adequate access arrangements to the site, time and financial resources to ensure essential recording and post excavation publication of the findings.
- The planning agreement might also make provision for public viewing access, including using the use of the site as a learning/teaching resource for local schools.

Example 2 : Conservation and Listed Buildings

Typically under this heading policies would encompass the following areas of concern reflecting the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which provides powers for the designation, protection and enhancement of conservation areas, the preservation of Listed Buildings and the making of tree preservation orders. PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) and PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning provide a full statement of Government policies in respect of conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeological resources.

- General Principles
- Criteria for designating and review of conservation areas
- Conservation areas : Streets and Open Spaces
- Conservation areas: New buildings

- Conservation areas : Extensions to Buildings
 - Alterations to unlisted buildings that contribute to the character of Conservation Areas
 - A) retention / repair of traditional materials
 - B) no painting or cladding that would harm the appearance of the conservation area
 - C) retention of original form, pitch, cladding and ornament of the roof
 - D) new dormers should respect the scale and form of the period of building and in particular be in balance with the external appearance
 - E) retention, repair or rebuilding of chimney stacks and pots
 - F) retention, repair or matching replacement of original windows using appropriate materials, colours, style and proportions.
 - G) Sensitive location of communications and security equipment
 - Listed building Alterations
 - Listed Buildings : Urgent Repairs and demolition
 - Buildings in Conservation Areas : Demolition
 - Permitted development directions in conservation areas
- Article 4 directions can be made, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State, where necessary to control alterations harmful to Conservation Areas. The classes and types of development that would typically be considered for the withdrawal of permitted development rights are:
- A) alteration and replacement of windows and doors
 - B) alteration and replacement of roof tiles and roof cladding
 - C) decoration of previously unpainted stonework and brickwork
 - D) rendering of previously exposed stonework and brickwork
 - E) removal of render
 - F) erection of extensions, garages and porches
 - G) construction of hard standings in front gardens
 - H) erection of gates, fences and walls
 - I) installation of oil tanks
 - J) erection of satellite antenna or dish
 - K) erection, extension or alterations of agricultural buildings
- local register of buildings of merit
 - Enhancement in conservation areas. The preparation of enhancement schemes for individual conservation areas will update existing control

plans and will form supplementary planning guidance. Principal extracts should continue to be part of the plan.

- Planning application submissions within a conservation area Typically a council will require detailed applications for development in Conservation Areas, and proposals for demolition must be accompanied by details of proposed new development. In certain circumstances consent for demolition will be made conditional on implementation of an approved replacement scheme
- Historic Parks and gardens

Example 3 : Safety and security

Typically a policy would encourage new developments to create safe and secure environments and therefore the following factors would be taken into account when determining applications.

- the provision of public routes which seek to minimise opportunities for criminal activity
- forms of development which reflecting general design policies provide opportunities for natural surveillance and self policing
- the siting of street furniture and surface treatments that enable ease of pedestrian movement
- layouts which reduce potential conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists

Section 9 : Process Related Policies

9.1 Development Control Policies

9.1.1 Planning application information requirements

Adequate plans and drawings must be submitted as part of a planning application so that the design can be properly assessed. They will be required for the benefit of planners, councillors (on planning and other committees), and residents' and amenity groups, among others.

For full (as opposed to outline) applications, the following are likely to be required:

Location plan

- Scale 1:1250 preferably, and no smaller than 1:2500. Metric scales only.
- North point, date and number.
- Outline the application property, and indicate any adjoining property owned or controlled by the applicant.
- Shows the application property in relation to all adjoining properties and the immediate surrounding area, including roads.
- Show vehicular access to a highway if the site does not adjoin a highway.

Plan of existing site layout

- Scale 1:200.
- North point, date and number.
- Plan of the whole property, showing all buildings, gardens, open spaces and car parking.

Plan of proposed site layout

- Scale 1:200.
- North point, date and number.
- Plan showing the siting of any new building or extension, and any vehicular/pedestrian access, with landscape proposals, including trees to be removed, new planting, new or altered boundary walls and fences, and new hard-surfaced open spaces.

Floor plans

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100.

- In the case of an extension, show the floor layout of the existing building to indicate the relationship between the two.
- Show floor plans in the context of adjacent buildings, where appropriate.

- In the case of minor applications it may be appropriate to combine the layout and floor plan (unless any demolition is involved).
- Include a roof plan where necessary to show a complex roof or alterations to one.

Elevations

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans)
- Show every elevation of a new building or extension.
- For an extension or alteration, show existing and proposed elevations separately.
- Include details of materials and external appearance.
- Show elevations in the context of adjacent buildings, where appropriate.

Cross sections

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans)
- Provide these if appropriate.

9.1.2 Design statement

Design statements submitted with planning applications should:

- Explain the design principles and design concept.
- Explain how the design relates to its wider context (through a full context appraisal where appropriate).

The written design statement should be illustrated, as appropriate, by:

- Plans and elevations
- Photographs of the site and its surroundings
- Other illustrations, such as perspectives.

9.1.3 Pre-application design statements

The Council will promote the use of pre-application design statements as an effective and flexible mechanism for structuring the design and planning process, in the case of a site which is not the subject of a development brief.

A *pre-application design statement* is made by a developer to explain the design principles on which a development proposal in progress is based, and how these will be reflected in the development's layout, density, scale, landscape and visual appearance. It explains how these principles were evolved from the relevant policy, site and area appraisal, and consultation. The statement enables the local authority to give an initial response to the main issues raised by the proposal.

The statement can:

- Enable the local authority to be proactive.
- Highlight and resolve potential conflict at an early stage.
- Ensure that the developer has as much certainty as possible as the design process progresses, reducing the likelihood of unexpected delays, abortive work and unnecessary expense.
- Create the conditions for good design.
- Structure the design and planning process.
- Facilitate the process of pre-application negotiations between developer and planners.
- Provide a basis for later evaluating the development proposal.
- Provide a basis for public participation, as appropriate.

