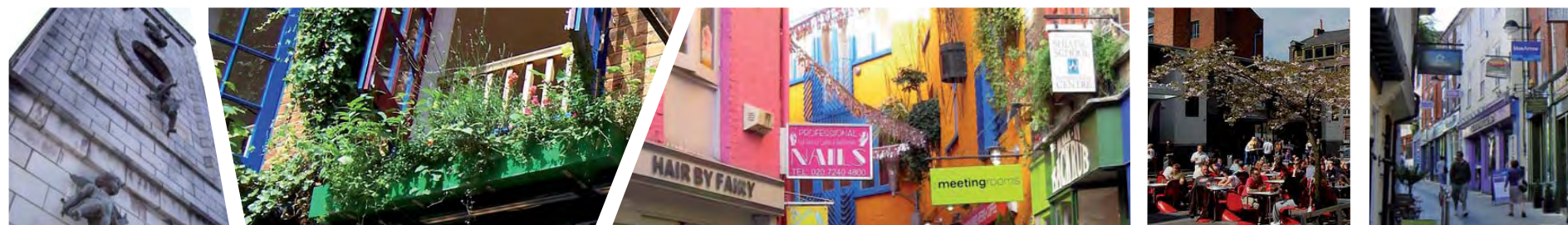



# THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE



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## SECTION 01: INTRODUCTION

This section introduces relevant planning and regeneration policy, the design context and the historic background of the study area

## INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE BRIEF

Powell Dobson Urbanists were appointed in February 2009 to prepare recommendations for development and regeneration of the north western area of the City Centre focused around Oxford Street, Singleton Street, Dillwyn Street / West Way and Plymouth Street.

The brief, issued by The City and County of Swansea Council (C&CoSC) and Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), was to assess the opportunities in this area within the context of the City Centre Strategic Framework and other important City Centre projects.

The City Centre Strategic Framework is a document commissioned by the City and County of Swansea and the Welsh Assembly Government which sets out realistic and deliverable proposals to facilitate and support development, transport, infrastructure and environmental enhancements within Swansea's City Centre over the coming 10 - 15 years.

The study area comprises the following elements:

- Split level surface car park identified as an opportunity for development
- An established retail area focused around lower Oxford Street, Plymouth Street, Nelson Street and West Way/Dillwyn Street
- The Picton Arcade and Shoppers Walk
- Swansea's Grand Theatre
- Adjacent to the site is the soon to be improved Quadrant Bus Station

The brief sets out the objectives of the study which includes the following elements:

- Testing the vision and principles set out in the City Centre Strategic Framework for this part of the city
- Exploring the potential range of uses for the area
- Exploring the potential for branding and marketing the area and the relation of this with the public realm and gateways to the area
- Assessing the potential for building refurbishment and the opportunity for new development on the car park site
- Reviewing the public realm in the area and the potential for extending existing enhancements in the city centre
- Developing the potential to create a new public square
- Identifying constraints to development
- Identifying land ownership interests
- Identifying proposals and an implementation programme
- Reviewing vehicle and pedestrian access in the area
- Addressing funding solutions
- Address phasing to comprehensive redevelopment proposals for the City Centre retail core

Key requirements that must be addressed as part of this study area are identified as the following:

- Incorporate the needs and aspirations of traders
- Enhance the role of the Grand Theatre, small specialist shops and cafes
- Create a new public space
- Improve the pedestrian environment
- Create a distinct district within the City
- Enhance identity, image and appearance







The Lower Oxford Street study area in the context of the wider city centre

### City Centre Context

The study area is adjacent to the main retail and commercial area of the city centre and forms a link between this and the surrounding residential area. It is also within walking distance of the Waterfront and Civic Centre, which is the main office of the CCoS, and where the City's Central Library is located.

The Waterfront is a key asset to the city and connection with it is an important theme in the long term strategy for the City Centre as set out in the City Centre Strategic Framework. Greater cohesion is sought between the city centre and the residential, cultural, leisure and natural features of the waterfront.

The SA1 waterfront development area on the east side of the River Tawe is a substantial development that has contributed significantly to the provision of office space, city centre living and leisure provision in the city.

Several significant notable investment have been achieved in recent years including Meridian Quay (the largest residential building in Wales), opening of the LC2 leisure destination and the National Waterfront Museum. Preferred Developer status has also been awarded to Hammerson's to develop a large area of land between the study area and the waterfront.

### Strategic Regeneration Area Context

In recognition of Swansea's potential key economic role as a driver for the regeneration of South West Wales, and the need to address deprivation within the City, WAG has designated Swansea as a Strategic Regeneration Area (SRA). A boundary for the SRA has been identified to provide a focus for investment, however the benefits of this investment will also be felt outside this boundary, particularly for people accessing jobs or training opportunities, or utilising the City's retail and leisure facilities.

The essence of an SRA designation is acknowledgement of the need to invest in both People and Place and recognition of the need for a more strategic, integrated, collaborative and holistic approach to regeneration. This will be reflected in:

- a consistent approach over time driven by the Wales Spatial Plan
- a strong focus on integrated policy and delivery, underpinned by the Making the Connections agenda
- empowering communities to contribute to their own regeneration and to design services around the needs of the user

It is within the context of this designation that this study for the **Lower Oxford Street Area Study** is set with the intention of contributing to the strategic role of the City Centre and its offer to the wider South West Wales area.



## 1.2 POLICY CONTEXT

### Wales Spatial Plan

The Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) is a Welsh Assembly Government document that provides the overall strategic framework guiding future development and proposals across Wales. It is a key spatial tool that sets the role of places and regions across the country.

Swansea is identified in the Wales Spatial Plan as the regional capital and the main driver for economic growth in the area. The plan states that Swansea should continue to develop its role as the regional centre with the surrounding hinterland benefiting from its growth. To achieve this it is important that the city centre develops as the regional hub for culture, leisure, commerce, health services and retailing.

The plan places an emphasis on strengthening the distinctive character of key settlements to establish an area that can compete with city regions that are closer to the UK's economic centres of gravity. The Picton Lanes Initiative should therefore make a contribution to the identity and character of the city, help to grow and diversify the city centre and contribute to its cultural, leisure, commercial, health and retail offer where appropriate.

### City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan

The City & County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in November 2008 and provides an up-to-date local planning context against which future proposals for the site will be determined. The majority of the site, with the exception of the frontage properties located on the west side of West Way, is within the City Centre boundary as designated in the UDP.

An extract from the UDP Proposals Map City Centre Inset is shown on the adjacent figure. A core element of the UDP Strategy, as set out in Part 1 of the Plan, is to ensure the delivery of a revitalised City Centre, properly integrated with an attractive, vibrant waterfront area. The key objective for the City Centre is: 'To reinforce and improve its role as a vibrant regional focus for business, administration, shopping, culture and leisure' (UDP Objective 2d).

UDP Policy CC3 makes clear that the main focus for significant new retail investment in the City Centre is the proposed comprehensive redevelopment of the St David's/Quadrant Area. The policy emphasises that any development proposals within the City Centre that would put at risk this redevelopment will not be supported.

In terms of new City Centre retail development, the UDP emphasises that schemes which improve the range, choice and quality of shopping opportunities that are accessible to all and reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car will be supported. The study area is within the designated retail core which makes Policy CC2 applicable. This seeks to ensure that development will maintain and enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the city centre as a retail destination. Enhancing shopping facilities has the highest priority in this area with ground floor retail uses regarded as

the most appropriate. Other ground floor uses should have regard to the relationship to other uses, impact on the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the street, the demand for retail uses and the scale design and impact of the development. The active use of upper floors will be supported.

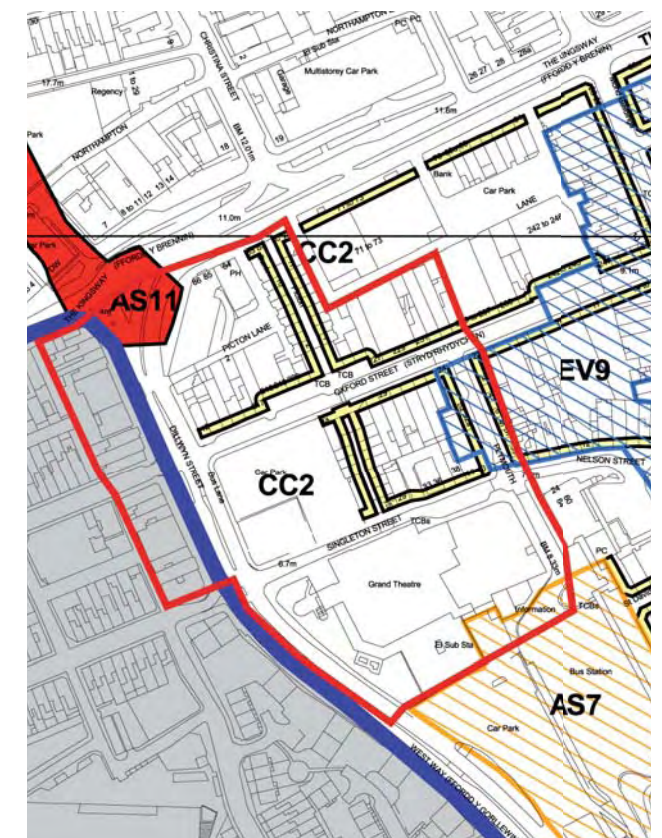
The creation of a strong retail circuit is considered important. The western end of Oxford Street does not currently add much strength to the retail circuit as there is little to draw people to the far end of the city centre.

The main focus for retail development is the redevelopment or improvement of St David's/Quadrant Centre and any other retail based development will be assessed against this aim (Policy CC3).

There is an emphasis in the UDP on the creation of a high quality environment that will be healthy, visually attractive, ecologically and historically rich. Given this, there is a recognition that the standard of design of new development needs to improve. Therefore the UDP promotes locally distinct and innovative design that is sensitive to its location and setting, is accessible to all and promotes resource efficient buildings.

The design of new development schemes will be required to make a positive contribution to enhancing the city centre environment (Policy CC5) with the aim of changing the face of the city centre creating routes and making places which people will find attractive and convenient.

Overall the Development Plan provides a robust and clear policy framework that fully supports an appropriate high quality, mixed use redevelopment of the Site.



UDP Proposals Map, City Centre Inset

- Study area
- Mixed Use
- City Centre Retail Core (CC2)
- Integrated Transport System Roads (AS11)
- Bus Services (AS7)
- Conservation Area (EV9)



# Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework

The Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework (SCCSF) was adopted by the Council as Corporate Policy in January 2007 and subsequently formally endorsed as SPG in March 2009. The SCCSF was developed to meet the aspirations of the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) in terms of ensuring that Swansea fulfils its widely recognised role as a City of regional significance.

The document provides a City wide framework intended to guide new development and investment in a co-ordinated fashion, thereby facilitating a major improvement in quality and competitiveness over the next decade and beyond. Proposals are set out to guide new investment in the City Centre with the aim of transforming and revitalising the city.

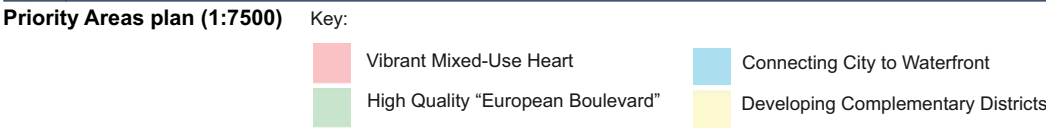
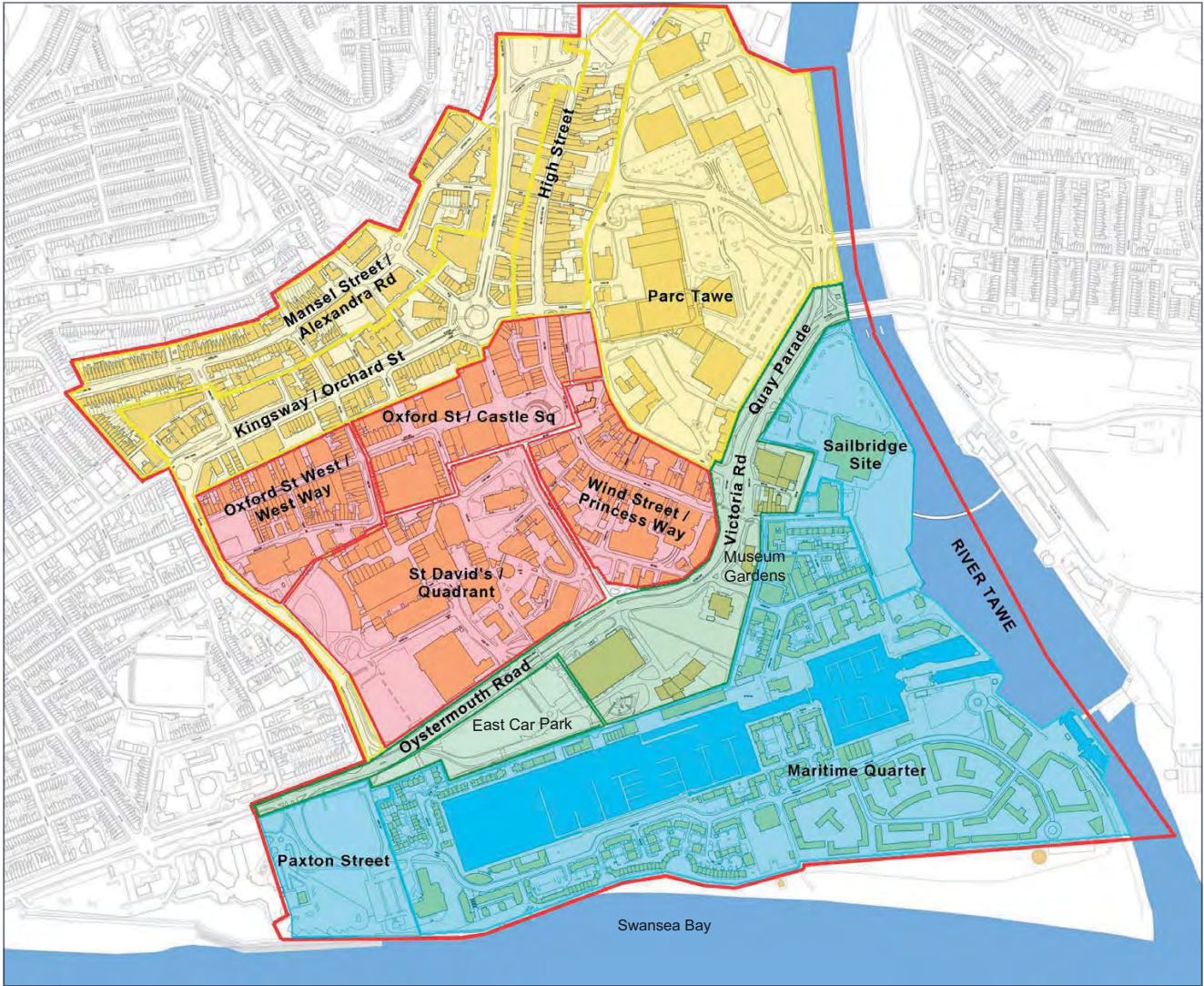
The SCCSF sets out conceptual proposals for a number of key sites and development areas across the City, including the study area which is referred to in the SCCSF as 'Oxford Street West/West Way'. This is identified as a priority area for development within the core theme of creating 'A Vibrant Mixed Use Heart to the City Centre'. The Vision for the area is expressed in the Framework as: "an area of special character with a mix of specialist small shops, cultural activity and ancillary uses, and a specific focus on an improved area around the Grand Theatre".

The development and design principles identified for the Oxford Street West/West Way area include:

- Creating a new public space associated with the Grand Theatre
- Developing or refurbishing buildings
- Developing the car park site whilst retaining some parking provision on the site

- Providing new and improved quality specialist shopping lanes or arcades with new mixed-use residential and "creative industries" uses
- Enhancing the public realm to build a distinctive character and identity for the area

The recommendations of this report sit firmly within the context of the SCCSF, incorporating its vision for the area, as well as the general development and design principles.



Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework plan identifying key areas in the city centre



### Additional Relevant Planning Guidance

#### Building Facade and Shopfront Design Guide

The Building Facade and Shopfront Design Guide provides relevant supporting guidance to some of the areas of this study. The purpose of this document is to ‘[promote good quality building facade and shopfront design to instil greater civic pride in the city and to raise perceptions of visitors, residents and potential visitors](#)’.

The guide sets out the principles of shopfront design, key considerations and sustainability measures. The key themes outlined in the document are:

- Promoting innovative design
- Creating active frontages at street level
- Adding interest and vibrancy
- Improving the relationship between inside and outside space

The guide seeks to ensure that the following issues are taken into consideration and addressed:

- Consideration of the wider streetscape
- Good relationship between ground and upper floors
- Good building maintenance

This guidance is particularly relevant to the building enhancement proposals contained in Section 4.4 of this report and is available to offer good practice advice and encourage investment in buildings to improve the public realm.

#### Tall Buildings Strategy for Swansea

The Tall Buildings Strategy for Swansea was adopted by the Council in 2008 and provides a coherent approach for the consideration of future tall building proposals. It identifies areas of opportunity within and around the City Centre where tall buildings may be appropriate. Development proposals for the Site must have

regard to this guidance.

The Strategy sets out a number of key design principles against which tall building proposals will be considered, including issues relating to scale, form, massing, views/vistas, architectural quality and sustainability of buildings.

This strategy will be a relevant consideration for any building that is more than twice the height of adjacent buildings.

#### St Davids/Quadrant Area Planning Brief

The study area lies adjacent to the St Davids/Quadrant area which is identified in the UDP and the SCCSF as the highest priority within the City Centre for redevelopment. A Planning Brief focussing on the St David's/Quadrant area is currently at draft stage and will be subject to a public consultation process in 2009. The Brief provides clear guidance in relation to the Council's aspirations for this extensive quarter of the City by outlining planning, urban design and development principles that will steer redevelopment proposals.

The vision for the St David's / Quadrant area encompasses the creation of a vibrant, attractive, quality shopping environment, based on the introduction of substantial new retail floorspace but which is supported by a range of appropriate other uses. The forthcoming Brief for St David's/Quadrant makes clear that future development in that area will need to be fully integrated with surrounding streets, particularly Oxford Street, in order to strengthen and extend the existing retail circuit and improve connectivity.

Redevelopment proposals for the Oxford Street West area have been formulated within this context since any application forthcoming on the site will be evaluated for its consistency with the aims for the wider retail core area,

particularly St Davids/Quadrant.

Other relevant guidance to consider:

- [Ambition is Critical; Making a Better Swansea](#), Swansea's Community Plan, City and County of Swansea (2004)
- [Sustainable Developer Guide](#), City and County of Swansea (2007)
- [Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing](#), Welsh Assembly Government (2006)
- [Technical Advice Note 12: Design](#), Welsh Assembly Government (2002)
- [Technical Advice Note 18: Transport](#), Welsh Assembly Government (2007)
- [Creating Sustainable Places](#), Welsh Assembly Government (May 2005)

### Welsh Assembly Government Sustainability Assessment

The WAG “Strategy Sustainability Assessment Tool” has been used to identify the key strengths of the study area for development and also identify where there are potential issues or conflicts that need to be addressed. The following bullet points summarise the assessment of the site at this early stage:

Key Assets-

- Adjacency to the city centre bus station which is soon to be re-modelled and the Metro
- Within the city centre
- Brownfield site
- Within a Strategic Regeneration Area

Key Considerations-

- Promote sustainable design and development practices (in line with the Local Authority's Sustainable Developer Guide)
- Improve the quality of the area and develop a local character
- Improve the safety/security of the area including road safety and crime and/or fear of crime
- Ensure development is accessible to all
- Support business growth/development and support local independent traders
- Reinforce the role of the city centre as a regional capital city

Further assessment of any proposals for development should be made at the appropriate stages. Design development should also respond to the sustainable design objectives as set out in [Creating Sustainable Places](#) which establishes the Welsh Assembly Government's (WDA) sustainability and design quality expectations for projects with which they have an involvement.

## 1.3 REGENERATION CONTEXT

### Swansea Strategic Regeneration Area

In January 2009 Swansea City Centre was designated by the Welsh Assembly Government as forming part of a larger Strategic Regeneration Area. This commitment to a holistic, long term and strategic perspective of regeneration will support the implementation of the City Centre Strategic Framework and target wider social and economic regeneration in the area. A key aim will be to reinforce the role of the city as the regional capital city with the focus of investment mainly in the centre of the city where there will be the greatest impact for the wider population.

It is within this context that there are opportunities for focused attention on the city centre and investment in projects that contribute to wider regional regeneration and have demonstrable regeneration benefits. The Picton Lanes Initiative has the potential to contribute to the regeneration of the city centre in the following areas:

- Maintaining and creating local businesses and supporting local jobs
- Providing affordable housing in a central, accessible location
- Dealing with a derelict site and vacant city centre properties
- Improving the competitiveness of the city centre by expanding its offer
- Supporting the vitality of the city centre as a place to spend time and money

### Major City Centre Redevelopment Proposals

The SCCSF sets out the Council's initial concept proposals for priority redevelopment areas within the City Centre. Amongst the key sites identified in the document for regeneration are: the St David's/Quadrant Shopping Centre area; the City Waterfront area between the Marriot Hotel and the Civic Centre; and the Parc Tawe area. The priority status afforded to these sites reflects their existing under-utilised nature, poor gateway profile and overall strategic significance. Planning Briefs are being prepared to guide detailed development proposals at each of these locations, where it is anticipated that comprehensive regeneration schemes will come forward in the medium term.

The Council owns the freehold of much of these areas, which together form a major strategic redevelopment opportunity for Swansea. Hammerson UK Plc was selected by the Council and the Welsh Assembly Government in 2007 as development partner to deliver a comprehensive scheme on the St David's/Quadrant site, which will transform the retail heart of the City. The emerging masterplan for the area focuses on a retail-led, mixed use scheme incorporating new anchor stores, unit shops, cafes, restaurants, offices, arts/cultural uses, residential and student accommodation. Integral to the scheme will be significant new areas of public realm and networks of open space. The proposed redevelopment is to integrate with the existing City Centre retail core at Oxford Street and the Quadrant Centre, and will create new and expanded 24 hour streets. The aim is to create a 'step change' in retail provision and significantly enhance the regional status of Swansea as a shopping destination.

The Council and its development partners are also bringing forward mixed use proposals for

land at the City Waterfront area between the Marriot Hotel and the Civic Centre, and also at Parc Tawe on the east side of the city. Taken together with ongoing development at SA1 Waterfront and the Tawe riverside, there is a concern that the priority focus is to the south and east of the Study area. This could make the lower Oxford Street area more peripheral and footfall could decline further, unless a clear development concept framework is established for the Study area and a future strategy put in place. In this context it is essential that the Picton Lanes Initiative shows how it relates to adjoining redevelopment areas, and in particular how it will provide an appropriate complementary offer to the major scheme that is proposed at St David's/Quadrant.

### Public Realm Investment

Recent investments have been made in the city centre to improve its appearance and function. Not least of these is the public realm works that have been implemented throughout a large area of the centre of the city. This investment has provided new paving, street furniture, and tree planting. It has significantly improved the appearance of the pedestrian streets and raised the profile of the city centre for the long term.

The surrounding improvements have to some extent marginalised the Lower Oxford area further as the public realm now looks outdated in comparison. The Picton Lanes Initiative seeks to address this and build on the investment that has been made in the surrounding area to reintegrate the area back into the city centre whilst still maintaining a distinct identity.

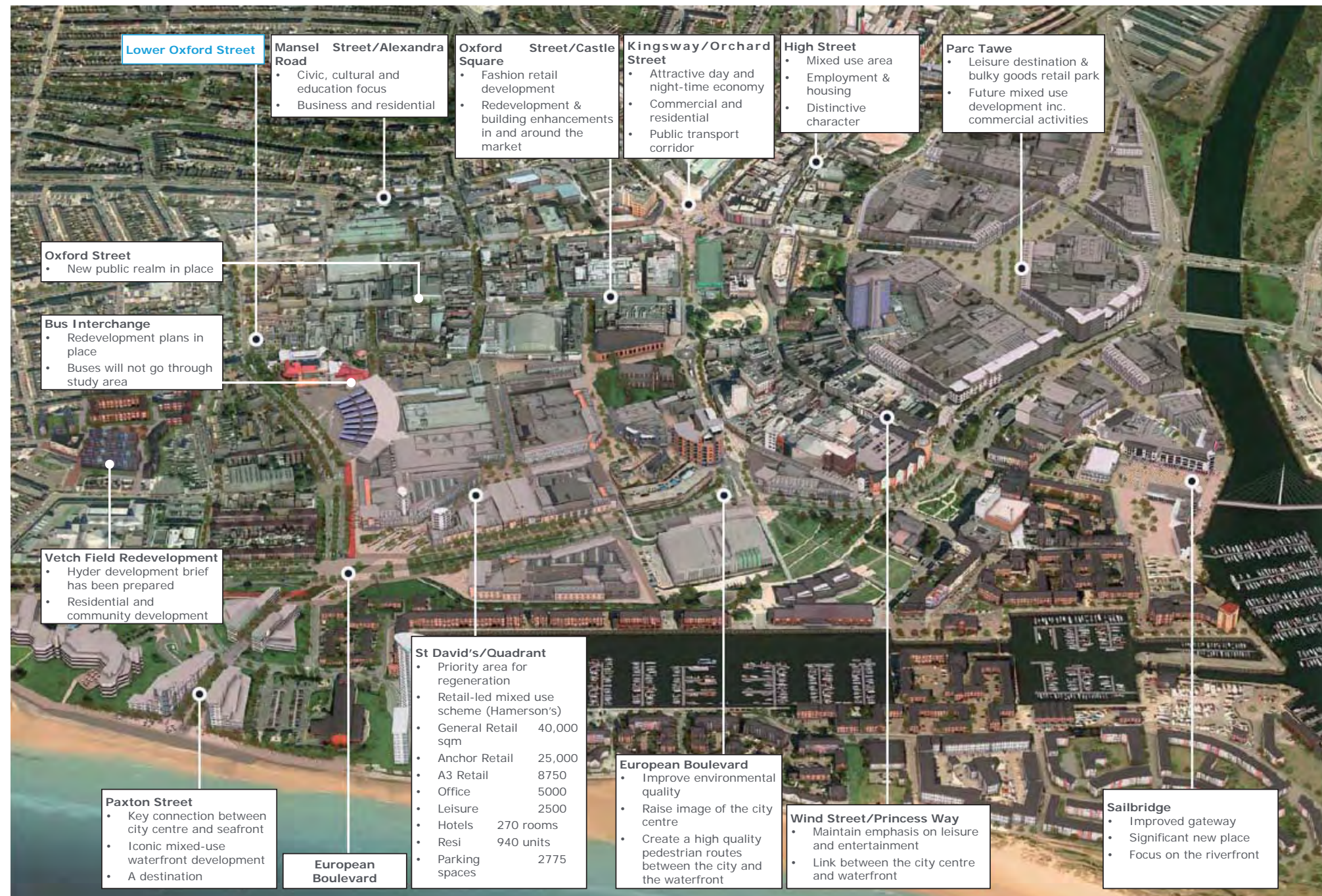


New paving and street furniture on Oxford Street



# SECTION 01

## INTRODUCTION



Distribution of major city centre schemes

### Retail Context

Debenhams's Department Store and the Quadrant Shopping Precinct are large draws to Swansea City Centre and both have high footfall. However, Swansea has a large amount of out of town retail which has challenged the quality of the offer of the City Centre in recent years. In this context, the proposed Hammerson City Centre regeneration scheme seeks to redress this balance, arrest decline and promote further investment in the city centre. The overall scheme could include around about 40,000 sq m of retail, 25,000 sq m of anchor stores, 8,750 sq m of A3, 5,000 sq m of offices and 2,500 sq m of leisure with 270 hotel rooms and 940 residential units. This is a significant scheme and the proposals in Lower Oxford Street will need to complement that development and not try to compete with specific uses.

The closure of David Evans department store in 2005 left the city centre with a poor representation of department and variety stores however this site has now been redeveloped to offer a range of higher quality retail. The principle fashion retailers currently represented in the centre include River Island, Monsoon/Accessorize, Next, Topshop, Warehouse/Miss Selfridge and Dorothy Perkins/Burton. There is a lack of high quality fashion retailers in the city centre at present although future plans for the city centre will help address this matter. Other current occupiers of note within the city centre include Boots, Marks and Spencer, WH Smith, Primark, New Look and Waterstones.

In March 2007, CCoSC and the Welsh Assembly Government unveiled a new strategic framework to transform Swansea city centre, under a blueprint that could generate approximately £1 billion worth of investment by 2022. After the completion of the general improvements to access, public areas, lighting



and the potential developments planned within the framework, rental levels are anticipated to move upwards over future years as the demand for commercial accommodation in the city increases. Swansea could continue to secure investment from retailers and leisure interests if its regeneration outputs are achieved.

On a smaller scale the study area provides accommodation for smaller independent traders, it is situated off the main retail circuit and as such its offer has been decreasing over a number of years and this is coupled with poor building fabric and layout. Having said that the offer and occupation is relatively good with few vacant units, but the current economic cycle is taking its toll with several closures during the study period. The make up of the study area is one of smaller units, some niche operators and an offer which is designed to capture specific spending patterns and complement the prime and standardised retail offer in the remainder of the city. We are essentially seeking to complement the current offer with improvements to operators and building fabric which will encourage independence and encourage a collage of uses and goods on sale. We do not see the study area as having the capacity to attract prime multiple retailers but, with open space improvements, better uses and long term management of the area, it

#### Office Context

Swansea City Centre is not a major office location, with just 4,500 office jobs in the wider city area and an estimated 890 within the retail core which is reflected in the overall supply of accommodation at about 148,000 sq m with just 30,000 sq m within the retail core (Framework Document). Despite a lack of activity and development within the core city centre, the market has benefited from an influx of grade A office accommodation over the last three years, which has subsequently been let or sold, reflecting a notable increase

in the take up of office stock on previous years, significantly assisted by the SA1 Swansea Waterfront development.

The Welsh Assembly Government completed the first phase of the WISP project in February 2008, comprising 3,900 sq m of grade A accommodation at the gateway to the SA1 which has been let to the Vehicle and Operations Safety Agency and Admiral Insurance at a new headline rent for the city of £156 per sq m (£14.50 per sq ft).

Within the city core there are a number of 1960/70's office buildings, namely Alexander House, Orchard House, Princess House and the Former Post Office building which all offer a mixed office specification with the majority of buildings unrefurbished. The buildings range in size from 1,000 sq m to 6,000 sq m and due to the structural limitations (restricted floor to ceiling height and multiple levels) and ageing M&E specification are proving difficult to refurbish cost effectively. The rental level achieved in this market is between £75.00 and £95.00 per sq m dependant on the specification available.

In summary, the main grade A product in excess of 1,000 sq m available in town and out of town is limited to a few schemes and it is anticipated that all the city centre Grade A product will be let or sold by the end of 2009. The City Centre Strategic Framework recommends office use in the city centre but there are currently no plans in the development pipeline for any new Grade A product in the city centre. With no supply for at least two years and possibly longer, this will have a negative impact on the Swansea office market. The Hammerson scheme will provide some accommodation but there remains scope for additional city centre space.

#### Residential Context

Up until early 2008 the new homes market in Swansea had experienced a period of strong growth, with evidence of competition between city centre developers vying for a slice of the waterside apartment market. Capital values across all schemes grew rapidly and in early spring 2008 sales were achieving an average value in the order of £2,500 per sq m, but with the issues of the financial markets demand has slipped and values have come down dramatically as developers compete for a decreasing number of buyers in difficult times. We anticipate average values now are probably less than £2,000 per sq m and with a downscale of volumes, sales rates are much slower increasing pressure on cash flows, and bank funding as a consequence is very tight for such schemes placing additional risk on viability models.

Given the private sector concerns at the current market conditions we are seeing Housing Associations as key drivers for many sites and they seem to be inundated with opportunities which the private sector would have considered previously without recourse to this sector. A city centre site such as the car park site could attract a Housing Association offer and, with their city living concepts aimed at attracting young professionals and graduates who work locally, this could improve the number of office workers and skilled jobs locally. This will generate a captive audience and spending power in the area and will have a positive affect on the viability of the development and improvement concept for the area. Residential scheme car parking is an issue in the UK and the private sector are likely to insist on a number of demised spaces with no alternative users. Housing Associations are less concerned with parking and this might allow the council to retain most of the spaces to manage for the benefit of the study area including the retailers and the Theatre with only limited spaces demised to office users during limited hours of the day.

#### SA1 Impact

The recent regeneration activity at the 40 hectare (100 acre) SA1 Swansea Waterfront adjacent to the City Centre has raised the profile of Swansea considerably. Larger lettings include the pre-letting of Cyprium 1 and 2 to Admiral Insurance in 2005 and 2006, at the time setting new headline rents for Swansea achieving £137 per sq m (£12.75 per sq ft).



Waterside residential development

## 1.4 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Understanding the history of a place is important in developing a perspective on its current situation and future direction. Oxford Street is an historic street that was once rich with architectural detail. These buildings defined the street and provided interest and quality in the street scene. However, damage from bombing during the Second World War was significant and large areas of the city's built fabric were destroyed and cleared, including buildings within the study area. Extensive rebuilding of the city centre took place in the 1950s and 60s at a time when the car had much greater prominence, building styles followed a much more functional form and building costs had to be kept low. It is this style of development that now characterises the area and is now beginning to look tired, outdated and in need of investment.

The current surface car park within the study area was formerly occupied by a school which was demolished approximately 15 years ago. The site has since remained undeveloped although it is well used as a car park.



Historic view of Oxford Street looking towards the study area showing rich building details and pedestrian priority



View of Kingsway c.1965 showing the increasing dominance of the car and a more simplistic building style



The former Oxford Street National School which once occupied the site.





## SECTION 02:

# THE LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY

This section explores the character and identity of the study area and its current issues

## LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY

## 2.1 CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

Although relatively small, the character of Lower Oxford Street is complex and multi-faceted.

This is partly as a result of the large proportion of local, independently owned businesses that trade from the area. The types of products and services sold from these small units are wide ranging which gives the area a distinct identity, quite complementary to the rest of the City Centre where national chains dominate. The range of products and services include:

- The Grand Theatre
- Cafés and restaurants
- Live music venues, bars and nightclubs
- Clothes shops
- Hair and beauty businesses
- Specialist shops (surf shops, comic/fantasy shops, fancy dress etc)

This diversity is largely as a result of its edge of centre location and affordable rents. As a result of its peripheral situation and personal input from business owners, Lower Oxford Street has accumulated a slightly ad-hoc character. Some of this is unwanted; as poor quality shopfronts, box roller shutters, Dutch canopies and poorly maintained upper floors all contribute to a lower quality and uncoordinated atmosphere prevalent here. However, there are some real gems, where traders have taken the decision to up the game by investing in high quality fit-outs, vibrant signage and high quality window displays.

