

CHELMSFORD TOWN CENTRE

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

Guidance for improving spaces

Supplementary Planning Document

CHELMSFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK 2001-2021



Adopted January 2011

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Preface

Preface

In a busy town centre like Chelmsford the quality of public spaces is important for attracting investment and maintaining a safe, convenient and enjoyable daily experience for residents, traders and visitors. Chelmsford has attractive and well-loved streets, parks and riversides - this strategy seeks to build on its strengths.

Improvement of the public realm relies on opportunism – optimising the benefit of funding opportunities, planning obligations in major development schemes and coordinating action to achieve long term quality.

The public realm is the stage for public life. It is ‘owned’ by all; however the decisions affecting its design and management are made by a few agencies with specific terms of remit. This document is aimed primarily at those agencies that can help make the most of the valued qualities of public space in Chelmsford.

The envisaged outcome of a strategic approach to public realm will be superb outdoor space enhancing the special character of Chelmsford, attracting businesses and visitors, as well as generating a feeling of belonging and a sense of pride amongst Borough residents; a network of routes and spaces providing the context for enriched public life: travel, play, celebration, socialising, and trade.

Both Chelmsford Borough Council and Essex County Council will pursue regeneration and improvement to support strategic growth through the Chelmsford Tomorrow Local Delivery Mechanism.

The Chelmsford Town Centre Public Realm Strategy supports the Chelmsford Local Development Framework and is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Adopted 25 January 2011

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PART I Public space as the focus for a successful town centre**Introduction**

1.1 The town centre of Chelmsford is changing as it supports substantial growth in homes and jobs through new development and transport initiatives. Chelmsford has a major opportunity to strengthen its attractiveness through the quality of its public realm – its streets, squares, rivers and parks - to enhance the sense of place, to act as a catalyst for investment and to complement development.

1.2 Public realm is the accessible space between buildings; streets, squares and parks; footpaths, bridges, courtyards and forecourts; rivers, the canal and water sides.

1.3 The Public Realm Strategy identifies opportunities for when funding arises, including from development schemes, to improve public realm quality. A strategy for the public realm helps drive improvements and enhances the image and standing of the town centre, clearly defining character in different parts of the town centre, encouraging people to use spaces, helping movement through the town, and ensuring an accessible and inclusive environment.

1.4 The key functions of public spaces are:

- Movement - spaces that contain routes and movement flows
- Trade - places that provide business interaction, markets, shopping and entertainment
- Recreation – where people rest, people-watch, listen, play, be entertained
- Meeting - where people gather, meet, interact and socialise
- Mitigate climate change - parks and green spaces contribute to the ecological network and facilitate natural drainage, restrain flood water, lower surface temperature

1.5 Visually, one gets to know a place through its buildings and streets, shop displays and signs. Places with an over dominance of signs and clutter, blank walls and lack of enclosure often give a negative experience. The day-to-day experience of public space is fundamental to its enjoyment and reflects on the image of the town. A good indication of a successful space is where people are present and are spending time. Health and wellbeing is influenced by public space – the diversity and richness of outdoor activity, the availability of recreational and social opportunities, the feeling of being safe are all key to the success of a space.

Economic and social value of a good public realm

1.6 High quality public realm generates positive economic and social impacts: quality of life, social and community identity, and the cultural life of the town centre. The biggest driver for public realm improvements is to boost economic prosperity.

- Making a place welcome and accessible to a diverse range of visitors contributes to the economic vitality of a place (Demos 2005)
- “... as towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investment, the presence of good parks, squares, gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool ...” (1)

1 "The Value of Public Space: How Quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value", CABI Space 2004.

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- Visitors are very sensitive to the attractiveness of a place and will be put off by a poor quality, dirty and untidy environment. 85% of business sector respondents to a Central London Partnership survey identified the quality of streetscape as 'important' in the ability to attract customers or tenants
- Town centre shoppers visiting on foot spend on average £91 a week, where shoppers arriving by car spend an average £64 (Town Centres Survey 2003/04).
- Good urban design adds value of 4.9% (£25 per square metre) to retail units, and good residential and urban design adds 5.2 percent to the value of residential properties (CABE research).

Responsibilities for creating and managing the public realm

1.7 The public realm is managed on behalf of the general public by the following owners and agencies who will jointly own and implement the strategy:

- **Chelmsford Borough Council (CBC)** - is responsible for all public green space in the town centre and maintains parks, trees and planting including Chelmsford Diocese's space around the Cathedral. **Local Planning Authority** - steers development through the development plan, guides conservation and urban design; determines planning applications and legal agreements for high quality public realm. **CBC cultural events** - responsible for vibrant cultural activity in public spaces. **Town centre management** - oversight of business activity in partnership with retailers. **Street care** - such as street cleansing, street trading, and environmental health management of day-to-day use of spaces.
- **Essex County Council (ECC)** - as Local Highway and Transportation Authority, has adopted most streets and hard spaces in the town centre; manages transport policy; traffic management and related construction; programmed and routine maintenance.
- **Land owners** - include Network Rail, Essex County Council, Chelmsford Diocese, the Meadows and High Chelmer shopping centres. Public car parks/green spaces are mainly owned by Chelmsford Borough Council. Anglia Ruskin University owns Rivermead; Essex County Cricket Club owns land next to Central Park. Many private owners have control over public squares and shop forecourts, such as at Grays Yard and Broomfield Road.
- **Environment Agency** - responsible for rivers, and Essex Waterways for the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation.
- **Utility companies** - can dig trenches and build structures for energy, water and telecoms but are bound by policy and practice to reinstate surfaces safely and neatly.
- **Partnership bodies** - prioritise and coordinate long term financing and delivery of infrastructure.

Public realm investment

1.8 The High Street was pedestrianised in the early 1990s, and Baddow Road was enhanced in 1997-98. The construction of the Meadows centre created Backnang Square and revealed the riverside in the town. Over the last fifteen years increasing amounts of river edge have been opened up enabling new routes with building frontage. These changes raised the quality of the public realm.

1.9 New developments including the Rivermead university campus, the bus station and Bond Street have improved routes and the quality of spaces. Forthcoming developments at Marconi works, Central Campus and Chelmer Waterside will generate new active public spaces. Current local authority investment includes the Moulsham Street improvement scheme which will raise the quality of the public realm and improve public usability.

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1.10 The town centre has lacked an overarching strategy for public realm, which has in part led to an incremental approach. The Public Realm Strategy seeks to build on, add to and improve what has already been achieved in a coordinated way.

Spatial characteristics of the town centre

Figure 1 shows all public space - paths, squares, roads and green spaces - in the town centre. It also shows the eight character areas defined in the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan.

Figure 1 Areas of town centre public realm



1.11 The spatial structure of the town is generated by the following:

- The two rivers Can and Chelmer converging and the flood plain defining green open spaces at Central Park, Kings Meadow and Chelmer Riverside
- The 'y' shaped layout of historic spine streets enclosing principal routes into the centre: Moulsham Street and the distinctively curved High Street, Duke Street and New Street meeting High Street at Tindal Square
- The radial roads entering the town: Broomfield Road, Springfield Road, New London Road

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- The Cathedral precinct creating a green haven defined by historic and modern buildings
- Parkway ring road forming a perceptual boundary to south and west of the centre and the railway viaduct forming a perceptual boundary at the west

Purpose of the strategy

1.12 The purpose of the strategy is to:

- Form a framework for funding bids, investment and programming of works and the basis for negotiation of planning applications
- Set out priorities and guidance for the design-led improvement of public spaces
- Coordinate the design of streets and spaces
- Provide the basis for best practice standards for client and contractor organisations with influence over public spaces
- Help to promote community cohesion and encourage the successful use of spaces

1.13 The strategy strives for public realm that is easily accessible, safe, well-used, encourages a sense of belonging and local community identity, that conserves and enhances character, stimulates investment and development, and is high quality and good-looking.

Policy context

1.14 *Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan (CTCAAP)*, August 2008 - the statutory planning framework for the town centre covering transport, development and public spaces. The public realm section of the CTCAAP underlies this document.

1.15 *Essex Local Transport Plan 2006-11*, Essex County Council - sets the programme for transport and highways investment over a five year period.

1.16 *Corporate Plan 2001-11* - sets out the Chelmsford Tomorrow vision for planned change and programmes promoting economic growth, supported by the Local Delivery Mechanism partnership⁽²⁾ generating public and private funds for urban infrastructure.

1.17 *Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies*, February 2008 - the statutory planning framework for the town as a whole to manage strategic development growth alongside planning policies for determining planning applications.

1.18 *Planning Contributions SPD*, April 2009 - sets out the Council's approach to planning obligations at three levels: on-site obligations, community infrastructure and strategic infrastructure.

2 The Chelmsford Tomorrow Local Delivery Mechanism (LDM) is a partnership of authorities and agencies that together are co-ordinating the delivery of key infrastructure required to support Chelmsford's growth and deliver the Chelmsford Tomorrow vision, which is for Chelmsford to set the standards that other towns aspire to and for the town to become the economic, cultural, leisure and shopping capital of Essex and a leading regional centre in the East of England.

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Objectives

Objectives from Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan

1.19 This strategy builds on the public realm objectives of the CTCAAP:

- Enhance the visibility of the green network and watercourses through the town centre emphasising the links with the countryside
- Maximise the potential of riverside green spaces as public parkland for recreation, tourism and routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- Create a network of enhanced existing and new public spaces
- Enable a walkable town centre
- Enhance mobility, safety, appearance and cleanliness of streets and spaces
- Protect the town centre's natural and built heritage

Practical outcomes of the Public Realm Strategy

1.20 Application of the Public Realm Strategy will:

- Focus improvement action on nine broad areas and specific projects
- Prioritise space improvements based on condition, regeneration impact and connection with other improvement programmes
- Complement planned transport and highways works for the town centre, including maintenance (3)
- Complement Chelmsford Borough Council's other existing strategies (see Appendix I)
- Complement new development
- Aid negotiation / basis of planning applications, funding bids and assist attracting investment in the town centre

The strategy

1.21 The strategy can be expressed as follows:

View the public realm of Chelmsford town centre as an important public asset.

Make gradual improvements to the public realm to meet CTCAAP and specific public realm objectives. Take opportunities for improvement as they arise, particularly at the planning application stage, and exploit them to the full.

Ensure all works carried out in streets and parks make a contribution to environmental quality and accessibility by coordinating agencies and processes.

Apply a range of firm principles to direct design, regulation, management and future maintenance to benefit public realm quality.

Focus particular attention on nine broad areas in the town centre where there are related public space needs and pursue priorities for improvement at ten key spaces.

3 "Manual for Streets 2" (September 2010), a companion guide to the Department for Transport MfS, focuses on busy streets and looks at how they can be returned to the local community by engineering them to create a better sense of place, provide an environment that is accessible for all and one that improves the quality of life. The Public Realm Strategy helps to bring these principles to the local level.

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Identify specific projects for targeting when a funding opportunity arises and to have objectives and design concepts in place to help with funding bids.

Opportunities for improving the public realm

I.22 The overall aim of this strategy is gradual improvement of the environment of the town centre, as opportunities arise. The funding for public space improvement is scarce and in competition with several other important infrastructure priorities. Any capital investment has a long term revenue cost implication which should be reduced through improved efficiency of use, long term robustness of construction, simplicity and sustainability. The funding sources change from year to year. The principles in this strategy will be pursued by making best uses of the following funding sources:

- Government grants supporting growth strategies – in a borough where housing and employment is addressing population and economic change, with infrastructure support and bidding criteria frequently changing.
- Planning obligations supporting growth – the Borough Council’s SPD on planning obligations sets the criteria for different levels of essential infrastructure.
- Site related planning obligations – all major developments have a direct impact on public realm which need to be reflected in planning permissions and agreements.
- Local Transport Plan – the Transportation and Highway Authority strategy indicates planned network projects.
- External funding sources – grant schemes with specific bidding criteria run by Central Government, statutory authorities (such as English Heritage, Environment Agency), independent foundations.
- Borough Council and County Council capital may be justified if it can attract other funds in support of priorities.
- Landowners – owners of public realm such as Network Rail, High Chelmer Shopping Centre and the University. Plus institutional property owners for whom quality of the public realm has implications for quality of covenants and investment value.
- Local partnerships – traders, property owners, community organisations generating funds through schemes such as Business Improvement Districts.
- Highway maintenance – planned maintenance of streets for repaving.
- Parks maintenance – management and improvement programme for park spaces.
- Street operations and cleansing – care of street furniture and street cleaning.
- Commercial floorspace – where improvement works create rent-generating space to finance the improvement.

Strategic principles

I.23 The town centre-wide principles for public realm design, regulation and management are set out below. All owners of public space and agencies carrying out change in the town centre should meet the following principles, which drive public realm quality. They are set out under four headings – design of routes and spaces; enhancing Chelmsford’s special qualities; creating new public spaces in development; and working with partners.

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A. Design of routes and spaces

Mark gateways into the town centre and create a better sense of arrival

1.24 Key arrival points offer a considerable opportunity to make a good first impression of the town centre. Making paving upgrades, improving visibility of landmarks and tree planting can all reinforce the sense of entering Chelmsford's centre at key gateways:

- Army and Navy
- Rainsford Road
- Broomfield Road
- Springfield Road / High Bridge Road
- Waterhouse Lane / River Can
- New London Road
- Station Square

Figure 2 Main walking routes and gateways



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Improve legibility of routes

1.25 The main routes into and around the town centre, whether walking, cycling or driving should be easily understood - in other words legible - by means of how one 'reads' the streets, buildings, landmarks and features.

1.26 Legibility is further assisted by coordinated street furniture along approach routes and a single way-finding system for orientation and direction to key streets and attractions. A high quality sign system has a role for direction, interpretation and promotion of visitor attractions but needs to be simple and well coordinated.

1.27 There are a number of significant landmarks in the town centre, which give meaning and aid orientation, and highlight key places of interest: the Cathedral, and the Shire Hall which neatly terminates views up the High Street, the Anne Knight building, the Riverside Inn and Stone Bridge.

Establish a series of destinations in and around the centre

1.28 Ensure the key squares and junctions have excellent spatial character and act as destinations in their own right, especially Tindal Square in front of Shire Hall and County Hall which has locational, historic and ceremonial significance but remains a traffic space. In addition the Cathedral, Half Moon Square, New London Road park entrance, ARU Rivermead entrance space, Moulsham Street, riversides, Bond Street and New Street are all destination spaces. For new spaces see C. Creating new public spaces in development.