What the statement contains

The pre-application design statement may consist of:

- Statement of the *policy* background, identifying all relevant policies, development briefs, design guides, standards and regulations.
- Appraisal of the *context*, including a site and area appraisal (illustrated with diagrams), summaries of relevant studies, and reports of any relevant consultations.
- Statement of *feasibility* factors, including summaries of economic and market conditions (subject to the need for commercial confidentiality).
- Statement of design and project management *approach*. This will include an outline of the various stages of the design process (for example: site and area appraisal, design workshops, design panels, urban design and building design) and a description of the design skills which will be employed at each stage.
- Statement of *design principles* which have been formulated in response to the policy background, the site and its settings and the purpose of the development, and an outline of how these will be reflected in the development's layout, density, scale, landscape and visual appearance.
- Programme of *meetings* with the local authority and other bodies.

- Programme of *participation and consultation*. The appropriate level of consultation will depend on the degree to which consultation has already been carried out in the preparation of any relevant development briefs or design guides.

How detailed this information should be will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the development. A statement relating to an application to build or alter a single house can be brief and straightforward. Describing the context, for example, might involve a simple sketch of the house and the buildings on each side of it, and a short description of the general character of the street. The design statement for a major development on a sensitive site would need to be detailed and comprehensive.

9.1.4 Planning application design statements

The Council will require the submission of a design statement with all planning applications. Government advice (PPG1) requires applicants for planning permission to provide a written statement, setting out the design principles they have adopted in relation to the site and its wider context. This allows the planning application to be assessed against design policies, and it encourages applicants to focus on design.

Design statements should include the following :

- An explanation of the design principles and design concept.
- An outline of how these will be reflected in the development's layout, density, scale, landscape and visual appearance.
- An explanation of how the design relates to its site and wider area (through a full site and area appraisal where appropriate), and to the purpose of the proposed development.
- An explain how the development will meet the local authority's urban design objectives (and its other planning policies).

Planning application design statements will be required for even the smallest and most uncontroversial development proposals, as together these have an enormous impact on the environment. In such cases only a brief statement (appropriately illustrated), explaining the design approach, will be necessary.

A written design statement should be illustrated including the following :

- Plans and elevations
- Photographs of the site and its surroundings
- Other illustrations, such as perspectives.

9.1.5 Design advisory panels

Increasing numbers of local authorities use design advisory panels to help them assess the design aspects of planning applications. Some panels meet frequently to consider relevant items on the planning committee agenda. Others become involved only where there is a dispute between an architect or designer and a planning officer which can not otherwise be resolved. The skills and experience of a design advisory panel might be more fully used by involving it at an earlier stage in the planning process, such as in the preparation of design policies development briefs and design guides.

It is proposed that the city council establish a design advisory panel to help achieve the policies and proposals of the UDP and as a mechanism to promote higher standards in the designs of buildings streets and spaces. The membership should be multidisciplinary drawn from all sectors and not dominated by a particular profession. The use of advisory panels is supported by both the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute.

9.2 Policies on Aspects of the Design and Planning Process

9.2.1 Preparing Urban Design Frameworks

Urban Design Frameworks will be prepared by the council and in partnership with landowners developers, development partnerships or agencies and local community organisations in respect of areas identified in the plan including :

- inner area zones of change,
- key city corridors

All urban design frameworks will be the subject of public consultation and subject to approval by the Councils Planning Committee adopted as supplementary planning guidance (see Appendix B). All frameworks will be prepared on the basis of the councils *Planning Procedure Guidance Note No 1 : Preparing Urban Design Frameworks* which sets out a recommended procedure and content reflecting the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions good practice guide Design in the Planning System. (forthcoming)

9.2.2 Preparing Development Briefs

Development briefs will be prepared by the council or in partnership with landowners, developers, development partnerships or agencies and local community organisations in respect of :

- sites over 1 hectare in area
- sites that are identified in an urban design framework
- gap/infill sites which by nature of their scale and sensitivity require design guidance

All development briefs will be the subject of public consultation and if approved by the Councils Planning Committee adopted as supplementary planning guidance (see Appendix). All briefs will be prepared on the basis of the councils *Planning Procedure Guidance Note No 2 : Preparing Development Briefs* which sets out a recommended procedure and content reflecting the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions good practice guide Design in the Planning System. (forthcoming)

9.2.3 Preparing Design Guides

The council will prepare design guides, and review existing guides to reflect the wider development plan review, or in partnership with developers, development partnerships or agencies and local community organisations in respect of the following topics :

- Advertising and signage
- Archaeology
- Conservation areas and listed buildings
- Cycling
- House extensions and alterations
- Mobility
- Open spaces and play areas
- Public art
- Residential development
- Safety and security
- Telecommunications equipment
- Shopfronts
- Trees

All design guides will be the subject of public consultation and if approved by the Councils Planning Committee adopted as supplementary planning guidance. All guides will be prepared on the basis of the councils *Planning*

Procedure Guidance Note No 3 : Preparing Design Guides which sets out a recommended procedure and content reflecting the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions good practice guide *Design in the Planning System* (forthcoming).

9.2.4 Design Competitions - when, where, how

In developing and implementing some of the proposals generated by urban design frameworks and briefs and in progressing other major environmental improvement schemes, particularly in the city centre, the council will promote the use of design competitions as one means of securing high quality design. In most circumstances competitions will require a multidisciplinary design team approach which responds to a creative competition brief. The process of procuring design products whether it be a building, a suite of street furniture or public space will be guided by the councils *Planning Procedure Guidance Note No. 4 : Design Competitions : when, where, how*.

It is recommended that this guidance note be prepared in collaboration with the Coventry by Design Initiative drawing upon the individual skills of its members and advisors and the data base of local, regional, national and international artists, crafts persons, architects, product, graphic and new media designers and other design specialists it will establish. The initiative will also be responsible for ensuring that the council is kept informed of recent national and European Union advice and guidance produced by other organisations in particular relevant professional institutions.

