

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Torquay Rethink Town Centre Masterplan

A Vision for the Heart of the English Riviera.

October 2014





Important note to the reader

This is a draft document for consultation. It has been produced to support and assist the delivery of key elements of the existing Adopted Torbay Local Plan and the new emerging Torbay Local Plan, which the Council expects to adopt in 2015.

The final version of this document will be amended prior to adoption to reflect some or all of the following:

- Comments received on this draft document during consultation;
- Any amendments to relevant policies in the newly adopted local plan;
- Any government policy changes

The final version of this document will be adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document on the basis of the existing Torbay Local Plan, therefore coming into the planning system on a formal basis before the new emerging Torbay Local Plan is adopted.

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PART 1 Background



Introduction

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1.1 The Purpose of the Masterplan Document

1.1.1 The Brief

In January 2014 the Mott MacDonald team (Lavigne Lonsdale, Stride Treglown, iCube, Urban Movement) were appointed to deliver masterplans for specific areas of Torquay – the town centre and the gateway site at Edginswell. This has followed their involvement in the neighbourhood planning work with the Princes Foundation since 2012.

The brief for both sites is included in Appendix 1 but the main thrust of the masterplans is to;

- Be deliverable, commercially viable and realistic
- Respond and reflect the emerging Neighbourhood Plans and new Local Plan,
- Understand the uniqueness of the Torquay and the individual sites,
- Build on the sense of place,
- Consider 'game changing' ideas

The process of producing the masterplans has been carried out over a six month period and has included a significant amount of consultation and preparation which is identified in this report (refer to Section 3). A similar study has also been carried out for Paignton town centre and land at Collaton St Mary which has been done by a separate team that included Stride Treglown.

1.1.2 Torquay Today

Torquay is the largest town in Torbay. The economy is centred on tourism as well as a strong retail sector although this has suffered over the last 5 years. With a high class natural environment focussed on the harbour and coast, makes the town an attractive place for visitors and investors. However, there are also communities with significant levels of deprivation and the economy has traditionally been hampered by infrastructure constraints.

Torquay needs planned growth and sensitive development (including new homes and jobs) to help deliver the social and economic changes needed to arrest decline whilst also protecting its strong environmental assets and tourism value.



In order to rise to the challenges of the 21st century and to improve Torbay's commercial and retail position, it is proposed that Torquay retains its role as the core shopping area, but that it needs to develop as a multi- functional centre with improved retail and new commercial and residential floorspace.

1.1.3 Masterplan 1 | Town Centre

The town centre effectively covers the harbour, Fleet Street and Union Street and the adjoining context. The Centre has declined from being a leading retail destination since the late 1960s.

However, there are a number of major development opportunities within the Town Centre which could provide comprehensive renewal by expanding the retail offer, providing a wider mix of uses and delivering improved public spaces. This includes areas along Union Street at the heart of the Town Centre, offering the opportunity to improve Torquay's retail offer, attract town centre living and leisure.

There are other opportunity areas such as the coach park, the harbour front and adjoining the town hall. In addition there are a number of buildings in the centre which are of a poor standard and visually unattractive. In some cases these buildings are underutilized and would greatly enhance the street scene if redeveloped. There is in addition a great opportunity to create attractive areas of public open space where people can visit, meet and relax, and provision of other green infrastructure assets such as street trees will provide cooling, shade and cleaner air.

There are inherent land use zones and character areas to the Town Centre which means that it can be sub divided into broad areas, as shown in Figure 1.0 This includes :

- Civic & Parks Quarter (Upton)
- Retail (Union Street & Fleet Walk)
- Harbour/Tourism Area (Parade/Strand)

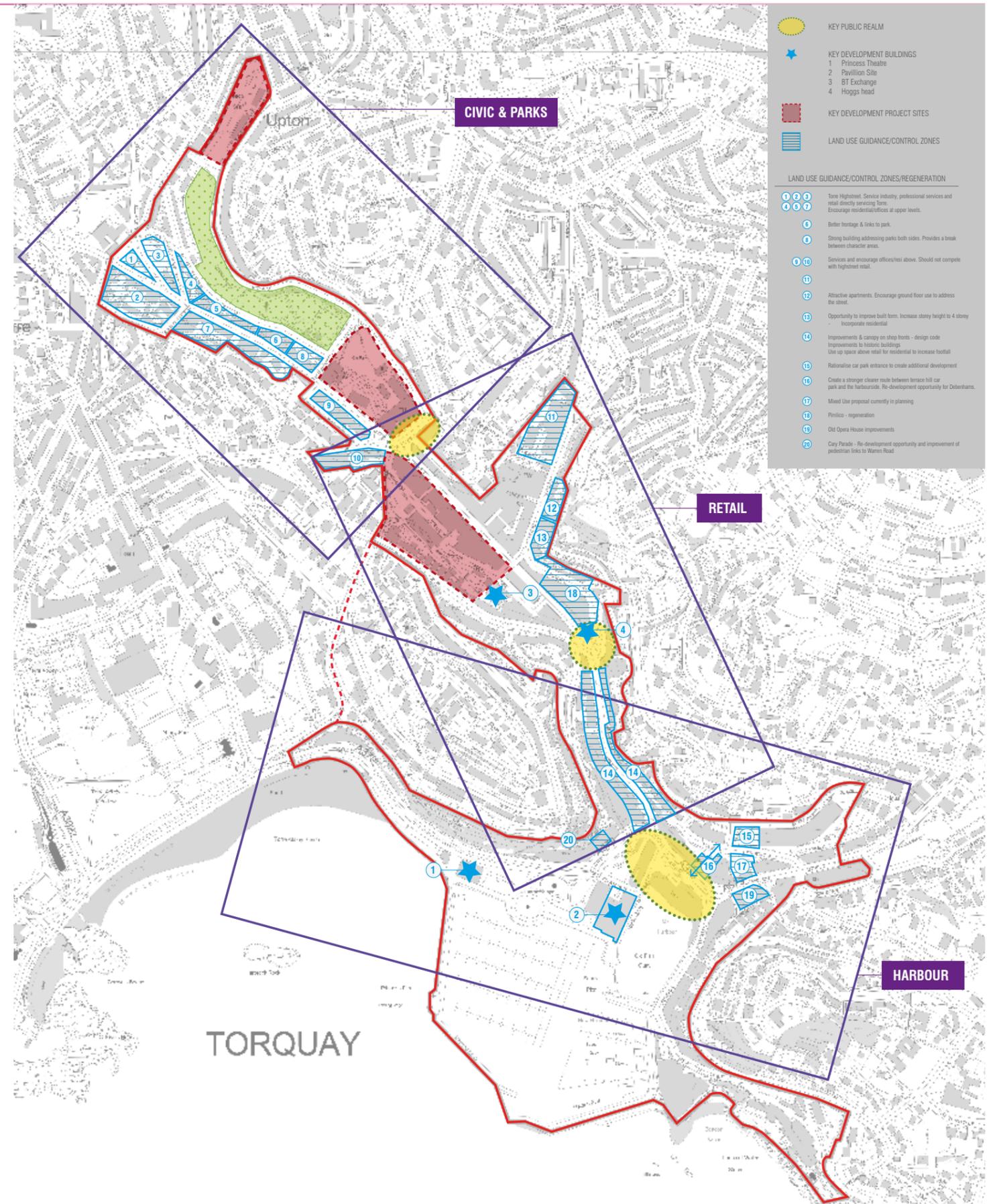


Figure 1: Inherent Land Use and Character Areas



Existing Policy Context

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2.1 The Purpose of the Masterplan Document

This summary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in March 2012 provides an overview of the NPPF.

This National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan "should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise". It is desirable that local planning authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place and part of these plan is supportive guidance such as the gateway and town centre plans.

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy suggests there are three dimensions to sustainable development which translate into three roles for the planning system:

1. Economic Role

2. Social Role

3. Environmental Role

The NPPF is guidance for local authorities in drawing up plans, and a material consideration in determining applications.

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

- *For plan-making the presumption means that Local Planning Authorities (LPA) should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. For decision making the presumption means*
- *Approving applications that accord with the plan without delay in the absence of a plan or policies, granting permission unless adverse impacts would demonstrably outweigh benefits when assessed against the NPPF*

Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach for the presumption in favour of sustainable development Neighbourhoods should:

- *develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans,*
- *plan positively to support local development,*
- *identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable development that is consistent with the Neighbourhood plan to proceed*



Core planning principles in the NPPF are that planning should:

1. be genuinely plan-led, with up to date, positive local and neighbourhood plans that empower local people and support predictable and efficient planning decisions.
2. be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
3. “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. ...
4. “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
5. “take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;
6. “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);
7. “contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.
8. “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
9. “promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
10. “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;
11. “actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
12. “take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

2.2 The Emerging Local Plan

The emerging Local Plan and Economic Strategy can be found at the following web links:

The Local Plan

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/your-services/planning/strategic-planning/new-local-plan.htm>

The Economic Strategy

<http://www.torbaydevelopmentagency.co.uk/dbimages/efstrategy.pdf>

Relevant policies that relate to the study area include;

Policy SDT2 - Torquay Town Centre and Harbour

Torquay Town Centre will develop as the largest retail and leisure centre of the Bay and become the key sub-regional retail and leisure destination. This will help provide an improved, vibrant and more enjoyable shopping and leisure environment with better highstreet retail, eating and leisure facilities. Developments within Torquay Town Centre and Harbour Cluster should comprise a mix of suitable town centre uses and deliver the indicative priorities, and sequence set out below:

Five Years:

- *Improve the accessibility of the centre as a whole and from key access points, including Torquay Railway Station, Torre Station, Lymington Road Coach Station, and Lower Union Street Car Park.*
- *Start to create a unique and more focused shopping experience with a distinct main high street offer in the Town centre, including new housing and a leisure based retail offer at Torquay Harbour – this will provide a ‘point of difference’ to complement the rest of Torquay Town Centre, connected by Fleet Street/ Fleet Walk, with wide range of retail and other town centre uses, making Torquay the complete package for residents and visitors.*
- *Deliver visual and physical landmarks to increase legibility.*

- *Deliver an improved provision of quality retail facilities and other town centre uses on lower floors with high quality residential and office space above.*
- *Better water-based transport links for leisure and commuting.*
- *Promote excellent design, which provides opportunities for economic prosperity within an attractive town centre environment.*
- *Support the redevelopment of key sites / facilities. Incorporate green infrastructure assets into development such as green space for relaxation and healthy living and street trees for cooling, shade and cleaner air.*

Over Five Years:

- *Comprehensive redevelopment and renewal of Union Street/ Temperance Street to add physical depth to the main high street shopping area and to accommodate larger format retail units*
- *Comprehensive redevelopment of some secondary shopping areas*
- *Mechanisms put in place to secure potential Harbour extension delivery*
- *Better, more sustainable, transport links along A379 especially to the Torquay Town Centre and Harbour area.*
- *Continued comprehensive redevelopment and renewal of Union Street/ Temperance Street to add physical depth to the main high street shopping area and to accommodate larger format retail units*
- *Continued urban renewal / refurbishment of poor quality / under-performing areas.*

2.3 The Emerging Neighbourhood Plan

The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan has been developed in parallel with the Torbay Local Plan being prepared by Torbay Council. More than that, each plan informs and strengthens the other. The local plan (titled "a landscape for success") provides the big picture for the whole Bay, and the neighbourhood plans for Brixham, Paignton and Torquay add detail about local outcomes, projects and sites.

The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) is on-going. All current Community Partnership statements and draft TNP is on the TNP website - <http://torquaynp.org/>

Nine community partnerships have been set up across Torquay, each one aiming to ensure that the needs and aspirations of its area are included in the plan. Those partnerships are:

1. Barton and Watcombe
2. Cockington, Chelston and Livermead
3. Ellacombe
4. Shiphay and The Willows
5. Hele and Lower Barton
6. St Marychurch, Maidencombe and District
7. Torre and Upton
8. Torquay town centre
9. Wellswood and Torwood

The Gateway masterplan area falls within the Shiphay and The Willows CP area. The Town Centre masterplan area lies within Tormohun, which incorporates the Torre and Upton CP and the Town Centre groups. A smaller but significant part of Ellacombe (around Market Street) is also included, and a portion of Wellswood (around the Imperial Hotel just along from the harbour).

A neighbourhood plan has to comply with national planning policy, European guidance and regulation, and the local plan whose area it lies within. A statement of compliance for this plan is included in the plan. The plan also aims to complement and not conflict

with other plans, particularly the neighbourhood plans for Brixham and Paignton.

The plan, in common with the local plan, covers the period from now until 2032 and beyond. The development proposals it contains relate to the period up to 2027 in compliance with the local plan's development horizon.

The plan is for the whole of Torquay and for each of its neighbourhoods, aimed at securing sustainable development to promote investment in the town's physical and social fabric, strengthening its economy, conserving its heritage, promoting its natural beauty and growing a safer and healthier community.

The plan has the following policies related to the town centre:

1 Transport and Movement

The flow of traffic into Torquay is about to be improved by the opening of the South Devon Link Road, bypassing Kingskerswell and providing a link to the Torbay Ring Road. However, there remains a need to improve access to the town centre, sea front and car parks, for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

The TNP suggests approaching the town centre and sea front routes become confusing, unclear and indirect. Signposting is poor or absent, routes veer away from destinations, the sense of welcome is diminished for visitors and investors, and residents are inconvenienced, all of which has a significant negative effect on the town. The plan endorses changing the one way system into and out of the town centres. It acknowledges that the most direct route towards the town (Higher Union Street) only carries traffic out of and away from the central area. It proposes that this flow should be reversed and a new, direct route into the town centre provided.

The TNP also suggests the coach station is poorly located and should be moved to be adjacent to the railway station where enhanced facilities can be provided for travellers arriving by train or coach. This is a better point of arrival, will provide a better first impression of the town for visitors, and is more easily accessible for coaches. Relocation of the coach station will also release the existing site for new development, which should incorporate improvements to Upton Park.

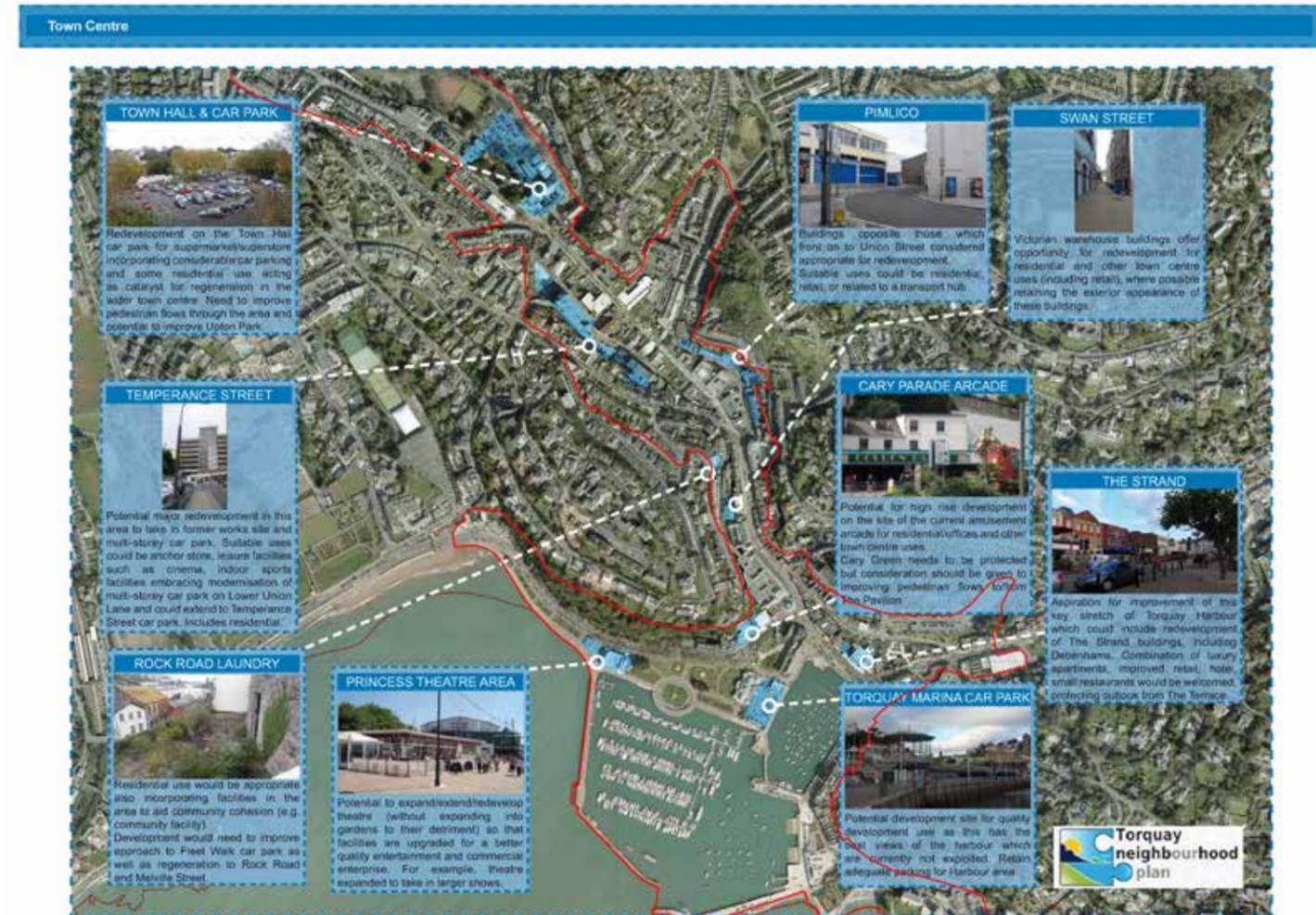
2 Town centre and key strategic development opportunity areas

Torquay town centre is ready for new investment. The central area has a strong retail history, with distinct character areas having developed to serve different functions which largely continue today. The upper part of the town is predominantly used by local residents whereas the lower part of the town and the harbour area is more strongly aimed at the visitor. There are more cafés, restaurants and pubs around the harbour, more banks and other commercial premises in the upper town, more small independent retailers around the market, and so on.

The plan identifies key areas with scope for major redevelopment in the town centre, to act as catalysts to support regeneration of its economy and attract stronger investment in its future.

Key opportunities for developments of strategic significance in the town centre / harbour area:

- a. between Pimlico and Lower Union Street – scope for a major redevelopment scheme providing the potential for high quality retail and other commercial activities, including an anchor store, other mixed uses and residential use of upper floors.
- b. the Marina car park – scope for a landmark development, of an appropriate design to a high quality, to make a striking and positive contribution to the setting of the harbour and surroundings.
- c. the Princess Theatre area – scope for a new theatre, providing a facility of regional importance in association with a creative arts and culture centre.





Consultation



3.1 Process

The consultation process has included the following ;

- 1st Public Exhibition 1st April 2014
- 1st Stakeholder Workshop 2nd April 2014
- 2nd Public Exhibition 21st May 2014
- 2nd Stakeholder Workshop 21st May 2014
- Survey Monkey (for the 2nd Public Exhibition) ran from the May to August 2014
- A number of stakeholder meetings with the following organisations- Torquay neighbour forum, business owners in Edginswell, land owners in Edginswell, developers in the town centre, local community groups and representatives.

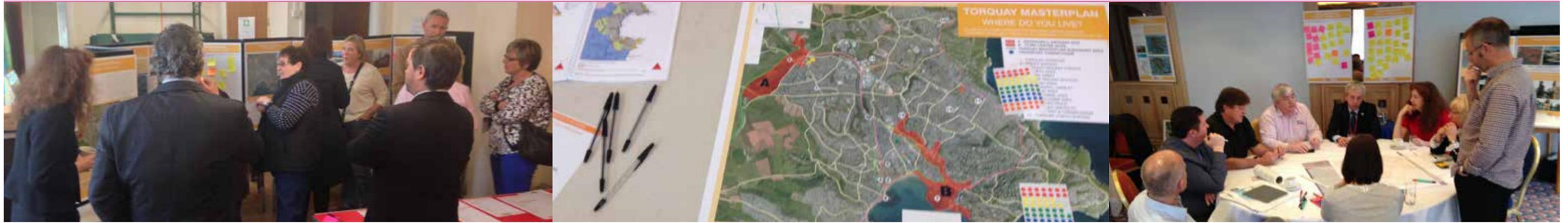
This work has been instrumental in terms of defining the areas of change and the content of the masterplan. Some of the main findings have been;

- Torquay has Unique Selling Points and Aspirations
- Torquay and the Bay has much to offer.
- Torquay is located in one of the Country's most attractive and aspiration Counties
- It has a unique and beautiful coastal, maritime and landscape setting
- It has outstanding schools
- It will have improved road and rail links (by 2015)
- It will have super fast broadband (by 2016)
- It has a rich history which is translated in its architectural merit.
- It has a vast amount of leisure activities on its doorstep.
- It has a strong and passionate community.

Through the process of talking to stakeholders, councilors and the community, the town's aspirations include;

- *Building on the maritime and harbour experience*
- *Creating a vibrant, varied and higher quality evening economy which includes retail, restaurants, cafés & night clubs for all ages.*
- *Creating a thriving town centre which focuses on both a regional retail offer and a retail/leisure offer with a mix of high street stores and independent high quality retailers.*
- *Creating a cultural destination, linked to its growing creative industries.*
- *Providing an environment that allows and helps businesses to start, expand and grow within the town and compete in local, regional, national and international markets.*
- *Provide a culture that encourages excellence and ambition.*
- *Create a town where people have the opportunity to grow up in the town and stay in the town and get high quality, high value jobs and retain the knowledge economy within the Bay.*

As part of the masterplan process, a comprehensive consultation process has been carried out to inform the masterplan. This augments the previous work that the team carried out as part of the Princes Foundation with the Neighbourhood Forum.



Objectives:

Movement :

- i. Make it easier to move around and to find your bearings in the town, particularly when you arrive as a visitor by both car and by public transport (train/ coach/ bus/taxi).
- ii. Make it easier to find the parking and to improve the parking quality and standard.
- iii. Consider how buses and taxi's use the town centre.

The Harbour and sea front at the Heart of the Town :

- i. The water front has always been the main attractor in the town but, it needs to be looked after, improved in order for it to become a world renowned harbour destination. The harbour is the 'Covent Garden ' of Torquay.
- ii. Public transport (buses and taxis) are an important part of the Bay. However, the presence of buses on the Strand needs to be carefully considered so that an improved pedestrian experience can be created on the most valuable asset of the town- the harbour.

There is a significant amount of public feeling regarding the Carey Green proposals and how to utilise the existing Pavilion. Some of the community ideas have included moving the pavilion into the inner harbour and much work was carried out looking into the viability for this. For the purpose of this document, we have identified current schemes that are in planning at present but have not identified them as 'agreed' solutions. Some work does need to be carried out around the marina and Carey Green/Parade in order to make the most of this unique location.