Create good conditions for walking and cycling

1.29 The town centre provides a permeable network of linked routes with generally good pedestrian access and benefits from a pedestrianised centre providing a vibrant, safe and accessible environment.

1.30 Ensure the pedestrian and cycling network throughout the town centre is easy to follow and not restricted by changes in level, street furniture and poor surfaces. Where vehicle numbers and speeds allow give pedestrians priority in street space shared with vehicles. Provide safe and direct walking routes from car parks. Improve the width and surface of cycle paths where possible and reduce conflict between cycling and walking in busy pedestrian areas.

1.31 Off-road cycling routes through riverside corridors provide an attractive link between the town centre and surroundings. Gaps in the network, where unconnected sections of cycle paths do not constitute a coherent system, need to be completed.

1.32 Parkway and its multiple-lanes hinders pedestrian and cycle movement and severs Moulsham Street and Central Park. Many of Parkway's roadside footways, underpasses and 'left over' landscape spaces are unpleasant for pedestrians.

Create an accessible, inclusive public realm

1.33 Access for all is essential to the quality of the public realm. This includes catering for those with limited mobility (such as through level-access to ease movement) and the visually impaired (such as through contrast and tactile aids to highlight access/danger). Placing inclusive access and inclusive design at early stages of the design process will mean considering access for disabled people with various impairments. However design for special needs can sometimes have a negative impact on streetscape quality, such as over-expansive tactile paving and inconsistent high visibility markings.

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1.34 An inclusive public realm will result from taking opportunities to widen pavements and making walking surfaces even and obstruction-free. Ensure utilities equipment is placed off-street, at the back of pavements or in recesses. Take a consistent approach to visual and tactile aids for sight-impaired people: design-in visibility of columns and posts to avoid applying high visibility markings later; minimise tactile paving within the regulations to avoid confusion and discomfort. Locate shopmobility facilities conveniently. Locate disability parking in convenient locations within suitable parking areas but avoid locating where it interferes with pedestrian safety and convenience.

Reduce street clutter

1.35 Street furniture frequently changes in response to traffic, pedestrian and utilities needs and there is a constant need to remove items that have no further use. The first principle is to minimise the number of installations. Clutter is not only the result of unnecessary street furniture, clutter is mainly a consequence of untidy and obstructive *necessary* street furniture.

1.36 Reduce street clutter by grouping street furniture, minimising the number of sign posts and taking out redundant street furniture whenever possible. When traffic regulations permit, reduce the size of direction, parking and street name signs and place them on building faces where possible. Leave historic items of street furniture in place as small landmarks.

Coordinate paving materials, street furniture and street trees

1.37 The quality of paved surfaces in Chelmsford falls behind the quality expected in a town centre of Chelmsford's status. Roads are marred by white lines and reinstatements. Some footways are paved in a wide mixture of materials, including concrete, asphalt, paving slabs and concrete blocks. There are few surviving historic paving materials in Chelmsford's streets. There is a lack of coordinated street furniture across the town centre and there are some important spaces and paths, such as at Station Square, disrupted by bollards, utility cabinets and other street furniture.

1.38 Surface materials and street furniture need to meet the demands of the town centre, but be minimal and simple. Through the choice of materials for individual schemes, a consistency of character can develop over a period of years. Attention to detail in design, specification and construction is crucial for long term quality. Detailed notes on specification of paving materials, street furniture and street trees is set out in Appendix 2.

1.39 Good quality paving results from using a single material consistently, including inspection covers, good quality kerbs and drainage channels, ensuring suitable sub-surface construction to avoid vehicle damage and cutting paving materials to adjoin building faces neatly. The paving material should be easily sourced for repairs. Customised street furniture is discouraged because of maintenance and repair costs. Street trees are encouraged for improving character, providing shade, assisting with drainage and offsetting carbon emissions.

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Locate and manage transport functions

I.40 The taxi ranks and cycle parking around the railway station, shopmobility and motorcycle parking around the Market Road public toilets and Market Road bus station, are all essential parts of the transport system and are accommodated in public spaces. They all need to be located and managed carefully.

B. Enhancing Chelmsford's special qualities

Make the most of Central Park

I.41 Central Park, Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture is the green focus for the town centre, containing active and passive recreation along the River Can. Improve links with the town and overcome the severance caused by Parkway.

Improve the character and connection to the waterways

I.42 The rivers and navigable waterways in the town generate most of the green spaces in the town and many pedestrian and cycle routes, a fantastic resource which merits further use and enjoyment. In development schemes, secure increased and improved frontage and public access along watersides, improve walking routes from the High Street to water, enable increased use of navigable water with moorings and landings, improve bridges and water clearance, boat rollers, craning points and ensure flood alleviation works enhance the riverside environment.

Conserve the Chelmsford heritage

I.43 The urban heritage of the town centre should be conserved through enhancement of the spaces that provide the setting for historic buildings. Any physical changes to street spaces provide an opportunity for enhancement. The character areas of the town centre are still affected by potent historic meaning – whether Roman routes on Moulsham Street and Springfield Road, the medieval market place, the Cathedral, industry on New Street, the railway and cottages in the West End, the river mills or the Navigation at Waterside. Streetscape features of historic significance should be protected.

- Ensure all opportunities to improve street spaces serve to enhance the historic character and meaning of the particular area.
- Conserve historic features in the public realm such as the Wharf Road feeder channel, the Giles Gilbert Scott K6 telephone kiosk near the Cathedral, the historic cast street name plates unique to Chelmsford, the cast Christy & Norris grates and manhole covers, the listed war memorial and the Judge Tindal statue.
- Reuse or reinstate old granite kerbs wherever possible.
- When excavating, investigate below ground deposits and links to the historic environment.
- Improve the Tindal Street elevations to High Chelmer including the exposed service yards and blank walls in the setting of Listed Buildings and Chelmsford Central Conservation Area.

Embed play, performance and culture into the public realm

I.44 Public spaces generate public life. In the first place, streets and parks are for people's convenience and enjoyment. In Chelmsford town centre, streets and parks provide the stage for lively, diverse, unexpected daily experience; and occasional special events, through markets, festivals, street performance and events.

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- Chelmsford Borough Council organises innovative cultural events including street performance and festivals, making the public realm an attraction in its own right.
- Keep space clear, and make supply points available for occasional public events.
- Visual art has enriched spaces throughout the town centre and opportunities to commission artists should be taken when they arise. The Borough Council's public art strategy and the County Council's public art officer provide support and guidance.

1.45 Children and young people like to play throughout whatever domain is accessible to them. In designing new spaces create imaginative, exciting and stimulating play spaces that feel integral to the surrounding environment.

1.46 There is a gap between daytime and night-time economies and a need for evening activities, such as cafes and entertainment, in this unexploited time period, to stimulate economic and cultural life of the town centre.

Maintain a sense of safety

1.47 Safety and security contribute significantly to the sense of well-being in Chelmsford town centre. Safe places improve the quality of life for those working, living and visiting an area. ⁽⁴⁾ Many of the attributes that contribute to safer places are underpinned by natural surveillance ⁽⁵⁾ – the constant presence and oversight by other people. Good street lighting is crucial – crime has been shown to be reduced by about 5% as a result of CCTV whereas improved street lighting resulted in a 20% reduction.

- Maintain natural surveillance by means of active frontages, including windows and entrances to buildings, providing over-looking of public space acting as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour.
- Avoid recesses and hiding places.
- Well designed lighting improves a sense of visibility and safety. All pedestrian areas, streets and car parks should be properly lit, whilst avoiding light pollution and considering energy efficiency.
- CCTV deters and detects crime and needs to be located with clear street views. Ensure that camera installations are sensitive to the streetscene.

Ensure shop fronts, signs and shutters contribute to public realm character

1.48 Shop fronts form an integral part of an attractive public realm and new ones should be designed to enhance the streetscene. Excessive use of lighting, over-large signs or garish colours can upset the established character of the street scene. The following principles apply in considering new or replacement shop fronts:

- Retention of historic shop fronts and details - there are very few historic shop fronts remaining in Chelmsford town centre, but there are some good examples, such as along Baddow Road, dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which contribute to the character of the town and should not be removed. In some cases where shop fronts have previously been replaced or altered, surviving elements from earlier phases of work, such as doorways, entrance tiling, console brackets, a cornice or a surviving roller blind should be retained and may provide a design cue for new shop fronts.

4 The attributes which contribute to safer, sustainable places are identified in "Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM, April 2004).

5 "Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Spaces", CABE Space, November 2004.

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- Consideration of context - consider the shop front in the context of the whole façade of the building and the wider street scene. In most cases where traditional shop fronts exist, the general proportions of the fascias, stall-risers ⁽⁶⁾ and glazing patterns should be respected.
- Respecting the character of the building - the shop front should be designed as an integral part of the building and related to its upper floors. Most buildings in the town have a vertical emphasis which should be expressed as visible structural support to the upper floors and stall-riser to relate the building to the street.
- Design quality and materials - for traditional buildings painted timber will usually be the most appropriate material, in some instances bronze, tile or plaster may be suitable or in less sensitive locations finely detailed and powder coated aluminium may be acceptable. Stall-risers should generally match the materials of the building.
- Signs should be in proportion with the shop front and the overall building, with lighting as an integral part of the design.
- Alternatives to placing advertising structures on the ground includes good quality signs or boards on the building face, or inside the glazed shopfront.
- Security should be designed-in with the use of stall-risers, laminated glazing and/or internal shutters behind window displays to provide robust frontages. External shutters in general are not encouraged as they create a forbidding appearance and impose bulky structures on building exteriors.
- Access for all should be designed in with level thresholds and wide door openings.
- Upper floor access should be retained or consideration given to reinstatement to allow use of upper floors to maximise efficient use of floor space and give vibrancy to the town centre.

C. Creating new public spaces in development

Creation of new public spaces

1.49 New development will bring many more public spaces to the town centre – within Chelmer Waterside, Marconi works, Central Campus and other sites, guided by Council produced planning briefs. Core routes and new spaces in major development provide an ‘address’ for new commercial development, important for property value. Connections between new and existing spaces is critical to the success of new development and how they fit into a changing town centre.

- Ensure the creation of routes and spaces is at the heart of any development masterplan concept.
- Ensure connectivity with the existing route network.
- Place new public spaces on routes to activate them, ensure safety and avoid neglect.
- Ensure the functions of each space are clear and practicable and that conflicts between through-movement, service access, play, window shopping, and townscape are managed.
- Use new public realm design to calm vehicle traffic.
- Design-out intrusive car parking.
- Make 'safer places' including to design-out antisocial behaviour and ensure designing for counter-terrorism is integral to built environment design.

1.50 In creating new spaces account also needs to be taken of future maintenance and commuted payments for maintenance will be bound into a planning permission where appropriate.

6 A stall-riser is the lower part of the shop front below windows.

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Detailed treatment of new spaces

1.51 In larger development schemes, the provision of a public realm strategy is expected. A public realm detailed plan should form part of the Design and Access statement, secured by planning conditions, showing how public areas, both hard paved and planted, are to be treated, including the location of street furniture, street lights, utility equipment such as BT cabinets and feeder posts to ensure these are planned into the site works in a practicable and easily maintained manner.

Manage microclimate and mitigate climate change

1.52 In order to tackle the causes of climate change, any physical change should work with nature, and help to mitigate the long term impact of climate change.

- Maximise opportunities for natural drainage by means of permeable paving surfaces and water harvesting.
- Use appropriate surfaces to keep temperatures down through evaporative cooling.
- Provide shade from direct sunlight and provide shelter from wind and rain to help draw people into spaces.
- Increase trees in the streetscene, particularly deciduous species to offer shade and cooling, to absorb carbon emissions and enhance character.
- Minimise the occurrence of wind eddy flows around new buildings.
- Use recycled or locally sourced street materials wherever possible.

D. Working with partners

New highway schemes

1.53 A particular challenge for the town centre is the need to balance traffic management at the heart of the Highway Authority's road network with quality of place, reduction of noise and air pollution, and an improved visual appeal.

1.54 In carrying out highway and junction alterations, traffic management schemes and major maintenance works, design decisions are made involving input from different interests. All new traffic schemes should enhance public realm quality throughout the town centre. All schemes evolve through liaison between professional disciplines, local planning authority, public users and construction contractors.

1.55 Essex County Council, as the Highway Authority and commissioner of projects will:

- Incorporate sections in project briefs relating to walkability, appearance and streetscape quality objectives.
- Ensure budget estimates allow for appropriate quality of materials, planting and street furniture - in conservation areas and key streets and spaces, take opportunities to specify higher quality materials.
- Ensure safety and technical requirements do not result in obstructions of unsightliness.

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Highway maintenance

1.56 For each funded planned maintenance project, a detailed plan of the site area is prepared with specification of works. It is at this stage that a streetscene audit is appropriate to address choices about detailed specification that may enable a significant enhancement of character – this may simply be modifications to signs and lines, relocations of furniture or small changes to materials.

- Highway Authority will keep CBC and ECC professional design teams informed of the forthcoming planned maintenance programme.
- Highway Authority will consult CBC and ECC professional design teams on significant elements of planned maintenance works in the town centre to agree works.
- Provide Section 106 funding to top-up maintenance schemes if there is a direct link with proposed development.

Parks improvement

1.57 As and when opportunities arise, CBC Parks Service commission improvements to specific component areas of parks, to improve, enhance or practically restore parkland to serve its visitors better. A Park Management Plan and Development Plan clarify the future direction of park usage and the future management of park space. These plans ensure continuity, encourage community involvement, help evaluate requirements for investment, and provide a basis for individual studies on design, restoration, renewal or enhancement. In some cases work may be commissioned by a developer team already working on a larger scheme in the vicinity (for example works associated with the cricket ground).

1.58 Each improvement project will entail research into topography, ecology and landscape character, historic layout and surviving features, the condition and quality of paths, lighting, signs, park equipment, the use of spaces and facilities and emergency access, and other special vehicle access needs. Maintenance implications of possible changes will be assessed, and good practice will be observed from parks elsewhere.

Engagement

1.59 The following interests should be involved and/or consulted in the improvement project process:

- CBC planning and conservation officers.
- CBC services - town centre management, refuse collection, street cleansing and facilities management, car parks management, CCTV and street lighting.
- ECC specialist traffic and highway advisors, archaeology advisors, arboriculturalists.
- Environment Agency, Chelmsford Biodiversity Forum and River Users Group.
- Utility companies, bus operating company.
- Private owners of any parts of the public space (for example Network Rail, High Chelmer) and property owners adjoining the space.
- Traders in the vicinity and traders organisation.
- User groups and forums, including the Civic Society.