9.2.5 Collaboration - when, where, how

The implementation of the proposals and policies of the Unitary Development Plan will only be possible through a positive partnership between the Council, developers, land owners, local communities, regeneration agencies and other key stakeholders. This partnership will need to be based upon evolving a shared vision of what sort of city Coventry should be. The Council is therefore committed to working collaboratively with the interests outlined above in developing urban design frameworks, development briefs and design guides, and in progressing major city centre improvements. This commitment includes performing its statutory duties in respect of wider public consultation and the support of the Coventry By Design Initiative as a mechanism to promote design quality in the city.

9.2.6 Quality audits

The impact of design policy and guidance needs to be constantly monitored so that the tools can be reviewed and revised as necessary.

Local authorities can conduct audits of their management of the design and planning process in order to:

- Assess the impact of the council's intervention at every stage in the planning process.
- Ensure that the council's design policies are being applied effectively and that supplementary planning guidance is being followed.
- Contribute to the review of design policy and guidance.

Quality audits can be carried out either by the council's own officers, by another local authority or agency, or by consultants. A quality audit checklist might set out the following details relating to a particular planning application:

- The main issues raised by the development proposal.
- The mechanisms used in guiding and processing the development proposal, and how (and with what success) they were applied.
- The relevant policies in the development plan, and whether the development complied with them when built.
- Such an audit can also be an effective means of communicating the council's commitment to design and explaining the planning process to non-specialists.

Other methods of assessing the impact of design policy and guidance include:

- Visits by council members and officers, and others, to completed buildings and schemes.
- Internal workshops and design surgeries.
- Comments by a design advisory panel
- Reviewing planning appeal decisions both locally and nationally in cases where design was among the reasons (or the sole reason) for refusal.
- Design awards.
- Views expressed by estate agents on commercial viability and rates of lettings.
- Views expressed by residents' groups and amenity societies on the impact of new development.

9.2.7 Monitoring and reviewing SPG

Supplementary planning guidance should be monitored to check how it is being used, and how developers and planning applicants are responding to it. The content of the guidance itself may need to be reviewed, or it may be necessary to review its promotion, marketing and the associated training. A review may be followed by a re-launch.

- The impact of SPG should be assessed by looking at completed buildings and schemes, and the results of appeals, not just at the quality of planning applications. This can involve members of the planning committee, as well as council officers.
- Meetings with local architects, designers, developers and interest group can help to establish how guidance is being received.
- Parish councils, civic and amenity societies, and conservation and design advisory panels may be able and willing to help monitor SPG.
- The impact of SPG may also be monitored through a local authority's quality audit and awards schemes.

SPG may need to be reviewed to keep it up to date in the light of:

- Changes in legislation or other policy (national and local).
- Changes in economic and market conditions.
- Emerging best practice elsewhere, and as reflected in Government and academic sources.
- Current local development and building practice (particularly as reflected in any quality audit).

Appendix A : General Urban Design Policies

Draft Extract (May 1998) from forthcoming DETR Good Practice Guide on Design In The Planning System

Objective 1: Character

The scale, massing and height of proposed development should be considered in relation to that of adjoining buildings, the general pattern of the area, and views, vistas and landmarks.

- The character of townscape depends on how individual buildings contribute to a harmonious whole, particularly through relating to the scale of their neighbours and through creating continuous urban form. Many areas have a general pattern of building, whose scale can be followed, though this will not preclude a degree of variety.
- In successful townscape, an individual building which stands out from the background of buildings by reason of its larger scale is likely to do so because its function is of *civic* significance, or because it contributes positively to views and vistas as a *landmark*.
- Scale, height and massing relate to the density of development. Higher densities are usually appropriate at places well-connected to the movement network, particularly public transport.
- The degree to which a building will *overlook and overshadow* other buildings should influence its massing and height.

Development should respond to the existing layout of buildings, streets and spaces.

- The existing layout of an area reflects its history, functions and connections with adjoining areas. These can contribute to the interest and richness of new development, and its potential to accommodate gradual change in future.
- Existing buildings and structures on a site should be integrated into new development where appropriate, maintaining the *continuity* of the built fabric and retaining buildings of local distinctiveness, or historical or townscape merit.
- *Narrow plot widths* should be established to promote a fine grain frontage and build on existing settlement patterns. Longer, thinner

plots promote more active frontages and increase the sense of enclosure.

The massing of development should contribute to creating distinct *skylines* or should respect existing skylines. (The character of a skyline is composed of the massing of blocks and the shape of roofs, as well as by the height of buildings).

- Skylines are sensitive to being obscured by high buildings in front of existing buildings or having their silhouette spoiled by high buildings behind them.

The layout and landscape design of development should allow for works of *art and craft* to be created in public spaces and as part of the fabric of buildings to enhance identity and a sense of place. (Important elements of the street scene include sculpture, lighting, railings, litter bins, paving and mosaics, hard landscape, seating, bollards, kiosks, cycle racks, signage, carved stone (including lettering), glasswork, wood carving and water features).

Development should be laid out in response to the site's *land form* and character.

- The three-dimensional shape of the landscape should be the basis for a development's shape (expressed in its massing and layout).

A site's *natural features* should be conserved where appropriate. (Natural features include rivers and streams, wetlands, ponds and lakes, hills, trees, woodlands, hedgerows, wildlife habitats and rock outcrops).

- The value of natural features lies in their *ecological* role and their contribution to creating a *sense of place*, among other aspects.
- Natural features can help give form to a development and integrate it into the wider area.

The landscape treatment of the *urban edge* and *site boundaries* should receive particular attention in the design of development.

- The layout, massing and landscaping of development can integrate it into the wider landscape, particularly through using *shelter belts*, *green wedges*, *green corridors* (along natural features and roads), rivers and canals.