The Town Centre :

- i. attract better quality retailers and an improved offer
- ii. possibly reduce retail extent and concentrate on an improved offer
- iii. encourage a mix of retail offers including high street 'named' retailers in addition to independent, high quality retailers. The retail offer varies from the Harbour to the Union Street experience. This area needs to become the 'Oxford Street' of Torquay.
- iv. needs to encourage vertical mixed uses (apartments and offices above shops)
- v. needs to enhance some of the architectural historic buildings and remove / re-develop some of the less attractive modern /run down premises- possibly encourage change in uses from retail to residential in order to increase the footfall in the centre.
- vi. The town centre has character areas which need to be enhanced;
 - *The Civic and Urban Park Quarter*
 - *The Retail Quarter*
 - *The Harbour and Leisure Quarter*
 - *The Specialist Local Centre (Torre)*

A summary of the various consultation events can be found in Appendix 2 which is a separate document.

PART 2 Town Centre (incl. Harbour & Sea Front)



Context Issues

4.0

4.1 Plan Areas and Baseline Context

Social Demographics :

In summary, the population of Torquay is older and more affluent than the average in Great Britain. The Acorn data does not include population projections but we know the UK's population is getting older as average life expectancy continues to rise and as a consequence of the high birth rates evident for the period 1945 to 1970 (sometimes referred to as the baby boom), followed by the long term decline in fertility rates seen since. People will live longer, with more active lives, working longer, but are still likely to need more intensive care and support at the end of their lives.

There are 3 main groups in Torquay

- Prudent pensioners (13% of Torquay population):

These are comfortably off retired people found in many seaside towns and elsewhere around the country. There are many over 75s as well as younger retired people. A lot of the households are pensioner couples or singles. Retirement homes are also common. Much of the housing in these areas is flats, either converted or low rise purpose built. Many are owner occupied and often of high value; others are privately rented. Holiday homes are also common. Residents tend to be well educated, and employment for those who are not retired tends to be in managerial and professional occupations. Most of the people in this group have a comfortable standard of living, having provided for their old age with above average levels of savings and investments. Although predominantly of retirement age, householders are far

from inactive. They are prepared to take on charity and voluntary work and show a marked propensity to be members of bodies such as the National Trust. Many have an interest in fine art and antiques. These sophisticated senior citizens are both financially smart and socially active. They have ensured that they will enjoy a relaxed and refined retirement.

- Blue collar groups (16% of Torquay population):

These are communities where most employment is in traditional blue-collar occupations. Families and retired people predominate with some young singles and single parents. Most property is two or three bedroom terraced housing. Many are being bought on a mortgage although renting from private landlords, local authorities and housing associations is common in some areas. Levels of educational qualifications tend to be low. Most employment is in factory and other manual occupations. There are many shop workers as well. Incomes range from moderate to low and unemployment is higher than the national average, as is long term illness. There are pockets of deprivation in this group. Car ownership is below the national average, and cars tend to be lower value and often bought second hand. Some of the better off areas within this group have modest levels of savings and investments, but many find it hard to save regularly from modest incomes. There are some households with high levels of debt. The tabloid press is favoured reading and other interests include camping, angling, bingo and horse racing, as well as watching cable TV and going to the pub. These people have a modest lifestyle but most are able to get by.

Torquay as a town has a population of 65,245 people (2011 Census) which has grown over the last 10 years and is expected to increase by 13% by 2026.

- Affluent greys (14% of Torquay population) :

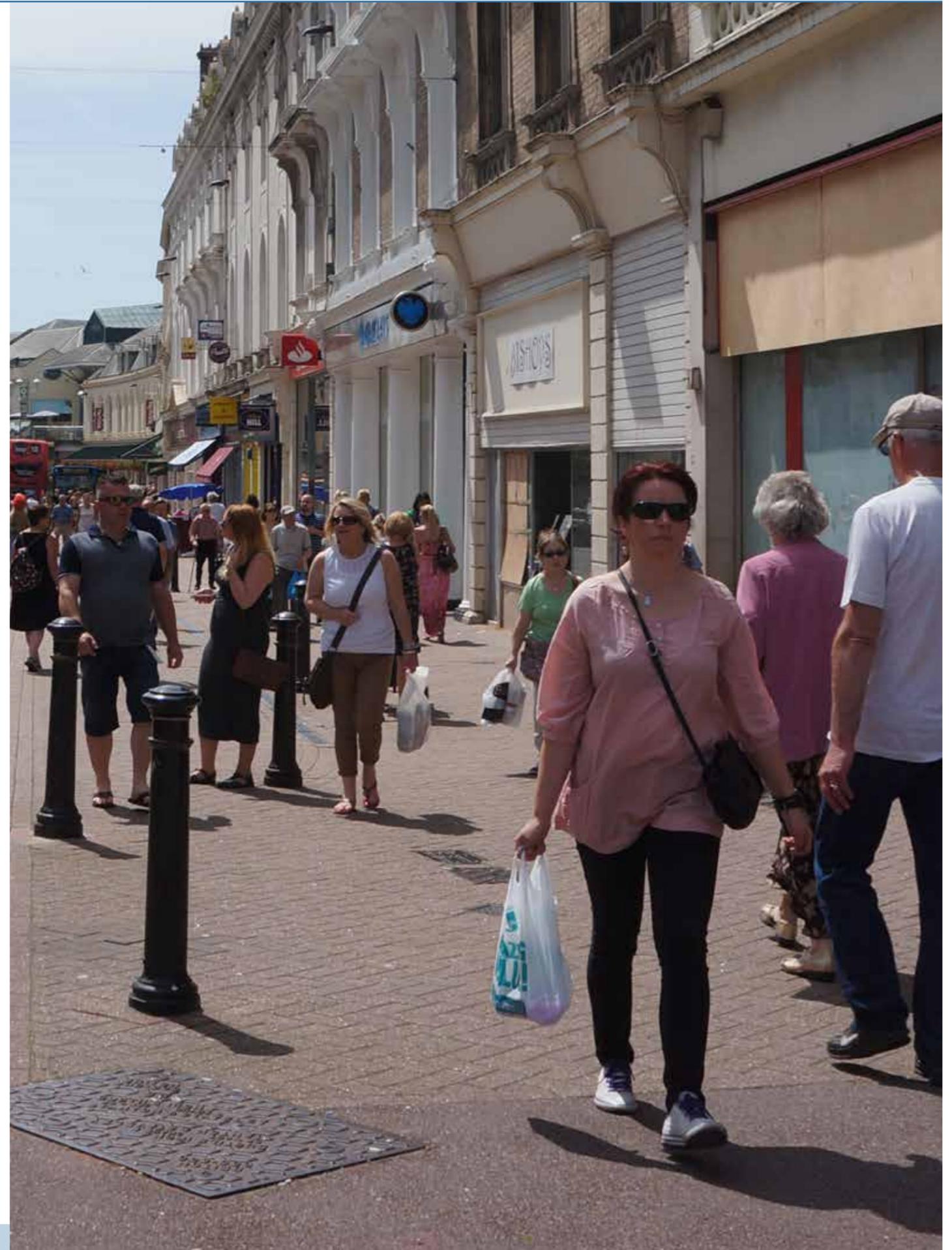
These people tend to be older empty nesters and retired couples. Many live in rural towns and villages, often in areas where tourism is important. Others live in the countryside where the economy is underpinned by agriculture. The Affluent Greys are prosperous, live in detached homes and many have two cars. Employment is typically in managerial and professional roles. Given the rural locations, there is also a significant number of farmers. These are high income households and even those that have retired have good incomes. The majority own their homes outright, and with no mortgage to pay are able to invest their money in a wide range of financial products. In their leisure time they enjoy gardening and golf. They appreciate good food and wine, and will go on regular holidays. These older, affluent people have the money and the time to enjoy life.

Torquay has a higher proportion of the following groups than seen in Great Britain (a full description of these groups can be accessed here)

http://www.esds.ac.uk/doc/6069/mrdoc/pdf/6069_acorn_userguide.pdf

- affluent greys,
- aspiring singles
- settled suburbia
- prudent pensioners
- post industrial families
- blue collar roots

There is also a significant issue related to people classified as “hard pressed” in Torquay than in great Britain. These groups are concentrated in areas close to the north of the Town Centre and within the Town Centre and equate to approximately 15,500 people. This does have a knock on effect on the Town centre in terms of the type of shops, the type of café’s and the general retail experience along the upper sections of Union Street. Clearly more needs to be done to reduce the percentage of families and individuals that are hard pressed but more also needs to be done to encourage other demographics into the heart of Torquay so that a more balanced community can be maintained in the town centre.



Employment :

Torquay and the Bays employment sectors are varied and include tourism, professional services, Language Schools, hi-tec industries (communications), agri/maritime R&D etc. These growing markets have been identified in the LEP strategy (Local Enterprise Partnership) Strategic Economic Plan 2014-2030, regional objectives (for Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay) which include;

- *By 2030, there is distinctive legacy of 'better jobs' from the investment in Hinkley, marine and other transformational assets*
- *By 2030, proportion of businesses in knowledge economy has increased*
- *By 2030 there is a ratio of high/medium tech businesses matching regional*
- *By 2020, HoTSW (heart of the South West) is recognised as one of the best places in the UK to start and grow a small business*
- *2020 the natural capital of the HoTSW area is enhanced and of increasing value to businesses and communities.*
- *By 2030 increase the competitiveness of our businesses so GVA/hour matches national average*
- *By 2020, reduce youth and long term unemployment by half**
- *By 2020, create an extra 50,000* jobs*
- *By 2030, increase average wages to match national average maximising productivity & employment opportunities Building on our*
- *By 2030 reduce rail journey times from Plymouth to London by 40+*minutes*
- *By 2020, 100% of the population able to connect to Super fast Broadband*
- *By 2020, 60%* of adult population qualified to L3 or above and 40*to Level 4 or above*
- *By 2030, deliver 170,000 new homes*

In relation to Torquay, those objectives translate into the following ;

- *Delivery of the South Devon Link Road by 2015.*
- *Securing and Delivering the Edginswell Business Park..... Securing and delivering town centre office/employment sites.*
- *Assisting with the improvement and growth of Kerswell Gardens for B1 & B2 employments uses in an improved business/employment park environment due to its strategic location next to the South Devon Link Road.*
- *Increasing the quality and turnover of the tourism market.*

Current growth forecasts (based on TDA business barometer survey dated winter 2013/2014) suggest that there is a growing confidence in the market and that there is a latent demand for the following in Torquay ;

- *Quality open plan office accommodation of varying sizes, primarily up to 500sq ft but also a smaller percentage for 3,000-5000 sq ft and over 20,000 sq ft. The location for these offices is in the town centre and also at Edginswell. These will require good road access, good broadband speeds and ample parking provision.*
- *There is a growing demand for incubator units and grown on space. The innovation centre at Upton has 100% occupancy and there are plans to increase the offer with an additional building.*



Innovation centre

Tourism & Leisure :

- *“Torbay has a fantastic brand – the English Riviera – and a wonderful tourism offer. There are some very positive signs of a changing tide for tourism. In general terms, the English Riviera is seeing increased visitor numbers and value, lengthening of the tourism season, increased spend, increased occupancies and overnight stays, growth in overseas visitor numbers and new tourism related development. For example, visitor spend in 2011 was 8% higher than in 2006.”* (text from Torbay Local Plan, pg. 97)
- *“Torbay is a resort in transition. Whilst there are signs of positive change, it also exhibits problems faced by traditional seaside resorts. The Tourism Strategy 2010 – 2015 ‘Turning the Tide’ was adopted in 2009 to reverse this decline. The Torbay Trends Report found that Torbay performed above the South West Region in terms of visitor numbers and surveyed business opinions. The ambition for Torbay is to develop tourism in a sustainable and competitive manner, to regain and enhance Torbay’s role as a premier tourism destination and to become the events capital of the South West.”* (text from Torbay Local Plan, pg. 97)
- Total value of tourism and leisure industry in Torbay in 2013 estimated at £445 million (according to English Riviera Tourism Company) – that’s a 3% increase on 2012 and the third year in a row of tourism growth.
- The harbour area of Torquay forms one of a number of Core Tourism Investment Areas in Torbay identified within the Council’s new Local Plan. The harbour plays an important role as an area to support the changing nature of the tourism industry, the development of new tourism and leisure facilities and support existing facilities.

Retail: (based on GVA retail assessment update 2013)

- Torbay lies somewhat behind Exeter and Plymouth as a retail location. This is due in part to smaller catchment area, division of retail spend into three town centres, and a poor road network. The viability of town centres remains constrained by lower expenditure growth and the continued rise of internet shopping.
- However, the completion of the South Devon Link Road in 2015 will provide an opportunity for increased expenditure in town centres.
- Torquay is the largest town centre in the Bay, and the main focus for comparison (non food) goods stores (ranked 133rd in the UK). Torquay is well provided for bulky retail and the Willows is a popular destination. But the town is only 60% of the size of Exeter town centre (in terms of retail floorspace) and has suffered from vacancies.

Sub Regional Retail Hierarchy

	2011 Rank	2007 Rank	Retail floorspace
(Sqm)			
Plymouth	28	18	143,400
Exeter	27	37	121,100
Torquay	133	108	75,600
Newton Abbot	270	256	59,100

Convenience Stores (food stores):

Need is confined to Torquay town centre. A very small existing need for food stores is identified in Torquay. This is projected to rise to about 1,000 sq m by 2021 and 2,700 by 2031. No significant need for additional food stores is identified in Paignton or Brixham. However, new local centres (e.g. at Edginswell Torquay, Great Parks and Yannons Farm, Paignton) may be required to provide some small scale provision to satisfy very local demand arising from planned growth.

Comparison Stores (non-food):

Need is confined to Torquay town centre in the longer term (post 2021). At 2021 this is projected to be for 1,800 sq m of non food floorspace, rising to 11,000 sq m by 2031. There is only a very small longer term need for additional non-food floorspace in Paignton and Brixham (of about 600 sq m in each town by 2031). More significant effort should be made to improving the quality of existing floorspace in all three towns.

Bulky Comparison Goods (i.e. products that would not normally be sold in the High Street, such as washing machines and furniture): There is some capacity for bulky goods floorspace, at about 1,500 sq m by 2021 rising to 6,300 sq m by 2031.

GVA's Policy Recommendations

- *A town centre first policy is supported - especially for Torquay town centre. In addition, GVA recommend that the Council should undertake proactive masterplanning of town centres to overcome site assembly etc issues and help town centres maintain their market share. A mix of leisure, eating and retail uses should be considered, not just retail.*
- *There is scope for some bulky goods retail in the north of Torbay. The Local Plan or Masterplans should identify an area in Torquay (e.g. in the Torquay Gateway area) that can accommodate bulky items retail.*
- *The Council should resist proposals for major retail or leisure outside of the town centre areas. Torquay should be the focus as the main town centre.*
- *Proposals for more than 500 sq m of retail floorspace in an out of centre location should require an assessment of their impact (N.B. this is less than the default 2,500 sq m threshold in the NPPF).*

- *The Willows, Torquay should retain its formal status as a District Centre, but its growth should be controlled to prevent adverse impacts on town centres.*
- *The Retail Update was not supportive of "factory outlet centre" type retail (i.e. a retail hub focusing on end of line or other discounted items), as this could detract from existing town centres and divert trade from the non-discounted retail sector.*
- *Torquay has the best opportunities for new floorspace. The Town Hall car park is the best location for a new supermarket. But the focus should also be on improving existing floorspace (due to little capacity for comparison floorspace in the short term). The north western side of Union Street is the biggest single mixed use regeneration opportunity. Other opportunities exist in the harbour e.g. Pavilion, Marina Car Park. GVA recommend a mixed use approach incorporating leisure uses, restaurants etc. as well as retail.*

Housing:

The new Local Plan proposes between 8-10,000 homes and 5-6000 jobs over the plan period. The Council believes this is a positive approach based on maximising the level of economic regeneration and social benefits that growth can bring to Torbay, whilst remaining within environmental and infrastructural limits – a sustainable approach to growth.

Torquay Town Centre and the whole Torquay Gateway area (wider than just the masterplan area) are identified as key areas to facilitate growth and change in Torbay over the next 20 years. Torquay as a whole is expected to deliver almost 4000 homes over the plan period with sites allocated through a combination of the emerging Torbay Local Plan and the emerging Torquay Neighbourhood Plan.

The new Local Plan sets out a sliding scale of affordable housing requirements seeking to minimise the viability impact on smaller and brownfield sites. Greenfield and larger sites will be expected to contribute greater levels of affordable housing.

4.2 Town Centre (Existing)

4.2.1 Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths:

The Council and community believes the weaknesses of the town centre can be summarised as:

Brand

The English Riviera is an extremely strong brand.

Business

There is a strong business community in the town centre, captured by its Business Improvement District status.

Diversity

Catering for a wide range of customers including local residents, family visitors, young people studying or visiting, business visitors and traditional 'empty nesters' on holiday in Torbay.

Local Demand

There is a substantial population with a higher than (national) average domestic income and a very substantial number of people within a 20 minute drive time of Torquay.

Integrated Offer

There is very close proximity between the working Harbour, main shopping street, central services and beaches. It provides a unique harbour retail and café culture offer

Glorious Heritage

The Harbourside is the nucleus from which the origins of modern Torquay can be traced. This has resulted in a legacy of fine buildings, parks and gardens. The English Riviera has received international recognition for its historical, geological and cultural heritage and is part of the UNESCO Global Geopark network. It is part of the world's only urban geopark.

Investment

Torquay's Harbour area has benefited from sustained and significant public and private sector investment, including Beacon Quay, a relatively new pedestrian bridge across the Harbour, a Big Wheel and other public realm improvements.

Retail

The mix of large and small, national and local retailers has helped to avoid Torquay becoming a stereo-typical carbon copy shopping area. The town centre also has sites for potential retail development to enhance this diverse offer.

Leisure

Hotels – Existing hotels, particularly around the seafront, are highly regarded. There is continuing investment in new hotel space in the town centre.

Night Time Entertainment

The vibrant night time economy gives a wide choice of restaurants, clubs, bars and live entertainment. The town centre has been awarded a Purple Flag.

Weaknesses:

The Council and community believes the weaknesses of the town centre can be summarised as:

Demographics

The town centre is split between tourism to the south (around the harbour) and local shopping to the north (along Union Street). The 'retail offer' is seen as a poor quality with very little high quality choice. This is partly a response to the demographics that surround the town centre where some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the town can be found.

Retail : Size

The length of the retail street is seen as 'too long' and therefore struggles to maintain full occupancy at a high level.

Retail : Offer

The retail offer is seen generally as low quality with limited specialist higher quality retail provision. Shoppers will either go to the Willows or Exeter/Plymouth for the higher quality retail experience.

Leisure/ Night time

The night time offer around the harbour front is improving but the High Street is still poor and there is still a perception of 'Stag and hen nights' which needs to be reviewed.

Town Centre residential :

The town centre residential offer is poor with larger sections of the main streets with no residential above shops and a large proportion of social rental/rental and HMO's (houses of multiple occupancy) close to the centre. This means that the demographics within the town centre are not balanced.

Leisure

The holiday market in Torquay has for a long time been biased towards the cheaper coach trips and lower quality bed & Breakfast accommodation. Whilst this is still a market, there is a shift in the offer. The number of higher quality hotels, higher quality self catering apartments and shorter year round breaks is a growing market and will help to transform Torquay into a higher quality leisure destination.

Ownership

Ownership issues for major re-development

Funding

Funding for major re-development

Funding for minor re-development

Rates

Business rate control & flexibility

Car parks

Car parking provision, quality and management

4.2.2 Opportunities & Constraints

The following Plans provide the opportunities and constraints related to the areas within the town centre masterplan.

Access (private vehicles, public transport and pedestrians)

Private Vehicles

- Ambiguous signage for visitors around Torre Station
- Convoluted one way system to get to the town centre
- Limited legibility to show where the centre is and where the parking for the town centre is
- The existing car parks are very poor quality and feel unsafe at night.

Public Transport

- Public transport works well but the Strand is being used as a bus station which creates a poor quality experience along the harbour frontage.
- Taxi ranks around the post office roundabout need to be better defined so that they do not hinder pedestrian movement
- The Torre Station is a poor quality environment for the visitor and has limited connection to the Town centre
- Torquay Station has limited connection to the town centre and other modes of transport (eg coaches)

Pedestrians

- Legibility and signage in the town centre is poor
- There have been recent upgrades to the public realm on Union street but these could be augmented with improvements to the harbour, post office roundabout and town hall.

Key:

-  Fork/ split in the road creating confusion for drivers
-  Main route through to the Town Centre
-  Main route through to the Seafont
-  Bus Only Access
-  Pedestrianised Zones
- CP Car Park

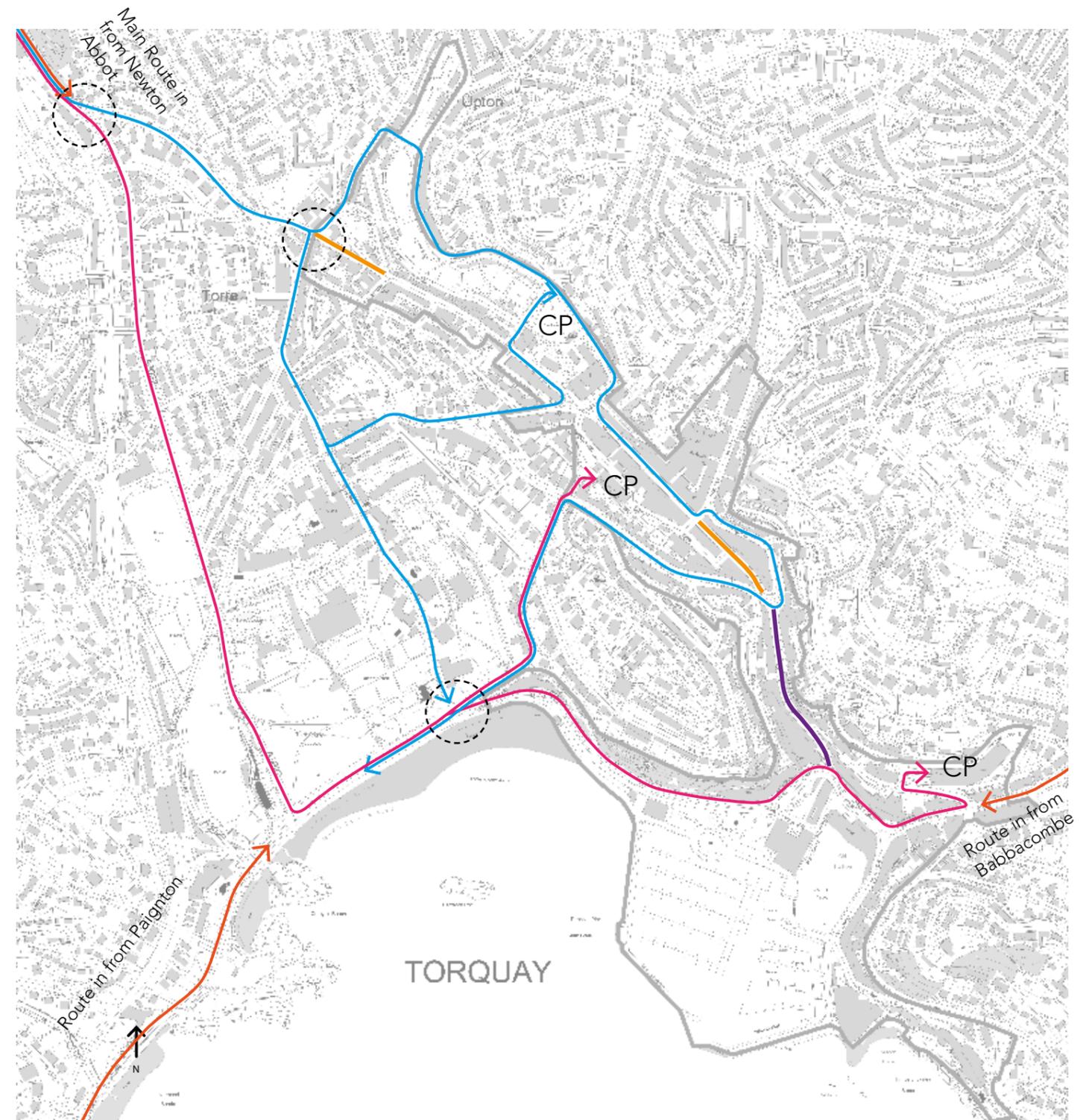


Figure 2: Existing Road Access into Torquay Town Centre & Harbour

Parking

- Car parks are poorly sign posted
- Parking charges have the potential to deter users on a regular basis (eg employees/residents) when the Willows is free.
- Existing car parks are poor quality and do not feel safe at night (particularly Temperance Street.)