The public realm in this area does not currently contribute to the quality and appearance of the area. Investment in the area has been on hold due to a number of factors including development uncertainties and reliance on external funding support. The existing public

realm is comprised of tired, dated materials which, together with a predominant box-like concrete architectural form, creates an environment that can sometimes be stark, bland and slightly uncomfortable. This is perhaps mostly as a result of the sterilising impact of the surface level car park and the traffic dominated West Way.

Although the current character and identity of Lower Oxford Street is unclear, there is certainly sufficient promise through the independent sector to summarise that although jaded, this area of Swansea has the potential to be a driving force in the ongoing reinvention of the City Centre.



Interesting, building mounted public art adds interest and richness



Vibrant shop signs and independent businesses promote a distinctive feel to Lower Oxford Street



Good quality shopfronts and interesting window displays help to enliven the area



Longstanding locally owned businesses with a vibrant image are good for the area



## 2.2 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND MOVEMENT

The study area includes the following streets:

1. Lower Oxford Street
2. Plymouth Street
3. Singleton Street
4. Dillwyn Street/West Way
5. Picton Arcade and Shopper's Walk

**1. Lower Oxford Street** is a westward extension of Oxford Street – one of the prime retail areas in Swansea City Centre. In movement terms Lower Oxford Street performs a variety of roles including:

- Local access to retail areas
- Egress from the Oxford Street surface car park
- Bus route for services to the north and west and bus stop on southern side of carriageway adjacent to car park
- A pedestrian east/west route
- Link to Picton arcade/Shoppers Walk
- Cycle access to retail core of Swansea City Centre
- Servicing for local units
- Access to on street parking/loading

**2. Plymouth Street** links Singleton Street in the south to Lower Oxford Street in the North. This street includes pay and display on-street parking for four vehicles. A key role for this street at present is that of facilitating bus movements north from the existing Quadrant Bus Station via Plymouth Street to Lower Oxford Street and through the signalled junction with Dillwyn Street/West Way. Plymouth Street also acts as a busy pedestrian corridor linking the Quadrant Bus station and access to the shopping centre with Oxford Street and Lower Oxford Street.

**3. The eastern end of Singleton Street** forms a cross roads with Plymouth Street (running north south) and Nelson street opposite. At the western end Singleton Street forms a junction with West Way.

Singleton Street together with Western Street form a southwest/north east route across West Way for pedestrians via signalled crossings north and south of the junction.

Singleton Street also provides access to the Oxford Street surface car park which serves the immediate study area during the day and provides a convenient facility those attending the Swansea Grand theatre which fronts on to the southern side of Singleton Street.

This street also facilitates movement for service vehicles to the study area and access to Swansea Market via controlled entry into Nelson Street (automated bollards control access for permit holders 1030hrs to 1630hrs).

These three streets form a one way loop off of West Way.



View of Lower Oxford Street and the transition from the pedestrian focused central area to greater vehicle dominance



On street parking on Plymouth Street



Singleton Street facilitating access to Swansea Market for service vehicles. Very low foot fall

## LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY

**4. Dillwyn Street/West Way** was until recently a dual carriageway road linking Kingsway (B4290) to the north with Oystermouth Road (A4067) to the south. At the time of writing the eastern half of the carriageway has been reallocated for use as a public transport route facilitating the introduction of the Swansea Metro bus rapid transit scheme. The scheme has included the remodelling of the former roundabout at Kingsway/Dillwyn Street junction and creation of a dedicated two way route for the Metro services, buses, taxis and other authorised vehicles in the former eastern half of the dual carriageway. A central reservation along much of Dillwyn Street/West Way forms the boundary between the Metro route and the western section of Dillwyn Street/West Way which remains open for use by all vehicles. General traffic moves north and south within the boundary of the former northbound western half of the former dual carriageway.

Within the study area Dillwyn Street is the name given to the northern part of this route and south of the junction with Lower Oxford Street the name of the routes changes to West Way. The route has signalled controlled junctions with Lower Oxford Street (West and East) and Singleton Street/Western Street which include pedestrian crossings for east west movements. The route also accommodates new Metro stop locations adjacent to the Quadrant Bus Station. An unsignalled crossing is currently provided within the southern part of the junction of Lower Oxford Street and Dillwyn Street/West Way.

This highway currently forms a significant barrier to pedestrian movement into and out of the heart of the City Centre. While efforts have been made to remove barriers and create direct crossings, the vehicle is overly dominant and discourages movement on foot. Crossing improvements in this area will only have a minimal impact on pedestrian movement.

The overall vehicle and engineering led approach to the design of the highway needs to be broken down to change the environment of the street, reduce the dominance of the highway, create a greater sense of place and make walking and cycling more pleasant. However, it is recognised that this street forms one part of a much greater City Centre highway network that needs to accommodate a large amount of traffic and that any changes and improvements in this area need to be considered in this context and incorporated into a wider and more thorough streetscape study. This is an important action that needs to be addressed to support the proposals of this study, improve the City Centre, integrate the residential area to the west of the City Centre and meet the long term aspirations of improving this route and the connection to the waterfront.

**5. Picton Arcade/Shoppers Walk** both provide a north south corridor for pedestrians through the study area connecting Kingsway to Lower Oxford Street (Picton Arcade) and linking Lower Oxford Street to the Grand Theatre and the Quadrant Bus Station (Shoppers Walk). Both routes are enclosed arcades for pedestrian use only.



Junction between Lower Oxford Street and Dillwyn Street is vast and lacks any sense of place



Picton Arcade provides a convenient short cut from Kingsway to Oxford Street although the entrance is very understated



Crossing improvements have been made by removing barriers and keeping lines straight however the expanse of road remains daunting



Shoppers Walk continues the connection from Picton Arcade to Singleton Street and the theatre



## LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY

**Traffic movement and volume**

Traffic moves through the Singleton Street/ Plymouth Street and Lower Oxford Street corridor in an anti clockwise one-way system.

Traffic flows provided by the City and County of Swansea (City and County of Swansea Council) in 2009 show that during a typical 10 hour day (0800hrs-1800hrs) some 4779 vehicles were recorded northbound on West Way (to Kingsway) with some 5497 vehicles moving southbound (to Oystermouth Road)

According to this data maximum flows are experienced between 1200 and 1300 where northbound flows reach 627 and southbound flows are 444. Between 0800-0900 flows are 468 northbound and 406 southbound. In the evening, the peak flow occurs between 1600-1700 where flows of 531 and 605 were recorded north and south respectively.

**Metro/Public Transport**

The Swansea Metro scheme is a bus rapid transit scheme linking Morriston and Singleton Hospitals through the city centre including a link to the new Quadrant Interchange.

In 2008 the main infrastructure for the Metro was completed through the study area on Dillwyn Street/West Way. Metro stops are currently being completed on West Way adjacent to the Quadrant bus station. It is proposed that the service will run on a frequency of one service every ten minutes in each direction. The Metro infrastructure is also available to existing bus services. The planned start date for the operation of the Metro is Spring 2009.

According to data provided by City and County of Swansea Council at present some 35.5 buses per hour operate via Plymouth Street/Lower Oxford Street to destinations to the north and west of the city and beyond. Up to 100 buses operate southbound on Dillwyn Street/

West Way each hour and 17 buses operate northbound on Dillwyn Street/West Way.

**Pedestrian**

The City and County of Swansea Council Pedestrian Footfall Estimates Swansea City Centre 1985-2008 includes the following information:

- In 2008 Location 4 End of Lower Oxford Street – is broadly only 28% of footfall at location 13 just east of Oxford street/ Plymouth Street (25410 / 90210) junction, and 24% of that at location 14 on Oxford street immediately west of junction with Union Street (25410 / 103910)
- Wilkinsons on Plymouth Street is a busy location (69250) – combined generation of retailing and desire line for access to Bus station. Almost 3 times as busy as lower Oxford Street.
- Footfall in the Picton Arcade has fallen by 50% since 1987 (56600 to 21740)
- Lack of real trend in time series data at location 4 (end of Lower Oxford Street) – peaked in 2003
- Counts at Entrance to Shoppers Walk low in comparison to other similar locations surveyed
- Sunday figures are surprisingly low across the board

It is important to note that the footfall figures reflect the change in the character of the study area compared to the area immediately to the east which is pedestrianised core retail area, and to the west characterised by a combination of commercial and residential areas and the significant obstacle for pedestrians represented by Dillwyn Street/West Way

**Cycling**

There are no dedicated segregated facilities for cyclists to move through the study area. However cycle parking is accommodated at several locations using traditional “Sheffield” style stands.

**Accidents**

According to the information provided by City and County of Swansea Council within the study area there are three clear clusters of accidents. The junction of Lower Oxford Street and Dillwyn Street/West Way shows the highest number of accidents, followed by the junction of Singleton Street and West Way, and a third cluster immediately north of the Picton Arcade on Kingsway. Additional accidents are recorded on Dillwyn Street, Singleton Street and Plymouth Street. These clusters show all recorded incidents.

**Car parking**

Within the study boundary some 116 car parking spaces are available in the Oxford Street Car Park on a short stay basis. This car park is significant in the provision of disabled parking and is a popular choice as it provides some 27 allocated disabled bays with easy access to the street.

At the time of writing results are awaited from the Strategic Car Park Study currently being prepared by consultants on behalf of City and County of Swansea Council. It is important to note that the brief for the Strategic Car Park Study specifically mentions the City and County of Swansea Council City Centre Strategic Framework’s Accessibility Strategy which states that “...small scale car parks should be used for development purposes, or designated for specific use and lost spaces accommodated elsewhere. A network of existing, improved and new development-related multi-storey car parks should therefore be provided at the appropriate locations to serve the needs of

shoppers... overall aim to maintain the current number of parking spaces, but to change the balance with multi-storey car parking facilities for short stay and Park and Ride for long stay.”

To the immediate south of the study area is the Quadrant Multi-Storey Car Park which has provision for 517 cars including 30 bays for disabled users. At present this car park displays informal signage requesting users not to park for using the theatre, due to limited hours of operation.

**New Quadrant Interchange**

The existing Quadrant bus station is to be replaced with a modern high quality transport interchange. The new interchange will be located on the site of the existing bus station and also includes the former Princess Street car park. Access/Egress for the interchange will be directly onto West Way. Current egresses via Plymouth Street and Garden Street will be closed which will significantly reduce the number of buses passing through the study area. Construction is planned to commence in June 2009 with completion in September 2010.

Reducing the number of buses pass through the area will significantly improve the quality of the environment particularly in terms of noise, air pollution and pedestrian safety. Fewer buses will allow the creation of a more pleasant public realm with spaces that can be used for outdoor seating and activities.

Disruption to public transport services during construction of Quadrant interchange needs to be mitigated and the proposals of this study need to be coordinated with the works on the bus interchange.

## 2.3 STREETScape QUALITY

The existing streetscape quality is generally low grade and out of keeping with the high standard elsewhere in the City.

The difference in quality between the Lower Oxford Street area and the wider City Centre emphasises the study area as peripheral and less important than the wider centre. This must be addressed for this area to become a destination in its own right in Swansea.

The materials that comprise the public realm are generally worn and dated. This is not necessarily through inadequate maintenance, but more because the materials are at the end of the natural life-span as they have diminished in colour and have become pitted and worn. The grey concrete slabs contribute to the predominant flat feel in the built environment (and exacerbated by concrete being a common building material). There does not seem to have been significant issues with low grade reinstatement and disturbance by utilities companies and it would seem prudent to contact the relevant service providers before any replacement works are considered further.

The relationship between traffic and vehicles in the study area is generally very positive. Most of the traffic is travelling in a single direction and usually slow enough for pedestrians to feel confident of encroaching upon the carriageway. The slow speed environment is influenced most by the tight corner radii, limited visibility and narrow carriageway width. However, the western section of Lower Oxford Street is wider and is one reason why speeds are slightly higher in this section (along with the smaller number of pedestrians).

These principles, consistent with those that underpin the concept of shared space, need to be retained and enhanced to ensure that pedestrians continue to have dominance over traffic in this area.

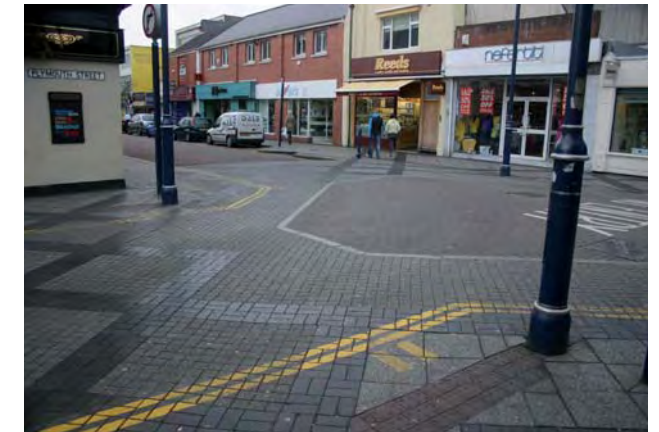
Within the study area there is currently very little space to linger or meet. Where space is available to pedestrians (where the entrances to the arcades face one another) this is severed unnecessarily by the movement of vehicles. An approach to public realm design which advocates a pedestrian dominance across the highway will greatly help to convey pedestrian priority at this key point.

Clutter of signs, lines, columns, markings and regulations is a problem in this part of Swansea. If this area is to have pedestrian priority and greater aesthetic appeal then a more moderated approach to street clutter needs to be taken. Double yellow lines are particularly prevalent here and opportunities to utilise a Restricted Parking Zone or conservation grade line markings will help to reduce accumulations of visual clutter.

The recent £4m investment in public realm in the City Centre has been a successful and wise investment in high quality materials and simple design. The future of public realm in Lower Oxford Street needs to reflect and build upon this investment rather than consider a new, separate, palette of materials.



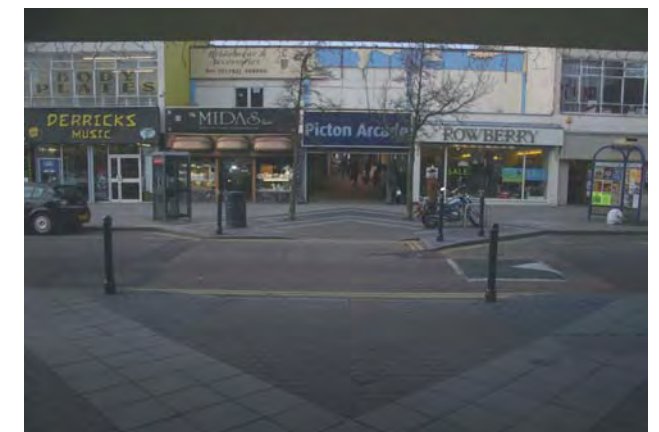
Pre-cast concrete materials



Traffic moves slowly through junctions but they do not form attractive places



Clutter of signage, street furniture and paint on the road needs to be reduced to improve the street environment



The space between the two arcade entrances is severed by the road



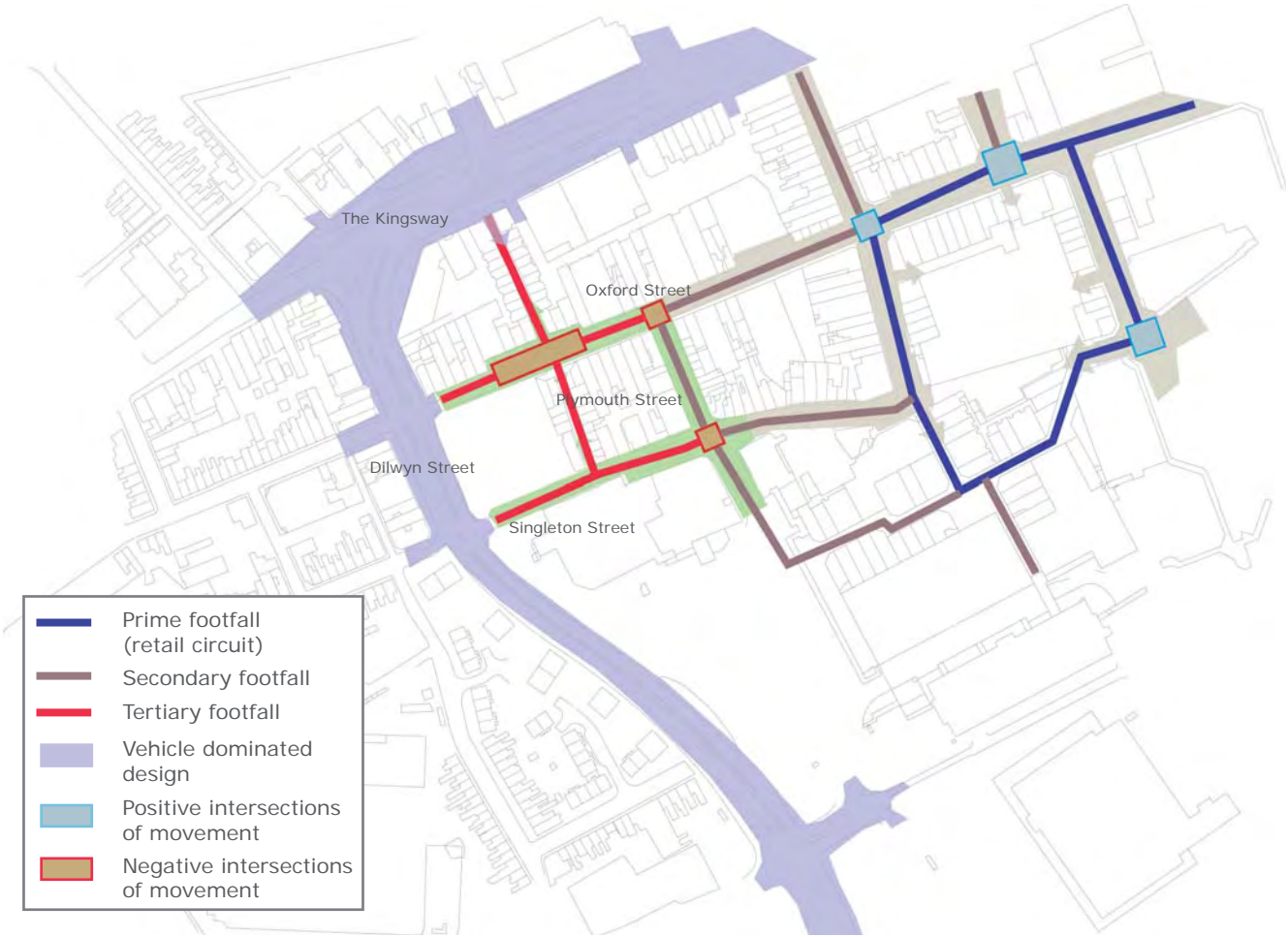
LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY



Dillwyn Street/West Way follows vehicle, rather than place-led design



The width of the street and lanes of traffic travelling in various directions makes crossing the road more complicated and daunting



Pedestrian footfall and public realm character



New pedestrian focused public realm in the heart of the City Centre supports high pedestrian footfall



Street furniture complements the paving design to reinforce the street as a place in which to stop and spend time



## 2.4 BUILDING QUALITY AND CONDITION

Whilst there is opportunity in this area for new development, there is also a need to address the quality and appearance of the existing built fabric.

A townscape review has been undertaken to assess the character and quality of the buildings within the study area.

The Lower Oxford Street area was substantially affected by war time bombing and post war reconstruction. The architectural style of the period and the need to rebuild large areas of the city meant that the 1950s/60s developments were far from the former splendour of the area and they are now looking particularly tired. The choice of materials, including large quantities of concrete; their simple utilitarian style with lack of detail and decoration; and the bulky form of the buildings creates an environment that lacks quality, human scale and a sense of rhythm within the street. This condition is prevalent within the study area creating an outdated and unattractive look.

A small portion of the study area is within a conservation area affording it protection from development that will not protect or enhance its character or appearance. The buildings in this area are not of great architectural merit but they do provide a sense of age and richness to the area and a human scale which is missing in other areas.

Beyond the conservation area there are two main issues affecting the quality of the built environment. Firstly, the larger scale and mass of the 1950s/60s buildings can dominate the street scene as they read as one large mass. This building style does not provide significant interest or detail. Secondly, the condition of the building facades and shopfronts is poor in

many cases. The poor quality of the 1950s/60s facades is symptomatic of their age and design; large areas of glass and cheaper materials now have a worn, dated and drab appearance. However, some of the more traditional two storey buildings are also suffering from poor upkeep and additions and alterations such as changing windows and adding Dutch blinds that has resulted in a poor appearance.

There are exceptions to the general condition of the buildings in the area where owners have invested significantly in their properties and shopfronts or made additions that enliven the street scene. However, without a wider concerted effort, improvements to individual properties do little to uplift the area.

The Grand Theatre is the only distinctive building of note in the area and therefore acts as a local landmark. However its contribution to the area is compromised by insensitive additions and its poor condition. There is scope for this historic building to be celebrated more through improvements to its appearance (including repairing the lettering so that the green netting can be removed) and giving it a more formal space within which to be appreciated.

One of the fundamental deficiencies in the built form and quality of the area is the frontage onto Singleton Street. The gaps in the frontage, empty units and poor quality buildings create a poor street environment and does not attract people through the area. This area must be addressed as part of this initiative.



The large buildings from the post war era have a poor relationship with the street and are in poor condition



Reeds Bakery has recently had significant internal and external improvements



Buildings in the conservation area have a pleasant scale but require consistent improvements



Poor quality frontage on Singleton Street does not help to draw people into the area



Bright colours help to enliven the area



The theatre acts as a local landmark but it could make a greater positive contribution



## 2.5 SURROUNDING LAND USE

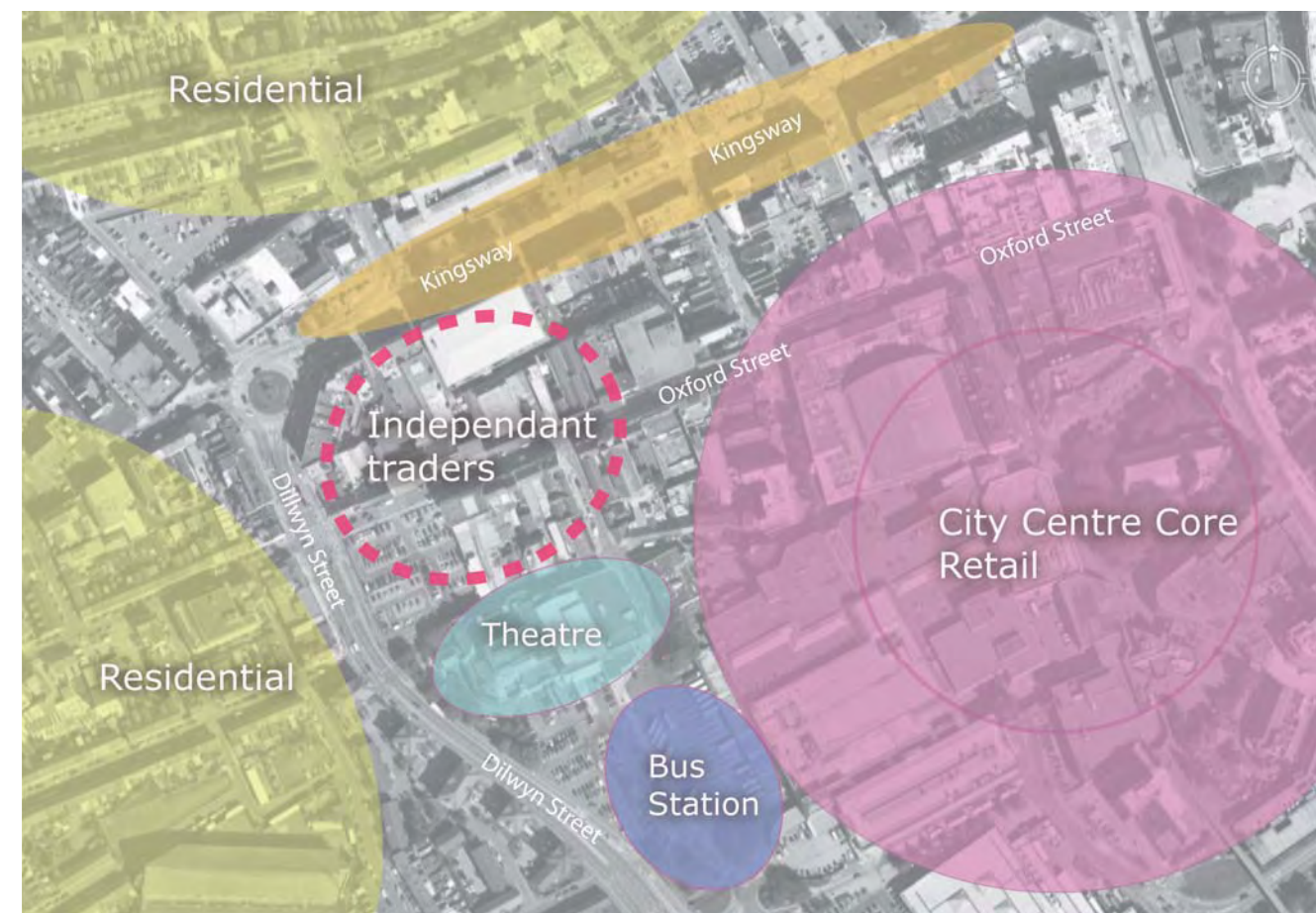
The study area lies within the western periphery of the city centre. To the east lies the city centre retail core, including the Quadrant Centre, Upper Oxford Street and Swansea Market. This area is typified by large to medium size national retailers. Further east is the recent SA1 development, a large scale mix use development.

A residential area largely made up of terraced housing lies immediately to the west. This area includes the former home of Swansea City FC, The Vetch Field, which is subject to a residential redevelopment proposal. Improved pedestrian permeability could be made with

this residential area particularly through future treatment of West Way.

Immediately to the north is the Kingsway thoroughfare which contains a mix of office, A3 uses and retail. The study area can provide a gateway between Kingsway and the town centre and a lunchtime destination for workers in the Kingsway area but currently the two areas are poorly integrated and the link through Picton Arcade is unclear.

To the south of the study area is the Swansea Grand Theatre, beyond which is the city bus station.



## 2.6 MICROCLIMATE

Microclimatic considerations should form key drivers for the design solution for the site. An initial study has highlighted several issues and opportunities

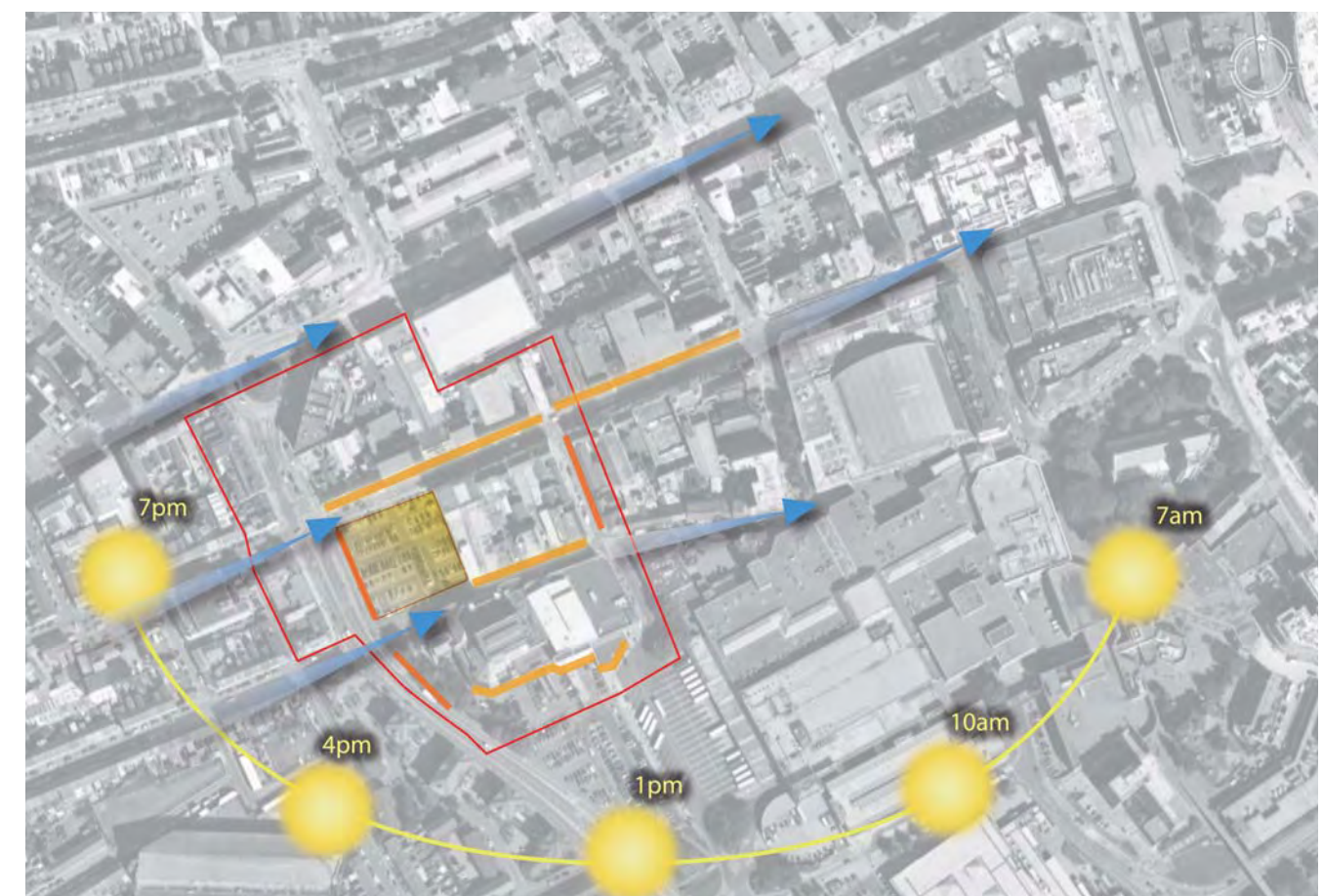
Any new public space in front of the Swansea Grand Theatre will be located to the north of the building. Solar path studies should be undertaken to determine the extent of shadow lines.

Due to the east-west alignment of the street structure, there is scope to harness both passive and active solar gain.

Prevailing westerly winds are likely to be channelled along both Lower Oxford Street and Singleton Street.

Given the frequency of inclement weather within the UK, shelter from the elements including canopies and colonnades will be important considerations.

The diagram below highlights the path of the sun throughout the day and the most common wind path. This is significant when considering the arrangement of comfortable spaces and energy efficient buildings





## 2.7 BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

With the exception of the car park site the study area is densely developed. The area provides accommodation for more than 100 businesses. In our audit we focused on ground floor uses identifying in total 95 business units. A number of units have been subdivided or simply given over to storage with the window space used for display. There is a vacancy rate running at 18%. Put together the number of units empty or being used for uneconomic purposes, point to a local economy which is currently under stress.

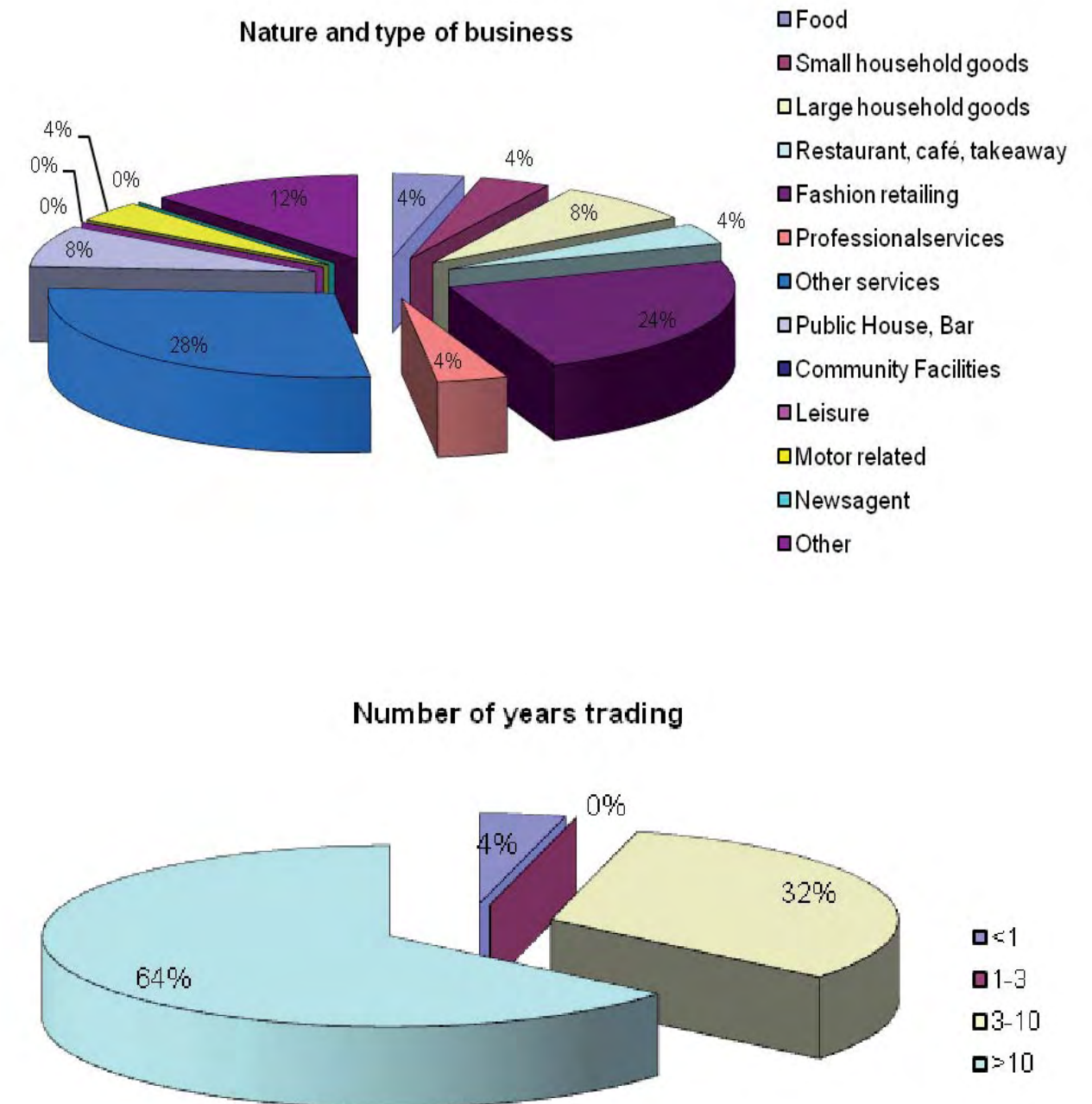
There is a wide range of business types as illustrated in the composition of our survey sample. **There is a balance of retail, leisure, catering and hospitality. It is this eclectic mix that is characteristic of the area, not the preponderance of a particular sector of the retail market.** The retailing on offer spans the value spectrum from the very affordable to the top end in terms of clothing for children and adults. There is an array of eating and drinking establishments, embracing take-aways, pubs, cafes and restaurants. The leisure offer is headed by the theatre, there are also night clubs within the area.