Public space as the focus for a successful town centre |

Land owners

1.60 Land owners such as Network Rail, High Chelmer Shopping Centre, the Meadows Shopping Centre or Anglia Ruskin University commission improvements to areas of public realm in the town centre with close liaison between CBC planning and ECC highways.

Planning obligations on development sites with relationship to public realm

1.61 As the local planning authority, Chelmsford Borough Council briefs, negotiates and grants permissions for major developments involving significant changes to the public realm. New development containing new work space and / or new homes places demands on transport networks and public open space. In applying Core Strategy and Development Control Policies the Council will seek to secure improvements to the public realm where there is a relationship to the proposed scheme.

1.62 Many major and minor developments will often directly affect the adjoining streetscene. Planning obligations bound into a planning permission may include the following:

- Resurfacing of the footway, rationalisation of existing street furniture, new street furniture and street trees.
- Mounting street lights and street signs on the building faces, plus incorporating cables, switches and other apparatus into the design of the building.
- Recesses in the building for street light feeder columns or traffic light cabinets to avoid these items obstructing the footway.

| Public space as the focus for a successful town centre

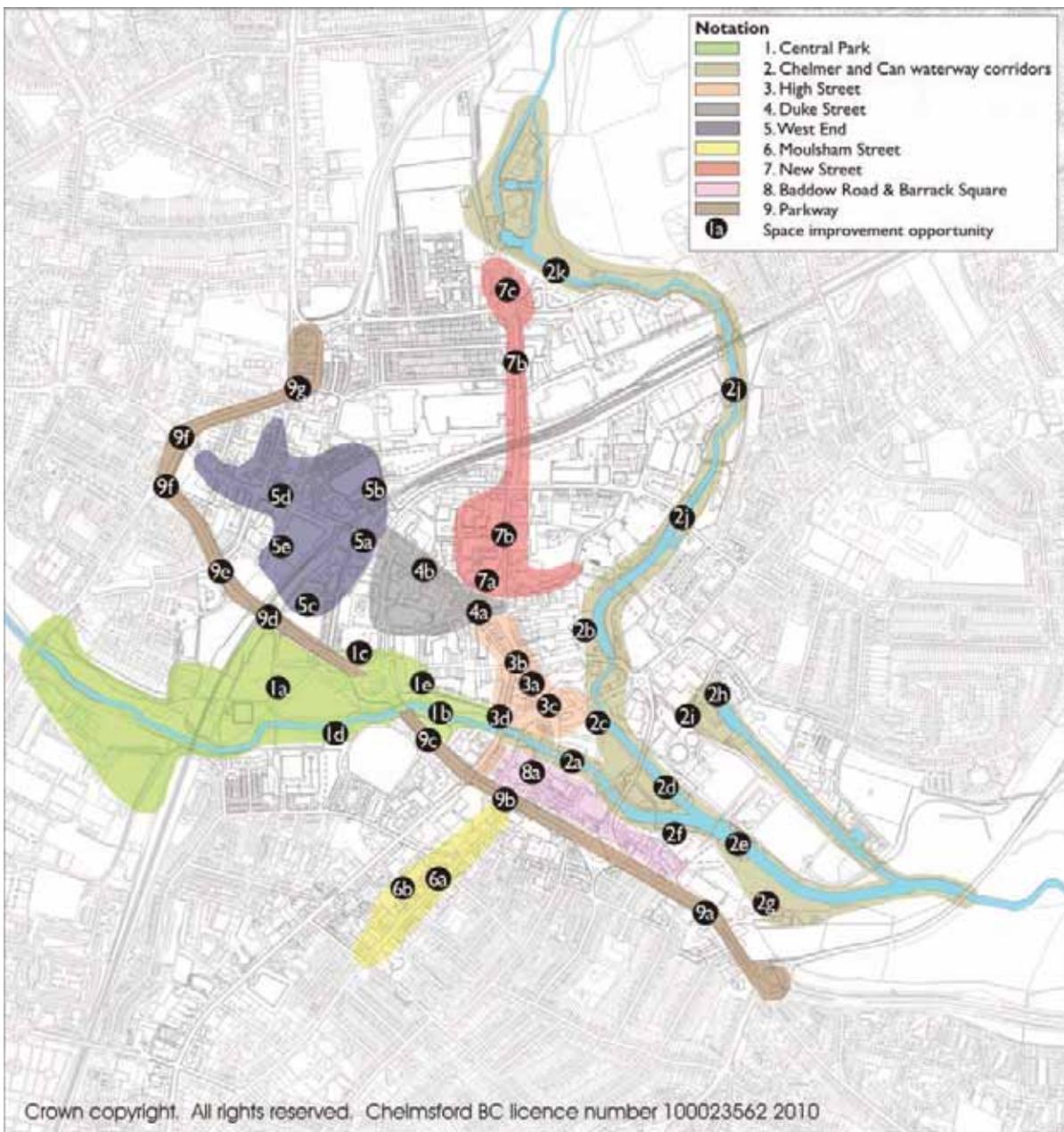
PART 2 Guidance on space improvements

Nine broad areas

2.1 For the purposes of the strategy, nine broad areas have been defined within the town centre. The public realm in each broad area displays specific characteristics that benefit the town centre as a whole. Discrete improvement projects can be planned in a coordinated way in each area.

2.2 The Figure below shows the nine broad areas. Each numbered dot represents a specific improvement opportunity. Each of the broad areas and the identified improvement opportunities, including ten priority spaces, are described in this chapter.

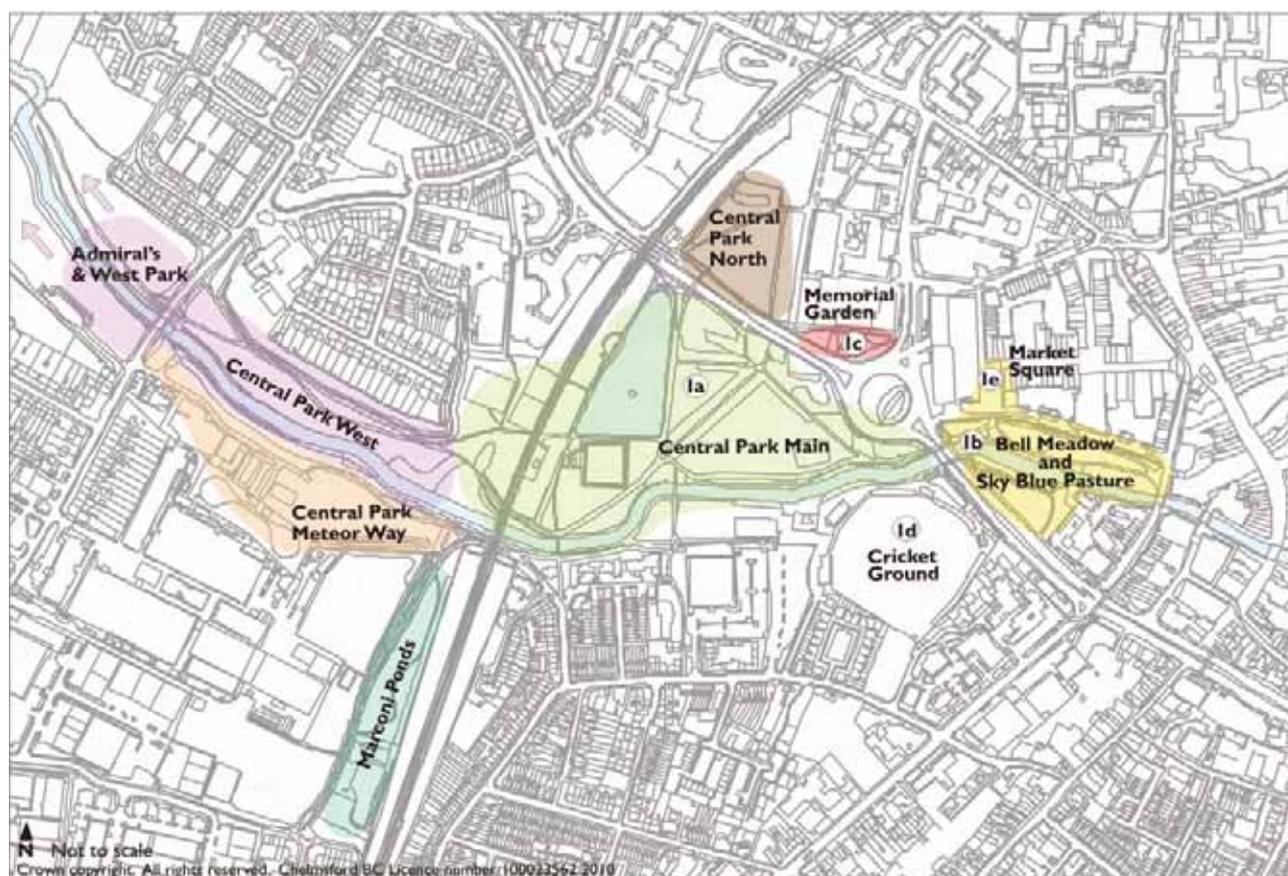
Figure 3 Nine broad areas for public realm improvement



2 Guidance on space improvements

Broad Area I - Central Park

Figure 4 Central Park elements



2.3 This broad area covers all park and green space from New London Road to Waterhouse Lane alongside the River Can. It is the main green lung for the town centre, providing active and passive recreation spaces, drawing people from the whole town. It is used intensively for daily informal recreation, and occasional major public events. It contains important walking and cycling routes but links with the shopping centre are compromised by Parkway.

2.4 The park spaces are flanked by major town centre activities – High Chelmer shopping centre and Essex County Cricket Ground. Development at these locations, the former central campus and other sites will change the character of the park and increase intensity of park use.

2.5 The maintenance and future change to the Central Park spaces is directed by CBC Parks Services Management Plan and the Development Plan for regenerating Central Park. The following helps to guide these documents.

2.6 Area objective

- To improve the coherence and quality of Central Park and its related spaces. To take all opportunities to improve the public experience of the parks as demands on its space intensify. To achieve improvement to entrances, edges, recreational facilities and landscape in association with adjoining major development schemes.

Guidance on space improvements 2

Space 1a - Central Park main	Priority Space
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Description

2.7 The main Central Park is tightly defined by the river Can, railway viaduct and Parkway - all influencing its access points and links with the surrounding town. The riverside provides a natural environment, key to park character. The park is an important floodable area that naturally floods every few years. Character is defined by tree lined paths and the lake by the viaduct.

2.8 Central Park is disrupted by Parkway and has poor underpass environments. Park entrances are uninviting and poorly sited, and the park generally has poor quality path surfacing, public toilets and edge treatment. The maintenance depot and unused bowls green undermine the quality and usefulness of adjoining spaces.

Objectives

2.9 A dynamic, destination city park for all-age recreation. To strengthen park character, maintain spaciousness, the riverside vegetation, the lakesides and the tree lined avenues. To enhance users experience by locating recreation, sport and play in optimal positions, enhancing accessibility, pathways and improve park entrances. To improve active frontage and built enclosure from surrounding new development. Sections of Central Park split by Parkway to be included in a masterplan for the park.

Guidance on possible future improvements

- Organise the parkland functions to enable a more diversified range of activity.
- Retain clear space for large scale events, a variety of outdoor arts and cultural activities.
- Provide specific facilities such as a café and toilets as a complimentary attraction if a business case can be made.
- Maintain and improve the skate park facility and landscape around it.
- Create an adventure play corridor to optimise use of woodland alongside Parkway and Victoria Road roundabout.
- To make way for a new bridge from the cricket club relocate equipped play facility to a suitable area. Involve an artist, children and parents in any redesign.
- Remove unused bowls facility and open up public space.
- Provide intimate garden spaces with good natural surveillance.
- Optimise use of areas west of viaduct for in-demand active sport uses.
- Suitable relocation of the park maintenance depot.
- All park entrances to Central Park (Parkway subway by viaduct, path from Coval Wells, Seymour Street bridge, Parkway underbridge) improved as identifiable, inviting gateways.
- Repave paths in a high quality, attractive walking surface and redefine paths and cycle ways to minimise users' conflict.
- Coordinate seating, bins, lighting, and CCTV furniture and information signage.
- Enhance the presence of the model railway in the park and its interrelation with park character.
- Improve the visual relationship between land within the e2v site with the Marconi Ponds.
- Disguise the concrete river edge walls such as introducing manageable riverwall planting.
- Restore original course of the river for flood alleviation and character.

