Stevenage Town Centre

Public Realm Guide

2019

Stevenage BOROUGH COUNCIL BDP.

1.0 Introduction & objectives

1.1 Executive summary

The public realm strategy sets out the future approach to the streets and spaces of Stevenage.

The aim of Stevenage Central Vision Statement states:

"In the early 1960's Stevenage town centre was brand new - bright, modern and cutting edge. It exemplifies the ethos for the town, which was to deliver a vibrant economy alongside decent housing and excellent public spaces. (...) Stevenage was, and should be again, a destination town centre."

In the past few years, some localised projects have been delivered throughout the town centre of Stevenage, bringing a restored public realm to its inhabitants in some areas. Nonetheless, the absence of a general strategy and the lack of maintenance along the years has led to a generally degraded streetscape which lacks quality and isn't pedestrian friendly. In many instances, it is not adapted for the uses and activities that with allow the town to thrive.

The public realm strategy is set out over a number of chapters and includes an understanding of the existing, influencing factors and future developments that will take place in the town centre; feedback received through engagement with stakeholders, and a series of principles and guidelines which are demonstrated through specific projects.

The public realm strategy sets out key guiding principles which are as follows:

1. Put people first. Design spaces for people.

2. Improve streetscape legibility.

3. Ensure consistency in design and use of materials.

4. Create memorable and identifiable spaces where people want to be.

5. Protect and enhance Stevenage's character and architectural heritage.

6. Create a green and sustainable town centre.

7. Support pedestrian users of the town centre.

8. Promote vibrant and active streets.

9. Create a safe public environment.

10. Implement a maintenance action plan and strategy.

11. Ensure that all public realm projects support the proper functioning of the town centre.

The general appraisal chapter sets out an understanding of the issues and opportunities in Stevenage, whilst setting out good practice examples regarding specific elements of the public realm.

The design manual chapter sets out clear spatial guidances for the improvement of the public realm and sets out principles of quality, construction and maintenance.

To demonstrate the intentions of the design manual and vision, a number of key example projects have been identified and are illustrated in chapter 4. In each case a series of design considerations has been estalished wich are site-specific and in line with the aspirations of the design manual.

The steps for implementing public realm projects are set out towards the end of the document. Here, recommended strategies are given for programme, funding, design, procurement and delivery.

Stevenage Town Centre

N

1km

1.2 Introduction and context

The Public Realm Strategy seeks to set out how publicly accessible areas should be design for today's and future generations. This includes the proposed conservation and enhancement of Stevenage's streets, parks, squares and spaces.

Stevenage...

The town motto for Stevenage is as follows: *"The Heart of a Town lies in its people"*. Stevenage was the UK's first new town in 1946 as well as the first wholly pedestrianised town centre. The Conservation Area around the Town Square contains two listed structures: the Clock Tower and the Joyride statue. The New Town architectural heritage has shaped a distinctive town centre and continues to influence character and sense of place in Stevenage today.

The town, located within Hertfordshire in the East of England, counts nowadays approximately 90,000 inhabitants. It is strategically connected by train - Central London can be reached in approximately 20 minutes - and well connected by roads, making the town ideally located to become a destination.

Retailing is the predominant land use within the town centre and a majority of the land is owned by public sector.

Stevenage's aspirations...

The Stevenage Central Framework 2015 is the overarching regeneration strategy for the development of the centre of Stevenage, including the establishment of investment priorities and physical interventions over the next 25 years. The vision of the Central Framework is supported by 10 principles, including *"There will be good, usable, high quality public space and there must be a new green space within the Ring Road"*.

Stevenage Borough Council is determined to pursue this vision through the enhancement of the town core, the creation of a vibrant town centre with pedestrian priority, safe streets, new linkages and urban spaces around key amenities such as the Town Square.

Public realm...

This is commonly defined as all areas between buildings including streets, laneways and open squares that are accessible to the public. From earliest times, public spaces have played an important role in the cultural, political, commercial, social and recreational development of communities.

Extensively studies and written about, public spaces are simply places where people can meet, mix, engage and exchange. Well designed and planned public spaces enhance the physical environment and improve the 'livability' and sustainability of urban centres. They provide a geographical focal point for the community and a place where residents and visitors alike can congregate for a variety of purposes.

The need for a public realm strategy.

The Public Realm strategy seeks to achieve the ultimate goal of transforming Stevenage into a leading town in the region through the design of an attractive and vibrant town centre in which people want to live, socialise and shop. A single, coherent concept of the town centre's public realm is an essential element to achieve this ambition for Stevenage.

The recommendations within this document are to be implemented through both public and privage development projects that may impact on Stevenage's town centre public areas.
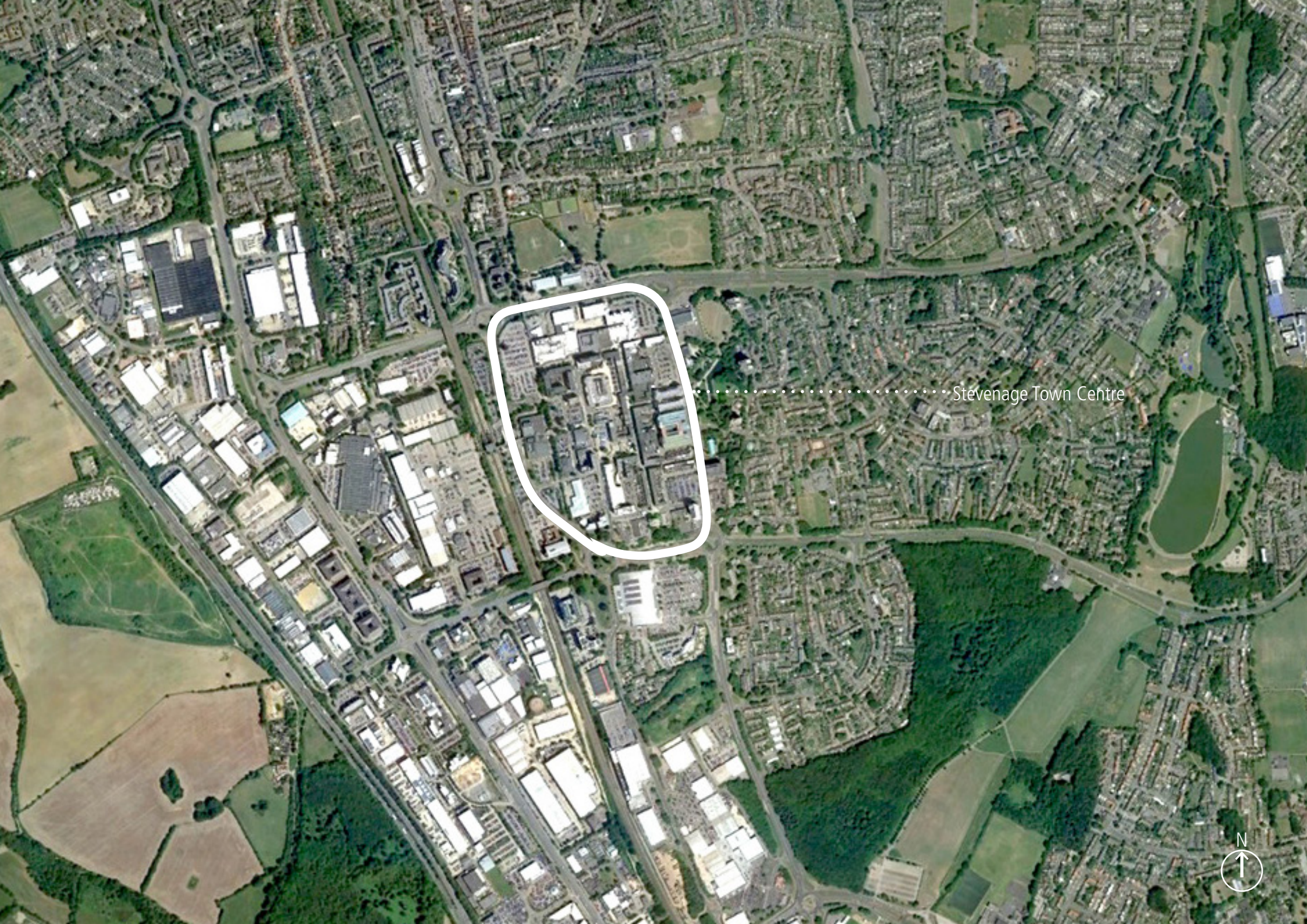
Stevenage Town Centre

1.3 Value of the public realm

This diagram highlights the importance of the public realm relative to Stevenage town centre. Every intervention and decision made must be considered against the physical setting, relecting on the value socially, environmentally, economically and functionally.
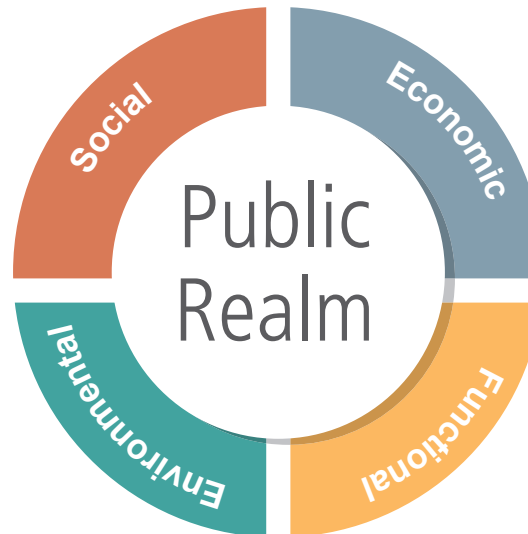
Social Value

▫ Makes spaces more accessible for physically impaired people and older adults
▫ Provides a venue for community events, community cohesion
▫ Creates a place where people want to be & meet
▫ Assists in the interpretation of heritage
▫ Improves well-being through exercise
▫ Produces a heightened satisfaction for users

Economic Value

▫ Attractive to investment and development
▫ Invest to save (reduce maintenance)
▫ People stay longer and help vitality
▫ Encourages inward investment
▫ Impact on property value
▫ Increase tourism

Environmental Value

▫ Reduces air pollution
▫ Enhances the identity of a place
▫ Aids in the softening, greening and future proofing of the town
▫ Brings nature and biodiversity in the city
▫ Protects, conserves and enhances heritage
▫ Promotes sustainable rainwater management and attenuation
▫ Contributes to positive image and perception

Functional Value

▫ Supports public art
▫ Encourages walking and cycling
▫ Improves orientation and wayfinding
▫ Makes public transports more accessible
▫ Inclusive for all users, universal design
▫ Helps rationalising movement and transport
▫ Creates outdoor spaces associated to retail & leisure

Social

Economic

Environmental

Functional

Public Realm

1.4 What makes a good public realm

The "public realm" consists of all areas to with the public has access (such as roads, streets, lanes, parks and squares). It includes the publicly accessible spaces between buildings, along with the buildings or other structures that enclose them.

A good quality, well considered public realm plays a major role in a positive user experience that will encourage return visits, just as a poor public realm on a cold, rainy day might discourage visitors.

The quality of the public realm plays a vital role in the creation of a place with an enhanced sense of identity, where people with choose to spend their time. It gives great scope for public art, community based activities, temporary interventions and events, 'greening' the town centre with landscaping and the inclusion of creative lighting schemes.

The public realm provides the context for highlighting the built heritage. Well-maintained and presented buildings are important component of the public realm.
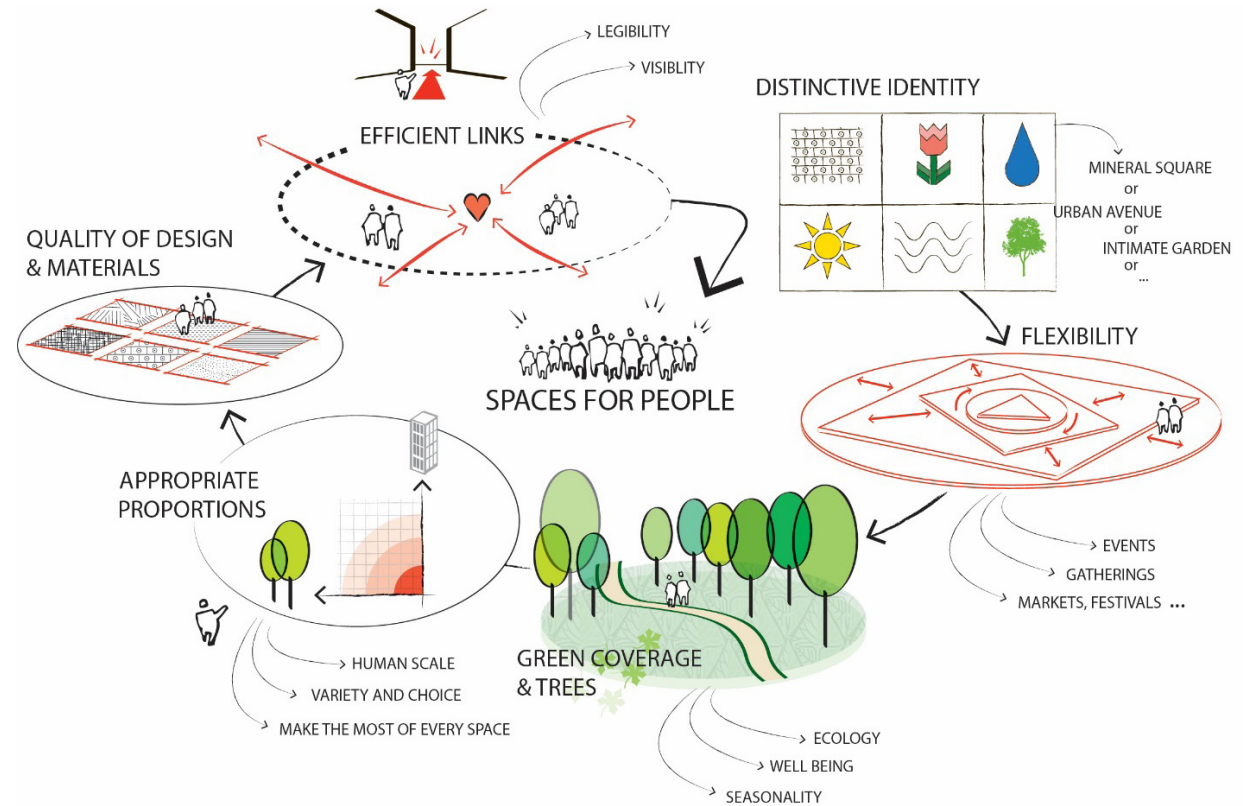
Legibility	Spatial integrity	Culture	Context
Sustainability	Permeability	Identity	Inclusivity
Heritage	Surveillance	Architecture	Future proofing

1.5 Vision and objectives for Stevenage

Making Stevenage...

A destination town centre

A green and sustainable town centre

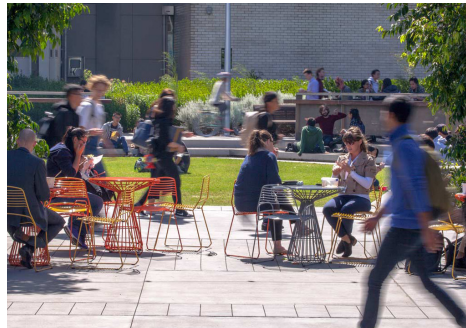**A pedestrian friendly environment**

An economically vibrant town centre

A place where people want to live

A civic heart offering social and democratic services

1.6 Streets and spaces hierarchy and overview

Planned evolution of the urban structure

Stevenage Central Framework sets out the general long term vision for the whole of the town, identifying key opportunities areas and defining the aspirations that will guide future developments. Alongside the Central Framework, a number of masterplan focusing on some areas of the town have been undertaken, SG1 regeneration area being the most extended. An understanding of the current layout of the town, its associated heritage and structure, and its relation with the future foreseeable development gives us a framework within which the public realm guide can be set out.

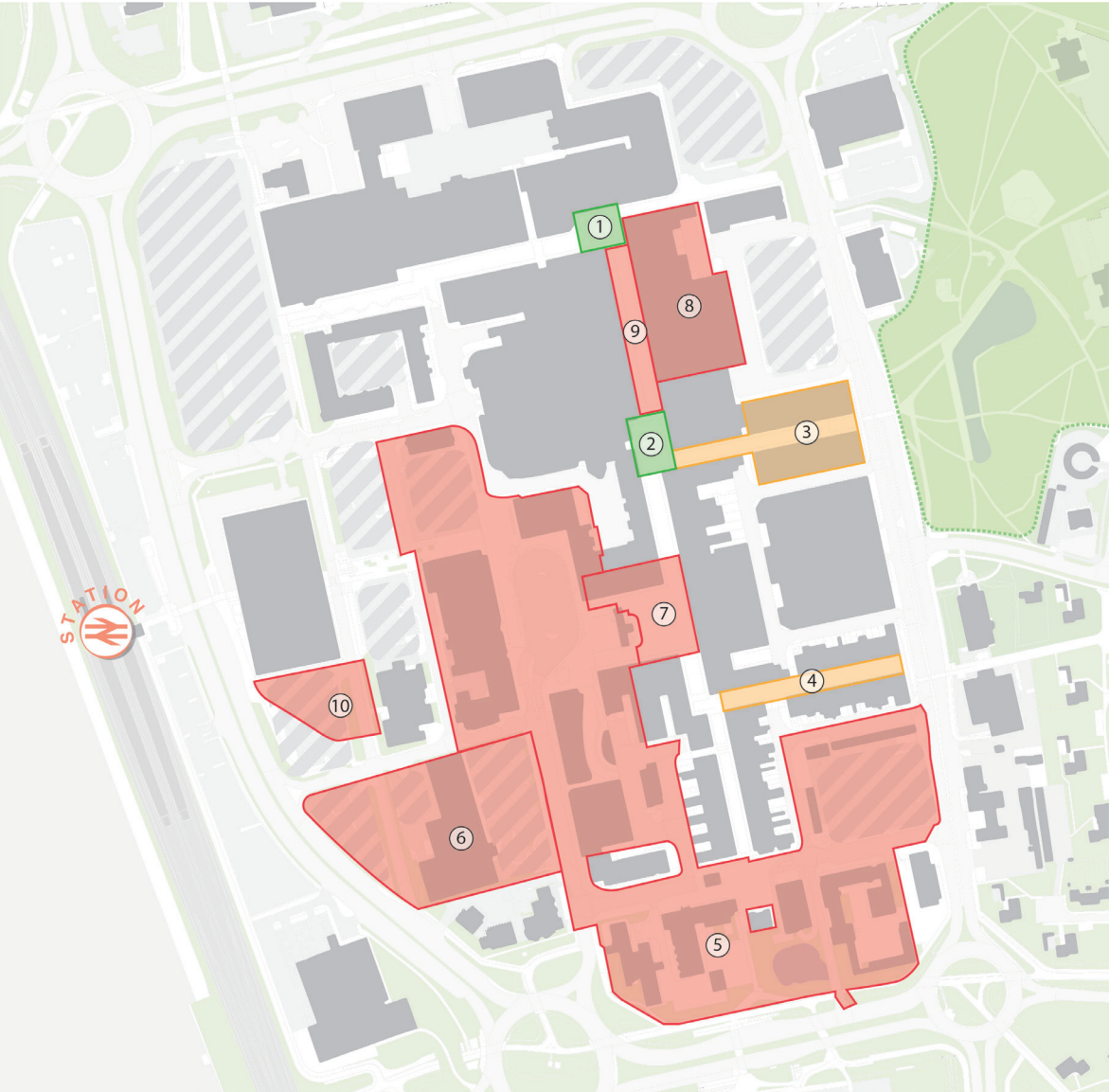Existing town centre

Mid term vision: SG1 regeneration
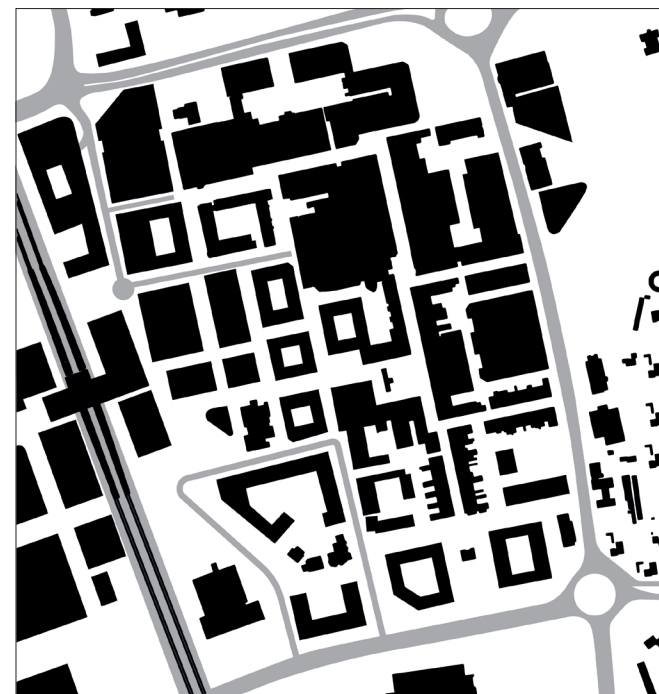
Long term vision: Central framework regeneration

1.6 Streets and spaces hierarchy and overview

Overview of ongoing and planned developments

As part of the general strategic vision for Stevenage, a number of develoment sites have been identified and development is ongoing throughout the town centre, both of public realm and urban structure. The diagram below shows the current regeneration programme.

Completed regeneration works
Forum Square ①
Littlewood Square ②

Ongoing regeneration works
Park Place residential and public realm ③
Market Place public realm and play street ④

Future regeneration works
SG1 ⑤
Matalan site ⑥
Town Square frontages & public realm ⑦
Queensway north ⑧
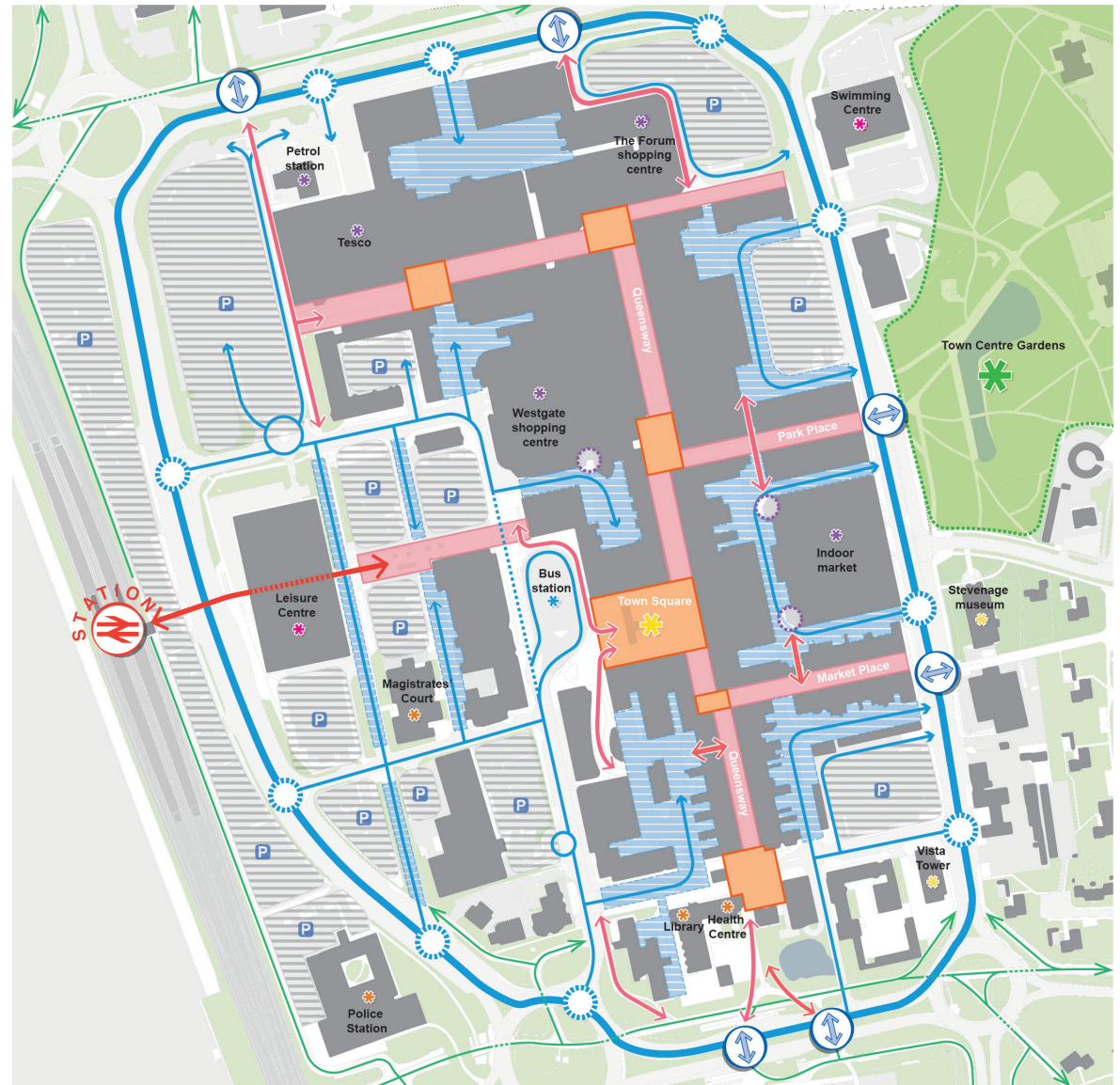Kames Capital ⑨
New bus station site ⑩

1.6 Streets and spaces hierarchy and overview

Current situation of the town centre

The town centre currently displays a strong network of pedestrian streets and spaces, but that lacks quality, spatial character and connectivity with adjacent streets and residential areas. Key pedestrian links lack legibility - such as from the station, from beyond the ring road or from Town Centre Gardens - making the town centre hard to navigate and monotonous. Outside of the pedestrian areas, the public realm is dominated by cars, car parks and vehicular accesses.

Legend:

- Pedestrian streets
- Public spaces
- Pedestrian link from station to town centre
- Other key pedestrian links
- Pedestrian and cycle accesses to the town centre (underpasses and bridges)
- Cycling routes
- Ring road
- Primary vehicular streets
- Secondary streets with delivery areas and access to garages
- Accesses to shopping facilities giving onto back of house
- Vehicular entrances to town centre
- Surface car park
- Heritage
- Civic
- Green open space
- Leisure
- Transport
- Retail

Map labels: Petrol station, The Forum shopping centre, Swimming Centre, Tesco, Queensway, Westgate shopping centre, Park Place, Town Centre Gardens, Indoor market, Stevenage museum, STATION, Leisure Centre, Bus station, Town Square, Market Place, Magistrates Court, Queensway, Vista Tower, Library, Health Centre, Police Station
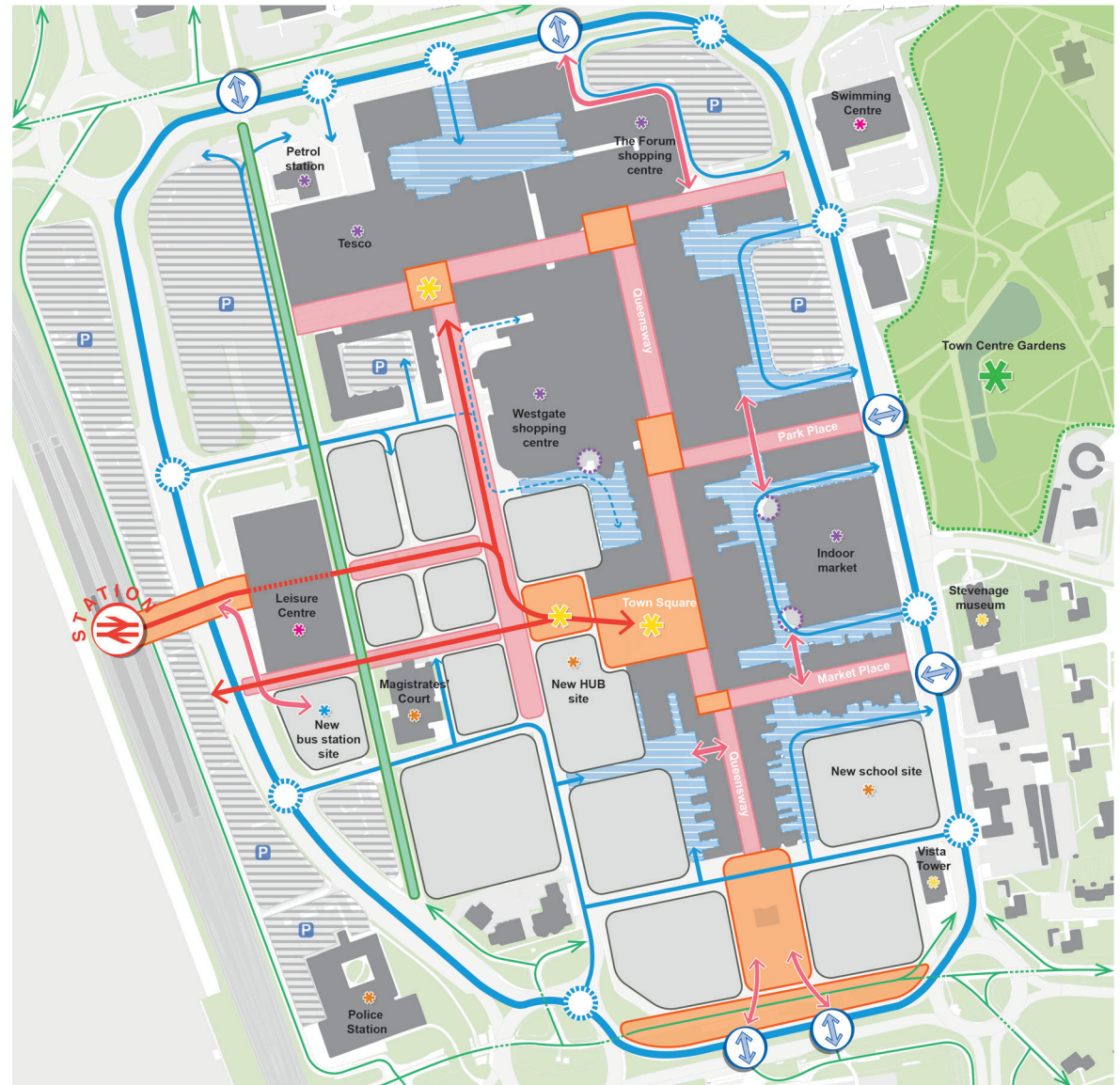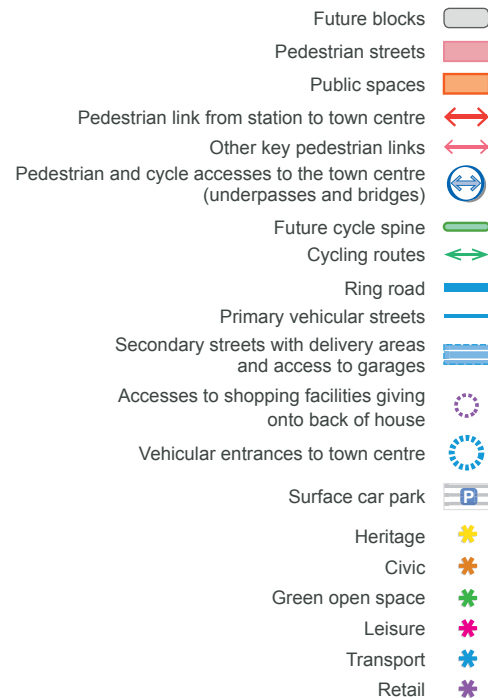
1.6 Streets and spaces hierarchy and overview

Future development of the town centre

The key public realm features that will be created by the regeneration process are as follows:

- Clear and direct link from the station to the heart of the town
- Two large squares at the heart of the town centre
- North-South pedestrian boulevard
- Pedestrian loop
- Large open space at the arrival from Queensway South
- Rationalised vehicular streets structure

	Legend
Future blocks	
Pedestrian streets	
Public spaces	
Pedestrian link from station to town centre	
Other key pedestrian links	
Pedestrian and cycle accesses to the town centre (underpasses and bridges)	
Future cycle spine	
Cycling routes	
Ring road	
Primary vehicular streets	
Secondary streets with delivery areas and access to garages	
Accesses to shopping facilities giving onto back of house	
Vehicular entrances to town centre	
Surface car park	
Heritage	
Civic	
Green open space	
Leisure	
Transport	
Retail	

1.6 Streets and spaces hierarchy and overview

Future public realm layout

The future public realm layout aims at reinforcing the existing network of pedestrian streets by enhancing existing weak links and creating new public spaces throught the centre, such as a station arrival space, the green square at the heart of the town, and the residential green and linear park at the south.
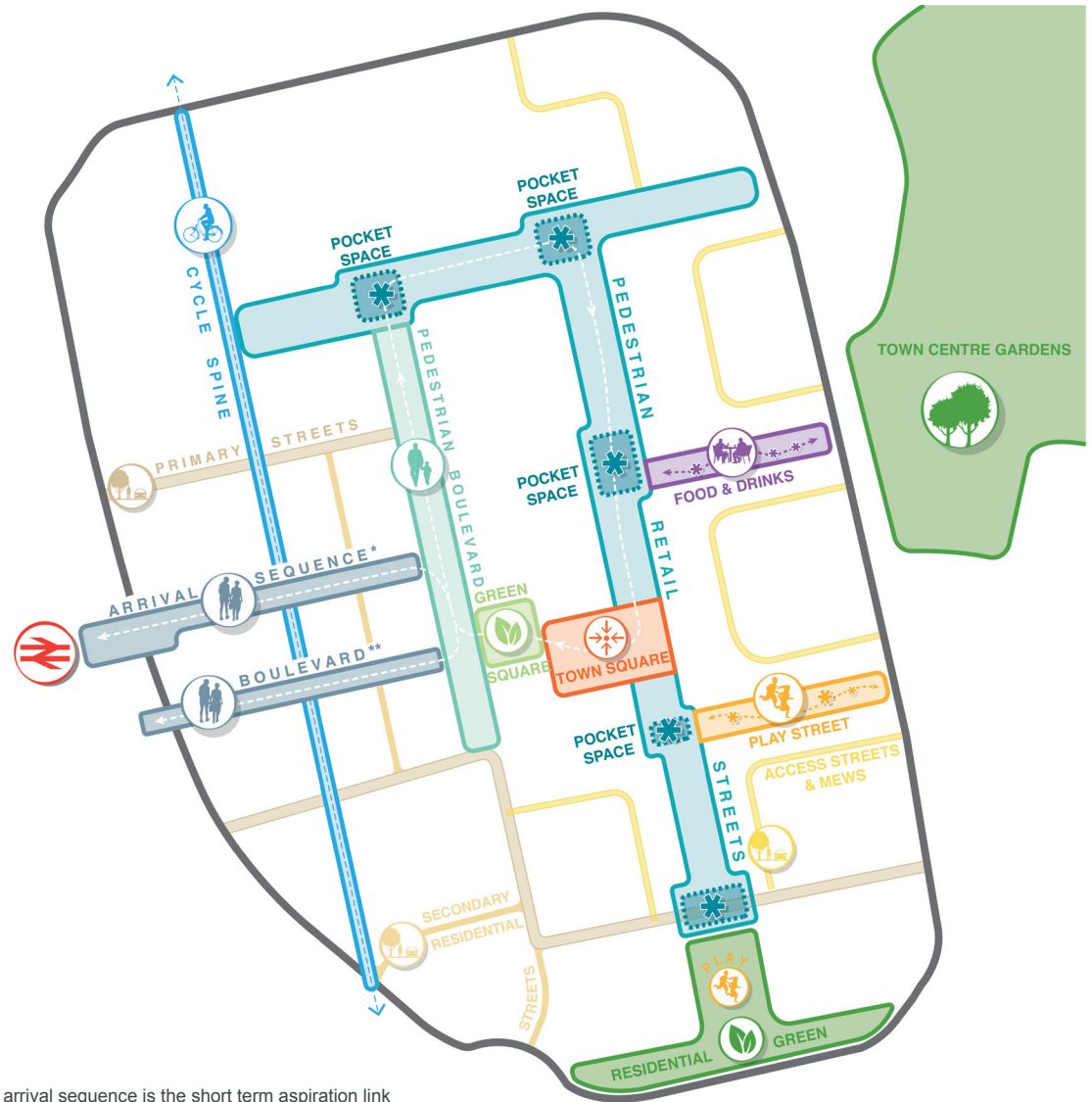
Pedestrian streets

Covered malls and alleyways

Public spaces

Main streets

Nodes of circulation

Secondary streets

Town Centre Gardens

Ring road

Pedestrian and cycle accesses to the town centre

Vehicular accesses to the town centre

Vehicular accesses to car park only

Station entrance

1.6 Streets and spaces hierarchy and overview

Future character areas

The future town centre layout will create a wide range of public spaces and pedestrian streets that will enable an enhanced connectivity and a variety of character areas including:

- A loop at the heart of the town centre, with enhanced access and visibility on the shop front

- A direct link from the station through a pedestrian street

- A central sequence of public squares, each of them displaying a unique character

- A play street at the heart of the town centre

- An active restaurant and café street

- A residential green with play spaces

- A linear park

- A cycle spine connecting to the wider cycling network

- Green and pedestrian friendly residential streets

- Enhanced access streets and mews

✳ The arrival sequence is the short term aspiration link
✳✳ The pedestrian boulevard is the long term aspiration link

1.7 Guiding principles

1
Put people first

The public spaces and streets of Stevenage will be geared towards people and focus on providing by design a clear, attractive and comfortable streetscape for its inhabitants and visitors.

2
Improve streetscape legibility

A clear and legible public realm will be provided through the simplification and coordination of street components and the decluttering of unecessary streetscape elements (bollards, street furniture, projecting structures and signage, etc)

3
Ensure consistency in design & use of materials

Use an appropriate palette of high quality discreet paving throughout the town centre, as well as coordinated street furniture.

4
Create memorable and identifiable spaces where people want to be

Allow dwelling on the street and appropriation of the public spaces by people. Define the character and key attributes of fe ature spaces through design, allowing flexibility and diversity of usage.

5
Protect and enhance Stevenage's character and architectural heritage

Support the restoration of key architectural and artistic features in the town centre, whilst celebrating Stevenage's heritage through streetscape intervention and public art.

6
Create a green and sustainable town centre

Maximise green coverage, planting that supports biodiversity and SuDs wherever practicable. Encourage carbone neutral transportation by creating safe pedestrian and cycle routes, providing cycle parking, and promoting public transports.

1.7 Guiding principles

7
Support pedestrian users of the town centre

Improvement of accessibility and legibility of all pedestrian links, including secondary pathways and underpasses. Promotion of fair, proportionate and pleasant spaces for pedestrians where their space is shared with vehicles.

8
Promote vibrant and active streets

Create responsive streetscape to the everyday town activities as well as to public temporary events, by supporting a renewed approach to signage and shop front design.

9
Create a safe public environment

This includes the enhancement of public lighting, including on secondary and remote pedestrian only links, along with the creation of clear and open sightlines to increase visibility throughout the town centre.

10
Implement a maintenance action plan and strategy

The quality of the existing and future public realm of Stevenage depends greatly on the day to day maintenance of the spaces.

11
Ensure that all public realm projects support the proper functioning of the town centre

Every project, works or improvement should be the result of a long term general strategy and coordinated with one another.

12
Create a pleasant place to live

The ultimate goal of every regeneration project should be to provide welcoming spaces for people to inhabit, making the town centre an engaging place for people to move around, gather, work and interact.

Queensway, 1960

2.0 General appraisal

2.1 Spatial character

Recurrent weaknesses of the public realm

1. Queensway looking south

- Inadequate tree species
- Street clutter
- Inadequate street furniture location
- Overwhelming shopping mall canopy
- Inconsistency in shop signs and frontages
- Lack of paving unity

2. Queensway looking north

- Street clutter
- Lack of legibility
- Poor tree condition
- Lack of shop foreground definition
- Poor quality paving
- Inadequate street furniture location
- Poor canopy condition
- Inconsistency in shop signs and frontages

- Canopies
- Street clutter
- Shop frontage
- Vegetation
- Paving

2.1 Spatial character

Recurrent weaknesses of the public realm

3. Queensway South looking north

- Presence of dead facades
- Inadequate planting location and height
- Lack of interest, monotony
- Street clutter
- Poor quality paving
- Poor canopy condition
- Inconsistency in shop signs and frontages

4. Westgate looking west

- Fragmentation of shop front continuity
- Inadequation of tree species and planters
- Street clutter
- Poor quality paving
- Inadequate street furniture location
- Poor canopy condition
- Inconsistency in shop signs and frontages

Canopies
Street clutter
Shop frontage
Vegetation
Paving

2.2 Streets and spaces dimensioning

Dimensioning of the existing public realm

The pedestrian streets and spaces are distributed following a clear spatial structure, offering a large range of spaces of varied dimensions.

① 11.4m

② 14.6m

③ 15.6m

④ 11.9m

⑤ 15.4m

⑥ 9.8m
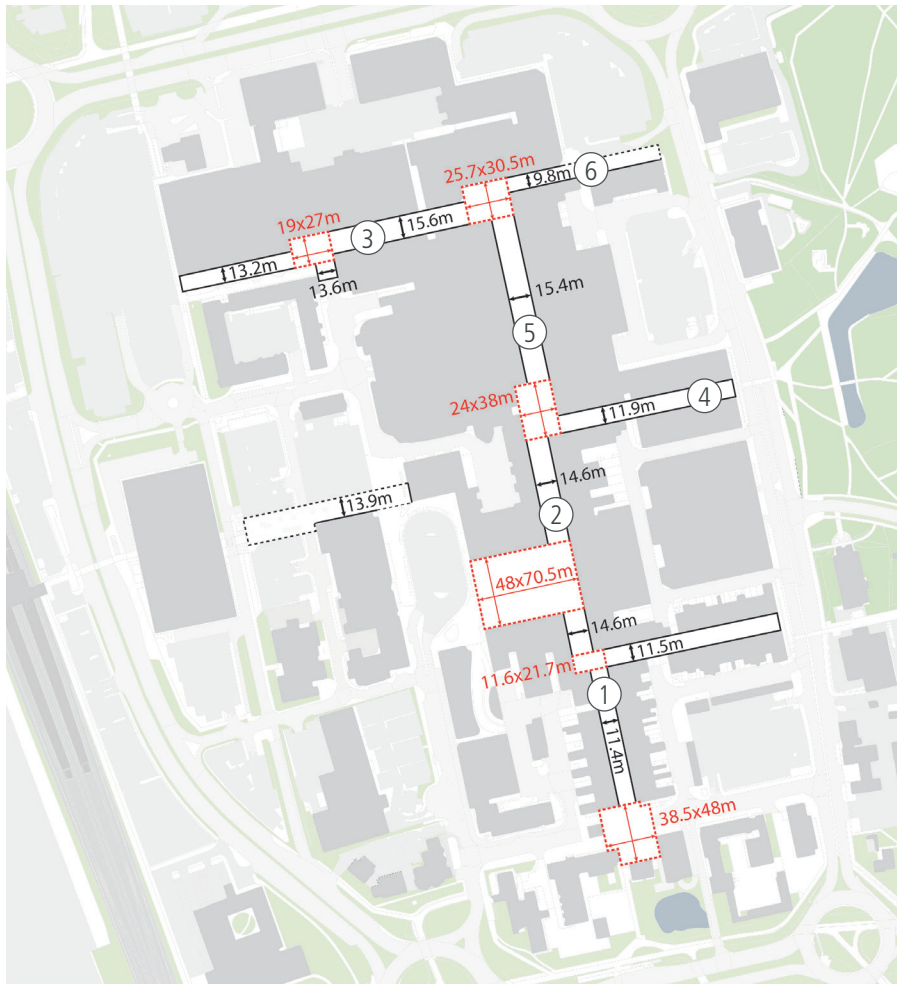
2.3 Existing canopies condition

Canopies typology and location

One of the key distinctive features of the pedestrian public realm of Stevenage are the canopies, important part of the heritage architecture of the town centre. The refurbishment and coordination of the canopies throughout the town centre is key to the public realm regeneration plan.

Timber soffit and metal structure

Westgate shopping centre canopy

Westgate entrance

Forum canopy

Tesco canopy

McDonald's canopy
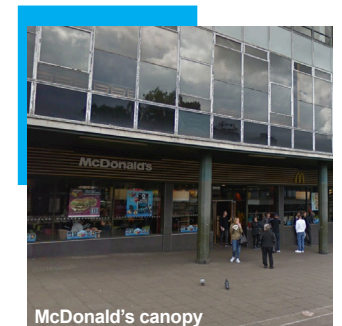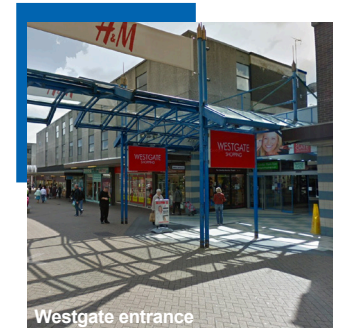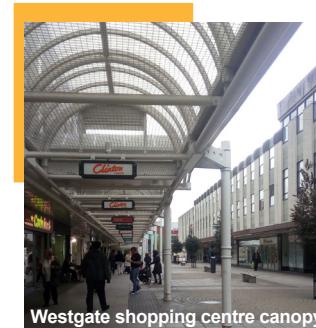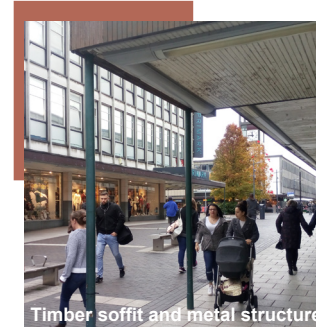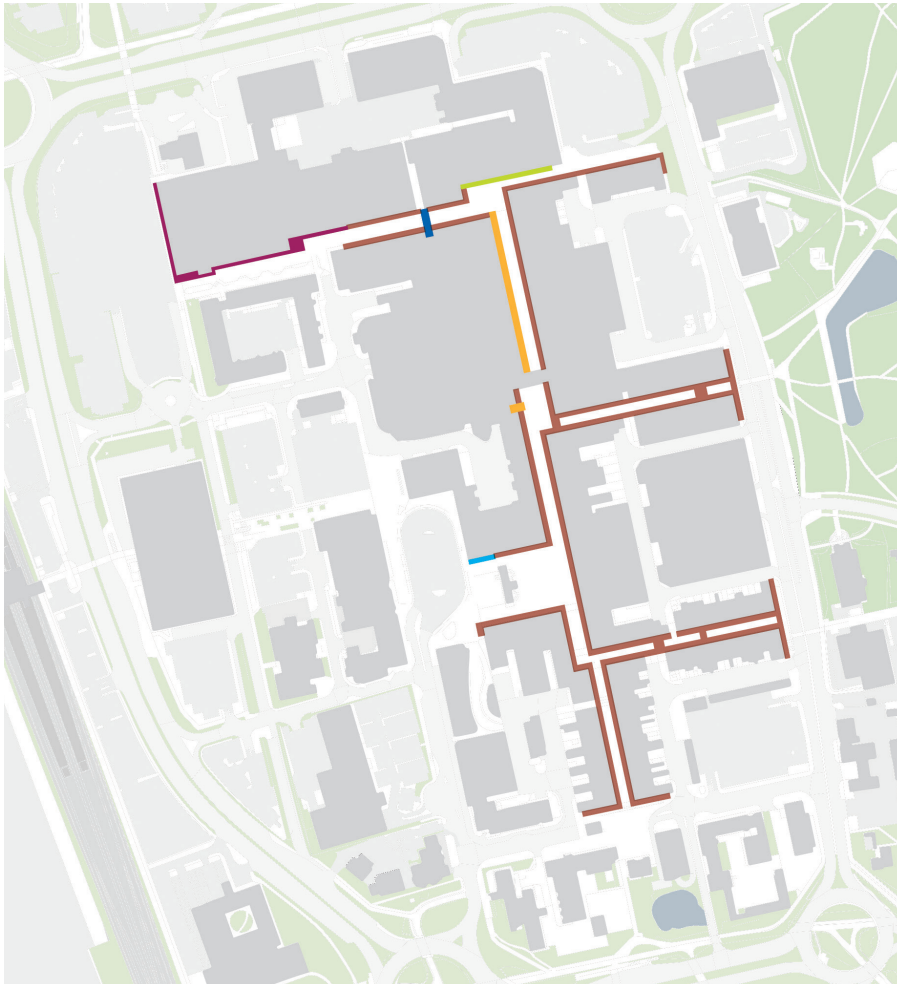
2.4 Existing planting and vegetation

Green cover conditions

The surroundings of Stevenage are generally densely planted and offer a pleasant green backdrop to the long views towards the outside of the town centre. The core of the town also counts a considerable amount of trees. The below assess the trees on amenity value.

Trees with dense character not ci-ontributing enough to the character of the street

Clusters of recently planted and pre-existing trees adding considerable character to the space

Mature and more appropriate street trees

Mature trees providing good value to the space

Buffer trees and shrubs along secondary street adding visual value

Individual specimen adding interest

Dense green buffers composed of shrubs and often mature vegetation adding visual value

AMENITY VALUE:

- Very good tree clusters
- Good street trees
- Good buffer trees
- Poor street trees

2.4 Existing planting and vegetation

Examples of good and bad practice in planting

Inappropriate use of shrubs: the combined height, location and density of planting results in a visual barrier that blocks the sightlines into the public realm.

High shrubs combined with low tree blocks the sighlines to the other side of the square.

Rather than bringing interest and green cover, these street trees can be assimilated with clutter: their scale and species are inappropriate, as well as the use of tree guards and planters.

Good practice in the integration of existing specimen trees in a regeneration process. The trees were crownlifted to create better views and integrated into a bespoke plinth on which people can sit.

Good use of mixed shrubs as boundary treatment to define a defensible area and give a green backdrop to pedestrian circulation.

Appropriate trees' proportion and species: they don't block view through the space and allow sightlines to the shop windows whilst providing a good green cover to the space.

2.5   Existing paving condition

Paving conditions

There are over 10 different surfacing materials arranged following different patterns across the pedestrian areas of the town centre of Stevenage, ranging from small coloured pavers, concrete and granite slabs, to asphalt.
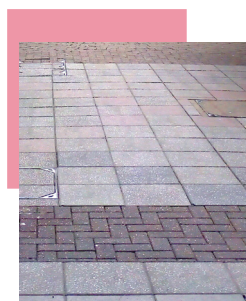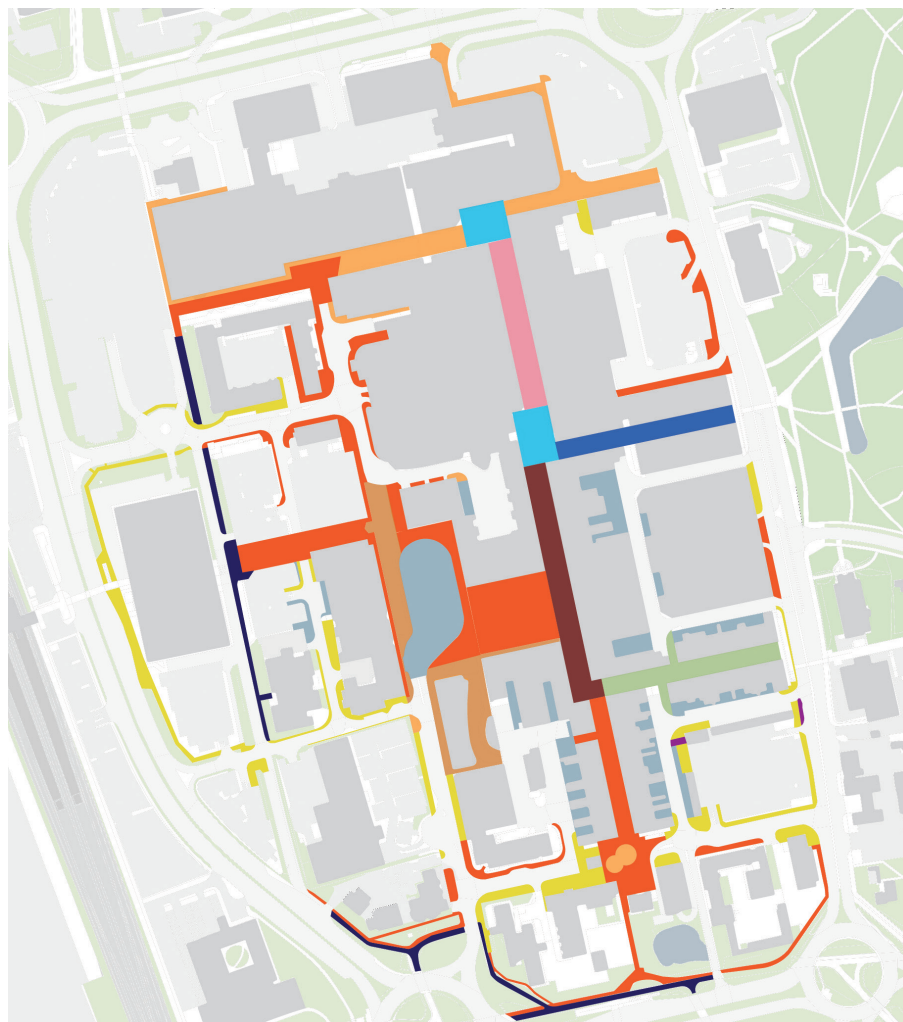
2.5 Existing paving condition

Overview of paving conditions

Pedestrian streets

Paving on Park Place

Paving on Queensway North

Existing palette of paving and patterns

PLAY AREA
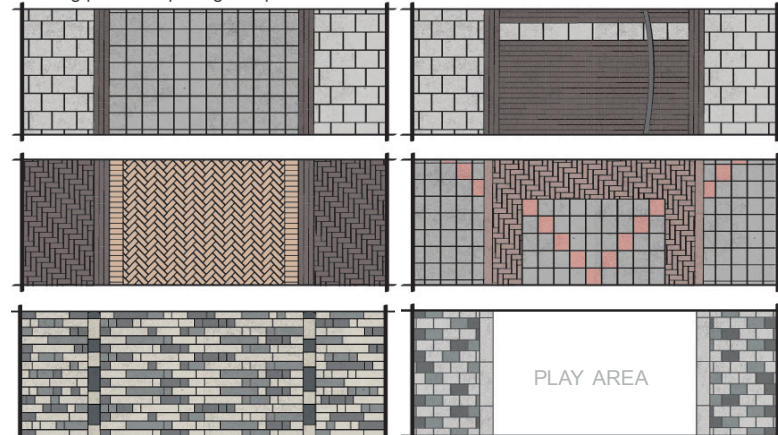
Defined spaces

Paving on Forum Square

Paving on Southgate Square

Existing palette of paving and patterns
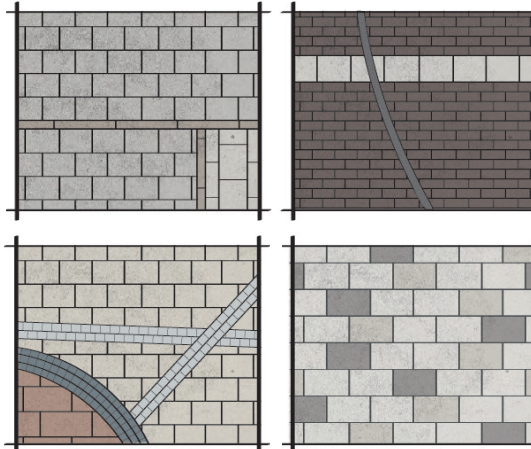
2.5 Existing paving condition

Overview of paving conditions

Feature spaces

Paving on Town Square

Paving on Town Square

Existing palette of paving and patterns
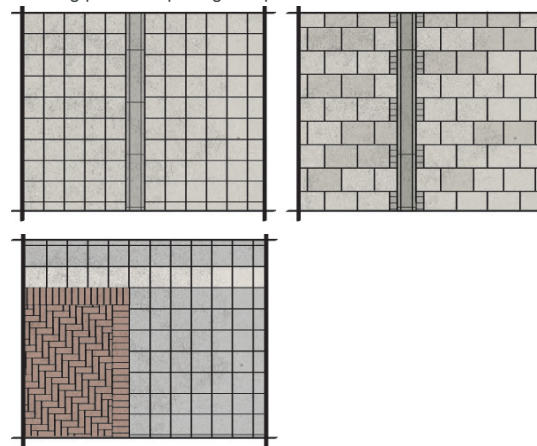
Pedestrian links & underpasses

Paving on alleyway leading to Queensway South

Paving in southern underpass

Existing palette of paving and patterns
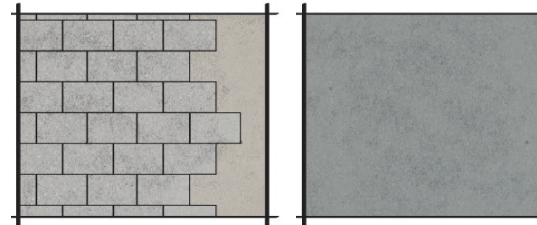
2.5 Existing paving condition

Overview of paving conditions

Primary streets

View of St Georges Way

View of Danestrete

Existing palette of paving and patterns

Secondary streets

View of Market Square

View of Southgate

Existing palette of paving and patterns
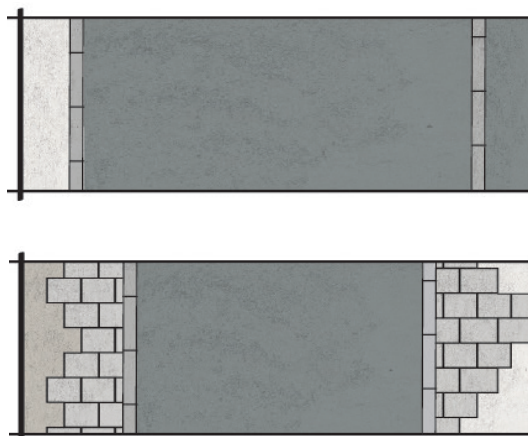
3.0 Design manual

3.1 Paving strategy

Objectives & general guidelines

1. The main objectives of the paving strategy are:

- To create a futureproof paving palette, that will give a framework for all large scale develoments, projects and improvement works;
- together of existing, currently under regeneration and future spaces;
- To define paving principles adapted to the different types of spaces identified in the streets and spaces typology.

2. The core principles around which all projects and improvements should revolve are:

- Consistency
- Continuity
- Sense of place
- Longevity
- Ease of maintenance

The following typology establishes a range of streets and spaces on which the paving strategy is based. The paving strategy aims at bringing existing and future spaces together whilst being responsive to their distinctive characters.The street typology is as follows:

|			
▬	Pedestrian streets	▬	Primary streets
▬	Defined spaces	▬	Secondary streets
▬	Feature spaces	‖‖‖	Cycle spine
▬	Pedestrian links	▬	Mews

3.1 Paving strategy

Objectives & general guidelines

3. General guidelines should be observed throughout the implementation of all projects or improvement works:
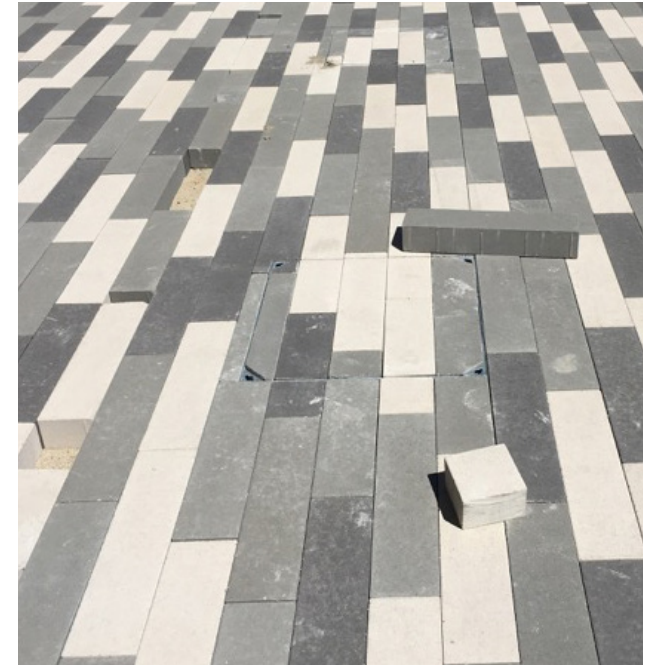
- All paving should be of high quality and suitable to withstand the function of the area. Durability, lifespan and visual appreciation should all be considered when specifications are being determined;

- Road widths should be minimised to reduce vehicular speeds and maximise pedestrian space;

- The layout of the street and degree of sharing shoud be appropriate to the function of the street;

- Kerbs should clearly define the carriageway;

- The carriageway should be a contrasting colour to footpaths where there are considerable vehicle flows;

- All footpaths and pedestrian crossings should be designed with acceptable gradients, to universal design standards;

- Street furniture should be rationalised and coordinated so as not to impede pedestrian movement;

- Access (degree of control) needs to be integrated into the design.

- Drainage units, manhole covers should be flush with the surrounding areas. They should be integrated into the design to avoid trip hazard.

Example of high quality granite paving with mixed grey small units

Example of successful manhole cover infill and integration
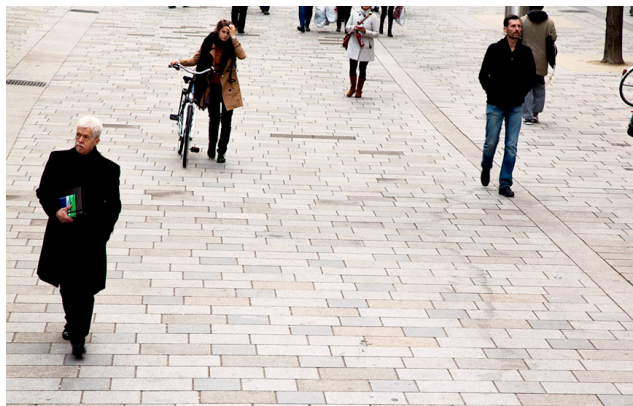
Example of high quality granite paving with mixed light grey and buff units

Triangular cuts should be avoided

3.1 Paving strategy

Pedestrian Streets

Pedestrian streets are one of the most significant heritage feature of Stevenage town centre. They already form a strong network of public spaces that the paving strategy aims at bringing together to create a consistent, high quality and attractive feature.
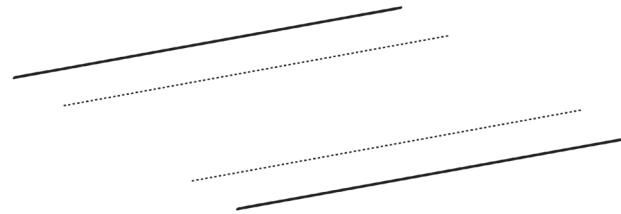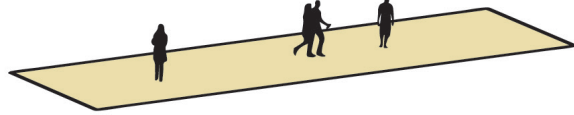
1- Layout rationale

As a tribute to the historical layout of the pedestrian streets, a central zone should be distinguised from the lateral forecourt areas. The width of the forecourts should be determined in relation with the canopies running along the streets.
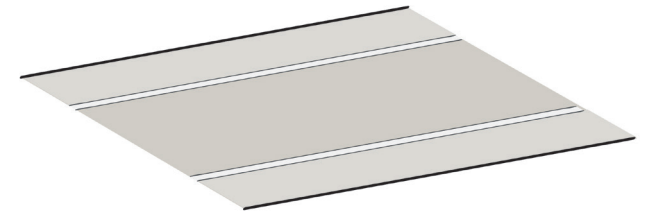
2- Street structure

A running lay of paving, combined with drainage channels, should be used to define the street structure. In some instances, the central zone can be used as an activity area.
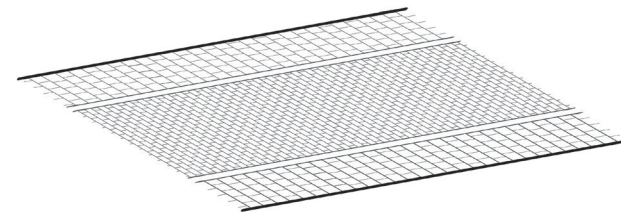
3- Sizing of paving elements

A small grain high quality discreet paving, natural stone like granite or equivalent, should be used in the central area of the street, whilst a larger grain should be used on the forecourt areas.
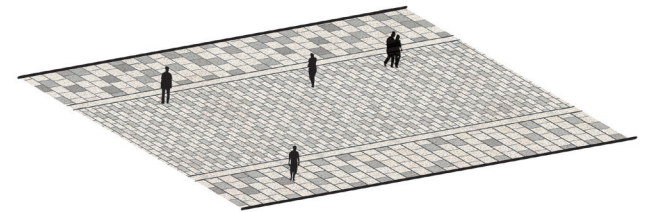
4- Paving colour

To be considerate to the recently regenerated paving in Market Place and Park Place, a palette of mixed greys including some buff tones should be considered.

3.1 Paving strategy

Defined Spaces

Defined spaces within the public realm give the opportunity to display a specific character and create activity areas for people to dwell, meet, engage in the space. The paving strategy aims at defining clearly these spaces to reinforce legibility.
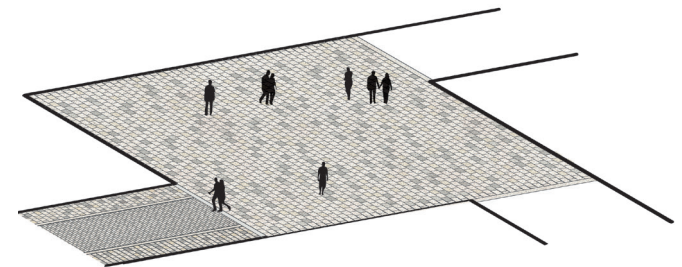
SPACE

ACTIVITY ZONES   PEDESTRIAN FLOW
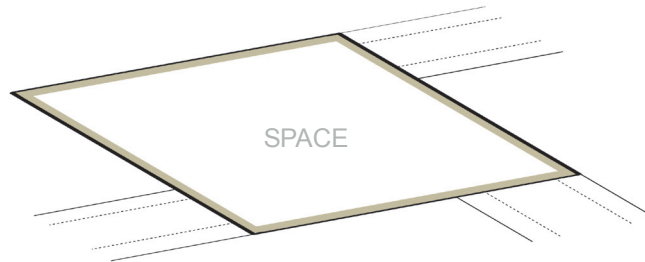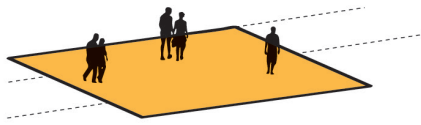
1- Rationale & interface with pedestrian streets

The space should be defined by clear thresholds in its interface with the pedestrian streets. Its paving running from facade to facade will provide a consistent, simple structure, whilst marking its identity and spread.
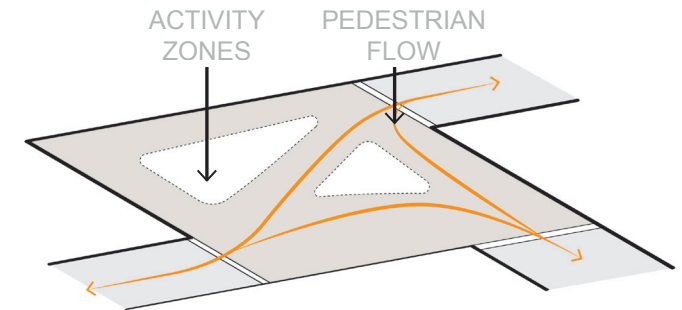
2- Space structure & activity zones

The facade to facade continuous paving allows the creation of activity zones within the space (sitting, play, planting, kiosks) whilst retaining legibility and simplicity. These activity zones may display a different paving or surfacing (turf, timber decking, contrasting paving, etc).

3- Paving colour & sizing

Medium to large grain high quality natural stone paving - granite or similar - to be used throughout the defined spaces. To ensure continuity and consistency, the paving's finish and colour should tie in with the ones used in the adjacent pedestrian streets, with a potential to contrast to add variety.

3.1 Paving strategy

Feature Spaces

The feature spaces are an essential part of the public realm structure: they are the core the town, allow gatherings and events as well as everyday uses. Their success is fundamental to the creation of the town's identity and sense of place.
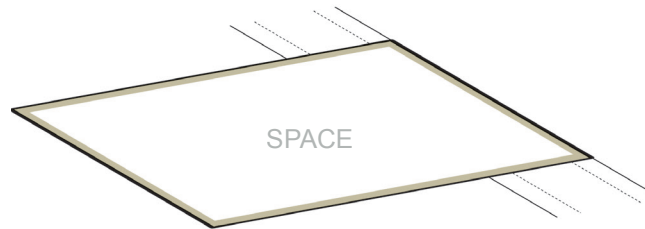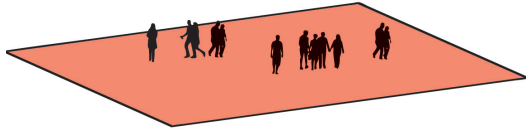
1- A strong entity

The feature spaces should be defined by clear thresholds in their interface with pedestrian streets. In the same way, its shape and structure should be clear and easily identifiable.
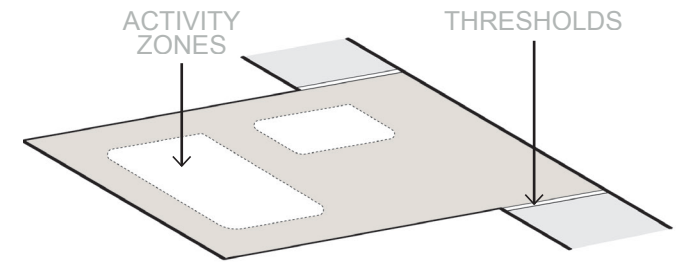
2- Space structure & activity zones

Feature spaces are large enough to welcome permanent, seasonal and temporary activities. 'Islands' dedicated to permanent activities can be defined through paving eg. sitting, kiosks, vegetation, play. Zones dedicated to temporary events eg. markets, outdoor cinemas, could also be defined.
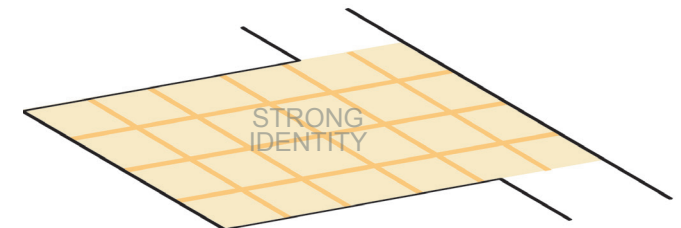
3- A unique character

the paving should support the creation of a special atmosphere, specific to the feature spaces. It should respond to the exceptional heritage value of the space in the case of Town Square.

3.1 Paving strategy

Feature Spaces

Guidelines

1. Unique character

Feature spaces should display a unique character to allow good legibility and create a sense of place and memorability.

2. Continuity and consistency

Whilst being unique pieces of the public realm, the feature spaces should retain a degree a continuity with the surrounding paved areas, so they are perceived as part of a sequence of spaces.

3. High quality and durability

The paving used should be of high quality, allow positive weathering with time and be robust to all kinds of uses. It should be futureproof and achieve a long lifespan with minimal maintenance.

4. A strong entity

The thresholds of the feature spaces should be carefully defined so the space can be read as a space in its own right, within which a range of sub spaces can be defined. Its paving identity should take precedence over the one of the streets that connect into it.

5. Dedicated activity zones

Unique paving interventions should be considered, such as the definition of activity zones, islands or shops forecourts used for display or outdoor spaces. The use of carefully designed high quality contrasting feature paving for such areas should be considered.
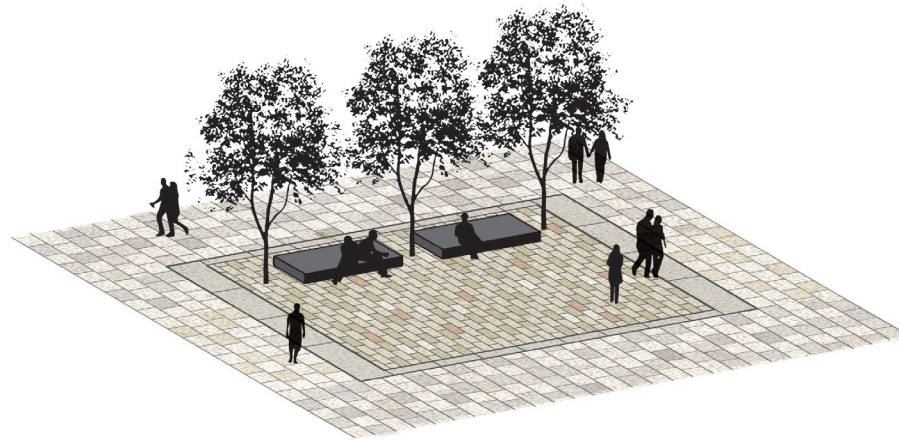
1

Examples of possible permanent activity zone featuring contrasting paving, feature seating plinths and tree planting.
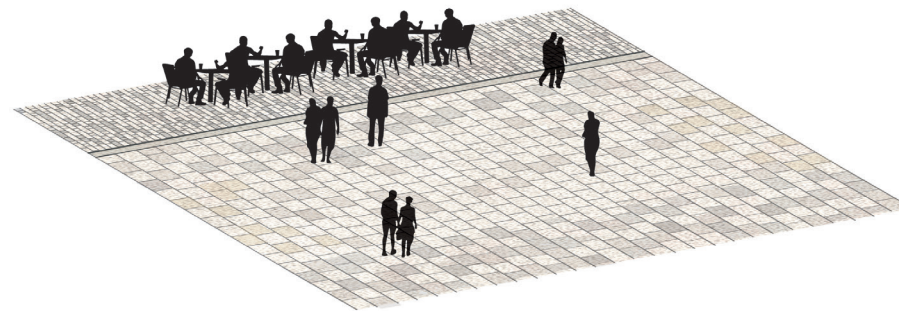
2

Examples of possible permanent linear activity zones featuring contrasting paving that retains consistency with the general paving. It is dedicated to shop forecourts and sitting.
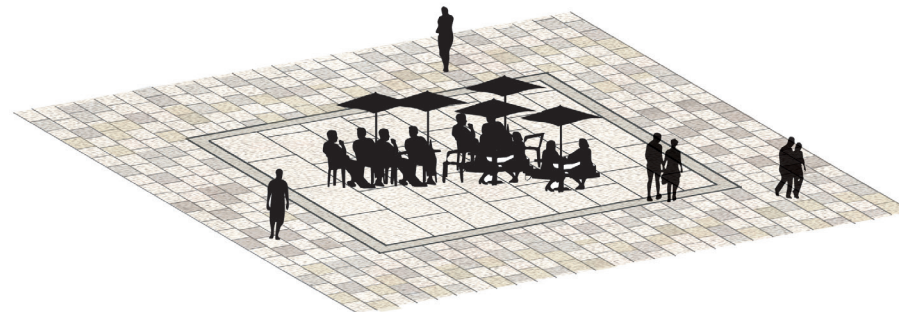
3

Examples of possible activity zones dedicated to temporary events such as markets or community events. An everyday use to such spaces can be outdoor sitting.

3.1 Paving strategy

Pedestrian links & underpasses

The town centre of Stevenage features many pedestrian links and underpasses, they are part of the heritage of the New Town urbanism. They often are an arrival path to the town centre and have a high footfall; the paving strategy aims at bringing coherence, quality and safety to all these links.
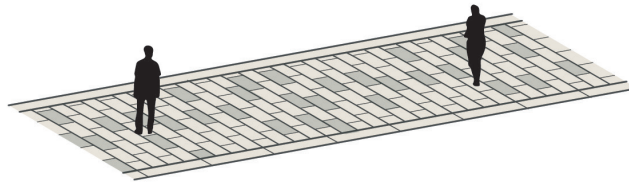
General approach

Pedestrian only footpaths, non adjacent to vehicular carriageway, should be wide enough to allow pedestrian flow and have a simple, robust, continous paving throughout to ensure the legibility of the access to the town centre.

Guidelines

*   Continuous small unit high quality natural stone paving
*   Consistency of finish and colour with adjacent paved areas
*   Minimum recommended width of 3m
*   Granite edging throughout
*   Free drainage into vegetated areas as ofter as practicable

3.1 Paving strategy

Primary Streets

Primary streets should be clearly defined and feature wide pedestrian footpaths and crossings. In key locations, some sections can be raised and paved to tie in with the footpaths and create shared surfaces (dashed sections in the below diagram).
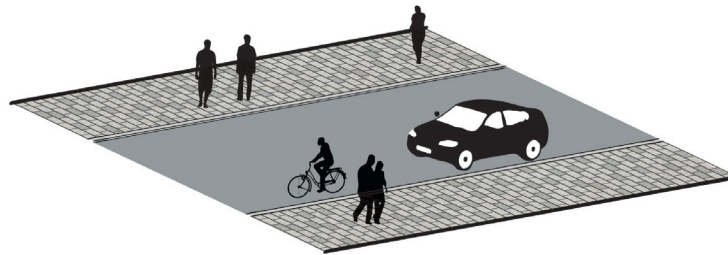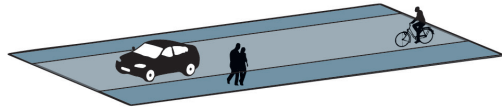
General approach

Road width should be minimised and secure raised crossings should be implemented to create a pedestrian friendly environment. The paving of some sections of the carriageway, with the appropriate base and pavers depth, should be considered where the implementation of shared surfaces is approriate.

Guidelines

- High quality asphalt laid between granite kerbs
- Kerbs to be 100mm high, lowering to a minimum 50mm where a shared environment is appropriate
- Use of radius sections, quadrants and drop kerbs where appropriate
- Footpaths to be continuous small unit natural stone paving

3.1 Paving strategy

Secondary Streets

Secondary streets should display a more 'local' and residential character than the primary streets; this can be achieved through the use of a distinctive paving and street planting palette. Some sections can be raised and paved to tie in with the footpaths and create shared surfaces focusing on cycle and pedestrian movements (dashed sections in the below diagram).

General approach

Road width should be minimised and the consistent implementation of a street structure that includes secure footpaths is essential, especially for spaces where delivery and car park access are mixed with the pedestrian flow. The footpaths should be consistent, free of trip hazards and connect in a straightforward way into other pedestrian areas.
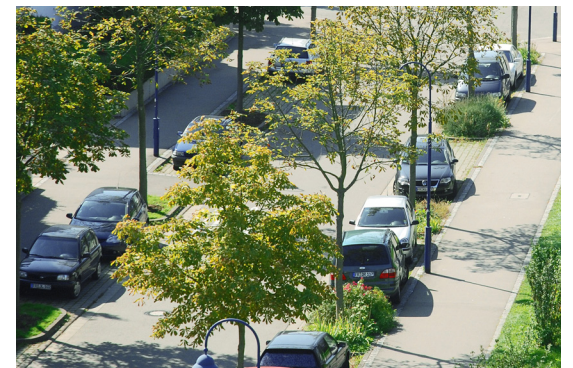
Guidelines

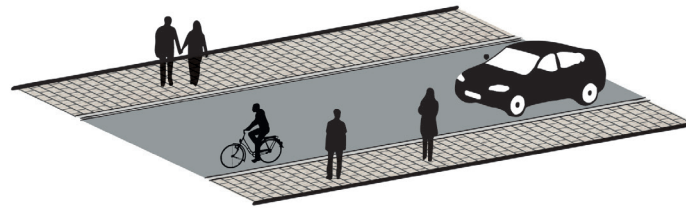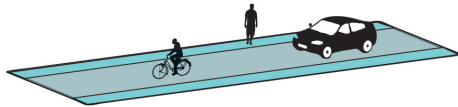- High quality asphalt laid between granite kerbs
- Kerbs to be 100mm high, lowering to a minimum 50mm where a shared environment is appropriate
- Use of radius sections, quadrants and drop kerbs where appropriate
- Footpaths to be continuous small unit natural stone paving to secondary residential streets
- Footpaths to be continous modular concrete setts to secondary back of house/access streets

3.1 Paving strategy

Mews

The mews are a shared surface, accessible by car for residents but primarily oriented towards pedestrian circulation and cycling. They should be quiet streets, displaying a strong residential character, reinforced by defensible planting such as climbers along facades and structural planting.
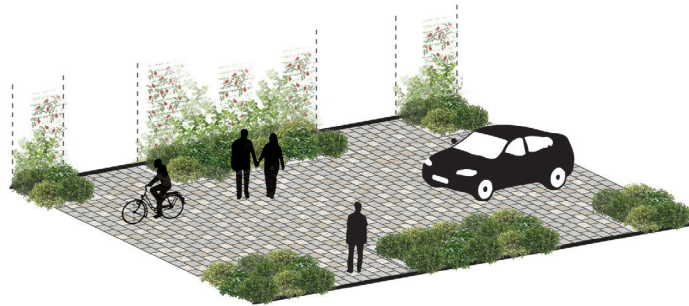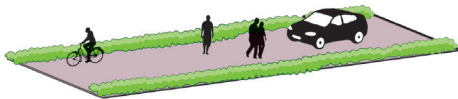
General approach

Pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement aren't segregated by design, meaning that a high quality paving will be used throughout the whole mews, pushing drivers to reduce their speed as they access their dwellings. Planting on each side of the street to create defensible areas should be maximised, using climbers,shrub, hedges and/or perennial planting. Breaks in the planting should lead to the access doors of the residential units.

Guidelines

- Continuous small to medium unit high quality natural stone paving
- Consistency of finish and colour with adjacent paved areas
- Free drainage into vegetated areas as ofter as practicable

3.2 Vegetation strategy

Objectives & general guidelines

There are a number of types of vegetation that should be considered within the public realm, each of them presents its own scale, characteristics and benefits. These include trees, shrubs, vertical surfaces, ground cover, rain gardens, lawns and temporary displays.

The right species for the right context
Plant selection should be appropriate to the context, considering scale, climate, daylight, orientation, form, durability, sightlines and maintenance.

Sustainability
Providing a rich, appropriate and comprehensive vegetation plan in the town centre is one of the key ways to ensure its sustainability. The trees' and plants' ability to reduce pollution and help restore biodiversity by attracting insects should be considered. Native species should be preferred.

Planting by design
The location and layout of planting within the town centre should always be "designed into schemes" so the best opportunities for the introduction of planting and trees are identified. The addition at later stage of stand-alone planters should be avoided as they detract from and add visual clutter to the streetscape.

Vertical surfaces
Vertical surfaces shoud be encouraged in appropriate location and implemented after a careful study of orientation, sun exposure and build-up, if adequate maintenance and irrigation are in place.

RAINGARDENS — SHRUBS — CONTAINERS — PERMEABLE PAVING — LAWNS / GRASSES — **Urban Greening** — TREES — GREEN WALLS — HEDGES — BLUE/GREEN ROOFS — WILDFLOWERS
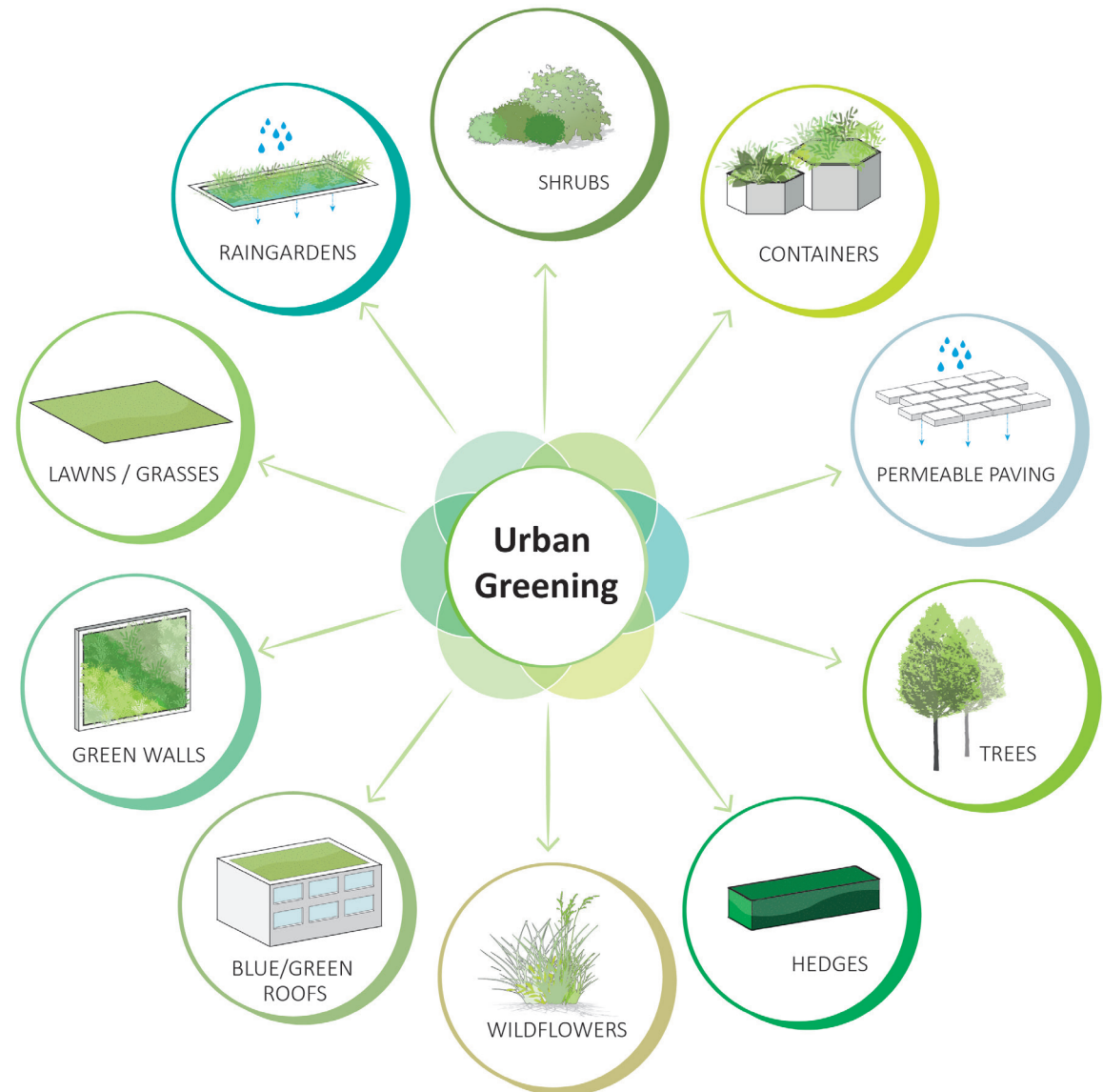
3.2 Vegetation strategy

Objectives & general guidelines

The vegetation and urban greening strategy for Stevenage should be comprehensive, hard working and aim to achieve key functions that significantly increase the public realms' quality:

- **A sustainable water management system** or SuDs (sustainable urban drainage) that supports the infiltration and evaporation of rain waters

- **Improvement of biodiversity** in urban areas by selecting species that attract birds and wildlife

- **Reduction of air pollution** in urban areas to create a healthier living environment

- **Enhancement of the character** of the urban places by bringing interest, seasonality and a sense of scale

The benefits in term of quality of life that can be brought to the people of Stevenage by urban greening are invaluable. The combination of some or all types of vegetation should be sought wherever applicable, putting an emphasis on one or several of the above goals, to deliver a better living environment.

A comprehensive green infrastructure

Implement sustainable water management (SuDs)
- PERMEABLE PAVING
- RAINGARDENS
- LAWNS / GRASSES
- BLUE ROOFS

Improve biodiversity in urban areas
- GREEN ROOFS
- WILDFLOWERS
- SHRUBS
- RAINGARDENS

Reduce air pollution in urban areas
- TREES
- HEDGES
- GREEN WALLS
- SHRUBS

Improve character & placemaking
- CONTAINERS
- TREES
- LAWNS / GRASSES
- WILDFLOWERS
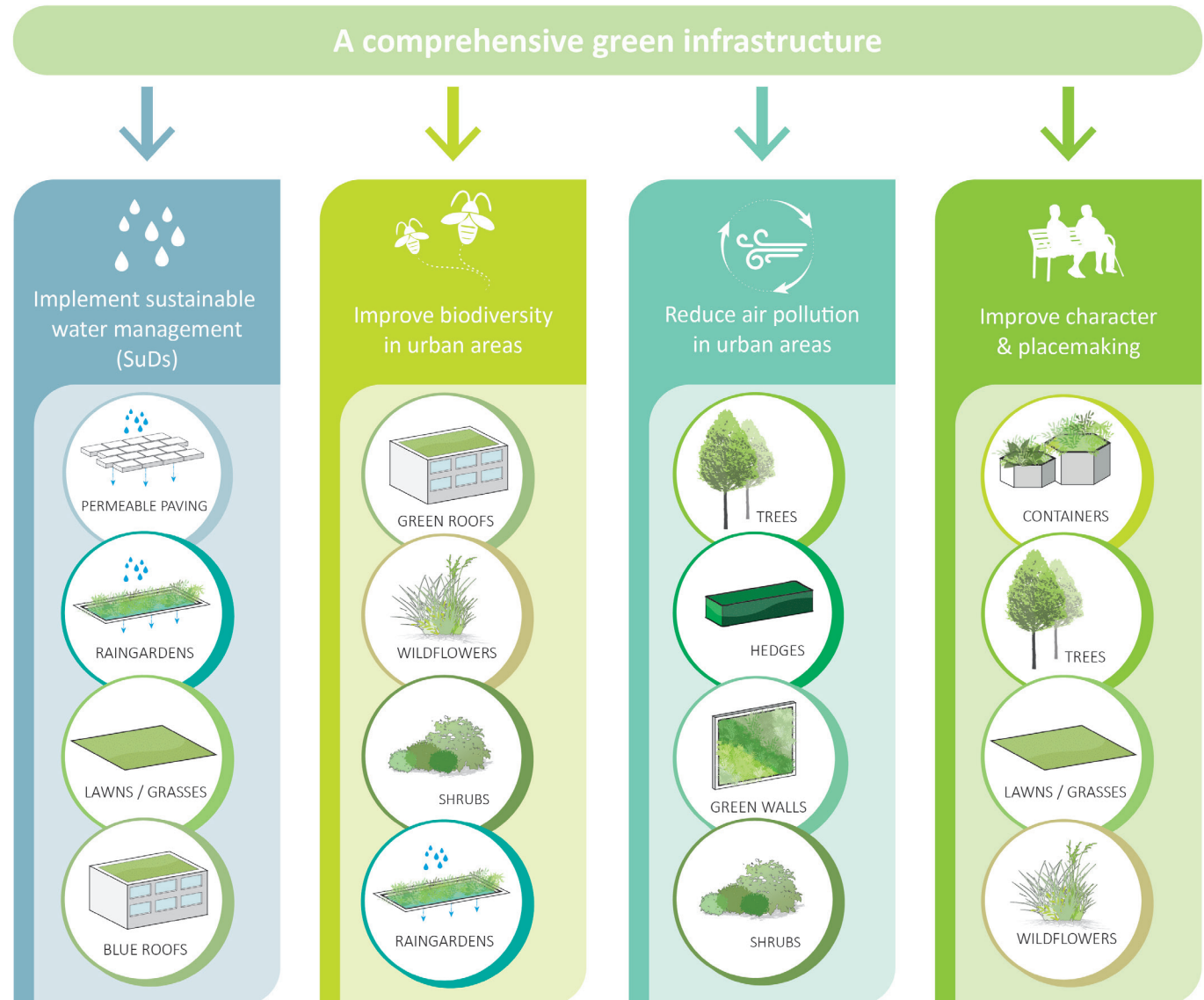
3.2 Vegetation strategy

Guideline by planting type

Tree planting

- When considering trees, the species, grouping and ultimate size shoud be taken into account.

- All trees should be planted as semi mature.

- Growing medium and volume are critical to the longevity and success of any tree or plant: the target tree pit volume should be 5-8m3.

- All tree pits shoud have high quality soil, underground guying, aeration and irrigation points.

- Care should be taken not to mask views onto shop fronts, key buildings or heritage features.

- All trees should have aminimum cler 2.3m clear stem.

- Retention of existing trees, especially mature specimens, should always be considered and preferred wherever possible.

- Regular maintenance of both existing and new trees is paramount to their success, that includes crown lifting, pruning and removal of deadwood.

- Native tree species should be preferred.

- Tree cells and root barrier systems should be used to extend the tree pit in vicinity of utilities as necessary.
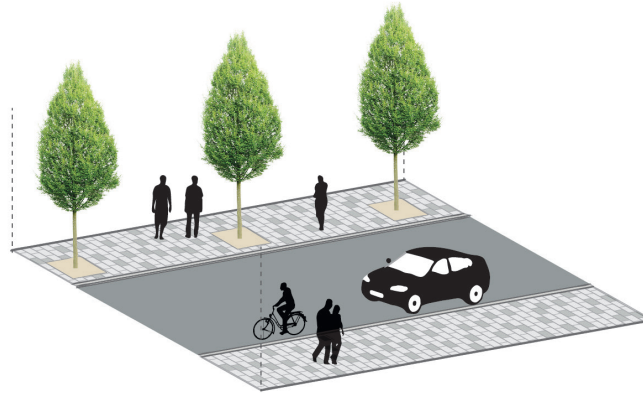
Street trees
Trees should be planted in primary and secondary streets as often as practicable. Upright, narrow tree species should be preferred for narrow street.
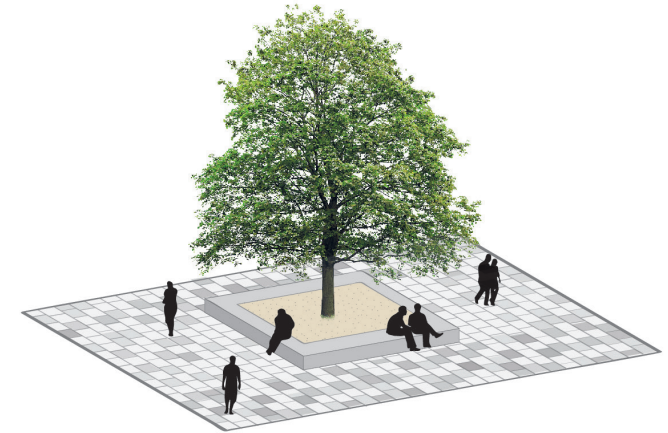
Feature trees
Singular specimen trees are appropriate in certain spaces to add interest and seasonal variation. A feature seat or furniture can complement an existing mature tree and turn it into a feature tree.
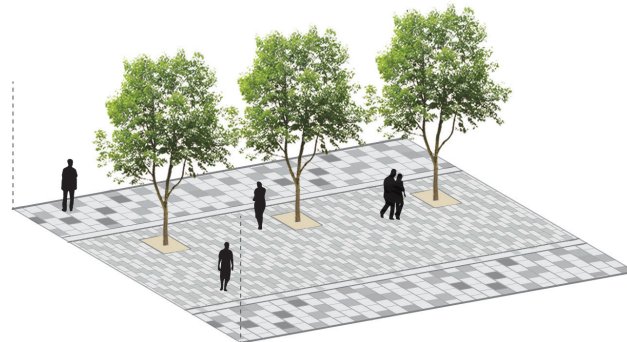
Pedestrian street trees
Most of the existing pedestrian streets are over 10m in width, which gives enough space to consider using wider spread street trees. An off-centered location will allow fire tracking and emergency vehicles access.
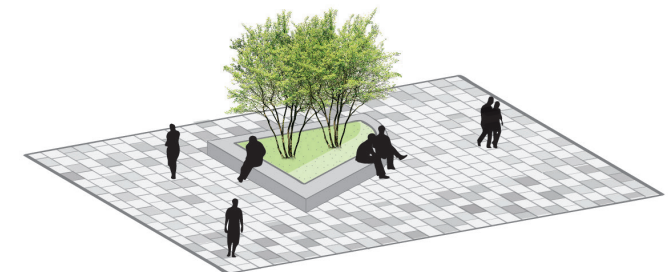
multistem trees
Small, ornemental multistem trees are appropriate in certain spaces, especially when used with planters and combined with perennial planting. They bring interest and seasonal variation.

3.2 Vegetation strategy

Guideline by planting type

1. Location & Design

Identify the right location for tree planting to then determine what attributes the selected tree must have. Overground and underground services, sightlines, interaction with road and footways needs careful consideration.

2. Tree selection

Many factors must be considered for a tree to establish, be healthy, grow to its full potential and offer optimal benefits. The tree's suitability, its aesthetic, the amenities it can deliver, its climate change resilience and its capacity to thrive in urban conditions must be assessed.

3. Tree installation

Appropriate installation is paramount for the success of tree planting. The necessary ground preparation must be undertaken, and access must be given to the young tree to an adequate type and volume of nutrient rich, moist, aerated and well drained growing substrate. Adequate above-ground protection should be provided.

4. Post-planting care

Once planted and secured in place, watering and weed control are essential during the first 3 to 5 years of the tree's life. Formative pruning, often undertaken in nursery prior to dispatching the tree to site, should continue after planting.

Temporary tree protection

Permeable tree grill or surfacing flush with paving

Structural topsoil
Aeration system
Underground anchoring system
Tree rootball

Subsoil

Drainage layer

Existing soil

Typical tree pit detail in hard surfacing

3.2 Vegetation strategy

Guideline by planting type

Shrub planting
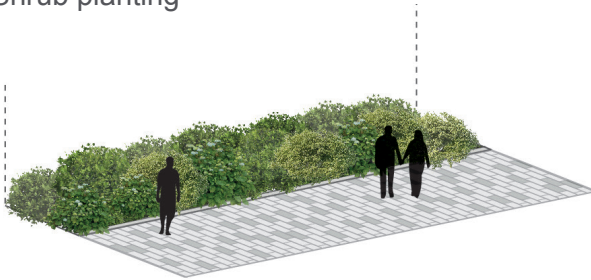
Example of use of shrub planting to define a boundary along a footpath, for instance to soften a blank wall or fencing.
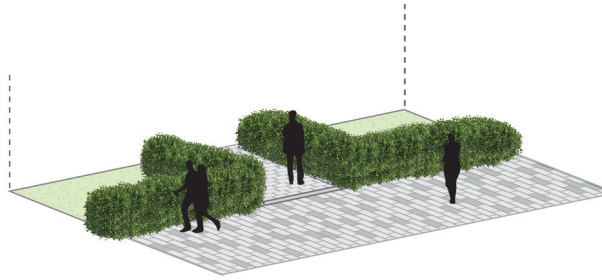
Example of use of shrub planting to define a defensible area and a front garden. It also brings privacy to the access to the residential unit.

- Shrub planting should only be used where space allows, ground cover is preferable to large shrubs so as not to block sightlines across spaces.
- Shrub planting makes a good boundary treatment and should be used to define front gardens, entrances and defensible areas in residential streets.
- Regular maintenance is essential for the shrub planting to retain its desired shape and height.

Perennial planting

Example of raised perennial planting bed with a sitting edge, suitable for spaces of all scale and that can be combined with tree planting
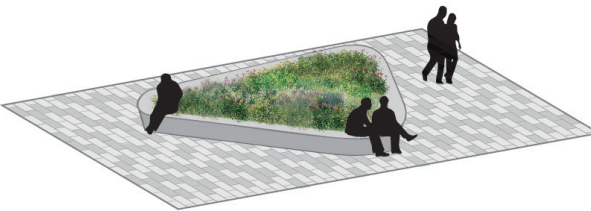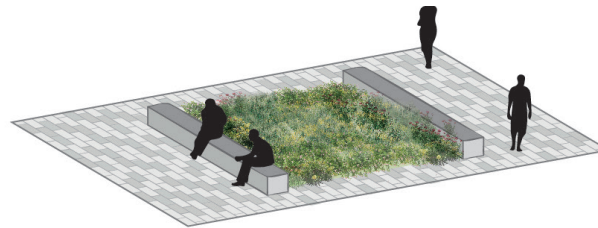
Example of perennial planting bed flush to the paving and defined by benches, suitable for linear spaces

- Perennial planting brings seasonal interest, promotes biodiversity and softens hard spaces, its use should always be considered along pedestrian streets, residential streets and in spaces.
- Low maintenance and native species mixes should be preferred.
- It is recommended to use a mix of 30% evergreen - 70% perennial to ensure year round interest.

Grass
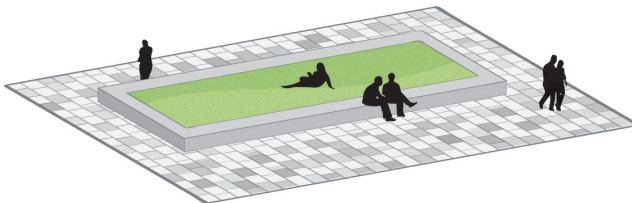
Example of raised lawn with sitting edge, suitable for small scale spaces and pedestrian streets
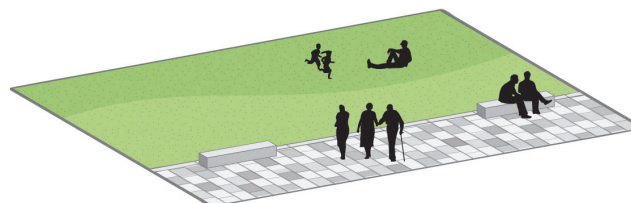
Example of extensive lawn area adjacent to pedestrian footpaths, suitable for larger residential green spaces

- Grass areas in town centre add interest and enables the softening of a space for a minimum maintenance and cost.
- Grass areas are good family amenities and can also allow special events such as outdoor festivals, cinema, performances,etc.
- Reinforced grass turf should be considered to help maintenance and usage.

3.2 Vegetation strategy

Guideline by planting type

Rain gardens

A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater and runoff from impervious areas such as roads, parking and walkways to be filtered, stored on site, and then percolate through the natural ground. Rain gardens act as living sponges, they are a key element of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) which can play a large part in shaping new sustainable urban landscapes. Rain gardens forms are an effective, attractive and economically accessible way to fight back the negative effects of over development of hardscapes in urban areas.

The implementation of rain gardens in the town centre should be sought wherever practicable. General guideline when implementing rain gardens are:

- Ensure the ground quality and condition allow efficient water storage on site, ground condition surveys are recommended.

- Select the right plant species, adapted to the moisture regime to which they will be exposed in the rain garden. Native species should be preferred.

- Ensure the storage capacity of the rain garden has been correctly assessed, the installation of an overflow system is recommended in urban environments.
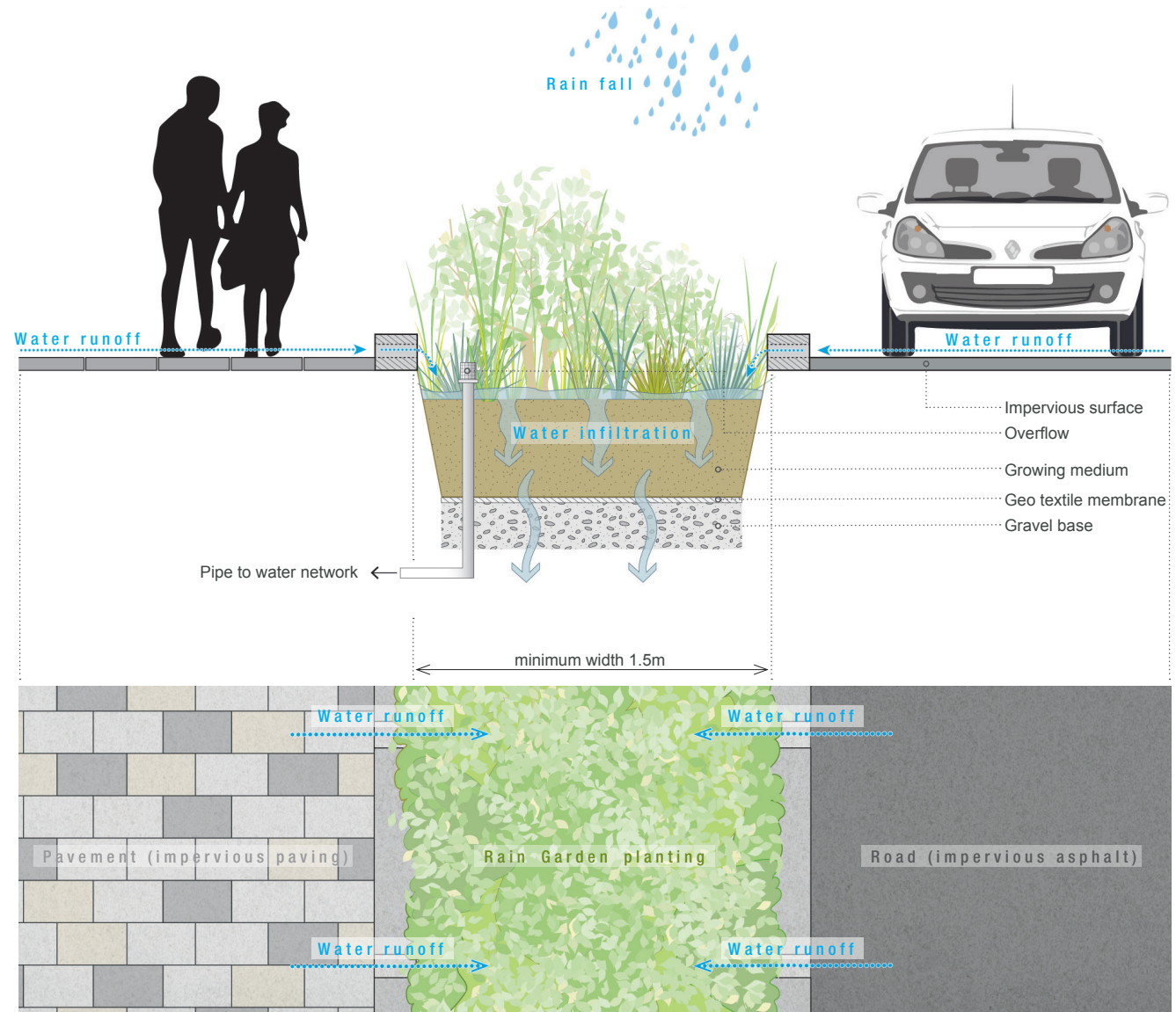
Rain fall

Water runoff

Water runoff

Impervious surface

Overflow

Growing medium

Geo textile membrane

Gravel base

Water infiltration

Pipe to water network

minimum width 1.5m

Water runoff

Water runoff

Pavement (impervious paving)

Rain Garden planting

Road (impervious asphalt)

Water runoff

Water runoff

3.2 Vegetation strategy

Species recommendations

This non exhaustive list of species gives suggestions of trees and plants species that could be selected for the town centre of Stevenage.

Streets trees

pyrus calleryana 'chanticleer'

Robinia pseudoacacia

Tilia cordata 'greenspire'

Carpinus betulus 'fastigiata'

Acer campestre 'streetwise'

Ornamental multistem trees

Amelanchier lamarckii

Prunus sargentii

Acer palmatum

Feature trees

Liquidambar styraciflua
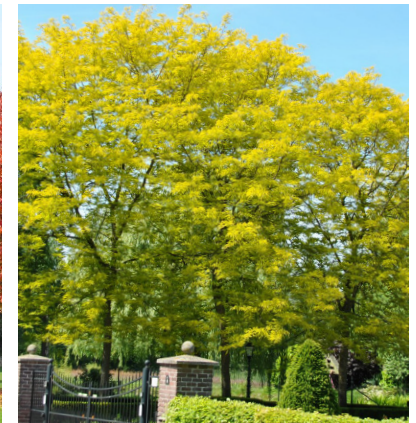
Gleditsia triancanthos 'sunburst'

3.2 Vegetation strategy

Species recommendations

This non exhaustive list of species gives suggestions of trees and plants species that could be selected for the town centre of Stevenage.

Shrubs

Euonymus fortunei

Buxus sempervirens

Coryllus avellana

Viburnum dentatum

Groundcovers

Pachysendra terminalis

Hedera helix

Perennials & grasses

Gaura lindheimeri
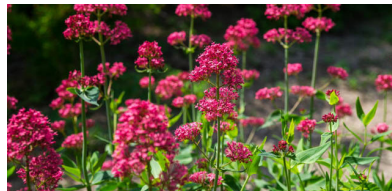
Centranthus ruber

Rudbeckia fulgida

Deschampsia cespitosa

Stipa tenuissima
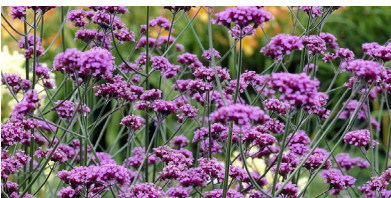
Verbena bonariensis
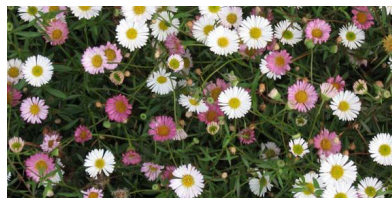
Erigeron karvinskianus

Astrantia major

Eupatorium rugosum

Melica ciliata

3.3 Lighting strategy

General guideline

There is a variety of types of lighting that can be used within the public realm. Lighting must achieve two goals - provide standard lighting levels and add visual interest, delight and mood.

The lighting strategy should include primarily a standard palette of lighting elements whilst allowing for feature lighting in defined locations.

Lighting level
Light quality - a minimum classification of CE2 (20 lux) should be achieved with a uniformity of 0.4 suitable for mixed modal streets. This creates a safe environment during darkness.

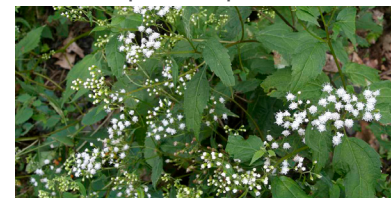### Standard lighting
These light levels will predominantly be achieved through columns, generally 6-8m high, with LED luminaires. Columns should be neutral in design throughout the city centre so as not to compete with the building facades. Canopy mounted luminaires should be reinstated along the pedestrian streets.

Feature lighting
Feature lighting should complement the street lighting and can take the following forms:

- Feature columns with multiple luminaires in well-defined spaces
- Facade lighting to key buildings
- Lighting to art and monuments
- Integrated into street furniture
- Catenary in narrow lanes

Light and visual pollution
Care must be taken to position lights so as not to produce any light pollution and avoid over-lighting streets and spaces. Electrical feeder pillars should always be located at the edge of spaces or against buildings or upstands.

Other considerations
Consideration should be given to:

- Integrating and supporting festive lighting, power sockets within spaces.
- Lighting columns vs building-mounted (way-leaves/easements).
- Feature lighting to facades and monuments
- Security and safety
- Light pollution
- Power consumption
- CCTV and Wi-Fi inclusion

Restored canopy mounted lighting to existing pedestrian streets

General standard neutral 6-8m high lighting columns

Feature columns with multiple luminaires in well-defined and feature spaces

Key arrival streets with feature lighting, including columns and/or facade mounted lighting

Opportunity for facade lighting, furniture integrated lighting or trees uplighting

Opportunity for feature catenary or wall-mounted lighting in narrow lanes

Wall-mounted lighting to underpasses, with oppotyunity to introduce feature lighting
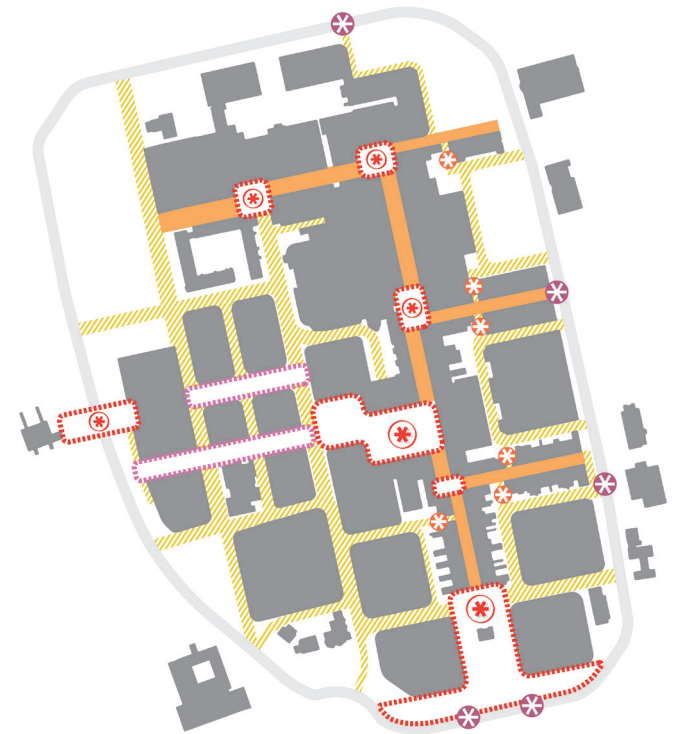
3.3 Lighting strategy

General guideline

Canopy mounted lighting

Standard 6-8m high columns

Feature columns with multiple luminaires

Opportunity for feature trees / furniture integrated lighting

Opportunity for feature catenary lighting

Wall mounted / feature lighting to underpasses

3.4 Furniture strategy

General guideline

All elements of street furniture should be designed into the public realm and not as afterthought. Coordination and combination between elements should be considered, to avoid visual clutter.

Seating

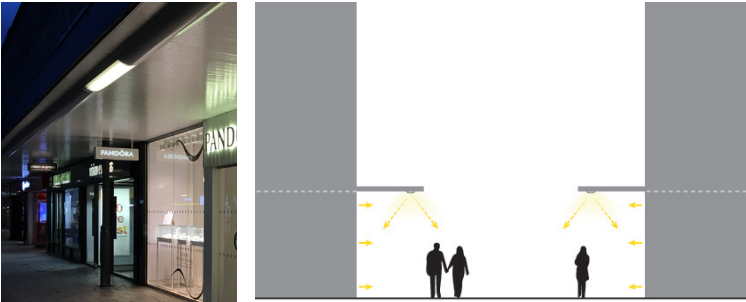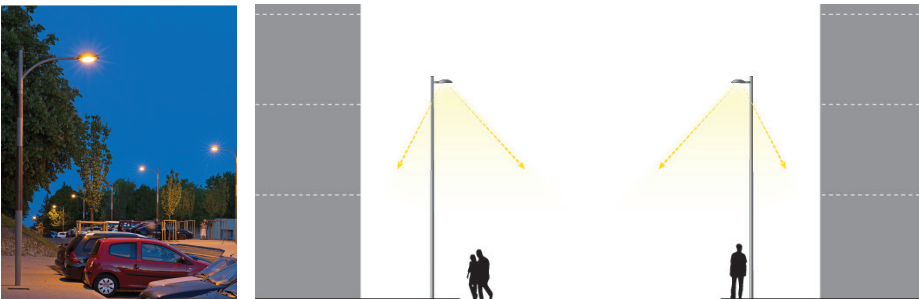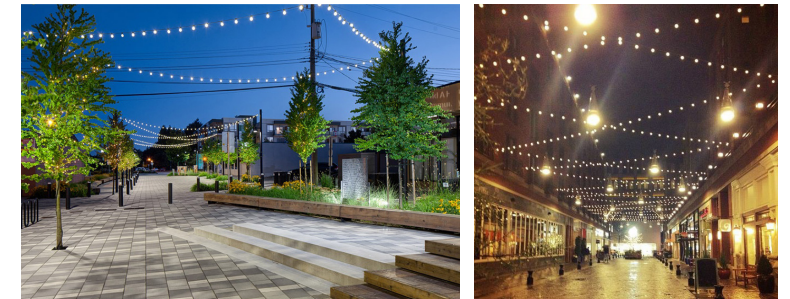A variety of seating options should be incorporated, including benches with arm and backrests, benches as seating platforms, ledges and steps. Seating must not impede natural movement, while seating arrangements should encourage social interaction. Some existing timber and stainless steel benches (see adjacent picture) should be retained in there location or relocated and reused as part of the new furniture palette, after cleaning up and refurbishment. Other disparate and aged seating elements should be removed.

Bins

Bins should be located at key junctions and spaced at regular intervals along the streets. They should be neutral in design and part of a coordinated street furniture palette. Some existing powder coated steel litter bins (see adjacent picture) should be retained in there location or relocated and reused as part of the new furniture palette. Recycling bins should also be provided throughout the public realm.

Bollards

The use of bollards should be avoided wherever possible. Existing disparate bollards throughout the town centre should be removed in their majority, to avoid visual clutter. When the use of bollards cannot be avoided, they should be 1.1m high, slender and coordinated with the other pieces of street furniture.

Cycle racks

These should be located in small clusters, in places where cyclists enter the pedestrian zones, in visible locations and spaced of a minimum of 1m and impeding circulation. There are some existing standard stainless steel Sheffield throughout the town centre, the generalisation of their use is recommended.

Railings

The use of railings should be avoided and existing railings should be removed in their majority to avoid visual clutter.

Examples of discreet and high quality benches.

3.4 Furniture strategy

Assessment and integration of existing elements in future furniture palette

Examples of disparate, aged or damaged bollards that should be removed to avoid visual clutter.

Examples of litter bin and bench offering less visual interest and value than other existing ones: to provide consistency to the public realm, these should be removed and replaced.

Examples of railing dominating the public realm and generating visual clutter. These should be removed.

Existing timber and stainless steel benches and powder coated steel litter bin suitable for reinstatement as part of the new furniture palette, after cleaning up, assessment of their conditions and refurbishment when necessary.

Existing standard stainless steel Sheffield stands like these ones, when in good condition, should be retained in their location when suitable, or relocated somewhere else in the town centre.

Existing slender stainless steel bollards. When the use of bollard cannot be avoided, similar bollards to these ones could be used.

3.4 Furniture strategy

Standard and feature furniture palette

Generally, all items of street furniture should be from a standard palette and neutral in design - the exception being when singular items of street furniture are considered as feature elements, pieces of art, and are site-specific.

It is recommended that the standard palette of street furniture, including as key features benches, litter bins and cycles stands, is used along the pedestrian streets, primary and secondary streets of the town centre. This is to guarantee the coherence and consistency of the public realm.

Feature pieces of furniture, such as plinths, seating steps or works of art, can be suitably located within defined and feature spaces, to bring character and reinforce their identity.

Areas of the town centre where the standard palette should be used

Defined spaces where discreet feature furniture can be used, such as the benches on Forum and Littlewood Square

Key feature spaces where specific bespoke feature furniture pieces can be designed

3.4 Furniture strategy

Standard and feature furniture palette

 Standard palette
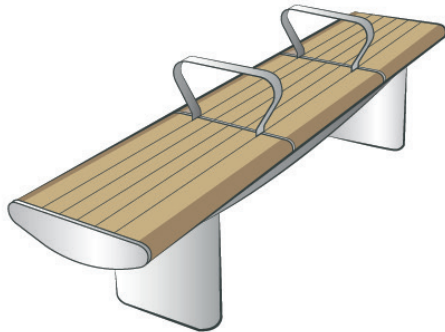
Standard dual facing timber and stainless steel bench as existing in the town centre

Standard stainless steel Sheffield cycle stand, as existing in the town centre
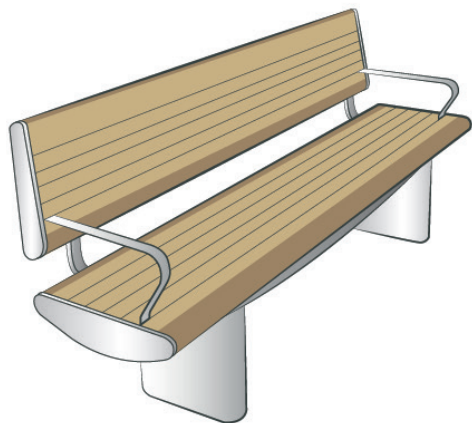
Standard timber and stainless steel bench with arm and backrests, to be specified to match the existing bench in finishes, proportions and design
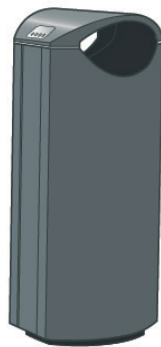
Standard powder coated steel litter bin, as existing in the town centre

 Examples of feature elements for defined spaces

Feature elements in defined spaces should be designed to retain a degree of consistency with the standard palette. Above, a timber and granite plinth with integrated timber and stainless steel benches, matching the standard benches in finish and colour (Littlewood Square) or timber planters with integrated seating.

 Examples of feature elements for main feature spaces

Feature elements of furniture for large feature spaces should celebrate the strong specificity and identity of the spaces, this may be achieved using a distonctive vocabulary of shapes, materials or colours. Above, feature natural stone seating steps with integrated lighting, sculptural organic timber benches and colourful play sculpture.

3.5 Building & shopfront interface

General shopfront guideline

Shopfronts form a significant part of the public realm, they participate to the attractivity of the town centre. The design of all shop fronts should promote appropriate interventions and improve standards and legibility within the town centre as a whole.

Shopfront signage

- Signs should not clutter or dominate the facade of a building, nor the entire street frontage, and should not detract from or obscure the architectural features of the building. Projection signs, banners and flagpoles should be limited in size and number to prevent clutter.

- The size, design, colour and material of signs should be subdued. They should generally be positioned well below the first floor.

- Projecting signs should be located at fascia level and should be limited to one per shop frontage. The size of hanging signs should be proportionate to the building and canopies. They should not dominate the facade or obscure the architectural details.

- The heights of signs and advertising on a building will be controlled. Advertising on the upper floors should generally not be permitted.

- Plastic or vinyl banner-type signs on the exterior of buildings should be discouraged. Only high-quality materials (wood, metal, etc.) should be used.

Shopfront lighting

- Internal illumination of signs should be kept to a minimum, with a restricted level of lighting and limited to white colour, except for pharmacies.

- Limited and discrete lighting of hanging signs and fascia may be allowed in the case of businesses open in the evening, such as restaurants, pubs and clubs.

- External illumination of buildings should generally be avoided, but careful feature lighting of key buildings of particular architectural quality may be considered.

Shopfront details

- Doors and shopfronts should be in a style and should use materials which are compatible with the rest of the building and canopies.

- Roller shutters should be placed internally, behind window displays, and they should be see-through.

- The development of floor to ceiling glazed shopfronts should be encourages wherever possible.

- Historic, locally distinctive or characteristics shopfronts should be retained. In some cases, the reinstatement of missing features should be encouraged.

- New shopfronts should be designed as part of the whole building and relate to the scale, proportions and style of the building and surrounding facades.

Example of shop signage to be removed from its current location and replaced with more sympathetic design, better integrated and proportionate signage, with materials appropriate to the historical context.

Example of successful shopfront with floor to ceiling glazing allowing long views into the shop unit, rationalised banner signage proportionate to the architectural and canopy scale and use of warm materials and lighting.

3.5   Building & shopfront interface

Detailed shopfront design guideline

The general shopfront guiding principles are illustrated in the typical new shopfront arrangement below, based on existing successful examples in the town centre, such as the shopfront designs of "Starbucks" and "Pandora".
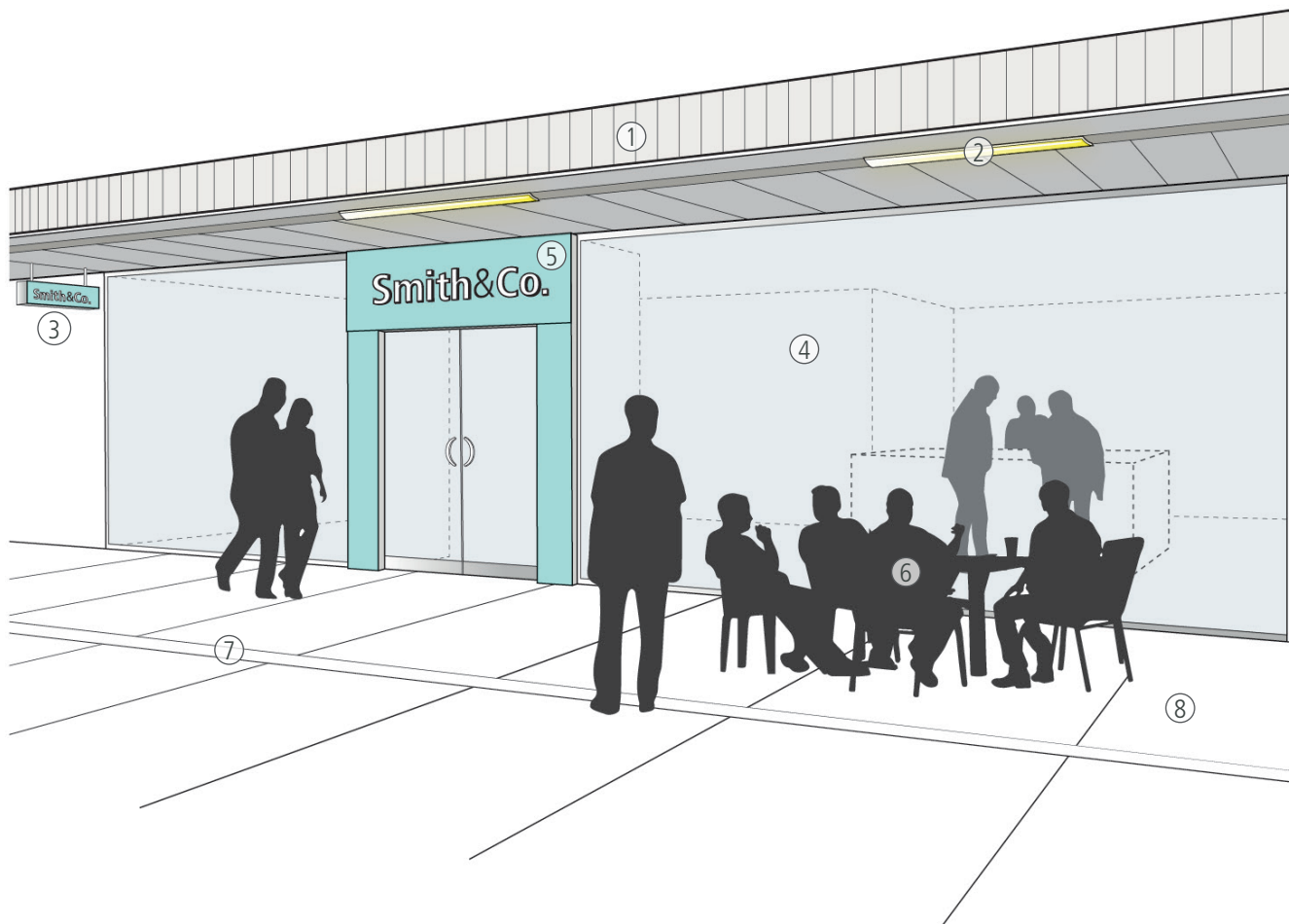
1   Refurbished canopy with reinstated historical features such as timber soffit.

2   Refurbished canopy lighting.

3   Discreet new projecting sign relating to the canopy in terms of scale and proportions.

4   Maximised ceiling to floor shop window to allow views into the shop and better activation of the street frontage.

5   Rationalised and proportionate fascia sign, integrated with coordinated pilasters and glazed doors.

6   Where appropriate, shop forecourt can be activated with a proportionate terrace space or outdoor displays.

7   In the case of pedestrian street, different paving grains should define the shop forecourts from the central part of the street.

3.5 Building & shopfront interface

General facades guideline

Building facades and their associates uses contribute to the quality and character of the public realm. They play a key part in the creation of a pleasant atmosphere and bring interest to the town centre. The design of all facades should promote appropriate interventions and improve standards and legibility within the town centre as a whole.

All interventions on building facades within the Town Square Conservation Area should be done in compliance with the appropriate regulations; a Conservation Area Consent when may be required.

Canopies

- Historical features and materials, such as timber soffits and lighting, should be restored and reintroduced where appropriate, along with a long term maintenance strategy.

- New canopies should be mindful of the historical context, with special attention to their scale, materials, colours.

- The removal of some canopies which are posterior additions to the New Town design should be considered, such as the Wesgate canopy.

Modernist heritage facades

- Specific historical architectural features, such as coloured cladding on some facades, should be cleaned up and restored.

- The potential for enhancement of each historical facades should be assessed (e.g. refresh colour palette, new coordinated materials and finishes)

- All improvements to historical buildings should be carefully designed and use coordinated palettes of materials sympathetic to the context and style of the buildings.

Public art

- The cleaning up and refurbishment when necessary of existing murals should be conducted as part of a general restoration strategy of the architectural heritage of the town centre.

- The potential commissioning of new murals should be assessed, especially as part of a strategy to bring interest to blank facades.

Functionality

- Ground floor frontages should be active as often as possible, to bring interest and attractivity throughout the town centre.

- Transparency and permeability of frontages should be promoted to increase public use and engagement.

- Core entrances should be clearly marked wherever possible, to increase the legibility of the historical architecture.
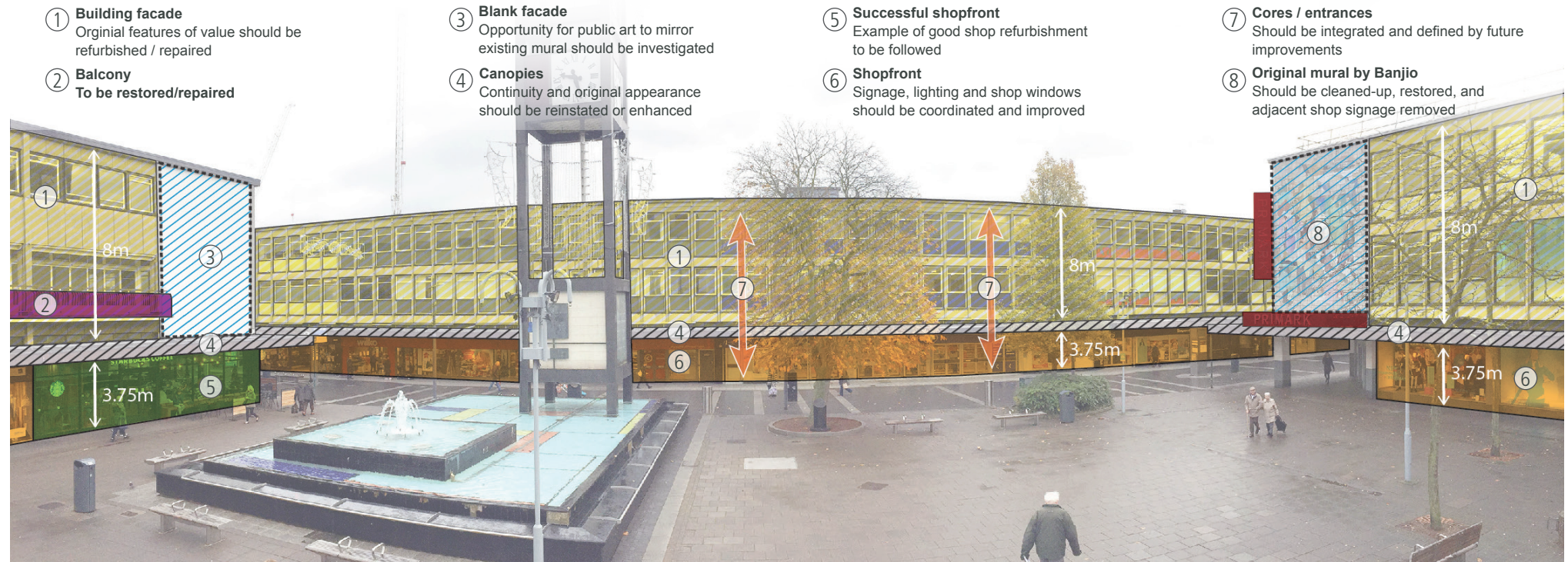

Extent of Stevenage Town Square Conservation Area

3.5 Building & shopfront interface

Typical facades guideline: Town Square eastern facade case study

① **Building facade**
Orginial features of value should be refurbished / repaired

② **Balcony**
To be restored/repaired

③ **Blank facade**
Opportunity for public art to mirror existing mural should be investigated

④ **Canopies**
Continuity and original appearance should be reinstated or enhanced

⑤ **Successful shopfront**
Example of good shop refurbishment to be followed

⑥ **Shopfront**
Signage, lighting and shop windows should be coordinated and improved

⑦ **Cores / entrances**
Should be integrated and defined by future improvements

⑧ **Original mural by Banjio**
Should be cleaned-up, restored, and adjacent shop signage removed

Building facade
• Interest should be brought back to this facade through new cladding and colour palette.
• The original facade rhythm and structure should be retailed.

Historical canopy
• Should be repaired and restored.
• Interest should be brought back through lighting as part of the lighting strategy.
• Potential use of a refreshed material and colour palette.

Facade features
• Facade colour features should be repaired.
• The potential use of a new colour palette should be investigated, as well as new cladding materials.
• The original facade rhythm and structure should be retailed.

3.6 Signage & wayfinding strategy

Signage strategy

The signage strategy should provide a single, consistent wayfinding information source for town centre users. The strategy presented here summarises the signage and wayfinding strategy realised by Maynard Design Consultancy for Stevenage Borough Council in 2018.

Directional signs
The signage should include directional signs as part of a town centre wayfinding strategy. This should be coordinated family of forms including maps at key arrival points, monoliths or totem signs at decision points and finger posts to aid orientation. Signage should be coordinated where possible with light columns or building mounted to avoid visual cluttering. All signage should be durable, with the possibility of changing texts and information.

Interpretation
Graphics signs or plaques should be positioned next to buildings and points of interest that have historic, cultural or architectural importance. This can be linked to a discovery trail.

Decluttering
The audit conducted by Maynard revealed the presence of many obsolete, repetitive or inappropriate signage throughout the town centre.One of the main types of signage within the public realm is statutory road signs: it should be kept to a minimum and rationalised wherever possible to avoid clutter. In the same way, promotional signage should be rationalised and carefully considered before applying to the public realm to avoid visual clutter. The recommendations regarding decluttering provided in Maynard's Sign and Decluttering Report should be followed.

Heritage signage
Individual historical slabs mounted to buildings and canopies are present throughout the town centre and are part of Stevenage town centre identity. These signs should be retained, restored and maintained where necessary and reintroduced where appropriate.
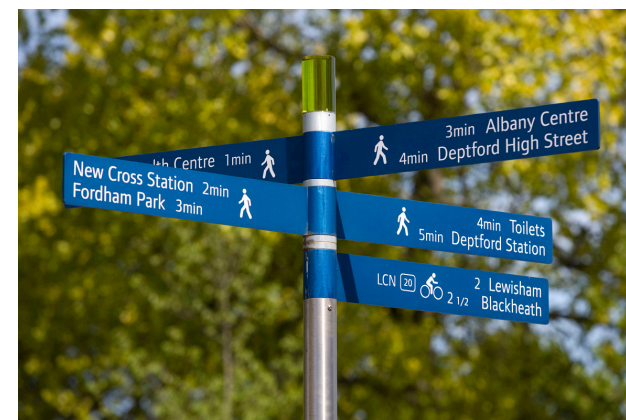

Example of historical signage to be restored and reintroduced

Example of 5 minutes walk map for monolith or totem sign

Examples of visual clutter: 'no cycling' signs throughout the centre
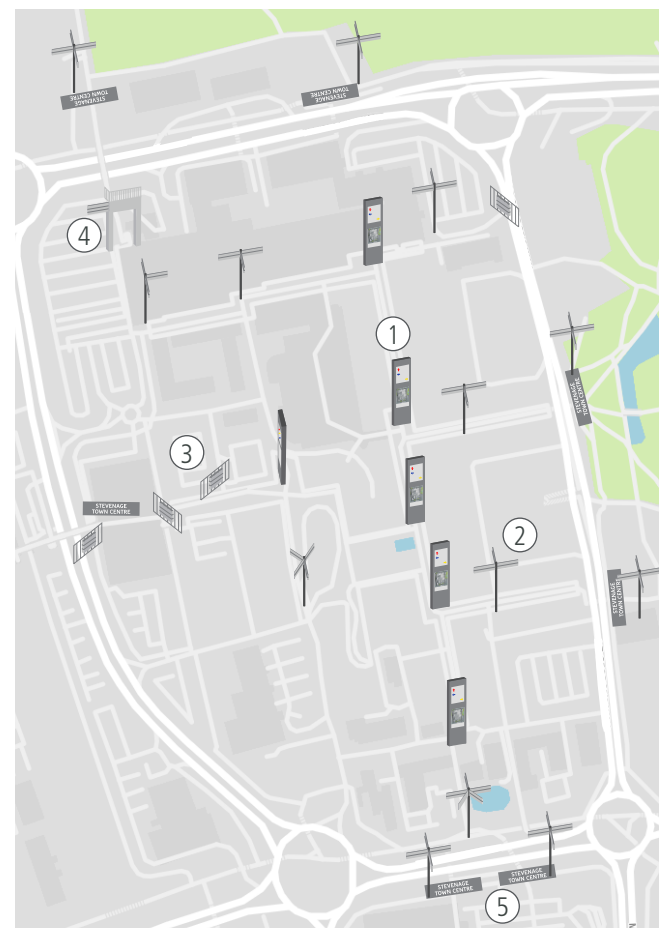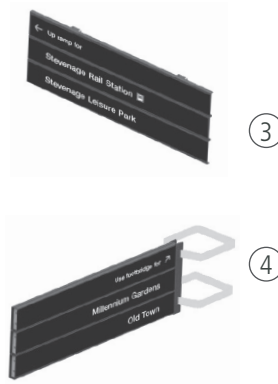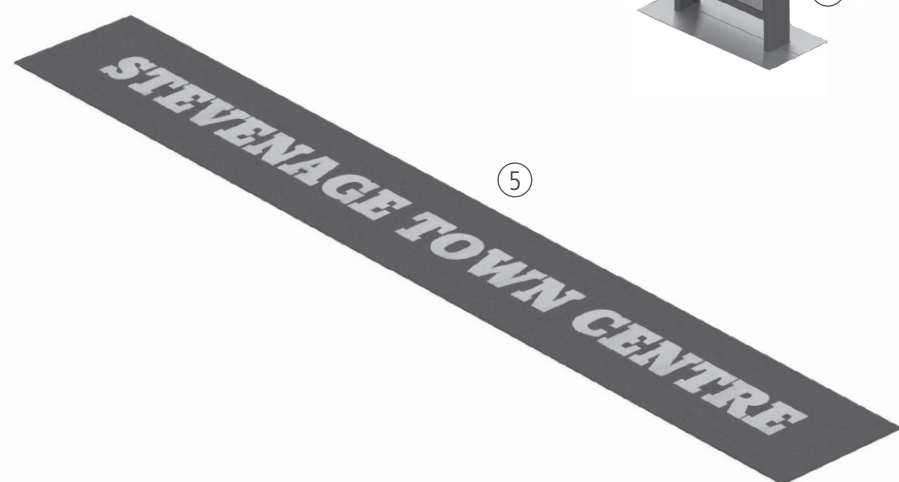

Example of fingerpost sign

3.6 Signage & wayfinding strategy

Product proposal

The wayfinding and signage strategy produced by Maynard proposes the use of the following signs throughout the town centre.

1. Wayfinding totem with map

2. Fingerpost sign

3. Rail mounted slates

4. Column mounted finger sign

5. Gateway sign

Map showing the proposed signs location

3.7 Sustainability

The objective of the sustainability strategy is to deliver general principles on how the public realm can be thought and designed to reduce the carbon emissions of the town centre, help future-proof the public realm and offer a healthy and resilient place to live to the people of Stevenage.

Level of intervention
There are many levels at which a project can be made sustainable by design (water management, biodiversity, materials, energy, etc). All of them should be considered and their possible implementation assessed.

Forward planning
The opportunity to reduce the impact on the environment of each project and development should be assessed in depth prior to and in conjunction with the design process.

Prioritising
Making each and every development in the town centre as sustainable and low impact as practicable should be a priority to all.

Scale
Sustainability should be a key component of all developments at every scale: from high level planning, massing and urban design to the detailed implementation of every single scheme. Putting in place a systematic approach at every scale and step of the project maximises the chance to achieve good results.

LEVEL 01
Planting & Biodiversity

- Planting helps mitigating impacts of climate change such as extreme weather and temperature

- Tree planting, green buffers and green walls help improve air quality by reducing air pollution

- Planting - perennials, wildflowers, fruit trees, shrubs - and bugs hotels help improve biodiversity by attractive insect, birds and small mammals

- Extensive and unbroken green infrastructure enables the continuity and permeability of habitat zones

LEVEL 02
Water Management

- Sustainable drainage system (SuDs) provide solutions for stormwater to be stored on site and soaked into the ground, reliefing classic drainage systems and helping improving water and habitat zones quality

- Rain gardens, swales and landscaped attenuation basinshelp improve biodiversity and wildlife and reduce water pollution

- Permeable paving and "grasscrete" enable the percolation of stormwater in natural grounds

- Maximising natural ground and green spaces help reduce flooding events

3.7 Sustainability

LEVEL 03
Materials & Recycling

- Resilience of the design and materials to climate change

- Materials of the public realm to be recycled, recyclable and carbon neutral, BREEAM criterias to be applied wherever possible

- Chain of supply and transportation of materials to be as carbon neutral as possible, locally sourced materials should be preferred

- Recycling bins including card, plastics and glass to be provided throughout the town centre
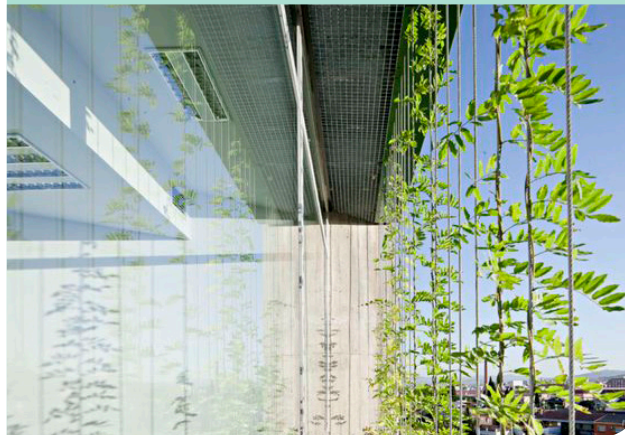
LEVEL 04
Urban & Built form

- Green blue and brown roofs enable water storage and evaporation

- Green walls and green facades help reduce air pollution and increase biodiversity and wildlife in urban environments

- High thermic performance of new and refurbished buildings contribute to the reduction of energy consumption

- Adequate orientation, massing and materials choice for new buildings help reduce their energy consumption and the island heat effect

LEVEL 05
Sustainable mobility

- Continuous, legible, signed and safe pedestrian and cycle links encourage usage by more

- Adequate short and long term cycle parking provision facilitates the use of bikes for everyday movements

- Efficient, cheap and well connected public transports encourage their use by more

- Provide charging points for electrical vehicles

- The reduction of free vehicular parking provision encourages the use of other means of transportation
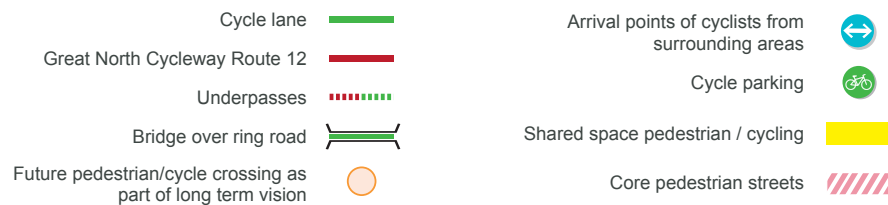
3.8 Cycling strategy

There is an important existing cycle network that surrounds Stevenage, wih existing cycling lanes on its northern and southern edges and the Great North Cycleway 12, connecting Stotfold to Hadley Wood, that surrounds the town centre on its western edge. The cycle strategy aims at connecting the town centre to the surrounding existing cycle network and promote the access by bike to the town centre whilst retaining the pedestrian only zone at the heart of the town.

The objectives of the strategy are:

- Offer easily accessible and secure cycle parking throughout the town centre, and especially at all entry points of the pedestrian core.

- Create a cycle spine / through cycling axis along London Road that connects the outside to the town centre, the station and the future bus station into the town centre.

- Extend the cycling network within the town centre and look to maximise opportunities for a network of shared pedestrian / cyclists spaces along paths of min 3.5m width and public space of min 5m width.

- Retain a pedestrian only zone at the heart of the town centre.

- Improve the cycling access points to the town centre.

Cycle lane	———
Great North Cycleway Route 12	———
Underpasses	··········
Bridge over ring road	⊐⊏
Future pedestrian/cycle crossing as part of long term vision	◯

Arrival points of cyclists from surrounding areas	⬌
Cycle parking	🚲
Shared space pedestrian / cycling	▮
Core pedestrian streets	▨

3.9 Cultural & public art strategy

The town centre of Stevenage displays a large amount of public art pieces such as murals, sculptures and artistic references integrated to the architecture. All these form a rich existing cultural framework, that can be enhanced and made more legible through the regeneration of the town centre. Stevenage Borough Council has recently published a 10 years cultural strategy to enhance the town's arts and heritage offering called Stevenage Re-imagined.

Key points of the cultural strategy:

- When public realm schemes are delivered it is essential that where art can be incorporated, it is designed into the scheme from the start to ensure a clear relationship between art and public space.

- Create an extensive new trail of public art, with a focus on interactive artwork, to draw residents and visitors to the cycle network and to Fairlands Valley Park and to enhance the regenerated town centre, also helping to revitalise the existing heritage sculpture trail

- "Interactive" is the key word. By commissioning work that actively engages audiences then people will be encouraged to visit the artworks to experience them, rather than seeing the works simply as decorative elements of the route.

- A number of other Key Aims in this Strategy will support an increase in opportunities for children and young people, including the development of Outdoor Festivals and events, the development of artworks in the public realm and a commitment to increasing volunteering opportunities.
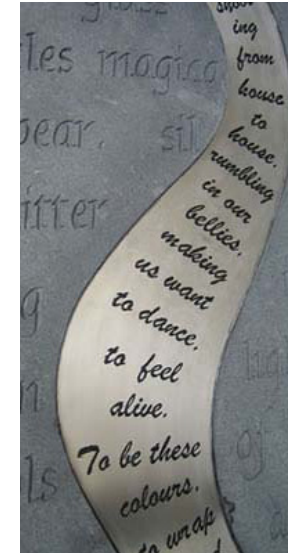
4.0 Specific projects

4.1   Queensway North - Typical street 01

1. Scattered trees in pockets of planting and seating
2. Perennial planting
3. Bench with timber top
4. Timber decking
5. New high quality slab paving
6. New high quality setts paving
7. Enhanced shopfronts, forecourts & signage
8. Refurbished canopies
9. Canopy removed

4.2 The Forum - Typical street 02

1. Landscape rooms down the centre of the street with raised lawns, seating edges, planting, etc.

2. New line of trees

3. Perennial planting

4. Timber decking

5. New high quality slab paving

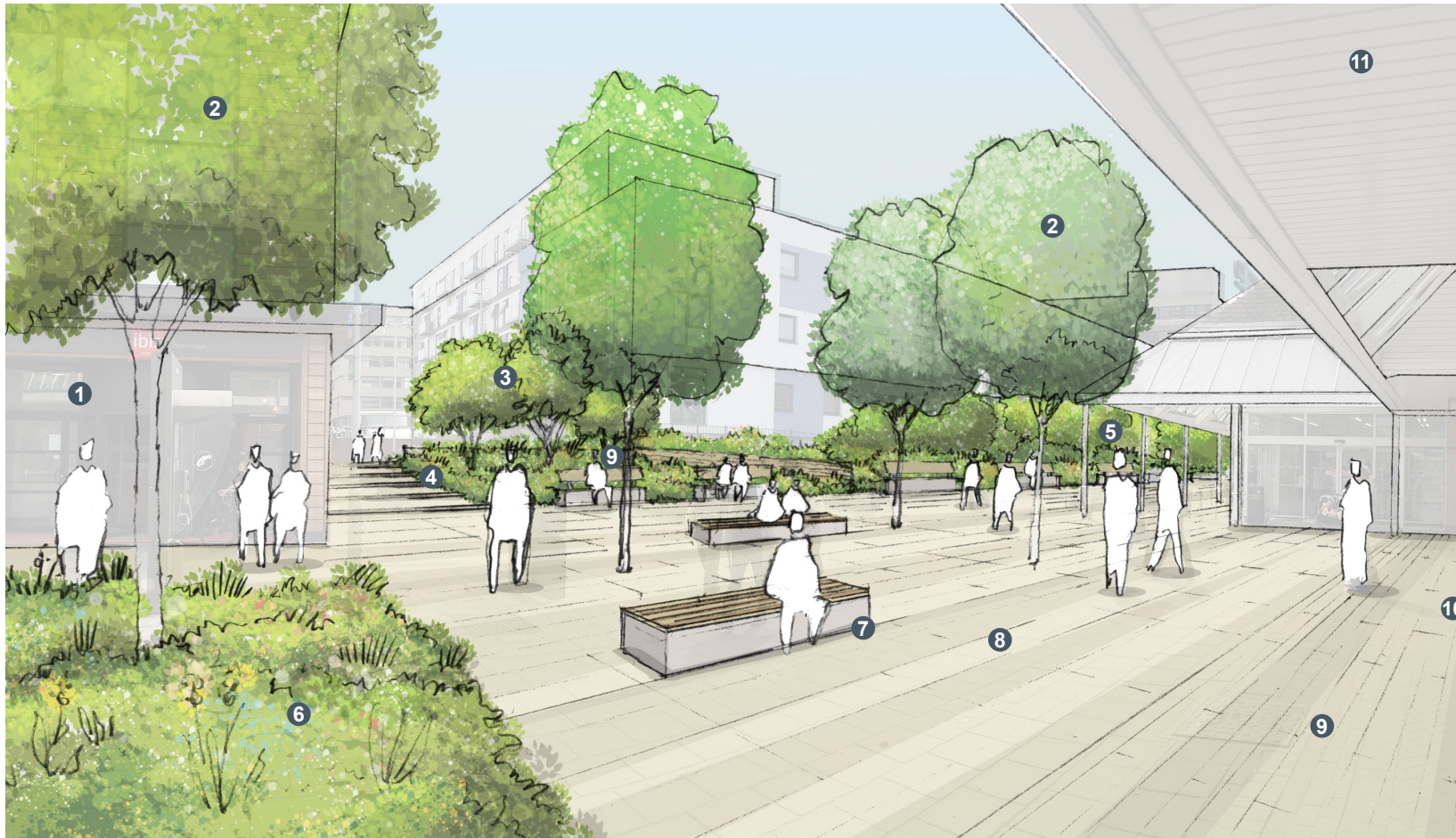6. Enhanced shopfronts, forecourts & signage

7. Refurbished canopies

4.3 The Forum - Typical street 03

1 Line of trees in the centre of the street

2 Refurbished canopies

3 Enhanced shopfronts, forecourts & signage

4 New high quality slab paving to forecourts

5 New high quality small grain paving to centre of the street

6 Existing paving

4.4 Tesco entrance Square

1 Enhanced shopfront

2 New street trees

3 New small ornamental multistem trees

4 Rearranged steps & planting to create buffer to private space at the back

5 Existing retained trees

6 Ornamental planting to centre of the street

7 Feature benches with timber tops

8 New high quality slab paving

9 New high quality setts paving

10 Entrance to Tesco

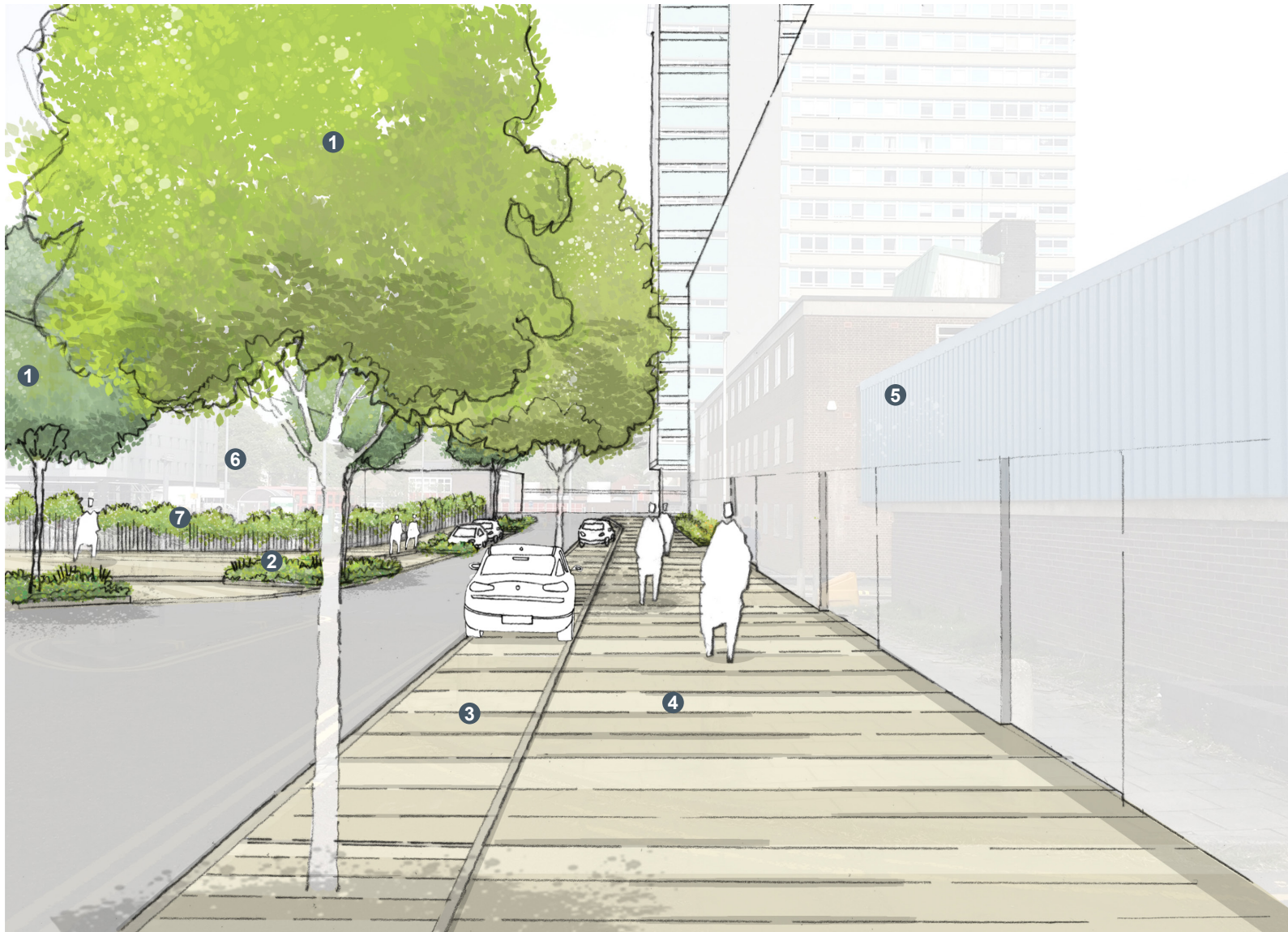**11** Refurbished canopies

4.5   Queensway Square & Residential link

1 New residential blocks
2 Existing retained trees
3 New street trees
4 New defensible planting
5 Enhanced shopfronts
6 New high quality paving
7 Enhanced pedestrian link into town centre
8 Residential green space

4.6 Southgate radiating street

1. Tree planting along both side of the street
2. Planting / rain gardens
3. Parallel parking bays
4. New high quality paving
5. New residential block
6. School site
7. Green boundary to school site

4.7 London Road cycle spine

1. Stevenage Leisure Centre
2. New bus station
3. New residential blocks
4. Tree planting both sides of the street
5. Shared surface including cycle spine, pedestrian link and access for buses
6. Planting / Rain gardens
7. Existing trees retained