- Developments at the boundaries of adjoining sites should be integrated with each other.

Structure planting and shelter belts should be created on large development sites to integrate the form of the development into its surroundings and improve the micro-climate.

Planting in new development should generally be of *plant species* that are locally common.

Development should respond to local building forms, traditions, practices, materials and surface treatments. Any such response should not be random or gratuitous. (Local building forms might include the cottage, terrace, semi-detached or mansions. Forms and practices might include boundary treatments, building lines, roof slopes, window types, gardens and combinations of materials).

- Building forms and practices should be used only at the appropriate scale. The common practice of inflating traditional domestic forms to larger scales is rarely successful.

Development should draw on local art and craft traditions. (These might relate to such features as ironwork, stained glass, thatching, woodcarving, stonemasons, walling and paving.)

The scale, texture and colour of paving and other hard landscape materials should reflect the function and character of the area.

Objective 2: Continuity and enclosure

Development should contribute to making a clearly defined public realm, and an unambiguous distinction between public and private spaces.

- The design of the *fronts and backs* of buildings should reflect the fact that they are used in different ways, and make clear which is which.
- The front of a building should have a direct relationship with the street.
- The extent of *private ownership* of space round a building should be clearly indicated by means such as walls, fences, railings, gates, arches, signage and paving, and by maintaining the building line.
- The primary means of access to all buildings should be from the street. *Entrances* should be clearly identifiable.
- Detailed design should make clearly apparent the degree to which *ambiguous spaces* (such as forecourts, malls, arcades and covered streets) are public.
- In-curtilage *parking* should be avoided in front of houses.

Buildings on a street should either respect a common building line or create usable, attractive spaces for pedestrians.

- A common line of buildings along a street helps to create clearly defined public space and a sense of enclosure.
- *Projections and setbacks* from the building line, such as bays and entrance halls, should only be for creating emphasis.
- Respecting the historic or traditional building line helps to integrate new development into the street scene and maintain the continuous urban fabric.

Streets, squares, parks and other spaces should be clearly defined by appropriately scaled buildings and trees.

- The height of buildings should relate to the width and importance of the space (including streets) which they enclose.
- *Setbacks at upper floors* should be used where necessary to reduce a building's impact at street level. Setbacks allow one or more upper

storeys to be less visible from the street. Setting back can allow an increase in density without an equivalent increase in scale. Setting back upper storeys allows the cornice line or parapet line of the rest of the street to be continued even on a building that is higher than its neighbours.

Objective 3: Quality of the public realm

Development should contribute to creating a clear hierarchy of different types, sizes and scales of public space.

- Public spaces should be designed to create a variety of type of space (path, street, square, park, plaza, circus, crescent, green), character of space (informal, civic, recreational, commercial) and scale of space, rather than being merely the parts of an area that have not been built on.
- Public spaces should be functioning parts of a *network of pedestrian routes*.
- Streets and street junctions should be designed as *public spaces*, not just traffic routes.

Streets and spaces should be overlooked to promote natural supervision.

- Buildings of all types should front on to streets, squares or parks, showing their public face. *Blank facades* make dead streets.
- A *car park* should not provide the immediate frontage to a street.
- Living over shops* should be encouraged to provide natural surveillance and evening activity.

Ground floors should be occupied by uses which relate directly to pedestrians wherever possible, creating activity and visual interest.

- Facades can be enlivened by entrances, windows (views in to the building give interest to passers-by and make the building's function apparent, while views out of the building allow natural surveillance which contributes to safety) and active uses (such as shops or restaurants).

- Ground floors* of residential development on busy streets can be raised above street level to maintain privacy.
- Entrances* on to streets should be at frequent intervals to ensure activity.
- Buildings on *street corners* should be designed to accommodate shops at a later date.

All public and open space should have a specific function.

- There should be no doubt about who will be responsible for *caring for and maintaining* public and open space, and who will use it.
- Space left over after development, without a function, is a wasted resource and will detract from a place's sense of identity. It is likely to be abused and vandalised, and to diminish an area's safety and security.
- Defining a space with buildings or clear boundaries will help to make its function clear.

Development should contribute to creating a system of open and green spaces which respects natural assets and creates publicly accessible amenities.

- Open spaces should be capable of being used for sitting, walking, picnicking and other recreations, not just left as an afterthought.
- Open spaces should make use of natural assets such as water, riversides and canalsides, slopes, trees and other planting.

Planting should be used to form views, create shelter, enclose and define spaces, soften or screen hard building forms, provide seasonal variation, and attract wildlife.

The design of public spaces should take account of the micro-climate.

- The micro-climate includes daylight and sunlight, winds, temperatures and frost pockets.
- The micro-climate of a site or area will influence and be influenced by the form of development, the orientation of buildings, the degree of enclosure.

- Public spaces should be protected from *down-draughts* from tall buildings as well as from lateral winds.

Development should be stimulating in its richness of detail and built to high standards of craftsmanship.

- Richness of detail is particularly important at *ground level*, where people see it close at hand.
- Different kinds of richness and scales of detail should be visible from a distance and close up.
- The work of artists and craftspeople should be encouraged and integrated into the design process at its earliest possible stage.
- The infinite variations in any *natural material* have their own intrinsic interest, which artificial materials often lack.
- Building *entrances* are particularly appropriate for rich detail.
- The quality of *signage* is an important element in the design of many buildings, particularly shops and other commercial premises.

Public art and craft work and well-designed street furniture should be provided to give identity to public spaces. (Important elements of the street scene include sculpture, lighting, railings, litter bins, paving and mosaics, hard landscape, seating, bus shelters, bollards, kiosks, cycle racks, signage, carved stone [including lettering], glasswork, wood carving and water features).

- Art and craft work* should be used to personalise buildings and spaces.