2 Guidance on space improvements

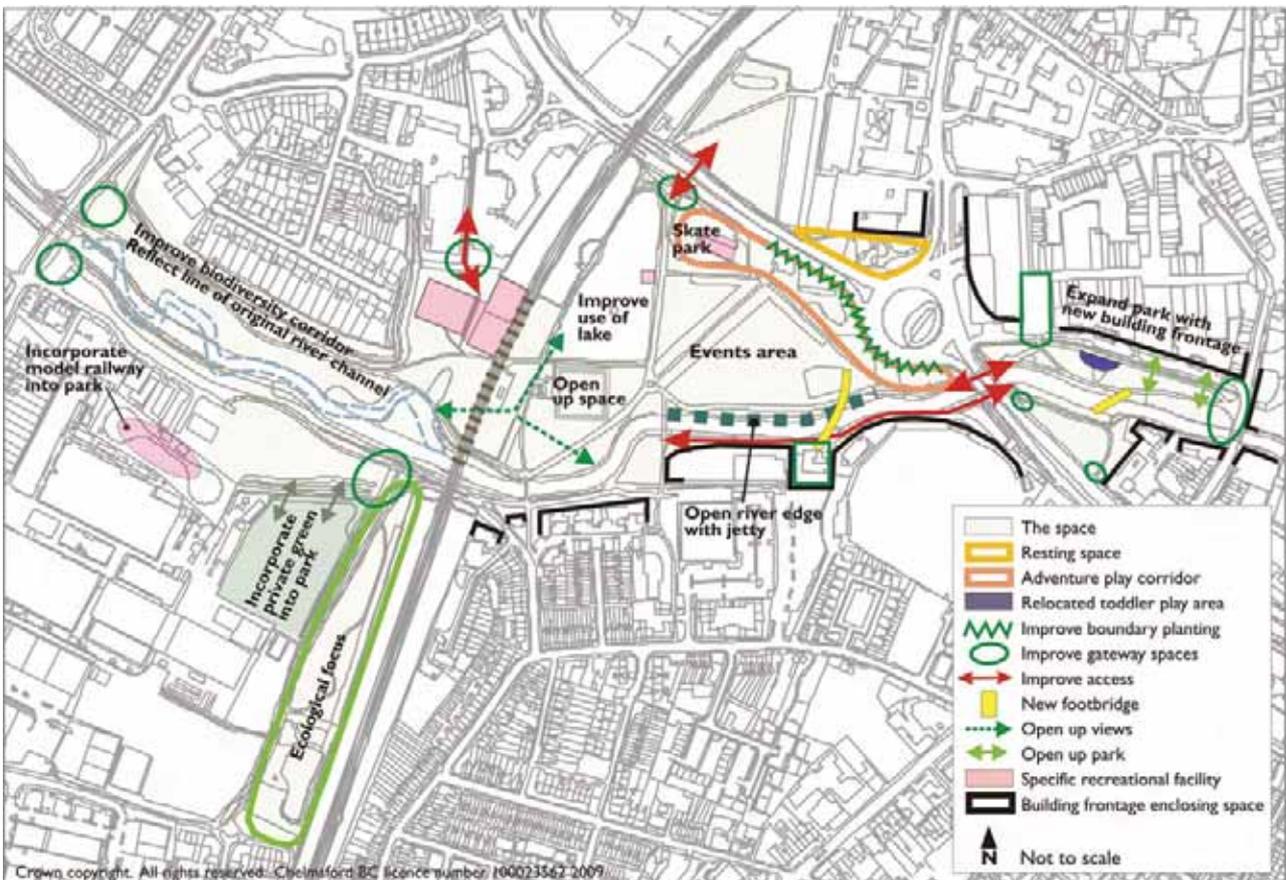
Steps required to secure improvements

Consolidate existing topographical, historic, ecological, structural surveys. Flood risk assessments are needed before any works.

Engage with park users, sports clubs, County Cricket Club, E2V Technologies, town centre businesses, Marconi Ponds Nature Reserve group, Sport England and the Environment Agency on feasibility for flood storage in the park.

Potential funding for park improvements from associated development sites including former university central campus; land at Meteor Way and part of adjoining E2V site; High Chelmer; Essex County Cricket Club. This also relates to Space 1b below.

Figure 5 Central Park - concept



Space 1b - Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture	Priority Space
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Description

2.10 Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture are an intensely used part of Central Park, mainly for relaxing but also some active recreation and occasional public events. Bell Meadow contains key walking and cycling routes and is directly related to the shopping centre, bus stops, market and Market Square and provides the town centre’s primary green lung. The green spaces are situated either side of the River Can but lack connection across the river, consequently Sky Blue Pasture is underused. From Sky Blue Pasture there are good views to the Cathedral and across the park and town.

Guidance on space improvements 2

2.11 The park has uninviting entrances, the underpass to the main park is a major pinchpoint and the cycle lane occupies a substantial amount of park land. There are exposed concrete riverbanks at the start of the canalised part of the river, poor quality path surfacing and street furniture, boundary hedges and railings hiding the park, and a poorly sited and equipped under 5's play area.

Objectives

A delightful, welcoming park space either side of the river, linked with a bridge, with an active interaction with High Chelmer and New London Road. To strengthen park character, maintain the openness, the mature tree landscape, and improve the river edge connection and park edges. To enhance users' experience by encouraging a variety of outdoor arts and cultural uses, enhancing accessibility and improving park entrances.

Guidance on possible future improvements (see Concept Figure)

- Create an open and identifiable entrance space at the interface with New London Road (see Space 3d) and at Bellmead connected with Market Square.
- Open the north side of Bell Meadow to integrate the park with Market Square across a reconfigured road space, cycle route and on-street disabled persons parking.
- Improved active frontage to High Chelmer, to enable interaction with the park and provide screening of the exposed shopping centre service yards.
- Introduce a new footbridge linking Bell Meadow and Sky Blue Pasture to optimise the use of these green spaces and create a more accessible river frontage.
- Enhance walking routes with paths resurfaced, park furniture and signage coordinated.
- Improve the path under the Parkway bridge by widening and removing the central railing obstruction.
- Improve connection to cricket ground.
- Enhance space to support rest, activities and occasional events.
- Planting to increase biodiversity value of the space.
- Soften the appearance of the concrete river edge walls such as introducing manageable riverwall planting.

Space 1c - Memorial Gardens, adjacent to Parkway / Victoria Road South

2.12 Description - Pocket park with seating on walking route into High Chelmer.

2.13 Guidance - Integrate the gardens with new open space within the future central campus redevelopment and link with an improved subway connection to Central Park. Improve the pedestrian crossing link towards High Chelmer.

Space 1d - County Cricket Ground concourse

2.14 Description - A public concourse and bridge from Central Park is a key element of any future improvement of the County Cricket Ground.

2.15 Guidance - Relocate existing children's play area and paths to enable a bridge and direct public access to the ground when development proceeds.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Space 1e - Market Square, High Chelmer

2.16 Description - Shopping square leading to Bell Meadow, with market and High Chelmer shopping frontages. Located on important north-south and east-west pedestrian routes.

2.17 Guidance - Enhance the paving and seating to create a destination space and enhance setting for the market. Enhance the pedestrian route from the market to the bus interchange and Victoria Road South, under the car park. Integrate Market Square with Bell Meadow by removal of the park hedge, repaving whilst also reducing pedestrian / cyclist conflict.

Broad Area 2 - Chelmer and Can waterway corridors

2.18 This area covers the spaces in the River Chelmer corridor from the Rivermead University Campus into the town, including Chelmer Waterside and Springfield Basin and the River Can corridor within the town. It contains the tree lined green spaces, paths and cycleways defining the river character and the canalised river and its associated urban spaces in the centre.

2.19 Area objective

- To reveal the water as the town's distinctive asset, improve access routes to the watersides, achieve continuity of river walks and improve adjoining spaces, landscape and built frontages. Increase recreational use of the water and optimise the use of navigable waterway.

Space 2a - River Can riverside

2.20 Description - Canalised river between Bell Meadow and High Bridge Road, focused on Stone Bridge. Quality of river walks highly compromised by service vehicle access space and poor surfaces. Access to water on east side by Meadows shopping.

Guidance - The most central and hidden part of the river at the historically significant bridging point. Coordinate all paving and street furniture. Restore active frontage to Marks & Spencer service yard and Quadrant. Shared, pedestrian priority space in front of Quadrant / Dansk to replace confused levels and paving. Repave the service bridge as a pedestrian priority shared surface – effectively a small square over the river. Increase active frontage to Meadows shopping. Introduce manageable riverwall planting.

Space 2b - Bond Street riverside. Redevelopment area

2.21 Description - The phase I development created a successful new piazza and boardwalk, and a distinctive street space.

2.22 Guidance - In the redevelopment continue the character and quality of the piazza, boardwalk and street space. Replace Mallard Bridge with a wider bridge to accommodate walking and cycling.

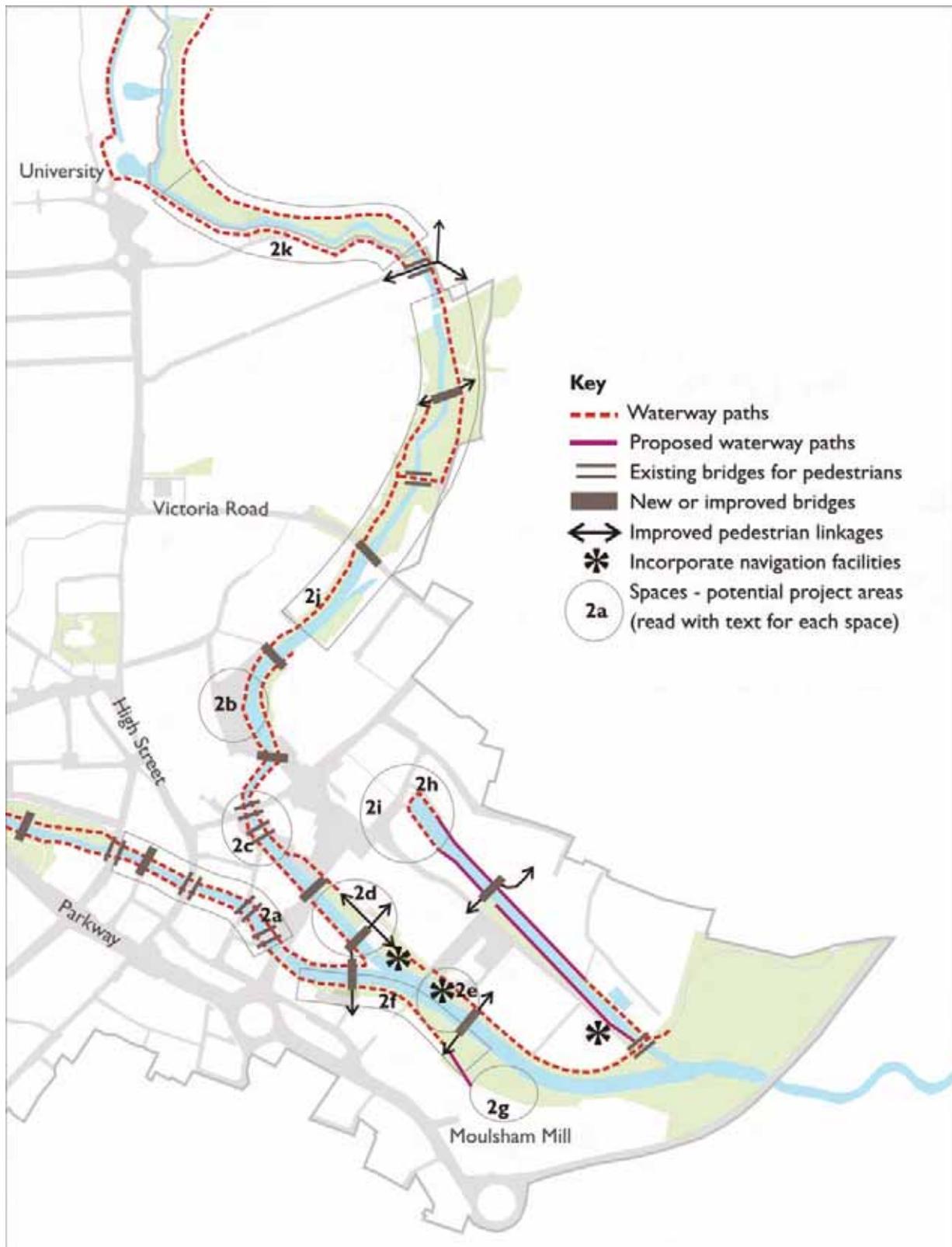
Space 2c - Backnang Square, Grays Yard and French's Walk

2.23 Description - Canalised river through highly attractive square with glimpses through to historic Grays brewery yard.

Guidance on space improvements 2

2.24 Guidance - Maintain high quality paving, planting and ease of viewing river. To soften the harsh concrete walls to the sides of the river introduce colour interest such as manageable riverwall planting. Maintain simplicity and respect historic character of past brewery use of Grays Yard.

Figure 6 Chelmer and Can waterway corridors area



2 Guidance on space improvements

Space 2d - Mothercare, High Bridge Road, north bank of River Chelmer

2.25 Description - From Mothercare under High Bridge Road to the Bailey Bridge. Green river bank and open semi-natural areas, currently occupied by river user group premises.

2.26 Guidance - A key space in relation to regeneration of gas works and its connection with the shopping centre. Provide a new bridge link direct into the gas works site from Meadows / Backnang Square. Create continuous riverside path through open space in connection with future development. Retain rich green areas at the confluence of the rivers.

Space 2e - Essex Record Office concourse

2.27 Description - River-facing entrance to public building and important future walking and cycling route to future development on peninsula. Adjoins the weir and boat rollers.

2.28 Guidance - Enhance as a destination space and key access for major future development. Upgrade boat rollers. Accommodate scope for replacement Bailey Bridge as new link into regenerated waterside.

Space 2f - Kings Meadow, south river bank

2.29 Description - South bank of River Can, flanking Baddow Road car park. Riverside walkway and tree-lined meadow, providing setting for confluence of the rivers.

2.30 Guidance - Protect trees, improve paving. In connection with development of gas works, improve existing pedestrian and cycle bridge links. Accommodate new or relocated navigation facilities.

Space 2g - Moulsham Mill

2.31 Description - Riverside green space and spaces around the historic mill.

2.32 Guidance - Enhance the landscape south and east of the buildings, protect riverside setting, restore water frontage in connection with nearby development and flood capacity.

Space 2h - Springfield Basin

2.33 Description - Historic Navigation terminal basin framed by housing, restaurant and business.

2.34 Guidance - Encourage transport and leisure boat use at the hub of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation. As opportunities arise, create continuous canalside paths eastwards to the lock and flood meadows with new river frontage.

Space 2i - Feeder stream

2.35 Description - Adjacent to south side of Wharf Road car park. Historic, restored channel maintaining water flow to Springfield Basin, framed by paths and planting.

Guidance on space improvements 2

2.36 Guidance - Maintain the paths and planting around this historically important small space. Integrate into paths and spaces as development of gas works and Meadows car park comes forward. Incorporate filter or grill for silt disposal collection.

Space 2j - River Chelmer riverside, Victoria Road

2.37 Description - North from Riverside Ice and Leisure, to Brook Street. Highly attractive tree-lined green spaces, incorporating key walking and cycle routes, and providing an urban retreat.

2.38 Guidance - improve the connections with the residential area to east and shopping and business areas to the west. Link space and path improvement to possible flood defence works.

Space 2k - Rivermead

2.39 Description - Natural green space, part of Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve. Rich ecology and routes into the town along both sides of river, on the south side through the university campus.

2.40 Guidance - Respect local nature reserve status. Conserve ecology and character.

Broad Area 3 - High Street

2.41 This area covers High Street, New London Road (north of Parkway), Tindal Street and Springfield Road - the shopping centre – intensively busy in the daytime, virtually dead in early evening. The main shopping streets, pedestrianised in the 1990's, link into the two covered shopping centres. The spatial character of the High Street derives from the enclosure created by its architecturally varied but continuous built frontage, tapering narrower and wider along its length, with its distinctive curvature towards the south. Most importantly its character comes from a sequence of four highly significant spaces – Tindal Square, Half Moon Square, Town Sign and Stone Bridge. Each space is very busy, and each is rich with historic association.

