

NEWMARKET HIGH STREET PUBLIC REALM DESIGN BRIEF

APPENDICES

11 THE CONSULTANT'S BRIEF

The Consultant's Brief

The consultant's brief was prepared by Forest Heath District Council and sets out the study area, the purpose of the report and the background to it:

Purpose:

To prepare a design brief for the comprehensive and coordinated improvement of the public realm in Newmarket High Street, Suffolk and to draw up detailed public realm improvements for identified key areas.

Background:

There is considerable interest in improving the public realm in and around Newmarket High Street. The aim is to make the High Street a destination that supports Newmarket's visitor offer, as well as providing for the daily needs of residents and enhance the built environment of the town's historic core.

Established in 2012, Newmarket Vision is a partnership of public, private and voluntary sector groups working to improve Newmarket's town centre, tourism and educational opportunities, traffic and community planning. Brought together by The Princes Foundation via a series of workshops and public meetings, the aim of the Vision Project is to set the vision for and development of Newmarket over the next 20 years. Local Residents and interest groups, the Town Council, Forest Heath District Council and Suffolk County Council have been working together to bring about the suggested actions from the Princes Trust Newmarket Vision Enquiry by Design Report.

Requirements:

The Design Brief should provide a detailed framework for improving the design quality of the High Street area, with particular consideration given to the identification and design of individual key improvement areas to be delivered as and when funds are available.

The Design Brief will include:

- an analysis of site conditions, consultation feedback and identification of the key design issues
- details of the manner in which any existing and proposed natural or historic features will be incorporated and where possible enhanced within development proposals
- measures to reduce 'clutter' in the Street
- introduce a holistic and integrated design proposal and materials pallet
- safe and attractive footpaths, cycle ways, parking areas and street crossings.
- consider vehicular movement, parking (including taxis), public transportation / facilities and traffic calming measures
- details of materials, design features and specific design guidelines to achieve a locally distinctive environment such as:
 - hard and soft landscaping
 - style layout and location of street furniture
 - signage
 - planters
 - lighting

Budgets and Implementation

The Consultants Brief does not set a budget or timeframe for the implementation of the Design Brief. Thus the Design Brief will represent a strategy for interventions that may arise incidentally as budgets become available as opportunities present themselves. It is also the case that a strategy, once adopted as policy, can be a focus of efforts to implement change. Thus a redirection of budgets to interventions on Newmarket High Street may arise because the strategy is in place.



12 PROJECT AREA ANALYSIS

Existing Survey Data / Analysis

There is a limited amount of existing survey and analysis of issues connected with the High Street.

Recognising Positive Attributes

Newmarket High Street benefits from many positive attributes. The built form is complete and comprises many attractive buildings creating a well-defined space. It is a vital place with good levels of retail and social activity. The public realm strategy does not have to create attractions in the High Street rather it need only focus on supporting the positive attributes that are already there.

Enquiry by Design

The Enquiry by Design (EbD) Report records concerns expressed in the community workshops about traffic and parking on the High Street as well as a desire for an improved public realm.

Concerns expressed in the EbD workshops were largely reiterated at High Street 'Visioning Day' (Chapter 3) where traffic, parking, and themes centred around the appearance of the public realm were at the forefront of concerns about the High Street.

Quality Audit

An assessment of the High Street has been undertaken by Ubiety Landscape + Urban Design. For the purposes of a public realm strategy the assessment considers primarily the place functions of the High Street and the criteria that contribute to fulfilling this however these cannot be divorced from the movement function for vehicles. Calming traffic and managing vehicle-related issues such as parking underpin improvements to the public realm.

The use of on-street parking on the High Street is extremely inefficient. The lack of enforcement means the turnover of 'stop and shop' spaces is very low - considerably lower than it could and should be. A new parking strategy will be need to ensure that existing and future parking facilities contribute more to the town's economy and environment.

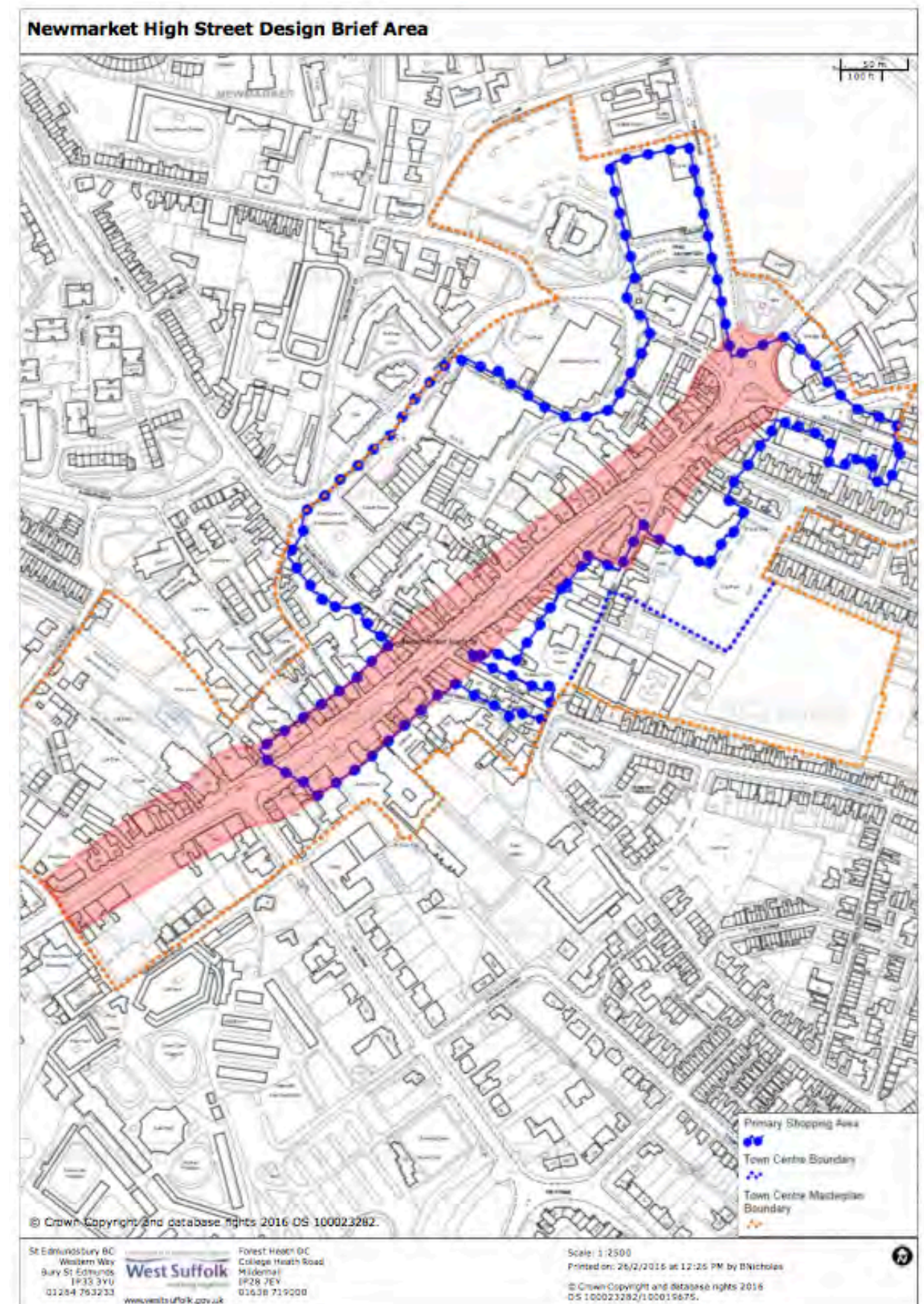
During the workshops it was said that investments to the Clock Tower end of the High Street and Sun Lane "shone a light" on the shortcomings of other parts of the town centre such as Wellington Street, The Guineas and the area around Innocence Nightclub opposite the Memorial Hall. Residents felt the abundance of street furniture, signage and railings at points along the High Street devalued the shopping experience and restricted pedestrian