How attractive a public space is, and how well people treat it, will in part depend on **The layout of and choice of materials for public spaces should be matched by suitable arrangements for maintenance, after-care, management and adoption.**

- how well litter is collected, how frequently and thoroughly it is cleaned, and how efficiently repairs are carried out. This in turn will depend on formal arrangements relating to lighting, street furniture, paving, landscape, planting, tree care, sculpture, water features, signage, information panels, walls and fences.

The layout of public spaces should respond to the patterns of local economic, social and cultural life. (Relevant aspects of local life

might include tourism, cultural industries, night life, eating, entertainment, sport, sitting-out, promenading, religious practices, retailing and ethnic communities).

- The layout of development should respond to *local events* such as fairs, carnivals, parades, markets, races, processions or promenading.

Objective 4: Ease of movement

Development should contribute to creating or enhancing a network of connected spaces and routes (for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles) which are related to public transport.

- Public transport* should be planned as an integral part of the street layout. Stops should be safe, well-lit and related to points of activity.
 - Streets should be designed to encourage *walking* and as places to meet.
 - The *hierarchy of routes* (including high streets, boulevards, residential streets, pedestrian streets, parks, greens, squares, paths and cycleways) should be based on their urban design qualities, rather than solely on traffic considerations. It should take account of the varied use of streets and roads: for civic purposes, and for shopping and play, for example.
 - Priority should be given to creating safe *pedestrian routes* which provide access to public transport.
 - Routes should connect into *existing routes* and movement patterns.
- A development's access and circulation should contribute to a permeable, fine-grain network of routes within and beyond the site, rather than creating big building blocks.**
- All streets should connect to other streets to encourage *through movement*, activity and natural surveillance. Culs-de sac should be avoided.
 - A *variety of routes* can enable people to choose in travelling through an area.
 - Streets should be designed as *public spaces*, not just in response to engineering considerations.

- The *grain* of streets should become finer around busy places. Shopping streets, for example, should have many connecting streets.

The layout of development should encourage low traffic speeds where appropriate.

- Traffic speeds should be managed by the arrangement of buildings and spaces. For example, limiting *forward visibility* by bringing buildings closer to corners encourages motorists to exercise more care. Physical traffic-calming measures such as speed humps and chicanes should be secondary measures.
- *Traffic calming* should be considered at the earliest stages of the design process.
- The arrangement of *parking* on the street can contribute to traffic-calming. Natural surveillance from buildings increases the security of vehicles and avoids the need for car parks.

Development should take account of the needs of frail and elderly people, carers with small children, partially sighted people and others with mobility impairments.

- *Pedestrian routes* should be even, non-slip, clearly defined, well-lit and uncluttered by street furniture.

Objective 5: Legibility

The massing of development should create and enhance views to and from the site, and should take account of strategic views.

- *Landmark* buildings or features should be sited so as to enhance existing views and vistas, and create new ones, helping people to move through the area and orient themselves. Otherwise development should conform to the general height of buildings in the area.

The design, location and function of buildings should reinforce the identity and character of the routes and spaces that they serve.

- A variety of design solutions should be encouraged to provide richness and identity.

- Development should be concentrated on *main routes* and around *focal points*.
- *Civic and community buildings* should be located around public spaces, providing symbols of community identity and a focus for civic life.
- A building's *function* should be apparent to passers-by and its *main entrance* should be easily identifiable.
- *Corner buildings* should provide identity, points of orientation and a variety of uses. Corners can be higher than the surrounding buildings and include public uses such as shops to create activity. *Car parks and garages* should not be located at street corners.

The design of the public realm should help to create a sense of place, and make alternative routes and destinations visible and comprehensible.

- *Pedestrian routes* should be direct, visible and uncluttered by street furniture.
- *Lighting* should be used to guide and orient people, highlight landmarks, reveal the richness of buildings' fabric, and disguise eyesores.
- *Signage* should help make the hierarchy of pedestrian routes, highways and spaces easy to use.
- *Public art* should contribute to an area's character and identity.

Objective 6: Adaptability

Development should create places capable of being used for a range of activities at different times of the day.

- *Traffic management* should allow different types of access at different times of the day, week and year, to accommodate varying levels of pedestrian activity.
- The design of public spaces should allow for the maximum use for events, festivals and markets.

The layout of development should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate potential future uses and changing needs for access.

- The layout of the *infrastructure* (including water supply, sewerage, drainage, gas, electricity, cable, telephone, roads, footpaths, cycleways, and parks) servicing development should take account of possible future expansion.
- Sites should be *reserved* for later providing facilities within a major development.

The greatest variety of possible future uses will be accommodated by simple, robust building forms which are not tightly designed to a very particular use.

- *Floor-to-ceiling heights* should be determined with possible futures uses in mind.
- It is particularly important for *ground floors* and *corners* of busy streets to be adaptable to different uses.
- Building *materials* should be chosen with adaptability in mind.

The conversion of old buildings should be encouraged.

Objective 7: Diversity

Development should contribute to creating a mix of uses and tenures which will attract people to live, work and play in the same area, and which are compatible and which interact with each other, generating energy and activity.

- The mix might be at the scale of the building (one use above another), the street (one use next to another) or the neighbourhood (groups of uses next to others).
- The mix might be improved by creating residential uses above shops or appropriate workplaces in residential areas.
- A mix of uses can involve different people using the same parts of a building or place at different times of the day, as well as different uses happening in different parts of a building or space at the same time.

Space should be left for uses not currently viable.

- Residential development on busy streets should have higher *floor-to-ceiling heights* at the ground floor to accommodate either raised ground floors (to ensure privacy) or shops at a later date.
- Land should be reserved for other uses to be provided later behind the building immediately fronting the street.

Development should accommodate arts, culture and entertainment activities which can support a flourishing *night-time economy*.

The design and location of residential buildings should allow people to live close to their workplace or work from home.

Objective 8: Sustainability

The density of development should be highest where access to public transport is best.