2.42 Area objective

- Draw out the distinctive character of the commercial heart of the town, safely accommodate the intensive daytime and night time public activity and expand the evening public offer. Define the key street spaces and optimise the public enjoyment of them. Make the streets inviting for local people and visitors. Provide an excellent setting for markets and public events.

Space 3a - High Street

2.43 Description - Main pedestrianised shopping street, from Tindal Square to Stone Bridge.

2.44 Guidance - Repair and maintain paving and appropriate furniture. Remove obstructions, including planters. Encourage vitality and activity in the form of street performance entertainment, well-coordinated outdoor market, and encourage evening family uses. Enhance the quality and lighting of the historic alleyways from Tindal Street to the High Street and the qualities of Stone Bridge.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Space 3b - Half Moon Square

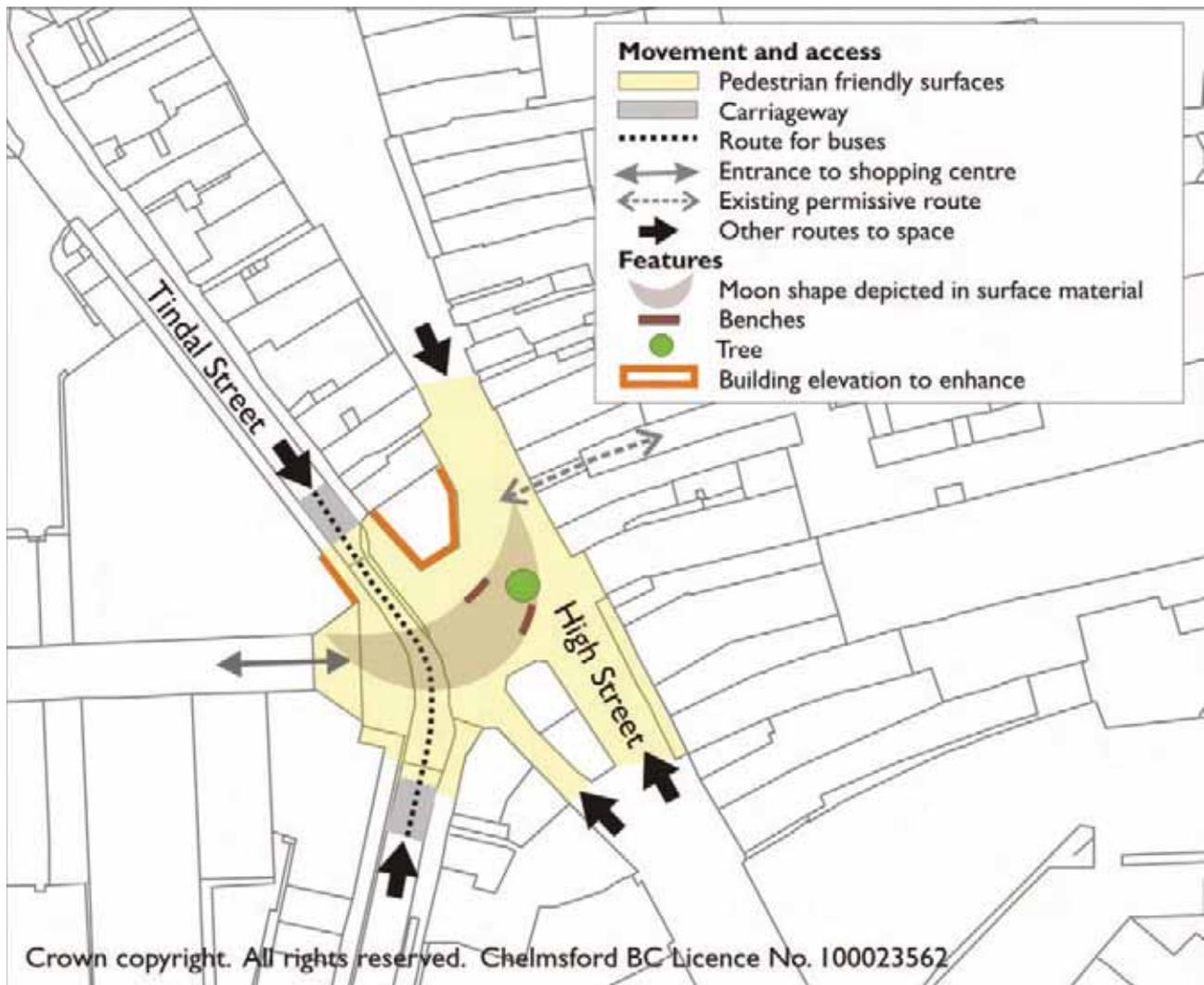
Priority Space

Description

2.45 Half Moon Square is the space on the High Street stretching from the High Chelmer Shopping Centre entrance across to the Ginnel, the historic passageway on the east side of the High Street, which links through to the East of High Street redevelopment area. The space is roughly at the mid-point of the original market from Springfield Road to Shire Hall. The Half Moon Inn existed at the space in the 19th century, when it was a much narrower space, one of a handful of public houses located in close proximity to each other in this central location.

2.46 It is enclosed by attractive building frontages and corners including listed buildings either side of The Ginnel and the island building (77 to 80 High Street). Tindal Street meets the High Street at Half Moon Square and has a medieval character on its eastern side and the ugly edge of High Chelmer on its western side. The alley which links Tindal Street to the High Street has historical significance being the only element of the former Conduit Street with good building frontages enclosing the narrow space. The space marks the start of the part of town influenced by James Fenton, the architect and engineer responsible for laying out New London Road.

Figure 7 Half Moon Square - concept



Guidance on space improvements 2

2.47 The carriageway provides a major one way bus route north to south, also for taxi and servicing vehicles, and its edge guardrail cuts the space in half whilst adding to street furniture clutter. It also serves as an access for emergency services to the High Street. Half Moon Square is a major confluence of walking routes in all directions and is the first pedestrian relief point when travelling down the High Street.

Objectives

2.48 A busy confluence of six walking routes, acting as a focus for High Street shopping, a colourful and lively meeting point. Strengthen character by creating an opened-up, inviting focal space for the High Street, allowing free pedestrian movement and emergency vehicle access, providing a rest space and event space.

Guidance on possible future improvements

- Open up the space. Remove proliferation of street furniture including guard rail, relocate or integrate utility cabinets, traffic signals, CCTV, lighting columns.
- Level surface across the carriageway to improve pedestrian comfort.
- Good quality paving materials to complement the High Street clay pavements and stone building frontages, to continue across the carriageway with complementary tactile paving.
- Half moon motif incorporated into the layout.
- Create enhanced opportunities for pedestrians to rest and for people to interact.
- Due to underground services, there is only one possible location for a tree, but there is scope to change the tree pit surround within the concept design.

Space 3c - Town sign

2.49 Description - Very active pedestrianised junction with Springfield Road, focus of street market and street entertainment.

2.50 Guidance - Maintain spatial character by avoiding obstructions and exploiting the opportunities for occasional public events.

Space 3d - Park entrance, New London Road and Bellmead

Priority Space

Description

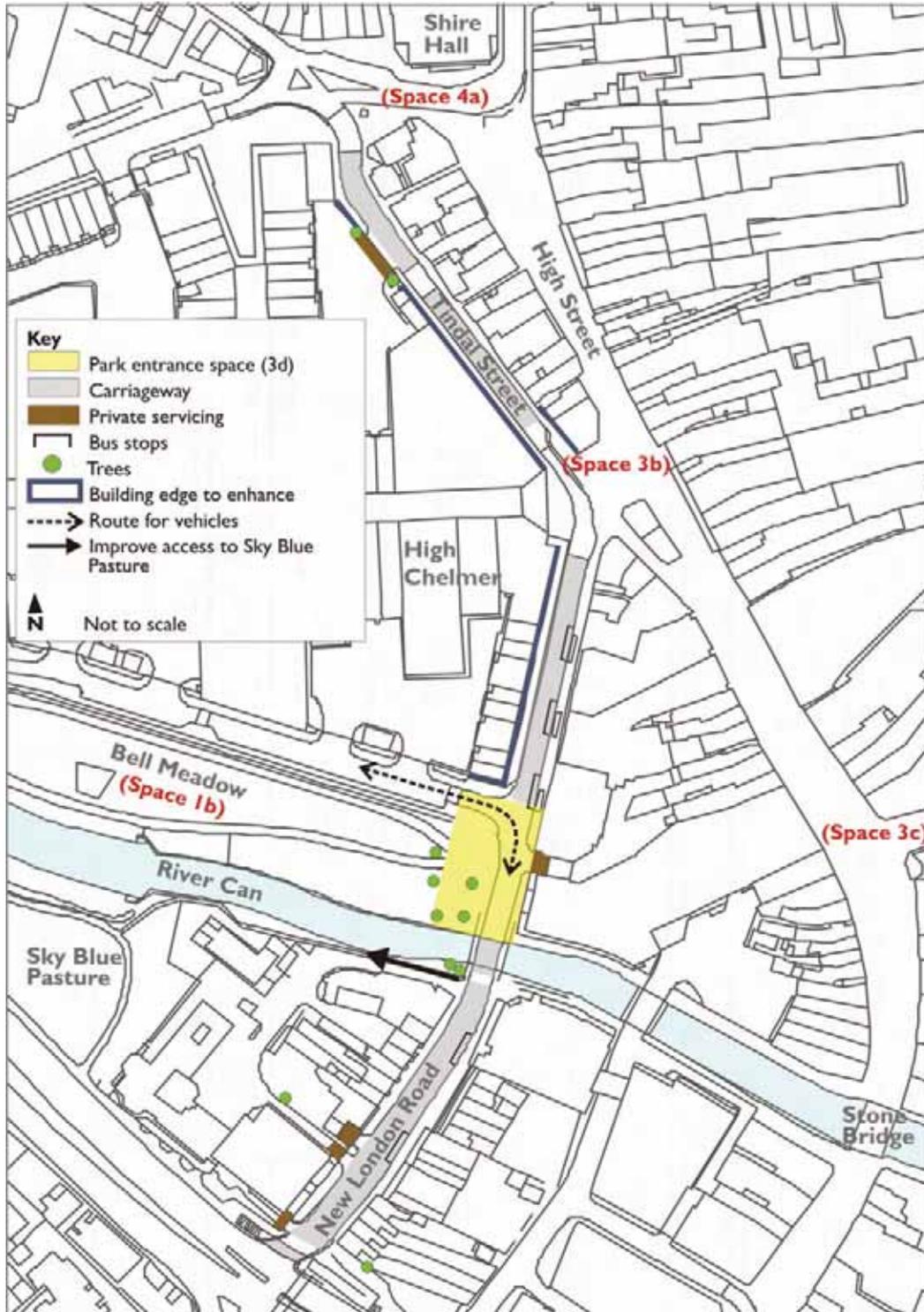
2.51 This space experiences heavy pedestrian flows between the park, the shopping centre, Marks & Spencer rear entrance and riverside walks. The park entrance is disrupted by signs, bins and a vendors vehicle stand which blocks views and occupies park space at the point where the park should be open. This is potentially one of the most important pedestrian focal points in the town at the point where park meets river walk and shopping centre. New Bridge contributes to the spatial character. New London Road contains the central bus stops for town centre shopping with unique shelters for bus passengers. New London Road provides car access to Bellmead containing Blue Badge on-street parking and a shopping centre service yard adjacent to Marks & Spencer.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Objectives

2.52 Create an identifiable park entrance, increase pedestrian space, enable safe pedestrian access to the park, improve conditions for cyclists and manage vehicles / pedestrian conflict, improve interface between park and street, remove railings and tarmac surface area, incorporate public art into the redesign.

Figure 8 Park entrance, New London Road - concept, and the four central spaces



Guidance on space improvements 2

Guidance on possible future improvements

- Increase pedestrian space, remove railings, reclaim underused vending space and incorporate into an opened-up, re-landscaped area. Create an identifiable park gateway space, integrate with repaved, pedestrian priority street space.
- Enable safe pedestrian and cycle cross movement between park, street and riverside paths and provide cycle parking facilities.
- Improve pathway to Sky Blue Pasture from New London Road.
- Activate the frontage on the west side of Tindal Street and close the gap of the existing service yard.

Broad Area 4 - Duke Street

2.53 This broad area covers Duke Street from Tindal Square and Market Road up to Station Square. It is the most intact historic townscape with a variety of buildings, significant civic destinations at each end and the entrance to County Hall. The public realm at the eastern end of Duke Street, Threadneedle Street, Market Road, Exchange Square and Tindal Square, is shaped by The Cathedral, Shire Hall, High Street, County Hall and High Chelmer. This is the most significant, complex and interesting urban space in Chelmsford and is the true centre of the town, at the meeting point of ecclesiastical, judicial, governmental and market activities, yet is still dominated by traffic management and poor landscape quality. The view north of Tindal Street across Tindal Square to the Cathedral is one of the most important views in Chelmsford town centre. Tindal Square provides the setting for Shire Hall and other listed buildings; the Market Road triangle provides the setting for County Hall and contains the grandest trees in the town centre.

2.54 *Area objective*

- To enhance the historic character of this route linking station with High Street, to transform Station Square and Tindal Square into spaces defining Chelmsford's role and status.