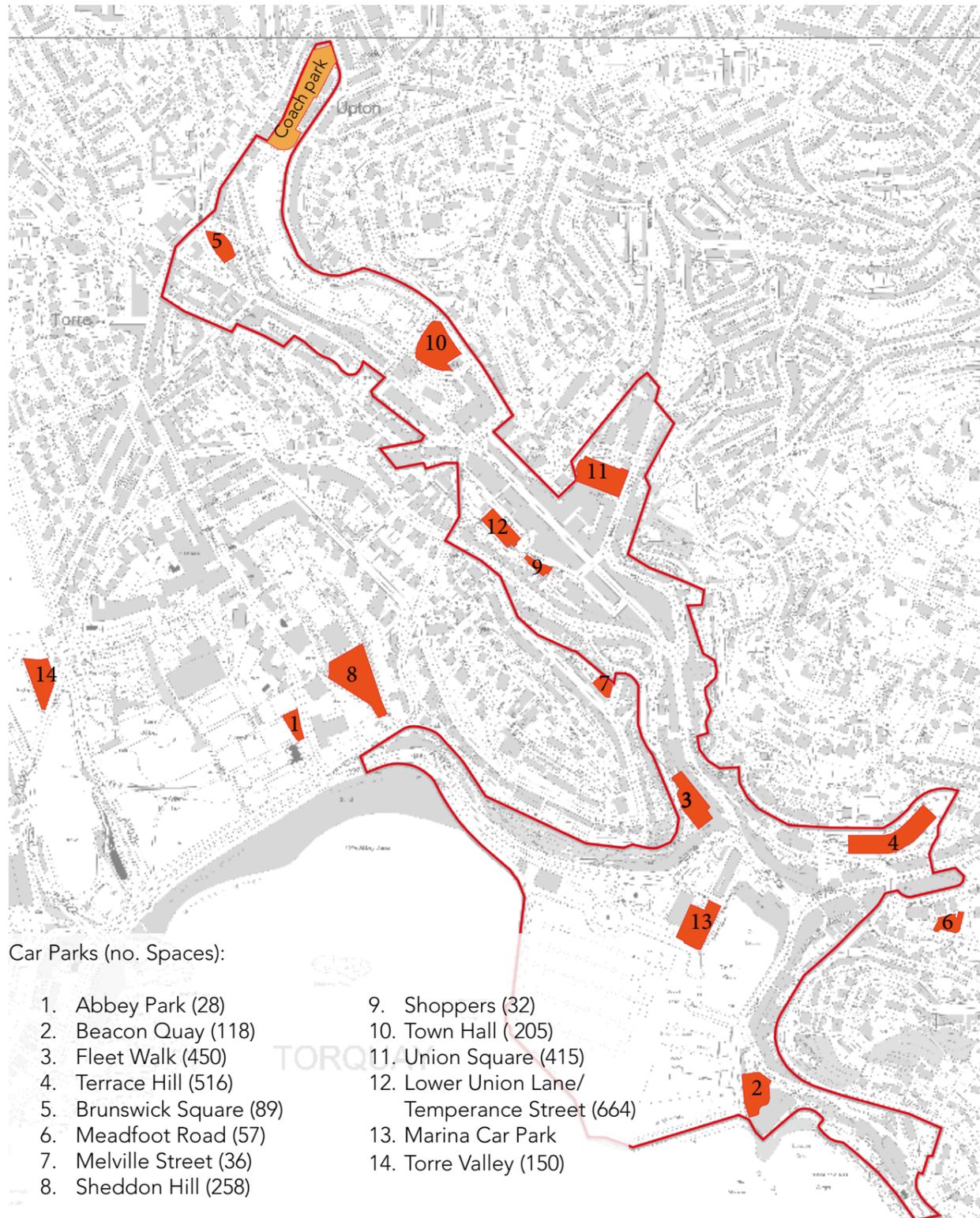


Figure 3: Existing car park locations and no. spaces

Public Ownership

The Council own a significant quantity of land in the town centre which needs to be invested in.

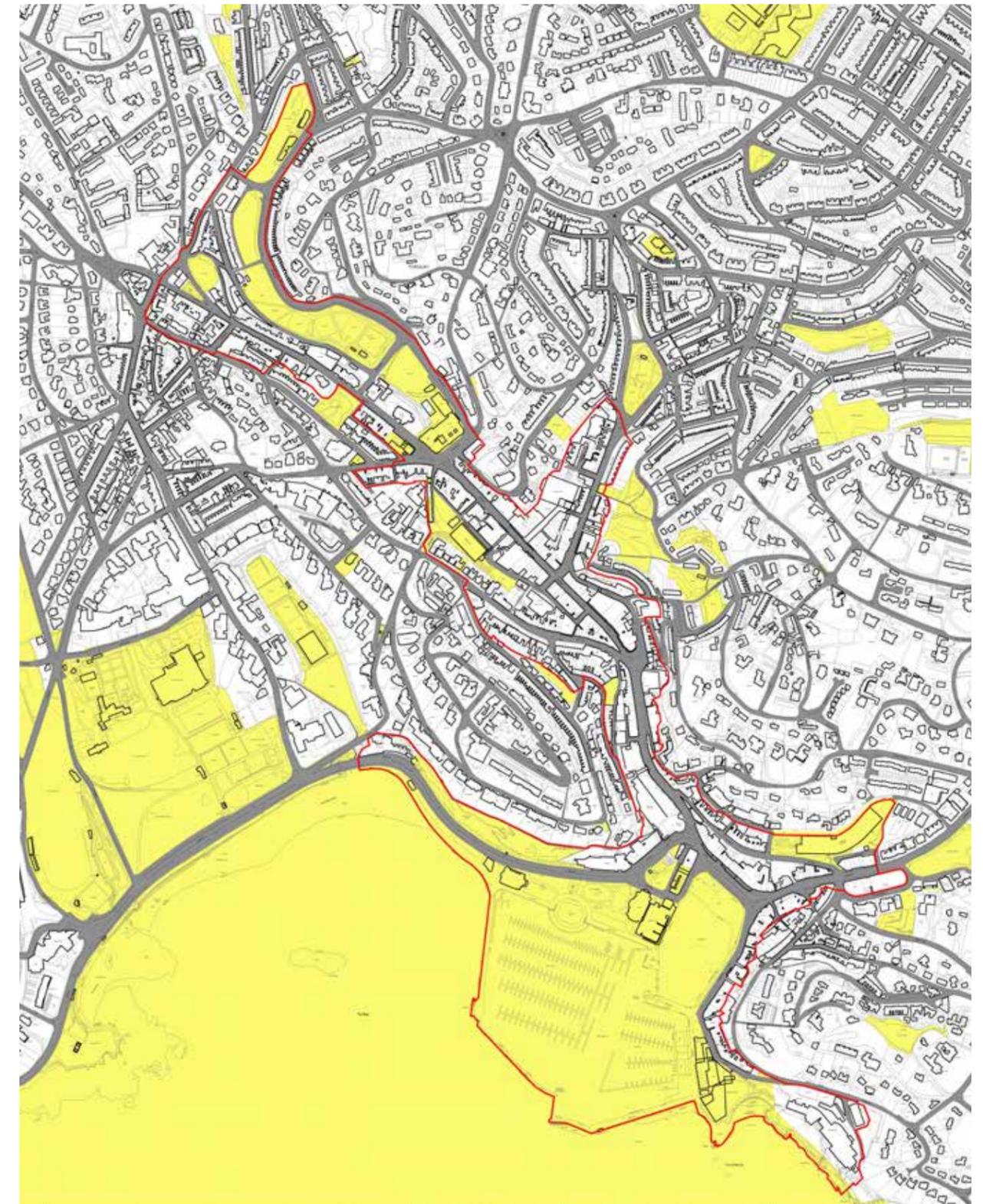


Figure 4: Council ownership plan

Land Use

The town centre can be subdivided into the character areas:

- Civic/ Parks
- Retail core
- Harbour/ Leisure

Civic/Parks

- includes the Torbay Council offices
- large park but requires significant investment
- includes the library, job centre, EF main centre,
- reinforce this area as a civic hub with attractive parks and gardens

Retail Core

- this covers Union Street (upper & lower) , the Fleet and parts of the Strand.
- there are significant areas of derelict land and under- utilised land in the town centre area.
- the size of the existing retail core is large but the mix of uses is not significantly attractive enough to encourage inward investment or shopper confidence.

Harbour/leisure

- this is a mixed use area and includes retail and leisure /restaurant uses.
- this is the major asset of Torquay town centre and is seeing investment interest.
- activities that create a higher quality offer should be encouraged that enhance the existing offer but at its expense.

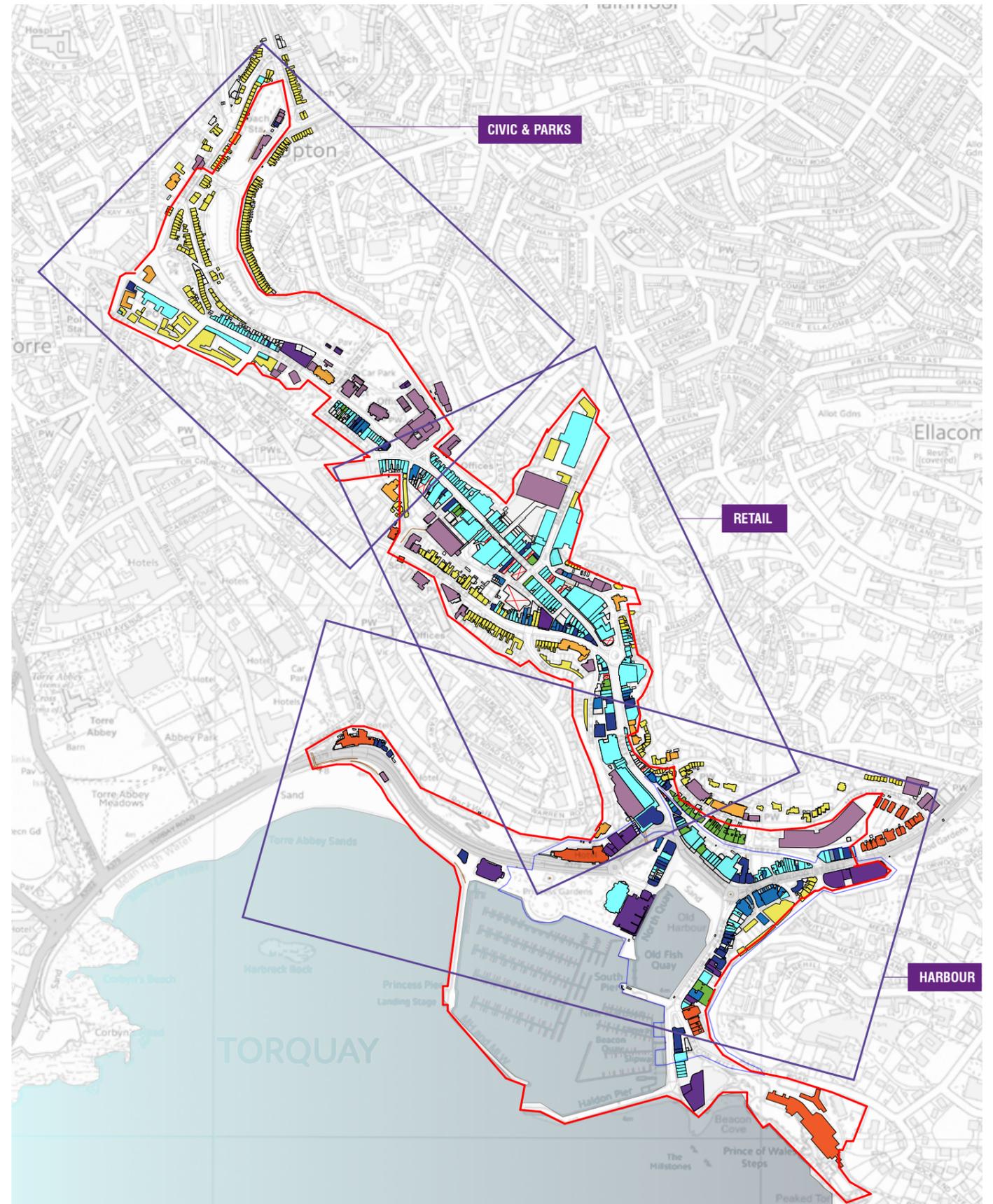


Figure 5: Existing land use plan

Historical



Figure 6: 1880's-90's Map of Torquay



Figure 7: 1904 Map of Torquay



Figure 8: 1930's Map of Torquay

Torquay town centre is constrained by the surrounding topography and has grown along a valley feature- hence the reason why it is linear. A large part of the centre is in a Conservation Area and include some beautiful buildings. These should be retained and enhanced.

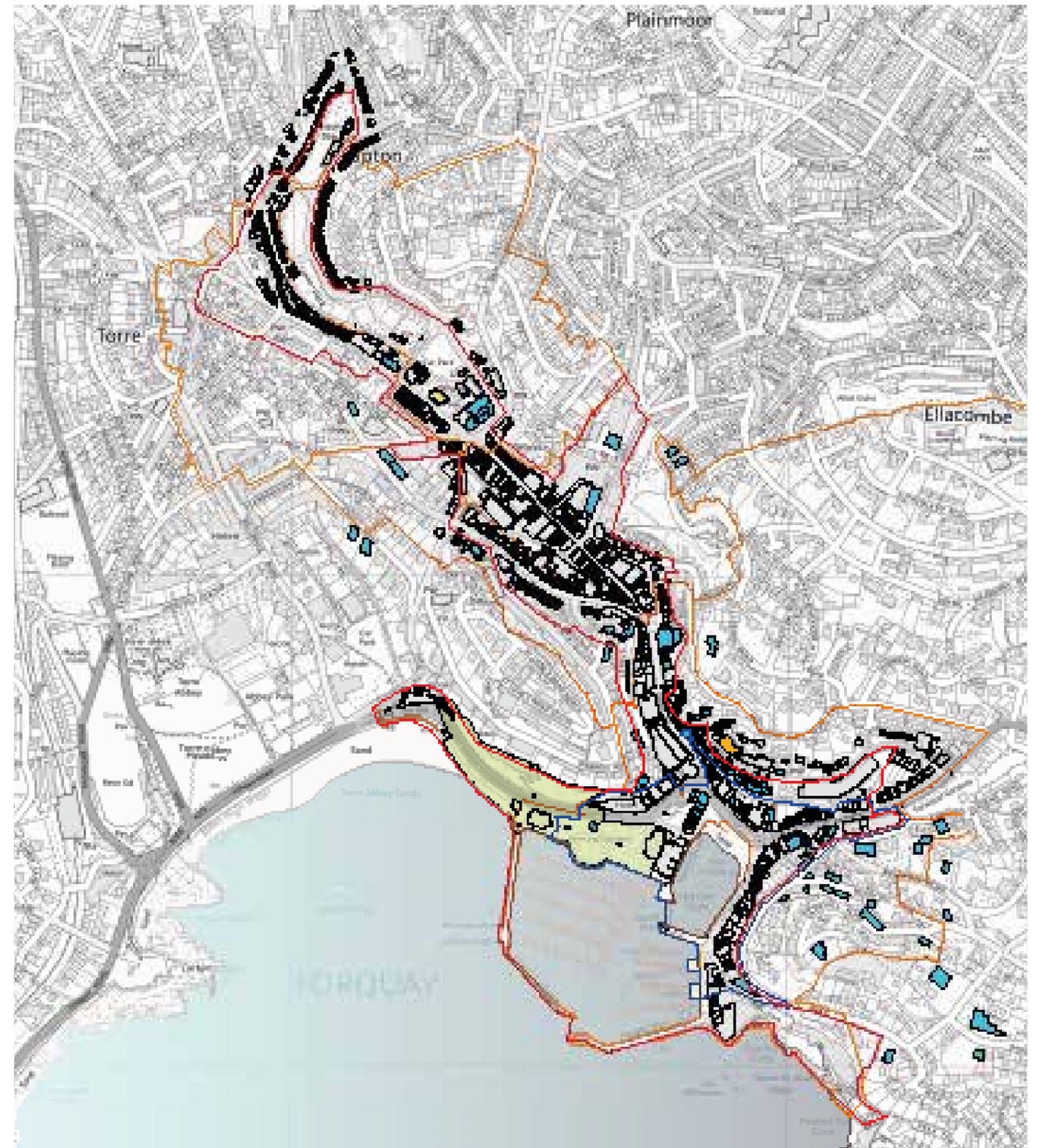


Figure 9: Listed buildings within the study area

Recent Achievements :

- i. The English Riviera Tourism Company (ERTC) wins the Silver medal awards for Tourism Information in the Visit England Tourism awards in 2014 .
- ii. The Abbey Sands development is nearing completion and has already become an asset to the town in terms of providing a striking focal building on the waterfront and providing additional restaurant destinations along the frontage.
- iii. Torquay won 15 awards for its beautiful beaches - more than anywhere else in the country - as well as a Purple flag for being one of the safest places in the country for a night out.
- iv. Torquay also featured fourth in the Trip Advisor Travellers' Choice awards for Top 10 Destinations in the UK after London, Edinburgh and Leeds.
- v. £90m pound investment in the Palace Hotel to make it into a luxury leisure and residential development.
- vi. Mitch Tonks, the acclaimed restaurateur has opened Rock Fish restaurant on Victoria Parade on the harbour front. Again showing growing confidence in the high quality destination at Torquay.
- vii. Other large scale development opportunities are currently in the planning system which demonstrate that the market is becoming more buoyant and that there is willing private investment for the town.
- viii. Proposals for a new station at Edginswell (together with one at Marsh Barton) are moving forward with a view the new stations being





The Vision Town Centre



5.1 The Vision: Town Centre

Current aspirations for the town centre suggest vitality could be delivered through a combination of the following actions;

- 'restructuring' the town centre;
- increasing town centre residents population;
- improving access and movement;
- potentially reducing the length of the retail offer but focussing mixed use development on Temperance Street, Pimilico, Torwood Street and in the harbour
- improving connections and links between the centre and the waterfront;

Consequently, the masterplan should promote the following:

1. Key urban locations for mixed use regeneration including major retail, leisure, cultural and recreational opportunities
2. Employment, health and housing provision - including a careful scaling back of secondary shopping areas.
3. The re-use of under-utilised floorspace, above existing businesses, as a source of employment space and housing supply
4. A strong town centre's first approach to development, particularly for retail uses.
5. A limited number of mixed use edge of centre

developments. These will help to achieve balanced communities by delivering a mix of employment, leisure, retail, family housing, healthcare, education and local centre facilities.

6. 'relaxed' planning requirements to support investment into re-use of redundant / vacant properties and the public realm around them.
7. 'meanwhile' uses that help make the transition from vacant property to valuable, long term use.
8. Encourage high quality investment into the Town Centre - leisure/ employment/ residential & retail.

2031 : Torquay is the 'Heart of the Riviera'.

It is the grand, elegant town of Torbay with a rich history linked to its beautiful coastal, maritime and landscape setting.

This unique setting provides a fantastic place to live, work and play .

Its connections to London, and the Midlands (Birmingham) has improved massively due to its improved road & rail network.

High quality tourism is one of the leading services with an international reputation but the bay is now also the south west's premier destination for advanced digital, hi-tec communications, and agri/maritime science industries as well as international language study.

The super fast broadband capabilities has enabled business's to set up and thrive in Bay and allow people to have a flexible work/life balance whilst still being on the cutting edge of the creative and science industries.





5.2 The Masterplan Area

In order to deliver the vision, the masterplan for the town centre defines a number of key components as follows;

1. The main character areas,
2. The key public realm improvements
3. The key buildings for re-development
4. The key development project sites and green infrastructure improvements
5. Identifying areas for land use planning changes

These interventions are described in the following pages.