The other defining characteristic, and arguably the area's greatest strength, is the ratio of independent businesses to multiples. Of the 95 businesses we recorded, 62 are independents – nearly two thirds. The New Economics Foundation's Clone Town Index is more often associated with smaller towns and centres rather than areas like Lower Oxford Street which is clearly attached to, and an extension of, the main city shopping centre. However it is interesting to note that applying the Clone Town methodology here places the study area firmly in the home town category defined as: - **'a place that retains its individual character, is instantly recognisable and is distinctive to the people who live there, as well as to those who visit.'**

There is then both a concentration and diversity of activity. This suggests a special place and the antithesis of "anytown". The often heard complaint that the same shop signs dominate the streetscape does not apply here. Currently the number of voids exceeds the number of multiple outlets in the study area.

Caution must always be applied in extrapolating from a numerically small sample. However the sample does represent 1 in 3 of the businesses active in the area. Overall one third of those interviewed owned the premises from which they operated, a relatively high figure. Accordingly they have a long term commitment to the area, and are able to make their own investment decisions. The results show that two thirds of the businesses have been trading in the area for more than 10 years. The next most populated quartile is those that have been trading for between 3 and 10 years. By combining these, we find that 96% of the businesses have been trading for more than 3 years. **This suggests a mature group of businesses that understand its market very well and remains resilient.**

Were it not for the high proportion of vacant properties this would be unreservedly good news. However putting the longevity of trading alongside the availability of vacant premises does raise the concern that the area is not attracting sufficient new blood.



Results of local trader survey



## LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY

A consideration of the footfall figures also gives rise to concern. The numbers recorded at count points within the study area are markedly below those in the adjacent areas of the city centre. This has dented confidence. When asked about what the future held 70% responded that they expected to see more shops closing and only 7% thought new shops would be attracted into opening in the area. No doubt this gloomy assessment influenced their attitude to investment. The record over the past two years on the strength of the sample has been weak. Over a half (56.5%) had no plans to make investments in the business in the foreseeable future.

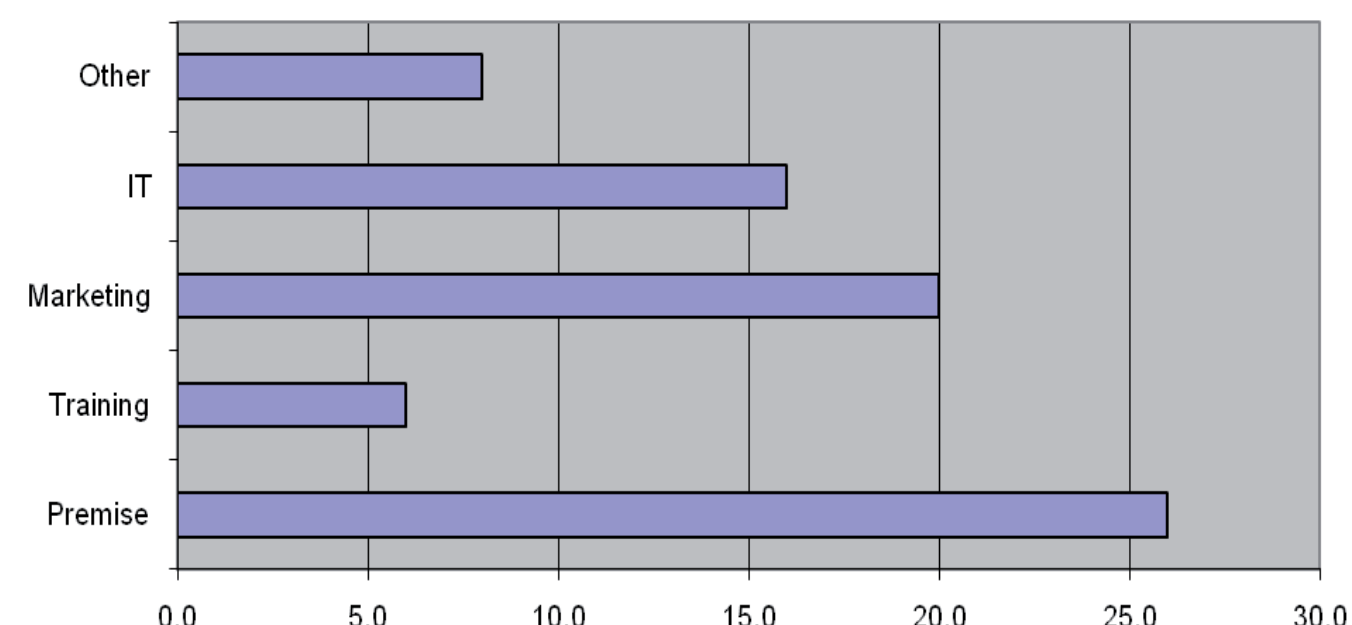
Despite this context the traders questioned maintain a positive outlook and most describe themselves as optimistic about the future. This may be slightly puzzling in the light of the evident decline in custom and trade. A number of things might help to explain it:

1. As has been observed, those who remain are a committed group who have operated in the area over a number of years.
2. Several traders are themselves active and involved in initiatives to improve the area. For example many subscribe to the Store Net scheme, and the arcades are run by a property company made up from traders in the arcades.
3. The Business Improvement District (BID) and City Centre Partnership (CCP) are making a difference. The Chair and Vice Chair of the BID operate businesses within the study area.
4. Traders have seen the successful promotion of other parts of the city and believe that their turn has come.
5. There is widespread support for the contribution that events can make to

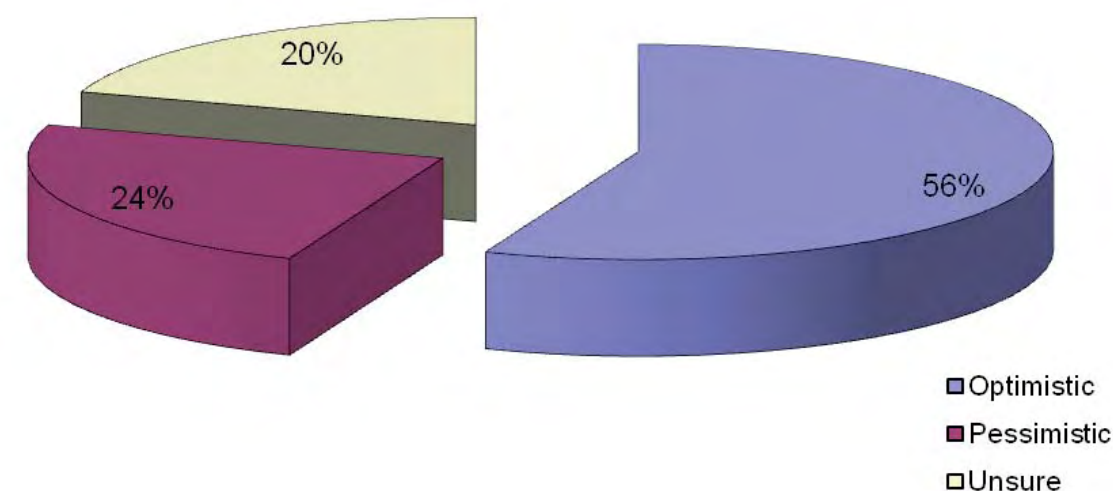
reclaiming footfall.

6. The presence of massive generators of activity - the bus station and Grand Theatre - underpins the area and provides the potential for growth if the opportunities can be exploited. Traders identified its location as one of the two best things about operating in the study area, particularly proximity to the centre, bus station and to a lesser extent The Grand.

Investment in business during past two years



Future outlook for area



## 2.8 CURRENT RISKS

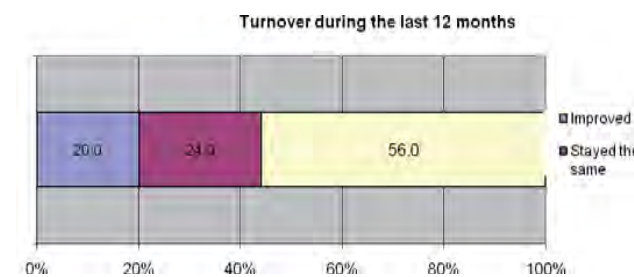
### Retailing through a recession

The context for this study is a very difficult one. The scale and pace of retail closure have reached levels not previously experienced. At the end of 2008 there were 63,500 empty shops in the UK. By February 2009 this had reached 90,000. Shops are closing at a rate of 450 a day. By April the total is projected to reach 108,000 and 139,500 by December 2009. If this happens the figure will have more than doubled in a year and 15.5% of the UK's retail floor-space will be unoccupied.

There are a number of things going on. Firstly there has been an unprecedented spike in the supply of retail space – a staggering 88 million sq ft in the last twenty years. Secondly consumers are reigning in their spending and this is evident in other sectors such as catering where 503 restaurants closed their doors in 2008 - a 32% increase on the year before. Thirdly the pattern of retailing is changing. Twenty years ago major retailers considered that they needed 175 stores to access 50% of the population. With the preponderance of out-of-town shopping centres and the willingness of consumers to travel further to concentrations of retail activity this figure has shrunk to 75. In such circumstances it is the peripheral areas that will lose out most. It is no coincidence that Milford Haven and Holyhead have the greatest number of voids in the UK.

The current vacancy rate in the study area is way too high, and well in excess of national averages. Some traders referred to an “accelerating trend” of closure, indicating that a number amongst them were considering their positions as leases came up for renewal.

What underlies this concern is a deterioration in trading conditions over the past twelve months. Only 20% of those interviewed have witnessed any improvement whilst 56% of the sample report that trading conditions worsened over the course of the year. Further evidence of this trend is provided by a comparison of the footfall statistics for 2007 and 2008.



Business survey results report that trading conditions have worsened over the last 12 months for over half of traders



There is evidence of retailers moving out of the area to new premises

### Crime, safety and anti social behaviour

There are a number of ways in which a visit to the area would lead to a perception of as it being less than a safe and comfortable environment. Accessing by foot from the north, west and to some extent south, involves negotiating heavy traffic, in some cases spread over six lanes. Crossing can be a confusing experience. Whilst street lighting wasn't considered a problem by the businesses, it is hard to argue with the Grand Manager's assessment that for his customers, having to walk any distance to their cars is a disincentive. Activity in the area declines sharply from late afternoon. Properties are shuttered. The number of empty properties and dead frontages naturally does not help to instil confidence either.

Retailers were sensitive to the potential threat from shop lifters. Communication on the Store Net system is busy. Licensed premises had experienced problems around drug peddling and usage, and several retailers complained about the level of abuse customers were exposed to from aggressive street begging.

While there are obvious concerns about crime the actual incidence of criminality is low. The level of burglaries from commercial premises appears to be low. Vandalism and graffiti aren't pressing concerns. Theft from parked cars does occur particularly in side streets at the periphery of the area and the darkened back lanes. But the local Crime and Safety Partnership is actively addressing the issues. Across the city centre there has been a 24% reduction in all crimes over three years. Swansea recently received the National Award for Crime Reduction in the Night Time Economy for measures such as the introduction of evening economy co-ordinator, and taxi marshals. The authorities are aware of the issues around drugs and street drinking and that the YMCA building is a focus for anti-social behaviour. The council is considering incorporating this area in the extension of the Designated Public Places Order which limits the drinking of alcohol to licensed venues.

There is a comprehensive CCTV coverage - but shop lifting and illegal drug use are at levels that detract from the area's charm and need to be tackled further. Management at the Grand consider that the journey to car parks post evening performances act as a drag on audiences. More could be done at the level of reassurance. Safe routes could be designated with good lighting, CCTV coverage and a uniformed presence being part of the mix. There is strong support for the street wardens service, and the BID's financial support of it.



## 2.9 PLACE MANAGEMENT

Unusually Swansea has both a Business Improvement District (BID) and a City Centre Partnership (CCP).

### Business Improvement District

Business Improvements Districts (BIDs) are often described as an import from North America where, over the last twenty years, they have become a major feature of the urban development scene in Canada and in the USA. However this is a rather simplistic view which doesn't do justice to the well established tradition of town centre management in the UK, where over 400 towns and cities now have some form of management initiative in place. The advance that BIDs represent is the equity of the funding model. In effect where BIDs operate all the businesses within the area contribute financially, thus eliminating the problem of so-called "freeloaders", i.e. businesses who derive benefits without making a financial contribution.

Legislation was enacted in the UK in 2004 which made BIDs possible. There are now over 70 BIDs in the UK. Many have developed from existing town centre management partnerships. Swansea, the only BID in Wales, provides a good example of this. Interestingly here the BID has not superseded the Partnership set up but rather the two operations run in parallel, sharing the same accommodation and pursuing separate but complementary agendas.

Swansea BID realises a £400,000 annual budget from a 1% levy rate. It covers a very large area in the city centre and is administered by a very small core team of full time coordinator, and part time marketing officer. It has developed an imaginative and varied programme, responding directly to the concerns that businesses face.

This is arranged around 4 themes: -

- Safe – supplementing the council's three Street Wardens with a further two BID funded posts, Night Time Economy Co-ordinator – Home Office funded, Taxi Marshall, pub and club watch
- Clean – rapid response team, night time litter collection. Four additional city centre rangers and cleansing staff have been enabled through the BID
- Promotion – TV adverts, events, big screen in Castle Square, on street advertising modules
- Transport – additional parking meters, subsidised park and ride, footfall counts



City Centre rangers have been appointed by the CCP

### City Centre Partnership

There is close working relationships between CCP and the BID but a clear separation between the two organisations with each having its own board. CCP has a clear strategic remit set out in the City Centre Action Plan. CCP is concerned with facilities management, place management, and project management. It has an operational role as part of the council, running:

- Rangers
- Shopmobility
- The market – which has a substantial budget and is a very important component of the Swansea retail offer

Each of these elements is managed by a Lead Officer, part of a City Centre Management team of 22.

The CCP runs a number of projects around:

- Community safety
- Cleaning
- Marketing events

CCP undertakes an annual performance assessment of the centre, a Health Check and intend to revive the regular collection of retail sales figures.

Jointly the BID and City Centre Partnership provide a major resource to support the implementation of a regeneration strategy tailored to the conditions in the study area.

They illustrate the capacity to:

- Develop partnership based working
- Work with the private sector in identifying locally based solutions
- Generate imaginative initiatives
- Manage promotional campaigns

These are likely to be important aspects of the emerging strategy.

## LOWER OXFORD STREET AREA TODAY

**Environmental maintenance**

The general cleanliness of the area has benefited from input from the City Centre Partnership and BID, and cleanliness was not seen amongst retailers as a major issue. The BID funds an additional night time litter collection service. Fly posting and incidents of graffiti are effectively treated as and when they arise. It appeared that the exception to this were parts of the arcades, where dirty bins and evidence of pigeon fouling didn't help lift appearances. Better pigeon proofing, replacement of ageing bins, and the painting and/or replacing of public surfaces should form part of a major refurbishment of the arcades. Although they are popular and pleasing places, they are clearly showing the signs of age and under investment.

The arcades present a particular challenge and opportunity. The freehold is owned by the council with each of the units held on long leases, and sub let to the occupiers on differing terms. There is a management company made up from the leaseholders / occupiers, that collects and manages the service charge. It is evident that the arcades are exhibiting the signs of lack of investment. The most visible public elevations look run down and in need of repair. Internally the environment is dated and ill maintained, with evidence of pigeon fouling, dirty bins and surfaces which are in need of replacement.

The arcades have the potential to act as a key attractor into the area. They house an interesting array of occupiers, but equally there are dangers that the increasing number of voids will tip the balance in a different direction. There is need for a renewal strategy that is based on the meaningful engagement of the different stakeholders. The council as freeholder should take the lead in this.

The council's other land holdings in the area are the car park and the Grand Theatre, which is the only distinctive building of note. The theatre's appearance is in need of an uplift. In a study area with so little public realm not given over to vehicles, the Grand's external space should also be put to better use. As a key attractor the issue of how its substantial visitor flow could benefit the area needs to be further explored.



Evidence of poor environmental maintenance





## SECTION 03: PICTON LANES TOMORROW

This section explores the vision for the Lower Oxford Street Area and some of the opportunities to become a distinct 'place' within the City Centre. Signifying this transformation and a new identity for the area the study area will now be referred to as Picton Lanes. The key elements of this transformation are presented in the Picton Lanes Initiative outlined in Section 4.



## PICTON LANES TOMORROW

## 3.1 A VISION FOR PICTON LANES

The Picton Lanes area will be a distinctive place within the city known for its vibrant streets, active spaces, unique local shops and alternative spirit.

The area will be physically revitalised with new unique shops, cafes and restaurants set within renewed streets that give greater freedom for pedestrians. Existing buildings will be improved to help establish a distinctive character for the area and promote individual shops. New public space will be host to live events and surrounded by restaurants and cafes to cater for after theatre dining. Picton Lanes will become a place to visit for locals and visitors alike who are looking for an alternative shopping experience.





### 3.2 PICKTON LANES OBJECTIVES

An ambitious vision has been set for the renewal and improvement of the area. To support this vision an number of objectives have been established. These objectives seek to ensure that all activity flowing from the Picton Lanes Initiative creates a positive impact on the area and works towards making the vision a reality.

The objectives will be used to assess the relevance and importance of projects that go into the Picton Lanes Initiative. All key activities should meet one or more of these objectives. The more objectives an activity meets, the higher its priority will be.

The objectives highlight that the Picton Lanes Initiative is about much more than the development of the car park site. They seek to establish a rounded and balanced approach to improving the area.

The Picton Lanes Initiative should seek to:

1. Make the area a **recognisable** district of Swansea City Centre by creating and maintaining a defined identity
2. Increase the amount of **footfall** in the area
3. Encourage new **independent traders** to this part of Swansea and support those that are already in business
4. Incorporate new public space
5. Create **safe and accessible streets** for all users
6. Promote **cultural, artistic and creative industries**
7. Accommodate a **mix of uses** that will extend activity throughout the day and into the evening
8. Apply the principles of **sustainable design**, low carbon lifestyles, adapting climate change and local economic development throughout the Picton Lanes Initiative

### 3.3 PRECEDENTS

The vision set out in 3.1 sees the Picton Lanes area as a place with unique character and identity. The analysis of the area presented in this document indicates that there are a number of characteristics that could be built on to achieve this aim. To assist in the development of the vision it is useful to look to existing successful areas that have the qualities and character that are sought here. This will provide inspiration and clues as to how to achieve the vision.

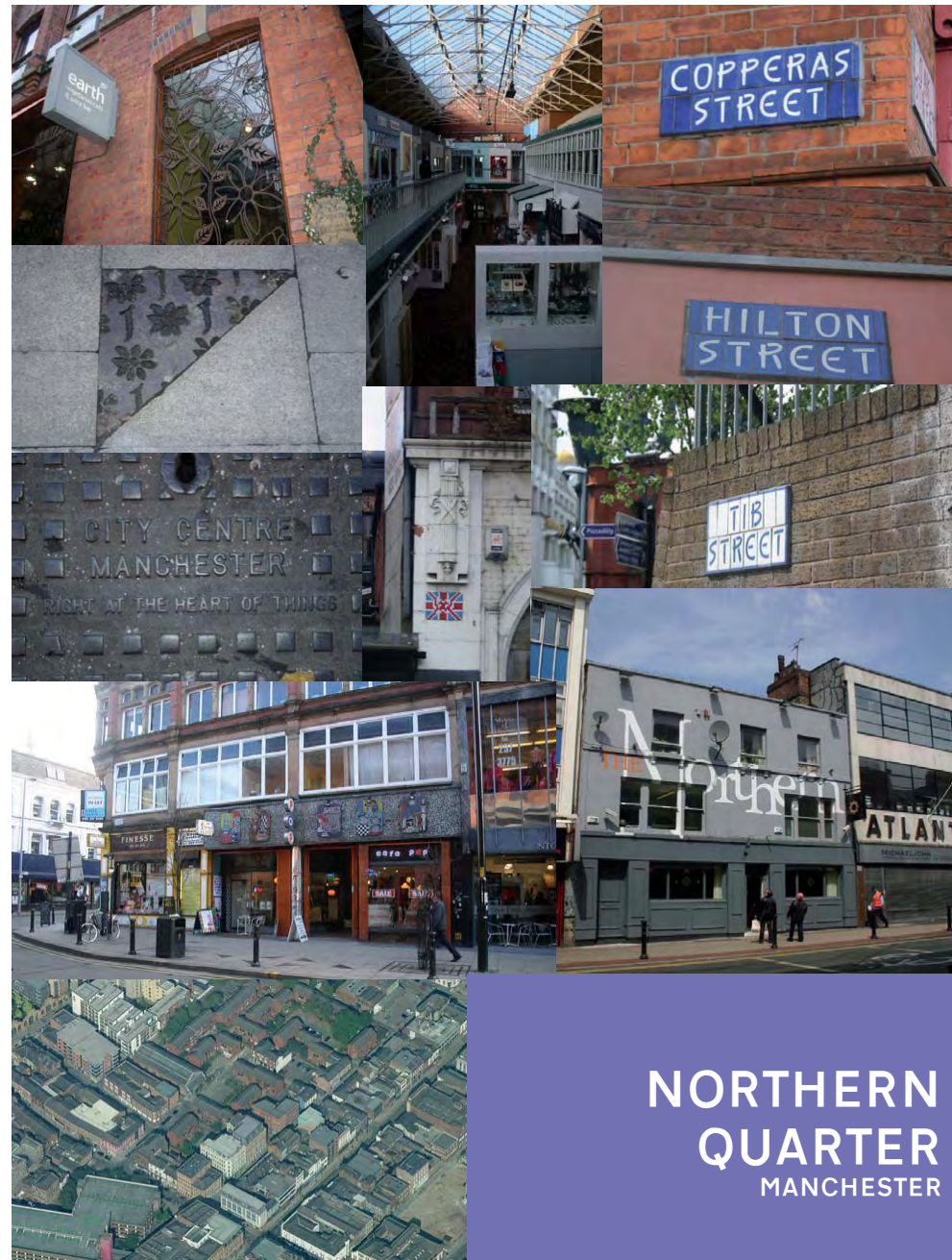
In order to gain a full understanding of the varying characteristics that define independent retail and culturally rich quarters of established UK cities an analysis of comparable areas has been undertaken. Four comparison areas have been identified which are inherently 'unique'. The following pages seek to extract some of the essence of these places. The four locations are:

- The Northern Quarter in Manchester;
- The Lanes in Brighton;
- Camden in London and;
- Neil's Yard in Covent Garden, London.

The following pages give a flavour of these precedent areas and a short description of their nature. This is followed by a distillation of some key common themes that are present in each of the four cases.

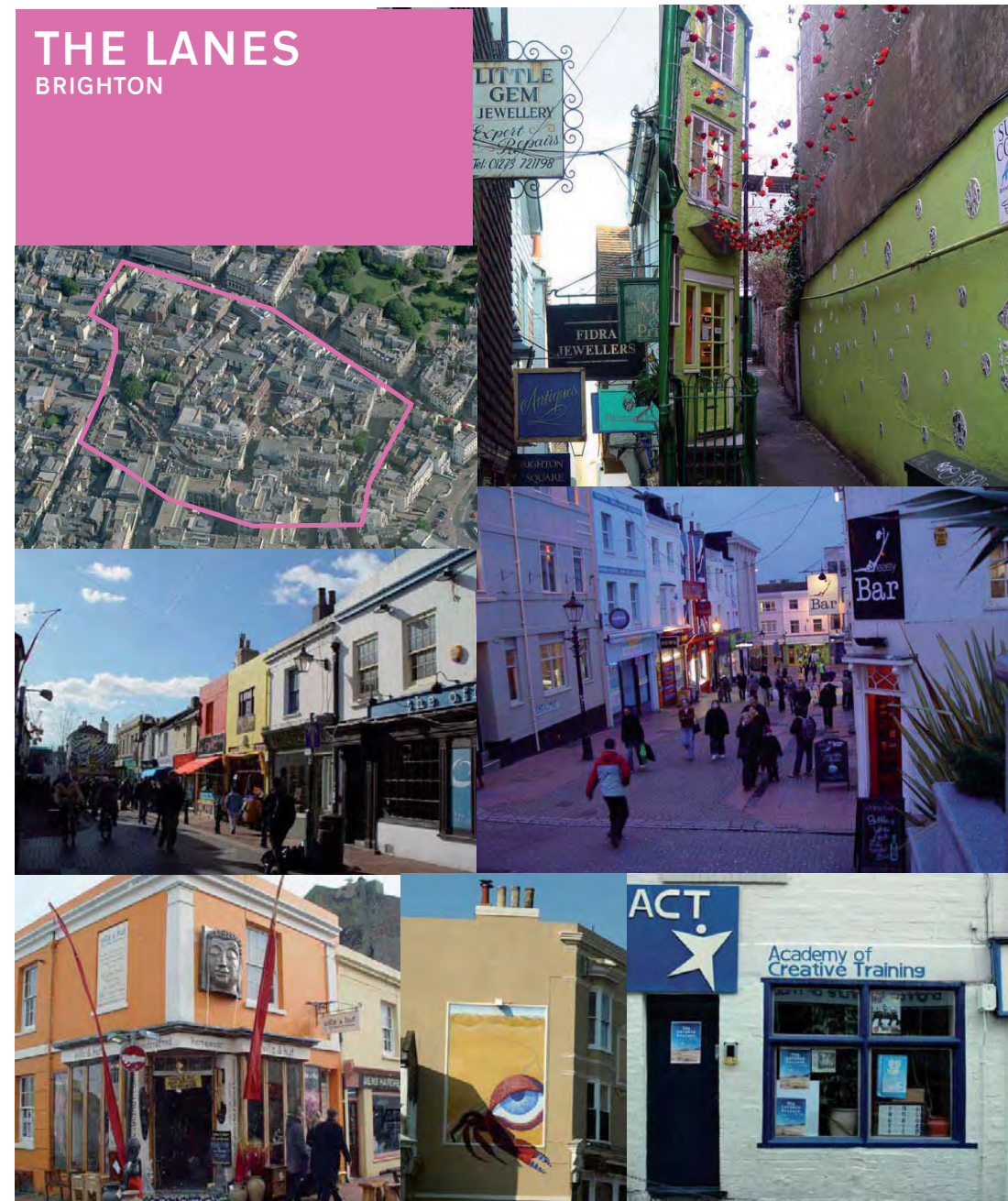
Whilst these precedents provide a rich source of inspiration the ideas presented should not be directly copied for the Picton Lanes area. It is important that the style and character of the area grows from within, starting with the history of the area, its current attributes and the ideas and aspirations of local people.





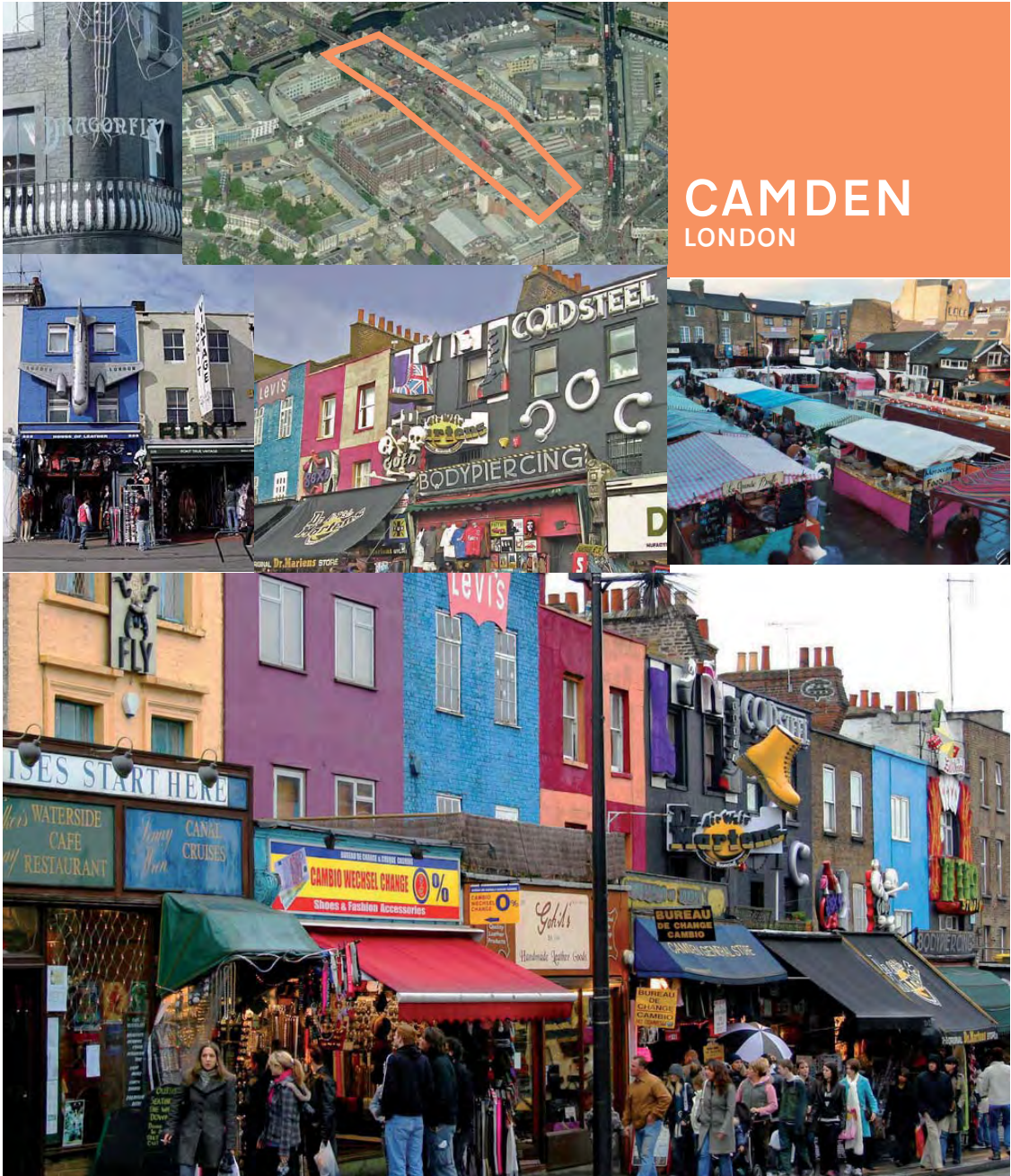
The Northern Quarter has been undergoing a process of organic growth and change for a number of years. It is now well established as one of the unique places to shop, eat and be seen in Manchester. The regeneration of the area is bringing to life hidden gems which make the area what it is today - interesting architecture, unique public art, craft and design activities, and an abundance of historical elements.

The longer-term regeneration of the area has been considered for some time and a plan has been formulated for the way ahead. Whilst retaining its individual character the area needs to grow to survive and an outline plan is now available for the regeneration strategy of Northern Quarter.



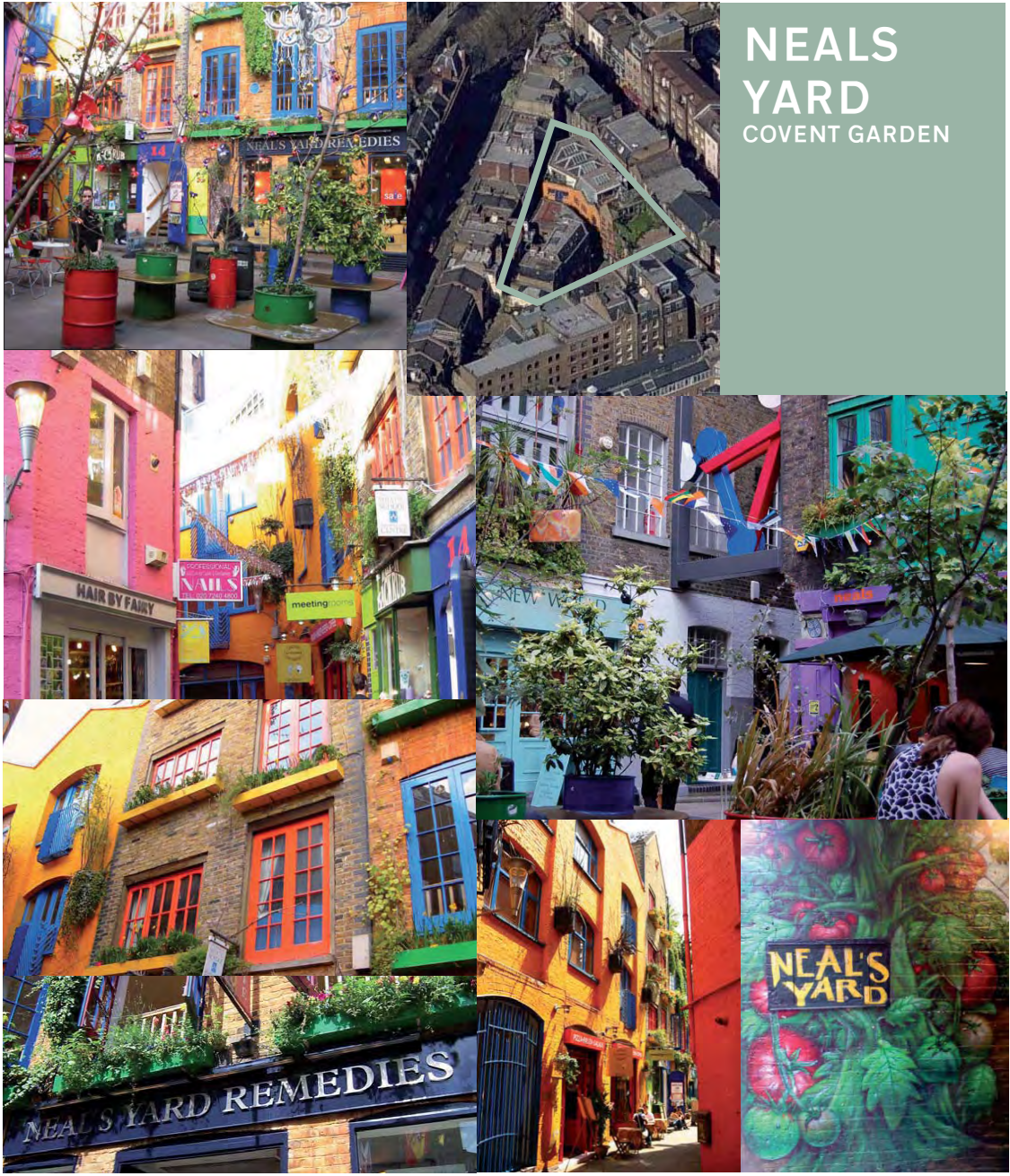
'The Lanes' is a renowned area of Brighton set within a historic quarter of the city that once functioned as fishing village. The Lanes is typified by tight characterful streets containing a myriad of independent retailers, bars, cafes and restaurants. Historic buildings, bespoke and often quirky shop fronts coupled with a strong artistic presence accentuate the strong identity.





Camden is in many respects similar to other sub centres within London, containing a mix of Victorian building stock and more recent additions. Similarly, the retail offer is typical of other areas of the capital, catering for both larger national chains and smaller, independent traders. Whilst it lacks the distinctive street

patterns of The Lanes, the overt and effervescent approach to dressing the building facades separates Camden and affords the area its own unique sense of place.