EbD

The A1304 High Street-Bury Road is a key feature of Newmarket and a vital route for vehicular access to, from and through its centre. The role of the A1304 corridor for longer distance through traffic is limited, with the A14 trunk road to the north being the primary route for that purpose. There is considerable concern over the use of the A1304 as a 'release valve' on those occasions when serious congestion occurs on the A14. Locals also worry about the volume of relatively short-distance through traffic, with drivers preferring to take the shorter route via the A1304 rather than the faster route via the A14

A number of formal protocols have been developed for undertaking quality audits. Generally they have to be adapted for the particular purposes of an assessment and the unique circumstances of the place under consideration however there are a number of consistent themes to be found in many of the questionnaires. 'Placecheck', devised by the Urban Design Alliance in 1998, is one such audit questionnaire and some of the questions it poses are set out below.

Ubiety relies on many years of experience of assessing places and how they perform in respect character, safety and inclusion and ease of movement, amongst other criteria Nevertheless, the key findings (below) will be recognised by members of the Vision Design Group who have been considering these issues in recent years. Although there maybe no new insights arising from this analysis it is important that key findings are stated here. The process of proposing design interventions starts with this analysis and any evaluation of them should consider how proposals address these findings.



“A placecheck is widely used to look at a place and think about how to make it better”
Questions include:

- What makes a place special or unique?
- Why does it look the way it does?
- What local activities or events have made it like this?
- Why might one like this place?
- What attributes can be built on?
- What is the potential for enhancement?

- How accessible is the place? What limits how easy it is to get around?
- How welcoming is the place? Does anything make it confusing?
- How well does the parking work?
- How can the place be made more accessible and welcoming?

- What makes this place safe and pleasant? What detract from this?
- How successful is the street underfoot? What could be improved?
- How can the place be made safer and more pleasant?
- How do people enjoy nature here? What is missing?

- The High Street in Newmarket remains a vibrant economic entity and a focus for community activity and civic identity.
- There are many high quality buildings in the High Street that provide a framework with strength of character and a backdrop for a town centre in which the community can take pride. A recently adopted shop front policy should allow for the high quality architecture to play a fuller role in the future as poorer quality shop fronts are gradually improved.
- The physical expression of the movement function – the engineering infrastructure of the vehicular highway – together with the volume of traffic flow dominates the High Street. A successful public realm strategy is likely to require that aspects of the movement function be addressed simultaneously in as far as they can be in order to rebalance the place function. In particular, the High Street poses a barrier to pedestrian movement and therefore disrupts the sense of a coherent place
- The fabric of the public realm, the paving materials and street furniture, are not of high quality or always well maintained. They do not support the architectural quality and do not express a high degree of civic pride.
- The design and disposition of street furniture creates a cluttered environment that detracts from visual amenity.



Chapman's Map of Newmarket 1787

Attention needs to be paid to the 'missing links' in the system (walking routes) typically in the town centre where pedestrian movement is encumbered. This includes people wanting to cross the High Street... The 'yellow brick road' establishes a good starting point for the development of a connected network of attractive walking and cycling routes.

13 VISIONING DAY

A ‘Visioning Day’ was held on 7th March 2017 where members of the High Street Design Group and the business community were consulted on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing High Street and potential themes for a renewed public realm. The group was relatively small (8 members) so the results must be interpreted with some caution. The following word ‘clouds’ were generated by asking “what is liked” and “what is not liked” about the High Street. Some of the words/phrases are a synthesis of words used so that different words with the same or similar meaning could be aggregated. The larger the word, the more ‘hits’ the issue registered with the largest word being 7 hits and the smallest being 1 hit. It is clear that some issues found a strong resonance amongst the group. As might be expected issues associated with the ‘Movement Function’ of the High Street (road traffic and its infrastructure) are generally not liked while themes around the ‘Place Function’ (attractive buildings and social aspects) are liked.

The Group were also invited to express a ‘like’ or ‘dislike’ to a wide range of images of public realm infrastructure and images ranked accordingly. In this case it was not so easy to draw conclusions from the results. Thus, for example, street furniture of contemporary or bespoke design was not ranked noticeably higher or lower than street furniture of more traditional design and nor were materials a particular prediction of where an image might be ranked. It is perhaps worthy of note that overall the scores for street furniture tended to the negative (there were more dislikes than likes). The technique itself has its limitations and again it should be borne in mind that the group was small in number and the images they were presented with were many (many more than shown here).

It might imply that the individual qualities of a particular item of street furniture, for example, are more important than any particular style and that therefore group members are more open minded about style per se.



NOT LIKED



LIKED

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

STREET SCENES

-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2

SEATING

Application of MfS Principles

Manual for Streets (MfS) is national guidance in England and Wales on streets that are not trunk roads and was jointly published in 2007 by the Department for Transport and the Department of Communities and Local Government in England. It replaces Design Bulletin 32 and was particularly aimed at the design of residential streets in new developments. In 2010 Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) was published as a companion to MfS. It promotes a wider application of the principles of MfS to encompass more urban situations such as High Streets (and therefore replaces the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – DMRB) to deliver more contextually sensitive designs. The principles that differentiate MfS2 from DMRB have been summarised as:

- Applying a user hierarchy (with pedestrians at the top)
- Emphasising a collaborative approach to design
- Recognising the importance of the community function (creating spaces for social interaction)
- Promoting an inclusive environment
- Reflecting and supporting pedestrian and cyclist desire lines
- Developing masterplans and preparing design codes
- Establishing a clear vision and setting objectives for schemes
- Striking a locally appropriate balance between the needs of different user groups
- Creating a network of streets that provide permeability and connectivity
- Moving away from hierarchies of standard road types
- Developing street character types
- Encouraging innovation
- Using quality audit processes
- Designing to keep vehicle speed at or below 20mph
- Using the minimum of highway design features

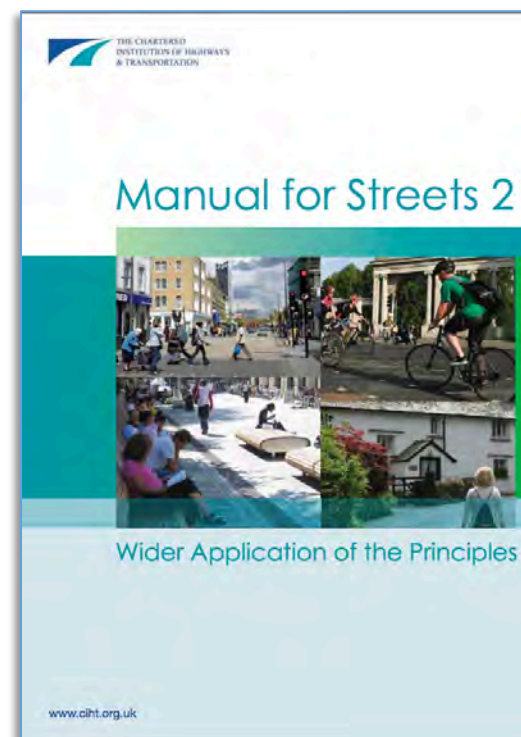
This Design Brief draws heavily on the guidelines contained in Manual for Streets 2 and the most relevant notes are briefly summarised here.

Movement and Place Functions

MfS2 acknowledges that High Streets have a high level status for both place and movement functions but states that town centres should be, pre-eminently, places. This does not mean seeking to eliminate some of the movement that made them the places they are. They should be the most walkable part of the road network but also accommodate public transport and cyclists while remaining accessible by private car. At the same time they should be attractive places to shop, eat, drink, work, play, do business, meet, study, hang around in and look at. Busier routes must be easily crossed and should not form a barrier.

Highway Design Risk and Liability

MfS2 encourages designers to move away from a standardised, rigid approach to design in order to respect local context. It points out that the highway is not merely a piece of infrastructure for moving from place to place but is a place in its own right and can be used for any purpose that does not cause obstruction or nuisance. Further, the primary responsibility for safety on the highway rests with the user of that highway who bears the onus of adapting their behaviour to the particular circumstances of the place.



Pedestrian Needs

MfS2 encourages walking for the many personal, social and environmental benefits. It recognises that the propensity to walk is not only influenced by distance but also by the quality of the walking environment. Pedestrian routes need to be direct and networks connected. Obstructions on the highway should be minimised. Street furniture can be hazard for vulnerable people.

Cycling

Cyclists should be accommodated on the carriageway. Routes should be direct, barrier-free, and avoid the need to dismount. Junctions should be designed with cyclists in mind and over-generous corner radii that encouraged high traffic speed should be avoided. Convenient cycle parking should be provided at key destinations.

Buses

Bus stops should high-quality places that are safe and comfortable and highly accessible by all. Carriageways on bus routes should generally be at least 6m wide. Buses can help to control the speed of cars at peak times by preventing overtaking. Bus stops should enable buses to stop parallel to the kerb and with a kerb of sufficient height (minimum 125mm) to allow access ramps to be deployed when required. Bus shelters are desirable at bus stops with information systems provided. Bus laybys can create difficulties for buses seeking to rejoin the carriageway and can reduce footway width making conditions worse for pedestrians. Bus laybys should only be used where a stationary bus would otherwise create a significant safety problem.

Carriageway

The geometry of carriageways in urban areas was often based on a design speed of 37mph (on roads with a 30mph limit) but this is now considered inappropriate. A more constrained geometry will reduce speeds. Formal speed limits of 20mph are becoming more commonplace and that is considered to be an appropriate maximum where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high, such as shops or markets. Measures that may help keep speeds low include:

- Physical features
- Changes in priority
- Street dimensions, including width
- Psychology and perception, such as:
 - Visual narrowing
 - Obstructions in the carriageway
 - On street parking
 - Pedestrian activity

Lane Widths

UK practice has generally adopted a standard lane width of 3.65m (12 feet) but this should not be taken as a preferred value in all circumstances. Narrower lanes are easier for pedestrians to cross and encourage low speeds without a significant loss of capacity. Lanes wider than 3m are not necessary in most urban areas. For a car travelling at 20mph the ideal minimum width for overtaking cyclists would be 3.8m but where flows are sufficiently light vehicles can move at least partly into the opposite lane. Providing a central median that can be overrun is one way of allowing motor vehicles to pass cyclists comfortably.

Refuges, Medians and Central Reservations

These terms describe features that run down the middle of the road. They can help pedestrians and cyclists cross roads in two stages and can significantly enhance a sense of place. Minimum widths for users are 1.2m for pedestrians, 1.5m for wheelchair users and 2m allowing wheelchair users to pass each other and for cyclists. Narrower medians that can be overrun have also proved useful.

Kerbs

In urban areas, half-batter kerbs with a standard 125mm height are often used but lower kerb heights are easier for pedestrians to negotiate, particularly people with impaired mobility, and can help reduce vehicle dominance.

Crossings

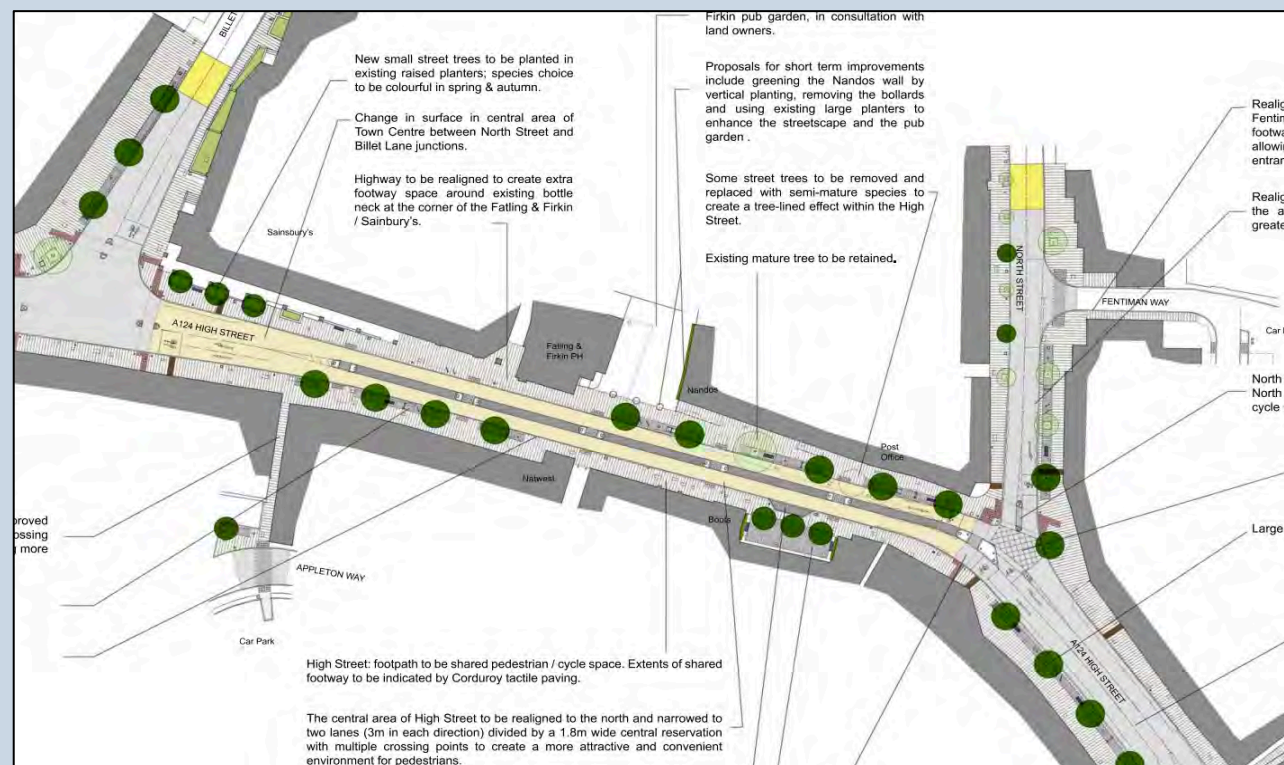
Crossings should be placed on or close to desire lines. Informal crossings can indicate to drivers where pedestrians are encouraged. Designs can make use of contrasting paving materials, street furniture and changes in carriageway width to emphasise pedestrian movement. Informal crossings require no signs or markings and therefore do not add to visual clutter. Replacing controlled crossings with informal crossings can reduce delays to traffic. In the Newland Avenue MPR scheme all signal-controlled crossings were replaced were removed, which resulted in reduced vehicle travel times as well as a reduction in maximum vehicle speed. Road safety and vehicle emissions were also improved significantly. Zebra crossings offer the greatest advantage to pedestrians. Older people and people with visual impairment may express a preference for signalised crossings as they provide greater certainty.