LAND USE GUIDANCE/CONTROL ZONES/REGENERATION	
1 2 3	Torre Highstreet. Service industry, professional services and retail directly servicing Torre. Encourage residential/offices at upper levels.
4 5 7	
6	Better frontage & links to park.
8	Strong building addressing parks both sides. Provides a break between character areas.
9 10	Services and encourage offices/resi above. Should not compete with highstreet retail.
11	
12	Attractive apartments. Encourage ground floor use to address the street.
13	Opportunity to improve built form. Increase storey height to 4 storey - Incorporate residential
14	Improvements & canopy on shop fronts - design code Improvements to historic buildings Use up space above retail for residential to increase footfall
15	Rationalise car park entrance to create additional development
16	Create a stronger clearer route between terrace hill car park and the harbourside. Re-development opportunity for Debenhams.
17	Mixed Use proposal currently in planning
18	Pimlico - regeneration
19	Old Opera House improvements
20	Cary Parade - Re-development opportunity and improvement of pedestrian links to Warren Road

- Character Zones
- Key Public Realm
- Key Development Project Sites
- Land Use Guidance/Control Zones
- Upton Park Refresh
- Princess Theatre. Key building on the Torquay waterfront. Theatre could be improved to provide adequate space for west end productions. Opportunity for iconic building in this location.
- Pavilion site (planning application currently being considered by Torbay Council)
- BT Exchange building- key building within Temperance St site. It is unlikely that BT will move from this building within the near future but the masterplan ultimately hopes to provide some improvement here- potentially introducing other tenants at ground floor to create more activity at street level.
- Hoggs Head

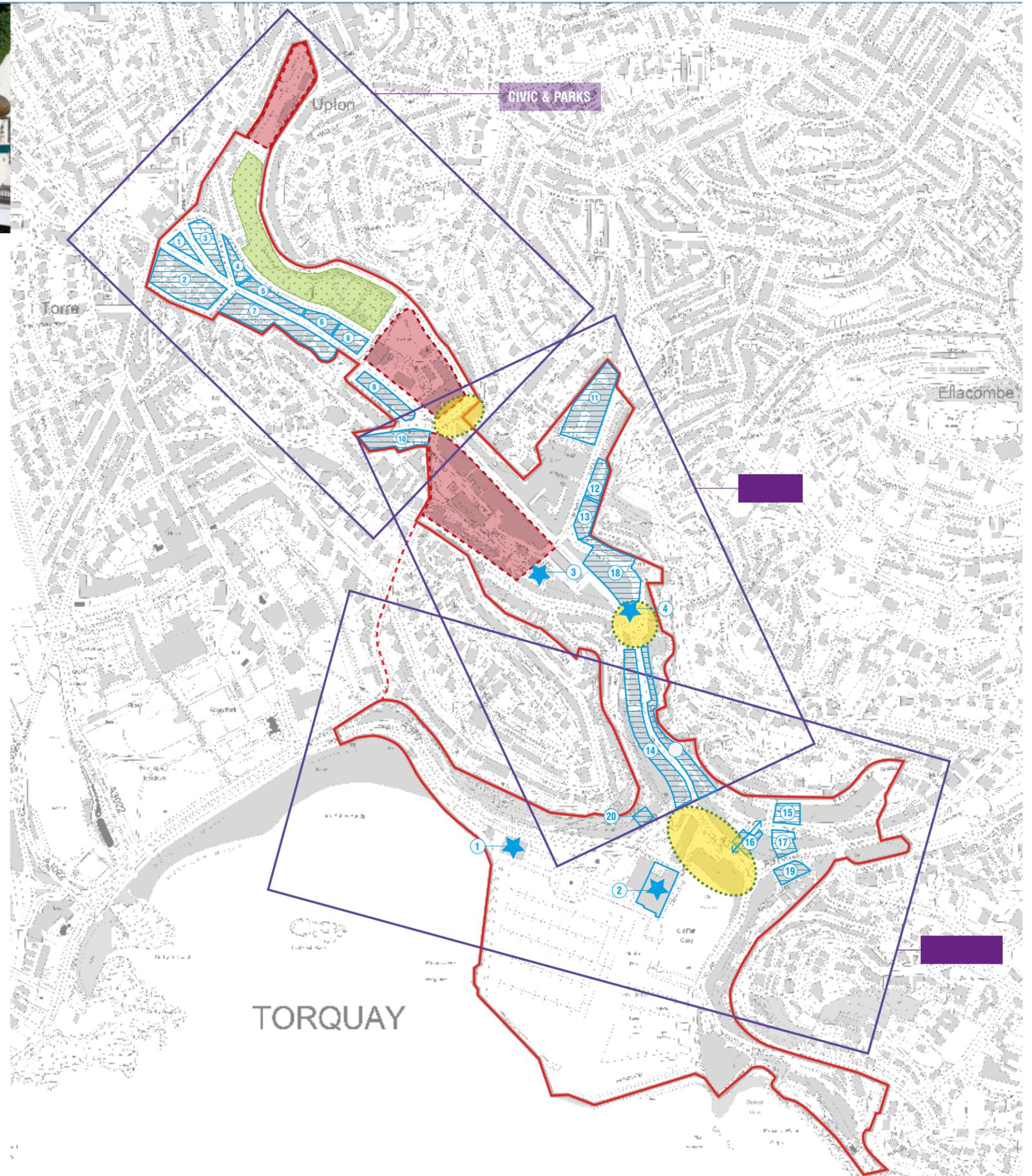


Figure 10: Masterplan Area

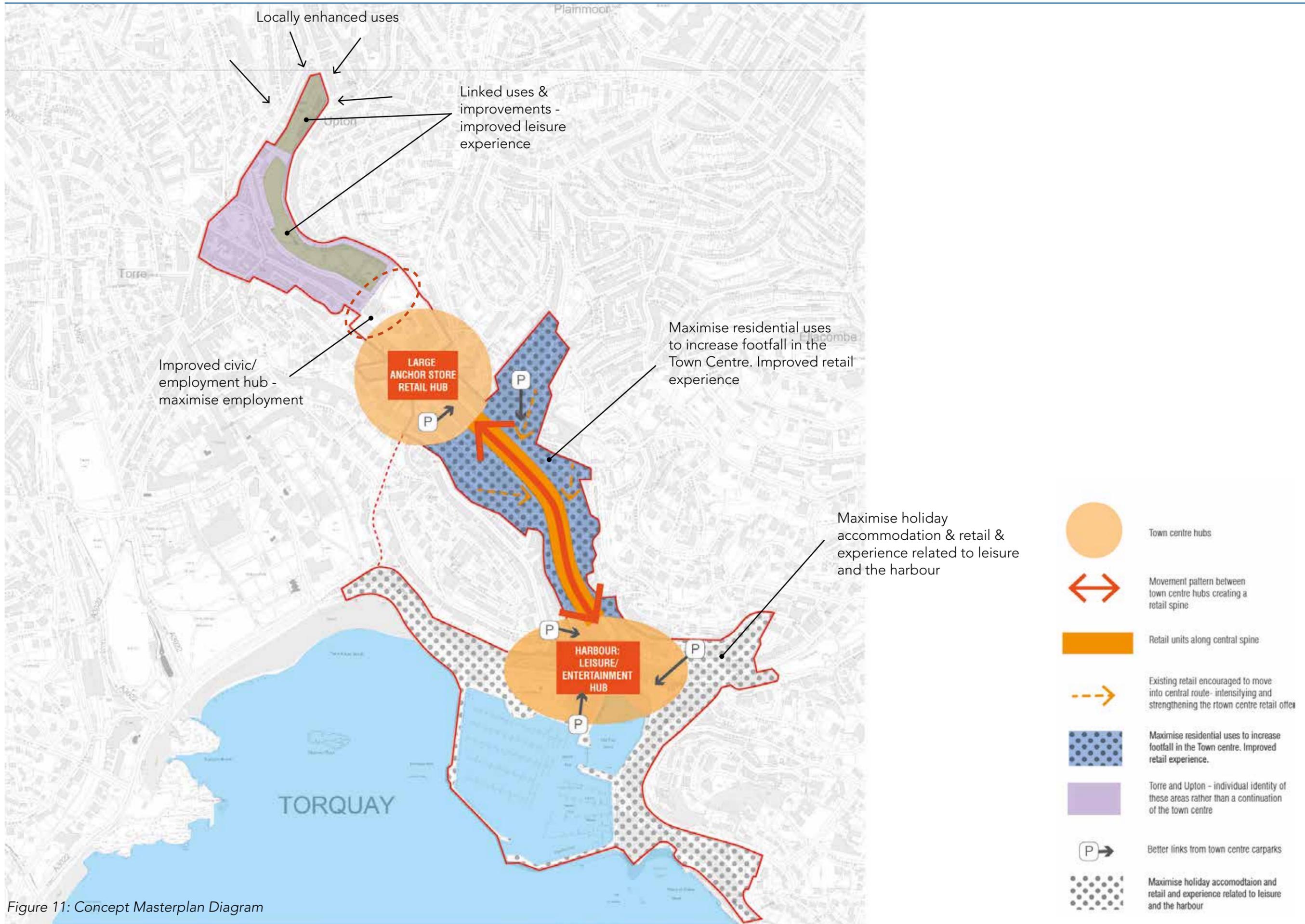


Figure 11: Concept Masterplan Diagram

5.3 The Intervention Areas

5.3.1 Civic & Parks

Key Project: Town Hall/ Carpark Block

This is a significant area in relation to the masterplan for the town centre and for the future success of the upper Union Street area.

Site Area = 67,000 sqft
 Current Use = Car parking 208 spaces

History: original consented scheme in 2011 for Offices

Recent schemes: Feasibility study for a 35,000ft² retail unit

Other issues:

- Move Western Power building/substation
- Underground culvert constraint
- Possible wider area if the library, courthouse were included

Option 01

2011 scheme with more resi and B1. Show possible extents of work- including courts/library buildings also.

Land Use Budget:

Food retail 41,500sqft
 Residential 52 units

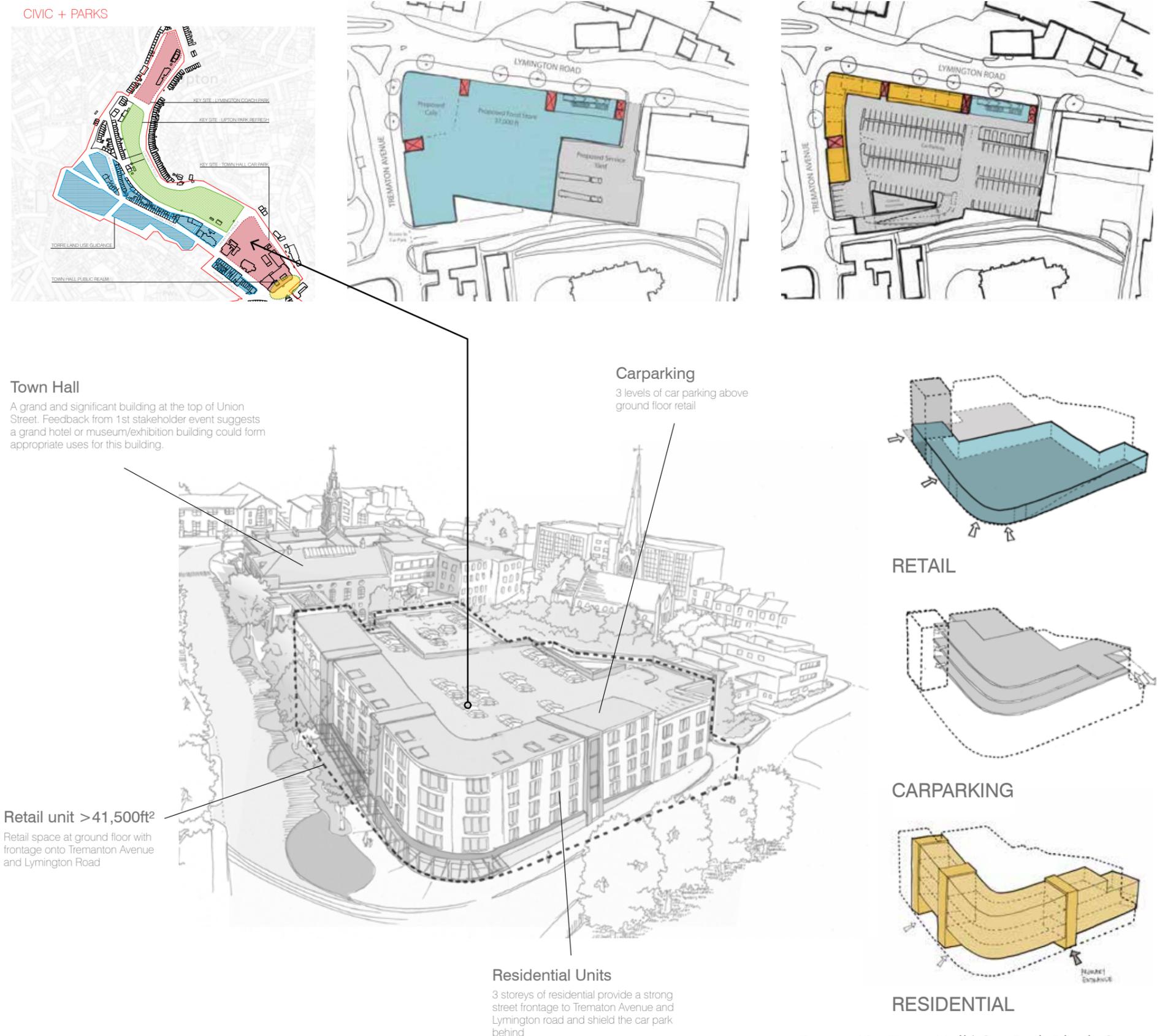


Figure 12: Town Hall/ Car Park Block Option 01

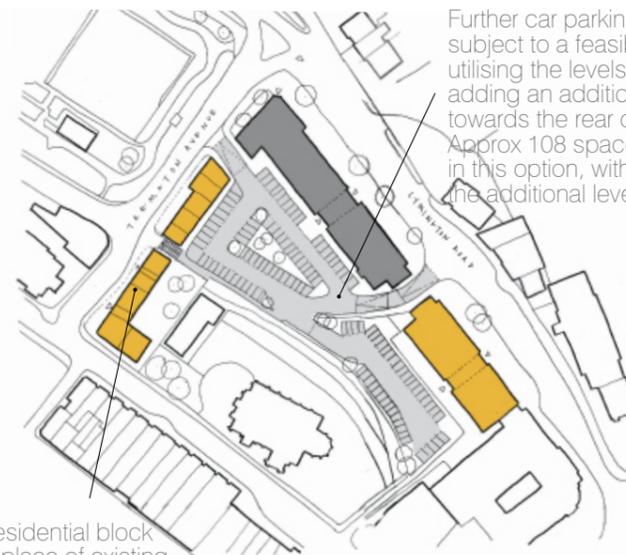
Option 02:

This option looks to enhance the Civic/commercial facilities in the town centre but with resi wrap/ improved frontage

Land Use Budget :

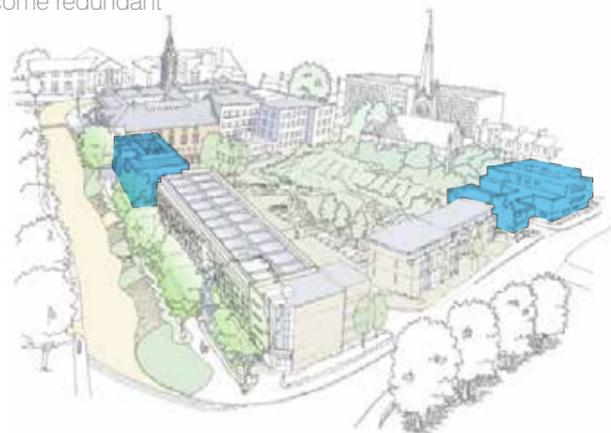
Residential	50 units
Commercial	181,200 sq ft
Parking	108 spaces

The retail component would be moved to the Temperance Street site.



Further car parking may be achievable subject to a feasibility study- by utilising the levels of the site and adding an additional layer of parking towards the rear of the site. Approx 108 spaces can be achieved in this option, with approx 70 without the additional level.

Residential block in place of existing law courts should the existing building become redundant



SCHEME PHASING

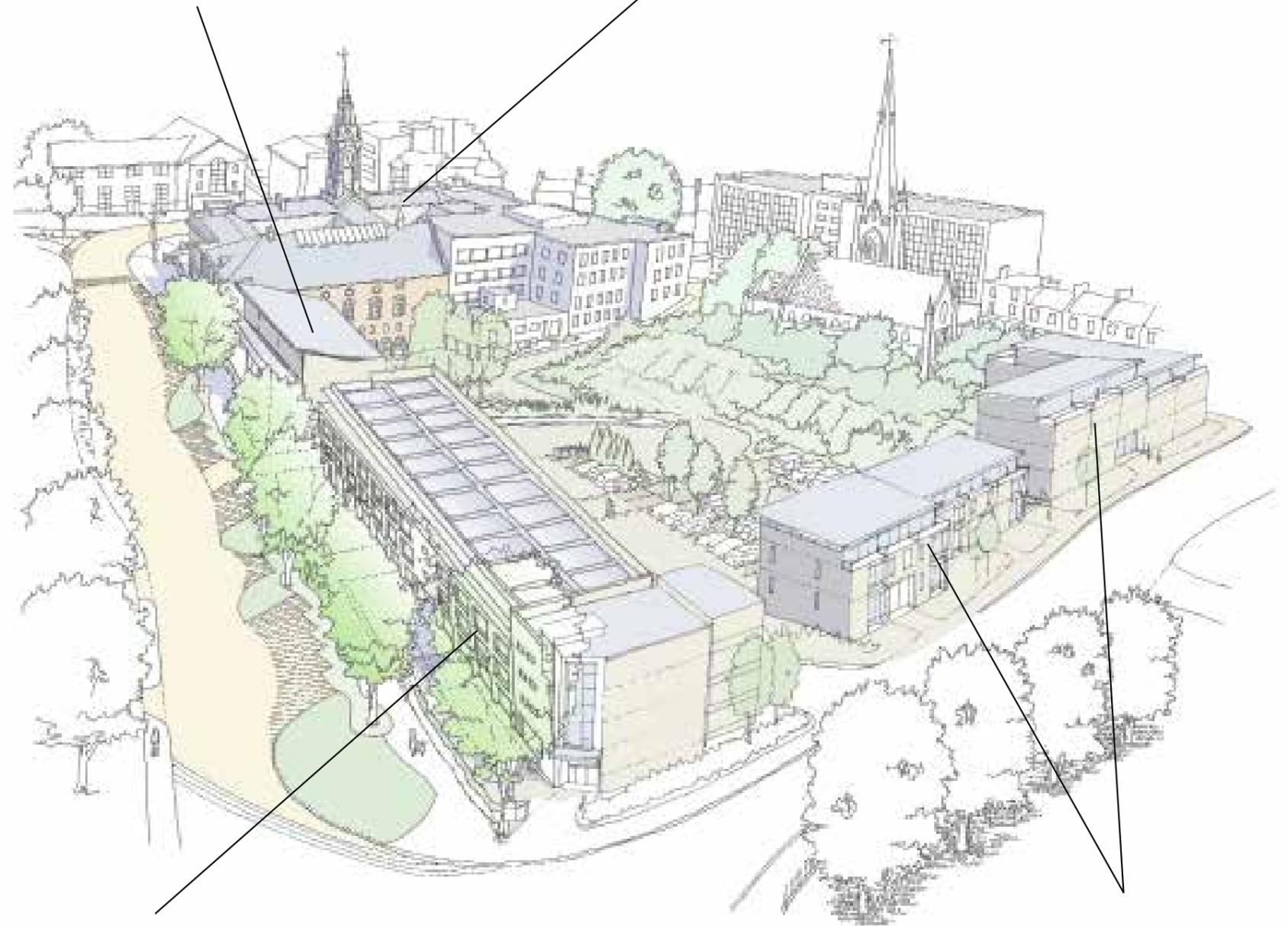
Blocks provide flexibility to phase the scheme as and when buildings become available

Innovation centre/link to new library

Possible reuse/redesign of existing library bloc to suit future needs

Town Hall

A grand and significant building at the top of Union Street. Feedback from 1st stakeholder event suggests a grand hotel or museum/exhibition building could form appropriate uses for this building.



Offices (B1) along Lymington Road

New business hub within town centre

Residential Units along Trematon Avenue

Units provide street frontage to Trematon Avenue and shielding of the car park from raised bowling green opposite to the northwest

Figure 13: Town Hall/ Car Park Block Option 02

Option 03:

This option looks at proposing a supermarket in the centre of Torquay

Land Use Budget :

Retail 80,000sq ft
 Parking 350 Spaces
 Note : Library relocated to Town Hall

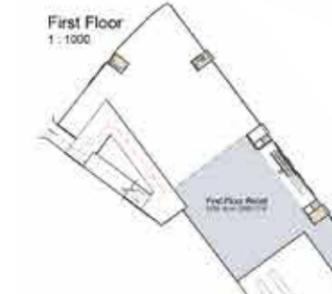
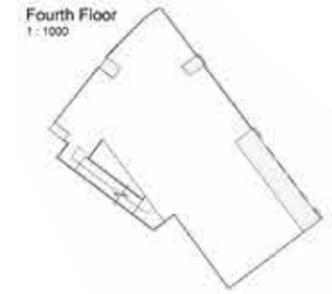
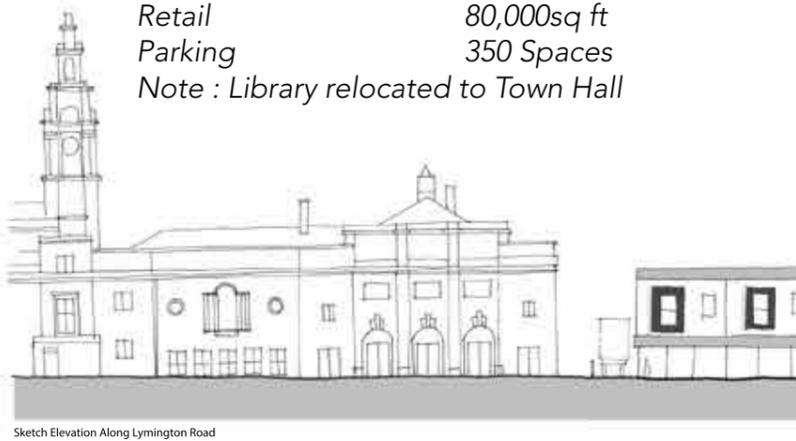


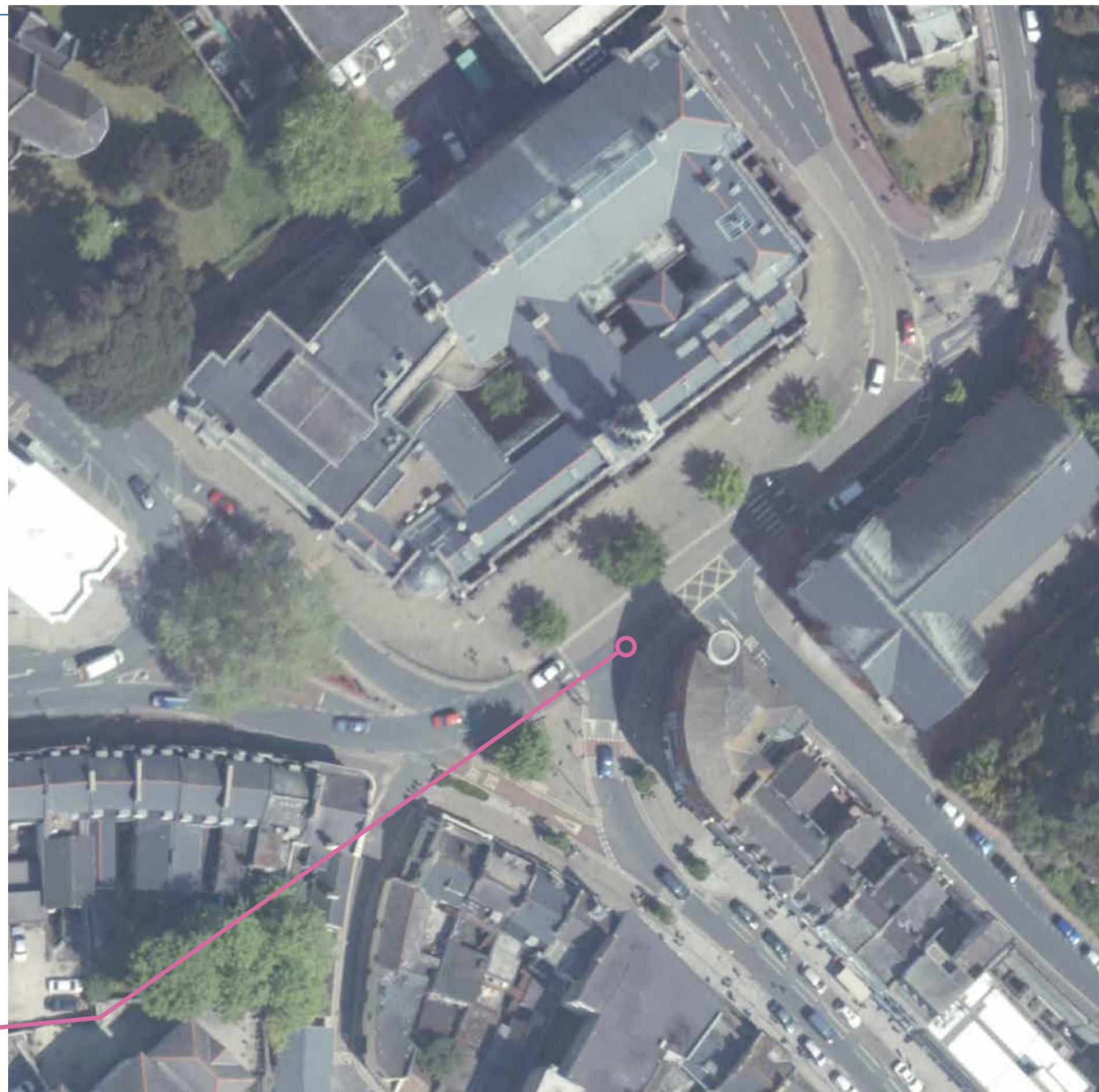
Figure 14: Town Hall/ Car Park Block Option 03

Project: Castle Circus Public Realm

In order to facilitate the revised one way system, there will need to be some amendments to the street system around castle Circus. Whilst a more detailed assessment needs to be carried out by the Highways Authority, Figure ... shows the likely changes to traffic flows and how the public realm could be enhanced.

The enhancements would include ;

- i. removal of street clutter - raised planters, signage etc
- ii. increase in the pedestrian public realm and a reduction in the amount of road surface.
- iii. introduction of public art and seating



CIVIC + PARKS

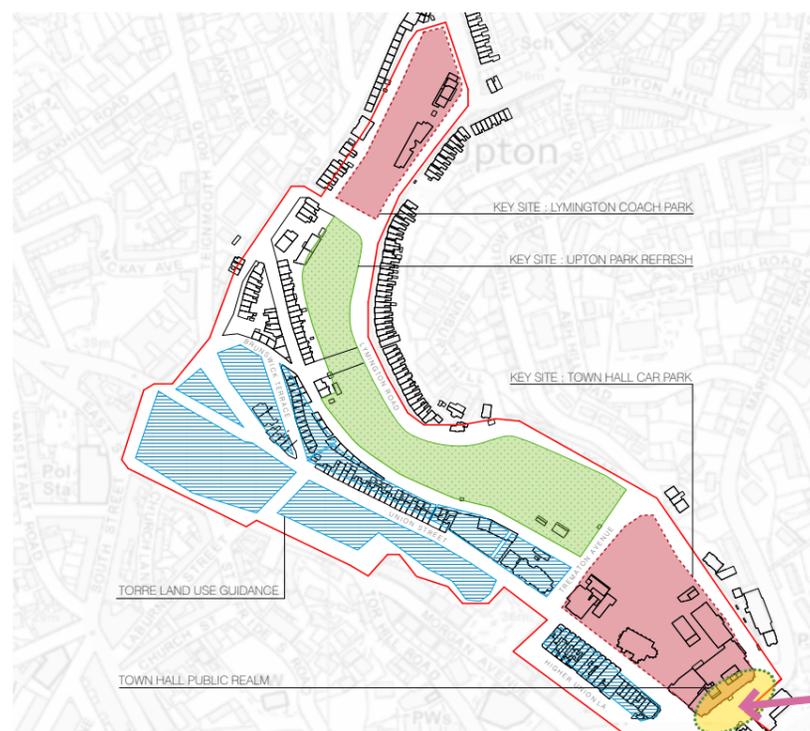


Figure 15: Castle Circus Location Plan

Figure 15: Existing aerial view of castle circus



Figure 16: Existing aerial view of castle circus

Other Projects:

Project : Upton Park/Coach Park

LHC consultants produced an Upton Park renewal scheme on behalf of Torbay Council. This document supports all the proposals including

- *Instigate and enhance the LHC Upton Park proposals*
- *Remove trees to allow more light into the park*
- *Move sports pitch provision to coach park site to allow for the permaculture area without losing sports provision. Improve the appearance of the coach park*
- *Combine coach/bus station site into a site outside of the town centre*
- *Snooker hall- (sports centre)- Consider upgrading as this is a poor building frontage onto the park*

The masterplan considers that both the coach park and Upton Park should be seen as one area. The areas are interlinked in that Upton Park fails to work as a free flowing park due to the presence of the tennis courts and netting which act as a barrier to pedestrian movement. The tree cover is also very dense and so light penetration is poor. This could be improved by moving some of the sports provision to the coach park.

The Coach park is underutilised at present and is a poor use of space so central to Torquay.

The aim is to move the tennis courts over to the Coach Park and make an all weather Multi use Games Area which could be used for tennis, basketball, 5-a-side football etc . The scheme retains parking for the innovation units and allows for some coach parking (as an option) but other sites on the outskirts of the town are more suitable for coach/lorry parking . A large part of the coach park cannot be used for built development due to the below ground constraints and so this would be a useful way of combining the two adjacent spaces and making them more efficient and integrated whilst also improving drainage in the flood plan. Four potential options have been identified.

Refer to Figure 17 for the illustrative layout.



Landscape Structure

The existing park feels disjointed, dark and a little down on its luck.

Incremental change has broken down the Park's cohesive character. Improvements have been undertaken in a piece-meal manner rather than through comprehensive and considered design that enhances the park's sense of place.



The park's landscape structure is defined by the activity in each area. We propose to refine and improve the quality of activity that takes place in each area.

These include Bowling, Sports (including Tennis, Basketball and football), Play Areas and Informal Activities and Events.

Figure 17: LHC proposal for Upton park

Play Area, Rehwaldt Landscape

Coach Park, Plat Design

Play Area, Annabau Landscape



Insert Masterplan Drawing Options



Figure 18: Existing Coach Park Location Plan

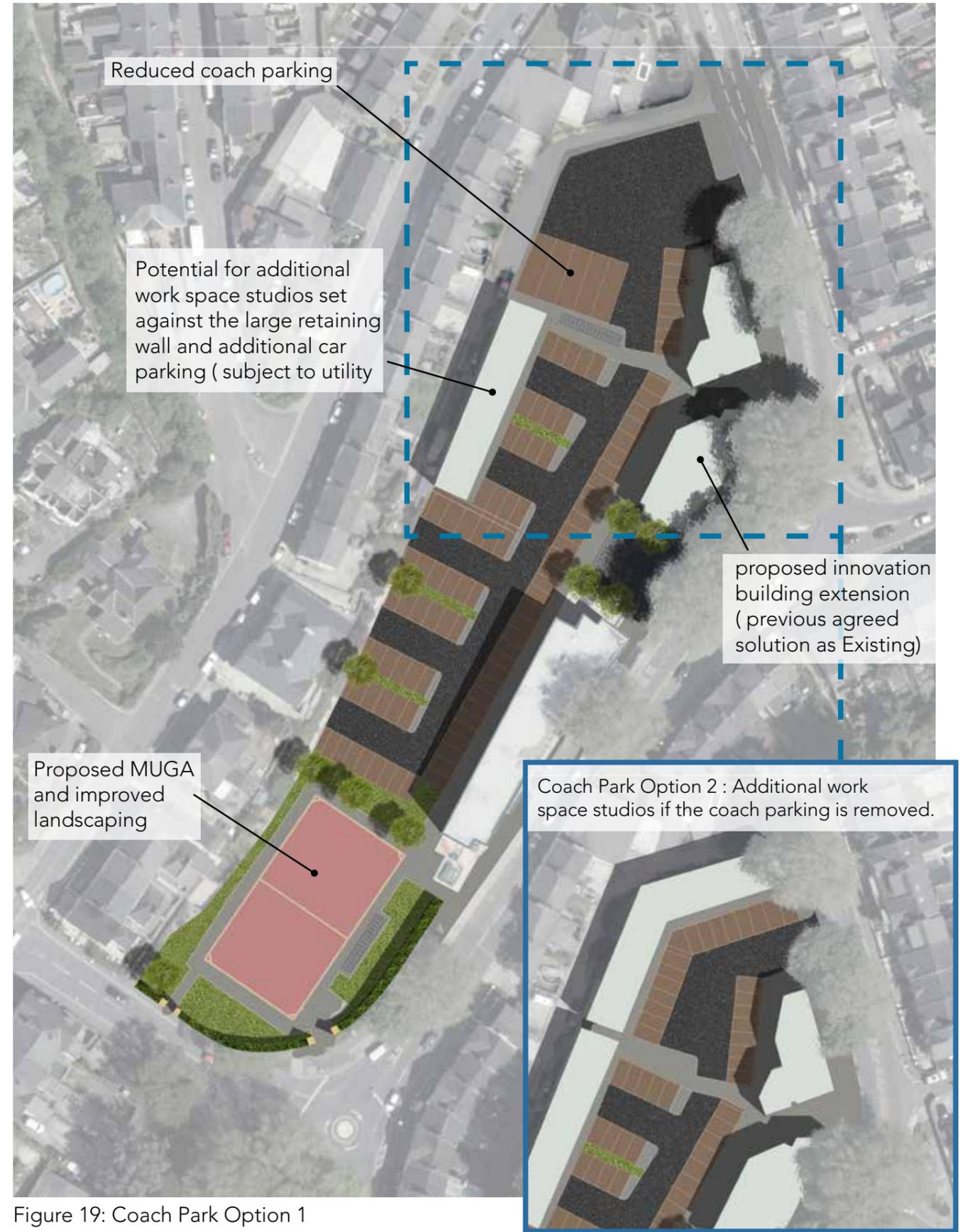


Figure 19: Coach Park Option 1

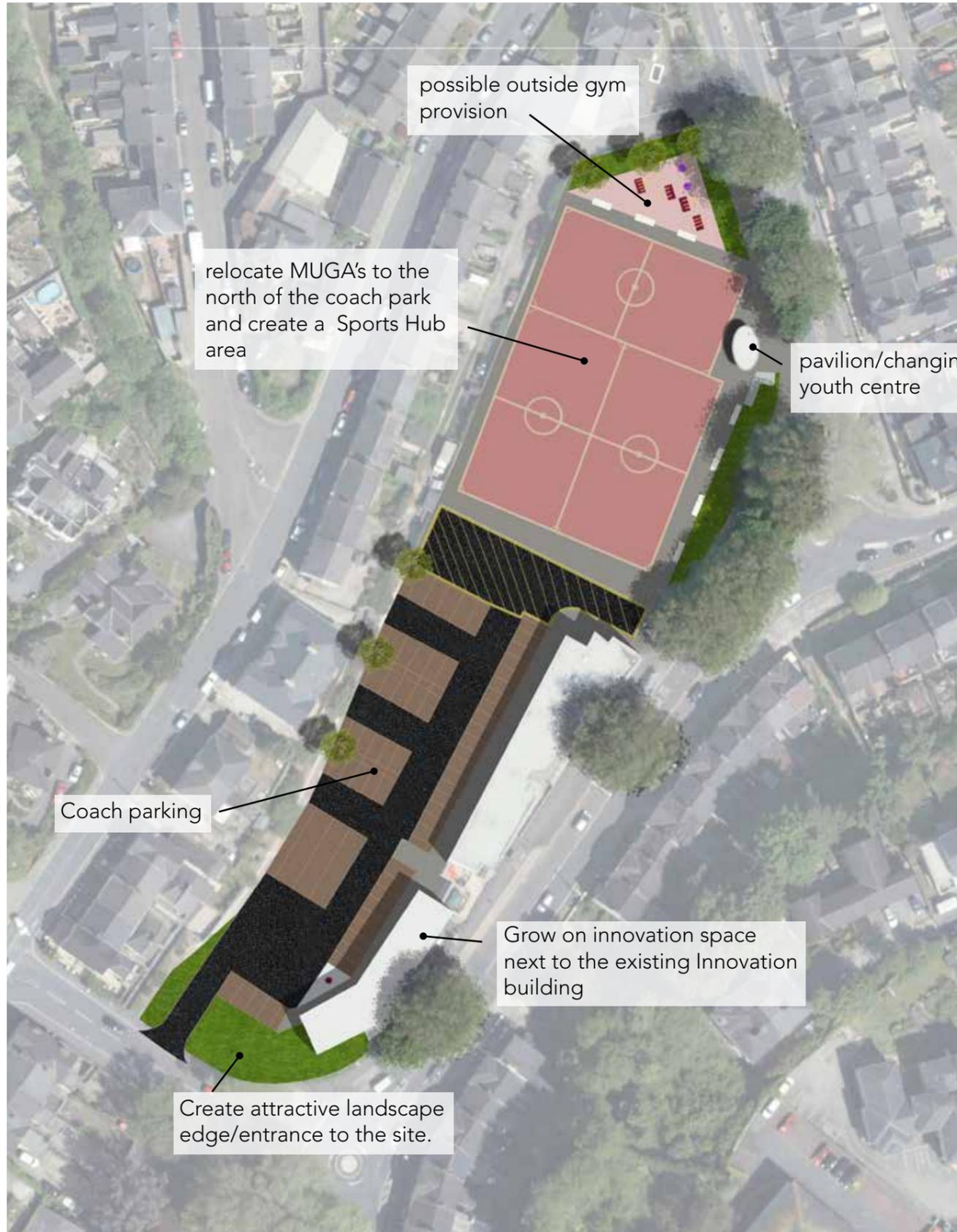


Figure 20: Coach Park Option 3 : Sports Hub with coach parking



Figure 21: Coach Park Option 4 : Sports Hub without coach parking

Land use Budgets:

- Option 1 : Proposed work space 8 units
1 no MUGA
116 no parking spaces
5 no coach spaces
- Option 2 : Proposed work space 24 units
1 no MUGA
166 no parking spaces
- Option 3 : Proposed work space 10 units
3 no MUGA's & an outside gym
56 no parking spaces
3 no coach spaces
- Option 4 : Proposed work space 10 units
3 no MUGA's & an outside gym
86 no parking spaces



Figure 22: Sketch proposal for the Coach Park



Figure 23: Existing view of the Coach Park



Figure 24: Sketch proposal for the Coach park

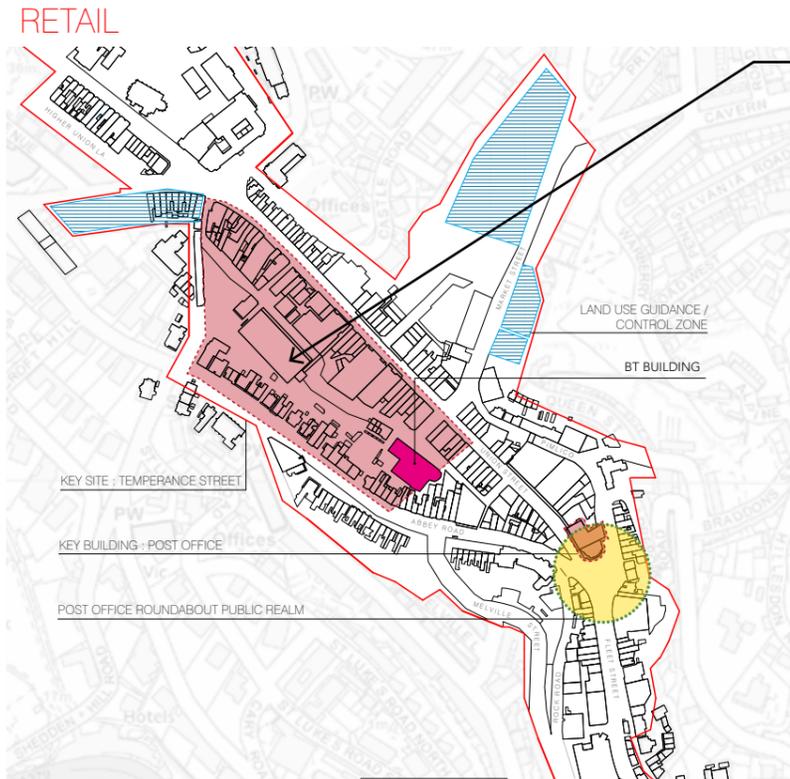


Figure 25: Existing view of the Coach Park

5.3.2 Core Retail Areas

OPTION 01

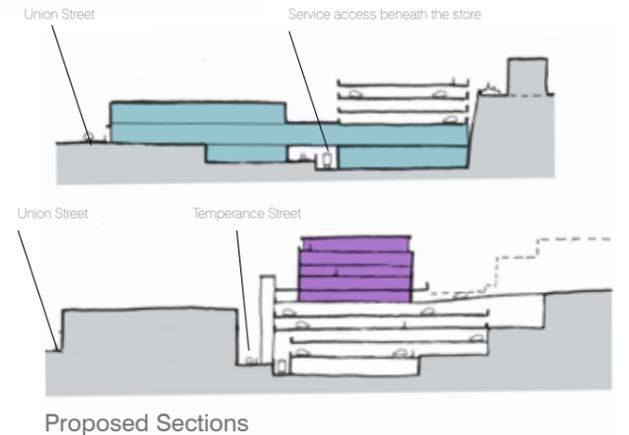
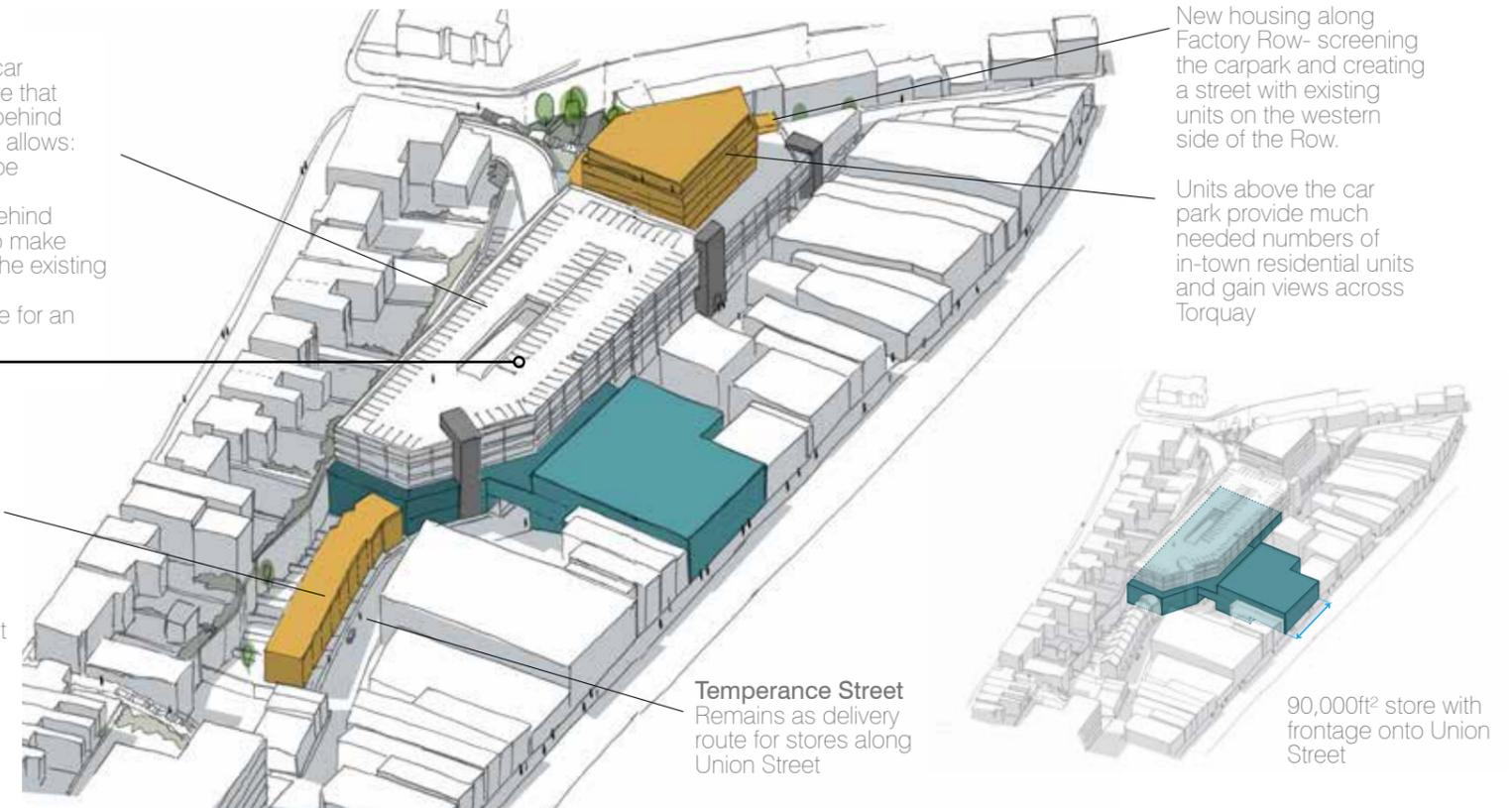
Key Project: **Temperance Street**



New Car park
 Replacing the existing car park with a new structure that utilises the whole area behind Temperance Street, this allows:

- car park numbers to be confirmed.
- Maximise built form behind Temperance Street to make more efficient use of the existing void space.
- Allows sufficient space for an anchor store

Temperance street residential units
 Houses with garages underneath along Temperance Street increase passive observation of the street and provide positive frontage.



View of existing multi-storey car park improved from the opposite side of the valley.



View of existing multi-storey car park improved- units/car parking kept low along line of existing houses along Abbey Road, with the residential block increasing in height where views are not inhibited

Temperance Street has a large multi storey car park, BT building & very few frontage buildings. It is on the whole unattractive, and yet provides an opportunity to service the retail units and the west side of Union Street and create larger retail offers at this north end of the retail street where visitors to the harbour seldom venture. Options 1 and 2 provide an indication of how a 90,000 sq ft retail unit (including servicing, delivery & storage areas) could be incorporated into the Temperance Street site whilst also providing car parking and residential development to support the viability of such a scheme. The BT building needs to be regenerated but following discussions with BT, this is the main exchange and it is unlikely to be re-developed for a number of years. This needs to be reviewed on an annual basis as the BT building is a very poor quality part of the Town centre.

Option 1 - concentrates development within the Council ownership, apart from a third party frontage onto Union Street. The frontage could be any position along the existing Union Street, or there could be two entry points along the existing street.

Figure 26: Temperance Street proposal option 01

OPTION 02

Option 2 - involves more third party land to create a larger frontage onto Union Street. The first stakeholder workshop identified the need for an anchor tenant at this north end of the shopping street.

Key Issues:

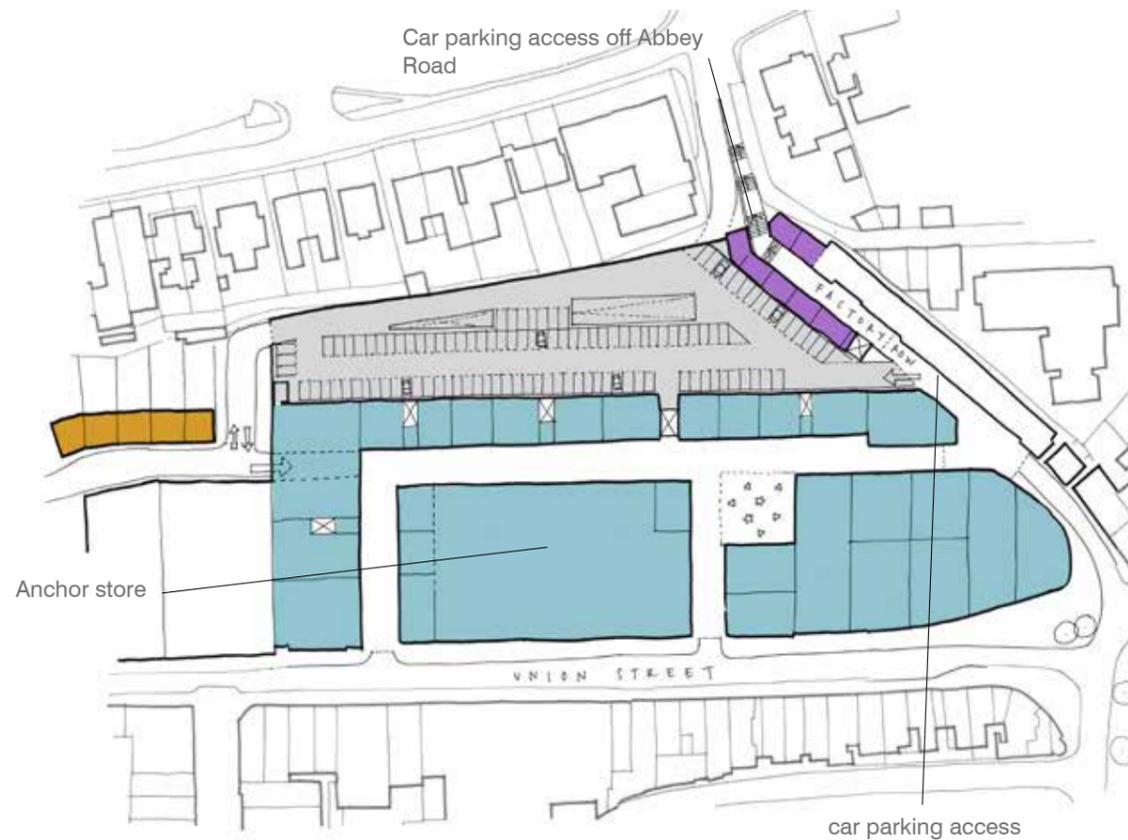
- Need for larger footprint buildings to allow for Anchor stores
- Improving the parking offer
- Delivering quality residential
- Improving surveillance along Factory Row

Land Use Budget : Option 1 :

Anchor Store	60,000 sq ft
Residential	106 units
Car Parking	588 spaces

Land Use Budget : Option 2 :

Retail floor space	60,000 sq ft
Residential Units	92 units
Car Parking	540 spaces



New Car park

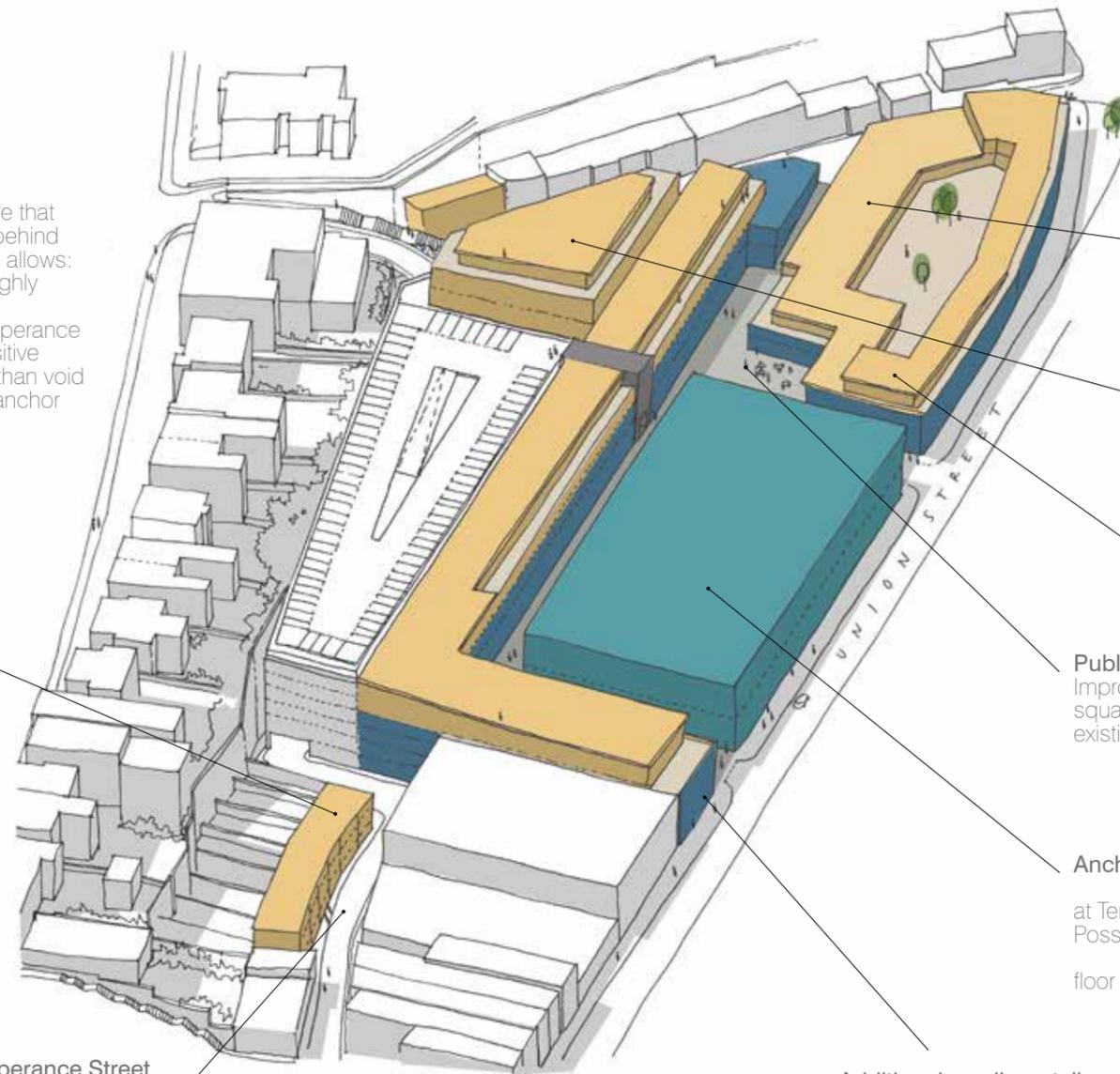
Replacing the existing park with a new structure that utilises the whole area behind Temperance Street, this allows:

- car park numbers roughly retained
- Built form behind Temperance Street providing a positive street frontage rather than void
- Allows more area for anchor store

Temperance street residential units

Houses with garages underneath along Temperance Street increase passive observation of the street and provide positive frontage.

Temperance Street
Remains as delivery route for stores along Union Street with service yard beneath new retail area on Union Street



Residential units

New housing along Factory Row- screening the car park and creating a street with existing units on the western side of the Row.

Units above the car park provide much needed numbers of in-town residential units and gain views across Torquay

Residential units creating a high level wrap over new retail units at ground floor

Public realm

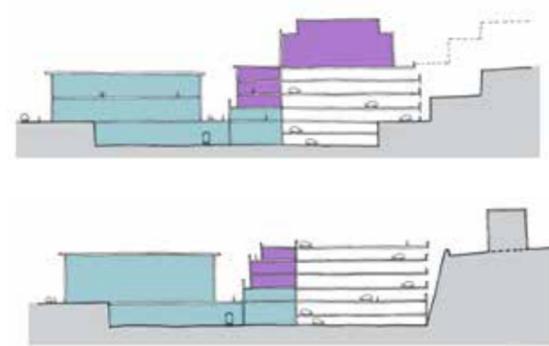
Improved pedestrian links and squares through restructuring existing footprints

Anchor Store

7ft² over 3 storeys. Deliveries at Temperance St at lower level. Possibility to have smaller units footprint of the store at ground floor to liven up the elevation.

Additional smaller retail

Smaller retail/cafe units surrounding larger footprint store



Proposed Sections



View of existing multi-storey car park improved - units/ car parking kept low along line of existing houses along Abbey Road, with the residential block increasing in height where views are not inhibited

Figure 27: Temperance Street proposal option 02

One of the benefits of removing and re-building Temperance Street car park is that the existing structure is an eyesore and so a more attractive street scene could be created when viewed from the surrounding area, and higher quality residential apartments altering the demographic.

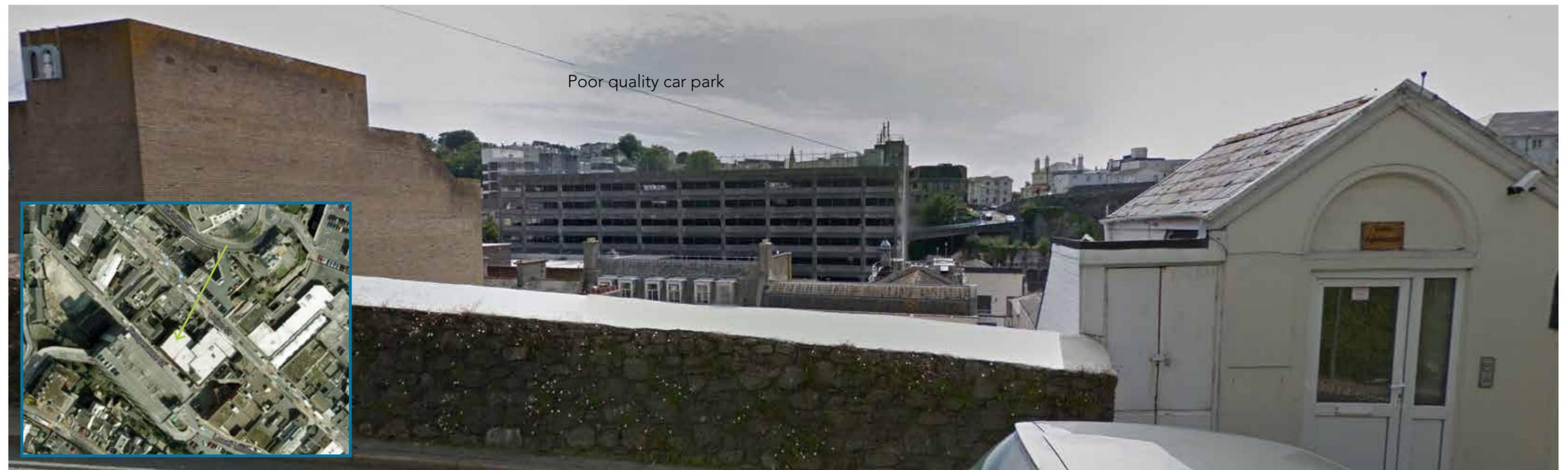
Potentially reduced building heights in rationalised parking

higher density residential tower



Reduced building heights

Figure 28: View of the Temperance Street proposals from Castle Road



Poor quality car park

Figure 29: Existing view of Temperance Street Car park from Castle Road

Other Projects: **Post office roundabout Public Realm:**

Issues :

- this should be a town square but is used as a roundabout and car park for taxi's
- Pedestrian links to Union Street are compromised by the lack of a direct visual link due to the tree planting
- There is no senses of place.

Aim :

to increase connections between the Fleet and Union Street to encourage pedestrian movement along Union Street. To create a town square character.

Actions :

- Remove the roundabout and trees
- Move the taxis to specific locations rather than in the middle of the space
- Consider redevelopment of the Hogs head building (long term)- prime location- ideally high quality building/ focal building
- Provide better signage
- Improve the public toilets
- Encourage outside dining/awnings on the shop fronts
- provide seating/steps- utilise the levels
- incorporate a magnificent piece of public art!



1. Taxi's
2. Focal art/ feature and seats
3. Shared surface treatment
4. Possible replacement of Hoggs Head as a focal building - mixed use, commercial/ residential
5. Introduce canopies on Fleet Street & encourage mixed use developments.

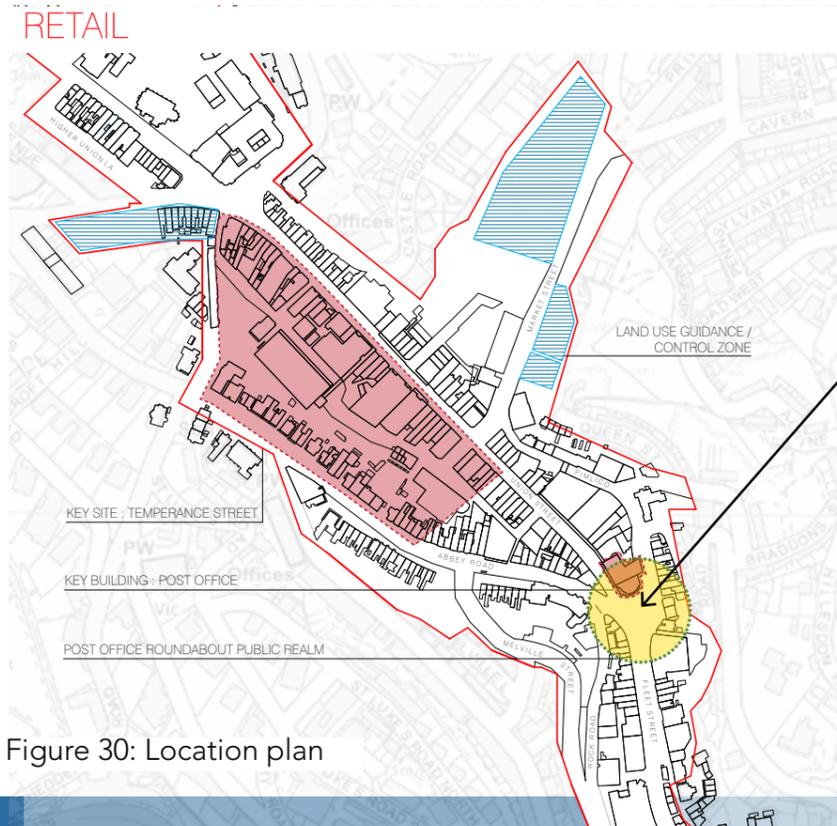


Figure 30: Location plan

Figure 31: Post Office roundabout public realm proposal



Figure 32: Post Office roundabout public realm proposal sketch



Figure 33: Existing view of the Post Office roundabout public realm

Other projects : **Market Street/ Pimlico**

Issues :

- Pimlico is a poor quality street with very little natural surveillance and derelict buildings yet is a major connecting street in the access diagram.
- There is capacity in the southern end of market Street and in Pimlico to increase development potential and maximise the use of the space for residential and commercial uses

Aim :

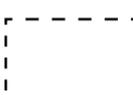
to create an attractive, overlooked street with a mix of uses (including high quality residential market apartments) and to maximise space above shops to provide additional residential apartment land.

Actions :

- Identify the land owners and look to re-develop the sites into mixed use, high density residential innovative led schemes.



PIMLICO - KEY SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT + IMPROVEMENT

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | Poor quality single storey buildings could be 4 storey residential as buildings further up Market Street |  | Small but key site |
|  | Opportunity for a focal building |  | Group of buildings that could develop large footprint and respond to Union Street & Pimlico |
|  | Rear properties & derelict buildings need to be addressed to create positive/ active frontages. |  | Focal building |

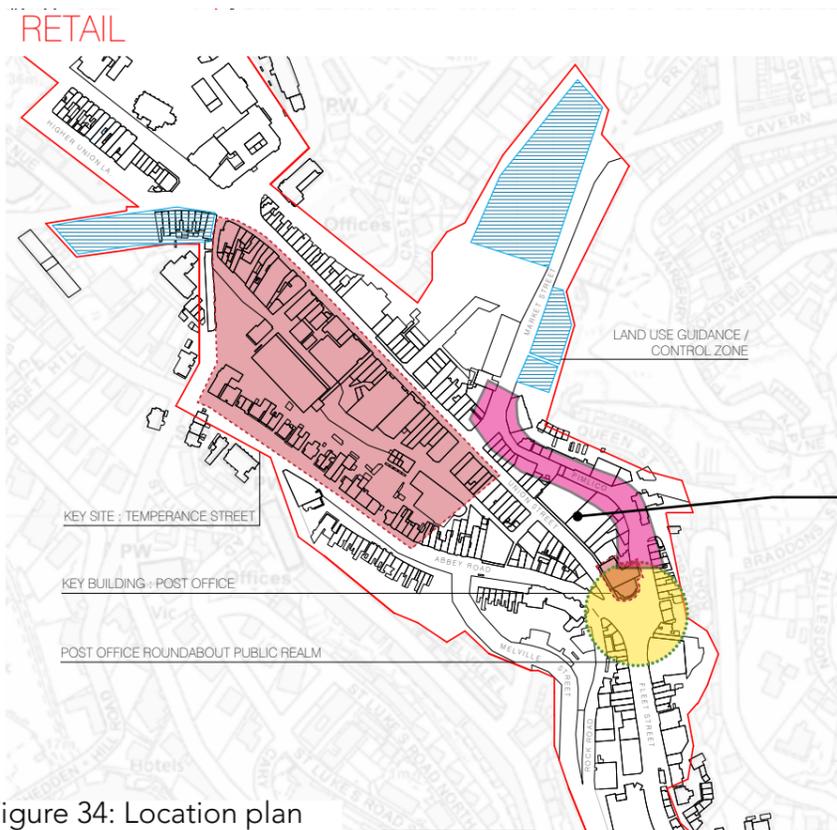


Figure 34: Location plan

Figure 35: Market Street/ Pimlico concept proposal plan

5.3.3 Harbour/ Leisure

Key Projects

- Cary Green/ Marina Car Park
- Victoria Parade
- Promenade/ Princess Theatre

Other Projects:

1. Market/ Events
2. Terrace/ Harbour Car Park/ Shops/ Debenhams
3. Cary Parade

HARBOUR



Figure 36: Location plan





Proposed key sites for development or improvements

Figure 37: Torquay harbourside proposals plan

Key Project: **The Strand**

Issues :

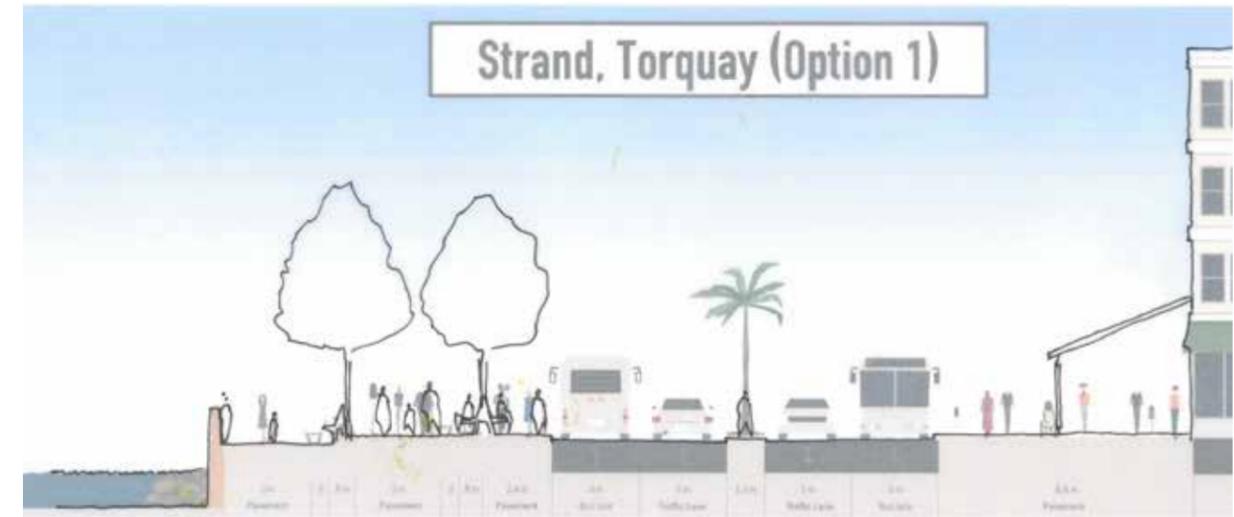
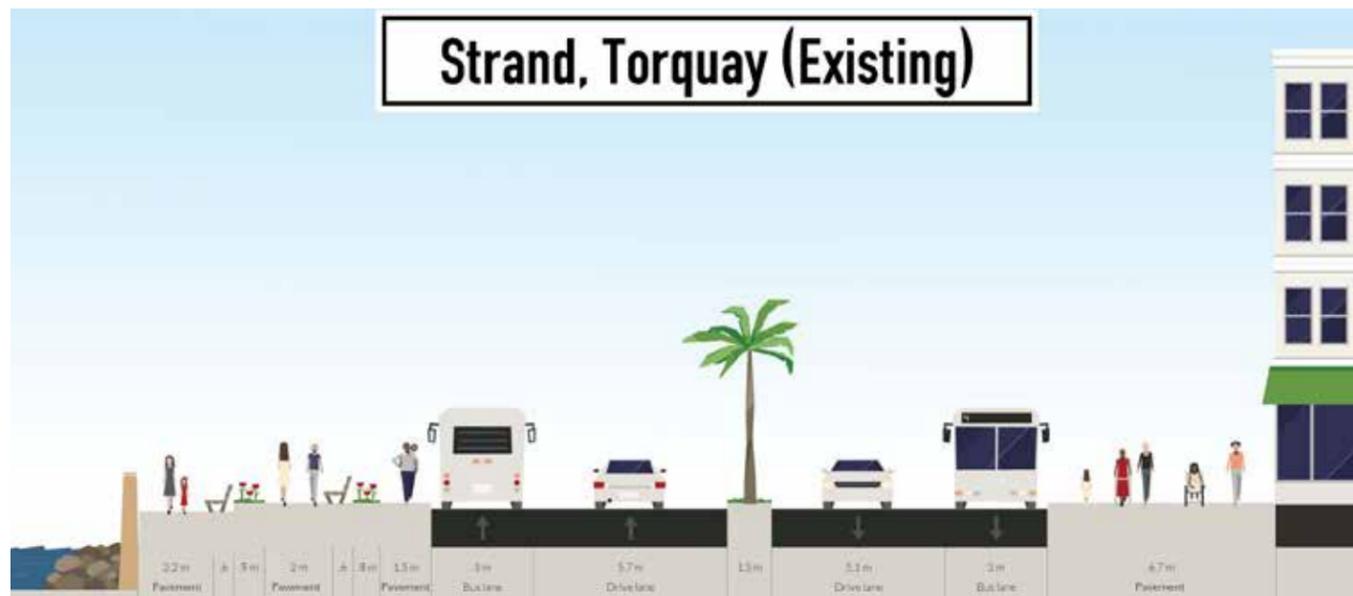
- Bus parking/stopping and waiting creates an unattractive environment for what arguably the most important public space in Torquay.
- Bus /public transport linkage is however important to retain in this area
- The public realm is very poor quality
- Pedestrian access over the road system is difficult and constrained

Aim :

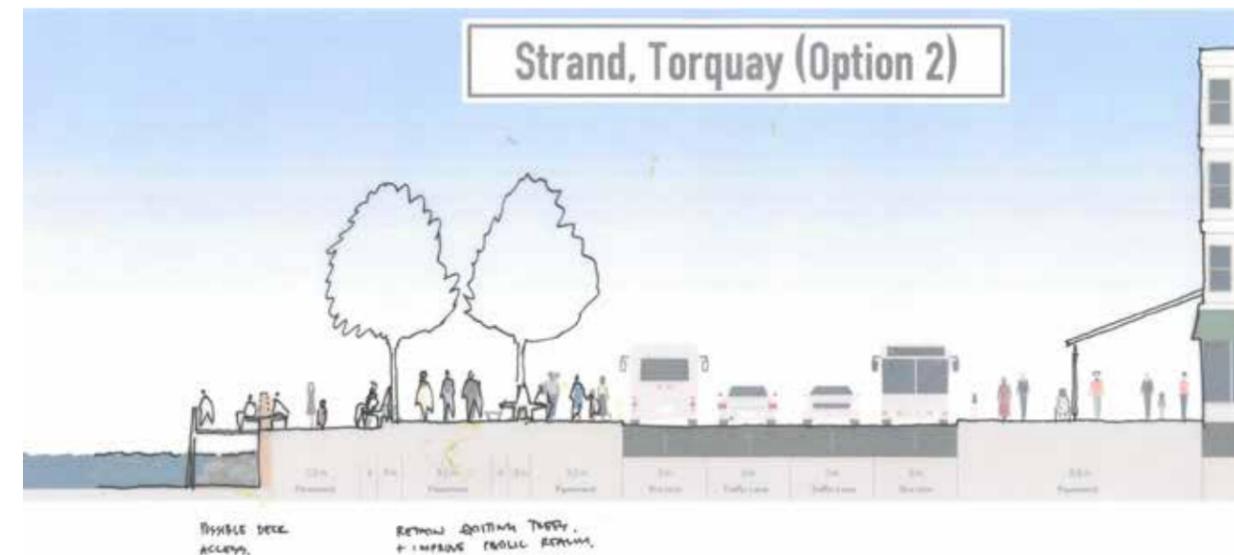
- *To create a fantastic public realm environment that does justice to this unique and important space in the heart of Torquay .*
- *To maintain but rationalise the public transport offer in this important hub.*

Actions :

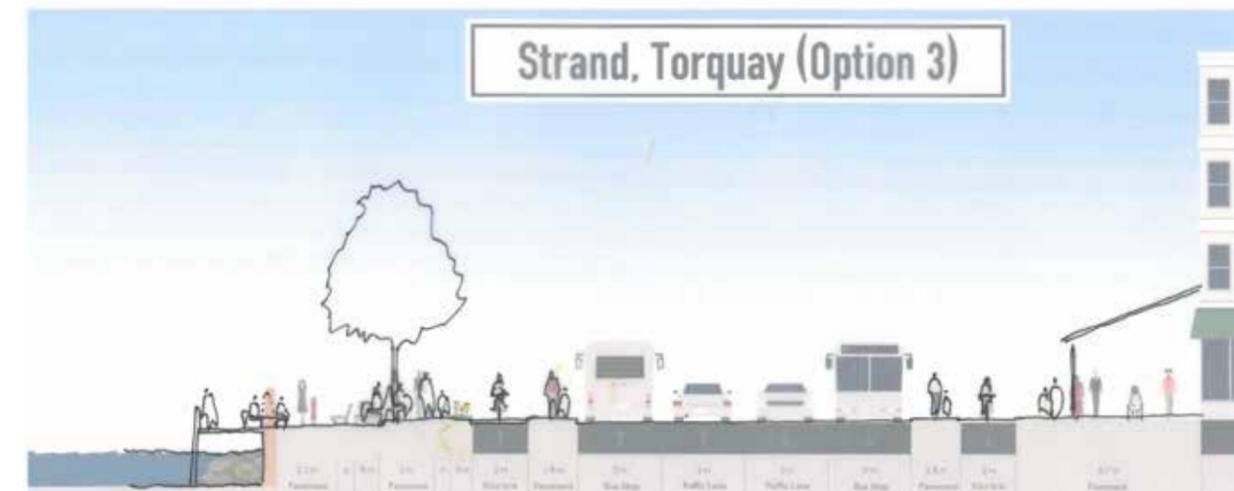
- Narrow the street corridor
- Allow buses to turn left and right at the bottom of Fleet Street
- Rationalise the bus stops and incorporate more bus parking along Cary Parade.
- Create a public realm enhancement scheme for the harbour edge.
- Create a public space that could be utilised for events.
- Create better signage for visitors



Proposed road narrowing option with retention of central median but as a crossing point rather than a barrier.



Proposed road narrowing option with removal of central median to widen the footway zones. Multiple crossings provided. Potential for additional public 'deck' zone over the harbour edge in accordance with the harbour plan.

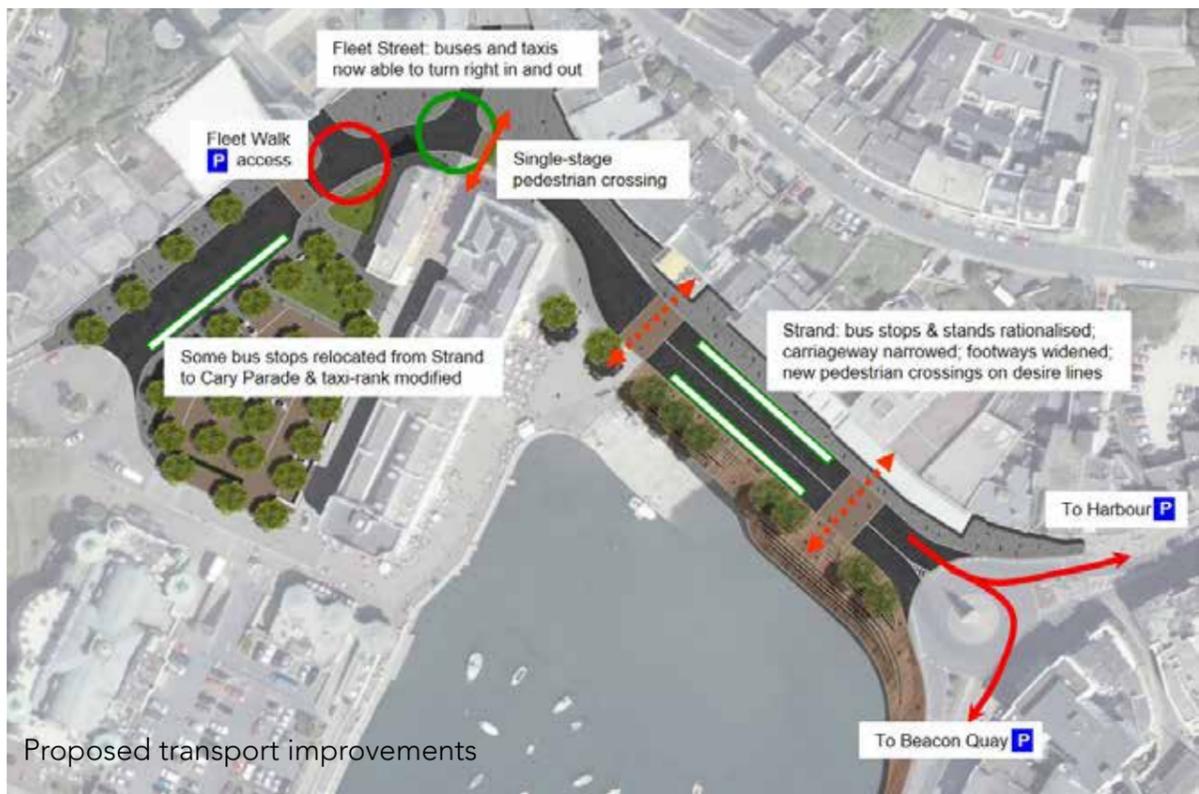


Proposed road narrowing option with removal of central median to allow for cycle lanes as well as increased pedestrian zones. This option would need to be considered against a wider cycle network strategy for the town centre and harbour.

Figure 38: Existing & proposed sections for the Strand



Existing Aerial photograph of the Strand



Proposed transport improvements

Figure 39: The Strand proposal plan & transport improvement





Figure 40: Photomontage of the Strand proposal

Key Project: **Victoria Parade**

Issues :

- More drop off facilities are required for the marina
- Utilising the harbour edge to generate income by the harbour authority
- Improving the public realm along the harbour edge to reflect the good improvements that have been made to a majority of Victoria Parade.

Aim :

To enhance the public realm environment whilst also allowing the harbour to work as a commercial venture.

Actions :

- Incorporate contemporary food 'pods' along the harbour frontage and utilise the harbour edge for seating
- Create a new public realm incorporating better trees and hard & soft landscape.
- Create better signage for visitors
- Provide drop off points for the marina.



HARBOUR

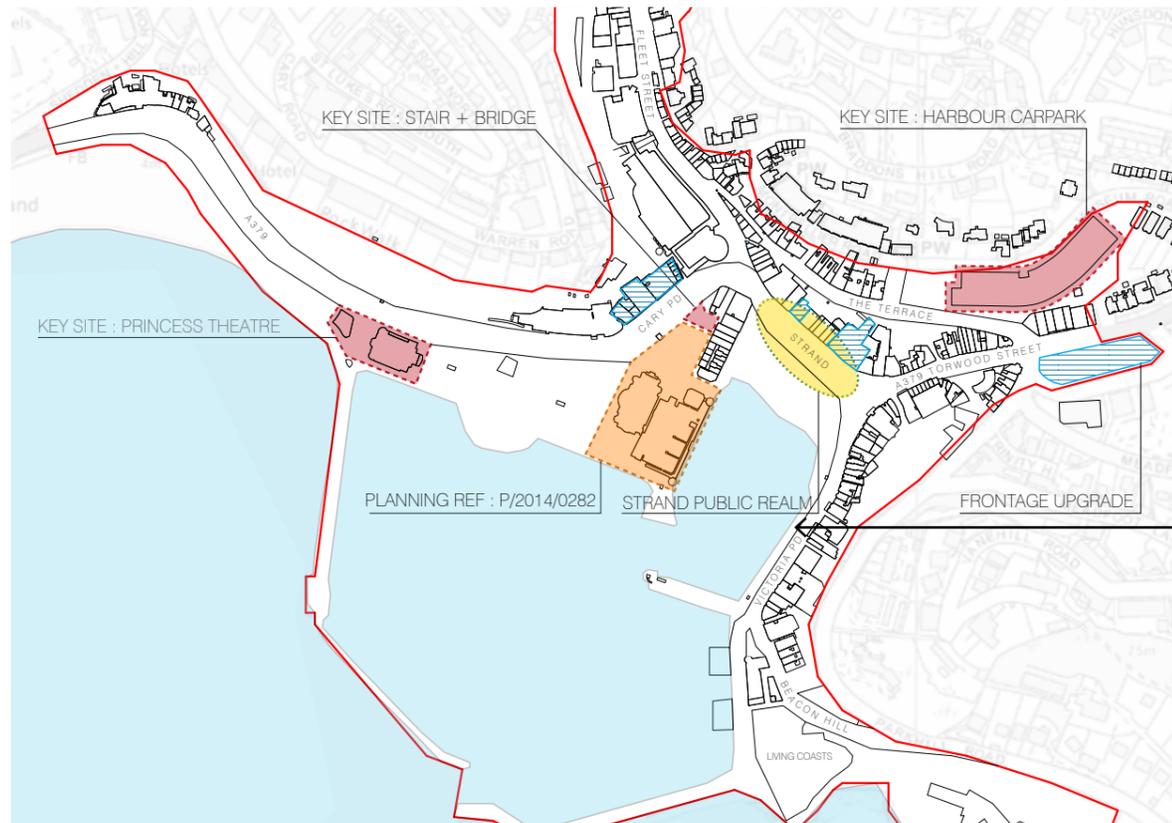


Figure 41: Location plan

Figure 42: Victoria Parade proposal plan



Figure 43: Photomontage of Victoria Parade



Figure 44: Alternative Photomontage of Victoria Parade

Key Project: Cary Green

There is significant public debate about the role and future of Cary Green and it has become a very emotive subject. It is clearly a very important area in the town but there are improvements that could be made regardless of the outcome of Marina Car park application.

The masterplanning team do feel that some form of development on the Marina Car Park needs to happen to inject further momentum to the future success of the harbour and the town. If this includes the Cary Green then it needs to be treated in a very careful way and maintained with the potential to be used for public events whilst also creating a positive frontage to Vaughan Parade.

Issues :

- The zigurat ramp system is an ugly entrance into the harbour area
- Pedestrian access over the Cary Parade is difficult
- Parts of Cary Green are used for bin storage
- The green is a cluttered space but is well used.
- Cary parade amusement arcade is not maximised as a site.
- Bus stop provision needs to be maximised on Cary Parade in order to reduce the reliance of The Strand

Aim :

To enhance the public realm environment whilst also ensuring that future development can be achieved if it is in the interests of supporting a dynamic economy around the harbour edge and enhances the sense of place.

Actions :

- Remove the Zigurat ramp and bridge in conjunction with the public realm enhancements and improved crossings to Cary Parade and the Strand. Improve the existing link to Warren Road.
- Ensure that any Cary Green proposals enhance the existing street frontages and public realm environment and reduce street clutter.
- Encourage re-development of Cary Parade Amusements to a height that responds to the adjoining buildings. Ensure that the rear public footpath to Warren Road is well overlooked with any emerging proposals.
- Redevelop Marina Car Park to enhance the built environment and the retail/ restaurant offer to residents and tourists.

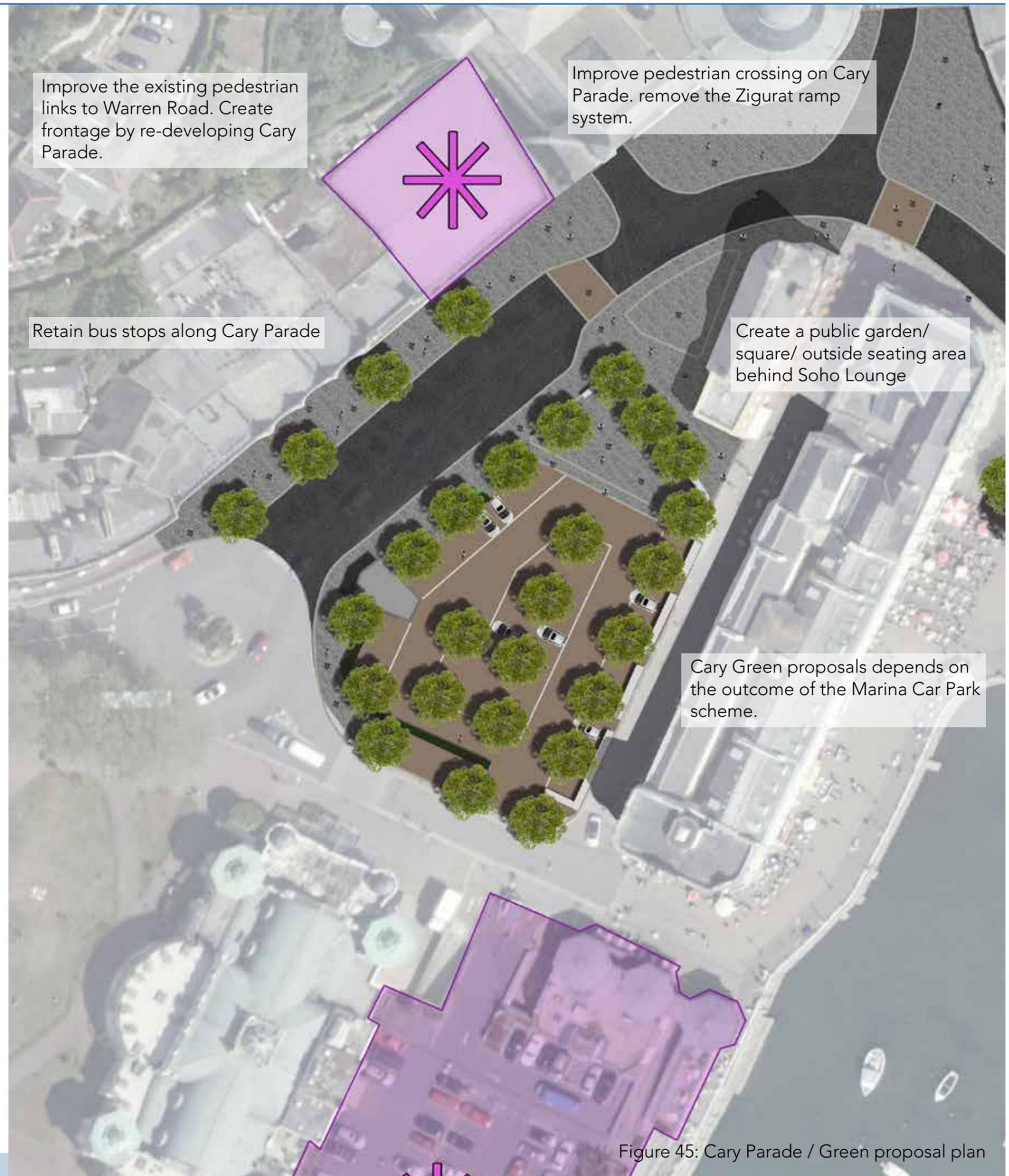


Figure 45: Cary Parade / Green proposal plan

Key Project: Princess Theatre

The Princess Theatre is located in the one of the most prominent sites on the Torbay coastal frontage and has the potential to become an iconic building in the same way that the Sydney Opera House has in Australia. It should be a world class building that puts Torquay on the cultural, architectural and arts map.

Issues :

- The theatre requires more back stage area in order to allow west End shows to come to Torquay.
- The existing Theatre building has become an accumulation of built additions and does little to enhance the frontage.

Aim :

To create a world class building that enables the theatre to expand its productions and in turn its commercial viability whilst also becoming an arts hub for the bay incorporating a contemporary gallery and roof top restaurants overlooking the bay.