Neals Yard, Covent Garden used to be the prime spot in London for health food well before the days of the 'organic' label. It was reputedly built up since the 1960's and has been founded on principles of fair trade, organic food and complementary therapy. As a result people flocked there from all over London. The area has since become a magnet for people wanting

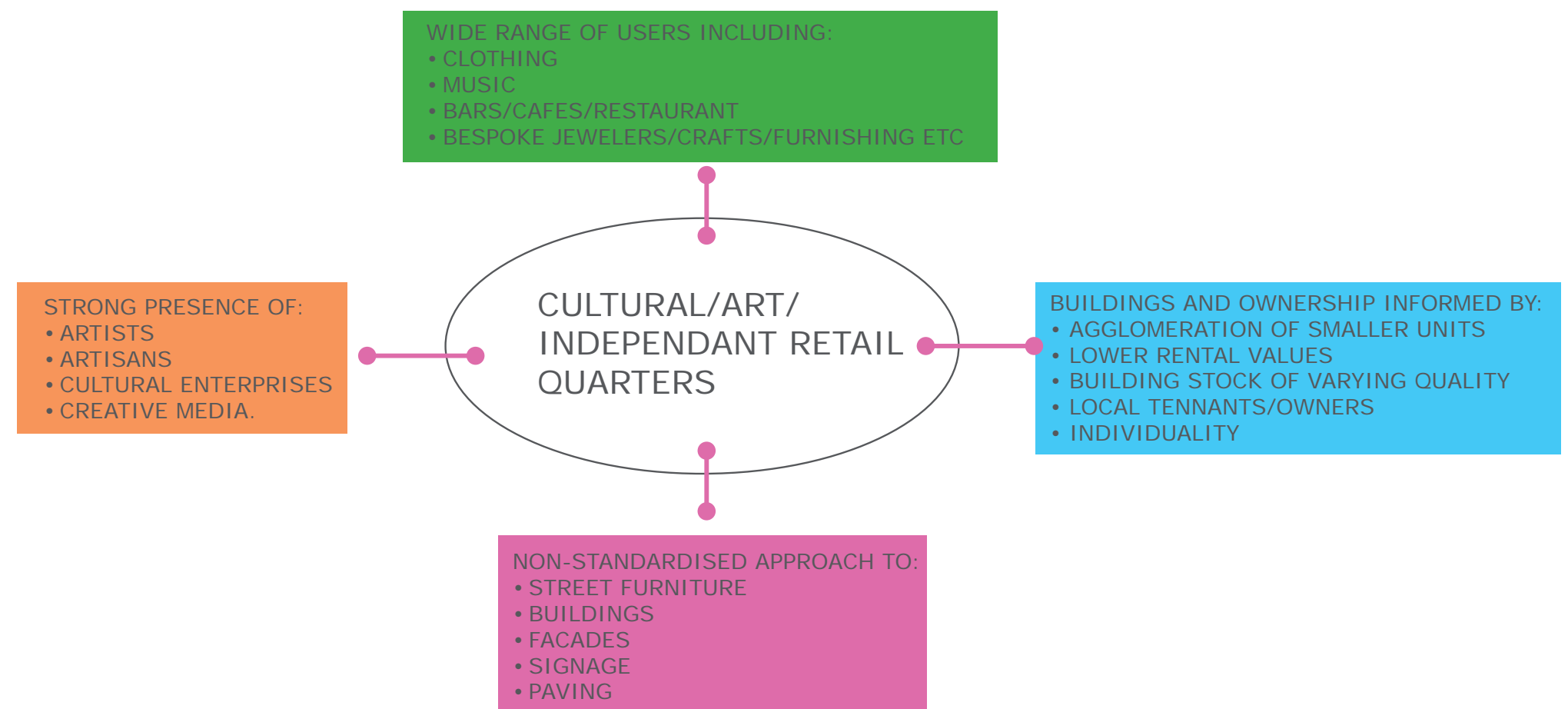
alternative food and drink and as a result the built environment has been enhanced ad-hoc to reflect this alternative, 'homespun' ethic. The result is a vibrant, interesting area and the antithesis of a 'Clone-Town'.



The four precedents have each developed on the basis of a number of unique features and circumstances. However, there are some common characteristics that these areas exhibit that can be explored in order to develop a similar effect. The adjacent diagram identifies a number of these characteristics and indicates how they may be related to one another.

It is clear that the presence of one characteristic will impact on another. For example, the presence of smaller units and lower rental values is more likely to attract independent uses including artists, cultural enterprises and creative media which will in turn begin to develop a strong sense of ownership and identity.

All of these elements should be considered in developing a strategy for the Picton Lanes area. A focus on one area only will not generate the desired effect for the area. The rest of this section begins to explore some of the opportunities that the study area presents and the following section looks at key projects and actions to be taken forward.



An overview of the conditions that have helped to create the cultural/independent quarters elsewhere



### 3.4 OPPORTUNITIES

#### New development

One of the greatest opportunities for change in this area is generated by the potential development of the car park site. This site is within the ownership of the local authority so there is significant scope to bring forward development to aid the regeneration of the area and generate momentum for wider improvement.

The car park is one of few undeveloped areas within the boundary of the city centre and therefore presents a key opportunity as a site to accommodate new development but also as a location that needs to be addressed as a part of the city centre townscape.

The site has the potential to generate an increased level of footfall that has been identified as a need in this area. The right mix of uses will help to draw people into the area creating activity that will support the existing shops. Developing this site will also help to reduce the peripheral nature of the area by effectively 'completing' this part of the city. Active frontages will improve the environment of the streets and make the area a more pleasant place to shop, browse and linger.

Additionally, development will help to improve the area as a 'gateway' into the city centre from the west. A greater urban scale and a mix of city centre uses will improve the sense of arrival into the centre. A feature on the north west corner of the site could also help to finalise the long view along Oxford Street.

However, the parking that is currently accommodated on the site is also an important facility for the area as it generates footfall and allows people to stop off in the area and use the local shops. The significance of this use should not be overlooked and it is important that an element of parking is incorporated into the scheme.

#### A broader strategy

Although the car park site provides a substantial development opportunity within the area there are three important points of caution which are developed elsewhere in the report:

- It is difficult to produce a robust plan for development in the current market – any scheme developed in this climate will reflect the long term aspirations for the site
- The loss of parking, even if only temporarily will be an issue for those running businesses in the area now
- Development may prove elusive. Given the climate and the history of the site it is not inconceivable that a number of years might elapse. In the interim a strategy based on a broad range of measures must be implemented.

The other strategic strands of this proposal are largely independent of the progress of development on the car park site, and an early start can be made on an incremental action plan that will build confidence for future development. These actions will include physical measures aimed at improving the built environment and the quality of the limited public spaces. Improving the public realm will raise the profile and quality of the area to bring it in line with the wider city centre that has already seen substantial recent investment. It will also help to provide unity in the area and make it a more pleasant place to spend time. Proposals for public realm improvements are presented in Section 4.3.

The precedents illustrated in the previous section generally have a character that has developed through improving and enhancing an existing area with both physical improvements and by developing a strong character. It is important therefore to address the existing built fabric

that makes up this area and not solely rely on new development. The opportunities and potential for improving existing buildings and shopfronts is explored in Section 4.4.

The enjoyment of the area will depend on other things also. Ensuring that customers feel safe and confident in using the area is naturally a key objective, as is sustaining and building on the standard routine maintenance and cleansing.

In themselves though, these may not be enough. Concerted action needs to be taken to reverse the trend in declining footfall. People need to be informed of, and attracted to the area now. This calls for the production of a marketing plan which considers and identifies measures to address the different customer segments to which the area might appeal. This potential customer base is diverse and includes:

- Those visiting the city centre core but not currently attracted into the study area
- The significant audience attending the Grand
- Students
- The, admittedly declining, number of Office workers

Our recommendation refers to the need to develop a Marketing Plan. This term is used advisedly. Marketing is more than "advertising" or "sales". The Plan would include elements that deal with product, place and promotion. The importance of place is emphasised throughout this report, and the themes of product and promotion are developed in Section 4.5.



The car park site provides a significant opportunity for development and change in the study area

**Did you know?**  
...you can use  
**Empty Shop for anything you like!**

Empty Shop is a new contemporary arts group in the North East, dedicated to giving artists in the region a platform to produce and exhibit their work. They take on unused buildings in the region and turn them into usable art spaces.

Initiatives like this can remove unattractive, empty spaces in the area and encourage footfall to the area.

### Branding

The area has provisionally been called Picton Lanes as this builds on an existing name in the area and starts to evoke a sense of the type of area it is proposed to be. Further work should be carried out in developing a permanent name for the area and a style or look with which it will be associated. This might be done by developing a colour scheme or a particular font for the area or a symbol that can be incorporated into shop signs and other advertising media.

However, a strong sense of identity is generally achieved through all elements of the appearance of the area rather than just a liberal application of a logo or brand name. For example Neil's Yard in Covent Garden is not identified by a symbol, but it is recognisable from the building colours, planting, the tight streets and public space and types of shops found there. This is then backed up with a name that clearly relates to that area.

The development of the brand should be led by a creative influence such as an artist or designer but it should be backed up with input and support from the local retailers represented in the area.

Whilst it is important that this particular area develops a clear identity within the city, it is still a part of the City Centre for which a brand has been developed. It is important that the Picton Lanes brand fits with the 'Vibrant Heart' brand for the City Centre.

### Joint promotion

Joint promotional events will help to further the identity and cohesiveness of the area and help to overcome some of the limitations of the smaller size and local nature of the shops and businesses in the area.

One example of a promotion that could be taken forward in conjunction with the Theatre is pre-advertised later opening hours when there are certain events on at the theatre. Notice of later opening hours could be sent out with the ticket for the event which will allow people to arrive early, browse the shops, have some food or a drink in a local cafe or restaurant and then see the show.

Consideration could also be given to promoting a loyalty scheme for the area. This would most likely be a card based scheme that would encourage repeat visits to the area with the incentive of a discount or other promotion at a given time. Alternatively promotions could be printed on the back of receipts. Initially any loyalty scheme should be simple to establish and administer with the potential to grow and develop in the future. These ideas are explored further in Section 4.2.

### Scope for street events

There are a number of elements that should be explored in the management and promotion of Picton Lanes to help develop its identity as a vibrant, active place associated with local traders and local arts. The redevelopment of the car park site provides the opportunity to create a defined, high quality public space that can accommodate a range of activities. This will be complemented by public realm works that will improve the streets as places that can accommodate activity.

A public space outside the theatre will be an asset to both the theatre and the Picton Lanes area. This space should be used to promote events associated with the theatre such as outdoor plays, music and dance performances and it can also be used to widen the scope of events that retailers can be involved in such as fashion shows.

There is also a strong opportunity to introduce a street market into the area. This proposal has been met with a healthy level of support from the local traders providing it has the right ethos and is located sensitively within the area. What is desired by the traders is not a food market but an initiative that would resemble and reinforce aspects of the product mix within the study area. This would be more flea market in nature, possibly bric-a-brac, or arts and crafts.

It is important that the street market is located to allow people to visit the market and browse and access the shops. The space on Oxford Street around the entrance to Picton Arcade where the building line is set back provides an opportunity for market stalls to be located in amongst the shops whilst not restricting access to them.

The market idea should be developed in close consultation with the local traders who may even become involved, perhaps using a stall to promote their new lines or promotional items.



A street market can be a lively addition to the local area



The market should be focused on goods that complement the local shops



The right type of market can attract lots of people to the area





## SECTION 04: PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

This section identifies the core principles needed for the Picton Lanes Initiative to succeed.

## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.1 THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE

The Picton Lanes Initiative is a priority programme involving coordinated activity from numerous individuals and organisations with a vested interest in the area.

The initiative is built around four important themes for action:

- Creating a new place in Swansea through **mixed use development** of shops, parking, offices, cafes, bars, restaurants and homes on the car park site and including within this a management plan for how it will be sustained;
- Enhancing existing buildings in the area including energy efficiency and maintenance;
- Upgrading and **revitalising the public realm** and improving the attractiveness and functionality of all of the spaces between the buildings; and
- Establishing a framework for **place management and promotion**

The adjacent plan provides an overview of the proposals for the area which are developed in more detail in this section.

MIXED USE  
DEVELOPMENT

1. New development with vertical mixed use including potential for a small scale convenience store at ground floor with office and residential development above.
2. Development to address Dillwyn Street
3. New development of units on Singleton street to create a better street enclosure and a secondary 'lane' with smaller shops to explore
4. New mixed use development over a half deck car park to include south-facing residential and office accommodation. Opportunity to provide rooftop garden space incorporating green roofs, planting, wind turbines and solar panels
5. Southern end of Shoppers Walk incorporated into redevelopment scheme to link with new public space

(see sub section 4.2)

REVITALISING THE  
PUBLIC REALM

6. Upgrade public realm on Oxford street between improved arcade entrances with a new canopy and with the potential to accommodate a street market
7. Theatre Square is a new high quality public space to complement the theatre and provide opportunities for events and informal seating
8. Cwtch Square a secondary, smaller scale public space surrounded by retail and cafe/restaurant uses
9. Improvements to Plymouth Street public realm with a greater element of shared space. Improvements will complement building improvements and enhance the setting of the conservation area
10. Reconfiguration of theatre space with a new cafe building with active frontage and private back to enclose the space

(see sub section 4.3)

ENHANCING  
EXISTING  
BUILDINGS

11. Building and shopfront improvements throughout the study area
12. Pilot building and shopfront improvement projects focuses on Plymouth Street and the entrance to Picton Arcade
13. Pool Sanctuary is a key building for improvement, with managed access to the rear and longer term potential for redevelopment
14. Improve buildings facing Dillwyn Street particularly the Sin City building
15. Enhancements to both arcades including entrances and roofs

(see sub section 4.4)

PLACE  
MANAGEMENT AND  
PROMOTION

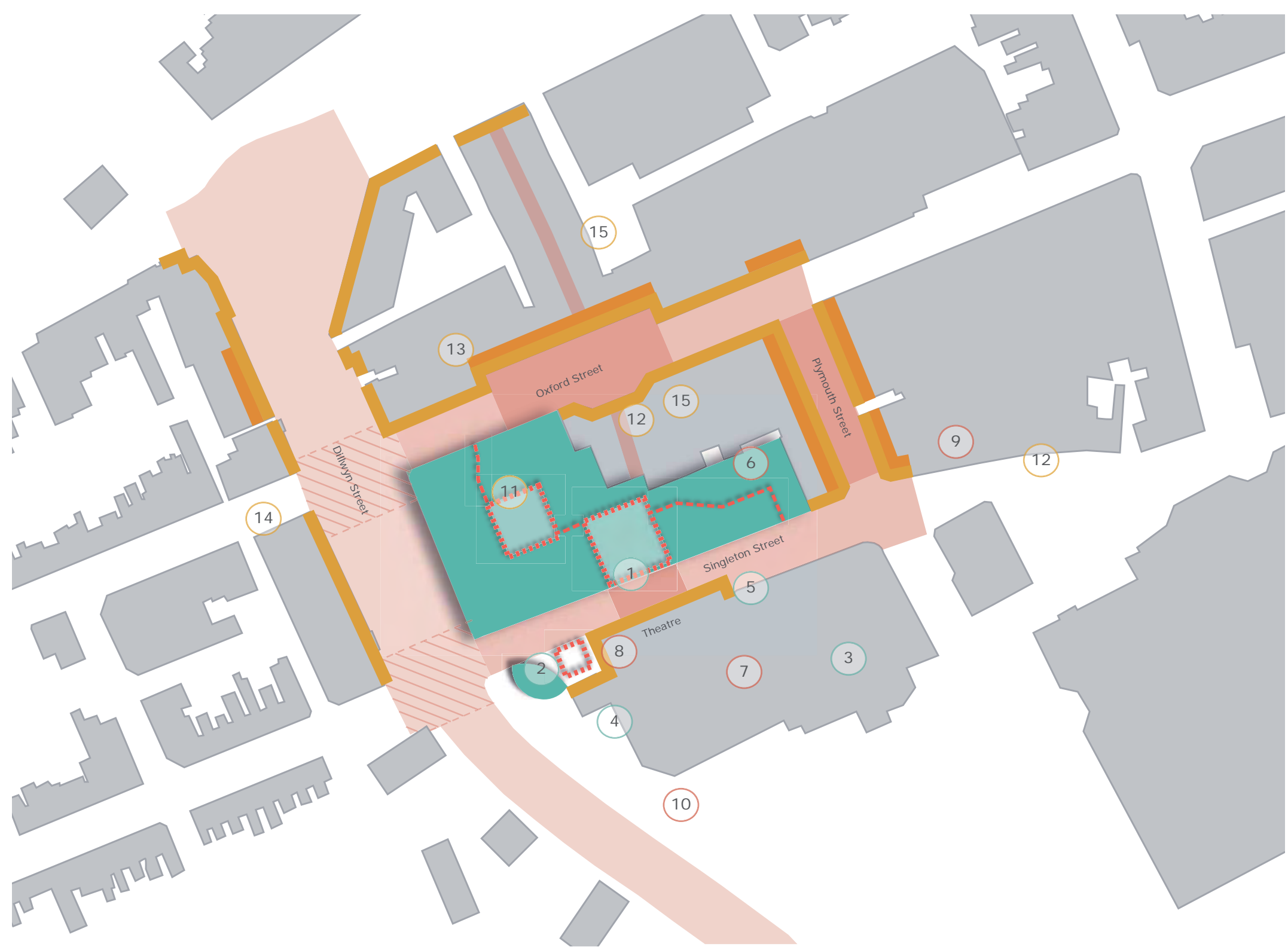
Area wide...

16. Establish a strong identity and brand for the area
17. Support and foster independent retailers
18. Promotional campaign for the area
19. Public realm management and maintenance programme

(see sub section 4.5)



THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



Overview of physical improvement and development proposals for the study area

SECTION

04

THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

THE PICTON LANES MASTERPLAN





4.2 NEW MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

4.2.1 MARKET POTENTIAL

The former school site is a significant opportunity to develop the character and vitality of the proposed Picton Lanes area.

Retail

The overall concept is to create an interesting space with many small individual operators adding to the mosaic of uses in the area. A large, single retail tenant will not fulfil the objectives (section 3.2) and will compete with other projects in the City Centre. Attracting such operators should therefore be avoided.

Although the focus will be on attracting small, locally owned retail operators, there is scope for an independent store of a larger scale or for a modestly sized convenience store within the development. The convenience store would attract people to the area and serve the neighbouring residential communities.

The frontage to West Way is unlikely to be a focal point for primary retail frontage. Instead, key retailing frontage will be concentrated on primarily on Oxford Street and also Singleton Street.

Office

There is currently limited city centre office stock in the City Centre. Despite the ongoing success of SA1 and with refurbishment issues in some of the older stock and with just 5,000 sq m proposed by Hammerson there appears to be some scope for offices, but current rents and build costs will limit the scheme viability. However, there is potential for office space which is accommodated by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) who would also manage the residential component of the scheme.

Residential

As of time of writing, the current financial constraints will mean almost no private sector developers or funders would consider a private sector residential-led scheme for this site. However, there is already interest in the development from a registered social landlord. This interest is extremely encouraging and represents an opportunity to progress the scheme within the first three years of the action plan.

A residential-led mixed use scheme could deliver a key audience into the study area. Although creating less value in monetary terms, an RSL is more likely to take on long term stewardship of the site, and in doing so will help to deliver the objectives of the Picton Lanes Initiative. In terms of regeneration impact, an RSL occupier could match neatly with the objectives of the C&CSC and WAG. By managing the residential component and occupying part of the office uses (and potentially some of the A3 units) an RSL led scheme would create a vibrant mix and a long term commitment to this Initiative.

Management structures are easier to put in place with an organisation having a policy of long term hold than a private sector developer likely to move on when the site is completed. It is the recommendation of this report that this development concept is investigated further.

Eating, drinking and entertainment

Currently there is little evening use of the area despite the presence of the theatre. A mixed use development with A3 units, which could serve the theatre, should create a more vibrant location and in consequence the Theatre could be become a more attractive place to visit. The A3 uses should be concentrated around Theatre Square and Cwtch Space and ideally adapt their offer at different times of the day to serve different types of customer.

The viability considerations of this scheme are wider than simply 'will it make money as a property development', its knock on affects to the remainder of the users in the area is vital. Of particular interest is the cumulative impact that this development would have

A mixed use scheme with apartments, offices , eating establishments and retail will create as many as 250 additional city centre jobs within the study area, some of which may be for people who could reside close by within the development achieving key sustainability objectives.



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.2.2 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The car park site provides the one key development opportunity to complement the design and retail led improvements anticipated elsewhere.

A concept scheme for the development of the site has been prepared. The following plans and images illustrate the proposals for the site. This proposal has taken a comprehensive view of the site in the context of wider regeneration considerations in the area. The following development and design principles outline key considerations for the site. The proposed scheme outlined here is the result of a design process which explored a number of options and iterations for development. An overview of some of these options is shown in Appendix A.

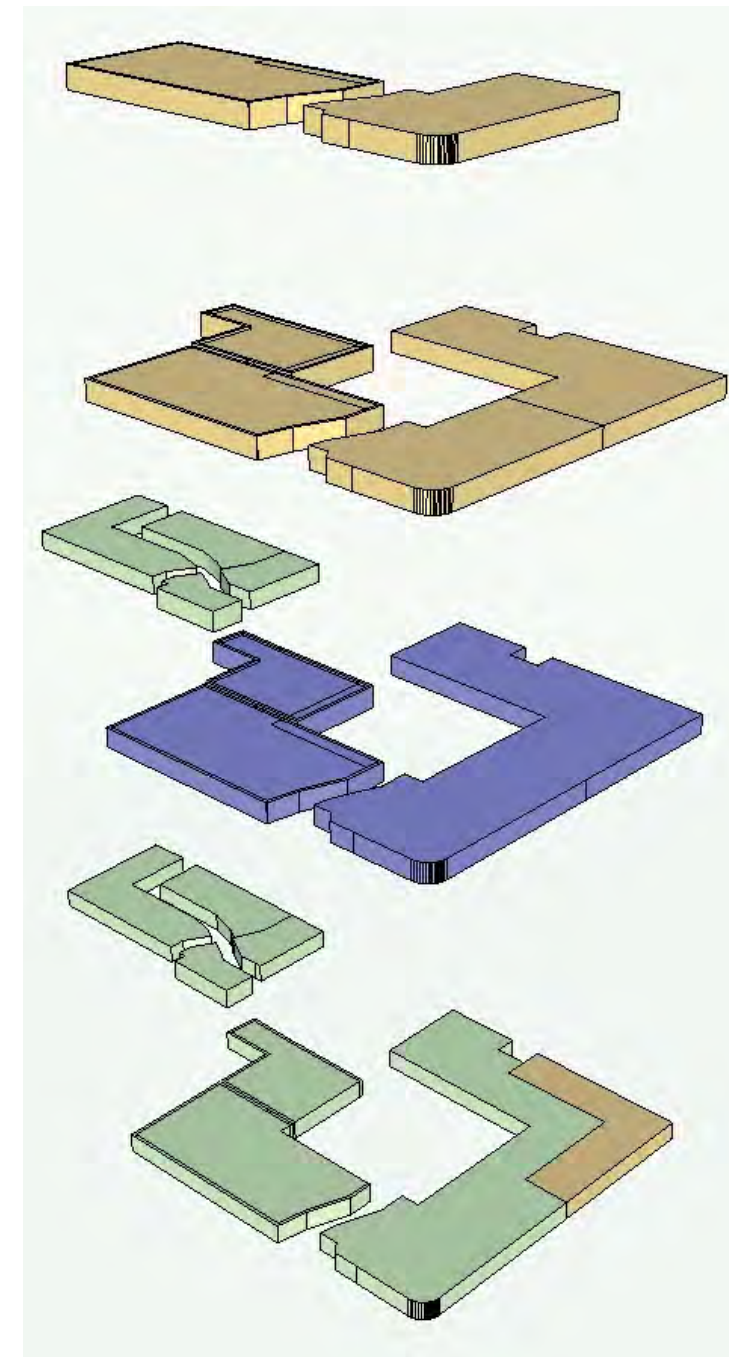
Given the potential market in the area and the vision set out for this area it is important that the right mix of uses is achieved in the development of the car park site. One of the key aims for the development is to encourage footfall and draw people to the end of Oxford Street. A potential draw to achieve this is to include a small convenience store in the development. This will attract footfall from the surrounding area including the local residential area throughout the day and into the evening therefore supporting the surrounding shops.

However, such a store must not be allowed to dominate the development and should only form one part of a wider mix of uses. A vertical mix of uses will help to generate activity and ownership throughout the day. It is proposed that the ground floor accommodates a mix of retail, café and restaurant uses, with office uses on the second floor and residential above (see adjacent diagram). The office accommodation will help to populate the area and support the

lunch time and end of work café and restaurant trade. The residential element will bring activity and surveillance to the area in the evening.

A mix of uses on the ground floor is also important to develop a richness to the environment. Smaller local retail units that can accommodate local retailers and start up shops should be supported.

Semi-basement parking is proposed to replace the existing surface car park. Due to the change in levels this can be accommodated at full basement level on Oxford Street and semi-basement level on Singleton Street. This is an important element of the scheme as it will maintain the convenience of the location and generate footfall in the area.



THIRD FLOOR  
Residential

SECOND FLOOR  
Residential

FIRST FLOOR  
Office and A3 2nd storey

GROUND FLOOR  
A3 retail, cafes, restaurants with potential for small convenience store  
Residential above deck car park on Dillwyn Street/Singleton Street

SEMI-BASEMENT  
Car Park

Proposed vertical mix of uses for the car park site

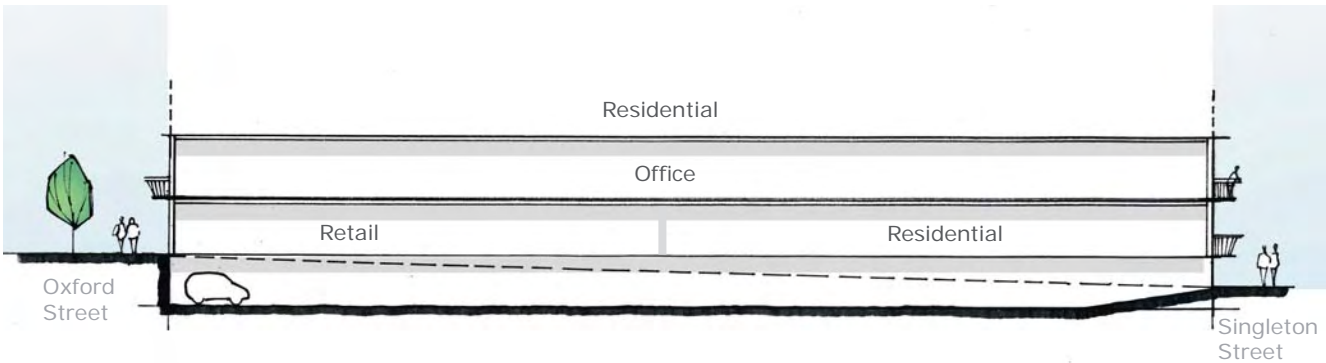


THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

Design Principles

Key design principles for the development of this site include the following:

- The development should complete the city centre block and overcome the negative voids presented by the vacant car park site and the gaps in the frontage on Singleton Street.
- The development must present active frontages onto the streets and spaces to support an active and safe public realm. Overlooking from residential units on upper floors will support this further.
- Development should provide a strong sense of enclosure to frame the new public spaces being created.
- Corners on key sight lines should be highlighted at the detailed stage to create interest and attract people into the area.
- The height of the proposed development should relate to the scale of the surrounding development. This proposal for the development of the site identifies the Oxford Street/West Way corner as a potential location for the taller element as a focal point at the end of Oxford Street. However, the scale of this corner should also respond the two storey units on the other side of the street.
- The semi-basement parking should be carefully designed into the development so as to avoid blank frontages that will create an unattractive and uncomfortable street scene.



The existing change of levels across the site allows for parking to be accommodated at half a deck on Singleton street and fully below ground on Oxford Street





SECTION

04

THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES





4.3 REVITALISING THE PUBLIC REALM

Greater vitality in the Picton Lanes area is linked to achieving higher levels of activity. Improved activity arises from increased footfall which benefits the local economy, improves safety and security and generates a sense of vibrancy.

Promoting more activity within the Masterplan for this Initiative requires a more carefully considered approach to the design of the streets and spaces in the area.

The area can no longer be seen as a spur off the adjacent strategic highway network, nor as a quick and easy means of redistributing bus movements. A fundamental change in the design philosophy is required with a hierarchical approach to movement. The Masterplan for this Initiative therefore seeks to place the needs of the pedestrian securely above those of the private car.

A fully pedestrianised approach is not recommended. Activity is the critical element in securing success for this area. To remove vehicles from the area would threaten the area's ability to attract greater levels of activity.

Therefore the way forward must be one in which both people and vehicles share the area but where the traditional relationship between people and vehicles is reversed so that vehicles behave as guests in a pedestrian dominated area.

The supply of space in the streets in the Picton Lanes area is limited. It is neither appropriate nor desirable to seek to fully segregate pedestrians and vehicles using traditional highway engineering responses. This form of segregation reduces options for pedestrians, removes desire lines changes the character of the area and introduces too much clutter.

A fully unsegregated or "shared space" approach is also not appropriate in the study area due to the continued need to provide a safe space for vulnerable users.

The recommended approach is to blend the two approaches to achieve a softer level of segregation on Singleton Street and Lower Oxford street retaining a small kerb upstand. Both of these streets would then be connected via Plymouth Street using shared space techniques albeit with delineation for vulnerable users.

Public Realm Goals

The Masterplan for this Initiative establishes that all of the spaces between the buildings in Picton Lanes will be significantly enhanced.

The street enhancement goals (below) need to be agreed with all parties implementing and managing the improvements to achieve continuity of vision. They are:

- Give the private sector confidence that this is an area where 'things are happening'
- Elevate the status of the area
- Match the standard of street design in other parts of the City Centre Core (and in doing so further enhance the status of the area)
- Create new public space where street activities can thrive
- Enhance vitality by drawing people into the area by effectively enlarging the existing City Centre 'shopping circuit'
- Promote the alternative spirit of the Lower Oxford Street area through alternative street design measures

Public Realm Principles

To realise the street design goals the following Street Design Principles have been established:

- Create a slow speed traffic environment throughout the area to encourage pedestrian priority
- Adopt a minimal approach to street signage, road markings, regulatory equipment and street furniture, based on intuitive design
- Designate specific places for on street parking and loading. Make parking in all other places outside these designated spaces illegal
- Create a streetscape which is comfortable for all users by integrating access for blind people, long cane users, people in wheelchairs, parents with children in buggies, and older people and doing this in way through which all pedestrians benefit
- Adopt a palette of materials which builds upon those already used in the rest of the City (based on the use of natural stone)
- Incorporate art and imaginative forms of planting into the streetscene in a way which reflects the area's alternative edge
- Create flexible spaces on the street that can be used in a variety of ways
- Select materials with low embodied energy

The following sub-sections will explore how these principles could be applied to different parts of the study area.



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.3.1 MATERIALS

The general composition of the materials palette should be informed by those recently deployed throughout the rest of the City Centre where the C&CoSC have committed to the use of natural stone wherever possible.

It is important that the original design principles endure and by being consistent with the existing palette, the ability of the council to maintain the quality of the streets will be optimised.

However, there is a need to create a subtle new identity to this part of the City so additional materials and furniture should be considered.

Of particular importance will be highlighting the main public spaces; Theatre Square, Cwtch Space, and the improved Theatre Garden. Local materials such as Gwrhyd Pennant Sandstone from Rhiwfawr should be deployed in addition to the existing materials to ensure these spaces have a contemporary Welsh quality. This dense and robust material has strong blue and ochre tones could be used in riven setts and paving. It will contrast well when used alongside with the lighter reflective qualities of the stone used throughout the City Centre.

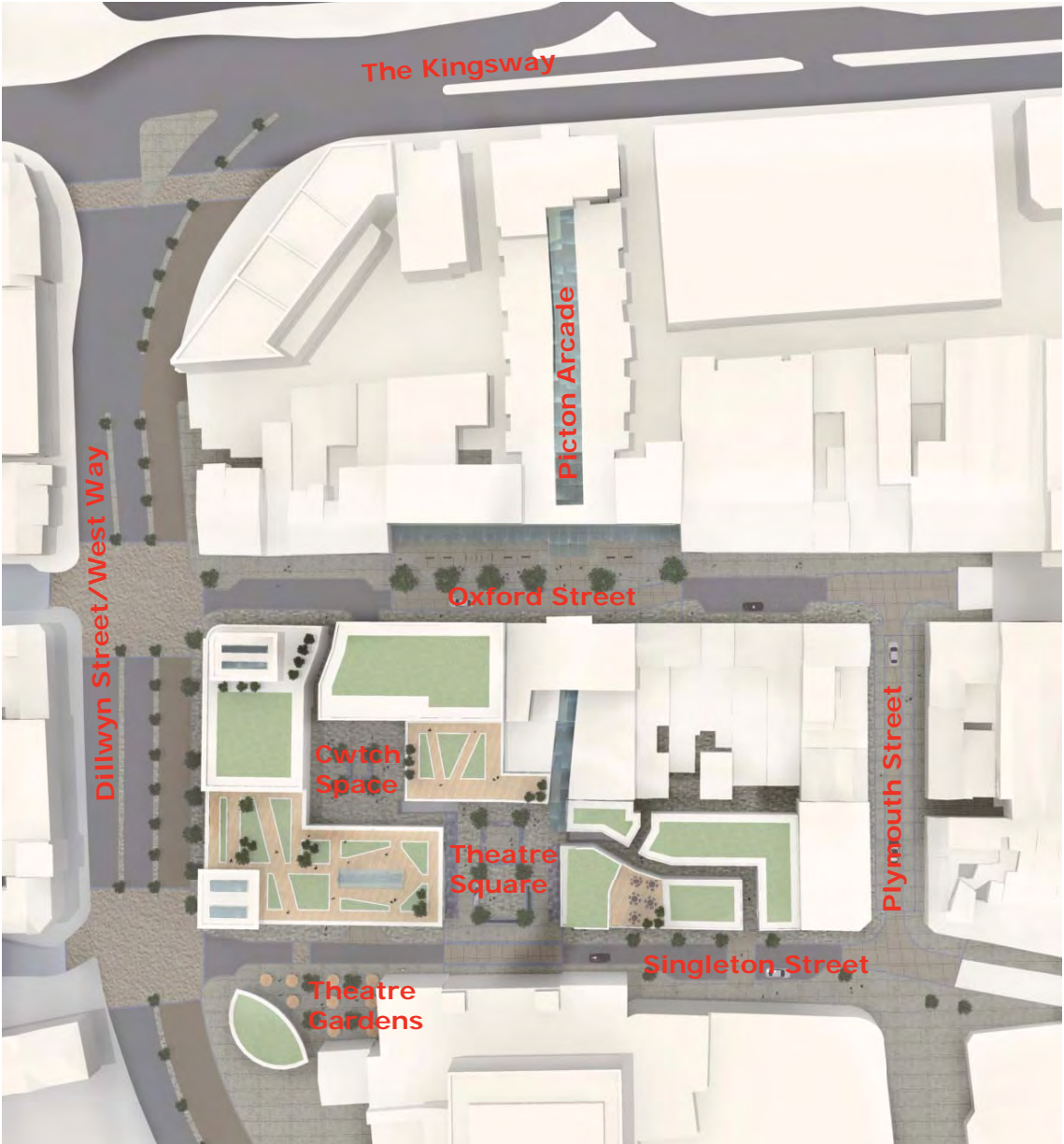
The use stainless steel and timber street furniture has been successful elsewhere in the City. This theme should be continued with the possibility of involving local artists to create bespoke items using similar materials. This will help to emphasise the bohemian and alternative characteristics of the proposed Picton Lanes area.





THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

The plan below identifies the elements that form the public realm strategy. These will be addressed in turn on the following pages.



4.3.2 DILLWYN STREET/ WEST WAY

The long term aim of the public realm strategy should be to make Dillwyn Street/West Way as permeable to pedestrians as possible using techniques to 'break the collar' that have been successfully deployed in cities like Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham and towns like Ashford.

The illustrated long term vision for West Way/ Dilwyn Street shows how:

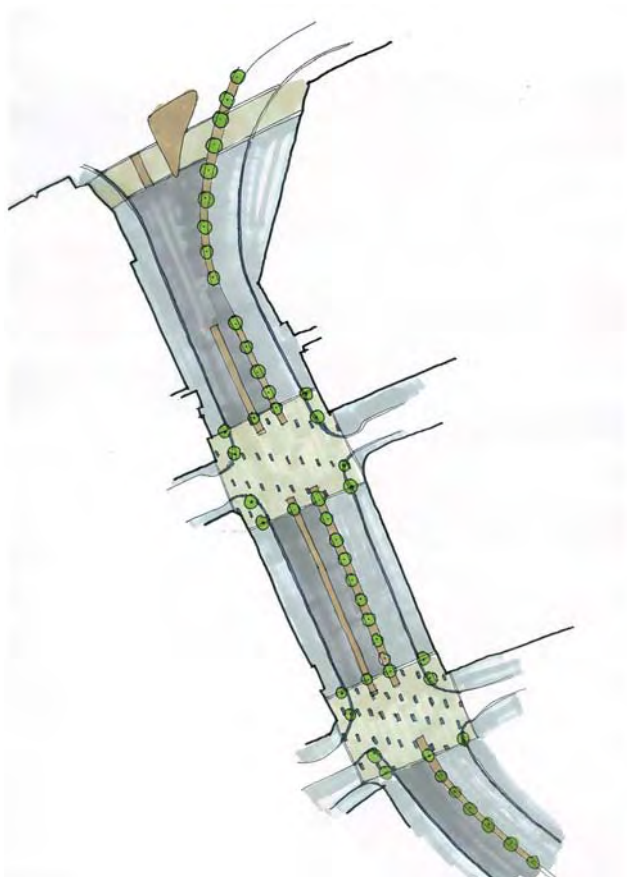
- the metro route is upgraded with different materials to distinguish it from the vehicle carriageway
- new single stage crossing will increase pedestrian permeability and connect the city and its western hinterland; and how
- planting will help to soften the street



The former one-way ring road in Ashford has been altered into a two-way street design on the principles of shared space

**The Kingsway**

The public realm strategy for The Kingsway is to ensure that the standard of materials is matched in with that in the rest of Picton Lanes (i.e., natural stone), even if this is a longer term aspiration. This is especially relevant since new granite paving has recently been laid within the central reservation and on the southern side of The Kingsway. More work is required to continue this material into areas like where the study area meets St.Helens Road.



Illustrative example of how the collar around the City could be 'loosened'.

## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.3.3 SINGLETON STREET

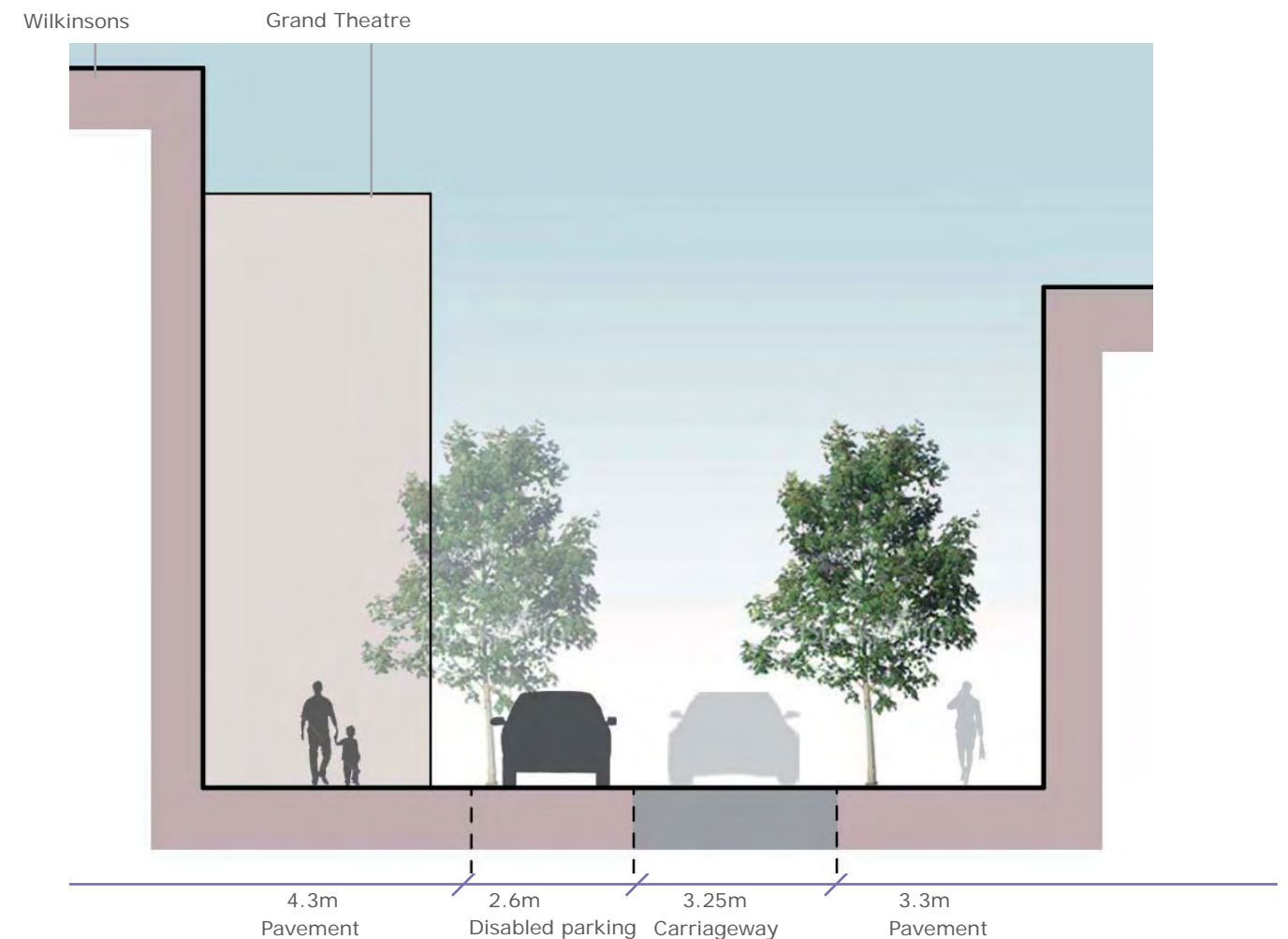
Singleton Street will be the arrival point for vehicles and all pedestrians from the west. Singleton Street will therefore play an important role in establishing a slow speed traffic environment. Limiting carriageway width to 3.25m will have a marked impact on speed. This is important as Theatre Gardens and Theatre Square will need to flow across Singleton Street. All non-essential road markings should be omitted from detailed design.

Singleton Street includes a section of carriageway to the front of the Theatre where pedestrian crossing has priority over easterly vehicle movements. This will be achieved by combining very low kerb upstands, tactile edge strips and enhanced carriageway materials. This space will ensure that the public realm creates a positive setting for the Theatre and the new Picton Lanes development.

Disabled parking has been retained on Singleton Street. These spaces need to be carefully designed to avoid using excessive road markings to reserve areas for rear unloading of wheelchairs etc. Use of trees and crossings (see below) to define the size of bays is recommended. There is scant logic for allowing coach drop off on Singleton Street given the proximity to the bus station, designed to accommodate such vehicles.

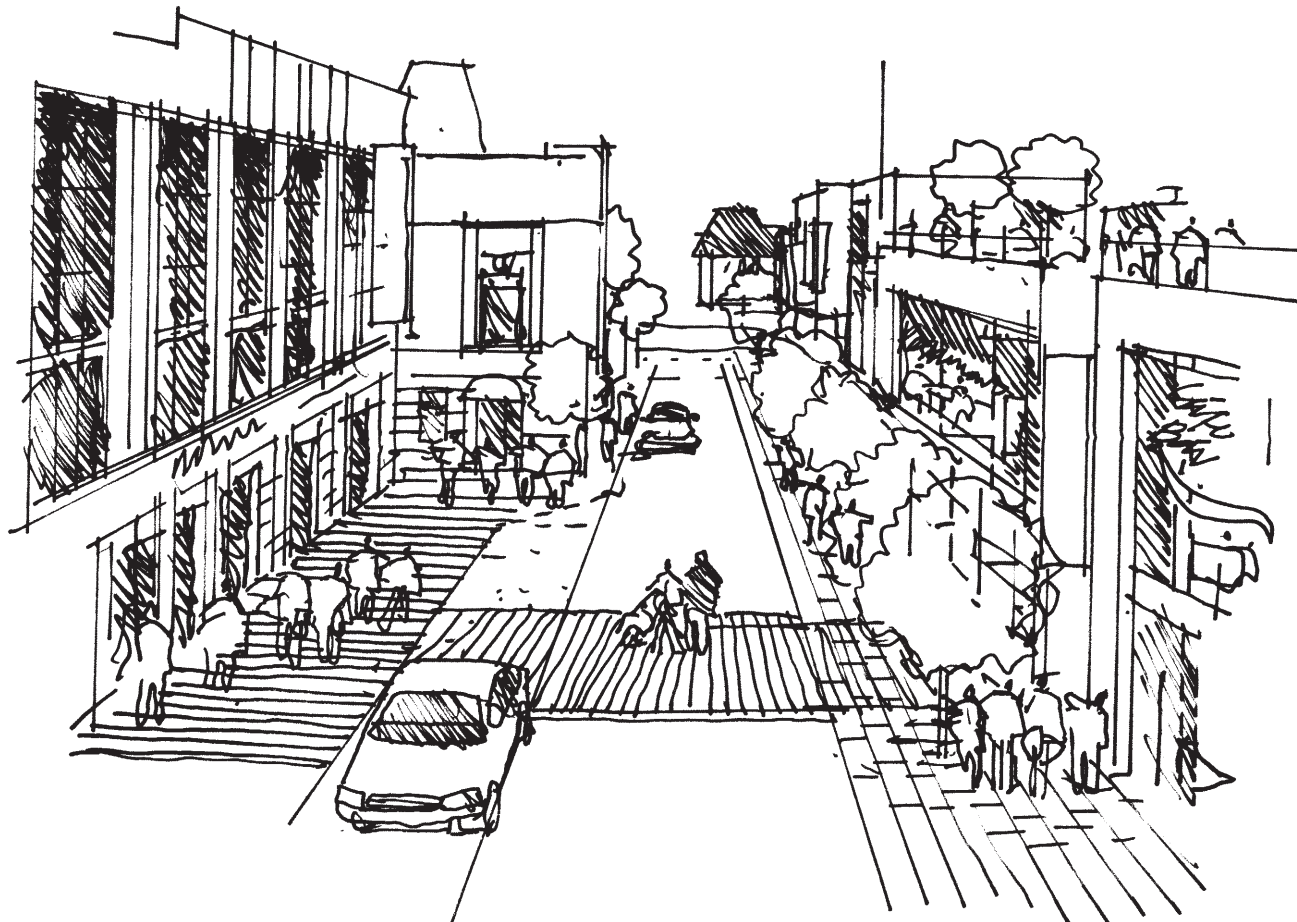
A courtesy crossing has been included in the design. This will help more vulnerable users cross the Singleton Street. The crossing is also located to define and separate the disabled parking bays and to assist people with impaired mobility cross the road. This crossing will be another feature that will help to dampen vehicle speed which should be designed for a maximum of 15mph.

Wider pavements, narrower carriageways, enhanced materials and higher numbers of pedestrians will help to make Singleton Street a desirable part of the City. Creating a 'civilised street' is really important to attracting people to the theatre and encouraging them to spend time and money in local shops, bars, cafes and restaurants before and after performances.





THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



High quality materials on footway carriageway and parking spaces. Chester



Parking bays and pedestrian courtesy crossing, Shrewsbury

“We need to recognise sense of place in all aspects of street design”

Traffic Management and Streetscape, DfT, March 2008



An indication of how the highway could be configured between the Theatre and Theatre Square (Sheffield)



Pedestrian priority at key junctions (Ashford) indicates how Plymouth Street and Singleton Street could work



Removal or reduction of kerbs, alongside appropriate delineators will help to emphasise pedestrian priority



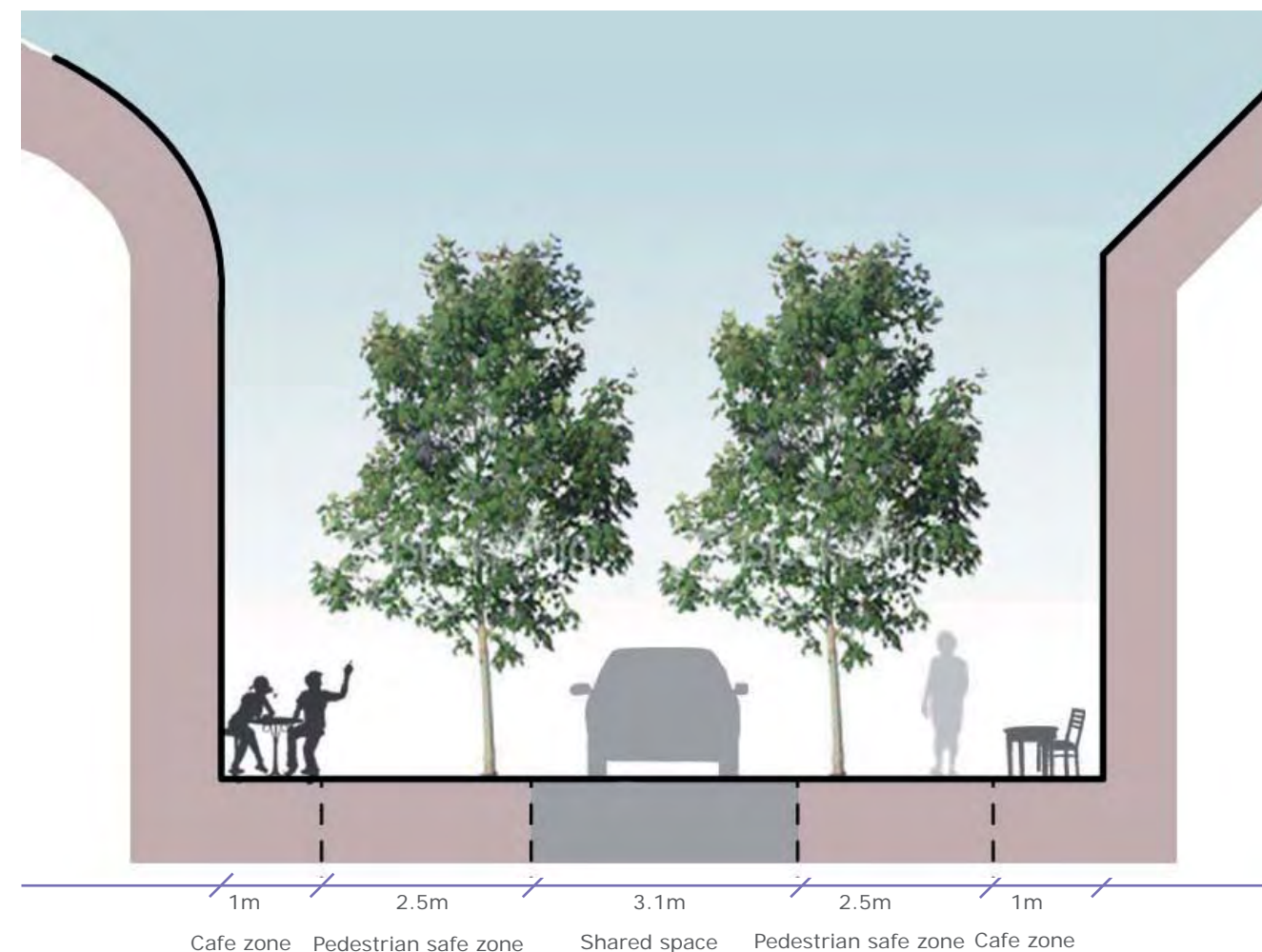
## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.3.4 PLYMOUTH STREET

This is the most important street in the study area as it connects Picton Lanes with the mainstay of the City Centre Shopping circuit. For this reason the proposed design response is to create an environment that is designed for pedestrians, but where vehicles are permitted. It is essential for the success of Picton Lanes that pedestrians are attracted to dwell in this street. To facilitate this, a very simple street, free of clutter is proposed. The adjacent extruded section highlights how the street will include a:

- Café zone – where businesses can ‘spill out’ onto the street (1m wide)
- Safe zone – which is free from obstructions and clearly marked out using tactile paving (2.5m); and a
- ‘Shared space’ – which will be a narrow (3.1m) carriageway where vehicles are permitted

The concept of ‘civilised streets’ will inform the design of this street. When vehicles reach Plymouth Street they will already be travelling at a very slow speed. The concerns that Guide Dogs for the Blind have on ‘shared space’ are recognised. As a result, removing kerb upstands is still recommended but these should be replaced with a tactile edge to make the boundary of the safe zone detectable. If this is found to be not feasible a 40mm kerb upstand can be included without eroding the design philosophy. Very slow traffic speeds (and light volumes) will give greater freedom to other potentially disadvantaged users like wheelchair users, the elderly and people with young children, whilst the visually impaired will be protected from uncertainty.



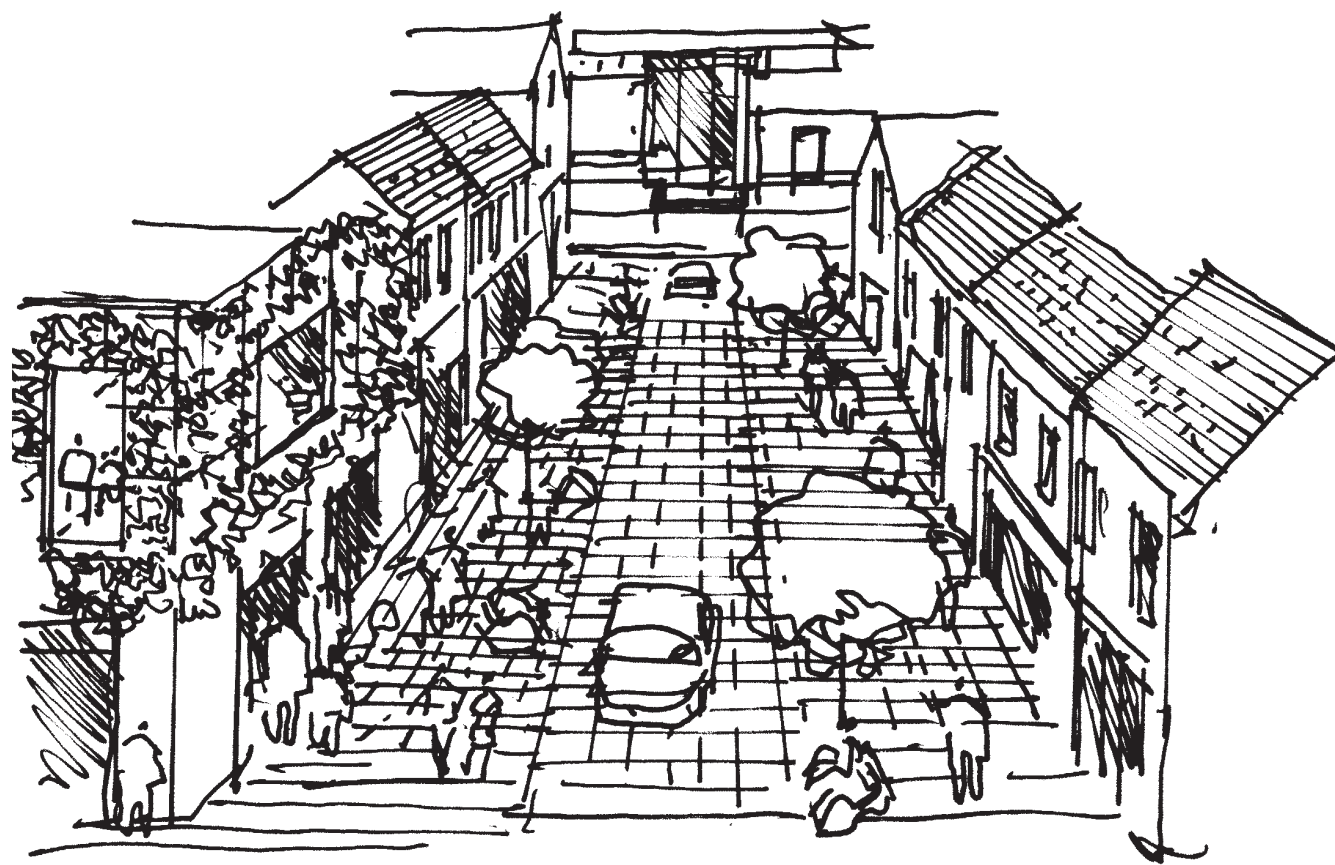
We recognise that trees are really important in urban streets, especially given the need to design for a changing climate. Streets trees should be incorporated into Plymouth Street as a means softening the street but also as a way of preventing illegal parking.

Sufficient space for street furniture will be available in the 2.5m pedestrian safe zone. This furniture should be positioned to prevent illegal parking without cluttering the street and creating unnecessary obstructions.



**Plymouth Street**





Simple and uncluttered, Oxford



Plymouth Street has the potential to be a lively street where people and vehicle mix (Haderslev, Denmark)



Tactile elements that are designed to complement the wider palette should be incorporated

“Creating attractive urban environments requires not only the suppression of motorised traffic but also the promotion of street life to take its place”

What are we scared of? The value of risk in designing public space, CABE



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

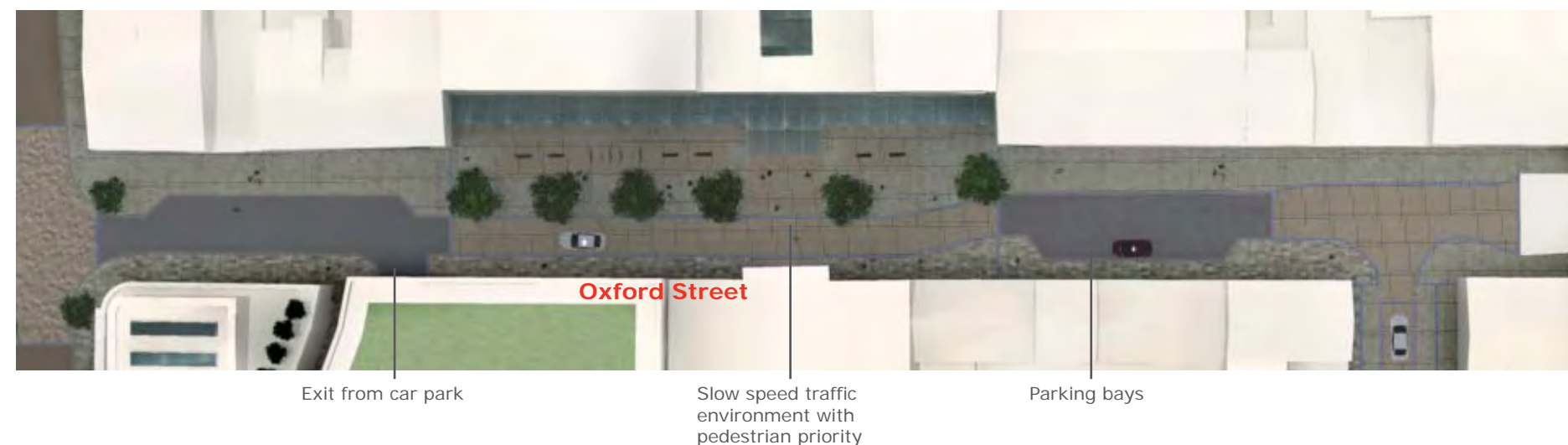
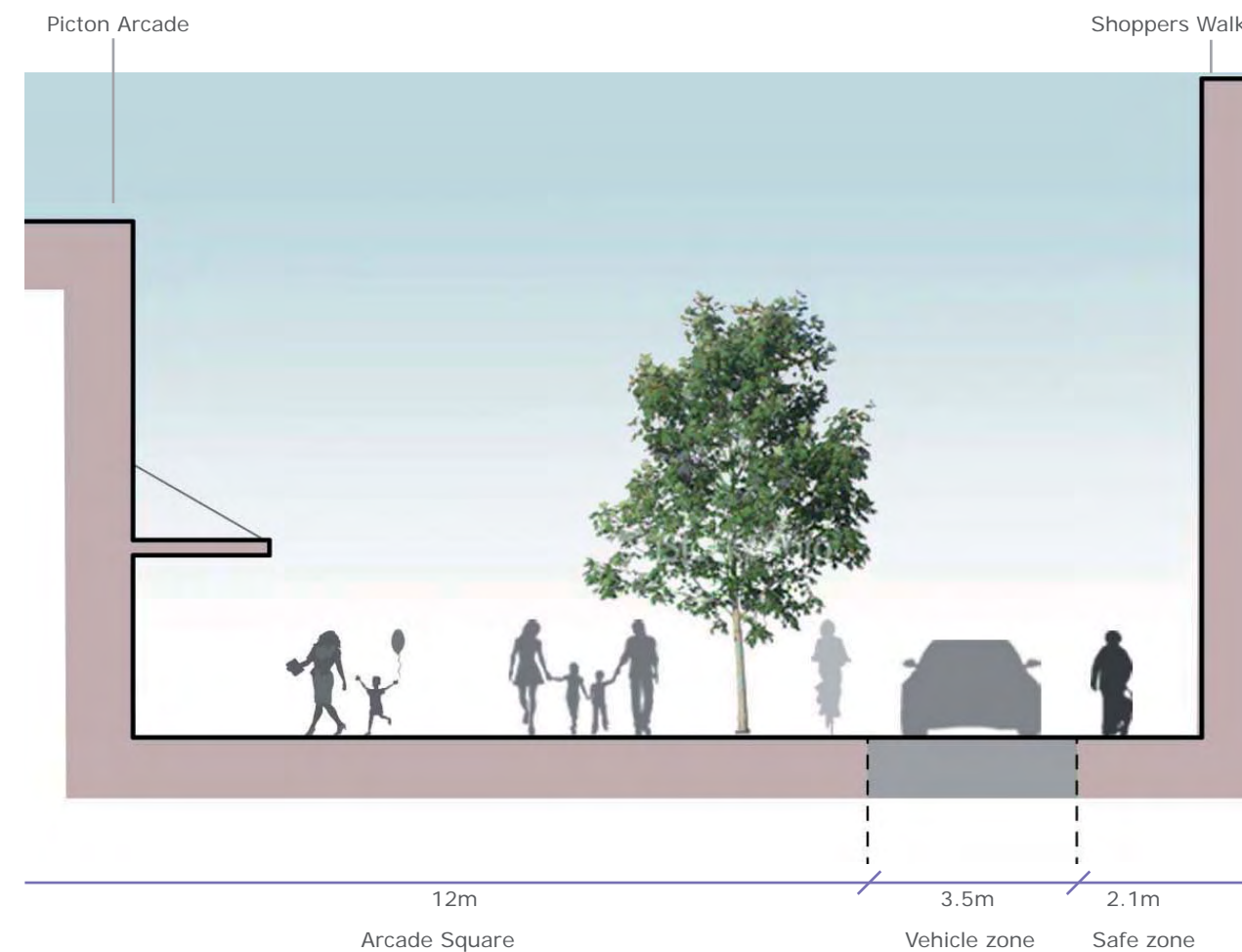
## 4.3.5 OXFORD STREET

Oxford Street needs to accommodate pedestrian movement, enhanced public space and car parking. The tight corner at Plymouth Street/Oxford Street already works as a shared space and the materials will be enhanced. Short stay car parking on Oxford Street will help to slow traffic and the pavement design will revert to a more traditional layout using small, but detectable kerb upstands to define the footway.

Arcade Square will use the same shared space principles as Plymouth Street to announce enhanced pedestrian priority using textured delineators as a preference to traditional kerbs. This is important as the public realm here needs to successfully link the two arcade entrances.

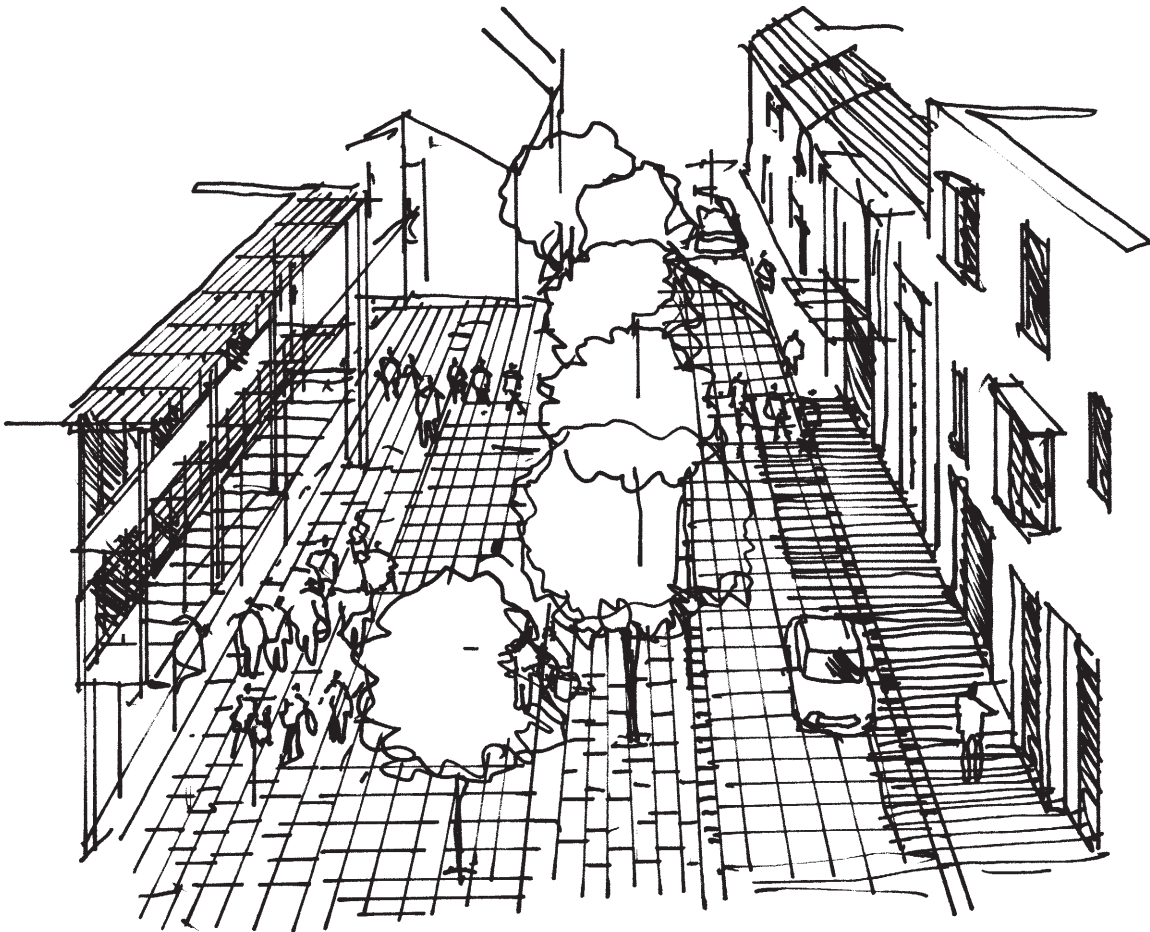
This space could host regular flea markets and incorporate street furniture and public art. Tree planting in this space will work in tandem with building enhancements to soften the brusque architecture surrounding the space. As the main location for public art in the study area, Oxford Street should accommodate forms of street art which interpret everyday items.

Arcade Square will be emphasised as the focus for alternative shopping and the public realm should acknowledge this. Temporary artworks, and quirky street furniture could add a sense of fun to the space created.





THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



Paving and highway design can help to unify the north and south sides of Oxford Street



Multi-functional art/seating/bollards could be considered as part of detailed design



Street based public art should have a role to play in making Arcade Square in particular very different from anywhere else in Swansea



“Sense of place comes largely from creating a strong relationship between the street and the buildings and spaces that frame it”

Manual for Streets, DfT, 2007

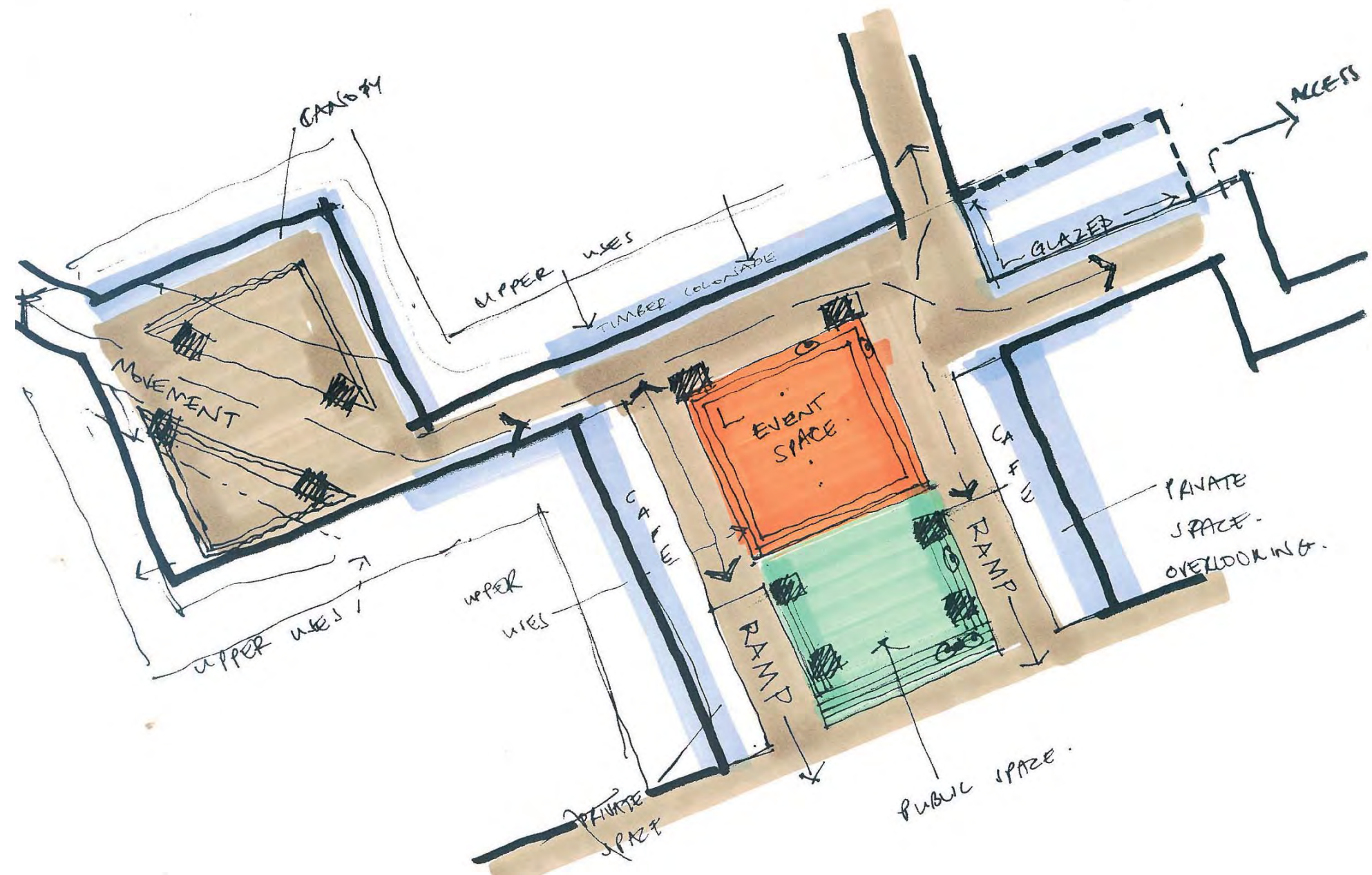


## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.3.6 CREATING NEW ROUTES AND SPACES

The diagram opposite explains the initial concept for how the new public spaces could be fed by a variety of routes arriving and intersecting within them.

This combination of routes, 'the lanes', will help to supply footfall and vitality. Also the experience of moving from a tight, relatively confined environment to open space will be pleasing and memorable, making Picton Lanes an area where people will feel drawn to.





### 4.3.7 THEATRE SQUARE

The concept for Theatre Square is to use the change in level created by undercroft parking to create interest, venues for activity, places for people watching and space to sit. Theatre Square will be a place to meet and a venue for street theatre, festivals and music. From Singleton Street, the idea is that one would walk up ramps or steps approximately 750mm into Theatre Square.

The new public space created on this podium would be overlooked by new cafes, bars, shops and restaurants and would be roughly 22m square.

The concept for the space has been arranged to allow public open space, private open space (allied to cafe bars and restaurants) and movement routes along existing and anticipated pedestrian desire lines to interact.

Opportunities for natural elements like water, timber and natural stone should be arranged to create an engaging and playful contemporary space that has a distinctly Welsh feel.

Theatre Square should incorporate planting on the ground and around it on buildings. Theatre Square would be predominantly south facing and partly sheltered from the predominant South-Westerly wind. Pleached trees will help to distinguish this space from others in the town and create shade.

Shadow analysis has identified that Theatre Square will be a suntrap with the units to the eastern edge enjoying the evening sun. Overshadowing from adjacent buildings is unlikely to be an issue.



Use of subtle changes of level in Concert Square, Liverpool create an interesting social arena



The arrangement of space and building massing has many similarities with The Brewery Quarter in Cardiff



Trees should be used to help soften the space and provide shade and texture



Canopies can encourage all weather use while full height glazing helps to animate public space



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.3.8 CWTCH SPACE

The concept for Cwtch Space is for a smaller space that needs to be 'discovered' from Theatre Square. Cwtch Space would be sheltered from inclement weather without needing to be covered. It would be overlooked by bars and include shops, offices and homes. Cwtch Space would be a quieter space and a useful contrast to Theatre Square. It would be more popular on days when people seek shade or shelter from harsh coastal winds.

Potentially, it could be surrounded by a colonnade. The two routes into Cwtch Space will contribute to the 'lanes' character of the area.

Cwtch Space would contribute to the Welsh feel of the area through use of indigenous materials. The arrangement of space would be less structured and more informal than Theatre Square. The success of the space would be dependent on the quality of the uses around it.

For management purposes Cwtch Space, like the Brewery Quarter could be closed for access after certain hours.



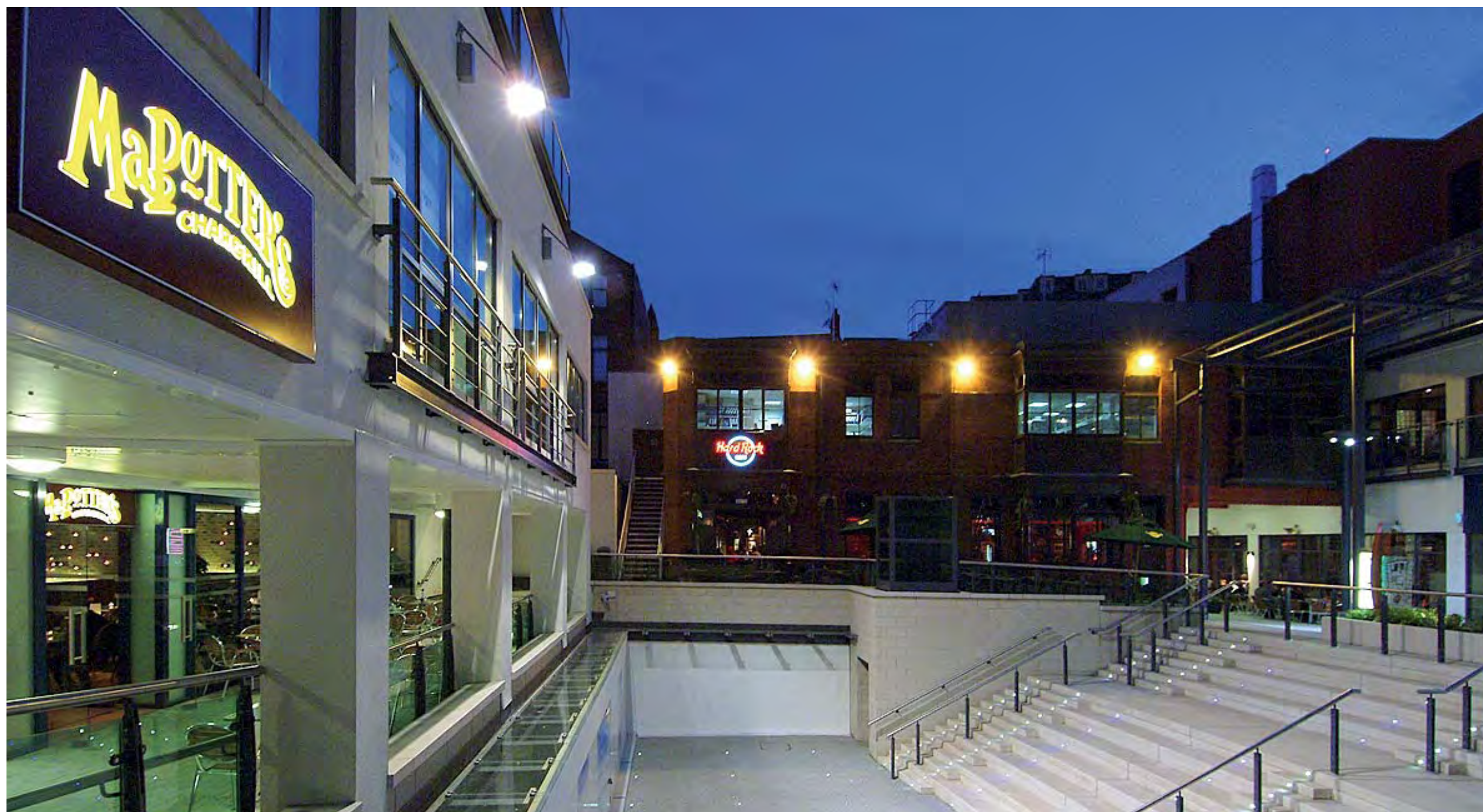
Covered colonnades and lanes at the Brewery Quarter



Indigenous materials like pennant blue sandstone will give the space a local feel.



THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



The dimensions of the space at the heart of the Brewery Quarter, Cardiff are similar to those proposed in Theatre Square



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.3.9 THE ARCADES

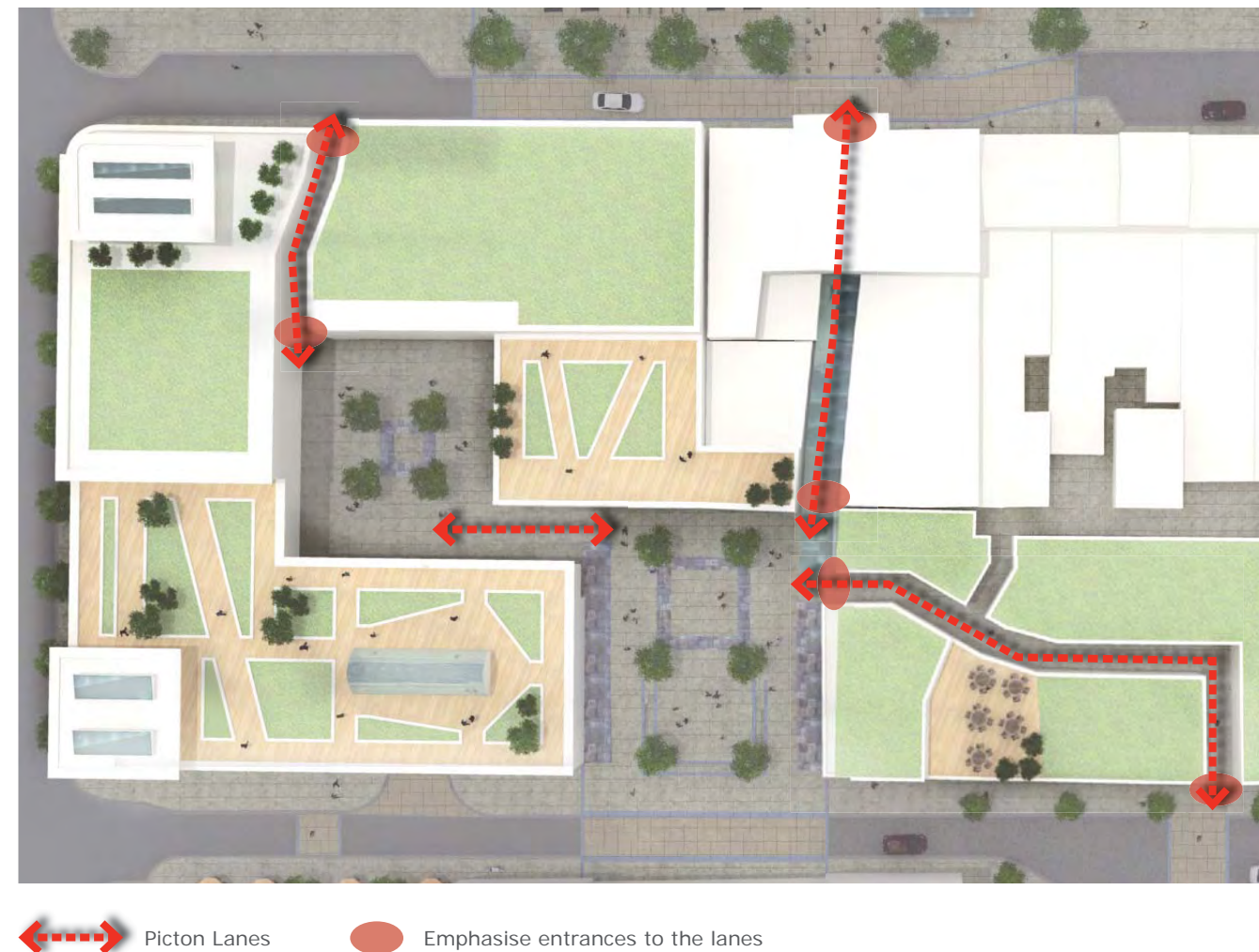
Picton Arcade and Shoppers Walk (which could be renamed Picton Walk) will need to be resurfaced to match the quality of the rest of this area.

## 4.3.10 THE LANES

A new network of tight lanes will be as important to the scheme as the two key spaces. These will link with the existing covered shopping arcades (Picton Arcade and Shoppers Walk) to create a close grain of development. The widths of these lanes should be kept to a maximum width of approximately 3m to permit ease of movement without losing the desired character. These lanes purposely 'meander' to create a gradual reveal of shops and units as you travel through them.

The entrances to the lanes, as with the existing arcades, will need to be emphasised so that they are evident and appealing from the street.

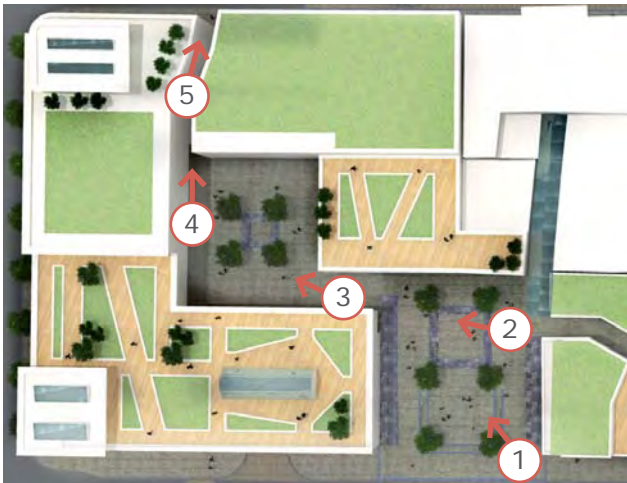
The subdivision of units within these lanes will be crucial. A presumption in favour of a collection of smaller units/retailers should be adopted to further enrich the Picton Lanes. All units located within the new and existing Lanes should provide active frontage ensuring that they function as 'places' in their own right. The detailed guidance for shop fronts, art, detailing and planting should be extended to include the series of lanes.



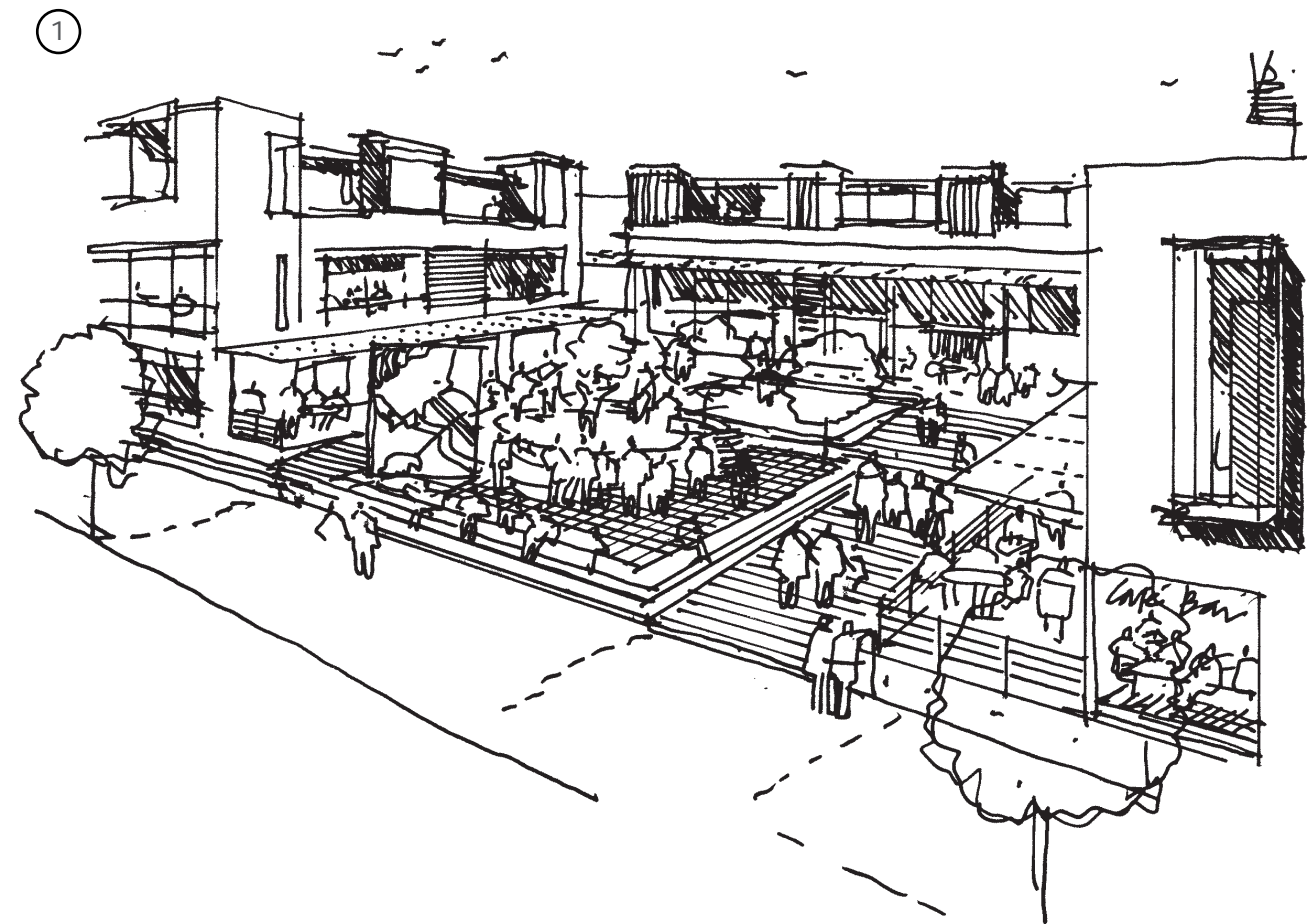
Examples of narrow lane-type shopping streets in Norwich and Venice



THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



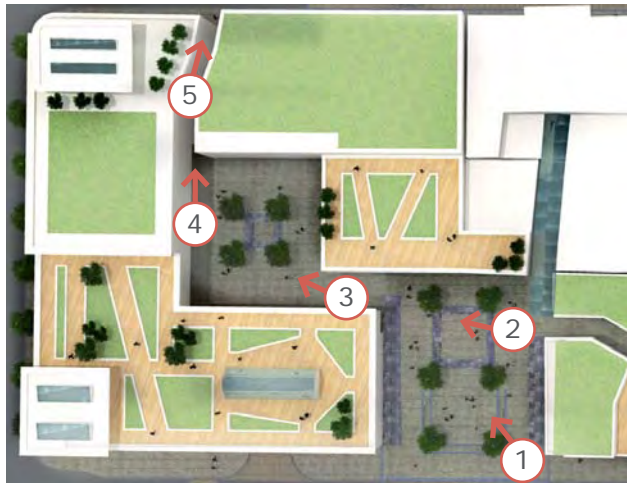
The following images illustrate the series of spaces and lanes that could be created in this area. The development of well proportioned public spaces with a rich public life together with the more intimate lanes will create an interesting area to explore within the city.



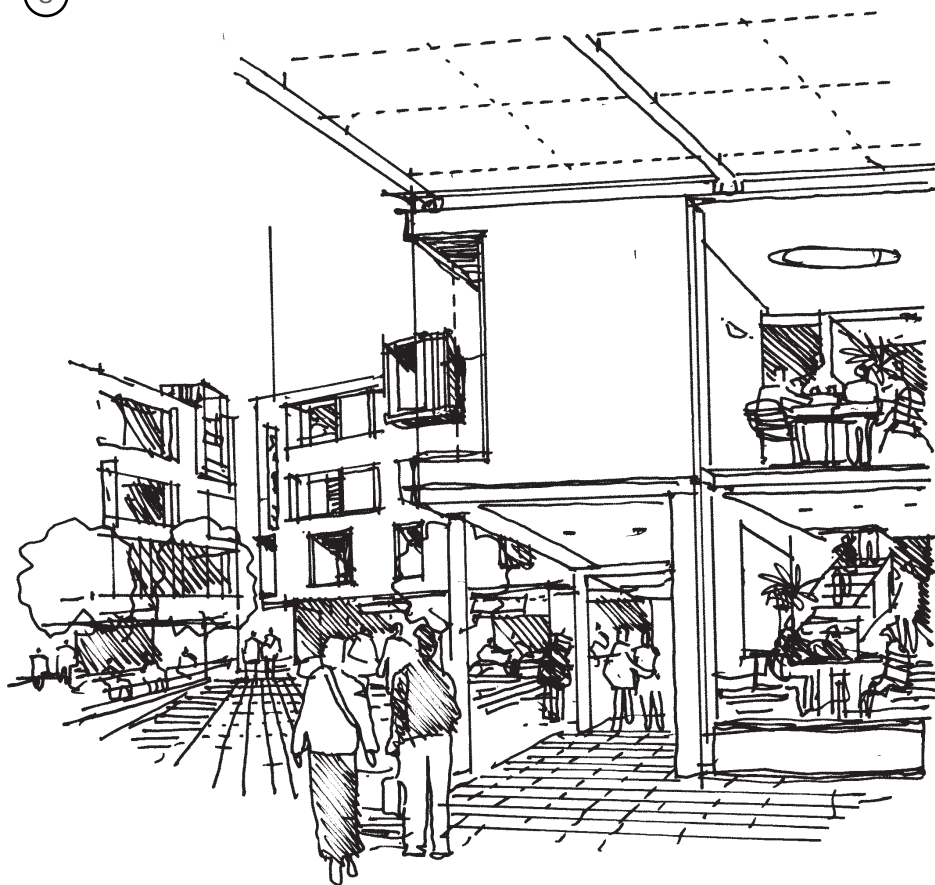
Theatre Square



Link between Theatre Square and Cwtch Space



③



Looking across Cwtch Space

④



Lane from Cwtch Space towards Oxford Street

⑤

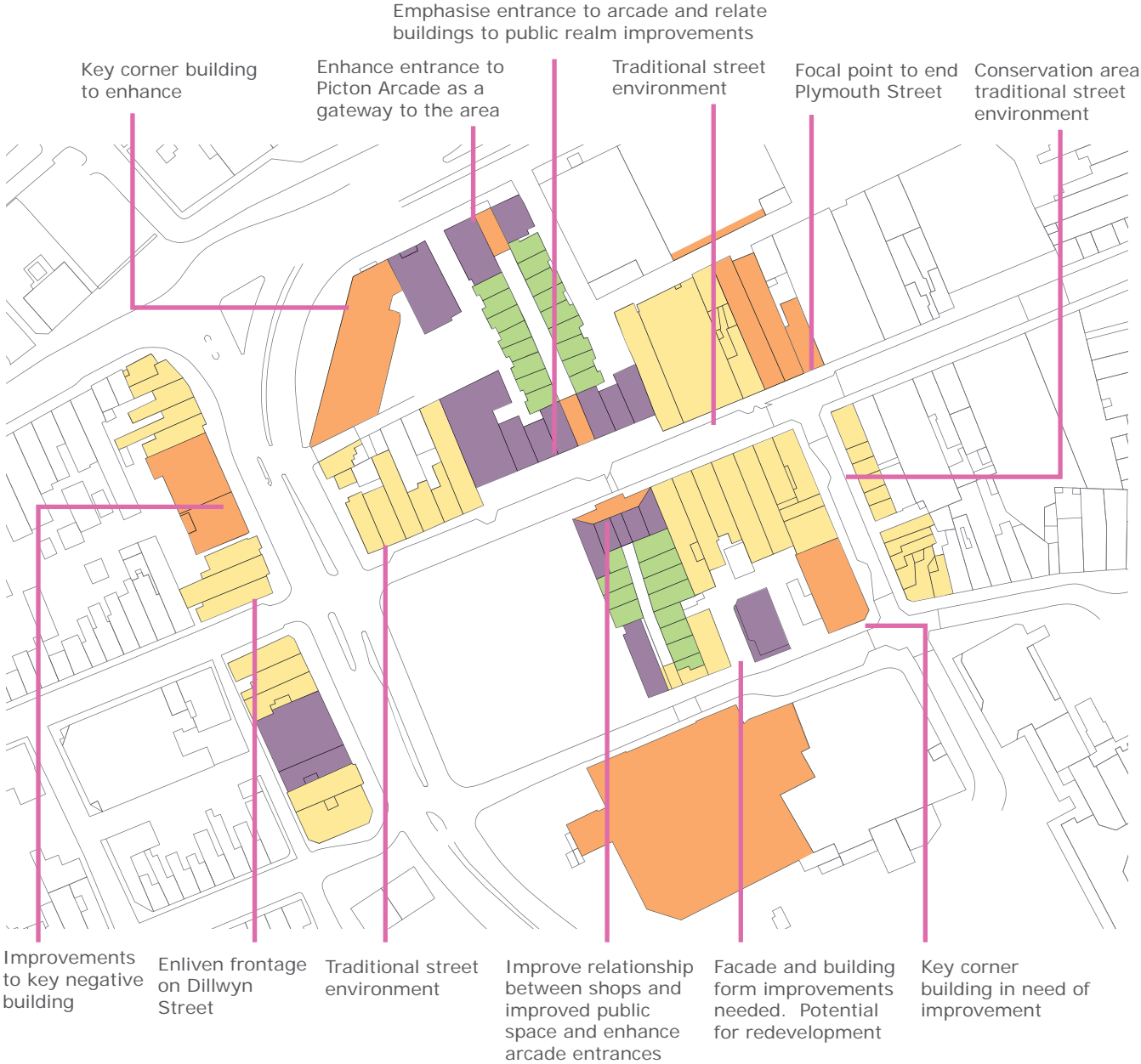


Within the lane



THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

4.4 ENHANCING EXISTING BUILDINGS



The building quality and condition review has revealed that the quality of the built fabric in this area of the city centre is generally poor and in need of attention. It is unlikely that this area will undergo full scale redevelopment in the short to medium term and at this stage it is not recommend that any large scale demolition takes place as this is likely to remove some of the quality and character of the area that could be fostered and developed. Therefore a comprehensive programme of shopfront and building improvement is proposed for the area.

Improving the condition and appearance of the buildings will have a number of benefits that will contribute to the overall vision and objectives for this area. It will help to revive the area signalling a sense of care and investment; it will help to develop a stronger character and identity for the area that is unified but not uniform; it will support existing local traders; and it will complement the proposed new development and public realm works for the area.

Strategy

All of the buildings within the study area should be addressed in a programme of improvement but there will be different priorities for different buildings. The adjacent plan identifies four categories of building:

- Traditional form
- 1950s/60s
- Arcades
- Key buildings

The treatment of buildings within the different categories is likely to differ due to their nature and characteristics. The following pages go into more detail on key considerations for building and shopfront improvements for each category to help establish what needs to be taken into account and what can be achieved in the façade improvements.

The key buildings identified in the strategy plan should be addressed as a matter of priority as they have a significant impact on key views, the appearance of the area and legibility. The strategy plan identifies priorities for each section of frontage which should be considered in any future design.

Initial Appraisal

- What are the strongest features of the building?
- Does the building have more modern or historic qualities?
- Is there a sense of vertical rhythm in the street that should be appreciated?
- What materials are used in the building?
- Are there existing colours in the building that can be drawn on and enhanced?

# SECTION 04

## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

### 4.4.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The existing Swansea City Centre Building Facade and Shopfront Design Guidance provides good general advice on the principles of shopfront and facade design and improvement and should provide the starting point for design. However, improvements in this area should seek to go beyond this guidance. Creativity should be encouraged in the design of shopfronts and facade improvements and, if necessary, the guidelines and restrictions should be relaxed to allow for innovation and for each proposal to be judged on merit. Quality of design should be promoted by ensuring that design proposals incorporate the expertise of an artist or architect and not rely on standard shop fitters or builders.

Whilst innovation and creativity are to be promoted there are some key principles and considerations set out here that should guide proposals to ensure that each facade contributes to an overall improvement in the quality of the area.

#### Rhythm

To give vibrancy and diversity to the street scene a sense of vertical rhythm should be established within the buildings. This may involve visually dividing the frontage of wider buildings to reduce the dominance of these buildings. Creating regular narrower frontages gives more active frontage, encourages a 'human scale' and gives variety to the street scene.

#### Colour



Regular rhythm created through variety in height and colour

The use of colour can dramatically change the appearance and feel of a street and can also differentiate an area from the wider city. The building materials used in the area and the building condition currently gives a rather bland appearance. Picton Lanes should be bright and vibrant, complementing the alternative nature of the area and contributing to its distinct identity. Consideration should be given to the creation of a colour palette in conjunction with the development of the Picton Lanes brand.

#### Quirky



Colour brings interest and identity to Neil's Yard in Covent Garden

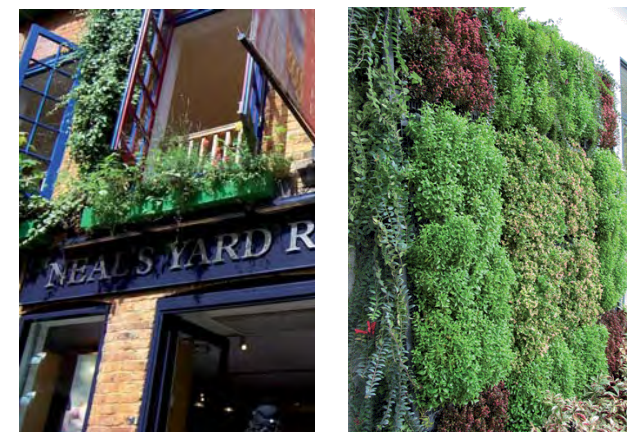
In addition to those elements introduced above there is real potential to introduce green elements into the street scene on the buildings. This will again help to enliven frontages, give added interest which may change through the year and will have benefits for the local environment including ecology and air quality. Green elements can include window boxes, green roofs and green walls. Green walls are an effective, attractive and sustainable way to cover gable walls and planting can be used to screen unattractive facades.

To add to the unique character of the area owners and occupiers should be encouraged to be creative and quirky with the way they promote their premises. Lively and innovative additions to the fronts of buildings or shopfronts will create interest. However, it is important that a designer is involved in the process whether that is an architect or artist to ensure high quality. Examples of shop fronts in Camden, London show interest can be given to a relatively plain facade with the addition of colour and bold features projecting from the front of the building.

#### Green



Large scale additions to shop fronts create drama and interest in Camden, London



Window boxes and green walls can accompany other green elements such as street trees and hanging baskets

#### Green Walls

- Plants grown vertically without any soil
- The light weight support structures can be applied to nearly any building
- Watering and fertilisation is automated resulting in virtually no maintenance requirements
- The plants contribute to air purification and provide phonic and thermic insulation
- Approximately 30 plants are used per square metre
- Regular watering prevents roots from penetrating into the building

"The vertical garden on concrete walls: a shelter for biodiversity and a cleansing system for cities" (Patric Blanc, green walls expert)

Before



After





## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

**Repair**

At a most basic level all buildings should be brought to a good state of repair fixing any elements such as broken windows or leaking roofs. To create an uncluttered look all unnecessary wires, cables, signs and fixtures should be removed from the front of buildings.

**Materials and Sustainability**

Materials selected for shopfronts and façade improvements should be high quality, durable and environmentally sustainable. The most sustainable materials for shopfronts and windows are sustainably sourced hard wood and soft wood followed by aluminium and steel with UPVC as the least sustainable. Materials should be durable so that they wear well and require limited maintenance and infrequent replacement. In order to reduce the maintenance burden it is important to keep the number of different materials to a minimum within each shopfront or building. Materials that look cheap and are likely to wear quickly such as acrylic or plastic should be avoided.

**Lighting**

Building mounted lighting should be promoted to highlight key features or to give greater light to the street. It is best to include lighting at the earliest stage and not treat it as an 'add-on' at a later date.

**Security**

Security features should be considered at the shopfront design stage so as to be integral and not detract from the overall look of the building. Toughened or laminated glass is the preferred option followed by internal grills or shutters which can be seen through. External roller shutters should not be used.



Colourful, durable and attractive wooden shopfronts in Glastonbury



Front lighting highlights a simple but stylish fascia board



Internal grills provide a much more attractive and active security solution than external shutters

**Points to consider**

The following pages outline factors that should be taken into consideration with the improvement of shopfronts and facades for the different building typologies. This is followed by some considerations that should be made when addressing the key buildings. These points of consideration are not intended to be strict instructions or guidance but they outline key elements that should be addressed and highlight potential solutions that will contribute to the overall improvement of the appearance of the area.

A mechanism for the implementation of improvements will need to be established which will promote up take and encourage enthusiasm and investment. A Building Enhancement Programme team is already established to promote the shopfront design guidance throughout the City Centre. This has seen a number of schemes brought forward recently and an increase in enquiries. This body should provide the mechanism for a focused improvement programme to take place.

**Professional Advisors**

Landlord and/or tenants wanting to bring forward improvements to their properties are encouraged to employ appropriate professional advisors to develop and project manage projects.

Employing a professional advisor can lead to a quicker development of projects. The Building Enhancement Team (BEP) will work closely with the applicant and appointed representative to ensure the proposals meet the requirements of the local planning authority and assist in the application of grant and any other statutory approvals required.

Where tenants are the actual grant applicant, employing such an advisor may reduce pressure off them during the development of the project and during the period of works, enabling more time to be given to continuing running the business.

If an improvement is brought forward under the Building Enhancement Program (BEP), a contribution will be considered towards fee costs within the grant application if approved.

## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.4.2 TRADITIONAL FORM BUILDINGS

There are a number of buildings in the study area that have a fairly traditional two storey form with retail units of the ground floor. Many of the shop fronts are tired and uncoordinated and would benefit from improvement.

Improvements need to go beyond the shopfronts to the upper floors. Appropriate upper storey windows that are centralised and in proportion to the building should be installed and consistent roof lines reinstated.

There is scope for creativity and personalisation in the shopfront particularly in terms of colour. However, the proportions of a traditional shopfront should be the starting point for any design as this gives a well balanced appearance to the building and the shop.

Canopies can be a lively addition to the street scene and support active outdoor uses. These should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront and should generally be retractable roller canopies rather than fixed Dutch canopies.

The adjacent drawing illustrates how improvements to this row of shops on Oxford Street can be improved.





THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



Colour and flowering window boxes create an attractive timeless look



Creativity in shopfront design adds interest to the area and promotes the goods on sale



Creative and off-the-wall additions to buildings can become attractions in themselves (Headington Shark)



Lettering is an important element of a shopfront



**After-** illustrating some of the areas that should be addressed in improving the shopfronts and building facades





## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.4.3 1950S/60S BUILDINGS

There are a number of large buildings in the area dating back to the post war period. These buildings present a range of different issues that need to be considered to improve their contribution to the image of the study area.

Where buildings are wide and bulky ways to **divide up the facade** to create greater richness should be explored. For example external colours and treatments could reflect the internal uses of the buildings, so each occupier would be able to clearly identify their units from the outside. More emphasis should also be given to the vertical rhythm of the building to reduce the horizontal emphasis that can be dominant. Vast upper stories can be broken up into sections to provide more interest in the street scene.

Many of these buildings have large amounts of glazing on the upper floors. Whilst this can help the upper floors to recede, it can look unattractive when what is behind the glass is unsightly or poorly maintained. In this instance the **visibility of the internal space should be reduced** with etching, colour treatment, block colour blinds, or well designed advertising. Replacing windows will significantly improve the appearance of the building and will also benefit the sustainability of the building providing greater insulation.

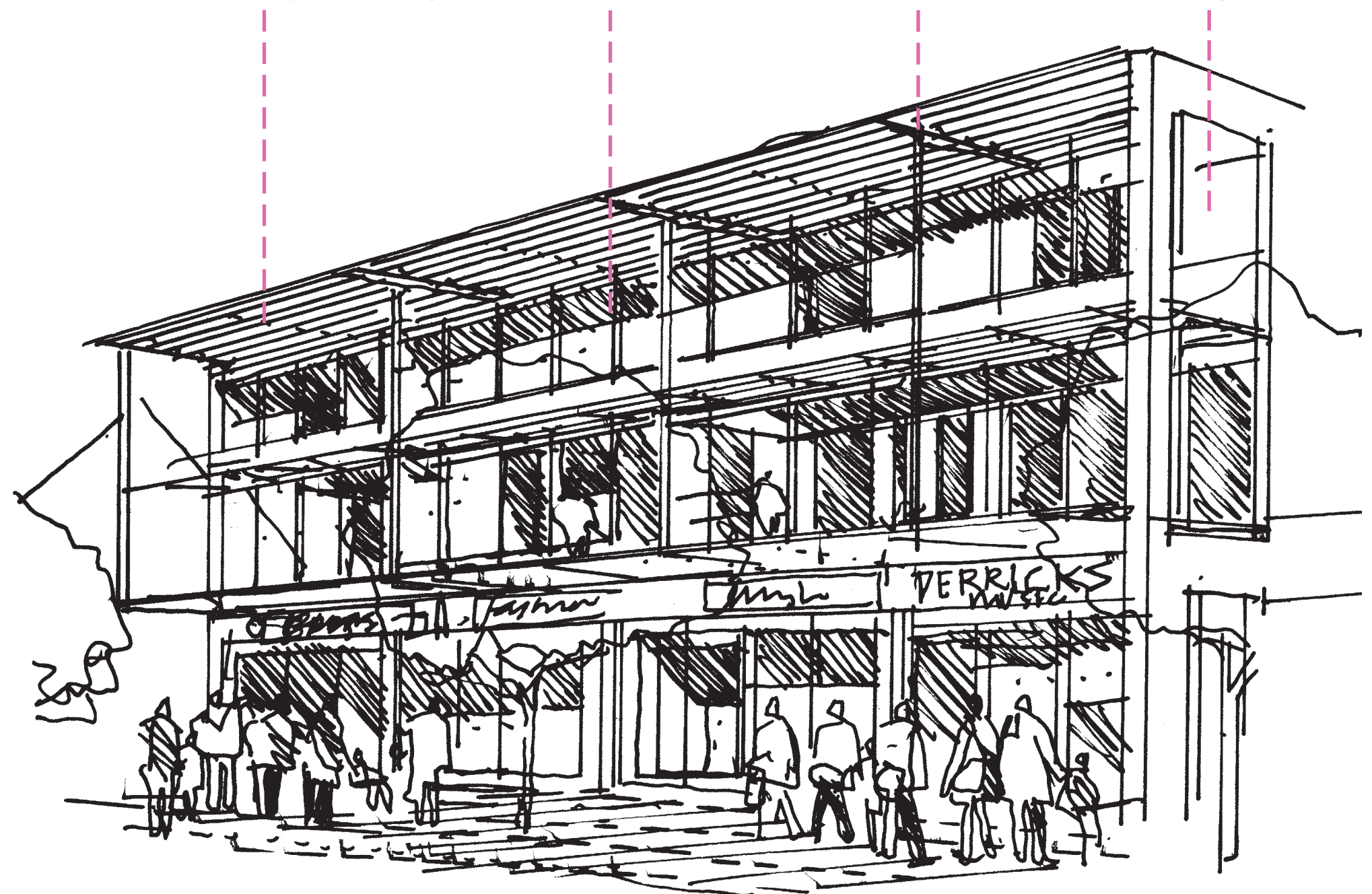
With regard to signage, a primary example of unattractive and ineffective signage is the 'Derricks's' sign located in the top right hand corner of the image to the right.

Introduce elements such as a brie soliel to provide solar shading and improve the look and sustainability of the building

Improve or screen the view of the internal space

Reduce the bulk of the building and fit the rhythm of the street

Paint, render of clad areas of unattractive concrete or panelling





THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES



External painting can help to break up a large blank facade and indicate internal divisions



Colour gives interest to blank facades



Solar shades can be applied on large, south-facing glazed facades to help regulate solar gain



The refurbishment of Swansea Leisure Centre indicates how materials can be used to brighten and modernise a dull building



Green elements can be used in creative and dramatic ways to alter the appearance of buildings



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.4.4 ARCADES

The principles of good shopfront design and building improvement should continue into Picton Arcade and Shoppers Walk. The arcades provide an alternative shopping experience that can be an attractive addition to the larger scale shops and shopping centres in the rest of the city centre. There is a range of appealing shops and cafes but the surrounding environment does not help to attract people to visit and stay in the arcades.

Important elements in improving the arcades include increasing the amount of natural daylight which will brighten the space and improve sustainability, improving cleanliness and paving the arcades as part of the public realm improvements.

As well as improvements to the arcades internally it is crucial that the entrances to the arcades are improved and highlighted. The entrances are currently low and enclosed. To give more definition they should be opened up and brightened to be more obvious and inviting.

Encourage colourful and vibrant window displays

Encourage active upper floors and use of balcony space

Use projecting signs to punctuate the view through the arcade

Clean/improve glazed roof to allow more light in

Improve the floorscape







Internal arcades should be stylish and bright with some unity between shops



An example of a modern arcade which is smart and light



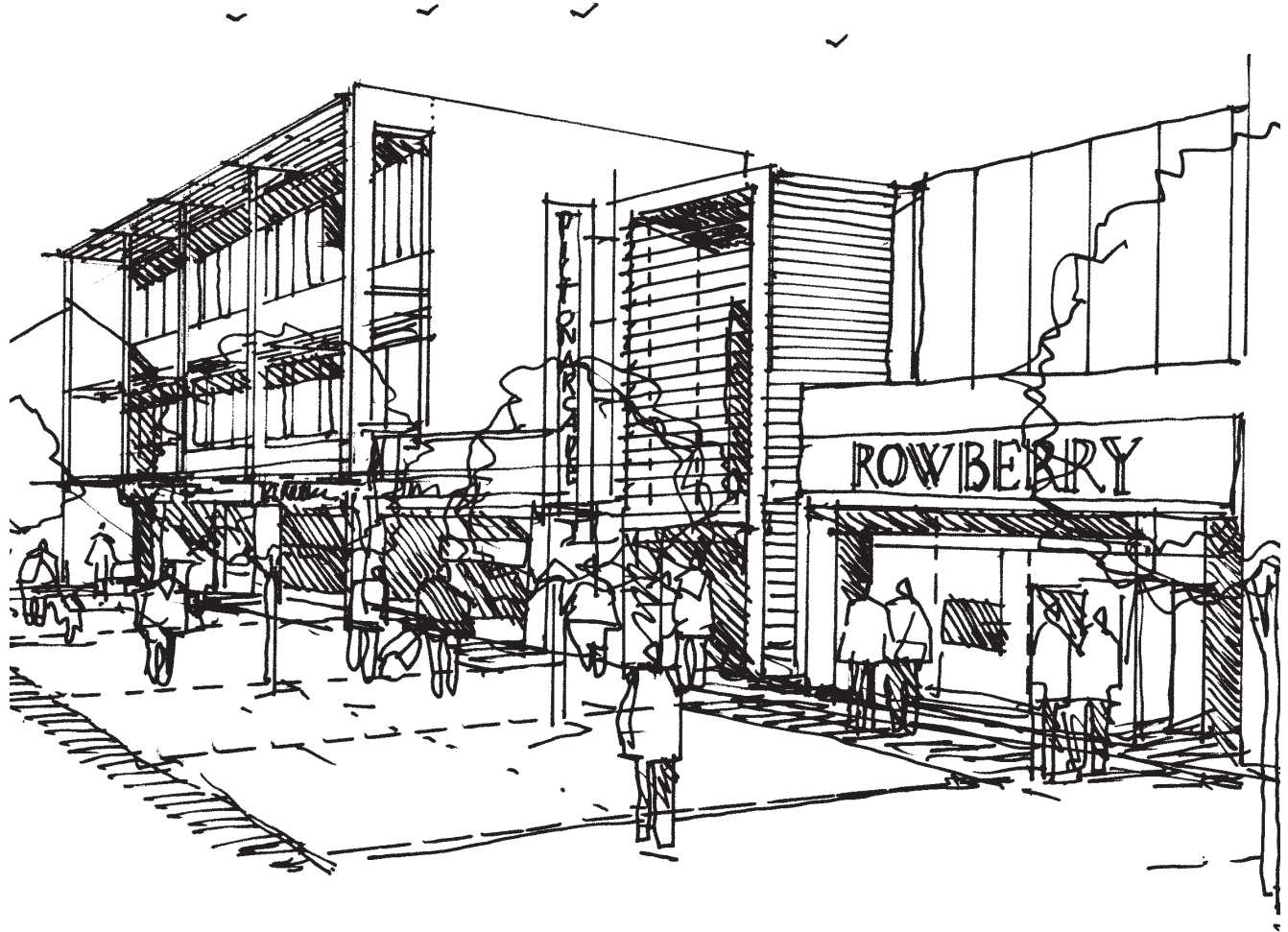
Projecting signs can help to promote businesses in the arcade



Coordinated and consistent shopfronts give a rhythm to the arcade and provides visual clarity



Active upper floors should be encouraged



Where possible extra height should be given to the entrance of the arcades to raise their profile in the street.



# SECTION 04

## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

### 4.4.5 PILOT PROJECTS

A pilot building enhancement project should be undertaken in the study area to demonstrate what can be achieved, set a high standard and kick start change in the area. Property owners are likely to need encouragement to make a financial contribution towards improvements and to think creatively. The project management and implementation process should therefore incorporate design input to help visually present potential schemes and the benefits of improvements should be clearly set out. A significant change in the character of the area will not be achieved if there is not widespread take up of the building and shopfront improvement initiative.

One pilot project might incorporate both sides of Plymouth Street and the end of the street where Toni & Guy is currently located. Another opportunity for a pilot project also exists at the entrance to Picton Arcade from Oxford Street.

#### Plymouth Street

The buildings on Plymouth Street are within the conservation area and therefore require a sensitive approach that will enhance the character of the area. A scheme for improvement has been prepared for these buildings which would support the aims of the building enhancement programme. A sketch of this scheme is shown below.

If it is feasible to retain the brickwork on the second storey this would give an added richness and sense of age to the buildings rather than fresh new render. The proposals seek to reinstate traditional shopfronts with improved upper floors. Together with proposed street redesign in this section there is real scope to create an attractive street.

The illustration below is currently being used to promote building enhancements within Plymouth Street by the Building Enhancement Team (BET). This has been produced by the Council's Conservation Team to guide development of this street which falls within a Conservation Area. At the time of writing work had already started on one property following this guidance.

#### End of Plymouth Street

- This frontage ends an important view along Plymouth Street from the bus station.
- Improve shopfronts
- Address the rear elevation of Oceana Club to reduce or improve visual dominance. The blank wall could be used as canvas for a local artist or a location for a rolling programme of temporary art pieces
- Glazed façade can be enhanced using coloured panes which could be lit at night
- Designated areas can be provided for advertising



#### Picton Arcade Entrance

- Shopfront improvements should incorporate a canopy across this recessed section
- Improvements to highlight the entrance to the arcade should be made
- A greater degree of creativeness and flare can be expressed in this area beyond the conservation area
- Trader representatives in this area have expressed a keenness and willingness to participate in a pilot project



The illustration above is currently being used to promote building enhancements within Plymouth Street by the Building Enhancement Team. This has been produced by C&CSC Conservation Team to guide development of this street which falls within a Conservation Area. At the time of writing work had already started on one property following this guidance.



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.4.6 OTHER KEY BUILDINGS

**Milkwood Jam Corner Building**

- This prominent corner building currently presents an unattractive view on the approach into the area from the east and from the bus station.
- Clean the stonework
- Install new shopfronts that are more sensitive to the building and adjacent conservation area
- Explore the potential of covering the unattractive brown glazing with a green wall to improve appearance, create interest and improve the environment
- Maintain cherubs and their link with the theatre and the wider town centre

**Sin City**

- The scale of the building and its materials makes it a dominant feature on the street.
- Visually divide up the ground floor to create five shopfronts that will be of a more human scale and tie in with the rest of the street.
- Where the shopfronts are essentially blank due to the nature of the internal use, the facade can be divided up with space for art work providing a canvas for local artists.
- Divide the facade of upper storeys to break up the strong horizontal nature of the building so it does not appear as one large mass. This can be done in a number of ways such as cladding the concrete sections, inserting coloured panels or glass, exploring the potential of trailing plants up the vertical columns and lighting different sections at night.

**Pool Sanctuary**

- The Pool Sanctuary is a prominent building at the junction between Kingsway and Dillwyn Street. The future of the building is uncertain, it may be redeveloped in the future. However if it is not redeveloped the existing building should be improved.
- Repaint the lettering and light at night.
- Clean or paint the vertical concrete elements to emphasise the structure of the building.
- Emphasise the edges of the building and establish a uniform glazing treatment that lifts the middle section of the building.
- Clad or treat the panels between the glazing, possibly metallic?
- Explore the potential to develop a 1950s/60s theme for the building to create a minor landmark for the area.

**Dillwyn Street/West Way**

- The other buildings on Dillwyn Street/ West Way also need to be addressed as their appearance detracts from the quality of the image of the town centre on this important thoroughfare.
- Shopfronts and facades should be improved in line with the principles set out for traditional buildings or 1950s/60s buildings where appropriate.
- Specific care should be taken in the design of fast food and takeaways. Although bold and vivid colours are advocated here, quality must be key and so cheap looking, plastic lit box signs must be avoided in shopfront improvements
- Improving these buildings in the same manner and to the same standard as those on Oxford street will help to tie them into the area and join the divide across Dillwyn Street/West Way.



## 4.5 PLACE MANAGEMENT AND PROMOTION

Independent retailers are a major tool that centres can use to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

They are one of the few ways in which centres can claim uniqueness. In the past the main players fulfilling this role were the large departmental stores, and no serious centre could be without its key retail attractor – David Morgan, Howells, Ailders, Kendal Milne etc. Even the smaller centres in Wales had their examples with Dan Evans in Barry, which closed its doors in 2006 after 100 years of trading, possibly the last example. Many department stores have survived as destination shops, but as they are owned by a few large multiple retailers, they are less important in efforts to distinguish one centre against the next.

Whilst the largest stores will have the broadest appeal, the contribution small independent shops can make can be significant. Swansea City acknowledges this and the current promotional material for the city centre emphasises the strength of its independent sector, as indicated by what appears on the city centre web site: -

- *The City Centre boasts a vast array of specialist independent retailers offering a wide range of niche and designer products and services.*
- *Independent traders in Swansea City Centre, and Swansea Indoor Market offer exclusive fashions and local produce to name a few, and combine this with excellent customer service.*
- *Throughout the City, populated independent retail areas such as High Street, Plymouth Street, The Arcades and Belle Vue Way & The Kingsway are serviced by near by car parks.*

If the aspiration is to create and sustain a thriving independent retail sector what measures should be put in place? This is best approached through consideration of the 4 Ps of the Marketing Mix – place, product, price and promotion.

**Place** is a central component in creating the right environment in which independent retailers might flourish. A variety of places have successfully been put to this use and there are a range of characteristics in such spaces. They include old traditional trading pitches like the Shambles (York, Stroud) and the Lanes (Norwich, Brighton). The Regency era introduced the sophistication arcades of which there are numerous successful examples – not least in Cardiff. Other historic parts of cities, though not initially designed for retail have been adapted well, such as the Rocks in Sydney. Large former industrial buildings have been pressed to new use – London's Oxo tower and Quincy Market Boston. It is not the style or scale of the architecture that unites these examples but rather their qualities, their ability to create the right ambience, the buzz of busyness. Another common feature in successful places of this type is the range of uses which are included in the mix. Catering and hospitality sit alongside retail that spans the value range. **Unsurprisingly what makes them successful social places also underpins their economies: footfall.**

### Product

What are the product ingredients that make for a thriving independent retailing area, and that would have wide appeal to the public? They include breadth of choice, the prospect of sourcing something unusual or unique, range of prices to suit all pockets, the opportunity to view things of interest – even those that one might never buy, all coupled with a complementary catering offer.

In most cases assembling such a mix has happened organically, over time and through a process of natural selection. Churn, and the removal of the weakest is an essential part of this process. **The strength of the independent retailer is being closer to the customer base and able to continuously fine tune product range.** They must be lighter on their feet than the multiples which rely on price advantage and volume.

What contribution can the public sector play in supporting this process? Public authorities are practised at creating place, but there is much less experience in assisting the development of the kind of enterprises that might occupy such places. The skills and knowledge base generally do not exist. There is a difference in culture and outlook and the funding regimes are configured in ways that make it more difficult to assist independent retail enterprises. As a result public intervention is geared towards creating the conditions which might assist developing the right context in which these enterprise might flourish. These include: -

- Grant aiding occupiers to enhance the appearance of their premises
- Investing in the public realm
- Maintaining clean and safe streets
- Ensuring that there are good arrangements for deliveries



The Lanes in Norwich provides an attractive environment in which to explore the shops



Quincy Market, Boston an exceedingly vibrant place



Fitzroy, Melbourne has a quirky bohemian character with original cafes and bars, eclectic shops and galleries



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

Given the scale of the difficulties confronting the market the public authorities may need to look beyond supplying the right context for enterprise and establish other ways in which it can assist in enriching the product mix.

Premises are one of the major barriers to entry into the retail sector for new enterprises. There are issues around availability, cost and the length of commitment involved in entering into leases. Street markets provide one way in which new retailers can begin trading before committing themselves to taking on premises. Subject to certain safeguards, many of the traders in the study area would support a flea market style street as highlighted in Section 3.2.

The CCP already has the experience and expertise to manage and operate such an initiative. Consideration should be given to involving other stakeholders in the development of thinking. In Camberwell the Arts Forum has put some energy into developing ideas for an arts orientated market. Another interesting example from Southwark is Bermondsey which has run an open air antiques market for many years. Markets are the oldest form of retailing. After years in decline they are in certain circumstances seeing a rise in their fortunes. This is fuelled partly by the interest which new formats such as farmers markets and continental markets have generated, and partly by new management approaches as exemplified by Urban Space Management.

Other interventions worthy of consideration are providing opportunities for test trading. This would involve a body taking on the head lease on accommodation and parcelling trading periods for different retailers. A recent variant of this is the growing phenomena of “pop up” shop. A number of London BIDs are exploring

whether a circuit of retailers could be set up between their different areas with retailers touring as traders used to habitually do in the past. What makes this more of a possibility in the current climate is the availability of empty units and a growing realisation on the part of landlords that their customary approach needs to be reviewed.

#### Promotion

Alongside the action on place and product, the third element of the strategy would involve a sustained promotional campaign to re-launch the study area and to keep it in the public's eye and maintain investor interest thereafter. There are a number of elements which would be included:-

- Identity – measures should be put in place to make the area coherent and legible. Through subtle gateway treatments and ambient branding the sense of being in a particular place would be reinforced
- Events – the city centre already acts as a venue for several events throughout the year. Castle Square hosts the majority of these. The Christmas Fair on Oystermouth Road has also been successful
- Joint promotion and advertising – while the public sector has an important role in progressing the wider strategy ultimately its success as a thriving independents area will depend on the extent to which the businesses themselves get behind and invest in the concept. To achieve the maximum impact promotional and advertising activity needs to be co-ordinated
- The BID and City Centre Partnership have run a number of successful campaigns, including examples such as Independents' Day which are of direct benefit to the study area.

Place, Product and Promotion can be considered as three legs of a stool – only when the three are present can functionality be achieved.



## 4.6 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### 4.6.1 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This section identifies core design principles that the proposed development must follow to help create a sustainable environment and exhibit a high level of design quality. The objectives are based on the five key objectives set out in TAN 12 but also take into account wider best practice urban design guidance including 'Creating Sustainable Places' (WAG), the Urban Design Compendium, Responsive Environments, Manual for Streets and Building for Life.

## CHARACTER

- *Sustain or enhance local character*
- *Promote legible development*
- *Promote a successful relationship between public and private space*
- *Promote quality choice and variety*
- *Promote innovative design*

### Local character

Establishing a strong sense of identity and character in the area is vital but this should be developed in the context of the identity of the wider city centre. To enable this:

- New development should adopt a style and character which is conducive the ethos of the Picton Lanes initiative and the character defined in this document.
- The scale and massing of the development should respond to surrounding patterns of development
- Place management, promotion and public art will strengthen identity and support the local traders that give this area its character

### Legibility

A legible scheme will allow people to easily read their surroundings and orientate themselves. Legibility should be created or enhanced by:

- Clearly marking entrance points and routes through the scheme
- Creating a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces
- Establishing well defined spaces that are distinct and memorable
- Using key buildings and easily recognisable features to act as visual markers and landmarks
- Using materials in the floorscape to clearly identify routes

### Quality, choice and variety

Variety and choice are integral factors in increasing the choice available to people. This may be visually in terms of building form and detail, or the nature of a given space. Variety and diversity should be increased via the following:

- Promoting an appropriate mix of uses that will create activity throughout the day and into the evening
- Variety in building form, detailing and materials to create uniqueness
- Creating distinctive spaces that add character to the development





## ACCESS

- Ensuring ease of access for all into the development and to all elements within the site

### Inclusive Design

Inclusive design principles should be adopted from the outset to provide for all people including those with mobility impairments, sensory impairments and learning difficulties.

The scheme must be DDA compliant.

Designs should seek to build in inclusiveness for people today and over time as requirements change.



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Ensure attractive, safe public spaces
- Security through natural surveillance

### Attractive, safe public spaces

The enclosure of streets and spaces, a consistent building line and active frontages onto the public realm are essential components in the creation of a safe and secure environment. This helps to create a stronger sense of place, a sense of ownership and encourages social interaction. The development must have:

- Units that face on to streets/spaces giving high levels of activity and surveillance
- Spaces that are well enclosed by development to create a sense of place and to promote public safety and security
- An appropriate relationship between building height and road/space width
- Clarity in what is public and what is private space



## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Achieve efficient use and protection of natural resources
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Designing for change

### Efficient use of natural resources and enhancing biodiversity

Any development should seek to be efficient and contribute positively to the local environment by addressing the following elements:

- Using sustainably sourced or recycled materials
- Reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting renewable energy sources
- Building development that will last
- Promoting biodiversity even in urban locations



### Adaptability

The scheme must be designed to be adaptable and flexible to respond to social, technological, economic and environmental changes over time. This can be achieved through:

- High quality architecture that is built to last, and permits alteration to the structure over time
- Designing spaces that are capable of adapting over time and which can fulfil a number of roles
- Streets that are simple, robust and clutter free
- Building in responses to the future effects of climate change



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## MOVEMENT

- *Promoting sustainable means of travel*

**Ease of movement**

An accessible scheme will accommodate all users and ensure safe and secure access to facilities. The area should be incorporated into the local movement network by:

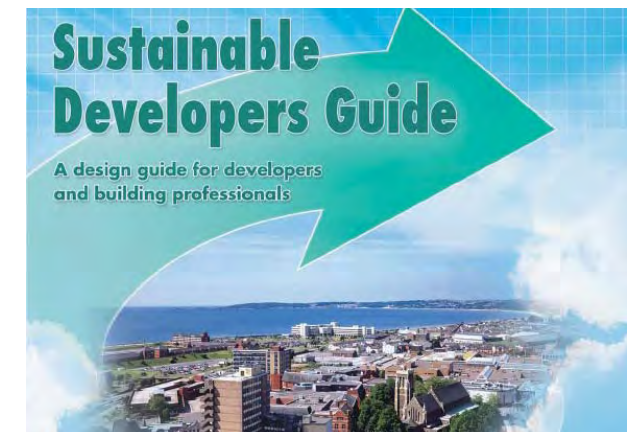
- Integrating with the city centre and connecting to the bus station
- Creating streets that put the pedestrian at the top of the movement hierarchy
- Improving the pedestrian environment on West Way to reduce the physical and psychological barrier it creates
- Establishing a layout that is permeable and responds to local desire lines



## 4.6.2 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

In order to ensure that these proposals are sustainable it is important to plan for the impact of climate change, the need to limit global CO2 levels, habitat loss and plan for uncertainty surrounding future energy security. In this context the proposals have been developed to allow for maximum use of renewable energy resources, both in new and existing buildings. To achieve this, the proposals should include:

- Energy efficiency as a key component of building enhancements to ensure that buildings are efficient as well as attractive places for business
- Incorporating trees and other plants which will reduce urban air temperatures, filter solar radiation and pollutants and store carbon
- Encouraging 'food feet' (rather than 'food miles') by providing new urban apartment dwellers with space to 'grow their own' on roof gardens as part of the development mix
- Building the new mixed use scheme to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 or equivalent and incorporating solar water heating, micro-generation, high thermal efficiency, grey water harvesting etc
- Opportunities to encourage habitat into the City through inclusion of bird and bat boxes
- Developers should refer to the City and County of Swansea's Sustainable Developers Guide



Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 01/2009 Planning for Sustainable Buildings provides a new section 2.12 of Planning Policy Wales. This states that in order to move towards more sustainable and zero carbon buildings in Wales applications received on or after 1st September 2009 for non-residential development which will either have a floorspace of 1,000 sqm or more, or will be carried out on a site having an area of one hectare or more, will need to meet the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'Very Good' standard and achieve the mandatory credits for 'Excellent' under issue Ene1 - Reduction of CO2 Emissions. This is likely to require some zero carbon and low carbon technologies and it is therefore important that these are built into any proposals from the start.



## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.6.3 PUBLIC ART AND CREATIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

There are numerous ways of ingraining art into Picton Lanes through public realm and highway enhancements. Temporary art, or roving outdoor exhibits (like Cow Parade) could occupy public space. There is scope to incorporate art into the floorscape. One suitable example of this is in the Northern Quarter Manchester where steel 'slabs' have been inlaid to highlight prominent local businesses and cultural endeavours. We can see merit in Derricks Records, City Surf and others being immortalised in this way.

There may be some places where highway regulations could be 'enhanced' in ways which would still allow prosecution but convey the spirit of the area. Canadian Street artist, Roadsworth, has made an international reputation for doing this very thing and work like his could be deployed here to enrich the public realm with quirky additions.

We do not recommend traditional, public sector commissioned, artistic pieces in this area. Instead, the Council and the Welsh Assembly Government need to enable the enrichment of the area with an accumulation of smaller temporary and permanent displays and items.

Instilling a sense of creativity and artistry into even the most mundane objects will be important in engendering an artisan culture. No element should be precluded as a possible source of art or design. Temporary hoardings to development sites, scaffolding, bollards, shop fronts and blank facades are just a few of the possible that could be transformed. With a prevalence of design and art interventions it is hoped that this would become a self-perpetuating theme.





## THE PICTON LANES INITIATIVE - CORE ACTIVITIES

## 4.6.4 ACCOMMODATING THE CAR

Car parking is a very important element of the scheme. Retention of a similar scale of off street parking facility is important to the future success of the area. Any future redevelopment of the Oxford Street car park should make provision for publicly accessible car parking together with appropriate levels of provision for disabled users. Schemes which may come forward on the car parking site also need to make provision for dedicated pedestrian access routes to/from the car park. The location of these routes relative to the street environment on Lower Oxford street and Singleton Street will have a critical impact on footfall levels at a micro level and will need to be carefully planned to avoid adverse impacts on any key active frontages.

At present traffic in the area circulates in search of a parking space. This can be reduced by provision of driver variable messaging signage on availability of spaces at Oxford Street car park. A revised signage strategy will form a part of the Strategic Car Parking Study currently being undertaken by City and County of Swansea Council.

To achieve a safe space for pedestrians on both sides of Plymouth Street will require the loss of the four on street car parking spaces. However the impact of this reduction in car parking should be balanced by the improved activity arising from the streetscape improvements and wider initiatives in the Masterplan.



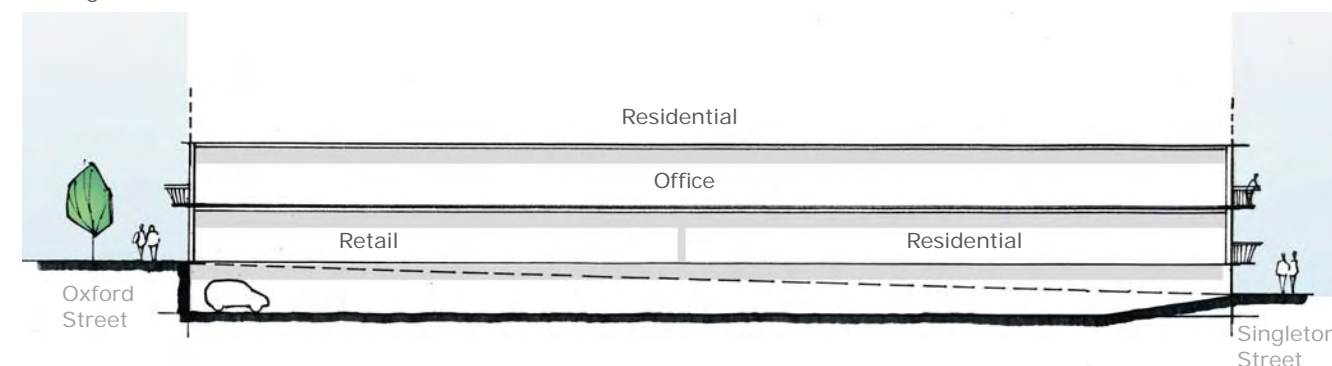
The blank facade of undercroft parking is mitigated with regular entrance points and residential balconies over looking the street

#### Car park provision considerations

- Semi-basement level
- Flexible spaces to accommodated different users through the day
- Car club
- Priority for hybrid/electric vehicles?
- Residents cycle parking



Example of residential development over half a deck of car parking providing natural ventilation as well as surveillance over the street



The existing change of levels across the site allows for parking to be accommodated at half a deck on Singleton street and fully below ground on Oxford Street





## SECTION 05: ACTION PLANS & IMPLEMENTATION

This section sets out an action plan and guidance for the implementation of the proposals

## ACTION PLANS &amp; IMPLEMENTATION

## 5.1 ACTION PLAN OF COORDINATED INITIATIVES

Section 3 established the Vision for Picton Lanes and Section 4 established four themes of regeneration activity that will turn the vision into reality. This section assembles into chronological order the tasks that are required to implement each theme of regeneration activity.

The regeneration themes are:

MIXED USE  
DEVELOPMENT

REVITALISING THE  
PUBLIC REALM

ENHANCING  
EXISTING  
BUILDINGS

PLACE  
MANAGEMENT AND  
PROMOTION

An action plan has been created for each of the above themes.

These action plans set out how the Picton Lanes Initiative should be implemented over a ten year period. The action plans for each theme highlight that the majority of the major intervention is concentrated into the first five years of the Initiative. For Picton Lanes to succeed beyond this many of the Place Management and Promotion activities will need to be ongoing.

Care has been taken to ensure that the action plans have not been prepared in isolation from one another, but inform each other to create a sensible delivery plan.