Space 4a - Tindal Square	Priority Space
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Description

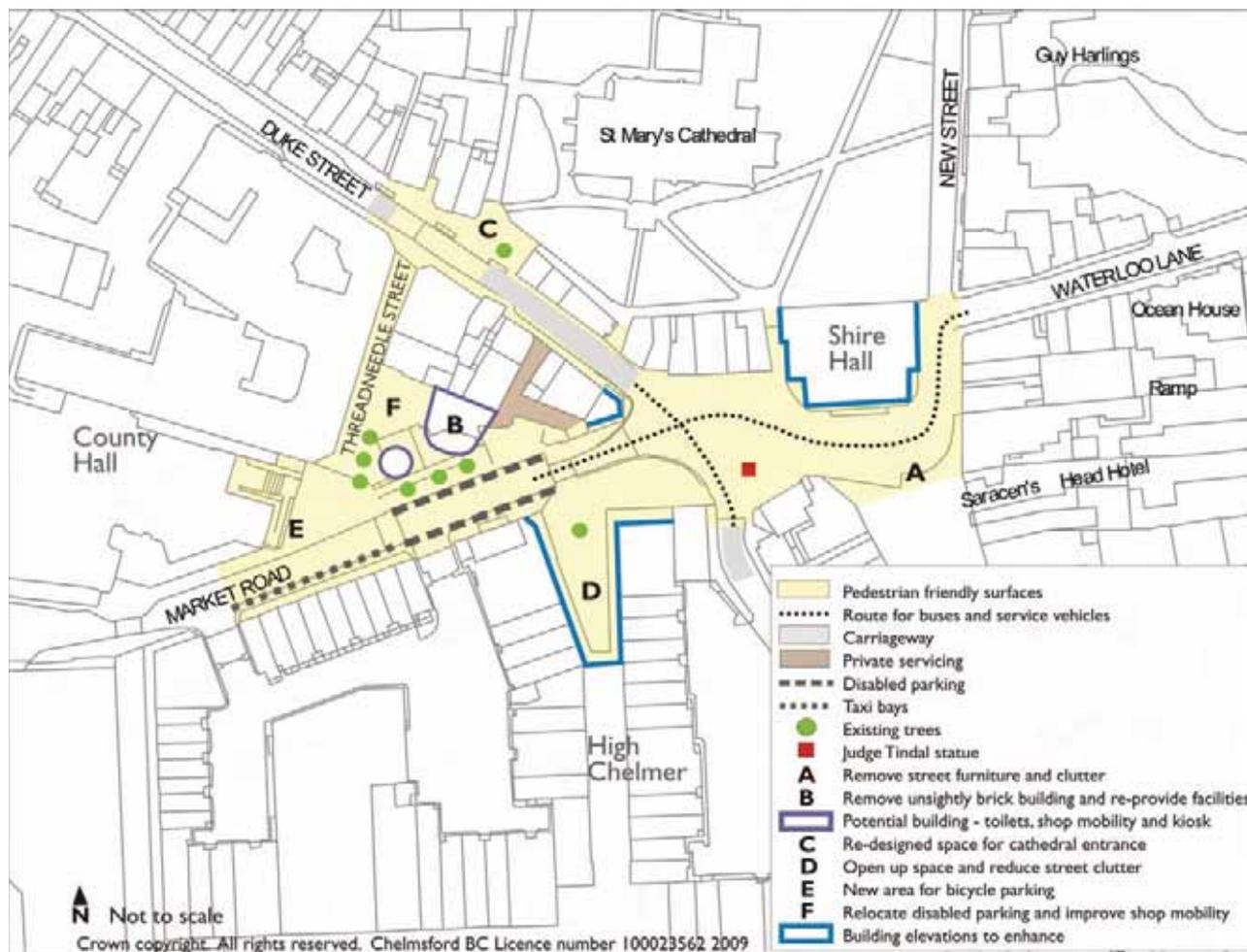
2.55 Tindal Square is Chelmsford's principal space in the heart of the town centre marking the top of the High Street, the setting for Shire Hall and the Cathedral plus other highly distinctive buildings. The area contains the Judge Tindal statue and spreads west to include Market Road, its triangle block of public conveniences and shopmobility, County Hall main entrance and Exchange Square providing access to High Chelmer Shopping Centre. The space is a busy cross route for pedestrian movement, with major flows of buses down Duke Street and Tindal Street, taxi rank and disabled parking and gives access to service yards of High Chelmer Shopping Centre. The area is dominated by road space, poor surfaces and street furniture clutter.

Objectives

A celebratory space, a destination for visitors representing the symbolic heart of Chelmsford town with traffic managed and a civic space reclaimed for pedestrians. To simplify and upgrade the landscape of the interconnected spaces as a pedestrian priority area, accommodating essential vehicle movements whilst reducing parking and the dominance of signage and street furniture, to provide an appropriate setting for the various listed buildings and enhance the use of the public buildings and business premises surrounding the linked spaces.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Figure 9 Tindal Square - concept



Guidance on possible future improvements

- Redesign of Tindal Square as the central public and ceremonial space and reinstatement of the public space linking to County Hall atrium.
- Tindal Square repaved as a pedestrian priority surface with subtle demarcation of bus paths.
- Good quality paving to complement the stone and brick building frontages.
- Market Road to library entrance paving to clearly define pedestrian space, vehicle paths, on-street taxi rank and disabled parking.
- The space to be designed to enable ease of movement and to provide areas for pedestrians to rest. All furniture to be coordinated including seating, bins, lighting, direction and information signage.

The following are specific improvement ideas and should be read with the Concept Figure:

- **A.** Shire Hall and Judge Tindal forecourt - a level pedestrian friendly space across the square; minimal furniture fronting Shire Hall and restricted access control for buses and servicing vehicles only; restore the historic cannon to its original location fronting Shire Hall; a potential significant space for cultural events.
- **B.** Market Road public toilets - this space in front of County Hall contains a large toilet block, shophmobility vehicles, motorbike parking, accessible parking and taxi ranks. It is highly disordered and parking in Threadneedle Street conflicts with pedestrian movement and character. It requires simplification and reassessment of space priorities. There are potential opportunities for improving

Guidance on space improvements 2

or transforming the area with a replacement building / kiosk and reclaiming pedestrian space around the six Plane trees.

- **C.** Duke Street Cathedral entrance - improve ground levels to aid pedestrian crossing opportunities; high quality paving indicating gateway to Cathedral.
- **D.** Exchange Square - open up area by removing street clutter; retain mature tree and manage its crown marking entrance to space; seek opportunity to replace canopies from building with a lighter structure to allow more daylight into the space.
- **E.** County Hall forecourt - relocated cycle parking.
- **F.** Threadneedle Square - open up as a pedestrian square; relocate disabled parking to street and improve shopmobility possibly in new building (see B).

Steps required to secure improvements

Develop design concept with ECC Asset Management considering future of Magistrates Court and Shire Hall and CBC Safer Communities / Public Places on the public conveniences and CBC land within the space.

Space 4b - Duke Street east (Station Square to Tindal Square)	Priority Space
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Description

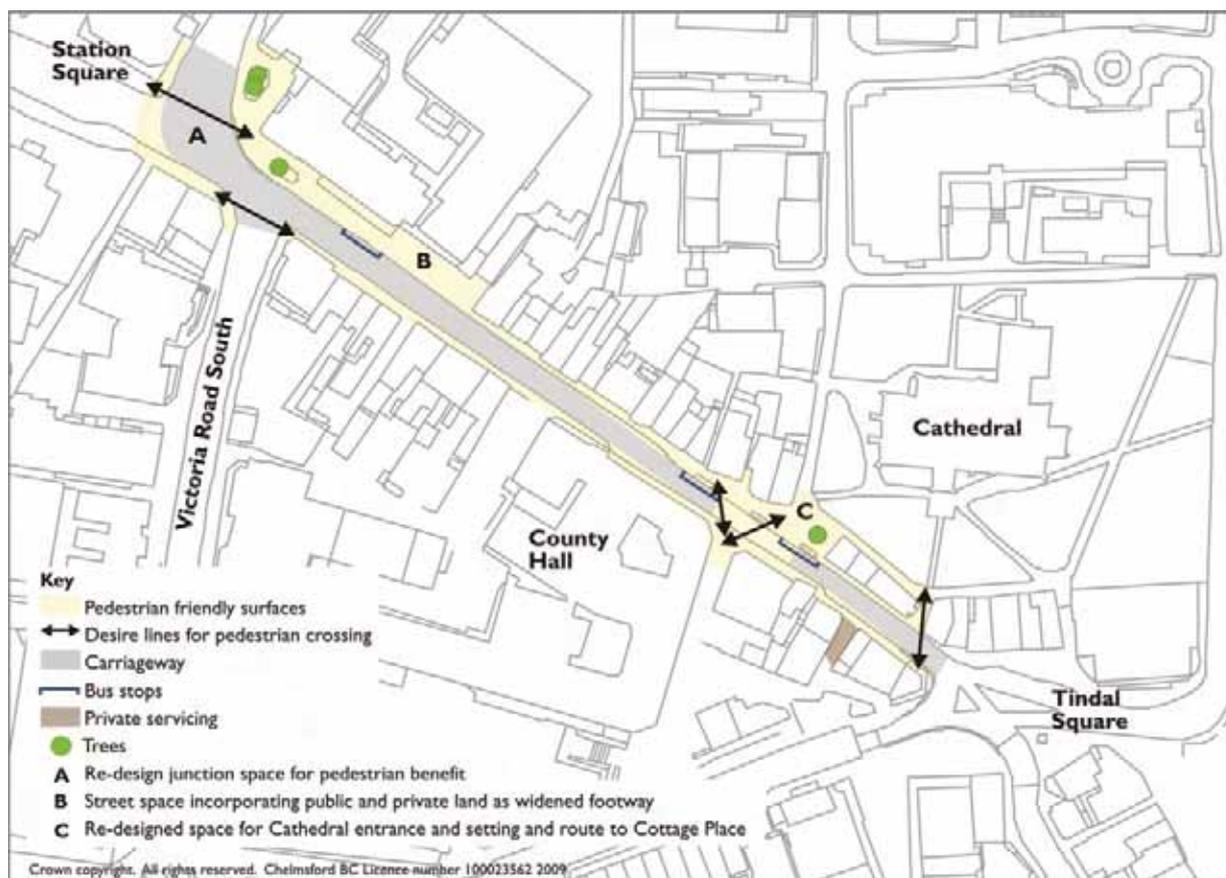
2.56 Duke Street, a medieval route, is a major route for pedestrian movement linking Station Square and the Cathedral, Tindal Square and the High Street. The street contains several listed buildings including County Hall. The historic street has narrow footways and street furniture clutter including CCTV and traffic posts. The space between the Cathedral and Threadneedle Street has a distinctive character and is an important pedestrian route, although this is disturbed by long high kerbs at the bus stops.

Objectives

2.57 An attractive historic street, linking High Street and the railway station revealing its distinctive character. To maintain the historic character, improve the quality of the walking experience, improve quality of side alleys, reduce the dominance of vehicles, improve conditions for cyclists and improve safety.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Figure 10 Duke Street east



Guidance on possible future improvements

2.58 Good quality and robust paving materials. Frequent crossing opportunities for pedestrians along the street, with flush crossing points in places of side passageways and particular focus for eased crossing opportunity between Threadneedle Street and Cathedral. Seating opportunities along the street, with street lighting and CCTV provision on buildings respecting built environment context.

2.59 Street design to integrate provision for deliveries and bus stops. Bays indicated by surface materials, and any high kerbs will be minimal in length to avoid obstructing pedestrian movement. Shelters for bus passengers will be designed to respect context of built environment including the potential for canopies on buildings and feeder pillars as part of the shelter or against buildings will be investigated.

2.60 The following are specific improvements ideas and should be read with the Concept Figure:

- **A.** Junction Victoria Road double roundabouts - reduce roadspace, reduce guardrail and improve pedestrian desire routes for east-west movement.
- **B.** Open up space enabling a widened pedestrian area encompassing public and private land.
- **C.** Cathedral entrance - see Space 4a Tindal Square.

Guidance on space improvements 2

Broad Area 5 - West End

2.61 This area covers the network of streets west of the viaduct including Duke Street, Broomfield Road, and Railway Street, focused on the rail and bus stations. The West End is Chelmsford's hidden quarter between the railway and Parkway, where public realm improvement will help reinvigorate business and leisure, stimulated by reuse of two major development sites guided by the Council's planning briefs for the former central campus and Marconi Works.

2.62 *Area objective*

- To give the area coherence and enhance its character, to provide a high quality streetscape fitting for a busy transport interchange, to provide the setting for a diverse range of business activity, important for the economy of the town, to support the establishment of a new north south axis through the former Marconi site, the station and the former central campus.

Space 5a - Station Square, Duke Street	Priority Space
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Description

2.63 This space has been the principal arrival point for Chelmsford town centre ever since the viaduct was built in the early 1840's. The existing 1980's station entrance building replaced the 1856 brick station although parts still remain including the 2-storey attachment to the viaduct adjacent to the Railway Tavern. The historic viaduct and Anne Knight building, provide good sense of place for the Duke Street space. The Anne Knight building carries significant historic meaning for Chelmsford temperance, anti-slavery and women's rights movements that Anne Knight led. This Listed Building marks the start of the former university campus site where redevelopment is due. To the north of the station is the Marconi site another major redevelopment site. A busy space with pedestrians, bus, cycles and taxis. The excessive carriageway and black tarmac surface is in poor condition and the clutter of uncoordinated street furniture makes for a poor pedestrian environment.

Objectives

2.64 Chelmsford's welcoming arrival space leading to quarters in four directions - east to the High Street, the West End, north to Marconi and the university, south to Central Campus and Central Park - traffic managed for buses and a civic space reclaimed for pedestrians. Coordinate walking, cycling and vehicle movements.

Guidance on possible future improvements

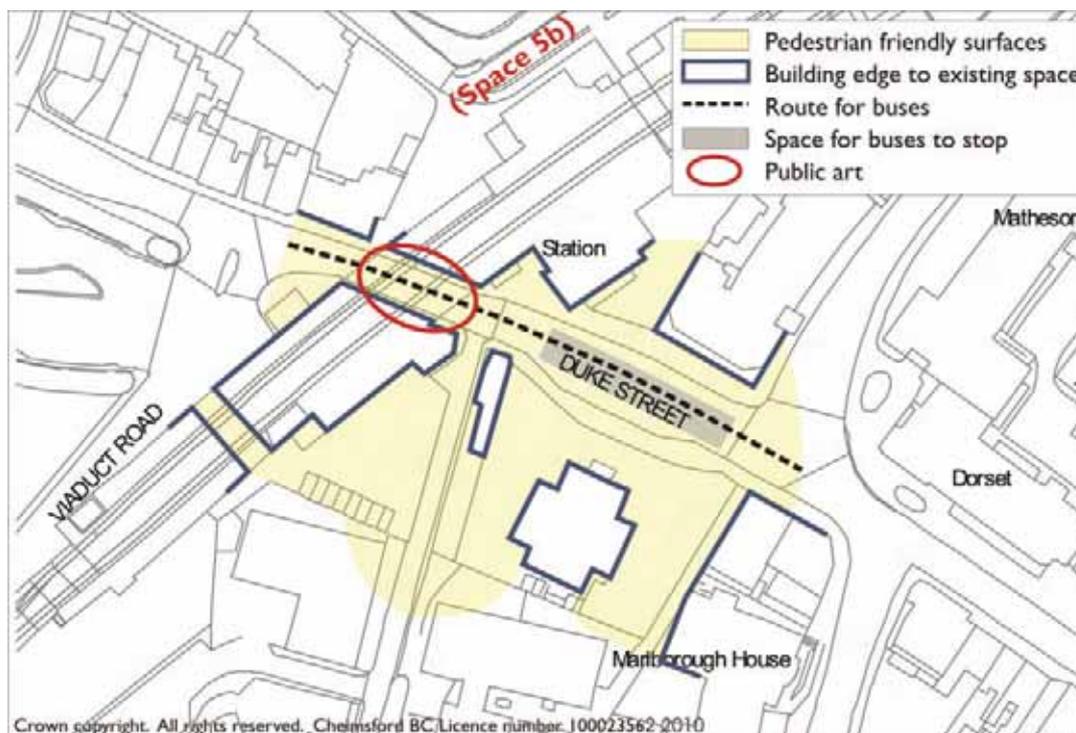
2.65 Redesign of the space allowing safe, pleasant and convenient pedestrian use whilst accommodating bicycle and vehicle movement through the space. A pedestrian friendly space extending across Duke Street to embrace and link the railway station with central campus redevelopment. Traffic movement to be reorganised to better accommodate buses and taxis.