More detailed extracts from MfS2 are contained in the most relevant Sections.

15 CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY I: HORNCHURCH HIGH STREET, ESSEX

This scheme was carried out in 2 phases in 2012 and 2013 and was funded by TfL (Transport for London)



CASE STUDY II: POYNTON, CHESHIRE

This scheme was completed in March 2012 following 5 years of local discussion, consultation, funding assembly, planning and construction. It was commissioned by Cheshire East Council with Poynton Town Council with funding support from a number of sources including a regional transport strategy, Sustrans, development funding and others and cost in the region of £4million.

All traffic signals were removed (following a trial switch-off) as well as road markings. The carriageway was visually narrowed and bold courtesy crossings provided. The town is on a major through route and takes about 26,000 vehicles per day.

It is understood that the scheme has resulted in a less congestion despite a reduction in vehicle speed and 80% of retailers have reported an increase in footfall and turnover.



16 PALETTES AND MATERIALS : DISCUSSION

Paving

Paving materials should be:

- A simple range to help bring visual unity to the street
- Visually coherent in juxtaposition
- Durable, with costs considered on a lifetime basis
- High quality, in recognition of the town centre location and able to reinforce character and identity

‘Stonemaster’ is a premium concrete product that is suitable as a replacement for natural stone and has a lower cost than Yorkstone. By randomly combining 3 different tones the colour variation can have a natural appearance. The blocks are 80mm thick and support occasional vehicular over-run so they can be used for private vehicle accesses without disrupting the pedestrian footpath.

‘Woburn Original’ are a chamferless block so create relatively smooth running surface. The blocks would be used at the edge of the carriageway to reduce the apparent width of the asphalt and they would be used by cyclists so the smoother running surface is important

Choice of street furniture draws much interest when discussing public realm works and there is often some divergence of opinion when issues of style and finish are under consideration. This is understandable as it has a significant visual impact and it can reinforce, or undermine, character.

There are some fundamental attributes that are clearly desirable and, as a minimum, the selected range should be:

- robust
- co-ordinated (a specific requirement of the Consultants Brief)
- available with security of supply for replacement / repair

Robust means durable, but not necessarily having a bulky or weighty appearance.

Co-ordinated means having a common theme that implies items can be grouped as a collection, particularly in terms of style. Availability can be difficult to control. It can help to have an established supplier but from time to time designs change and product lines discontinued.

The style of street furniture should support the character of the setting. The High Street is a designated Conservation Area with a number of listed buildings on the street. This implies that street furniture should be of high quality in design and construction (which may be in contrast to budgetary considerations). It does not necessarily imply that a ‘Victorian’ style of street furniture (widely in use in the UK) is necessarily the most appropriate. The Suffolk Design Manual states:

Care should be taken when choosing street furniture from manufacturer’s standard catalogues because many ‘heritage’ products are a poor pastiche of original designs. In urban areas ... ‘heritage’ styles such as heavy, decorative Victorian types are unlikely to be appropriate in many locations in Suffolk. ¹

Similar advice is proffered in other sources:

Conservation should be aiming to reveal the story of an area ‘warts and all’ through the honest differentiation between additions and the original. The heritage approach can lead to the application of reproduction street furniture (pseudo-Victorian lamp posts and seats) which seek to harmonise with the original but only succeed in belittling it. ¹

¹ *Introducing Urban Design: Interventions and Responses*, Clara Greed (Routledge, 1998)

New Street Furniture

On the other hand, the City of Westminster, which has a rich tradition in street furniture including some well known designs unique to the City), has a carefully considered policy of using accurate replicas of historical street furniture in places and a black livery throughout proving that this approach succeeds when done well.

Newmarket does not have such street furniture traditions. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the High Street as having a “*rich variety of architectural styles*” and they include Regency Victorian and Edwardians. Thus the style of street furniture needs to be adaptable. Determination of a particular supplier / range of street furniture is to be undertaken by the High Street Design Group. Whilst a contemporary style may be more ‘honest’ the Group considers that a ‘traditional’ style of street furniture in black would be more supportive of the Conservation Area. A black finish would permit a number of materials to be considered including cast iron, mild steel, aluminium and ‘composites’ but stainless steel would not be included.



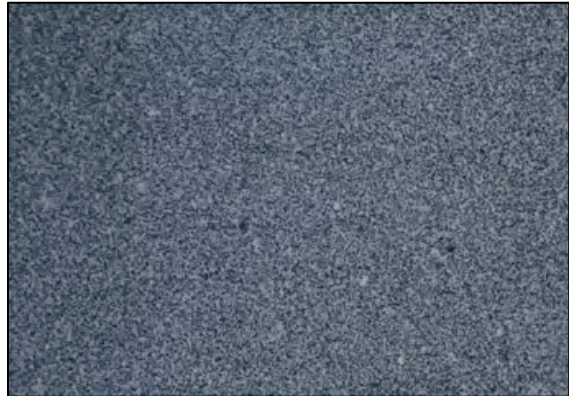
Paving



Footpaths:
Charcon Stonemaster
450x300x80mm
mix of 3 colours: 60% medium; 30% light; 10% dark



Carriageway Edge:
Charcon Woburn Original



Carriageway
Asphalt



Kerbs
Silver-grey granite, flamed texture

Examples in use (photos from 'External Works' ESI Ltd)



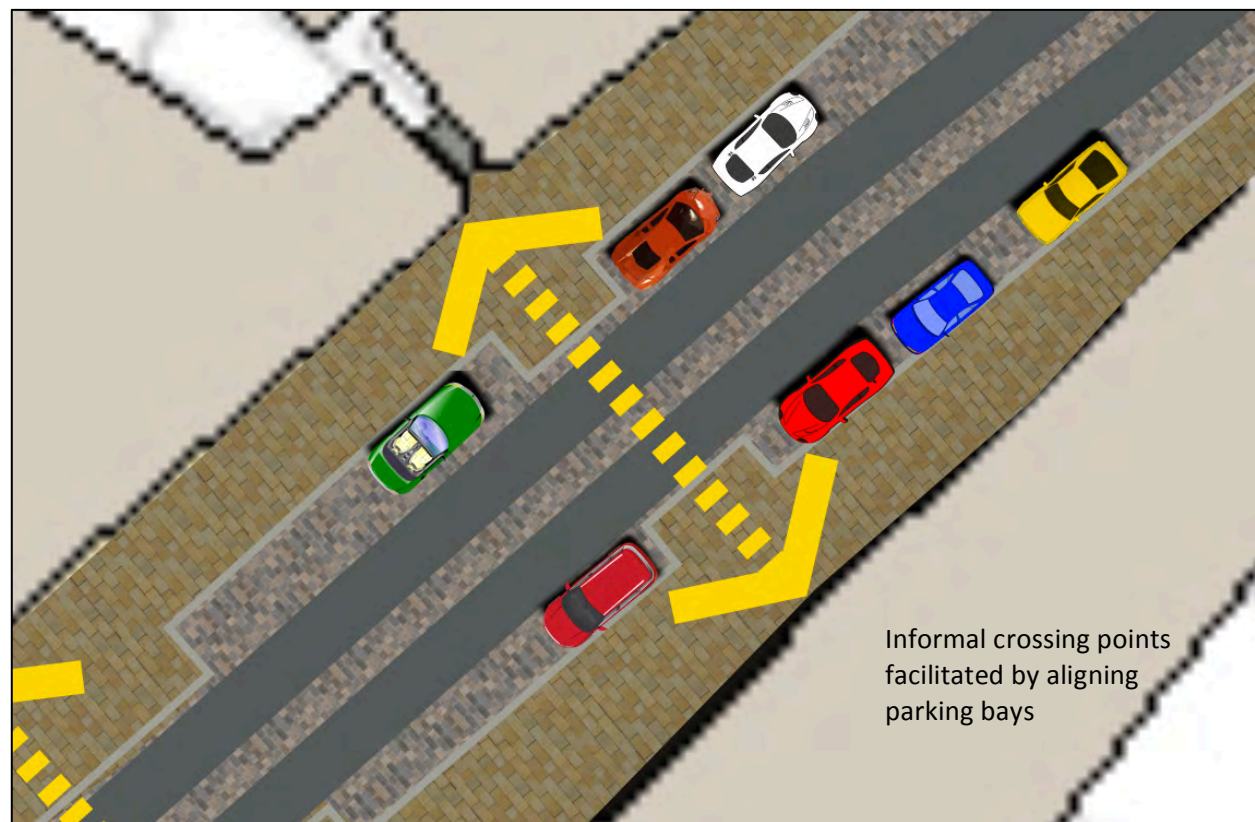
16 PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINTS & VEHICLE CROSS-OVERS : DISCUSSION

The High Street is also known as the A1304. Traffic speeds are limited but traffic flows are high and this impedes pedestrian movement across the High Street and therefore from one half of Newmarket to the other. The underlying strategy of the Framework is to introduce changes that will emphasise the 'Place Function' of the High Street and downplay the 'Movement Function'. Changing the perception of High Street in this way can signal to drivers that there is an elevated priority for pedestrians and so affect their behaviour to facilitate crossing. Enhancing the appearance of the High Street can reinforce this shift in perception both directly (signalling a shift in priorities) and indirectly by encouraging more commercial activity and pedestrian presence.

In support of this strategy it is proposed that the crossing at Sun Lane would be the subject of a 'Key Area' intervention (see Section.6). A new paving scheme also provides an opportunity to trial the removal of the traffic signals. Since 2001, when lights were removed from a busy junction in Drachten in the Netherlands this approach has been trialled with success in many other locations², including the UK, resulting in permanent removal in some instances.

MfS2

"Informal crossings can indicate to drivers where pedestrians are encouraged. Designs can make use of contrasting paving materials, street furniture and changes in carriageway width to emphasise pedestrian movement. Informal crossings require no signs or markings and therefore do not add to visual clutter. Replacing controlled crossings with informal crossings can reduce delays to traffic. In the Newland Avenue MPR scheme all signal-controlled crossings were removed, which resulted in reduced vehicle travel times as well as a reduction in maximum vehicle speed. Road safety and vehicle emissions were also improved significantly."



. This can be further facilitated by reducing the width of the carriageway and aligning on street parking bays on each side of the road to improve visibility at defined points. The signalised crossing at the Post Office could be moved closer to the Avenue where lights are required anyway. Other formal crossing points would be retained (a light controlled crossing at the Rutland Arms and a zebra crossing at the Roundabout end) .

Vehicle Cross-Overs

There are number of private vehicle accesses on the High Street, particularly on the north side and they generally have only occasional use. The footpath paving material ('Stonemaster') should continue uninterrupted but the vehicle cross-over could be delineated with more subtle use of the colours available in the Stonemaster range, e.g. a course of darker blocks to delineate a kerb line. Parking would be restricted if they denied access but these spaces could be used by taxis as the driver would be with the vehicle and could move if required.



Vehicle cross-overs should use the same materials as the footpath to emphasise pedestrian priority. Charcon Stonemaster, for example, will support light vehicular over-run and offers blocks with variations in tone to enable more subtle demarcation than changes in material.

² Könizstrasse, Berne (700 v/hr); Portishead High St (1700 v/hr); Exhibition Road, London.

17 PARKING & TAXI RANKS : DISCUSSION

Existing Provision

In addition to on-street car parking there are approximately 650 short stay parking spaces available + 250 long stay spaces close to the town centre. Currently there is significant provision for on-street parking in the form of longitudinal bays alongside the carriageway. Of these, approximately 12 spaces in 2 bays, are reserved for licensed taxis.

Review

The Consultant's Brief advises that parking is currently being reviewed in Newmarket and that this could affect on-street parking on the High Street.

Issues Arising

Issues around car parking and taxi parking featured in the Visioning Day and it is noted that car parking, and taxi ranks in particular, were seen by the group as negative features in the High Street in Newmarket. Provision for taxi parking was considered excessive resulting in numerous taxis waiting for clients and drivers keeping warm in winter months by leaving engines idling and so adding to pollution.

A reported issue with car parking was the lack of management. It is intended that High Street parking is for short periods but stays are often extended so that bays are regularly full and abuse of short stay parking terms can deny access for shoppers / visitors

EbD para. 3.14

The removal of some on-street parking provision in the prime shopping area (running from Sun lane/Wellington Street to the Clock Tower) coupled with sidewalk widening could beautify the streetscape, heighten pedestrian safety, ease movement across the High Street and improve the retail environment for shoppers and businesses

MfS2 notes that there are both negative and positive aspects to parking on High Streets. Negative aspects include:

- it can reduce the places for pedestrians to cross with adequate visibility
- it can be visually dominant in the street scene and undermine established character
- it may lead to footway parking
- indiscriminate parking can block access to premises
- cars parked on street can be vulnerable to crime
- footway space can be reduced

On the other hand MfS2 also notes potential benefits, including:

- it can be a common resource, catering for visitor and services needs
- it can add a sense of activity to the street
- it can provide a buffer between pedestrians and traffic

Cars manoeuvring to park or seeking parking can also have a calming effect on traffic speeds

Proposed Provision

On the south-east side of the High Street it is proposed approximately 8 spaces (equivalent to the proposed number of taxi spaces lost) are removed and replaced with soft landscaping. The visual amenity of the High Street would be significantly enhanced. Apart from the visual improvement of fewer parked cars (seen as a negative feature) greenery would be introduced which is a feature cited on the Visioning Day as desirable and lacking.



The strategy proposes a modification of existing provision rather than a radical change. Longitudinal bays are considered appropriate and the footways are often sufficiently wide to accommodate this without adversely affecting pedestrian movement. It is proposed that overall provision be reduced but that most of the loss of spaces should apply to taxi parking. Currently there are spaces for 12 taxis most of which are likely to be servicing the wider area in and around Newmarket rather than just the High Street. It is proposed taxi rank spaces be reduced to 4 comprised of 2 spaces on each side of the road (and towards the exiting end). Other taxis can be waiting away from the High Street and take up positions on the High Street as they become available.

Management

Car parking should be managed to ensure that it is used efficiently for short term parking only and, anecdotally this does not take place at present. The details of management are beyond the scope of this strategy and is the subject of a separate study into parking in Newmarket town centre.



Redesigning the existing parking bays with rectangular bays and low kerbs that may be over-run would help to emphasise that the environment is designed primarily for pedestrians rather than motor vehicles.

18 TREES & PLANTING : DISCUSSION

Avenue

MfS2:

Trees bring a wide range of benefits both to individual people and to society as a whole. They contribute to character and distinctiveness, create visual interest and help to soften the urban environment. However, their potential contribution goes far beyond the purely visual; they have a critical role to play in helping to adapt urban areas to climate change, for instance, by providing shade and reducing the local environmental temperature or by slowing the rate at which rainfall enters the drainage system.

Recent studies have shown that in urban areas all over England trees are under threat. Large, mature trees are under particular threat, while new trees being planted tend to be smaller varieties. It is worth noting that the benefits that trees bring are proportionate to their size: large, mature trees bring more benefits than small ones.

Although providing and maintaining street trees have financial implications, the economic, environmental and social benefits vastly outweigh these costs. For example, a recent cost:benefit analysis study of New York street trees has revealed significant cost benefits.

A formal tree planting scheme is proposed for the High Street with a single species planted in pairs (opposite sides of the street) along the Central Retail Area section. The trees should be in scale with the buildings and the space afforded by the High Street and medium sized trees (15m approximately height) are therefore recommended. Trees of this stature will not thrive if the root system is so constricted as to not support the canopy therefore free-standing planters are not recommended but trees should be planted in properly prepared pits in the ground. This can raise issues in relation to underground services. Where there is a potential conflict there are a number of possible remedies to be considered including:

- Re-routing cables and ducts away from the tree root zone
- ‘Sleeving’ of ducts and cables through the tree root zone
- Introducing root barriers / deflectors
- ‘Raised’ planter (adding rooting material above ground to a limited space below ground)

In the event that none of these solutions can be applied the paired tree positions should be omitted and possibly replaced with a shrub planter at those locations

Species

A tree planting scheme on The Avenue has successfully used *Carpinus betulus* ‘fastigiata’ in a similar fashion (as formal avenue planting) and this has provided a distinct character to The Avenue. It is considered appropriate to distinguish the High Street from The Avenue by using a different species in the same way. Potential species would include:

Acer platanoides ‘columnare’
Fraxinus ornus ‘Obelsik’
Ginkgo biloba
Liquidamber styraciflua ‘Starred’
Liriodendron tulipifera ‘Fastigiatum’
Pyrus ‘Beech Hill’
Pyrus calleryana ‘Chanticleer’
Tilia cordata ‘Greenspire’



Planters

There is further opportunity to increase the green element of the High Street with the installation of larger planters. The existing planters are numerous but small and, at about 1m in height, the containers can be more visible than the plants growing in them. It is proposed that these are removed to reduce clutter and replaced with 2 large raised planting areas located centrally on the south-east side of the High Street where the pavement is widest.



19 LIGHTING & CCTV : DISCUSSION

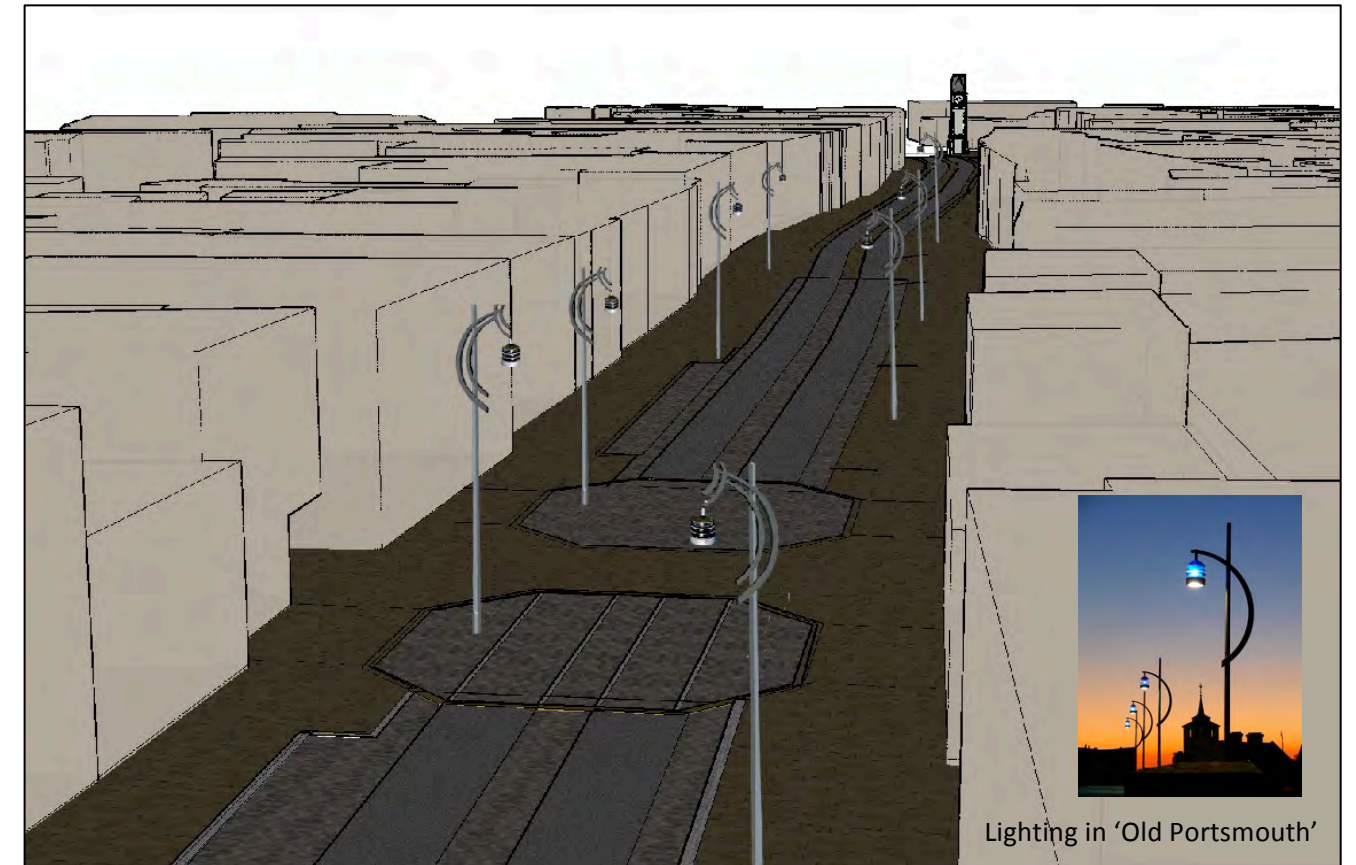
MfS2, inter alia, offers the following advice:

- *Lighting should be planned as an integral part of the street layout, including any planting*
- *Lighting should be appropriate to context and street function*
- *The height of street lighting units should be appropriate to the cross section of the street*
- *Lighting columns should be placed so that they do not impinge on the available widths of footways*
- *Lighting design should ensure that shadows are avoided in streets where pedestrians are vulnerable*
- *Consideration should be given to attaching lighting units to buildings to reduce clutter*

The existing lighting scheme in the High Street is generally successful. A single design of lantern / column is used along the most of the length of the High Street project area providing a sense of unity and coherence. The 'heritage' design is considered not inappropriate - although this design has been criticized by Historic England (Streets for All) as a '*new fitting made to seem historic*'. It is of the correct scale in relation to the cross-section of the street. There are a few smaller columns with a slightly different lantern mounting towards the eastern end of the Central Retail Area but the shorter height relates better to the lower height buildings adjacent and they do not look out of place.

Lighting installations have a limited lifespan however as mild steel columns are prone to weakening from oxidation (rust), particularly at ground level. The street lighting section of the Highways Authority will be aware of these factors and may well have an schedule for monitoring to determine the approximate time for a comprehensive replacement scheme in order to ensure the continued safety of the columns. Available column / lantern designs change over time so those details would need to be reviewed when a replacement scheme is under consideration however there may be an opportunity to further integrate the lighting with the design of the High Street.

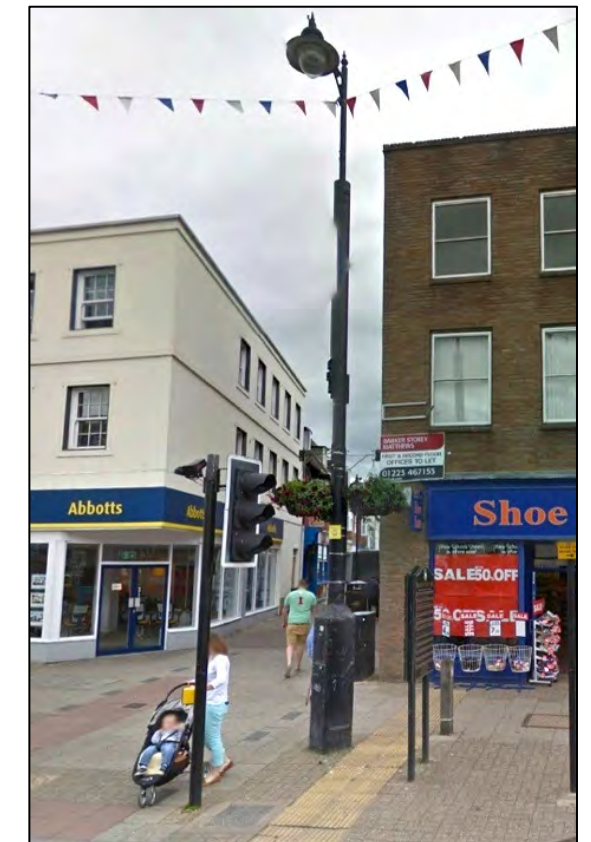
For example, lighting could be used to subtly indicate a 'gateway' by pairing columns on each side of the street. Bespoke designs of lighting columns / lanterns have also been used to impart a sense of identity to specific areas such as the 'dolphin' columns of the Thames Embankment or Pall Mall where the ships of the Battle of Trafalgar are commemorated atop the lanterns. A bespoke lighting design can impart strong messages in a subtle way and might, for example, reinforce Newmarket's unique brand as the historic home of British horse-racing. Such a schemes require early engagement with the lighting section of the Highways Authority



CCTV

Whereas the existing lighting scheme is appropriate and successful in design terms the same cannot be said for the CCTV installations. In particular, where CCTV cameras have been mounted on to lighting columns, and a stand-alone CCTV column at The Avenue, the column design is bulky. They can seem to add to clutter and detract from the amenity of the High Street. In this case (opposite) the camera could be attached to the corner of the building.

The 'bulk' is attributable to the control gear incorporated into the base of the columns. There are alternatives and control gear can be located remote from the column either underground or in a separate cabinet. Remote cabinets have also been criticised for adding to clutter but in some cases the cabinets have been located discretely, including being incorporated into other street



20 CLUTTER & SIGNS : DISCUSSION

Clutter

It is acknowledged that ‘clutter’ is an issue in Newmarket High Street and the Conservation Area Appraisal refers to the potential for “*removing clutter, unnecessary signage and coordinating street furniture*”. The Public Realm Design Brief is charged with proposing measures to address this. Such measures can be grouped as 2 kinds:

- reducing the number of objects in the High Street, including visually intrusive additions such as road paint
- carefully designing and placing such objects as are retained / provided so that they are either more discrete or more co-ordinated

MfS para 12.1

- Designers should start from a position of having no street furniture and only introduce these elements when they serve a clear function.*
- Street designs should be self-explanatory so that the number of signs can be minimised*
- Excessive street furniture should be avoided*

Reducing the amount of street furniture will bring significant benefits in terms of visual amenity. It is only possible to appreciate the character of an area if it is not obscured by excessive standardised street paraphernalia.

Existing Street Furniture

There is a degree of co-ordination to some of the existing street furniture which is based on an identifiable livery (black and gold) and an approximate style that might broadly be described as ‘Victorian’. Most items (bins, seats and planters) are also organised in terms of arrangement in that they sit in a line set back from the kerb allowing free pedestrian movement along the High Street.

However there are also notable shortcomings to the existing inventory:

- It lacks distinctiveness - the theme of quasi -Victorian objects in black and gold is probably the most ubiquitous throughout the UK
- It lacks design integrity / authenticity – for the most part they are not original Victorian designs and may use contemporary materials , such as mild steel or plastic/resin based composites (as used in litter bins),
- The initial sense of co-ordination breaks down at closer inspection with variation in materials (as above) and the provenance of design detail. The litter bins and planters, for example, are frequently juxtaposed but apart from being rectangular and black with gold trim they are clearly not of the same design family in form or in detail.
- It lacks quality of design. The bulky scale of the litter bins, for example, renders them an assertive feature in the street-scene to the detriment of general amenity.
- Planters are there to beautify the street with greenery (although they can serve other functions, such as controlling vehicle parking) however the containers are visually dominant and of limited appeal.
- Although ‘organised’ the disposition of items of street furniture often lacks a sense of composition.

The net effect of these shortcomings is an apparent under-investment and a lack of care or pride in the High Street as a whole.

MfS2 para.12.2

When improvements are carried out designers may over-provide and over-specify traffic signs, markings and other street furniture based on the principle that they will only have one opportunity to provide such items. This practice adds unnecessarily to street clutter and should be avoided. Instead, the starting point should be that they are not provided unless there is a clear need for them. Where there is doubt over the need for any items they should be omitted and the situation monitored closely to establish whether they are justified in the light of experience.

Signs

These fall into 3 categories:

- private signs: i.e. shop signs, including fascia signs, window signs, projecting signs and ‘A- boards’).
- Highways signs: these include regulatory signs (e.g concerning parking restrictions) direction signs and advisory signs provided by the Highways Authority.
- Public non-highways signs, including finger posts and ‘welcome’ signs.

The first category are effectively outside of the ‘public realm’ (although impacting on it) and therefore not considered as part of this Design Brief.

The second category should properly be considered from time to time as part of an audit by the Highways Authority but in any event they are limited in number in the High Street and not considered to be a significant issue.

Of the third category 6 separate types of sign have been identified, comprising:

- Event signs fixed to lamp columns
- The Guineas location signs
- Finger posts
- Shop location signs
- Welcome signs
- Interpretation sign

Although clearly designed with a degree of co-ordination the sum of all of these signs does add to the general sense of clutter and there is scope for some rationalisation.

In order to reduce clutter it is recommended that the finger posts, welcome signs and shop location signs all be replaced with a single sign.

In addition the number and location of such combined wayfinding signs should be reviewed. They would be of most value to visitors at the point of arrival (main car parks, bus station, train station) and there may be a limited need to repeat them at intervals along the High Street.

TfL Streetscape Guidance

Designers should ensure that

- signs are not excessive in terms of numbers and size*
- key views and landmarks are not obstructed by poorly located street furniture*
- clear pedestrian routes are maintained*
- clutter is reduced by combining elements of street furniture*



The illustration opposite is of a bespoke design for a sign. Bespoke designs can be more expensive as they do not confer the economics of scale but additional expense could be recouped by reducing the number of signs and/or keeping the design simple. They have an advantage over mass produced signs in that they can add to a distinct sense of place (a specific requirement of the consultant’s brief for the Design Brief) and can be designed to meet specific requirements.

There may be locations where an adaptation of a combined sign would be useful, such as illustrated below using the bespoke design in corten steel (text font : Gabriola).



The existing finger posts, welcome signs and shop location signs all have an element of way-finding and could be combined into a single sign to help reduce clutter. The illustration above shows a bespoke totem with a corten steel core and black enameled inserts. A bespoke sign would be unique to Newmarket adding distinction and contributing to a sense of place.

21 BUS STOPS : DISCUSSION

Bus & Coach Services

Most local / regional bus services use the Bus Station on Fred Archer Way to provide access to the town centre. However Newmarket is also served by 4 long distance (National Express) coach services and these use the High Street as it provides the fastest route through the town. These services include:

- 370 Runcorn to Clacton
- 497 London to Great Yarmouth
- 498 London to Diss
- 727 Brighton to Norwich

Some of the coach services run several times a day.

Local bus services using the High Street include:

- 10 A Newmarket to Cambridge, hourly

Bus Stop Shelters

There are 2 bus stop shelters in the High Street on either side of the road near to the former horse racing museum and they are provided with a dedicated lay-by for buses. The need for the layby arises from the coach services as passengers often have luggage and can take time to board. Also, coaches may wait here (there are limited options for drivers needing to make the necessary adjustments in order to adhere to timetables). By the same token passengers may be waiting extended periods for long distance services and this explains the need for shelters at this location.

Ownership / Maintenance

Bus shelters are normally the responsibility of the Town or District Council as the County Council (SCC) has limited funds for their installation. However SCC have a preferred style (to reduce maintenance costs) and this is for a basic design in powder-coated mild steel. The existing bus stop shelters are presumed to be of the approved style and receive limited maintenance.

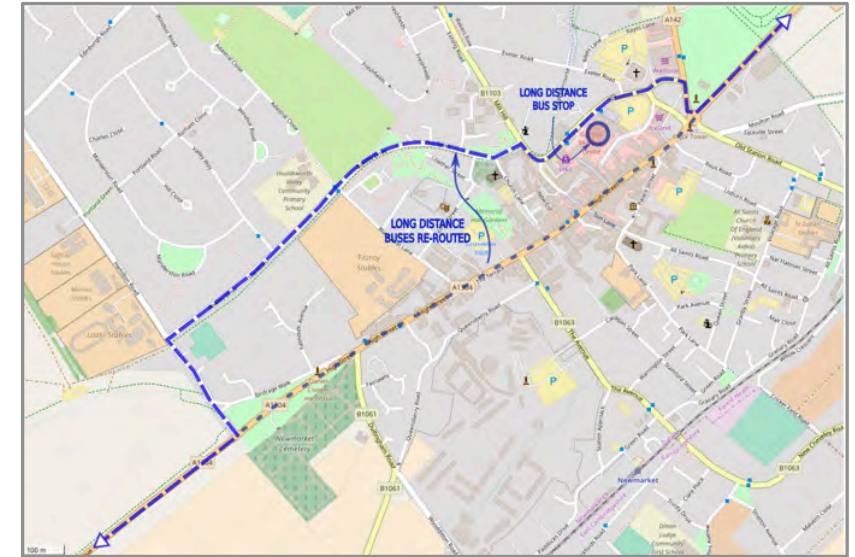
SCC undertake to repair damage to shelters but cleaning (and presumably re-painting) is the responsibility of the Town or District Council. If non-standard shelters are installed then all maintenance liabilities rest with the Town or District Council.

Quality

Bus stop shelters were cited at the Vision Day as features that detract from the amenity of the High Street. It is not hard to understand why as their appearance could reasonably be described as 'shabby'. Much better designs, of higher quality materials and construction, are available and would seem more appropriate in a prime location such as Newmarket High Street. It is also the case that the existing shelters restrict pedestrian movement and there may be better locations where the pavement is wider.

Relocation of Long Distance Bus Stops

Long distance bus/coach services do not serve the High Street and should be relocated to the Bus Station at the Guineas Shopping Centre. This would free up the space used for lay-bys (while removing the associated road paint) and the restricted width of footpath behind bus shelters. This may add to the timetable of these services which would then be re-routed to Rowley Drive but they would also have a better links to other local bus services.



Buses can help to control the speed of cars at peak times by preventing overtaking. Bus laybys should only be used where a stationary bus would otherwise create a significant safety problem.

MfS



Bus stops should high-quality places that are safe and comfortable and highly accessible by all.

MfS

20 MARKET : DISCUSSION

Existing Market

A market takes place on Saturdays and Tuesdays in The Guineas car park on Wellington Street. The number of stalls has been in decline in recent years and now comprises about 10 stalls on Saturdays. Initiatives to raise the profile of the market, such as crafts markets, music events and children’s activities have been trialled however they have not resulted in increased sales or footfall. The market is not considered to be thriving in its present configuration and may not be viable in the longer term without a plan to revive interest. It is not easily accessible and relocation to a more prominent site such as the High Street would help raise its profile.



RELOCATION OF MARKET TO THE HIGH STREET: PROPOSED STALL LOCATIONS

Proposed Market

A working group, consulting with some stakeholders, explored options including the location of some 20 stalls of 2-3m squared could be placed on the south side of the High Street, facing shops and backing on to loading bays. The possible location of stalls is shown on the plan below. These locations are necessarily based on the existing street layout but the plan below shows how these locations would relate to the proposed redesign of the High Street. It is envisaged that with some reconfiguration market stalls could be successfully accommodated in any redesign of the High Street.

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