## Regeneration Objectives

The objectives are set out in Section 3.4 and summarised here:

1. Make the area a **recognisable district** of Swansea City Centre by creating and maintaining a defined **identity**
2. **Increase** the amount of **footfall** in the area
3. Encourage new **independent traders** to this part of Swansea and support those that are already in business
4. Incorporate **new public space**
5. Create **safe and accessible streets** for all users
6. Promote **cultural, art and creative industries**
7. Accommodate a **mix of uses** that will extend activity throughout the day and into the evening
8. Apply the principles of **sustainable design**, low carbon lifestyles, adapting climate change and local economic development throughout the Picton Lane Initiative
  - Refer to Section 3.4



5.2 ACTION PLAN : THEME 1: MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

	Project Title	Project Description	Objectives Met	Essential, Important or Desirable?	Project Champion	Cost (where applicable)	Phasing (years)
THEME 1: MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT							
a	Shoppers Walk	Complete a survey of how the structure can be shortened and improved	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	I	C&CS		1
b	Car Park Development Brief	Compile a development brief for the car park site	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	E	C&CS/WAG		1
c	Site Acquisition	Commence the process of site assembly	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	E	C&CS		1-2
d	Car Park Site Marketing	Market the car park to potential developer / operators	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	E			2-3
e	Picton Lanes Management Plan	Incorporate successful developer into Project Group to create a longer term Management Plan for the ongoing stewardship of the area.	1,3,6,7	D	Developer/C&CS		3 - ongoing
f	Mixed Use Development	Develop the car park site for mixed use development and new public spaces	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	E	Developer		3-5
g	Pool Sanctuary Access	Consider more effective management to limit access to the rear of the Pool Sanctuary building by encouraging the relocation of the taxi office	5	D	C&CS		1-3
h	Pool Sanctuary Development Brief	Compile a brief to guide the future of this building by exploring future design options	1,2,3,7,8	I	WAG		4-6
<p>Implementation notes:</p> <p>The preparatory work for the main mixed use development of the existing car park site will take at least two years for the Council to acquire additional land, market the site and sell it with a robust development brief for a developer to be on site following the completion of improvements to Plymouth Street, Picton Arcade and Oxford Street. Achieving high quality design and an effective long term management plan for the area will be critical goals that need to be attained for the development to complete the metamorphosis of this part of Swansea.</p> <p>We recognise that the C&amp;CoSC and Welsh Assembly Government may require this development to be brought forward sooner than this. If this is the case it is possible to undertake the development in phases. The details for how this might be achieved are outlined on p.82 and this would be appropriate provided it does not compromise the principles of the overall design.</p> <p>Another option that the C&amp;CoSC and WAG may wish to consider is to run the process outlined in the action plan simultaneously. The first part of this will require C&amp;CoSC to prepare and finalise a Development Brief. At this stage C&amp;CoSC will be able to approach the market and carry out developer selection on the basis of the agreed Development Brief. The second part will require the preferred developer to take on the negotiations with the other adjacent land interests, supported by the threat of Council's Compulsory Purchase powers. Whilst there is a danger that the process will inflate expectations of values from noncompliant land owners, it is not expected that this is a significant risk since there are a relatively small number of interests to deal with.</p> <p>The developer would be expected to submit a detailed planning application and would be in a position to do this within two years at the latest, and potentially much sooner if interests are acquired through negotiation. An additional benefit of this simultaneous process is that the preferred developer is brought in at an early stage to assist with the process of creating the main development site.</p>							

## 5.3 ACTION PLAN : THEME 2: REVITALISING THE PUBLIC REALM

	Project Title	Project Description	Objectives Addressed	Essential, Important or Desirable?	Project Champion	Cost (where applicable)	Phasing (years)
THEME 2: REVITALISING THE PUBLIC REALM							
a	<i>Review of street clutter</i>	Audit all street clutter to inform future detailed design	5	I	C&CoSC		1
b	<i>Plymouth Street Enhancement</i>	Detailed design for new shared space on Plymouth Street and implement following completion of bus station	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	E	C&CoSC	External works including Plymouth Street, Singleton Street, Oxford Street excluding new build area £938,500	1-2
c	<i>Oxford Street Enhancement</i>	Detailed design and implementation for the public realm along Oxford Street and create Arcade Square	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	E	C&CoSC		2
d	<i>Singleton Street Enhancement</i>	Detailed design and implementation for the public realm along Singleton Street / Nelson Street. Should consider the relationship and phasing in relation to future Theatre Square	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	E	C&CoSC		2
e	<i>Dillwyn Street / West Way Review</i>	Feasibility study to consider potential alterations to Dillwyn Street to promote greater pedestrian permeability and enhanced traffic management	5	D	C&CoSC		5
<p><i>Implementation Notes:</i></p> <p>The strategy for phasing Theme 2 starts with a detailed audit of street clutter to identify what is essential and what is superfluous to detailed design.</p> <p>Strategically, Plymouth Street is the most important, so commencing enhancement here is important. This is an opportunity use Plymouth Street as a “pilot project” which will help to establish momentum and build upon a local appetite for change.</p> <p>Oxford Street should follow on from Plymouth Street as it is not subject to the same level of change as Singleton Street which should be implemented last, once greater clarity has emerged from Theme 1: Mixed Use Development. The process of stakeholder review (already commenced) has proved that there is consensus on the initial sketch designs. Maintaining the continuity of this vision with these groups and other partners will be the key ingredient to successful implementation of Theme 2. All parties involved in this process must be clear about the wider aims of the Picton Lanes initiative and be willing to recognise how these street enhancements are contributing to the delivery of this vision.</p>							



### 5.4 ACTION PLAN : THEME 3: ENHANCING EXISTING BUILDINGS

	Project Title	Project Description	Objectives	Essential, Important or Desirable?	Project Champion	Cost (where applicable)	Phasing
<b>THEME 3: ENHANCING EXISTING BUILDINGS</b>							
<i>a</i>	<i>Reinventing building façades pilot project</i>	Pilot project to include Toni and Guy, Picton Arcade (and adjacent buildings including Derricks Records), Plymouth Street and Milkwood Jam. To include consultation, design and longer term funding procurement	1,2,3,6,7,8	E	C&CoSC/WAG	Plymouth Street £1,189,350 Milkwood Jam £162,750	1-2
<i>b</i>	<i>Picton Arcade Canopy &amp; Adjacent Building Enhancements</i>	Incorporate canopy as part of the above project (and street enhancements)	1,2,3	E	C&CoSC/WAG	Picton Arcade £499,750 Oxford Street Buildings £1,141,300	2-3
<i>c</i>	<i>Ongoing Building Enhancements</i>	Enhance the remaining building facades in the study area using experience from pilot projects	1,2,3,6,7,8	I	C&CoSC/WAG	Sin City £305,100 Shoppers Walk £443,050	3-5
<p><i>Implementation notes:</i></p> <p>The approach to implement Theme 3 is based around the concept of pilot projects.</p> <p>The following have been selected as pilot projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony &amp; Guy - is located at a prominent location and will have a big impact on the area</li> <li>• Plymouth Street - work of a high standard is already underway here. It is a strategically important street. Lessons from this street can be applied to later traditional Victorian/Edwardian shopfronts.</li> <li>• Milkwood Jam - a key corner building in a strategic location. This building needs to be addressed in the context of the above schemes because it is prominent. It will also help owners of late-20th Century building to recognise that an imaginative approach can make a huge impact.</li> <li>• Picton Arcade and adjacent units - Addressing Picton Arcade and adjacent units is important due to the appetite from key building owners for change (as a result of stakeholder workshops). This appetite with willing collaborators must be capitalised. This elevation is one of the worst in the area. Upgrading this facade to a high standard will encourage other owners to be innovative and more importantly stimulate investment and interest in the wider Initiative area.</li> </ul> <p>The phasing of Plymouth Street taking slight priority over Oxford Street is consistent with the Action Plan for Theme 2: Revitalising the Public Realm.</p> <p>The above projects will establish how a number of different approaches to building enhancement can be achieved. These should be used as a model to inspire and implement other property owners to contribute to the Initiative.</p>							

## 5.5 ACTION PLAN : THEME 4: PLACE MARKETING AND PROMOTION

	Project Title	Project Description	Objectives Addressed	Essential, Important or Desirable?	Project Champion	Cost (where applicable)	Phasing (years)
<b>THEME 4: PLACE MARKETING &amp; PROMOTION</b>							
<i>a</i>	<i>Picton Lanes Initiative Project Group</i>	Broaden steering group to incorporate traders and other user groups alongside other political, professional, design representatives.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,	E	C&CoSC		1
<i>b</i>	<i>Precedent Areas Research</i>	Arrange a study tour with the Project Group to visit precedent areas of other Cities	1	D	WAG		1
<i>c</i>	<i>Picton Lanes Annual Events Programme</i>	Immediate creation and implementation of broad annual events programme	2,3,6	E	BID		1-3
<i>d</i>	<i>Arcade Management Plan</i>	Work with owners of each Arcade to ensure their management plans contribute to the wider Vision.	1,3,7	E	Owners		1-3
<i>e</i>	<i>Communications Plan</i>	Explain to businesses, public and investors the aims and progress of the Initiative using a website, blog and traditional newsletter.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	E	BID/C&CoSC		1-7
<i>f</i>	<i>Branding Strategy</i>	Appoint suitable advisors to create a brand for Picton Lanes which should be used on all marketing, correspondence and web material	1,3,6	E	BID/C&CoSC		1
<i>g</i>	<i>Temporary Artworks</i>	Implement creative ways of encouraging temporary artworks. Utilising vacant shops, street markings, coloured scaffolding, site hoardings are all recommended	1, 6	I	BID/C&CoSC		1-3
<i>h</i>	<i>City Centre Car Club</i>	Encourage Car Club to set up on the existing car park and to be subsumed into future development site	1,8	D	BID/C&CoSC		1-7
<p><i>Implementation notes:</i></p> <p>Physical alterations to places require a huge effort and long term commitment. Much can be achieved far more quickly with the adoption of these projects which create the right environment for the other projects to flourish. It cannot be overstated how important it is that all stakeholders have continuity of Vision. For this to be achieved structures need to be in place which ensure that the Initiative remains focussed.</p> <p>Importantly, these projects can help to make it clear that the area is moving in a new direction long before scaffolding or heavy equipment is required. The projects in this theme will commence the Picton Lanes Initiative and will continue to promote it long after the infrastructure projects have been completed.</p>							



5.6 PHASING THE INITIATIVE

Early intervention in the Lower Oxford Street area is essential. Since we started this commission at least two businesses in the Lower Oxford Street have ceased trading. One of these, Barkers, was a long standing name and therefore a significant loss to the area. As one would expect, **businesses are finding trading conditions challenging and there is a risk that without an immediate commencement of the Picton Lanes Initiative that the trading structure will suffer further losses.**

In this context, the major interventions which will have the biggest impact will naturally take time to prepare and this may be too long for some and more closures may occur. It is clear, however, that The City and County of Swansea, the Welsh Assembly Government and the local stakeholders cannot afford to wait for these large interventions to take place before implementing parts of the Initiative.

The purpose of this initiative is for the public sector to invest in the area and in so doing give confidence to the private sector that this is a place where things are happening. The action plans (5.2 to 5.5) sets out a structure for how this should take place.

The phasing plan needs acknowledge the impact of other developments nearby. The redevelopment of the Bus Station will commence in June 2009 and will result in bus services being operated from Oxford Street for fifteen months until October 2010. For this reason, implementing the public realm works on site should commence *after* this initial disruption is over.

The projects that can have an almost immediate impact will include: an annual events programme, branding strategy and small scale artworks. These projects should

be commenced as a matter of priority. In the meantime communicating the longer term ambition of the Initiative to stakeholders, potential investors and shoppers will help to stimulate optimism in the area. This will be especially important to help traders live with the disruption. Incorporating artworks into temporary features like site hoardings, shop banners, and scaffolding will have a positive temporary impact.

The first wave of major physical works should include the building enhancements on Plymouth Street (to include Toni & Guy and Milkwood Jam). This should set the scene for a similar scale of investment in the elevation of Picton Arcade, Derricks Records, Rowberry's etc.

The action plan sets out broadly how the street enhancements should be phased to follow the completion of the bus station. All of these should be let as a single contract.

The adjacent table indicates the phasing of each of the projects in the action plan showing how a sequence of project start dates fits within the ten year programme.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Theme 1										
a										
b										
c										
d										
e										
f										
g										
h										
i										
j										
Theme 2										
a										
b										
c										
d										
e										
Theme 3										
a										
b										
c										
Theme 4										
a										
b										
c										
d										
e										
f										
g										
h										

The implementation of the Picton Lanes mixed use development could potentially be built out over a number of phases with initial development taking place to front Oxford Street and the remainder of the development and the public spaces to follow. The following sequence of plans indicates how this might occur.

#### The sequence of new development...

##### Phase 1



Lower Oxford Street

##### Phase 2



West Way/Singleton Street phase 1

##### Phase 3



New public space

##### Phase 4



Singleton Street phase 2

An illustration showing how the new development could be phased

## 5.7 DELIVERING LEADERSHIP, ENABLMENT AND SUPPORT

**The public sector is in a very strong position to positively influence the direction of the study area.**

The City and Council of Swansea owns the most important structures – theatre, arcades and adjacent bus station. It also owns the vacant development site which represents a significant proportion of the study area. Other ownerships are fragmented making the council a leading stakeholder. This puts the council in a position to pursue a development and renewal strategy which will benefit the area in ways which are complementary to the overarching vision for the city centre as a whole. As part of that wider vision for the centre there is a series of defined sectors which are to perform different roles. The challenge is to first determine the configuration of features which will best enable the study area to fulfil the role assigned to it. Secondly a strategy needs to be agreed that will realise those features. Thirdly, there will be a need to put in place the mechanisms and devices that will facilitate the delivery of the strategy.

The development of the car park site is a project of sufficient scale to merit its own governance arrangements. However, this must be considered as one element amongst a range of supporting initiatives which can lead to a balanced incremental improvement of the study area. These other elements may have more relevance and significance in the short term, whilst progress on the development site delivers benefits in the medium to long term.

Responsibility for certain supporting elements of the strategy will fall naturally to existing structures:-

- Building enhancement - standard Town Improvement Grant approach
- Identity – council regeneration

- Events – BID / CCP
- Joint promotion/advertising initiatives – BID
- Street market – CCP

How more innovative pilot initiatives around utilising empty retail space, “pop-up” shops, test trading etc can be best be developed requires a considered approach which must begin with a better understanding of what might be achieved, and the arrangement and capacity of the organisations already active in the study area.



## 5.8 CREATING A BROAD PROJECT STEERING GROUP

The consultations undertaken during this study have generated interest and support for the proposals set out in this report.

It is important that this enthusiasm and momentum is not lost in the period leading up to and during the implementation of the initiative. We would therefore advocate establishing a project group that will provide a mechanism for continued communication and involvement between parties who will be key to ensuring that the initiative is taken forward with the spirit outlined in this report.

The project group needs to be led by a project champion who will drive the project forward and coordinate the project group to ensure that the principles of the initiative are followed through and the objectives are maintained. The role of the project champion would include:

- Ensuring regular communication between the parties involved in the initiative
- Providing a key point of contact for concerns and enquiries
- Coordinating the implementation of the project with other city centre works, particularly the Bus Station and Quadrant/ St David's centre redevelopment
- Ensuring temporary works (such as art installations and temporary uses) take place during implementation to maintain interest in the area
- Encourage take up of initiatives such as shopfront improvements and building enhancements
- Undertaking wider consultation at appropriate stages

The project steering group must have broad representation from key stakeholders and decision makers who should share a commitment to a common vision for the area. The mix of representation will be important in achieving a balanced approach. The group should include councillors, trader representatives (BID representatives) and senior local authority officers. An independent perspective could be provided through retention of professional advice which would also help to promote design quality and ensure that the essence of the Picton Lanes Initiative is maintained.

Clear terms of reference should be established for this group to confirm what representation is sought, how it is to be facilitated and chaired, the limits of its powers and how it relates to those charged with delivering the individual project elements.

The delivery of the strong sense of character and alternative feel for this area will be dependent on all those involved in the process, including the local authority planners; those who are aware of the plans and committed to delivering them. In some areas, such as the design of 'quirky' shopfronts, assurance may be needed to provide confidence that proposals are deliverable and appropriate. In such cases it would be of great benefit to look at case studies of where similar things have been achieved elsewhere such as those areas introduced as precedents in this report.

A programme of wider consultation will be important but it will be crucial to involve the right people at the right time. Widespread consultation should only be conducted on elements of the initiative when there is a level of confidence in delivery to avoid raising false expectations.

## 5.9 DELIVERING 'PLACE MANAGEMENT'

In this instance there is an alternative to the traditional shopping centre management approach that would be worth considering. It may be desirable to approach the whole study area as a single entity ensuring that standards for cleansing, security, maintenance and waste management are universally applied. The fact that the BID and CCP are not only active but also based in the area reinforces this opportunity. The financial mechanism would rely on the established service charge approach, supplemented by the funding generated through the BID levy.

It needn't be a case of either or; a combination of the traditional approach and new innovation could address any investors concerns and deliver an integrated management regime for a study area where there have been problems of consistent management to date.

## 5.10 COST APPRAISAL

### Car Park Mixed Use Development

The nature of the funding issues in the private sector are well documented and finance for development of any sort is scarce at the current time. However Housing Associations and public sector government organisations appear to have fewer concerns about attracting finance and this may be a real alternative to the traditional reliance on the private sector. A longer term view of the development and its viability is essential because it is currently doubtful if any form of development would be viable.

In the current economic climate, faced with a lack of private sector funding for property, especially speculative funding and residential, would indicate that the car park scheme would not be viable. We have set up a viability appraisal and have considered ways to mitigate the down side in respect of viability, including: -

- Selling the car park rather than retaining it within the Council for income, provided that it was still open for retail use during the day and theatre use during the evening.
- Larger retail units will attract stronger regional covenants with better rents and yields but this goes against the general regeneration concept and potentially competes with the proposed nearby Hammerson scheme.
- Build costs have been at high levels over the last year or so and with a lack of demand costs appear to at least stable and perhaps might come down in the future. There might be convergence funding available to off set some of the cost issues.

SECTION

05

ACTION PLANS & IMPLEMENTATION







## **SECTION 06:** CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The part of Swansea within which this study is focussed is a currently a unique shopping location that has the potential to be a more distinctive and vibrant district of the City Centre.

While the prevailing economic climate might currently preclude a privately funded comprehensive development scheme for the Lower Oxford Street project area, there are a number of public/private sector initiatives which deserve support and merit implementation. Many of these might be regarded as the softer side of economic regeneration: raising the idiosyncratic nature of the study area by promoting its 'quirkiness', to differentiate it from the rest of the City Centre core area (e.g. through public arts initiatives, event management, and encouraging property owners to invest in the fabric of the area).

The study area is likely to face considerable disruption as a result of the nearby Bus Station development. The Picton Lanes Initiative must be regarded, certainly in the short term, as a way of compensating the area for the disruption it will face making sure that the area's special character and integrity is maintained to ensure its survival. Following the completion of the new bus station the Picton Lanes Initiative is a means by which this part of Swansea can continue to grow and build its reputation as a vital part of the City and one which, like the precedents on pages 32 and 33 will become known nationally. If the City and County of Swansea Council and the Welsh Assembly Government are earnest about securing the future of the area it is vital that the Picton Lanes Initiative is progressed rigorously through to implementation.

Irrespective of when the potential redevelopment of the car park takes place, the public sector has an obligation to work with local traders and the Business Improvement District (BID) to deliver the stewardship that is

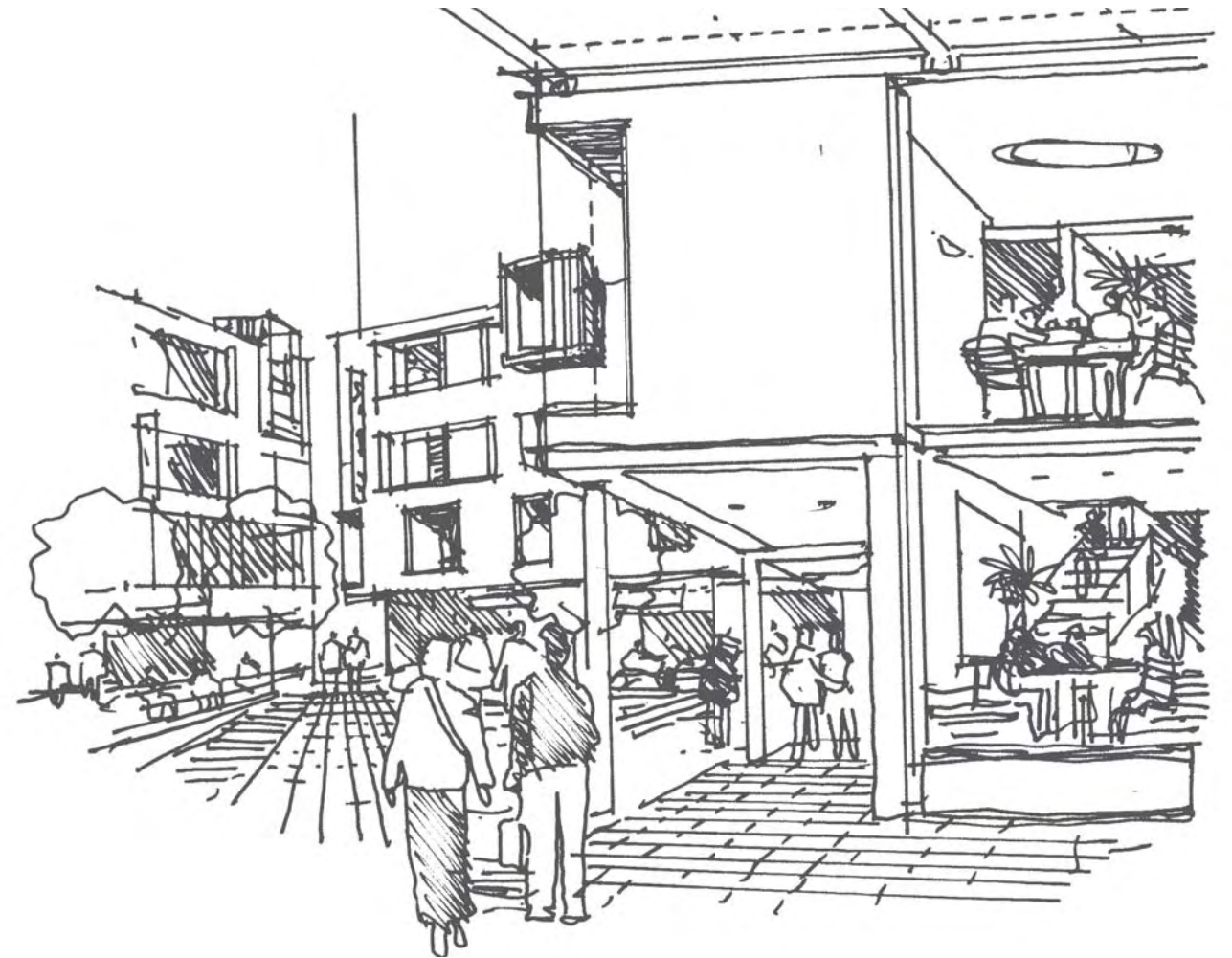
necessary to secure the area's future. A political commitment must be put in place as soon as possible to underwrite the area, particularly in these times of economic uncertainty.

The planned implementation of public realm enhancements will be one mechanism for demonstrating that commitment, along with support for property owners who may need persuading and encouragement to invest in the fabric of their own buildings.

Last but not least, the Picton Lanes Initiative should never be sold as a 'quick fix': on the contrary the initiative must be regarded as a 10-15 year programme of focussed stewardship. It will be totally unrealistic to think that the area will be turned around overnight by any one set of initiatives. Success will rely upon a "nurturing" approach, working through a series of confidence building, finite, pilot projects that can create a sustainable impact, and which, incrementally can build to make the Picton Lanes a destination in its own right, a place of memories that will encourage shoppers, tourists, party goers and theatre buffs to spend time, spend money and return again and again.

- Develop car park site (and adjacent land) for mixed use development incorporating new public space. Complete a detailed project appraisal to determine key milestones, workstreams and timescales. There is much to be done to prepare this site for development.
- Prepare detailed designs for public realm enhancements based on a full appraisal of constraints (services, site levels etc)
- Obtain agreement and funding for initial building enhancement pilot projects. Once this is in place put together urban designers/architects, owners/tenants and an artist to develop costed elevation enhancement plans that will add a quirky edge to the area
- Agree Picton Lanes as a priority area within the City Centre Strategic Framework
- Assemble a broader steering group to include key stakeholders and an in-house artist
- Maintain regular 'Project Briefings' based on those which have contributed so much to the findings of this study. These will help to build consensus and erode traditional 'single issue' perspectives
- Work with the BID and the CCP to fund and organise an annual events programme for Picton Lanes
- Develop the Picton Lanes brand and embed this into a broader communications plan





## APPENDIX

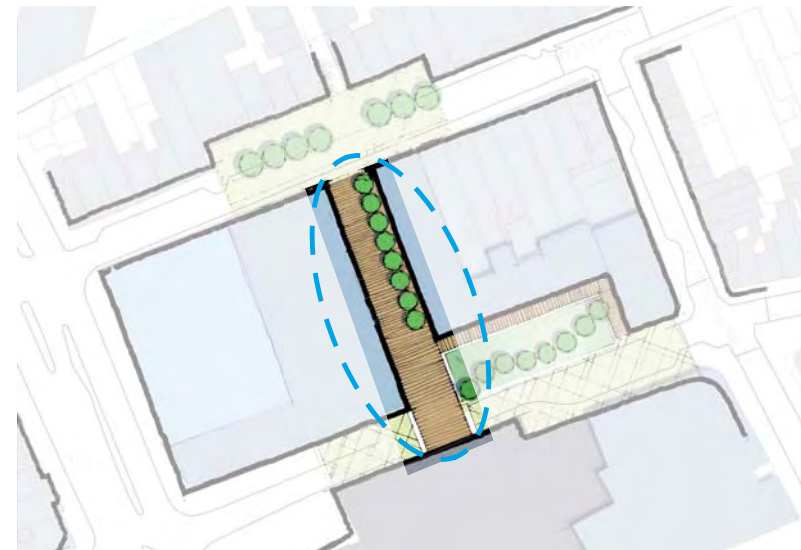
Supporting documents are provided separately

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

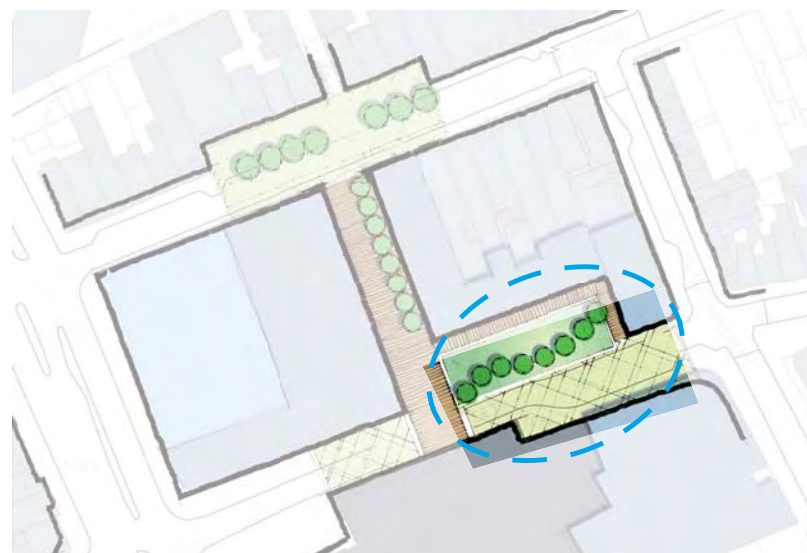
#### Development Options

During the design period a number of variations for the layout of development were explored. The various options were assessed against wider aims for the study area and the objectives set out in Section 3.2. The following sketches illustrate some of the design iterations considered. Some of the elements from the design iterations were taken forward into the development proposal presented in Section 4.2.



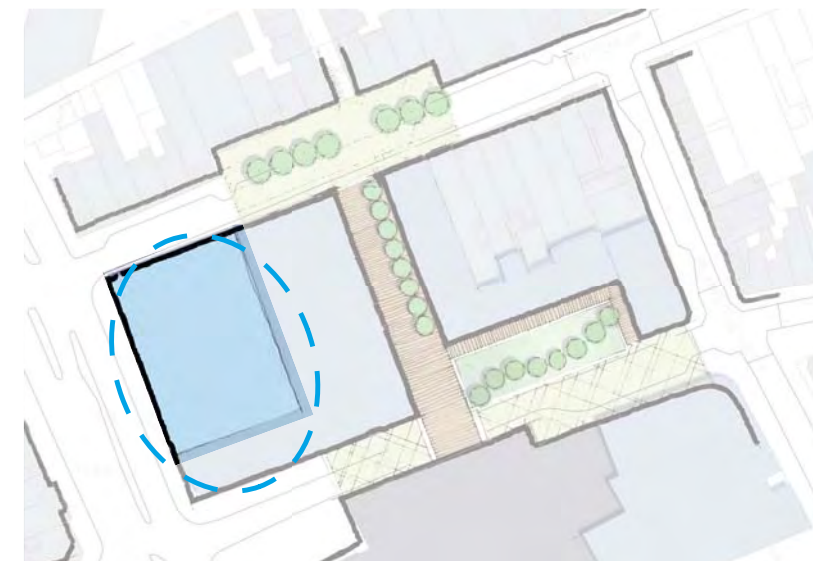
#### New open street

- Loss of Shoppers Walk and disruption caused
- Too wide



#### Singleton street space

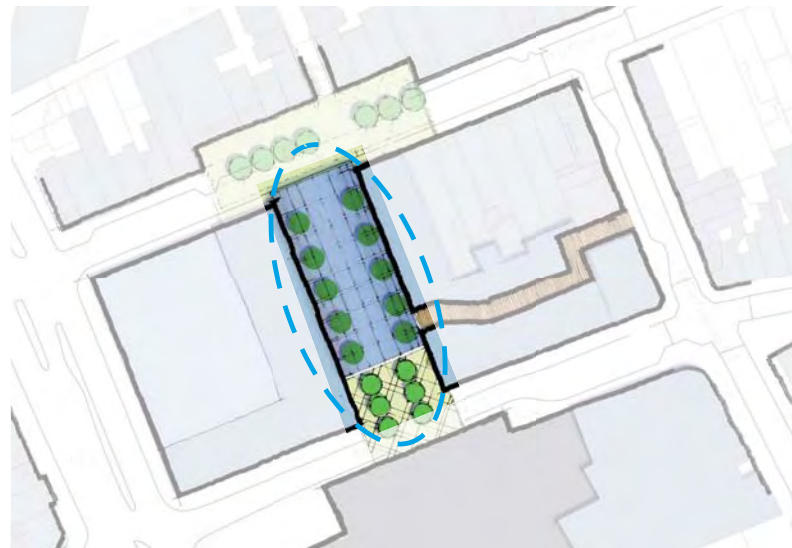
- Space does not link to the theatre
- Does not strengthen the street scene
- Too large



#### Supermarket/large store

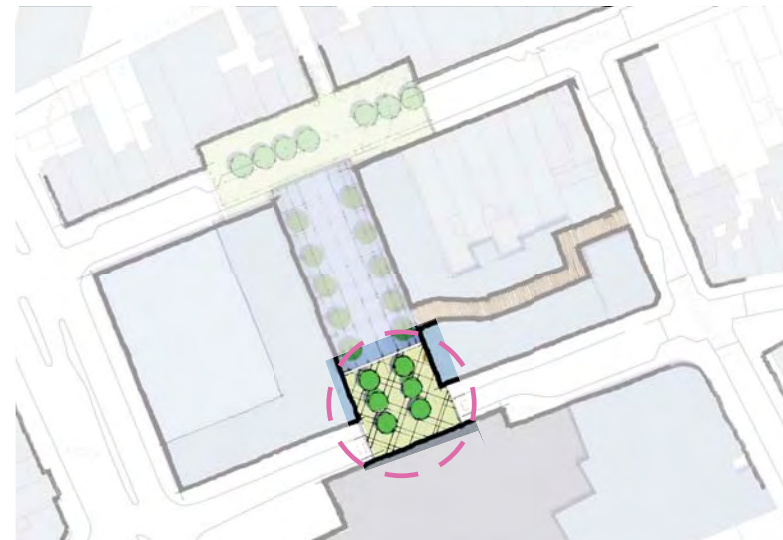
- Reduces provision for further independent retailers
- Will create 'dead' frontages





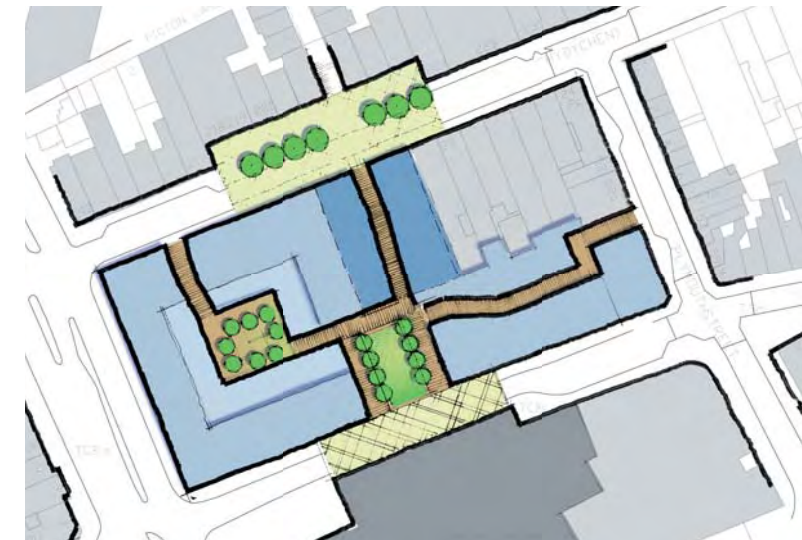
#### Destination building

- Lack of clearly defined space
- Expensive to deliver
- Loss of Shoppers Walk



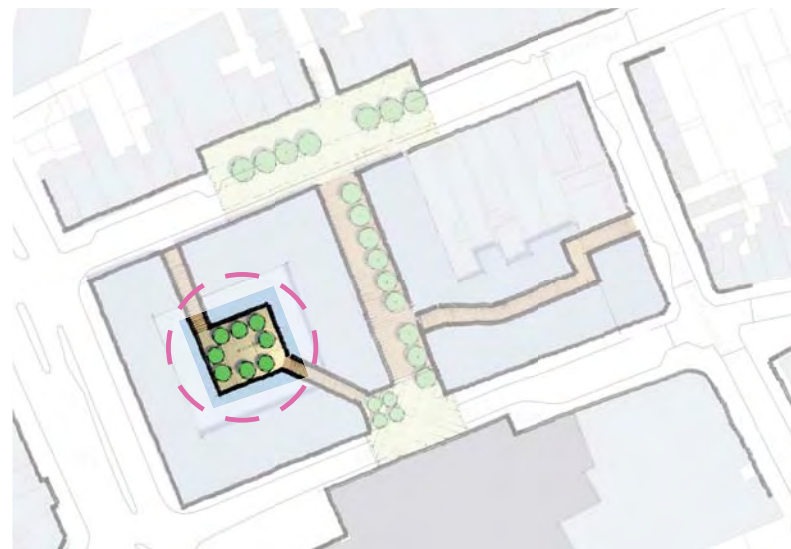
#### Theatre Space

- Addresses key building
- Can be linked with activity from the theatre
- Will help to draw people into the area



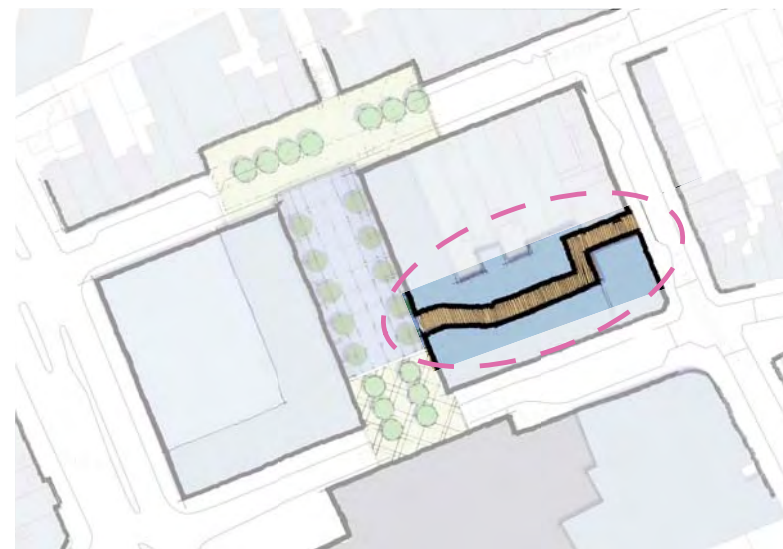
#### Preferred Option

- Retains northern portion of Shoppers Walk
- Shopping lane created
- Theatre Square centralised on Theatre facade
- Secondary Square



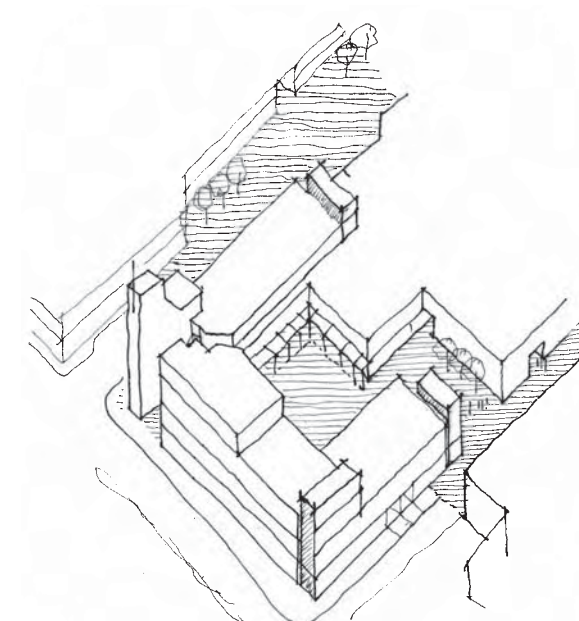
#### Second square

- Series of tight characterful spaces
- Units facing on to public spaces



#### Shopping Lane

- Allows for smaller units
- In keeping with desired character



#### 3D Massing design development