2.66 Paving, lighting, seating and information about public transport and community activity / local events to be improved. Incorporation of the Railway Tavern, street cafes and active shop frontages.

2.67 Improvements are being pursued by CBC and ECC in partnership and are the subject of a project concept document.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Figure 11 Station Square - concept



Space 5b - Station north concourse, Railway Street

2.68 Description - Taxi rank and cycle parking.

2.69 Guidance - Exploit opportunity for improvement, such as remodelled taxi rank and cycle parking in connection with redevelopment of the Marconi Works and new pedestrian route and series of public squares through to New Street.

Space 5c - Former central campus and Central Park North

2.70 Description - Green space for informal recreation within site for major redevelopment.

2.71 Guidance - Reconfigured public open space within the redevelopment of central campus. Provide new north south and east west pedestrian links and high quality public realm.

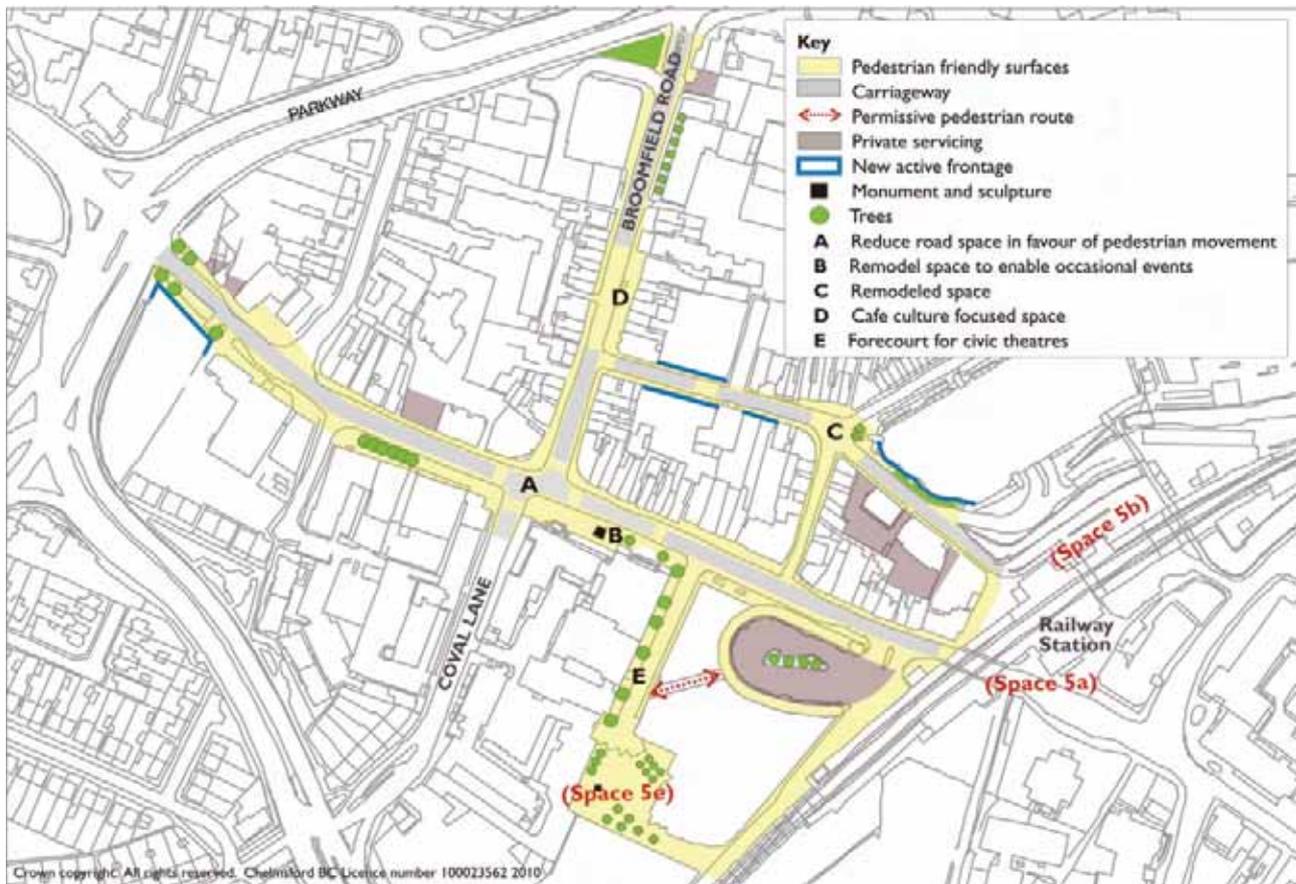
Space 5d - West End streets and Duke Street west	Priority Space
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Description

2.72 The West End is a neighbourhood at the edge of the town centre, and it is the busy gateway for public transport travellers to and from Chelmsford with the town's railway station and new bus station at its heart. The historic character of this area, largely within the West End Conservation Area, was created by the railway in the 1840's and is a local business / retail centre and a popular eating and drinking destination, also containing the town's theatres. The focus of the street network is Duke Street, Broomfield Road, Railway Street and Wells Street, which have poor surfaces and un-coordinated street furniture. These streets are also dominated by road space and outdated by traffic restrictions but suffers from peak time surges due to Townfield Street Car Park, 'kiss-and-ride' at the stations and vehicle cut throughs.

Guidance on space improvements 2

Figure 12 West End streets - concept

**Objectives**

A rejuvenated network of busy streets, supporting diverse business and cultural activity and reinforcing its dual identity as community focus and travel hub. Enhance users' experience by de-cluttering spaces, creating a restrained floorscape, accommodate buses, taxis, street parking and clearly distinguished pedestrian routes.

Guidance on possible future improvements

- Focus attention on Duke Street, Broomfield Road and Wells Street.
- Redesign of space starting with widened footways. Reduce road space.
- Resurface in good quality enduring materials. Coordinate public footways with private forecourts as a seamless surface.
- Designed-in street parking on Rainsford Road and Broomfield Road.
- Create opportunities for sitting, for outdoor art and cultural activities and areas for cafe tables and chairs.
- Plant trees to front edges of forecourts to contain views and improve microclimate.
- Rationalise street furniture with a consistent range of seats, bins, bollards and surface materials and tree pits and guards. Minimise number and prominence of traffic signs, and ensure only useful signs such as to the public car park are installed. Upgrade street lighting on buildings and columns.

2 Guidance on space improvements

The following are specific improvements ideas and should be read with the concept plan Figure 12:

- **A.** Duke Street and Broomfield Road crossroads redesigned reducing road space in favour of pedestrian movement.
- **B.** Civic centre frontage for occasional cultural events, rationalise street furniture.
- **C.** Railway Street and Wells Street junction - redesigned pedestrian friendly space allowing calmed vehicular through traffic.
- **D.** The Ship to 37 Broomfield Road - pedestrian friendly cafe culture space.
- **E.** Forecourt for Civic Theatres - Fairfield Road redesigned as a pedestrian priority street, whilst accommodating access to the Civic Centre and for theatre drop-offs.

Space 5e - Marconi Plaza, Fairfield Road

2.73 Description - High quality square framed by residential and commercial buildings next to the two theatres.

2.74 Guidance - Encourage new buildings with ground floor entrances and active frontage to enclose all four sides of the square as a new focus for activity in the West End.

Broad Area 6 - Moulsham Street

2.75 This broad area covers Moulsham Street between Parkway and St John's Road, paths and spaces either side of the street and the George Street car park. A highly distinctive part of Chelmsford where vehicle traffic and pedestrians co-exist in constricted street space and support a range of businesses. An improvement scheme for the northern half of the street is programmed for implementation.

2.76 Area objective

- To enhance the highly distinctive character of Moulsham Street and its related paths and car parks as the focus for the Old Moulsham neighbourhood and to boost independent retailing which is an important part of Chelmsford's retail attraction.

Space 6a - Moulsham Street, south of Parkway

Priority Space

Description

2.77 Moulsham Street is a long straight street linking the High Street to the Chelmsford Museum and Moulsham neighbourhood with a diverse mixture of activity including independent shops, public houses, and businesses. It is known to be the oldest street in Chelmsford town centre and was the location of the Roman town. At its northern end Parkway severed Moulsham Street in the 1960's. There is presently a choice of the underpass and surface crossing. It is a major route for pedestrian movement with narrow footways and a lack of direct connection to public car parks.

2.78 The space between Parkway and St. John's Road is the area of the 'future Moulsham Street' initiative set up in 2005, to improve the street for the future by enhancing its special character and reinforcing its unique function. Joint funding from Chelmsford Borough Council and Essex County Council is secured to enable implementation of an improvement scheme for the northern half of the street.

Guidance on space improvements 2

Figure 13 Moulsham Street - concept



Objectives

2.79 A rejuvenated historic shopping street; its distinctive character reinforced as a community focus and a visitor destination. To strengthen the streets character enhance the quality of the surfaces and its furniture and the shopfronts either side of the narrow street to reinforce the specialist retail function. To enhance users experience by improving ease of accessibility, community safety and conditions for cyclists, reduce vehicle speeds and manage parking.

Guidance on possible future improvements

2.80 Improve pedestrian footways in good quality and robust materials with frequent crossing opportunities across the street and flush surface entrances to all side roads.

2.81 Increased opportunities for people to sit down and to interact along the street. Cycle parking at appropriate points on the street. Lighting to relate to the Crompton arc lamp head ⁽¹⁾ and be attached to buildings wherever possible. Signage to be minimal in number and size, only necessary and useful signage, including for Oaklands Park, Chelmsford Museum and public car parks. Signage along with CCTV to respect historic street character.

2.82 Retain and design-in on-street parking from New Writtle Street southwards. Tree planting at the southern end of the street to help create a connection between the street and St. Johns Church grounds.

2.83 The northern stretch of Moulsham Street between Parkway to New Writtle Street is subject to a current street improvement project. Footways are being widened in an improved material with a gently meandering vehicle path incorporating delivery bays.

¹ R.E.B. Crompton was a pioneer of electric lighting schemes, including the arc lamp, and his company lit the main streets of Chelmsford in 1890 using his power station, Devon House in Anchor Street. One of Crompton's original lamps can be seen standing to the front of Chelmsford Museum.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Space 6b - Moulsham Street Car Park, George Street

2.84 Description - Car park supporting shopping and businesses.

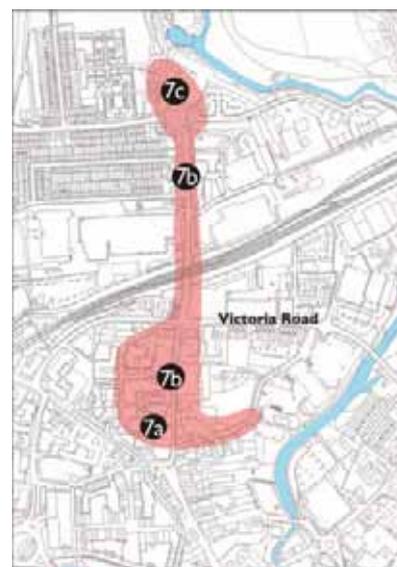
2.85 Guidance - Resurface George Street and the car park in a more appropriate material for the conservation area. Tree planting. Open up safe connecting routes into Moulsham Street, in particular adjacent to the public toilets. Remove clutter. Improve boundary treatments to rear of New London Road premises and private car parks.

Broad Area 7 - New Street

2.86 This area covers all of New Street from Tindal Square up to Anglia Ruskin University campus and includes the Cathedral, Cottage Place and the junction with Victoria Road. The cathedral grounds provide a tranquil setting for church and civic activities, while New Street acts as a strong axis between university and town.

2.87 Area objective:

- Protect and enhance the special character of the Cathedral precinct, enhance the historic character of New Street, assert the importance of New Street as an important pedestrian and cycling axis between the High Street and the University, provide an excellent setting for the civic functions of the area.



Space 7a - Cathedral precinct, New Street

2.88 Description - Calm retreat with pedestrian routes.

2.89 Guidance - Conserve tranquil character. Opportunity to create an improved space to an altered rear elevation to Shire Hall.

Space 7b - New Street	Priority Space
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Description

2.90 New Street is a long straight street linking the High Street to the university with a highly diverse mixture of town centre activity. At its southern end the historic street serves the Cathedral, law courts and offices, after the Victoria Road junction it serves the Marconi site, Atlantic Hotel, and businesses. It is a major axial route for pedestrian movement.

Objectives

2.91 An attractive walking route between High Street and the university, rejuvenated to favour pedestrians and revealing its civic, religious and industrial history. To strengthen character by reinforcing the streets historic setting, its civic, administrative and religious function. To enhance users' experience by improving pathways along the whole street and opening up links to land adjacent to the street, improving conditions for cyclists, reducing vehicle speeds and manage parking and improving community safety.

Guidance on space improvements 2

Guidance on possible future improvements

- Frequent crossing opportunities along the street and flush crossing points of all side roads.
- Good quality and robust paving materials.
- Increase opportunities for people to sit and interact along the street.
- Design-in an on-street safe cycle route. Clearly define on-street parking and integrated bays for deliveries.
- Enhance tree planting to create a boulevard character and improve connection with the Cathedral grounds.
- Pursue lighting attached to buildings where appropriate. CCTV and other street furniture provision should be appropriate for its historic setting.