- Relating density to access can help to make full use of public transport infrastructure and help to reduce car use.
- The density appropriate for a site will also depend on the contribution that the development can make to the townscape and to the quality of the local environment.
- Development at places well served by public transport should cater in particular for people without cars.
- Development at relatively high density at places with good access to public transport are likely to be appropriate for mixed-use development, for civic uses and for uses generating large numbers of visitors.

The density of development should relate to the nature and capacity of the physical infrastructure, and to a site's or area's proximity to open space and recreational areas.

Development should contribute to urban regeneration.

- The re-use of previously developed (brownfield) sites can contribute to a regeneration strategy for a wider area and help to reduce development pressure on the countryside.
- Development will contribute to regeneration only if it is connected in to movement networks, for example by being served by public transport.
- Development is more likely to contribute to regeneration if it incorporates a mix of uses.

The layout of development should be designed to conserve energy.

- Buildings oriented towards the sun need less heating. (The Building Research Establishment (BRE) publishes guidance on good practice in site layout planning for daylight and sunlight. Its numerical guidelines should be interpreted flexibly, as natural lighting is only one of many factors in site layout design. For example, in a historic city a higher degree of obstruction of light may be unavoidable if new developments are to match the height and proportions of existing buildings. Alternatively, with a building where natural light and solar gain are of

special importance, less obstruction and more sunlight and daylight may be deemed necessary. A council's design guidance is likely to be more effective in encouraging imaginative design when it is written in terms of design principles, such as privacy and overlooking, rather than solely as specific standards, such as specifying how far apart buildings should be.)

- Deep buildings (where some parts of rooms are far from a window) should be avoided so as to maximise natural lighting and ventilation.
- Choice of site and the layout of buildings should take account of all aspects of micro-climate, including wind and frost pockets.
- One building can reduce the energy needs of another by sheltering it from the wind, or increase it by shadowing it from the sun.

Building materials should be considered according to how they will perform over time: how durable, adaptable and colour-fast they are; how they will weather; what level of cleaning and maintenance they will require; and what they will look like when wet or dirty.

- The choice of building materials should take account of their likely cost throughout the building's life-cycle, not just the construction cost. Materials that are cheap initially are often expensive when maintenance, repairs and replacement are taken into account.
- The appearance of materials should take account of their likely appearance throughout the building's life-cycle, not just when the building has been completed. Some (especially natural) materials look better with the patina of time. Other materials soon lose their initial qualities.
- The weathering (and hence performance and appearance) of materials may depend on whether they are on the side of a building that faces north or south.
- The choice of materials should take account of how a building will look when dirty (if it is likely that they will be, as in the case of many industrial uses, for example) or wet.
- The appearance and performance of building materials depends in large part on how they are detailed and put together. Fixings and joints, for example, often have a significant effect.

- Building materials should come from *sustainable sources*, where possible.

The layout of development should allow existing infrastructure to be re-used wherever this allows a more efficient use of resources.

- Re-using infrastructure can also reduce *disruption* on site and nearby during building work, and reduce the disruption of sensitive wildlife habitats.

The layout and density of development should minimise the use of forms of transport which cause most pollution and use most energy.

- Mixed uses and relatively high densities can allow people to live close to their work, minimising the energy used in travelling.
- The way layout allows for the *distribution and receiving of goods* can have a significant effect on the energy used and pollution caused by transport.
- The layout of development should encourage *cycling*.
- A housing layout can be designed as 'car-free', which in practice means that it is likely to generate much lower than normal levels of car use (rather than none at all).

Layout should be designed with regard to the potential impact of development on the local ecology.

- Development will have an impact on the *flora and fauna* of the site and the surrounding area..
- Changes to *natural drainage* and the *water table* will have an impact on flora and fauna.
- Ecological impact is likely to be a relevant factor in assessing the comparative merits of greenfield and brownfield (previously developed) sites.
- The local ecology will play a part in determining the character and identity of a development and the place of which it is a part.

The layout of development should allow for ecological reserves and contribute to the creation of green wedges, green chains and green webs.

Appendix B : Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Introduction

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has the following purposes :

- Elaborates on the development plan's policies relating to a specific area, topic or site, and shows how its other policies can be applied to that area, topic or site.
- Provides a range of tools for achieving the development plan's policy aims.
- Includes urban design frameworks, design guides, development briefs and village design statements.
- Ensures that the development plan is not encumbered with material of an advisory nature.
- Must be consistent with the plan (and cross-referenced to the relevant policy or proposal), prepared in consultation with the public, and formally adopted by the council.
- Must not contain policies which are not in the development plan.
- Public consultation and council adoption give the guidance increased weight as a 'material consideration' in deciding planning applications.

Providing adequate guidance on design requires much more than setting out the City Council's broad planning policies and proposals. It is good practice for local authority should to show how the policies can be developed into clear design ideas in particular areas and sites, and in relation to specific planning and design issues. Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) can include urban design frameworks, conservation character appraisals, village design statements and some design guides provide more detailed guidance on particular areas; development briefs on particular sites; and design guides on specific topics.

Supplementary planning guidance, in the words of PPG1, para. A2 (which refers to it as supplementary *design* guidance), 'elucidates and exemplifies' plan policies. It is not a part of the development plan, but conforms to and supports it. SPG should not be a substitute for policies and proposals which should properly appear in the plan itself. SPG is given *material status* by the policies in the plan.

SPG can be of particular value in dealing with a matter that is:

- Subject to frequent change for reasons outside the council's control.
- Reliant on advice or documents produced by other bodies.
- Advisory, rather than being a requirement.

Government advice emphasises the importance of SPG: 'Local planning authorities should reject poor designs, particularly where their decisions are supported by clear plan policies or supplementary design guidance which has been subject to public consultation and adopted by the local planning authority' (PPG1, para. 17).

2. SPG and development plans

Government advice explains what should be in the plan and what in supplementary guidance. 'Policies and proposals that are likely to provide the basis for deciding planning applications, or for determining conditions to be attached to planning permissions, should be set out in the appropriate plan, which is subject to statutory procedures.... But many authorities prepare planning guidance which supplements the policies and proposals of the plan itself (for example, design guides...) and the Secretary of State believes this can provide helpful guidance for those preparing planning applications. Any such guidance ought to be consistent with the plan and clearly cross-referenced to the relevant plan policy or proposal. It should be issued separately from the plan and made publicly available, and its status should be made clear.' (PPG12, para. 3.18)

Government advice continues: 'Only the policies in the development plan can have special status... in deciding planning applications. However, SPG can be taken into account as a material consideration. The weight accorded to it will increase if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and has been the subject of a council resolution. But the Secretary of State wishes to emphasise that SPG must not be used to avoid subjecting to public scrutiny, in accordance with the statutory procedures, policies and proposals which should be included in the plan. Plan policies should not attempt to delegate decisions to SPG....' (PPG12, para. 3.19).

In practice, there is no clear distinction between what is policy (and therefore belongs in the plan) and what is guidance that elucidates and exemplifies policy (and so belongs in SPG). In many cases local authorities use SPG as a way of giving some weight to matters which the authority would want to include in the plan itself when it is next revised.

(Many current development plans have fairly rudimentary design policies). In such cases, what might be no more than the bare bones of design policies in the plan provide the peg on which to hang much more comprehensive coverage of design issues in SPG.

The principle should be that all matters of importance should be included in the plan. All matters which do not need the authority of having the status of plan policies, on the other hand, should be excluded from the plan so as not to encumber it with unnecessary detail. The question should be: 'Does this design criterion need to be included in the plan, or is there already a policy in the plan which covers it?'

Development plans should explain what SPG has been, or will be, prepared. Likewise SPG should refer back to the relevant policies in the plan.

3. Urban Design Frameworks

An urban design framework:

- Elaborates on the development plan's area-related policies and shows how its other policies can be applied to a specific area.
- Provides guidance for an area undergoing change, or where change needs to be promoted.
- Explains and illustrates how development plan policies will be applied in that area.
- Sets out a comprehensive set of design principles for the area.
- Explains how the planning strategy will be implemented.
- Is identified in the development plan.
- Identifies sites which will be the subject of development briefs.
- Is prepared by a local authority, partnership or development agency.

Urban design frameworks go well beyond the level of detail that is appropriate to include in the area-related design policies in a development plan. They draw on detailed area appraisals and express urban design ideas. An urban design framework usually relates to an area of which only some parts will be potential development sites. A framework goes beyond a traditional master plan by, for example, including a strategy for implementation.

An urban design framework can:

Create confidence

- Evolve a shared vision
- Build consensus for action
- Create partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors
- Highlight concerns and fears
- Tackle particular problems and issues
- Respond quickly and flexibly to changing local conditions and development pressures

Unlock potential

- Promote high standards of design
- Identify development opportunities
- Identify other opportunities for positive change
- Harness local skills and energy

Manage change

- Focus and co-ordinate activity and resources
- Promote and market an area
- Provide a framework for development control
- Contribute to the local plan (and plan review) process in circumstances where the existing plan does not provide an adequate policy context.

Provide a strategy for implementation

- Set the framework for implementing projects
- Provide the basis for bidding for public sector funds and securing private sector support
- Attract inward investment and external funding
- Provide the basis for developing an action plan and implementation programme

Urban design frameworks are a means of applying development plan policies (particularly design policies) in particular areas where there is a need to control, guide and promote change. They can provide a framework by which policies can be evolved (in the light of the context of the area and of what is economically feasible) into area-specific policies; proposals; action plans; and funding and implementation strategies. They also provide a framework for development and implementation control, when given the status of supplementary planning guidance. Urban design frameworks express design and planning concepts and proposals in two- and three-dimensional form, through drawings, models and other presentation techniques.

Urban design frameworks are generally initiated and prepared by local authorities, landowners or developers, partnerships, or regeneration agencies. The aim should be to create the basis for a dialogue with developers and anyone else interested in the area, not to set out a rigid structure for what must happen there.

The form of an urban design framework will depend on its role and the context. Frameworks can turn policy into action in areas such as: transport interchanges and corridors; regeneration areas; town centres; urban edges; housing estates; conservation areas; special policy areas; watersides; villages; new settlements; urban areas of special landscape value; suburban areas identified as being suitable for more intense development; and other areas of change.

An urban design framework sets the context for more detailed development briefs for specific sites within the area. In a case where several sites in the area are available for development, the framework will provide a strategy for preparing the briefs in a way that will ensure that their development will be complementary rather than competing with each other.

4. Development briefs

A development brief:

- Elaborates on the development plan's site-related policies and shows how its other policies can be applied to a specific site.
- Sets out in detail how the development plan's policies should be implemented on specific sites.
- Is prepared for a site of significant size or sensitivity.
- May be identified in the development plan or in an urban design framework.
- Expresses a set of coherent design ideas about how development can make the most of the potential of the site and its setting.
- Is prepared by a local authority, partnership, development agency, developer, or jointly.

A development brief provides detailed guidance on how a particular site should be developed. It is potentially one of the most effective means of agreeing the design principles for a site and implementing a local authority's design (and other planning) policies.

Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including planning briefs, design briefs and development frameworks. There are no standard definitions or practice as to what these include. As design is now recognised as an integral part of planning, there is no need for separate planning briefs and design briefs.

A development plan should specify the circumstances in which development briefs will be required, either in general or specific terms. The need for a brief will usually relate to the size and sensitivity of the site (for housing sites of more than a certain area, for example).

Speed and certainty

A brief should speed up the planning process and provide a greater degree of certainty about its outcome:

- Give landowners and developers clear guidance.
- Provide a degree of certainty about what the local authority and other agencies will require.
- Set out a sound basis for speedy negotiations. (A brief should make clear which matters are open for negotiation between the developer and the local authority, and which are not.)
- Save developers and local authorities time and effort that might otherwise be spent in negotiating amendments to a planning application.
- Make the planning process more proactive and responsive by creating an opportunity for involving councillors and local people.
- Create greater awareness of commercial and practical aspects of a development proposal early in the process.
- Help the local authority or other landowner market the site, or a regeneration agency to attract interest among developers.

The outcome of the design and planning process on a particular site will be determined and influenced by policies and standards; market conditions; the local context; and the approach of designers and project managers. A brief can help to achieve a balance between these and to resolve potential conflicts.

A development brief will not be required if the development plan and any existing supplementary planning guidance provides adequate guidance for any developer, and if there is no need to establish a set of urban design ideas and principles for the site.

What A Brief Should Contain

At the heart of a development brief is a set of design principles relating to the form of development: its layout, density, scale, visual appearance and landscape. Those principles should be derived from the development plan. If the plan does not have adequate design policies, the process of preparing the brief can (as second best) generate design principles without them, guided by factors such as planning policy guidance.

A development brief should:

- Show (in words, diagrams, photographs and drawings) how the development plan's design policies can be applied on the site.
- Provide the basic area and site appraisal that is an essential requirement for good design.
- Establish detailed design objectives for the site, expressing a set of urban design ideas.
- Show the first stages of urban design analysis.
- Convey the local authority's hopes and expectations, persuade developers of what the site has to offer, and inspire them to design and plan for the highest possible standards.

Part of the policy context for a development brief will be provided by any urban design framework (which provides guidance on how design principles can be applied to the wider area) and design guides (which show how design principles can be applied to specific design topics).

A development brief's requirements should be specific, and expressed in a way which will make it possible at a later stage to assess the degree to which a development proposal conforms to the brief. It may be useful for the brief to include a checklist of the criteria which would be used in this. Applicants for planning permission should explain in their planning application design statement how they have responded to any brief.

The design content of a brief should be more than just a list of the relevant design policies. The brief's site-specific planning and design considerations should reflect thinking by urban designers as to how those policies should be applied in the light, not just of the local context, but of the type of development that seems most economically feasible. The brief should show how the UDP design policies should be applied. This may be done with the help of concept diagrams; building envelope guidelines (diagrams with dimensions); and three-dimensional sketches of building

forms and spaces. However, such drawings should not go beyond what is required to explain the application of the principles.

A design brief should communicate strong design ideas, without actually designing buildings or layouts. Those who prepare briefs are sometimes tempted to design a building or buildings which would conform to the principles, and to include the fully worked-up drawings in the brief. This may confuse potential developers, who will not easily be able to tell which aspects of the drawings illustrate the application of the principles, and which have been included merely to enhance the drawings' appearance. Prescriptive design and any suggestion of a particular style should be avoided.

Preparing a brief

Most development briefs are prepared by local authorities, but landowners, developers, regeneration partnerships, and business and community organisations can also prepare them, either by themselves or jointly with the council. Any brief will need to be approved by the local authority if it is to have the status of supplementary planning guidance.

A wider range of people will usually need to be involved in preparing the brief. An effective brief may need the involvement of landowners and developers to provide information on economic and market conditions, and local people and interest groups to highlight values, needs, expectations and live issues. Representatives of any interest that might later want to influence a planning application should be consulted or otherwise involved in preparing the brief. All the necessary departments and disciplines should be represented on the local authority's team.

How elaborate the brief is (and what level of resources its preparation will require) will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the site and of any likely development. At the lowest level, a brief for a small infill site may require no more than simple guidance about such matters as height, access, the building line and materials, and consultation with neighbours. By contrast, the brief for a sensitive site on which major development is expected may require comprehensive assessments of complex issues such as soil conditions and ecological impact, and extensive consultation.

An area and site appraisal is the first stage of the urban design process: the effectiveness of subsequent design and planning work on the brief will be determined by the quality of its analysis. Analysis of the area involves

looking beyond the site to discover the immediate visual context and the broader functional context of activity, movement, land uses and functions. Whether or not specialist skills will be required at this stage will depend on the nature, scale and context of the site.

The council must set out clearly its expectations of any brief that it does not prepare itself. This should include a requirement for briefs to be developed in consultation with local people and other interests, as with the council's own briefs.

5. Design Guides

A design guide:

- Elaborates on the development plan's topic-related policies and shows how its other policies can be applied to a specific topic.
- Explains and illustrates a set of design principles relating to that topic.
- Identifies common design failings and helps to avoid them.
- Provide a basis for consistency in the local authority's dealings with planning applicants and a basis for negotiation.
- Enables a local authority to communicate its commitment to design both internally and to everyone involved in the development process.
- Is prepared by a local authority (sometimes more than one) or any other organisation (such as a housing trust, a county planning officers' society or a conservation area advisory panel).

What a design guide does

Design guides are among the most common mechanisms used by local authorities (and others) to influence the design of development. They are also potentially among the most effective, communicating widely and having a direct influence on what is built. The most successful guides have the committed support of all the relevant council officers and planning committee members, and they are clearly understood by local developers, architects and other users.

Design guides can:

- Illustrate and describe how the development plan's design policies can be implemented.
- Inspire innovative design appropriate to its context.
- Point to common design failings and help to avoid them.
- Provide a basis for consistency in the local authority's dealings with planning applicants and a basis for negotiation.

Reasons for preparing a guide include:

- To elucidate and explain the development plan's design policies.
- To provide a basis for negotiating with developers.
- To raise standards of a particular type of development where problems have been identified through the council's own experience, through consultation, or by local amenity groups.
- To provide answers to questions frequently asked by planning applicants.
- To provide a framework for co-ordinated action by the council or a partnership.
- To interpret new regulations.

Design guides enable local authorities to guide development in relation to particular design issues and type of development, where the design policies in the development plan are not sufficient. Producing a design guide can be an effective use of a council's design skills, in cases where officers find themselves repeatedly giving the same advice.