Actions :

- Work with the Theatre operators to consider the brief and how to maximise this unique location.
- Consider development scenarios that incorporate commercial uses - eg restaurants.
- Explore funding streams for arts projects.
- **Set an International Design Competition for the site!**

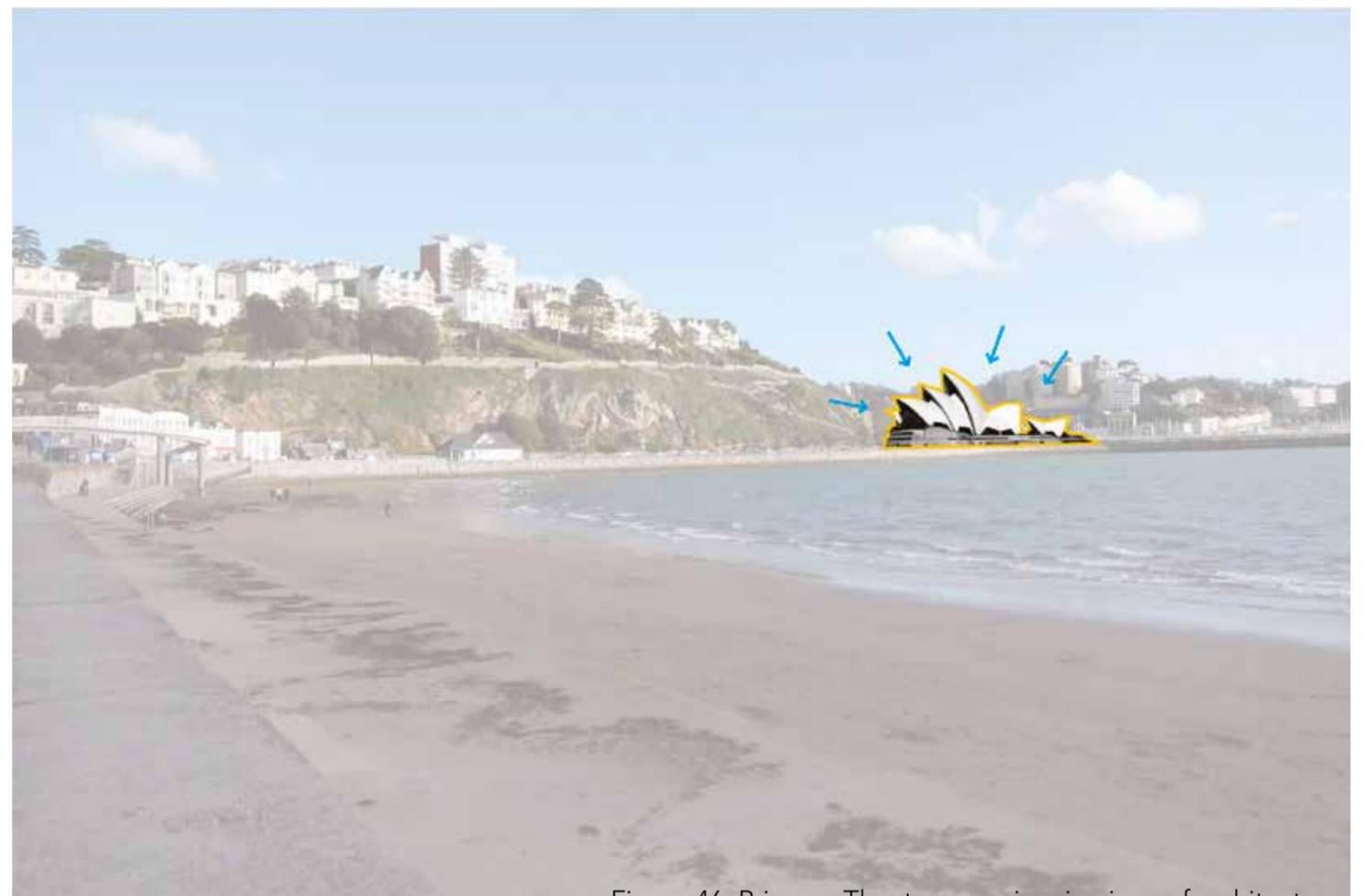


Figure 46: Princess Theatre as an iconic piece of architecture

Key Project: Terrace Car Park & Torwood St Development

Issues :

- Limited good access from the terrace (harbour) car park to the Strand and harbour frontage.
- Entrance to the terrace car park is over engineered and ugly in comparison to the beautiful georgian Terrace buildings.
- Potential improvements as a consequence of the Torwood Street emerging mixed use proposals.
- If the terrace car park isn't full, then sections should be considered for future development.
- Improve the signage to the car park
- The treatment of the rear entrances to the shop units along the Strand is very poor and very visible along the Strand.
- The old Opera building is a beautiful building that is in poor condition.

Aim :

To continue the built frontage of the Terrace on the inefficient land associated with the terrace car Park. This would help to re-define the street in conjunction with the emerging proposals on Torwood Street. Create a safe and attractive route for pedestrians from the Terrace car park down to the harbour.

Actions :

- Look at ways of rationalising the entrance layout into the terrace car park in order to free up land along the frontage of the Terrace in order to create either residential land/ holiday apartments or commercial premises. This should complement the existing georgian terrace and the proposed Torwood Street proposals. Consider re-development of the Debenhams buildings to create a more rational retail store but allow for a direct pedestrian link from the terrace car park to the Strand that is safe and well lit.
- Find funding opportunities to restore the Old Opera building and consider a mix of uses.

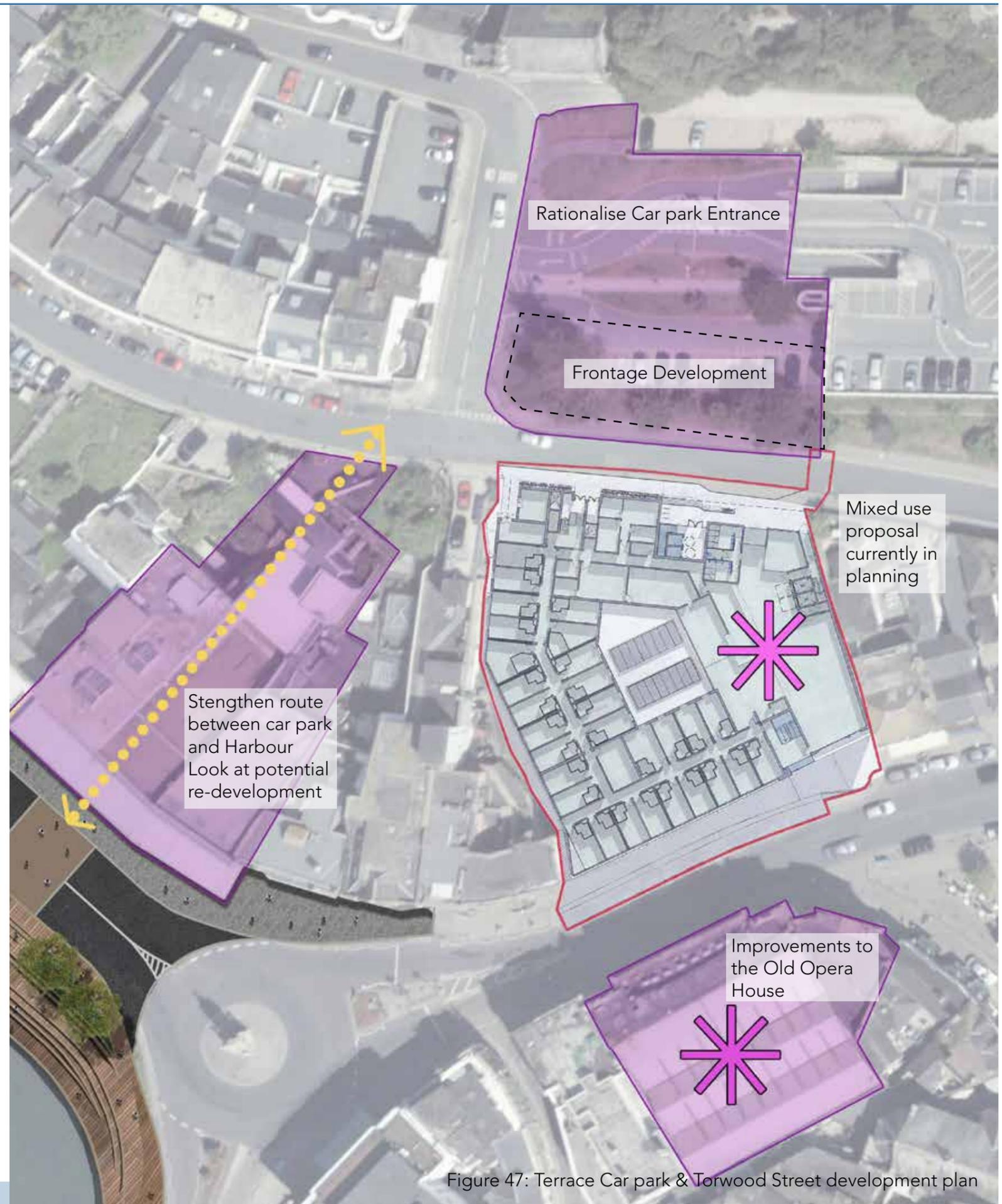


Figure 47: Terrace Car park & Torwood Street development plan

In addition to the main core areas, the design team were asked to have an initial look and review of the secondary centres of Torre and Melville which adjoin the town centre.

The principle issues and ideas are as follows;

1. Melville :

The significant challenge of this area from car parking, poor quality public realm, bin storage, rat running, ASB, HMOs, lack of community space/play area, links to the town centre .

Opportunity sites include the Laundry site (residential and parking), Roebuck House (community use and apartments) and Melville car park which could partly be turned into a community park, restrictions on HMO's and funding for home improvements on buildings of note and improvements to public realm/pedestrian links to town.



Figure 48: Melville Car Park sketch proposal

2. Torre: 1 + 1 Torre Traders/ Antiques shops (specialist retail)/ Car park/Weston Power

The challenge for Torre is to retain its identity as a district distinct from Torquay.

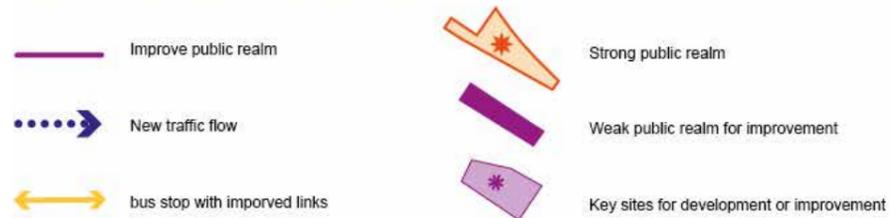
Considerable successful public realm improvements have been carried out within the heart of Torre while the peripheral areas are reliant upon small pendant banners to identify their association. The character is weakest at the south eastern end of Torre adjacent to the Gym/Snooker Hall.

Opportunities exist with the redirection of the one-way system for the heart of Torre to be appreciated by many more visitors.

- A bus stop between the Torre car park and the pedestrianized Union Street
- Improved public realm along the edge of the car park, the rest of Union Street and particularly the Gym
- Encouraging specialised retail, Torre Traders and discouraging general retail sprawl from Torquay's retail centre
- Re-site Weston Power's transformer from the flood zone at the Town Hall car park to the rear of the Torre's car park to safeguard supplies to Torquay



Figure 49: Torre concept plan



The unattractive rear view of the Gym from Upton Park



Top Union Street in Torre

5.4 Movement :

Key Design Principles

- Change the one way system to allow direct access to the TC
- Improve signage to Beach/ TC/ Harbour on the principle routes
- Improve signage to the car parks
- Improve pedestrian signage around the town
- Possible tram between railway station, harbour and up to town hall/ Torre & back

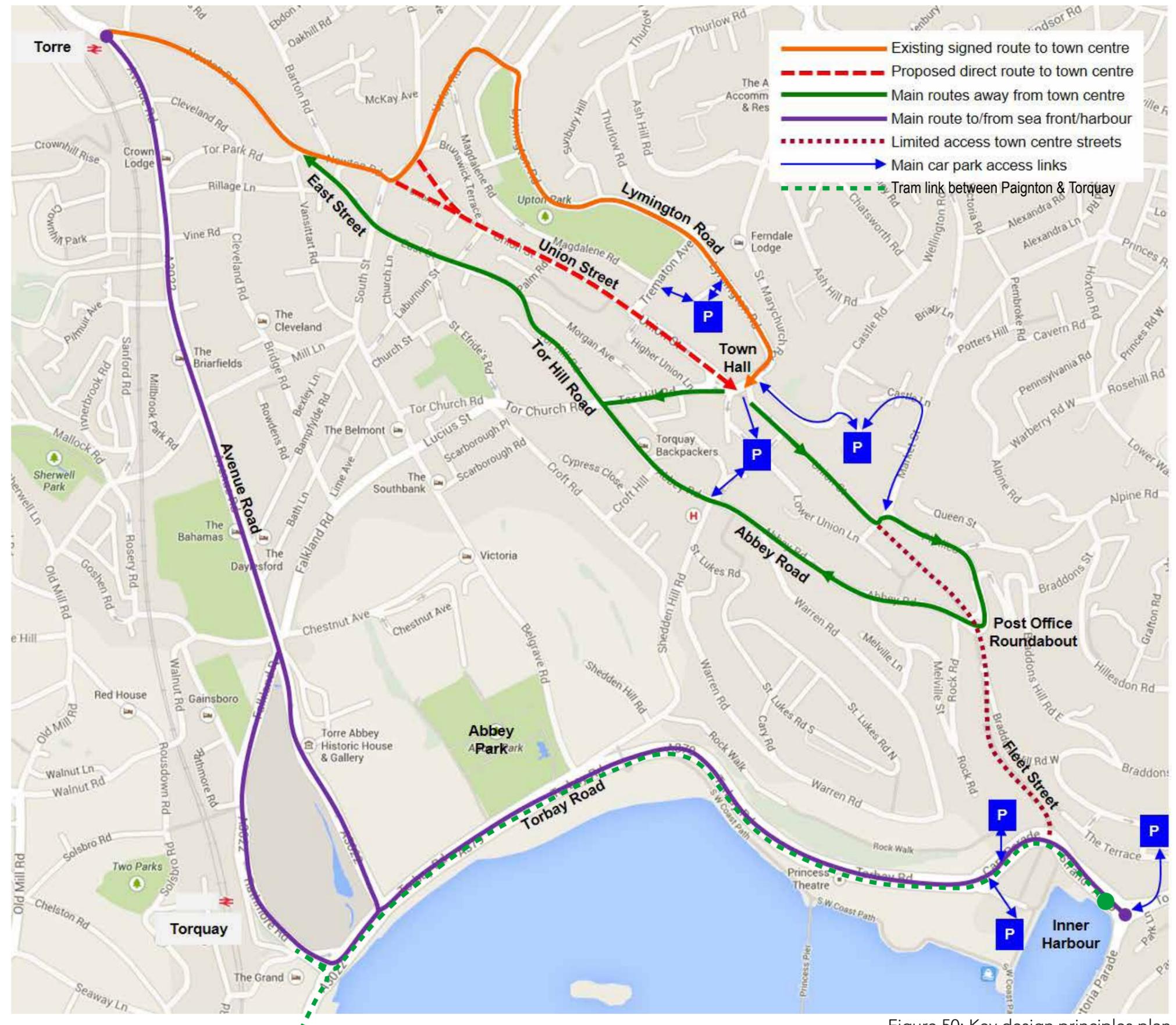


Figure 50: Key design principles plan

5.5 The Intervention Areas

Better town centre legibility for all modes :

Implement a simple way-finding system, including improvements to existing signage, to help people find their way to/from and around the town centre more easily. This will include: rationalising and clarifying road signs so that drivers are more able to distinguish easily between different parts of the town centre (e.g. upper/Union Street shopping area; lower/Fleet Walk shopping area; harbourside/sea front); improving signage (including enhanced variable message signs) so drivers can easily find the best car park for their destination; and a new way-finding system for walking, configured around a town centre circuit and links to all major destinations, including the railway station and Living Coasts).

Reconfigure the main one-way system :

Associated with (i), it is proposed that the one-way system between Torre and Castle Circus should be reconfigured so that people heading into the town centre by car from Torre follow the most direct and attractive route via (Union Street) and do not have to follow the 'scenic route' via Upton Park.

Improving the parking experience:

Associated with (i) and (ii), a package of proposals should be implemented to ensure people are able to choose the best car park for their journey, to find that car park easily, to find a space when they get there, pay a fair charge for the space, feel safe in the car park at all times, and find that the experience of parking generally enhances their experience of Torquay as a whole.

There are currently more than enough parking spaces in the town centre to meet demand, but some car parks can get full (or nearly full) at peak times while others remain relatively empty. Reliable variable message signing will help, as could differential pricing between car parks – so long as information about this is clear and readily available.

Several studies indicate that the availability of a parking space is more important to a town centre than price. While cheaper parking is typically appreciated by users (people rarely object to saving money), there is no evidence that lower parking charges have a direct, positive impact on high street vitality. The retail offer is key: people are prepared to pay more to park to access more/better shops.

In short, the parking strategy for Torquay should avoid simplistic responses such as creating more spaces (at a not inconsiderable cost) or making it cheaper (which can reduce Council revenues while failing to achieve greater usage or longer stays). The strategy should cover both the short and long terms, and remain flexible.

Bus accessibility :

Bus patronage in Torbay is high the number 12 bus being one of the most frequented bus services in the South West. However, no studies have been done to determine the actual linkages between retail spend and footfall from bus use, and this is a piece of work that needs to be done before any major decisions about relocating services and moving bus stops is carried out.

Rail, Tram and Coach Links :

Combining modes of transport is a key component of successful sustainable transport. This could be further enhanced with a tram system between Paignton and Torquay along the water front connecting the train stations & main features. Living on the edge of rural community in Devon means that accessibility is restricted. However, linked trips with rail, coach, taxi, bike use could be improved if coach drop off /pick up facilities were introduced at Torquay Station. Some discussion including a tram along the coastal frontage, linking the station to the town centre and harbour should be explored- this could replace the land train with a more permanent and higher quality experience reflecting the change in the economic and tourist dynamics. the route could also link to paignton sea front and become a tourist attraction as well as a useful local transport option.

Ferry/water taxi:

Encourage the use of the water taxi service as this means of transport sets Torquay and the Bay apart from other regional centres. The water experience is an integral component of the success of the Bay and is explored in the harbour masterplan.

5.6 Delivery & Phasing

The brief states...

The Council recognises that it can only deliver a masterplan by strong civic leadership working in close partnership with residents and the private sector. It is important that the masterplan is action oriented. It should identify realistic resources that are able to deliver both short and longer term objectives. This should be backed by a measurable delivery plan. The masterplan should build upon the experience of regeneration and urban design initiatives locally, nationally and internationally.

- i) Quick Wins (0-5 years)
- ii) Medium term (5-10 years)
- iii) Long term (10-20 years)

The Benefit Cost Ratio for quick win item i – the one-way system has been calculated at 2.28. This focuses on the immediate return through journey time savings, carbon and the like. There is significant added value resulting from the investment in the Town Centre that will regenerate the struggling economic position.

Quick Wins & Projects:

0-5 yrs

- i. One way system
- ii. Signage
- iii. Parking monitoring
- iv. Use and treatment of empty shops
- v. Identifying small scale re-development sites and supporting new / on going major development schemes as long as they deliver quality development – eg Marina Car Park.
- vi. Public realm Enhancement / Bus /taxi usage and parking– the harbour (The Strand, Cary Parade and Victoria Parade – in accordance with the Port Masterplan))
- vii. Work Hub – Vaughan Parade
- viii. Start enabling works for major projects e.g. land acquisition/ services/ funding partners/.....

Medium wins : 5-10yrs

- i. Public realm enhancements (second the post office roundabout, third the Town Hall.)
- ii. Private / Public investment into key historic Buildings , eg old Opera House, Town Hall
- iii. Identifying and re-developing small – medium sites eg Town Hall Car Park, Upton Coach Park, Upton Park, existing sites around the harbour – eg Cary Parade, Debenhams, Boots etc, Pimlico, Market Street

Long term wins: 10-20yrs

- i. Large scale development opportunities – Temperance st,
- ii. BT building
- iii. Palace Theatre re-development

6.1 Next Steps

Torquay Town Centre

Torquay is the largest town in Torbay. The economy is centred on tourism as well as a strong retail sector although this has suffered over the last 5 years. A high class natural environment focussed on the harbour and coast, makes the town an attractive place for visitors and investors. However, there are also communities with significant levels of deprivation and the economy has traditionally been hampered by infrastructure constraints. Torquay needs planned growth and sensitive development (including new homes and jobs) to help deliver the social and economic changes needed to arrest decline whilst also protecting its strong environmental assets and tourism value.

This masterplan identifies broadly deliverable projects which will need to be taken forward through to delivery with support from TDA and the Council, working with private sector partners and landowners. It is the aspiration of the Council to facilitate an attractive investment proposition for the private sector to redevelop the key sites within the town centre. Therefore, the Council will wish to work collaboratively with private sector development partners and existing businesses as may be affected by proposals, to deliver the benefits associated with the redevelopment of core sites. The Delivery and Phasing opportunities in section 5.6 are not prescriptive, and the Council will support development opportunities as and when they are able to come forward. The masterplan presents a long term spatial framework within which investment decisions will be taken to enable schemes to be delivered that meet social, economic and environmental objectives.

Governance

The Council will be responsible for the overall governance and leadership required to ensure the delivery of the aims and aspirations presented here. However, a range of partners will need to be involved in order to ensure the delivery of individual elements of the masterplan. These include TDA, the Neighbourhood Plan Forum, the many Community Partnerships noted in section 2.3, local retailer networks (within and outside the remit of the Business Improvement District), transport

operators, individual businesses, local environmental groups, statutory agencies and utility providers.

As the local planning authority, the Council remains responsible for the consideration and approval of proposals within the town centre area. As such, proposals which accord with the principles and aims of this masterplan will be considered favourably, albeit they must still comply with the development plan and other relevant policy. Proposals for development which would prejudice the aim of the masterplan will be resisted as they would lead to difficulty in delivery the masterplan concept. Developers are encouraged to actively engage with the Council at an early stage in order to ensure that specific development proposals can be formulated in a way which supports the masterplan.

As an early adopter of the Neighbourhood Plan process, there are three active forums across the Torbay area, each of which is at varying stages of progress in the formulation of plans. The Torquay Neighbourhood Forum are preparing a plan which, amongst others, covers the Town Centre area. Once both the draft Torbay Local Plan (currently under examination) and the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan have been adopted they will form the development plan. This masterplan is anticipated to perform a central role in both, but particularly the Neighbourhood Plan which will itself be a critical element in guiding development within the town centre area.

Funding

The Council recognise that investment decisions to undertake town centre redevelopment proposals involving retail, employment, leisure, residential or mixed use developments are heavily dependent on a number of issues, including but not limited to development viability driven by land value and relevant site specific constraints. To this end, any decision on the part of landowners and developers to progress the development of sites identified within this masterplan will be driven by the availability of funding, anticipated sales values and the costs associated with bringing forward development proposals in terms of direct development costs and planning obligations and/or future Community Infrastructure Levy tariffs as will become known during the life of the masterplan.

European Funding

Funding for public realm/landscape/streetscape improvements is increasingly scarce. While the 2014/20 European funding programme is anticipated to be live from January 2015 this is heavily focussed on smart, sustainable economic growth and any projects put forward will need to meet the priorities outlined in the Local Enterprise Partnership's EU Structural & Investment Fund strategy .

Council Funding

Transport and Infrastructure funding has also, for a large part, been devolved to Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Heart of the South West's Strategic Economic Plan (2014-30) sets out the drivers for growth across Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay. This has also been used to negotiate Growth Deal funding from government for 2015/16. A similar process of negotiation is expected for future years and there may be the opportunity to put forward proposals for improvements within the masterplan which will contribute to the LEP's strategic economic goals.

Landownership

Within a town centre location, land ownership will always be a critical delivery path in a regeneration and revitalisation programme. This masterplan will perform a central role in building support across landholdings and key delivery stakeholders for the broad aim of town centre improvement. The vision and detailed plans for particular sites and streets within the town, including strategic highway improvements, should be seen as a demonstration of the Council's intention to pursue a dynamic programme of change to realise the overall desired improvements.

Many of the key sites are within Council ownership such as the Town Hall car park, Upton Coach Park and many of the public realm proposals within the masterplan document. Others such as Temperance Street, or developments around Pimlico would need to include Council and private sector landholdings

In the event that landownership constraints are perceived to hinder a redevelopment opportunity, and the tangible economic or community benefits which would be generated by that development, the Council will consider the use of Compulsory Purchase powers to remove such barriers and enable the delivery of key sites as may be required.

While the possibility of the use of Compulsory Purchase powers remains, it is anticipated that this masterplan will provide the private sector, both in the form of individual and institutional landowners and developers, with the certainty and reassurance required to work with the Council to deliver each key project of the masterplan to the overall and long term benefit of Torquay