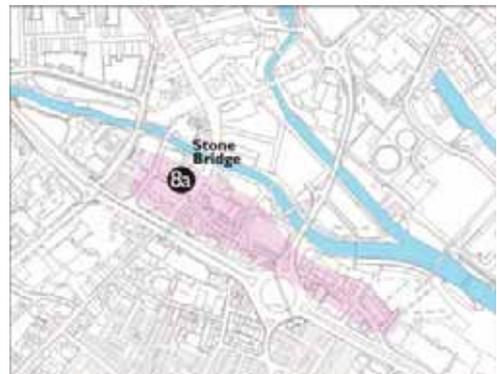
Space 7c - ARU Rivermead campus spaces and entrance concourse, Rectory Lane

2.92 Description - Spaces marking arrival at the university and progress through the riverside campus.

2.93 Guidance - Reduce dominance of road space in favour of pedestrians. Seek opportunities to encourage improved use of spaces and celebrate the river side location of the campus heart space.

Broad Area 8 - Baddow Road and Barrack Square

2.94 This broad area covers the shopping and restaurant streets of Baddow Road and Barrack Square to the west and the mixed use Baddow Road extending to Baddow Road car park to the east. Focused on Quadrant department store, it contains many independent shops, restaurants and small businesses. The public realm improvement to Baddow Road and Can Bridge Way in 1998 was key to the economic revival of the area.



2.95 Area objective:

- Reinforce the highly individual character of this part of the town centre as a pedestrian priority shopping and leisure attraction, focused on the section of Moulsham Street south of Stone Bridge.

Space 8a - Moulsham Street, Barrack Square / Friars Walk / Baddow Road

2.96 Description - Shopping and restaurant streets. Baddow Road continues eastwards into mixed commercial and community uses.

2.97 Guidance - Increase streetscene quality and consistency in the network of streets south of the Stone Bridge. Improve the riverside paved areas. Improve the pedestrian link to Baddow Road east of High Bridge Road with paving renewal.

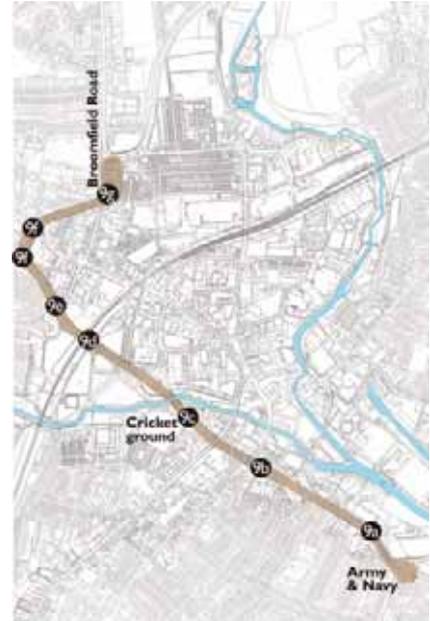
2 Guidance on space improvements

Broad Area 9 - Parkway

2.98 This includes all the spaces that lie alongside Parkway from the Army and Navy flyover to Broomfield Road. Parkway dominates perceptions on arrival to the town centre and acts as an impediment to pedestrian routes.

2.99 *Area objective:*

- Improve the landscape and spaces alongside Parkway to integrate the road with the surrounding street and path network, enhance crossing points for pedestrians ease of use and overcome its barrier effects, and minimise the amount and size of signage to ensure only essential and useful provision for users' benefit.



Space 9a - Army & Navy to Odeon roundabout

2.100 Description - Gateway into the town from the east and setting of Moulsham Mill. Flanked by new hotel and retail development, new housing, Salvation Army and a site for retail development.

2.101 Guidance - Develop a boulevard character through tree planting at Parkway edges and planting in the central reservation. Improve footways and subway access towards Great Baddow.

Space 9b - Parkway at Moulsham Street

2.102 Description - Busy pedestrian flows between Moulsham Street, north and south of Parkway.

2.103 Guidance - improved public spaces on both sides of Parkway. Street edge tree planting.

Space 9c - New London Road to Victoria Road South

2.104 Description - Walking route for cricket ground, setting of Sky Blue Pasture and Bell Meadow.

2.105 Guidance - Improve footways, park edge and river bridge.

Space 9d - Parkway at the viaduct

2.106 Description - Access to and setting of Central Park.

2.107 Guidance - widen subway access to Central Park. Tree planting at edges of Parkway. Widen the footway between the subway and Viaduct Road by seeking reduction of Network Rail fenced area.

Space 9e - Parkway at Coval Lane

2.108 Description - Busy pedestrian route between residential areas, offices and station.

Guidance on space improvements 2

2.109 Guidance - Improve pedestrian crossing. Tree planting. Improve landscape areas of margins and along central reservation.

Space 9f - Parkway at Rainsford Lane to Rainsford Road

2.110 Description - Main western entry into the town for pedestrians. Gateway for the West End.

2.111 Guidance - Improve pedestrian crossings and street edges. Tree planting and improve planted areas along central reservation.

Space 9g - Parkway at Broomfield Road

2.112 Description - Main northern entry for pedestrians and buses. Busy flows for station and grammar schools.

2.113 Guidance - Improve footways and pedestrian crossing points. Improve landscape areas of margins and planting along central reservation.

2 Guidance on space improvements

Appendix I: Evidence Base

The list below shows the key evidence used to inform the CTCPRS. A wider list of evidence relating to the whole Local Development Framework can be found on the Council's website at www.chelmsford.gov.uk

Local policy

Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (DPD)
Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan
Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Making Places SPD
Sustainable Development SPD

Other local publications

CBC Community Plan
CBC Public Art Strategy
CBC Cultural Strategy
CBC Car Parking Strategy
CBC Climate Change Strategy
CBC Biodiversity Action Plan 2008-2012
CBC Parks and Green Spaces Strategy
Chelmsford PPG17 Open Spaces Assessment
Chelmsford Historic Environment Characterisation Report 2006 - ECC for CBC
Chelmsford West End Conservation Area Character Appraisal
Chelmsford Central Conservation Area Character Appraisal
Chelmsford Moulsham Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal
Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area Character Appraisal

County/Regional publications

Essex Design Guide (2005) - Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA)
Urban Place Supplement (2007) - Essex County Council / EPOA
Local Transport Plan - ECC

National publications

Manual for Streets - Department for Transport
Manual for Streets 2 - Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation
Streets for All (East of England) - English Heritage
Paving the way - CABE / ODPM
The Value of Public Space - CABE Space
Paved with gold - CABE Space
Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Spaces - CABE Space
The principles of inclusive design - CABE
Town Centres Survey 2003-04 - Transport for London
Safer Places - ODPM
Crowded Places - Home Office
Design for Play - Play England
People Make Places - Demos

Appendix I: Evidence Base

Appendix 2: Specifying materials

Materials and street furniture types

The following list contains generic surface materials suitable for Chelmsford town centre, that are consistent with work that has taken place and will reinforce the identity of the centre.

- Footway surfaces – concrete flagstones 600 mm wide, Marshalls Perfecta slabs 600mm wide and Marshalls Perfecta 450 mm square (or equivalent), fine grain macadam, York Stone, granite pavements / slabs.
- Shared footway and vehicle surfaces – dressed granite setts, Marshalls Tegula blocks (or equivalent), clay brick-type pavements.
- Carriageway – where conditions allow, granite setts, Marshalls Tegula (or equivalent), other small element pavements.
- Kerbs – granite 300mm wide preferred, conservation kerb acceptable, drainage channels to complement kerbs.
- Tactile paving – in conservation areas within the town centre, match the tactile with existing paving rather than the intrusive standard red concrete paving at signal controlled junctions.

Detailing is essential to the quality of paving – consideration must be given to interfaces between different materials, junctions with buildings, insertion of inspection covers, incorporation of falls and drainage channels.

- Design the detail of paving layout as part of the scheme.
- Cut slabs and blocks to fit, rather than infilling awkward gaps with a more flexible material.
- Square-edged slabs and minimal joint size is preferable to chamfered edge slabs which collect dirt and are difficult to clean.
- Avoid concrete infill by detailing paving around the base of street furniture.
- Use ‘inset’ or ‘precinct’ inspection covers whereby the paving alignment and bond is continuous within the cover.

Street furniture

- Bins – use a standard circular bin type for visual consistency. Group bins with trees and other street furniture and position appropriately elsewhere avoiding over provision.
- Recycling bins – group recycling bins with other street furniture. Position very carefully in view of their bulk and potential obstruction.
- Commercial waste bins – where possible, should be in gated enclosures or yards, keep away from public thoroughfares.
- Seating – design seating into new schemes to allow sun and shade and good outlook. Ensure a minimum footway width of about 2m in front of seating.
- Cycle stands – ‘Sheffield’ or hoop stands painted black or stainless steel in new developments. Make space for cycle parking by removing other street furniture at the most convenient points. Bikes requires a 2m deep parking space without obstruction of pedestrians, so a clear footway width is necessary without pinch points caused by trees or other street furniture.

Appendix 2: Specifying materials

- Bollards – the general presumption is against the use of bollards in the town centre. Kerbs, strengthened paving and parking controls should be sufficient to deter cars overrunning footways. Where a barrier is needed, use trees or benches in preference to bollards.
- Guard rail – while safety remains paramount, the general presumption is against the use of guard rail in the town centre wherever there is a busy flow of pedestrians and vehicle traffic is light. Removal of guard rail releases approximately 0.5m additional footway and enhances character.

Installations of specialist equipment in the streetscene

The Highway Authority in consultation with the local planning authority deals with requests to install various specialist equipment including new lighting, CCTV, rising bollards for traffic control, electronic information points and wi-fi antenna.

- New lighting schemes should be the subject of a brief about lighting requirements, light levels, layout of installation. Options for lanterns, posts and brackets should be reviewed by relevant professional disciplines.
- Consider all specialist installations with regard to avoiding obstruction to pedestrian movement, avoiding visual intrusion in a sensitive townscape or setting of historic building.
- Remove any dispensable posts and bollards before installing the new equipment.

Signs and lines

Signs – traffic signs, parking, CCTV and direction signs should be positioned so as to minimise the number of posts. Signs should be wall mounted where it is possible to obtain wayleaves from building owners. Place signs on lighting columns rather than a separate post, contact ECC street lighting designer for advice regarding column structural integrity.

Road markings should be minimised in the town centre. Avoid areas of road with white cross hatching and replace with footway or rumble strip when the opportunity arises.

Use narrow, primrose lines for parking restrictions across the town centre which is generally all part of a number of conservation areas.

Street trees and planting

Use of street trees is encouraged as a means of improving character, providing shade and drainage and offsetting carbon emissions. Further information on ‘planting in the public realm’ is available in Making Places SPD page 67.

- Specify species that have an interesting leaf and bark colour and regular form, and do not drop leaves, petals or residue that will cause a nuisance to the cleanliness of the street, such as avoiding ornamental, fruiting and maintenance intensive species.
- Ensure that adequate light can reach ground spaces.
- Plant trees at ground level where possible with a free draining pit, rather than in containers. Minimise the extent of tree pits, finished flush with adjoining paved surfaces and avoid any upstand around tree pits that would interfere with pedestrian movement or safety.
- Ensure a suitable management programme is in place, including adequate watering in the first year of planting.
- Avoid trees with shallow roots where heavy footfall occurs.
- Use root barriers in the vicinity of underground utilities.

Appendix 3: Control of development on private forecourts

Appendix 3: Control of development on private forecourts

Managing development on forecourts

Many business premises own a forecourt adjoining the public footway and in most cases the two flow together in open street space. The private forecourt is essentially public realm and owners have a responsibility to the convenience, comfort and safety of the public. Businesses are at liberty to place goods and signs on their forecourt but still have to give common sense consideration to obstruction, safety and unsightliness. Sometimes works within forecourts require planning permission.

- Extending the building out into the forecourt – generally extending buildings forward is not encouraged. In town centre streets, buildings form a building line, sometimes a continuous face, sometimes with recesses and projections. This creates character and legibility in the streetscene. Each building has an alignment in relation to its immediate neighbours. A building should not project forward to the extent of disrupting this building line relationship with the adjoining buildings, or disrupting the legibility or spatial character of the street as a whole.
- A building projection will not be supported where it forms a hidden corner that would attract litter or anti-social behaviour; creates a blank side wall construing a visual intrusion or has a roof form that is in conflict with built form and character.
- Enclosing forecourts – permanent enclosure of forecourt space at the front of business premises will not usually be supported in any of the following circumstances: a footway narrower than 1.8m; obstruction to a public desire line; visually intrusive and disruption of the legibility of the street; excessive height of an enclosing structure; inappropriate materials detracting from streetscene character and appearance.

Installations within forecourts

- There is a presumption against permanent advertisement panels on private forecourts.
- Cafes and restaurants can use private forecourts for tables and chairs.
- Tables and chairs on the public highway require a licence under the Highways Act, based on criteria relating to free passage of pedestrians. A planning permission for a change of use to a restaurant does not mean that tables and chairs can be placed on the highway – a separate licence is still necessary.

Property boundaries on street frontages

Property owners can undertake minor works without planning permission but these can be influenced in connection with planning applications for other development on the site.

- Gaps between building fronts should be filled by solid structures, such as walls, containing secure doors or gates, using materials typical to the street and its buildings.
- Rear and side boundaries on a street frontage should have robust walls or railings incorporating gates and doors. Palisade fencing and timber garden fencing should be avoided unless accompanied by hedging.
- Also see section on enclosing forecourts above.

Appendix 3: Control of development on private forecourts

Works by the Highway Authority for private property access

Private forecourts may be paved to match the public footway at the owners expense.

When the paving embraces footway and private forecourt, property boundaries can be delineated by metal studs flush to the surface or a steel strip.

Car parking on forecourts is unacceptable within the town centre because of the intrusion into the pedestrian environment. While there is no means of development control for parking that is ancillary to the use, planning advice should be obtained by the Highway Authority before agreeing to construct a dropped kerb and pavement overrun for vehicles. Dropped kerbs should not be installed:

- on busy pavements with constant pedestrian movement;
- where the footway is narrow;
- if there is less than 5m clear depth of private land;
- where parked cars will interfere with the free flow of pedestrians;
- where parked cars will disrupt the street scene;
- where existing walls or trees contributing to character would be removed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This publication is available in alternative formats including Braille, large print, audio tape and other languages. Please call 01245 606330.

Minicom: 01245 606444

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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE