

# EPSOM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

NOVEMBER 2023

**CONSULTATION DRAFT**





## ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION

This draft Town Centre Masterplan is available for public consultation for a period of four weeks between midday on Friday 24 November 2023 and midnight on Friday 22 December 2023.

You can find out how to respond to the consultation online by visiting the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council website: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk> or for those without access to the internet, hard copies of the document are available to view at the town hall and the borough's libraries during opening hours.

There are a series of consultation questions. The best way to submit your response is by using the Councils online consultation portal: <https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/ETCMP/>.

If you are having difficulty registering to use the portal, please contact a member of the Epsom and Ewell Planning Policy Team using the email below.

Alternatively, a questionnaire can be downloaded from the Epsom and Ewell website, collected from the Town Hall reception during opening hours or requested by phone and completed and sent to:

- By email: [localplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)
- By writing to: Planning Policy, The Old Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom KT18 5BY

Please note that the council will not accept anonymous, abusive or defamatory comments.

The comments received during this consultation cannot be treated as confidential so please do not include any personal information within your comments. Responses will be published on the council's consultation portal, together with the name and/or organisation name of the respondent.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION & VISION

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE MASTERPLAN

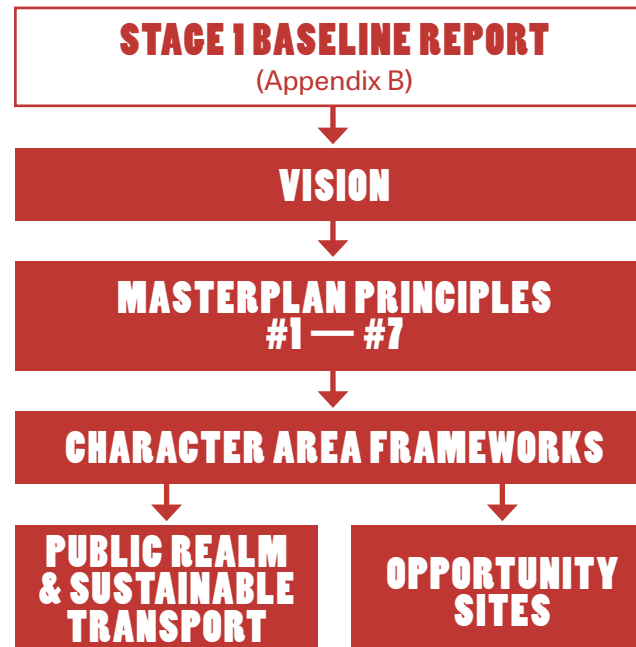
- I.1** Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has committed to preparing an Epsom Town Centre Masterplan to set out the vision for the Town Centre up to the year 2040, and to provide a framework of development principles to help guide decisions within Epsom Town Centre. The Epsom Town Centre Masterplan (the 'Masterplan') will function as key evidence to inform EEBC's Local Plan (2022—2040) by identifying development options for specific Epsom Town Centre sites and outlining how the wider Town Centre could be improved through a focused approach to placemaking.
- I.2** Epsom Town Centre is a characterful and popular destination for local residents, and benefits from many important assets which can provide a foundation for future regeneration. The town centre is busy, with activity taking place within an attractive heritage setting. Landlords, including the Ashley Centre, work hard to ensure units are occupied and the mix of independent and multiple retailers, along with regular markets, continues to attract shoppers despite the draw of online shopping and competing destinations. Nonetheless, the town centre faces some inherent challenges in the period ahead, and EEBC will work to implement the Masterplan, through either direct intervention or by working closely with key partners, stakeholders and other landowners to deliver improvements. Our aim, in summary, is to ensure the continued vibrancy and viability of the town centre as a key service centre for the growing borough.

- 1.3** Regeneration and improvement will take place within the context of accelerating climate change which is forcing us to reconsider how we approach the use of land and the built environment. Additionally, the legacy of COVID-19 means changes to working patterns, lifestyles and the demand for good-quality open spaces are unlikely to abate for the foreseeable future.
- 1.4** EEBC committed to their [Climate Change Action Plan](#) in 2020, which involved setting an ambitious target of securing carbon neutrality by 2035. This 4-year plan relies on a range of measures to help reduce the Council's own emissions as well as promoting good practice throughout the borough. This commitment is a cornerstone of the Town Centre Masterplan.
- 1.5** The Consultation Draft Masterplan has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA) on behalf of EEBC. Transport and mobility inputs have been addressed by Latcham. Several work stages have been completed as part of the masterplanning process:
- **Stage 1 Baseline Report** – background analysis of the local context.
  - **Stage 2 Engagement Strategy** – creation of consultation materials and initial studies.
  - **Stage 3a Engagement** – hybrid (digital and in-person) public consultation held in summer / autumn 2022, collation and interpretation of responses.
  - **Stage 4 Masterplan Design Evolution** – technical and landscape-led design iterations and draft Masterplan report.
  - **Stage 3b** – landowner and elected member workshops, and engagement with the local highway authority.
  - **Stage 5** – Draft Town Centre Masterplan.
- 1.6** This report sets out clear and comprehensive guiding principles for development of the Epsom Town Centre, centred around a holistic Masterplan, to address:
- the parameters for development of the key sites (the Ashley Centre/Global House, Southern Gas Network/Hook Road site, Depot Road car park, and the Town Hall/Hope Lodge car park and Epsom Ambulance Depot site);
  - the placemaking objectives that would support the development of key sites;
  - environmental and travel improvements to the town centre that could be facilitated through development proposals (through development itself, CIL and S106); and
  - key principles for retention, enhancement, or repair of those parts of the town centre that would not be subject to major development proposals
- 1.7** This Masterplan report should be taken in its entirety. It is intended to guide and assist in the planning, design and delivery of change within the town centre by establishing a vision and a common set of principles, along with site specific recommendations. Development proposals should respond positively to each of these to achieve consistency and cohesion across the centre.

- 1.8** *The Vision* captures the overall development strategy and long-term intentions for the Epsom Town Centre, as reflected in the Masterplan, in order to enable the sustainable development of new homes and of a thriving retail and business environment, bolstered by an enhanced cultural and recreational offer.
- 1.9** Seven *Masterplan Principles* (**Section 1.0**) expand on the Vision by articulating the guiding principles for future development, taking account of the local context and the increasing prevalence of environmental and sustainability agendas. The principles can be used to assess any future development proposals within the Epsom Town Centre.
- 1.10** The town centre area is divided into ten distinct Character Areas responding to place-based analyses of specific local characteristics and challenges. The *Character Area Frameworks* (**Section 3.0**) describe the principal strategic development opportunities and strategies for each respective Area to enhance its functionality and distinctiveness.
- 1.11** Studies and guidance for individual sites is provided in two forms – *Public Realm* (**Section 4.0**) and *Opportunity Sites* (**Section 5.0**). *Public Realm* covers the integrated landscape- and transport-led strategies to augment public experience of the town

centre. The latter section comprises capacity studies for each Town Centre Opportunity Site, with optioneered designs for future development.

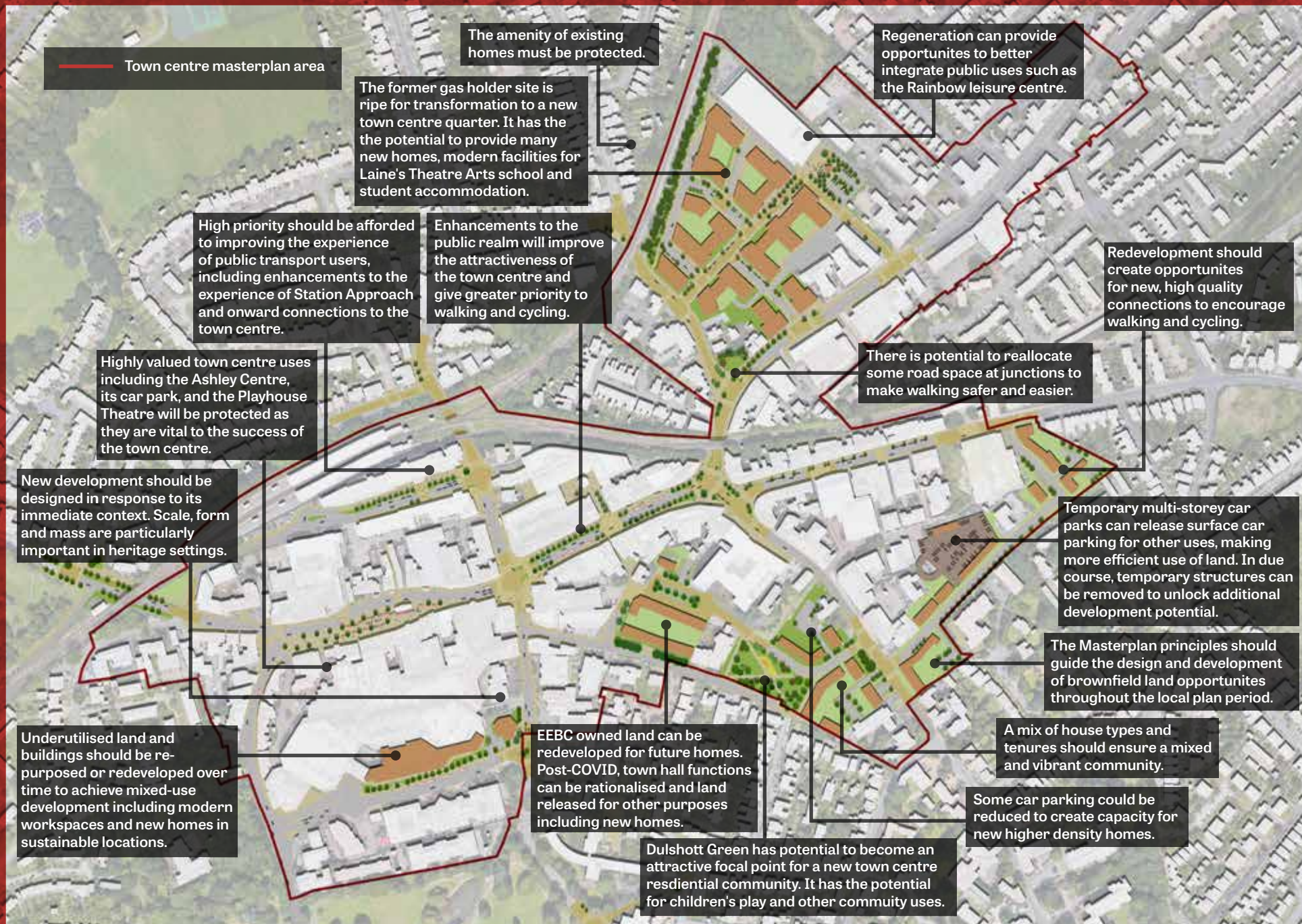
- 1.12** The Stage 1 Baseline Report forms the background document for this Masterplan and provides the contextual details and considerations underpinning this document's proposals. The Stage 1 Baseline Report can be found at Appendix B should be read in conjunction with this Masterplan.



## VISION STATEMENT & COMPREHENSIVE MASTERPLAN

- 1.13** Epsom Town Centre will be a place that attracts, connects and inspires people, with a strong sense of community, commerce and creativity.
- 1.14** In Epsom's town centre buildings, activities and users will be brought together through public realm improvements which will to create a distinctive sense of place as a backdrop to public life.
- 1.15** The town centre will realise its potential to deliver an optimum level of housing and social infrastructure alongside enhancements to the built, historic and natural environments.
- 1.16** 1Green infrastructure and good active travel connections will help to prioritise sustainable and accessible links both within the town centre and with the wider Epsom.
- 1.17** Changes to Epsom Town Centre will reinforce efforts to combat the Climate Emergency through a comprehensive approach to transport, low carbon development, green infrastructure and human health.





# THE MASTERPLAN

Figure 1: Epsom Town Centre Masterplan



## MASTERPLAN PRINCIPLES

**PRINCIPLE #1** Adopt a context-led design approach to guide the development, regeneration and repair of the town centre. Having particular regard to the impact of building heights, building design, materials and land uses will ensure new development contributes to an improvement in the quality of the town centre. Pursue mainly low- and mid-rise, high-density housing which afford excellent levels of residential amenity and complement the character of the town centre whilst using land efficiently. Justify proposals for taller buildings using heritage and townscape impact assessments, and ensure tall buildings are positioned where they can make a meaningful contribution to townscape and placemaking, without undermining current residential amenity.



**PRINCIPLE #2** Ensure development maximises opportunities to connect and enliven streets and spaces to create the conditions for vitality and liveability. Design so that people can delight in their surroundings, with enhanced public realm as the setting for the life of the town centre. New development should positively address public streets and spaces, with frequent entrances and overlooking of the public realm.



**PRINCIPLE #3** Aim to deliver diverse and vibrant communities. Plan and design for an evolving demographic and socio-economic context, recognising trends and challenges in the housing, employment, retail and leisure markets. Delivering flexible spaces that can be easily repurposed over time, or cater for homeworking, or can be adapted for later-living will ensure their longevity and reduce future carbon.



**PRINCIPLE #4** Give priority to pedestrians and cyclists in order to better balance movement within the town centre and to transform Epsom's arrival experience. The Masterplan will support the transition towards zero-carbon transport, recognising that for the time being, some car access will be necessary, but this should not be to the detriment of the growth in walking and cycling.

**PRINCIPLE #5** 'Green' the town centre and to create climatically comfortable, clean and attractive streets and spaces. Properly considered landscape schemes should form part of development proposals, demonstrating how planting and surface treatment has considered the needs and health of people, nature and climate change.

**PRINCIPLE #6** Utilise land under Council control to actively drive regeneration to meet the needs of all residents of the Borough over the life of the Plan period and beyond. Ensure all EEBC service delivery is aligned to promote the attractiveness and regeneration of the town centre. Seize the opportunity to demonstrate how the Masterplan principles should be applied by delivering exemplar, affordable and sustainable schemes.

**PRINCIPLE #7** Deliver a zero-carbon ready town centre, and ensure buildings are constructed to a standard that can be easily adapted to meet the requirements of zero carbon. Adopt a fabric-first approach to ensure homes are warm in winter and cool in summer, as well as being energy and water efficient.





# 2 MASTERPLAN EVOLUTION



Figure 2: Masterplan Area and Opportunity Sites

- 2.1** This section provides an overview of the considerations behind the Masterplan's evolution.

## MASTERPLAN AREA AND OPPORTUNITY SITES

- 2.2** As illustrated in figure 2 the Masterplan Area encapsulates key areas that define Epsom's town centre. Specifically, the redline boundary includes sites in and around the High Street / Market Square, East Street / Hook Road and Upper High Street, extending on to the train station and the Town Hall / Depot Road.



**2.3** The Masterplan Area also includes a number of Opportunity Sites. These sites were initially identified through a call-for-sites exercise led by EEBC but have since been subject to further discussions with the respective landowners where possible as part of the masterplanning process. These discussions, coupled with various technical studies of site capacity and development potential, enabled the selection and Local Plan allocation of the following opportunity sites in order to deliver at least 1,070 new homes over the plan period:



**Ashley Centre & Global House** – creating opportunities to retain and enhance this popular attraction, being mindful of heritage sensitivities intrinsic to this town centre location, whilst realising the potential for new town centre homes.



**Town Hall** – unifying the current Town Hall, Hope Lodge and Epsom Clinic to create a new residential area centred around the high quality Dullshot Green.



**Hook Road Car Park & the Southern Gas Network site** – consolidating the Hook Road Car Park, former Southern Gas Network site and the Laines Theatre Arts ('LTA') school into a mixed-use development that responds to housing need and enlivens East Street.



**Depot Road** – making more efficient use of well located town centre land by re-providing existing car parking in a decked structure, releasing land for new homes.

## BASELINE ANALYSIS

**24** The Stage 1 Baseline Report examines the historical growth and current uses and composition of Epsom's town centre in addition to the future town centre trends post-pandemic. The Baseline Report identified thematic implications for the Masterplan, summarised here, which in turn informed the Masterplan Principles and Masterplan recommendations.

### Heritage & Building Heights

- 25** The structure of the town centre has proved adaptable to change over time. Even where architectural responses have detracted from the overall character, the town centre is still recognisable. Many historic buildings remain, and there are areas where the traditional fine-grained pattern of development remains strong.
- 26** In response to prevailing development pressure, which includes pressure to build upwards, it is critical for the Masterplan to consider whether the potential exists for taller buildings in and around the town centre without consequent detrimental impacts on the immediate surrounds, including recognised heritage assets.
- 27** Therefore, a heritage and townscape view analysis has informed the options for some of the opportunity sites where some scope for increased height has been proposed by site promoters. The priority of the Masterplan is to ensure a context led approach (Principle #1), which safeguards the historic environment and the townscape character of the town centre, without overly constraining reasonable opportunities for height where they exist. This comprises appropriate responses to scale and massing and rational consideration of the role of taller buildings in placemaking and townscape quality. This does not negate the need for future development proposals from undertaking the relevant impact assessments, but rather acts as a further level of refinement to inform the Masterplan and the site options.



Many historic buildings remain, and there are areas where the traditional fine-grained pattern of development remains strong



### Current Land Use and Activity

- 2.8** In general terms, land in Epsom has been used efficiently, with infilling of blocks and land parcels adding to the intensity of the town centre.
- 2.9** The Masterplan needs to identify and create opportunities to deliver a more diverse mix of uses in the town centre. In considering what might be appropriate, regard should be had to post pandemic trends including increased home working, as well as changes in the way people shop and spend their leisure time (Principle #3). Further, the Masterplan should look to capitalise on the town's specialist uses to distinguish Epsom from competing locations. The planned expansion of the University for the Creative Arts ('UCA') for example brings with it an opportunity to develop the creative economy.
- 2.10** To maintain a healthy retail offer, the Masterplan should also identify those locations where retail should be prioritised. Beyond the core area, additional residential development can help to support the vibrancy of the town centre. Ensuring high standards of residential amenity is likely to be key to the success of this approach.



UCA Business School

## Active Fronts and Building Entrances

**2.11** The nature and design of the built form is crucial to the future success of the town centre. The Masterplan should include a general presumption towards continuous active frontages (Principle #2), where visual and physical interaction between the inside of the building and the public street can be maintained. In addition, the Masterplan should identify future destinations where concentrations of activity will help to bring new life to the Town Centre. Here, particular regard should be given to achieving the right mix of uses within a flexible built form which can support varied activity (Principle #3).



Animated street scene on the High Street



## Public Realm, Connectivity and Green Infrastructure

**2.12** Highway interventions in the 1950's to accommodate traffic contributed to the loss of some historic fabric and paved the way for a car dominated environment, to the detriment of the pedestrian experience. Nevertheless, the Town Centre remains mostly compact and walkable. Further, the Town Centre has grown towards the station, but links between the two are weak. Recent development has failed to secure better connectivity.

**2.13** The Town Centre Masterplan is a once in a generation opportunity to establish a deliverable ambition to improve the public realm (Principle #2). This can bring wide reaching benefits, and it will be crucial to understand both what makes a good space and how any planned improvements can be achieved.

**2.14** From research carried out by the Project for Public Spaces<sup>1</sup> on measurable factors that make a great place, it is evident that 'uses and activities' (i.e. shopping, working, living) count for only a small part of what makes a place successful. Consideration also needs to be given to sociability, access and linkages, and comfort and image.

**2.15** Public realm enhancement schemes, when designed sensitively and delivered effectively, can have a transformational impact on the attractiveness of a place and the opportunity for new activities and public life. It stands to reason that places that are perceived to be attractive generate increased footfall, and this in turn increases their attractiveness. The Masterplan should place an emphasis on the importance of good design, on 'quality over quantity' and the need for a tenacious approach.

**2.16** Opportunities to improve connections should be identified in the Masterplan. For the opportunity sites, the Masterplan will need to attentively demonstrate how people will access and move through those areas, and where the wider town centre connectivity can be enhanced through the design of these areas. New connections should be safe, attractive and lined with active fronts. To be meaningful, they should connect to the next area (i.e. they should not function as dead ends), and the design should be legible for pedestrians to recognise that onward connectivity is possible.

**2.17** Finally, the Masterplan can identify opportunities to introduce street trees, green areas and other green infrastructure features. To improve amenity for new residents, it will be desirable to provide opportunities which mirror those available in residential locations, for example: opportunities for green circular walks that promote exercise and dog walking, and places of calm for relaxation.

<sup>1</sup> a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping cities improve their public spaces for the community's benefit

## Public Ownership & Role of the Council

**2.18** In order for the Masterplan to be effective in its role, support for the town centre vision will need to be entrenched within EEBC since delivering the Masterplan will cut across several service areas (Principle #6).

**2.19** It may be helpful for EEBC to regard itself as a 'proactive curator' of the town centre, having regard to a range of factors that can influence future outcomes. In particular, ensuring visitors' experience of the town centre is a positive one will help the centre's continued use and vibrancy. This overlaps with, but goes beyond, the need to enhance the public realm to include initiatives from rigorous street cleansing regimes to initiatives to bring that public realm alive with events and entertainment. This will all help to drive footfall, which in turn will support local businesses.

**2.20** In addition, close collaboration with Surrey County Council will be needed to ensure a joined-up approach. The county council employs officers responsible for a place based approach to service delivery, which should ensure that the collaborative approach is effective.

## Town Centre Trends & Development Viability

**2.21** While the pandemic did exacerbate the decline of some aspects of town centre economies, it also shone a light on the trends and characteristics that made town centres / high streets vibrant, attractive, healthy and perhaps most importantly, resilient. Epsom's town centre seems to have admirably weathered the pandemic storm, but its continued resilience can only be secured by anticipating and responding to changing market trends (Principle #3).

**2.22** Pre-pandemic, 'successful' town centres relied on a high share of office workers within a wide and affluent catchment area. However, it is now abundantly clear that low footfall levels and consumer spending power cannot sustain high street amenities in the long term and, as such, town centres should diversify their offer from exclusively retail/food/drink consumption towards being places of production. Establishing town centres as attractive and viable spaces for entrepreneurship and investment is key to ensuring that the demand for high street retailers will follow.

**2.23** Research<sup>2</sup> by Centre for Cities highlights an important distinction inadvertently made by the pandemic that the performance of the high street reflects the wider economic strength of the town centre, but it does not drive it. Therefore, it is prudent to consider means to holistically strengthen the town centre economy in order to:

- facilitate opportunities for highly skilled, highly paid jobs in the town centre and intensify income generation (including by providing the 'right' variety of commercial and residential spaces);
- respond more acutely to changing customer demands (town centres must be able to adapt and to provide a unique experience); and
- support mental and physical health of residents and visitors (enhanced access to nature, support for cycle and walking, expanding public transport etc.).

**2.24** EEBC's updated Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (2021) underscores that the overall strategy for Epsom is not one of growth but of consolidation. This assessment also makes specific recommendations for the Epsom Town Centre, as detailed in the Stage 1 Baseline Report.

<sup>2</sup> Cities-Outlook-2022-2.pdf (centreforcities.org)

## STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**2.25** EEBC's recent Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA, January 2023) also highlights that the demand for future employment floorspace will be influenced by the post pandemic working patterns and the latest changes to the Use Class Order. The HEDNA identifies industry sectors that are considered most likely to adopt permanent homeworking (including education and entertainment), noting that the quantum of demand for office spaces could remain unchanged. The type of demand could change, however, towards more flexible and interaction led spaces. The effects of Use Class E, and associated permitted changes of use, on the employment areas remains unclear at this stage.

**2.26** The Masterplan should also be mindful of development viability, particularly in light of uncertainty in the UK's property market caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the worsening cost of living crisis and the wider macroeconomic effects of the Russia-Ukraine war (e.g. supply chain shortages). The data reviewed for Epsom indicates a strong sales and rental market overall, but with weakening demand for flats. This may reflect the nature of the stock on offer but supports a trend where the demand for flats is less certain than that for houses. It is also worthwhile considering the role that students play in the rental market, where demand is highest during term time and lowest over the summer period.

**2.27** Public engagement played an integral role in the development of the Masterplan proposals. A Hybrid consultation strategy was developed to invite local residents' views on the initial proposals both at an in-person consultation in the Ashley Centre and on a virtual platform. This consultation was undertaken between 25 July and 31 August 2022 and a total of 1,979 unique responses were received.

“Epsom town centre is fundamentally flawed as it is treated as an arterial route into London. The high street is essentially just a dual carriageway with frequent speeding traffic and pedestrian unfriendly junctions. Despite the wide roads, cycling infrastructure is limited to bike gutters, where it exists at all.”

“Please **do something** as Epsom could be amazing.”

“This is good, first time I've been asked for my opinion. We moved to Epsom because of the town centre and transport links. It's a lovely town but needs to **fight to stay relevant** with online shops.”

**2.28** All in all, the responses highlighted local residents' interests, attachments and aspirations for the Epsom Town Centre. However, it also uncovered some inconsistent sentiments which the Masterplan sought to thoughtfully address in order to deliver a suitably ambitious and practical framework for managing change over the local plan period. The responses and masterplanning reflections are summarised below.



Public engagement played an integral role in the development of the Masterplan proposals – members of the public viewing the in-person display in the Ashley Centre

## Economic Development & New Homes

- 2.29** Epsom's Town Centre is not, generally, considered a 'destination' for employment, education or tourism. This may be explained by the fact that currently these uses have a limited profile within the heart of the Town Centre (LTA, UCA and the Epsom racecourse are all in relatively peripheral locations). However, there is support for a growing university presence, and employment / business uses are identified as appropriate uses at the Southern Gas Network / Hook Road and the Town Hall / Depot Road opportunity sites. This indicates support for a greater variety of activities within the Town Centre.
- 2.30** The delivery of more housing within Epsom Town Centre is not widely supported, although there appears to be a local partiality for standard (family) rather than student / later living forms.
- 2.31** However, given the support expressed in response to the consultation for 'a growing university presence' and the stated aspiration of both LTA and UCA to grow their current student numbers, the practical matter of ensuring those additional students are appropriately housed must be tackled. To not seek to provide student accommodation would have a disruptive impact on the housing market, with a potential increase in family homes being given over to student rentals, bringing new pressures to housing affordability and availability within the district.

- 2.32** In addition, an increase in student numbers indicates a related increase in teaching staff, many of whom might aspire to live within the borough (indeed this is desirable to reduce commuting). These factors highlight the inextricable links between economic growth and housing provision, and if Epsom Town Centre is to develop its education and employment base, additional housing is a necessary pre-requisite. Therefore, while there appears to be a general reluctance to housing, and student housing in particular, the Masterplan needs to test options for its delivery, nonetheless.

## Retail and Commercial Activity

- 2.33** Epsom is seemingly very well regarded and well used, primarily for its convenient retail offer and access. This indicates that the Masterplan should look to measures that will support the continued resilience of shopping opportunities, particularly considering the shift towards more online shopping. The lack of local support for a balance between chain and independent stores is difficult to explain, as a broad-based retail offer with greater amounts of choice and variety will add to the resilience of the town centre.
- 2.34** Epsom's outdoor markets, and its evening economy, support the appeal of the town centre now. In the future, local residents expressed a strong desire for more evening activities, again suggesting more diversity of uses would help to attract more interest and custom.

- 2.35** In terms of the opportunity sites, enhancing the Ashley Centre, and its current offer, is generally preferred over any wholesale redevelopment whereas redevelopment (to varying extent) is seemingly accepted on all other opportunity sites.

## Environmental Quality

- 2.36** Current green spaces and heritage assets are valued, and Epsom is regarded as a safe and welcoming place. In the future, additional (integrated) green infrastructure and measures to help combat climate change, including more recycling opportunities, would be supported. Epsom Town Centre should be clean and safe.
- 2.37** Respondents would not like to see taller buildings in and around the High Street but may accept the principle of such development at East Street. This indicates that there is an underlying desire to retain the character of the heart of the town centre, but potentially some flexibility beyond for a more contemporary built form. Accordingly, the Masterplan sought to test options which align with this set of preferences, being mindful of the potential impact of those options on conservation areas and listed buildings.



## Access & Movement

- 2.38** Vehicular (e.g. car) travel to the town centre is popular, and car parking is valued by visitors. However, there is also a large group of people who walk to the town centre, indicating that routes between residential areas and the centre are conducive to more sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.39** In the future, respondents would like to see the existing car parking retained, particularly at the Ashley Centre. However, they would also aspire to have a town centre which is inclusive and gives priority to pedestrians.
- 2.40** To realise these aspirations, the Masterplan examined opportunities to retain good levels of car parking acknowledging that, for the plan period, many visitors will likely arrive by car. However, it also considered ways in which greater priority can be given to pedestrians, which chimes well with other stated aspirations for a clean, safe and green town centre, and points to possible streetscape enhancements to deliver these outcomes in a coordinated manner. These aspirations are consistent with future sustainable transport outcomes.

## Councillor Workshop

- 2.41** EEBC Councillors were also invited to comment on the initial ideas during a dedicated workshop in October 2022. Councillors discussed four relevant themes:
- **Town centre offer** – Councillors expressed support for increased diversification of the town centre offer including the evening economy and support for the growing student population. The market is recognised as very important to the town centre, with Councillors expressing a desire to do more to ensure its future attractiveness and success.
  - **Access & Movement** – Participating Councillors voiced agreement that improvements should support a better experience for pedestrians and cyclists, and opportunities for pedestrianisation should be examined. Barriers to pedestrian movement and better crossing points were seen as essential.
  - **Green & Open Spaces** – Councillors expressed a desire for a more cohesive landscape design approach to the town centre and indicated support for more events within public spaces.
  - **Opportunity Sites** – Councillors took a favourable view of mixed use development, stressing the importance of co-working opportunities, affordable housing, family homes and good design which responds positively to the character and heritage assets of the town centre.

## DESIGN RESPONSE

- 2.42** The Masterplan, therefore, considered the town centre as a whole when developing the integrated strategy for future development within the plan period, supported by place-based assessments and recommendations for identified component parts and/or Character Areas. This holistic consideration of the town centre means that the Masterplan places a crucial emphasis on the enriching the qualitative experience of the town centre, rather than merely focusing on the opportunity sites.

### Opportunities and Constraints

- 2.43** Combined, the aforementioned stages of research and analysis revealed the factors behind the success of Epsom Town Centre, but it also identified opportunities for future development (and where this is hindered by physical or market constraints). In order to provide effective place-based solutions to these challenges, the Masterplan identified distinct Character Areas and examined the role of the opportunity sites and public realm within that context.
- 2.44** These Character Areas (see **Section 3.0**) represented areas of the town centre with similar distinct attributes and local identity. Here, the Masterplan considered appropriate land uses, their distribution and the capacity of these areas to accommodate new uses, bearing in mind which uses could bolster footfall in specific locations.

**2.45** For the Opportunity Sites (**Section 5.0**), the masterplanning work endeavoured to explore their development potential by not only testing their capacity to accommodate a mix of uses, but also examining the sites' specific constraints and opportunities in greater detail. This helped generate a range of design configurations which, when weighed against each other, were used to inform the town centre policies for the emerging Local Plan.

### Heritage & Building Heights

**2.46** Building heights were an integral consideration for the Masterplan, given the potential impacts on sensitive heritage assets in Conservation Areas both within and around the town centre. To inform the Masterplan's recommendations on building heights, DLA carried out further heritage and townscape view analysis using three-dimensional modelling to assess the general appropriateness of certain building heights and massing for some of the individual opportunity sites. This assessment was not intended as a formal impact analysis but was used as a design tool to support the Masterplan principles and to inform the site-specific options.

**2.47** As detailed in **Appendix A**, this testing incorporated an element of townscape analysis to consider the impact of taller building heights at the 'Ashley Centre & Global House' and 'Hook Road & Southern Gas Network' sites, using a number of identified key viewpoints (figure 3).



Figure 3: 3D model viewpoints (Appendix A includes the view analysis used to inform the draft Masterplan)

**2.48** A 3D model enabled a better understanding of the existing and potentially changed views having regard to the following:

- **Existing views**

- » Quality, experience, type and condition of existing townscape;
- » Important groups of buildings with consistent architectural treatment;
- » Focal points;
- » Heritage assets and their settings;
- » Negative features – i.e. traffic, gap sites, poor townscape;
- » Type of view – i.e. short or longer view, filtered etc.; and
- » Sensitivity to change.

- **Proposed views**

- » Height, scale bulk and massing/compatibility with existing townscape;
- » Form and layout;
- » Permeability and legibility;
- » Removal of existing harmful elements;
- » Potential to enhance townscape character, public realm/landscape, active frontages etc.;
- » Impact on visual amenity – during the day and at night;
- » Prominence, who will experience the development; and
- » Impact on setting of heritage assets.

**2.49** The 'as proposed' model used for assessment purposes only provides an indication of the height, scale, form and massing of potential development schemes but does not go as far as providing full architectural details (e.g. materials, façade treatments, fenestration, etc). This information is crucial when considering the acceptability of a tall building and should be provided in planning applications for such development. A taller building of high architectural quality may have less impact than a lower but less refined building.

**2.50** DLA has not undertaken any detailed technical studies for town centre development schemes in respect of their potential impacts on night time illumination, daylight and sunlight, wind, and microclimate in general. This will need to be prepared in support of any future planning application submitted for any of the respective town centre sites.

### Public Realm & Parking Strategy

**2.51** To achieve an uplifting, welcoming and attractive setting for the town centre, it is critical to ensure a cohesive scheme of public realm improvements could be secured throughout the Masterplan Area (see **Section 4.0**). Key considerations include:

- Future connectivity, with particular regard to structuring development and encouraging

footfall, and creating a safe and attractive environment;

- Sustainable travel, particularly Active Travel;
- Active fronts, including new development and repair of the existing built fabric;
- Key nodes and gateways; and
- Scope for new landmarks and other measures to improve legibility.

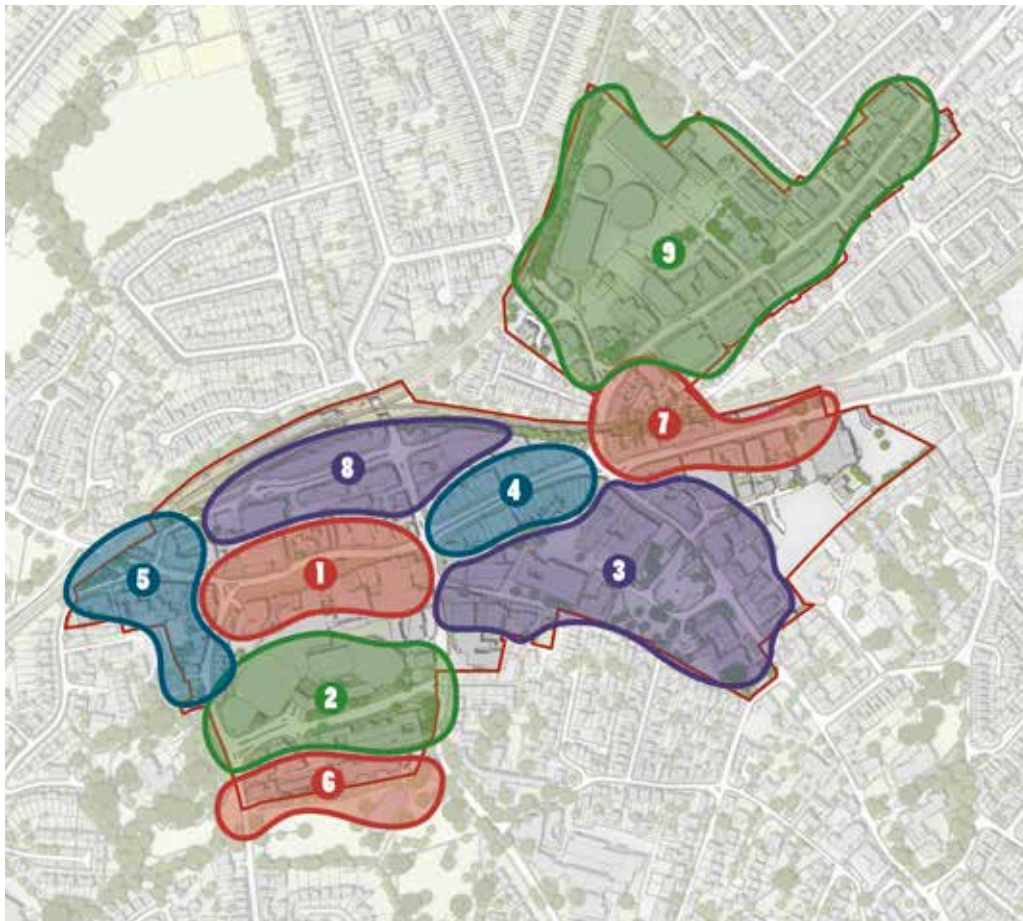
**2.52** Delivering these objectives requires a better understanding of the current highway function within the Town Centre, recognising the critical role of the A24 within the wider conurbation, and recognising that accommodating through traffic will continue to be essential for the duration of the plan period. In this context, engagement with Surrey County Council as the Local Highway Authority formed part of the masterplanning process.

**2.53** As a starting point for discussions, all parties support the principles of central government's approach to decarbonising transport and increasing the number of journeys made by active travel and public transport. To deliver this within Epsom, sustainable transport, public car parking and public realm are addressed together so that the Masterplan adopts a joined-up approach, capable of delivering the objectives and desires of local residents and councillors. This work is presented in **Section 4.0**.



# 3 CHARACTER AREAS FRAMEWORKS

- 3.1 This Section considers the existing character and development potential of each of Character Area, as defined/refined from the Stage 1 Baseline Report. Figure 4 depicts the location of the Areas. Where the opportunity to redevelop land is evident through the Local Plan 'call for sites' Framework Plans have been prepared to illustrate this (Market Square & Ashley Avenue, The Parade & Church Street, Upper High Street and Depot Road Car Park, and Hook Road, East Street and former gas works). Reference should also be made to Section 4 of this report, which explores the potential for public realm enhancements.



- 1 Market Square
- 2 Ashley Avenue
- 3 The Parade & Church Street
- 4 High Street East
- 5 West Street
- 6 Rosebery Park Edge
- 7 Upper High Street and Depot Road car park
- 8 Station Approach
- 9 Hook Road, East Street and former gas works

Figure 4: Overview map of the nine townscape analysis character areas



# 1 MARKET SQUARE

## EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.2** The Market Square is a rich environment, framed by a historic building pattern with a consistent, strong, building line. The space has recently undergone public realm improvements that offer opportunities for spill out spaces, creating vibrancy and attracting visitors even on non-market days. At its heart is the clocktower, which as a local landmark anchors the Square and acts as a central marker for the town.
- 3.3** Building heights vary from 2–4 storeys, with red-brick facades that feature dormer windows and varied fenestrations. Later additions, such as the TK Maxx building, disrupt this continuation and historic quality and are incoherent and insensitive to the character area. Most detrimental is the A24 which severs the High Street, inhibiting pedestrian accessibility and compromising the attractive qualities of the Square.

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.4** There are no significant opportunity sites within the Market Square area, but it is probable that piecemeal change will occur during the plan period. This being the case, it is important to emphasise the role of the public realm in binding the component parts to maintain a sense of cohesion and enhance the historic character of this key area of the town centre. Proposals set out in Section 4 provide further guidance on this.





## 2 ASHLEY AVENUE

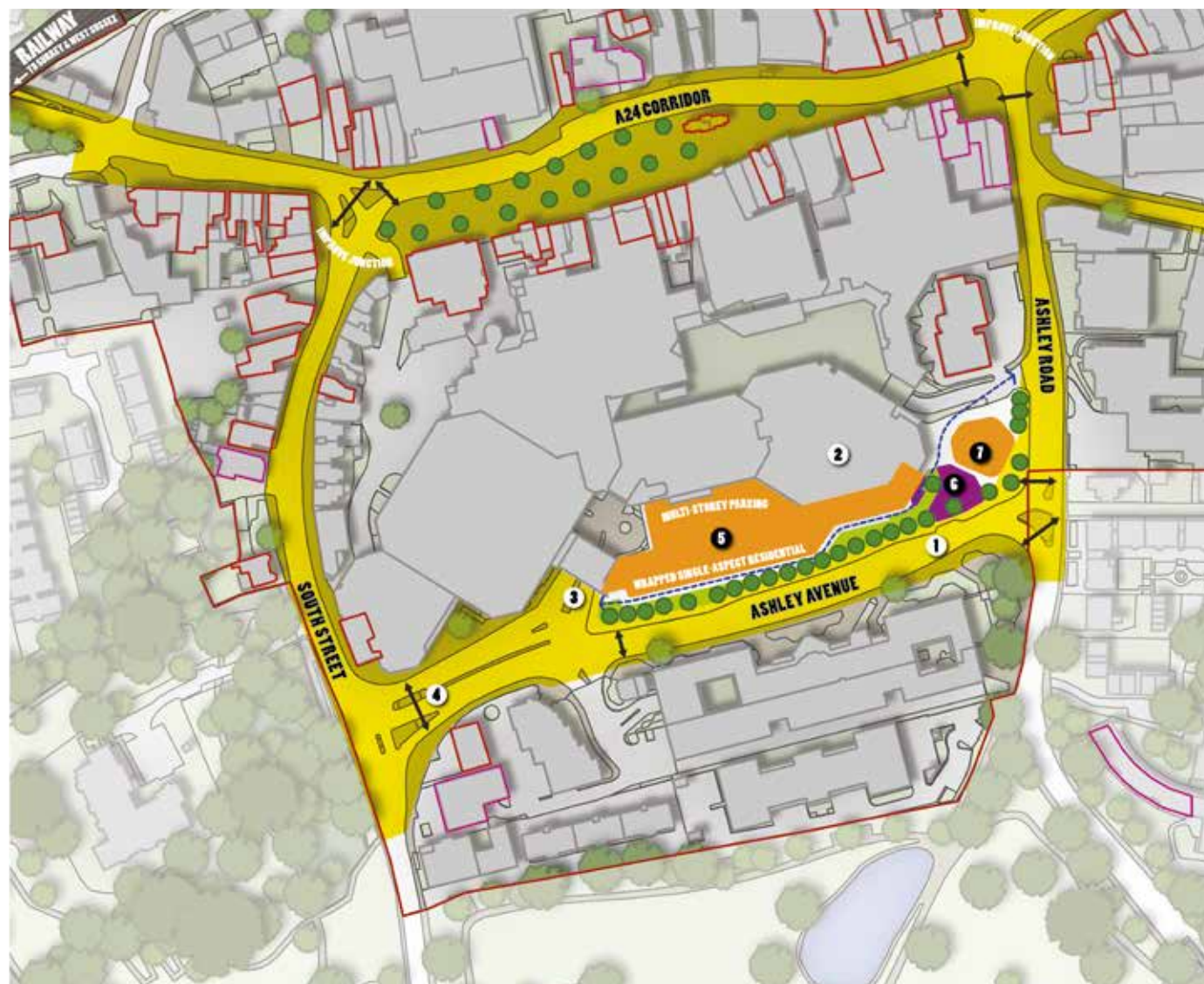
### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

**3.5** Despite being bounded by late 20th Century buildings that lack human scale and detailing, the pedestrian environment is lifted by mature tree planting and vegetation, and comfortable street proportions. The streetscape and architectural character of this street generates a vehicle dominated environment. There is little to attract or support pedestrian use, with little overlooking or activation of the street scene afforded by the buildings here.





## DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR MARKET SQUARE & ASHLEY AVENUE



- Improve street layout and public realm
- Railway
- Civic space
- Green verge
- Opportunity sites
- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- Improve pedestrian environment
- Mature trees to be retained
- Pedestrian crossings

### Existing Character

- 1** Congested, one-way loop around the town centre.
- 2** Large footprint multi-storey car park creates an unappealing frontage
- 3** Multi-storey car park access
- 4** Few pedestrian crossings

### Development Opportunities

- 5** New multi-storey car park, wrapped with single-aspect residences
- 6** Proposed civic space
- 7** Landmark structure at a gateway to the town centre.

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.6** There is scope here for some redevelopment of underutilised office space to create new homes within the heart of the town centre. Coupled with the public realm and highway improvements, Ashley Avenue has the potential to become an attractive place. Regard should be had to the height of new buildings, in particular their impact on the adjacent conservation area. These opportunities are explored further in Sections 4 and 5.

Figure 5: Market Square & Ashley Avenue Development Framework



## 3 THE PARADE & CHURCH STREET

### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.7** The Parade acts as an area of transition between the core Town Centre activities and the looser grained, greener residential areas. Buildings along this street are typically three-storeys tall, set back with defined boundaries, and accommodate civic and hotel uses. The relative bulk of the buildings is well mitigated by the pattern of fenestration and sense of overlooking.
- 3.8** Newer developments move away from the typical red brick facades of the town centre, adopting yellow brick and slate coloured roof tiles that appear out of character. Pedestrian footpaths get narrow in places, though this is mitigated by the street's quiet nature.



### DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK





**3.9** Church Street is a gateway to the town centre, yet the approach lacks a distinctive character, with a blend of large footprint buildings of moderate quality and historic buildings of domestic scale. Whilst the latter add pockets of interest, the area would benefit from improvement.

**3.10** Towards the town centre, the public realm is defined within a tight boundary of buildings, though the public space 'leaks' where surface car parks fragment the environment. The urban form relaxes southwards towards the greener, residential neighbourhoods.

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.11** Development here can play an active role in establishing a more seamless transition between the town centre and residential areas. More generally, public realm and highways enhancements should ensure that The Parade and Church Street are permeable, safe and attractive for pedestrian movement. EEBC own the Town Hall site and has expressed a possible intention to relocate to new Town Centre premises, more suited to their needs in the post-pandemic period. This will lead to the redevelopment or re-purposing of the Town Hall, and as such the Council as a landowner is well placed to help drive forward the future success of the town centre. These opportunities are explored in Section 5 (Town Hall, Hope Lodge Car Park, Epsom Clinic/Ambulance Depot sites). In general, development should enhance the residential setting and respect the local vernacular of building typologies and façades, recognising the opportunities presented by the currently underutilised Dullshot Green, and the redevelopment opportunities described above.

Figure 6: The Parade Development Framework



## 4 HIGH STREET EAST

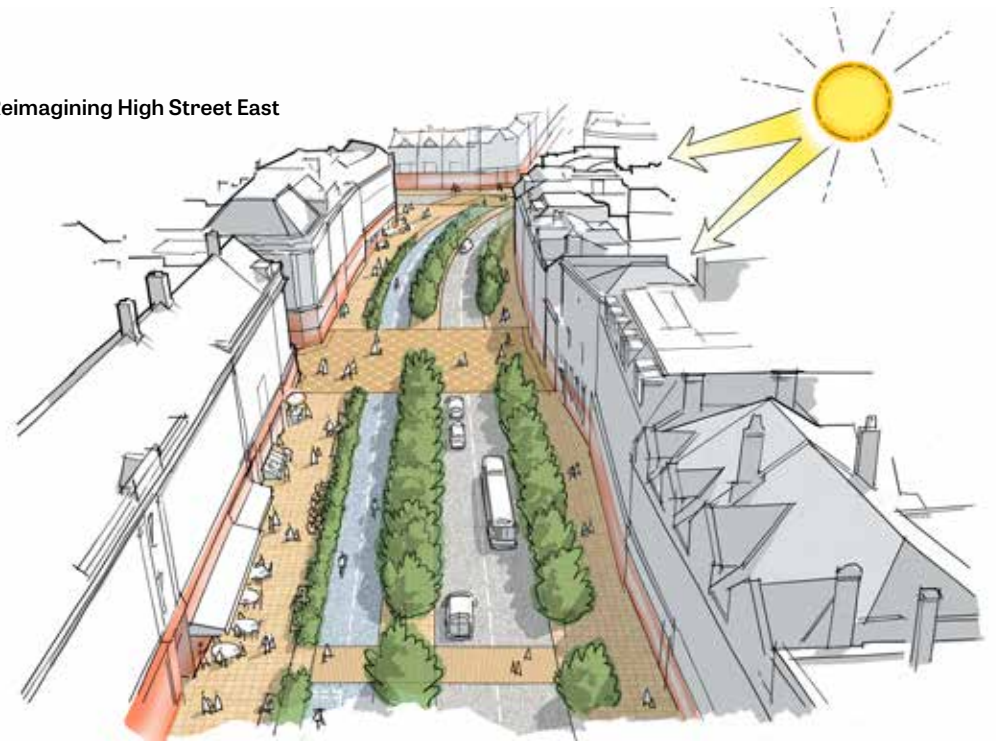
### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.12** Dominated by the A24, the eastern end of the High Street offers little incentive to dwell. The street is severed by the guardrails, traffic junctions and street clutter which reduces pedestrian accessibility, and produces an unattractive, cluttered public realm.
- 3.13** When compared to the Market Square, the buildings that line this street offer less visual interest, though the historic finer grain, particularly to the south, is well activated and clearly defines the street. To the north, the street is lined by a continuous building form dating from the 1950s. While the façade is repetitive, the building reinforces the sense of a well-proportioned street. The street has the potential to be substantially improved, to offer a better pedestrian experience and safer cycling.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- 3.14** Whilst there are no significant opportunity sites within High Street East, development here should focus on streetscape enhancements to improve the pedestrian and cycle experiences. This will likely entail wholesale re-evaluation of the public highway, removal of the guardrails and introduction of more frequent pedestrian crossings to support the 'spilling-out' of local activity. These ideas are explored further in Section 4 of this report.

Reimagining High Street East





## 5 WEST STREET

### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

**3.15** The railway bridge along West Street marks a gateway into the town centre, characterised by a blend of historic buildings, and bulky office buildings dating from the 1980s. The public realm is characterised by a car-orientated street design, with excessive street clutter and road markings detracting the qualities of the historic fabric.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.16** Development should embrace the gateway character of West Street through improvements to the public realm, in particular the South Street junction, whilst complementing the historic setting of the nearby conservation area. Attention should be given to the scale, height and massing of new buildings, avoiding any form which is unsympathetic to, or does not enhance the arrival experience or conservation area status.



## 6 ROSEBERY PARK EDGE

### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

**3.17** Development around Rosebery Park is largely domestic in character, with the exception of UCA. The northern edge, closest to the town centre, is bounded by mixed office and residential developments of 2–3½ storeys. It is hidden by mature trees which are the defining feature of the park edge.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.18** It will important for any development to create strong and active frontages overlooking Rosebery Park. Strengthening active travel connections along Ashley Road will be key to ensuring a well-connected and cohesive Town Centre.



## 7 UPPER HIGH STREET & DEPOT ROAD CAR PARK

### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.19** Upper High Street has a mix of architectural styles. Its northern edge is lined with distinct edwardian terraces, with ground-floor retail and upper-floor commercial and residential uses. The southern edge of the street features a mix of mid to late 20th century commercial buildings (including a popular cinema). These buildings are generally bulky, with large footprints and are 3 to 4 storeys tall.
- 3.20** Depot Road car park is overlooked by a mix of offices and flats. The street environment of the car park and Upper High Street has a poorer quality, with narrow footpaths, excess street clutter, and a sense of being 'back land'.













## DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



-  Improved street layout and public realm
-  Railway
-  Green space
-  Opportunity sites
-  Adjacent opportunity site
-  Listed buildings
-  Locally listed buildings
-  Residential area
-  New vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian throughroute.
-  Improved access
-  Mature trees to be retained
-  Pedestrian crossings

- Existing Character**
-  Large footprint buildings
  -  Site sits within a heritage context
  -  Busy street with no cycling provision.
  -  Residential area
  -  Underused Dullshot Green
- Development Opportunities**
-  New access route
  -  Reinforce the green buffer
  -  Existing street retained for access to a new multi-storey car park

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.21** Strategic development should seek to make more efficient use of this land to enliven the area and to enhance the wider setting. This area can play a pivotal role in linking town centre activity towards adjacent residential areas through an emphasis on good placemaking and well considered building design.

Figure 7: Upper High Street & Depot Road Car Park Development Framework



## 8 STATION APPROACH

### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

**3.22** The character of Station Approach contrasts with the town centre, being a much denser, busier and potentially hostile environment lacking in aesthetic quality. The street width to building height ratio is greater, with 5–7 storey buildings and no setbacks. Development here lacks architectural quality and disregards traditional materials. There is little here to suggest it is 'of Epsom'.

**3.23** With the railway station, the street is often busy with vehicles and taxis, while the pedestrian environment is hampered by a narrow central reservation, poor quality landscaping, and limited pedestrian accessibility.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.24** There is limited scope for significant built development here, but it is possible that ad hoc changes will occur during the plan period. The Masterplan priority here, and key to the success of Station Approach, will be creating a welcoming atmosphere and using the appropriate wayfinding and public realm enhancements to create a legible transition to the town centre.





Figure 8: Illustrative perspective of potential improvements to the public realm along Station Approach



## 9 HOOK ROAD, EAST STREET & FORMER GAS WORKS

### EXISTING AREA CHARACTER

- 3.25** Hook Road marks a transition between the town centre and adjoining residential neighbourhoods to the north-east. There is a mix of land-uses and activities along this street, small-scale offices, a multi-storey car park, and Laines Performing Arts School. At the corner between Hook Road and East Street are several listed buildings of sensitivity that contrast to the late 20th century redevelopment in its surroundings. Their setting is characterised by buildings of contrasting scale and by the large, vehicle dominated junction between Hook Road and East Street.
- 3.26** Development along East Street is characterised by large footplates that lack architectural and visual quality. Some have recently been converted to residential use, indicating the importance of achieving environmental improvements to better residential amenity. Currently, the street is dominated by vehicular movement, particularly during peak hours, creating a hostile pedestrian environment, and deterring bicycle use.
- 3.27** The redundant, industrial land of the former Gasworks sits between East Street and the railway. The site is run down, with two derelict gasholders adjacent to the newer Rainbow Leisure Centre, a popular local leisure facility in an unfortunate and unattractive setting. Hook Road car park is a large concrete structure; whilst it has usefully served as a commuter car park in the past, post pandemic, occupation rates have fallen, and it is an appropriate time to consider the future potential of this council owned land.





## DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



- Improved street layout and public realm
- Railway
- Civic space
- Green space
- Opportunity sites
- Adjacent opportunity site
- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- New vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian throughroute
- Secondary pedestrian and cycle connections
- Mature trees to be retained
- Street crossings

### Existing Character

- 1** Busy junction between East Street (A24) and Hook Road (B284)
- 2** Edge lined with low-rise, listed, buildings
- 3** Street fronted by large footprint office buildings, contrasting with the tight form of the nearby High Street
- 4** Unattractive leisure centre car park
- 5** Well-used mixed sporting facility, hidden from the primary street
- 6** Railway lines sever the town

### Development Opportunities

- 7** Potential for new civic spaces
- 8** Reinforcing the green buffer
- 9** Opportunity for convenient and direct access to the leisure centre
- 10** Greened car park and new square

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**3.28** The scale of the opportunity is such that a comprehensive plan should be explored to ensure the optimum regeneration benefit. As a substantial landowner, the council has an instrumental role to play in driving forward a high-quality scheme in partnership with other land owners.

**3.29** The role of the public realm will be critical to ensuring future development not only supports residential amenity but also provides permeable connections to the town centre.

Figure 9: Hook Road, East Street & former gas works Development Framework

# 4 PUBLIC REALM & SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



- 4.1 The public realm of any urban area is the canvas on which daily life occurs, accommodating a wide variety of activities and functions such as access and movement, trading, play, and social and community interaction.
- 4.2 The existing public realm within the Town Centre offers significant potential for improvement as part of a successful and vibrant future for Epsom, characterised by excellent opportunities for Active Travel as the town transitions towards a lower-carbon future.



## EXISTING PUBLIC REALM

- 4.3** The existing town centre public realm exhibits characteristics of the historic built fabric of Epsom, pieced together with more contemporary areas. The quality varies across the Town Centre with some areas such as the High Street's Market Square having received relatively recent investment and refurbishment whilst other areas, such as Upper High Street, appear to have remained unchanged for some time.
- 4.4** The Town Centre is generally a car-dominated environment typified by narrow footways, wide vehicular carriageways, convoluted pedestrian crossings and a general lack of planting and tree cover.
- 4.5** There is a lack of definition to the points of arrival into the Town Centre, including at West Street, Waterloo Road, Hook Road and Church Street. This poor sense of arrival also applies to the train station which is visually cut-off from the Town Centre.
- 4.6** Good quality connected cycling infrastructure (e.g. designated cycle lanes, secure bicycle parking) is also noticeably lacking, albeit that the Town Centre is generally considered 'cyclable' in terms of distances. Pedestrian movements along certain routes are impeded by vehicles parked on already narrow walkways (e.g. refuse trucks / delivery mopeds).

- 4.7** Whilst reasonably vibrant and attractive during the day, the Town Centre has a distinct lack of activity for all ages to support a successful night-time economy. This could be attributed in part to the retail focus of the Town Centre and insufficient security along key routes.



## PUBLIC REALM OBJECTIVES

**4.8** As highlighted in the Masterplan's Vision and Principles, it is the intention to enrich the Town Centre so that it is a safe, comfortable and greener environment, which prioritises Active Travel and enlivens the streets from day to night. This can be achieved through the following measures.

### Safe and Comfortable Environment

- 4.9** To safeguard universal accessibility, the Town Centre will be welcoming during the day and at night. This will be facilitated through:
- the creation of well-overlooked streets and spaces which are also well-lit after dark;
  - the incorporation of seating opportunities at regular intervals;
  - cleanliness and good standards of maintenance and repair;
  - the provision of generous pedestrian crossings; and
  - climatic comfort.

### Greener Town Centre

**4.10** There are opportunities for increasing the level of tree canopy cover through new planting in streets and spaces within the Town Centre to bring about aesthetic improvements as well as air quality and biodiversity enhancements and mitigation for the urban heat island effect.

**4.11** Increased planting within the Town Centre can also provide visual amenity and boost mental health. Such improvements to the Town Centre quality can help to increase the number of people visiting and using the town centre and encourage walking and cycling as a means of arriving there.

**4.12** The narrowing of current vehicular carriageways presents the opportunity to reclaim spaces as part of the public realm to create new areas of planting.





### Reprioritised Movement

- 4.13 The Masterplan supports the redistribution of space within the streets to improve the quality of the Town Centre environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The narrowing of the current vehicular carriageways provides additional space for movement and circulation. These wider footways can also accommodate spill-out activity from retail units, helping to activate the public realm.
- 4.14 New and improved pedestrian crossings along the A24 and other major routes are proposed to provide wider, more direct, and more convenient crossings. The crossings will be situated at regular intervals within the Town Centre.
- 4.15 Opportunities to provide segregated cycleways should be explored further. Generally, Epsom can support and sustain local cycling activity by providing suitable infrastructure in the right locations (e.g. cycle parking near the shopping centres and train station).
- 4.16 Access to Town Centre parking should be unchanged, although some rationalisation of public car parking may occur as a result of redevelopment and a move towards more sustainable travel.

### Enlivened Streets

- 4.17 The Masterplan supports opportunities for an improved after-dark environment to create a more vibrant and attractive night-time economy within the Town Centre. It also embraces the potential for informal play facilities, where little currently exists, to increase the diversity of uses and users within the Town Centre.
- 4.18 Increased planting to provide shade and shelter, visual amenity and increased biodiversity will also

visually attract and support prolonged use of the Town Centre.

- 4.19 The potential for more street-based events and entertainment should be explored by the Council and other stakeholder groups. The public realm should form an attractive and inviting setting for street life. As the regeneration of the Town Centre progresses, engagement with local businesses will be essential to provide a calendar of events and celebrations to draw visitors to the town and help it to compete successfully with other centres.



## PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

### Wayfinding

- 4.20** Wayfinding within the Town Centre can be substantially improved, using sensory cues to help people intuitively understand the Town Centre so that they are able to navigate it comfortably and efficiently. An important feature to accomplish this will be the creation of a defined hierarchy of public realm, open spaces and streets – to be achieved through the careful use of materials and urban design.
- 4.21** Wayfinding signage can supplement the public realm design, providing additional navigation assistance. This would likely benefit tourists and seasonal visitors more than residents and regular visitors who would likely be familiar with Epsom. However, high quality, well-designed signage furniture can still play an integral role in ameliorating the urban environment.
- 4.22** New signage should complement the wider street furniture palette within the Town Centre, being consistent in terms of branding, design and materials.
- 4.23** The signage elements should be carefully situated to be visually prominent without becoming an obstruction, whilst providing the right information at the right time. Information content, together with the signage's design, would be the subject of a more detailed design exercise, supplementary to this report.



Examples of Legible London wayfinding signage



## Landscaping

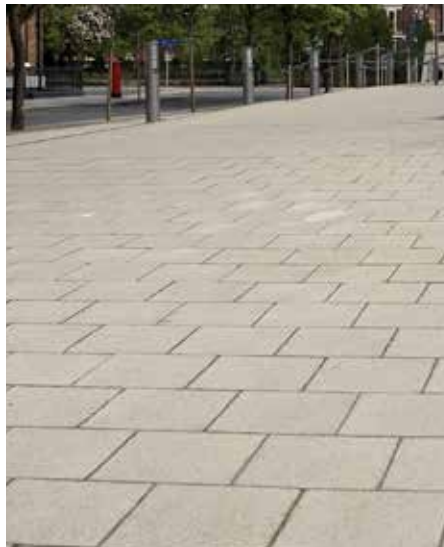
- 4.24** Increasing the amount and diversity of soft landscaping within the Town Centre can help to attract a wide variety of benefits for the environment, society, biodiversity and the vibrancy of Epsom Town Centre.
- 4.25** Planting has the potential to act as a valuable resource for food and shelter as well as habitat for breeding a wide variety of wildlife including animals, birds and insects. The selection of plant species should be made to maximise such benefits, considering their year-round contributions. Plant species should also be selected for their suitability to the ground, air and microclimatic conditions found within the urban environment.
- 4.26** The management and maintenance of the soft landscaping should be carefully considered to ensure the plants chosen can thrive without the need for excessive human intervention.



Increasing the amount and diversity of soft landscaping within the Town Centre can benefit the environment, society, biodiversity and the vibrancy of Epsom Town Centre.

## Materials

- 4.27** Building materials and façades define the character and experience of Epsom Town Centre. Therefore, the materials palette for future development will need to reflect the history of Epsom with locally-specific and locally-sourced materials where practical.
- 4.28** Materials should be selected to ensure universal accessibility, accommodating the needs of all users of the Town Centre. They should be of a high quality and durability, to withstand the busy environment without significant wear-and-tear. In a similar vein, the materials chosen should be easy to clean, maintain and/or replace so as to ensure the longevity of the public realm quality.
- 4.29** Materials which have low embodied carbon should be prioritised, wherever possible, to minimise the environmental impact.
- 4.30** A rigorous street cleansing regime will be necessary to attract and sustain Town Centre users and improve visitor numbers.



Materials should ensure universal accessibility, accommodating the needs of all users of the Town Centre, they should be of a high quality and durability, to withstand the busy environment and should be easy to clean and maintain to ensure longevity.



## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

### Decarbonising Transport

**4.31** The Baseline Report prepared for Stage 1 of the Masterplan outlined the provisions of the Surrey Local Transport Plan 2022—2032 (LTP). It also summarises the key challenges relating to:

- Public transport connectivity, including bus and rail services and infrastructure
- Walking routes and road crossings
- The A24
- Town Centre parking capacity and changing demand

**4.32** The Masterplan proposes interventions to achieve new or reconfigured sustainable transport infrastructure that builds on and applies the measures in the Surrey LTP. At a strategic level this responds to:

- **Climate Change and Transport Decarbonisation** – To promote development travel patterns that minimise and mitigate climate change impacts and develop transport systems more adaptable to climate change effects.
- **Better accessibility and connectivity** – To support growth and regeneration opportunity sites and public realm objectives and ensure they are well connected and integrated into the movement network.

- **Encouraging a modal shift** – This is a national and Surrey wide challenge to encourage a significant shift from private car use to public transport with much better choices for people to walk and cycle to and from the town centre.
- **Public transport** – Build on the SCC bus services improvement plan and work with partners to enhance the bus network and public transport connectivity over the short/medium term.
- **New technologies** – Consider the rapid emergence of new transport technologies which is changing how people and goods move around the borough and wider region.
- **Air Quality, Noise and Environmental quality** – The prioritisation of traffic in the town has reduced the amount of ‘effective space’ available for walking and cycling and it detrimentally impacts on urban environmental quality and conditions for a good quality of life. This needs to be redressed.

## DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

**4.33** It is realistic to plan for some car use within the Town Centre, particularly given the necessity of accommodating through traffic along the A24, and the ongoing need for many to access the Town Centre by car for the foreseeable future. However, changes to the physical environment, including subtle but nonetheless important changes to the design of the highway can bring about marked improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, leading to a healthier and more attractive centre. In this regard, 'do nothing' is not compatible with the future prosperity of the Town Centre. Instead, a rebalancing is proposed.

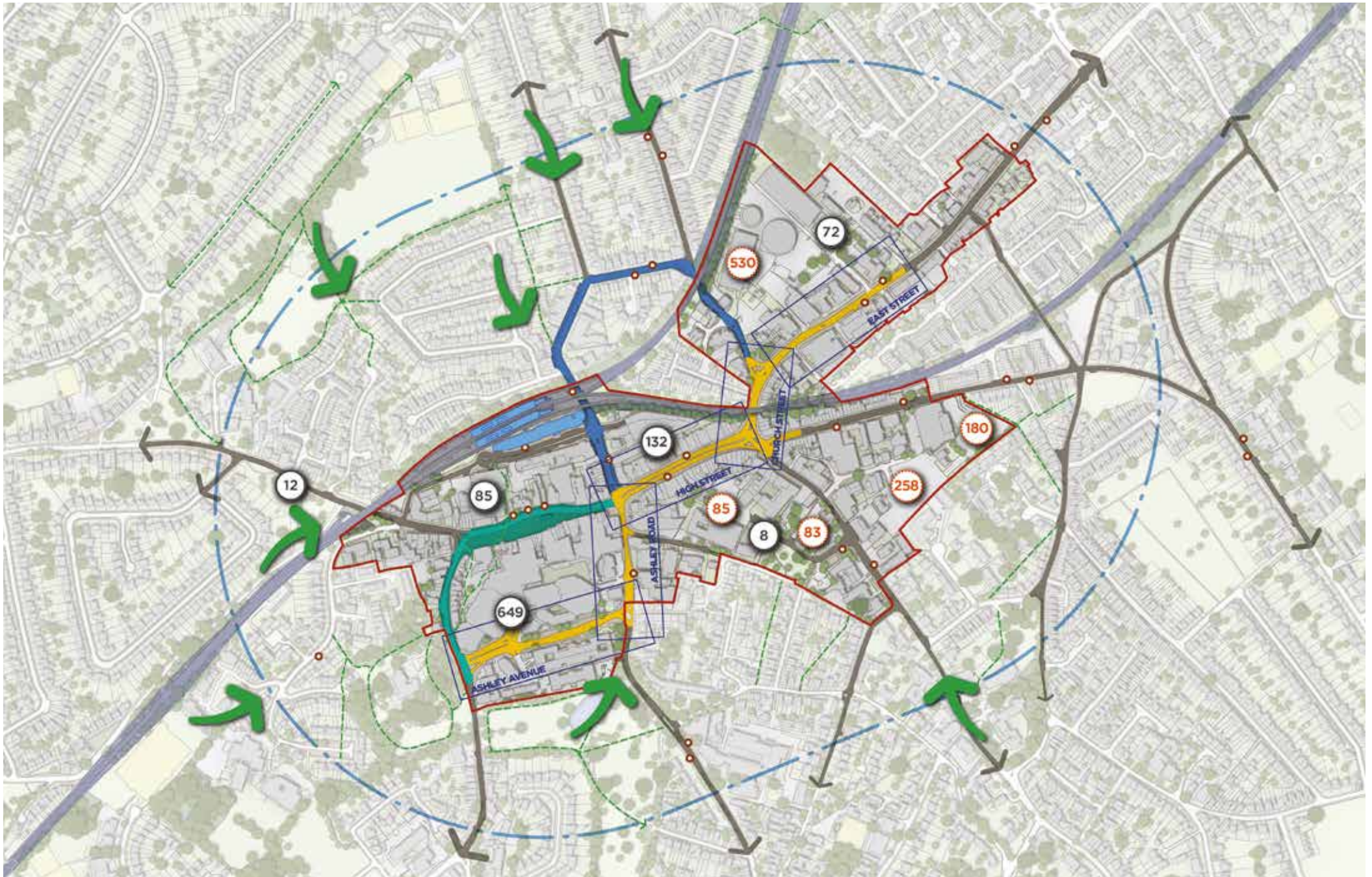
**4.34** Accordingly, the Masterplan has been prepared with input from Surrey County Council as the local highway authority. An overarching review of how movement works within the Town Centre has been undertaken, followed by an analysis of the highway, paying particular attention to space given over to facilitate traffic movement, bus facilities, pedestrian desire lines, and the level of provision (physical space) for pedestrians and cyclists.

**4.35** The Draft Transport Strategy Plan (Figure 10) focuses on the A24 (highlighted in yellow) issues and opportunities to deliver pedestrian and cycle priority. It also identifies those public car parks which, through the masterplanning exercise and the Local Plan 'call for sites' have been identified for possible redevelopment and/or reconfiguration.

**Figure 10: Draft Transport Strategy**









## A24 TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

**4.36** In the context of this strategy, several Transport and Public Realm Infrastructure Projects have been identified, targeting the component parts of the A24 (Ashley Avenue, Ashley Road, High Street, Church Street and East Street) and the junctions along this route. These are explained in the following panels.

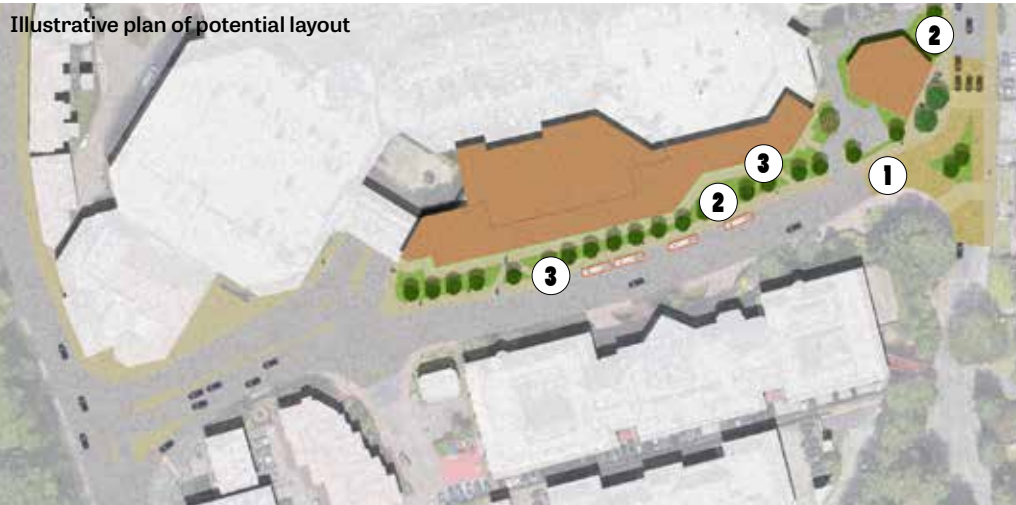
### Ashley Avenue

Aerial photo of existing layout



- ① Seperate footway link
- ② Open space on staggered levels
- ③ Bus layby/dwell area (6 buses)
- ④ Traffic capacity 2 lanes – westbound only
- ⑤ Car park access
- ⑥ Multiple crossing islands
- ⑦ No bus or cycle facilities
- ⑧ Existing queuing capacity
- ⑨ No pedestrian phase
- ⑩ Restricted crossing movements

Illustrative plan of potential layout



- ① Simplified pedestrian crossings
- ② Increased tree planting
- ③ Widened footways and improved pedestrian access



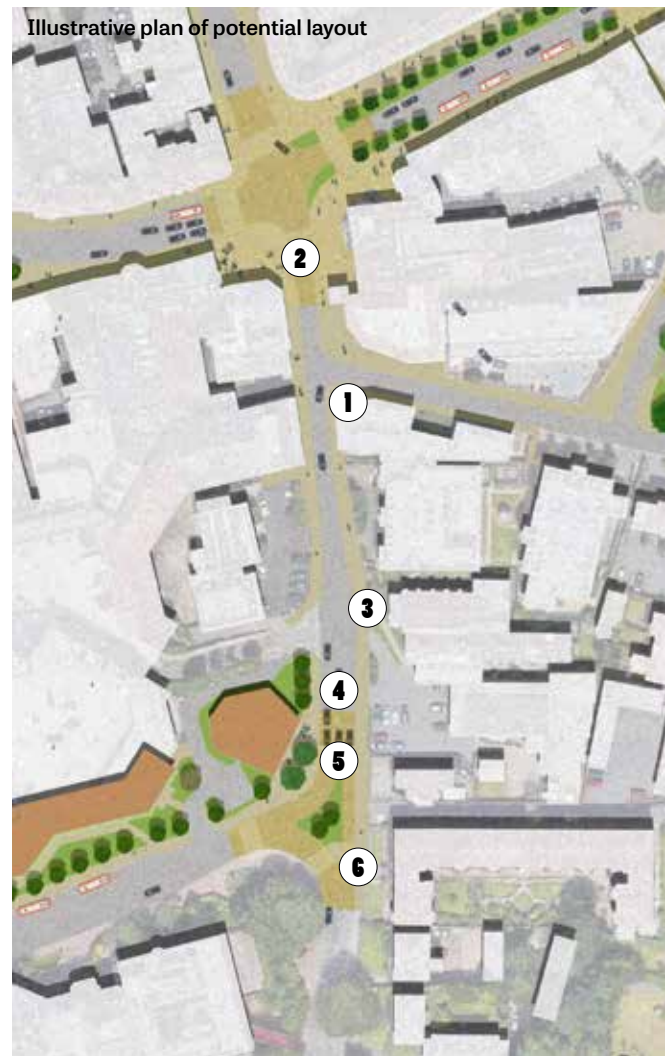
## Ashley Road

Aerial photo of existing layout



- 1 Two-way traffic throttle. Effective footway less than 1.5m
- 2 Narrow pavements, further compromised by bus stop facilities and road signage
- 3 Traffic queuing capacity likely to be needed in peaks
- 4 No pedestrian phase on northern arm
- 5 Traffic island used for all crossing movements
- 6 Street is one-way westbound

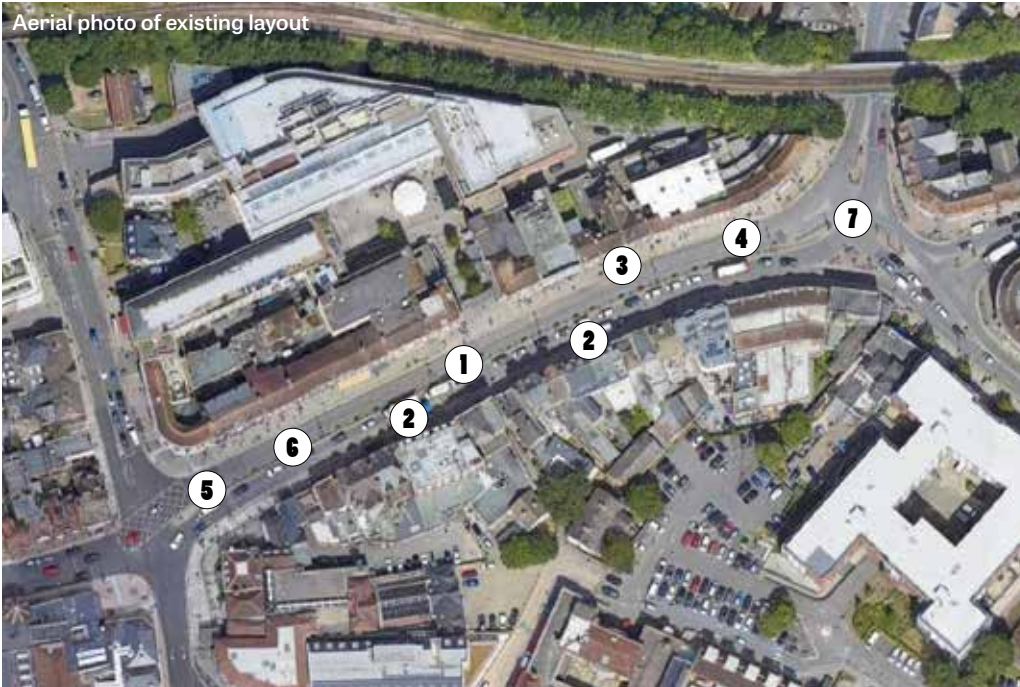
Illustrative plan of potential layout



- 1 Widen footway both sides of the road
- 2 Tighten junction, reduce to one lane southbound and widen footways
- 3 Widen pavement by bus stop facilities
- 4 Traffic queuing capacity likely to be needed in peaks
- 5 Pedestrian phase on northern arm
- 6 Widen footway on one side of the road

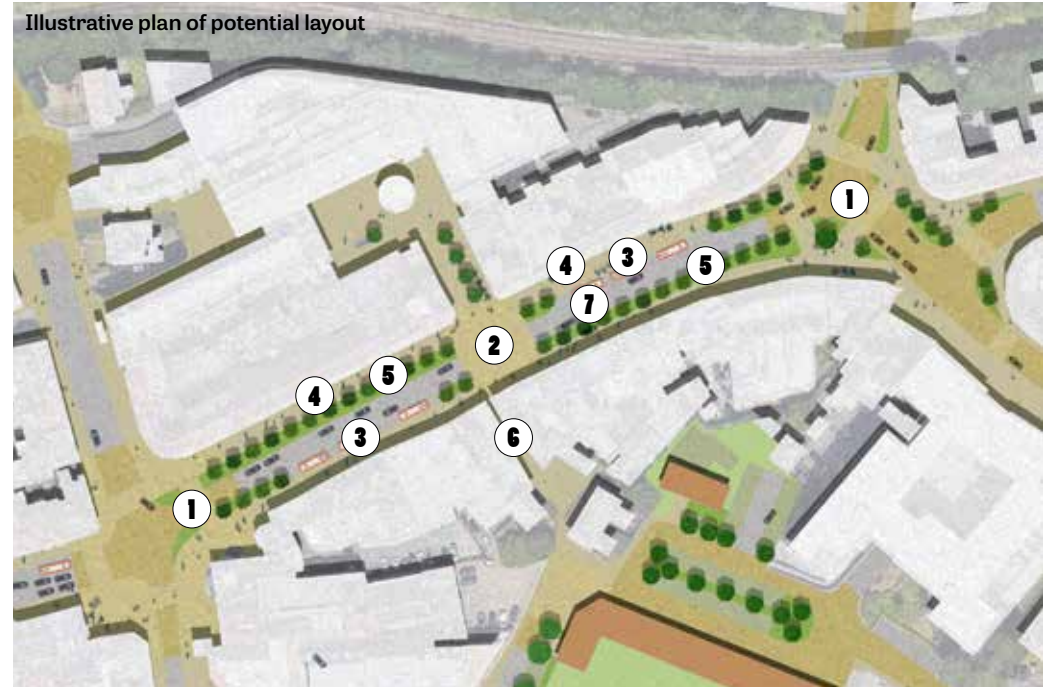
## High Street

Aerial photo of existing layout



- 1 Central linking pedestrian crossing
- 2 Bus stops (2no.) and bus stands (2no.)
- 3 Bus stops (2no.)
- 4 Traffic queuing capacity
- 5 Direct pedestrian phase
- 6 Guardrail restricting crossing movements
- 7 Complex signal junction layout

Illustrative plan of potential layout

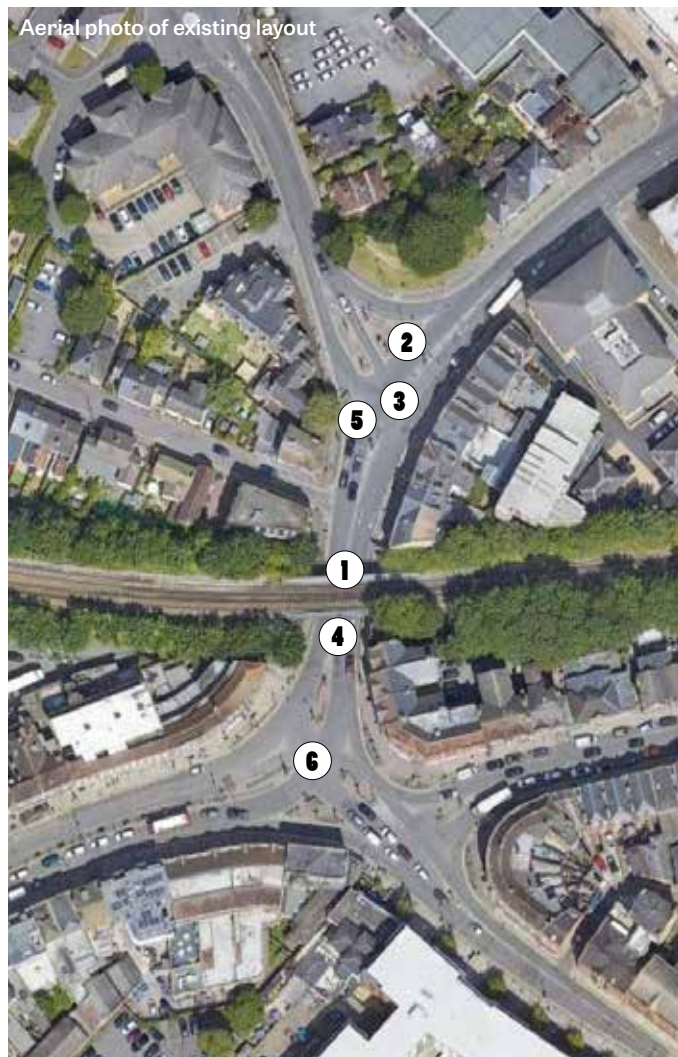


- 1 Pedestrian prioritisation with simplified crossings
- 2 'Super crossing'
- 3 Rationalised and improved bus stops
- 4 Widened footways and 'spill-out' space for retail units
- 5 New street planting including trees
- 6 Improved walking connections linking town centre
- 7 Narrowed carriageway



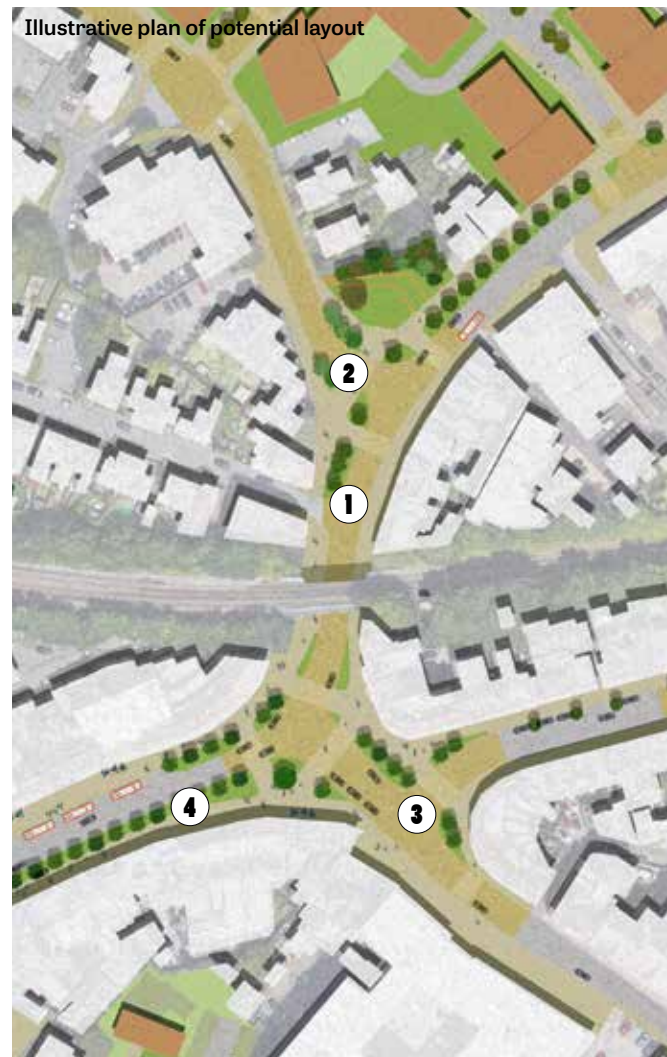
## Church Street

Aerial photo of existing layout



- 1 Pinch-point under the bridge
- 2 Multiple crossing islands
- 3 No bus or cycle facilities
- 4 Limited queuing capacity
- 5 No pedestrian phase
- 6 Restricted crossing movements

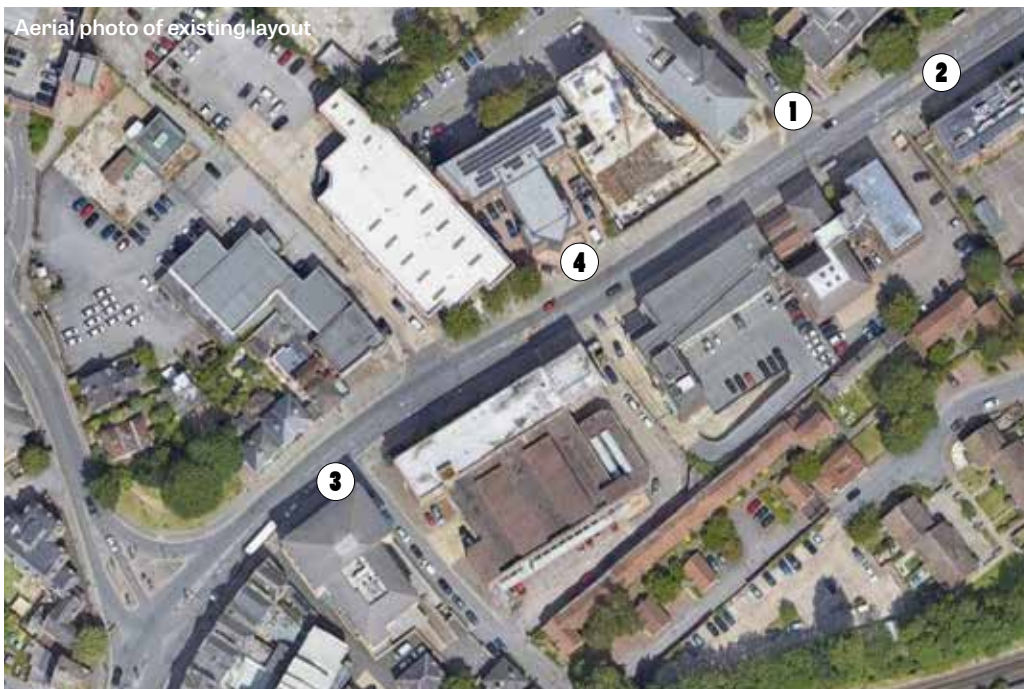
Illustrative plan of potential layout



- 1 Pedestrian prioritisation with simplified crossings
- 2 'Super crossing'
- 3 Partial pedestrianisation of Upper High Street with managed vehicular access
- 4 Provision for cycle lanes on High Street

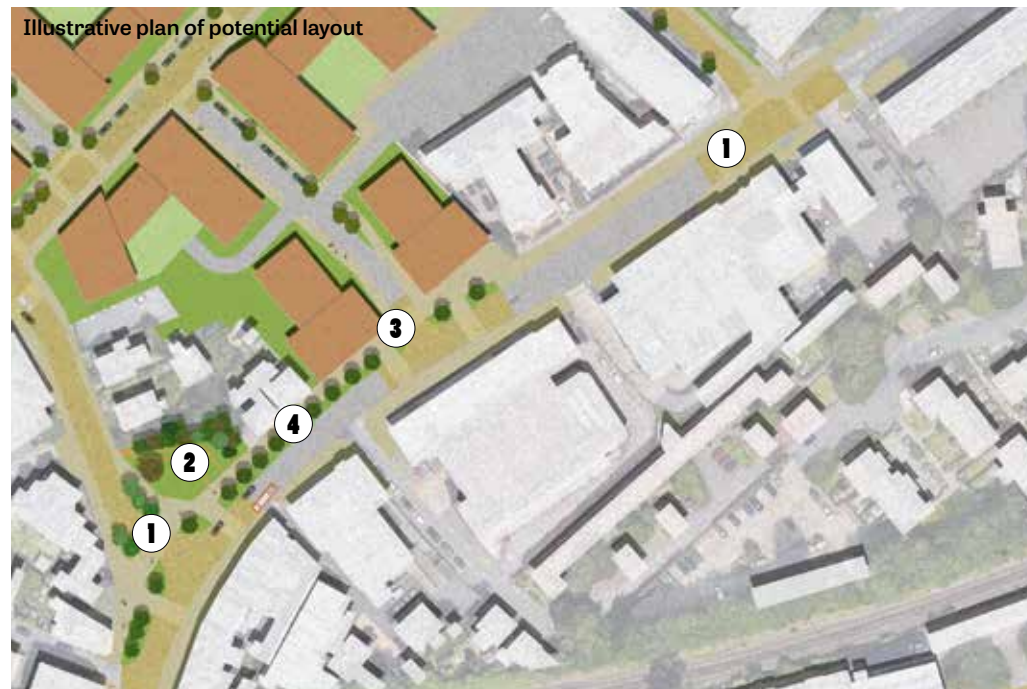
## East Street

Aerial photo of existing layout



- 1 Car park/side road accesses
- 2 Small crossing islands
- 3 No bus priority facilities
- 4 Cycling on shared footway

Illustrative plan of potential layout



- 1 Simplified pedestrian crossings
- 2 Enhanced green space
- 3 Widened footway and improved cycle connectivity
- 4 New street planting



## ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS

4.37 Two other highway projects are proposed:

### Upper High Street

4.38 Upper High Street acts as a local approach to the town centre, rather than a strategic through route. There is scope here to introduce a greater degree of pedestrian priority through a partial-pedestrianisation scheme. While vehicles would not be prevented from accessing the street (and indeed service vehicle access will be essential for the ongoing operation of commercial businesses) the streetscape could be remodelled to afford free-pedestrian access across the entire street surface, discouraging non-essential traffic at the same time. This is a similar approach to that taken in many urban areas; Exhibition Road in Kensington is perhaps the best-known example, where an innovative and high-quality street design has reduced but not prevented vehicle movement whilst creating a better place for pedestrians and cyclists.



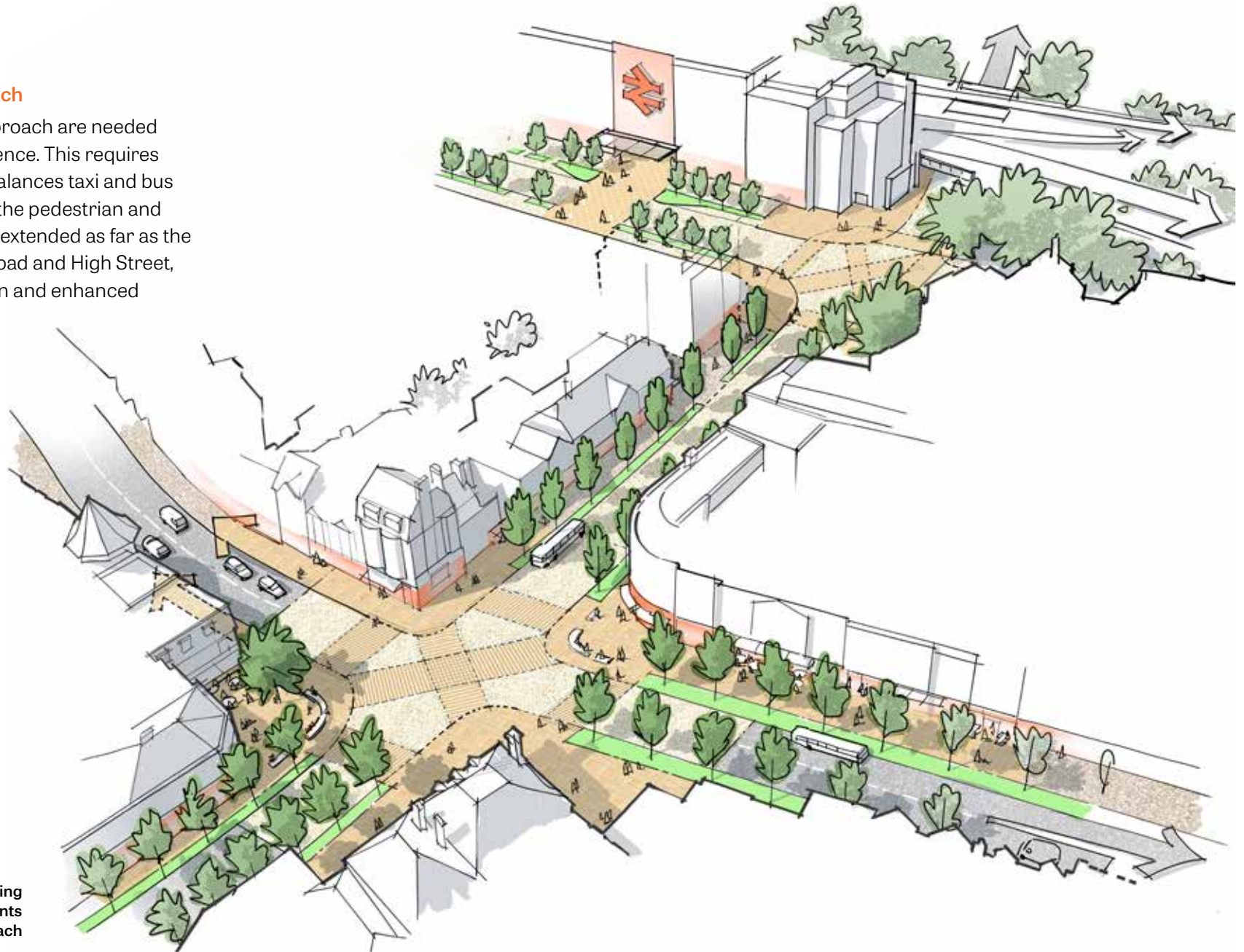
Illustrative perspective showing potential public realm improvements along Upper High Street



Exhibition Road, Kensington

### Waterloo Road / Station Approach

4.39 Improvements to Station Approach are needed to enhance the arrival experience. This requires a public realm scheme that balances taxi and bus movement with the needs of the pedestrian and cyclist. These works could be extended as far as the junction between Waterloo Road and High Street, ensuring seamless integration and enhanced wayfinding.



Illustrative perspective showing potential public realm improvements along Station Approach



## PUBLIC CAR PARKING

**4.40** In 2023 publicly available car parking capacity was 2,094 spaces, comprising Council managed provision and NCP managed provision. The Baseline report provides usage data on the usage of specific town centre car parks managed car parks over a long time period and reports the findings of car park usage surveys undertaken across nine town centre car parks in July 2023 using Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems. The ANPR surveys demonstrate the varying utilisation of the Car Parks and that overall the peak usage across all nine car parks monitored was recorded as 58%.

**4.41** The Masterplan approach to car parking addresses individual sites and town centre wide. It is possible to increase, reduce or keep the same parking capacity, and any decision must be weighed against the benefits or disbenefits to be derived from planned interventions, and the extent to which change will help to deliver other Masterplan objectives.

**4.42** A future parking study to examine overall provision and individual site provision is needed and it must reflect policy approaches in the SCC Local Transport Plan – Demand Management for Cars. At this stage, the Masterplan adopts the following position:

- Under-utilised car parks should be considered for redevelopment to regenerate the town centre with equal or more valuable uses including new homes;
- Wherever possible, lost parking spaces should be re-provided, at least in part, as part of any redevelopment scheme;
- Smart technology should be used to enable multiple users to use the same parking spaces throughout the 24-hour period;
- Changes are only proposed for council owned car parks; and
- Popular car parks serving the retail core of the town centre should be retained.

**4.43** Section 5 provides further thinking on the future of council owned car parks.

# 5 OPPORTUNITY SITES

## OVERVIEW

**5.1** Section 3 of this report establishes Character Area Frameworks which are concerned with placemaking, while Section 4 provides further detail for the future redesign of key areas of public realm. This section is focused on the opportunity sites and explores alternative options for their development. This exercise has informed the Local Plan site allocations.

- 5.2** The options set out here represent the consideration of a number of variables including:
- The physical extent of the opportunity sites, including instances where adjoining sites may be planned cohesively in order to achieve an optimum solution;
  - The opportunity to regenerate town centre sites, including the principle of 'brownfield first', for the wider benefit of all users, and to help deliver Local Plan objectives including helping to meet housing needs (including affordable housing), supporting the growth of tertiary education and delivering a vibrant and viable town centre economy;
  - The retention, redevelopment or reprovision of town centre car parks;
  - Development mix, i.e. the potential for different land uses, and also the potential for different housing types and tenures including student accommodation; and
  - The influence of the surrounding townscape including any heritage assets, and the degree to which this might influence the built form including building height.
- 5.3** The outputs of this optioneering provide guidance on site capacity, build form, future car parking provision, access, public realm, and development mix. At this stage, there is no recommendation about which option might be 'preferred'; this exercise provides information to inform the draft Local Plan and must be considered alongside other factors such as housing need.



## ASHLEY CENTRE & GLOBAL HOUSE

### Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.4** A summary of the emerging policy is included in the accompanying table, which also summarises the key design and development considerations for the Masterplan. Two options have been explored for this opportunity site.



## SITE INFORMATION

<b>Draft Local Plan site allocation</b>	SA4 – Ashley Centre & Global House Mixed use development, comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The retention and refurbishment of the Ashley Centre</li> <li>• The redevelopment of Global House to provide at least 70 homes</li> <li>• Building heights between 5–8 storeys</li> <li>• Retention of the Playhouse</li> <li>• Maintaining existing planting and green verge along Ashley Avenue</li> <li>• Retention of the Multi Storey Public Car Park</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership</b>	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, private ownership
<b>Site Area</b>	3.19 ha
<b>Indicative Capacity</b>	70–125 residential units comprising 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments with 50% car parking
<b>Planning Designations</b>	None. However, the Conservation area lies adjacent to the north.
<b>Site and Development Considerations</b>	<p>A gradual decline in the demand for office space alongside the ongoing housing crisis indicates part of the site may be redeveloped for new homes, with apartments being the most suitable type in this location.</p> <p>EEBC has indicated that the Ashley Centre car park should be retained on the basis that it serves the main retail area of the town centre. Similarly, the Playhouse Theatre should be retained as a valuable contributor to the evening economy and a popular local cultural asset. No alternative locations are available for its reprovision. However, some retail units may be suitable for redevelopment as part of a comprehensive scheme, and there is further potential to incorporate residential property at the corner of Ashley Avenue and Ashley Road to deliver a larger scheme.</p>

<b>Site and Development Considerations</b>	<p>Proximity to the conservation area and several listed buildings indicate the need to test the impact of building heights. The options are informed by the informal heritage and townscape view analysis undertaken as part of the Masterplan exercise.</p> <p>Key planning and design considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing mature trees along Ashley Avenue should be retained;</li> <li>• Any new scheme should ensure the operation and commercial viability of the retail centre, car parking and theatre are not hindered or disrupted;</li> <li>• Building heights should respond to the surrounding context and a townscape and heritage impact assessment should be prepared to inform the height of the scheme at the planning application stage;</li> <li>• New development should be designed to animate Ashley Avenue. Building frontages should include balconies and front doors to bring life and enhance residential amenity; and</li> <li>• Residential car parking should be limited due to the sustainable location.</li> </ul>
<b>Current Use</b>	Retail mall, multistorey car park and offices to the rear
<b>Character Area Framework</b>	Ashley Avenue



### Site Options

5.5 Option 1 assumes redevelopment of the office buildings fronting Ashley Avenue in an eight-storey form to achieve c.73 residential units in a mix of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments. Residential car parking is provided at a ratio of 1:0.5, recognising the town centre location and proximity of local services and public transport.

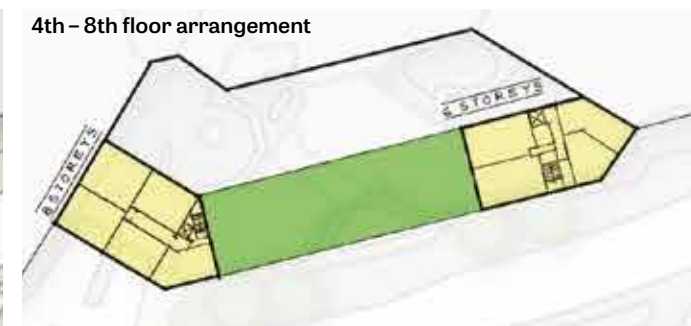
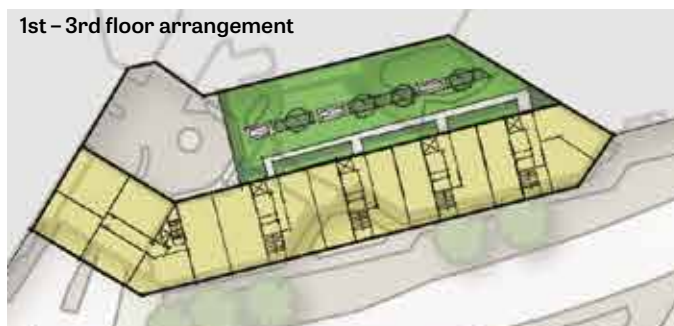


Figure 11: Ashley Centre and Global House option 1

- 5.6 Option 2 explores the potential of a larger site, including the redevelopment of the office buildings, the rear section of the former House of Fraser store within the Ashley Centre and two buildings at the corner of Ashley Avenue and Ashley Road. This option anticipates a possible decline in the demand for large format retail units and looks to redevelopment some retail floorspace to assist in the regeneration of the Town Centre. Building heights vary between three to eight storeys to create visual interest and moderate between the bulkier form of the Ashley Centre and the adjacent domestic scale of Ashley Road. Option 2 achieves c.125 units with a mix of 1-, 2- and 3- bedroom apartments and car parking at a ratio of 1:0.25 in response to the inherent opportunity to deliver new homes in a sustainable location, on brownfield land.

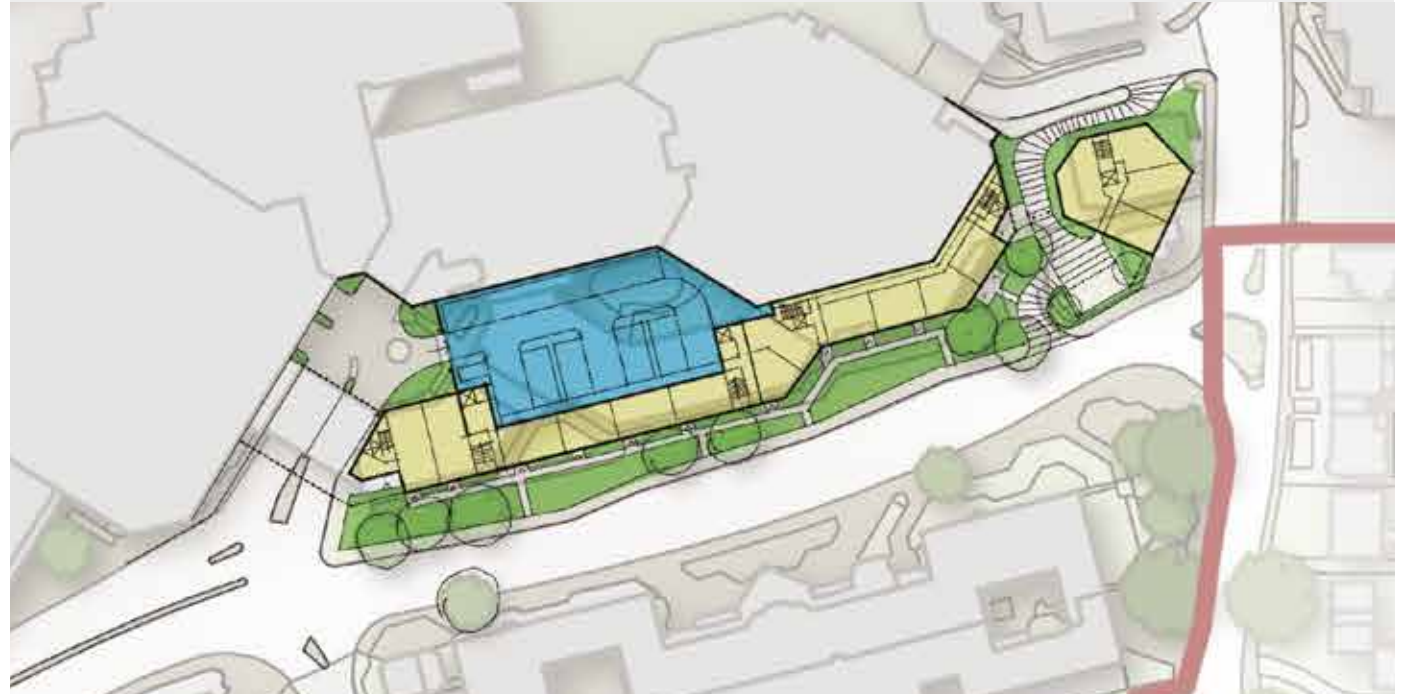
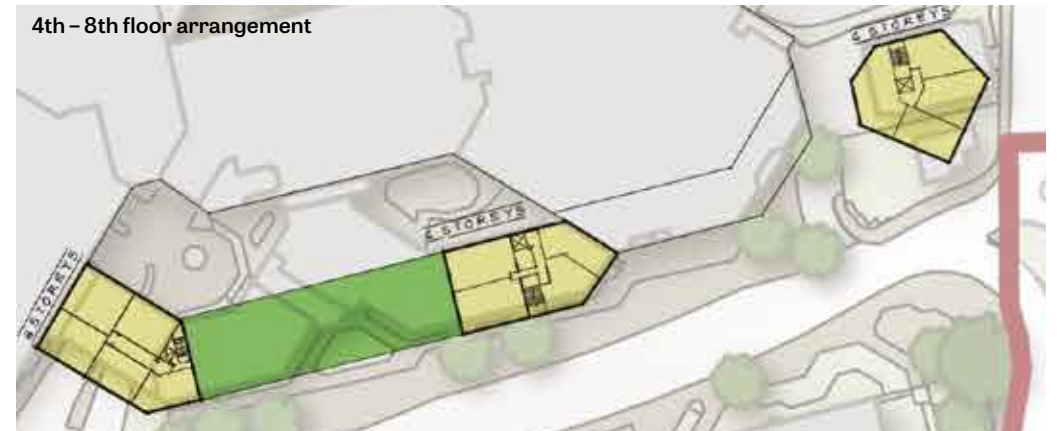


Figure 12: Ashley Centre and Global House option 2

1st – 3rd floor arrangement



4th – 8th floor arrangement



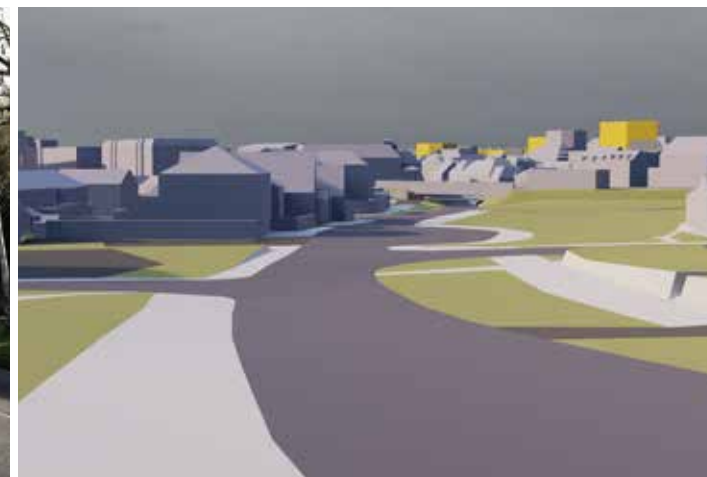


## Building Height

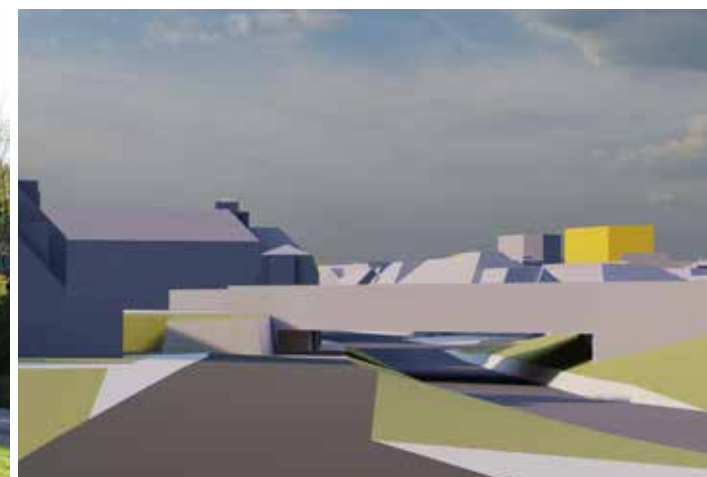
5.7 The bulky form of the Ashley Centre indicates that it is appropriate to explore whether the potential exists for taller buildings in this location. However, any potential may be limited given the proximity of the conservation area and Market Square. Accordingly, an analysis of townscape and heritage views was undertaken from potentially sensitive receptors at Stamford Green Conservation Area (views 2 and 3). Some of the taller elements are marginally visible above the existing roofscape (views 2 and 3) and are likely to appear more prominent during the night when illuminated. However, they do not appear incongruous or harmful in a town centre context. Any application would need to be supported by additional height testing of its impact on longer views.



Townscape and Heritage view 2



Townscape and Heritage view 3



## HOOK ROAD & SOUTHERN GAS NETWORK

### Capacity Study & Key Considerations

- 5.8** This is the largest and arguably the most complex of the opportunity sites to plan and deliver. Nonetheless, it offers a real opportunity to enhance the appeal of the Town Centre and deliver on several ambitions, including supporting the growth of the UCA and its student population, delivering new accommodation for the Laines Performing Arts School, creating new homes in a sustainable location and remediating a contaminated site. The key considerations are set out in the accompanying table.





## SITE INFORMATION

<b>Draft Local Plan site allocation</b>	<p>SA1 – Hook Road Car Park and SGN Site</p> <p>Comprehensive residential-led mixed-use development, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 640 new homes;</li> <li>• Student Accommodation (potential for about 400 student rooms);</li> <li>• Mixed use ground floor active frontages accommodating space for office, retail and creative start-ups;</li> <li>• Performing Arts Centre;</li> <li>• Café;</li> <li>• Building heights ranging between 2 and 7 storeys;</li> <li>• Podium parking with smart technology solution allowing different users to access spaces at different times of the day/evening;</li> <li>• Provision of a new public square adjacent to the leisure centre entrance;</li> <li>• A neighbourhood park in the heart of the development with direct connection to the existing Public Rights of Way network;</li> <li>• Relocated SGN infrastructure;</li> <li>• Improved public realm and connectivity within the site and to adjoining areas</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership</b>	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Southern Gas Networks, Laines
<b>Site Area</b>	4.57 ha
<b>Indicative Capacity</b>	The options accommodate a range of residential units numbers between 300 and 500. In addition, 400 student bedrooms can be created. Approximately 1300 square metres of teaching and studio space for a new Laines Performing Arts School facility can be accommodated.

<b>Planning Designations</b>	Adjacent Conservation Area
<b>Site and Development Considerations</b>	<p>The site owners have submitted the former gas holder site to EEBC's 'call for sites'. The site is in a valuable location and would benefit from an appropriate level of decontamination so it can be brought back into active use.</p> <p>The potential to redevelop Hook Road multi-storey car park as part of the re-organisation of Town Centre parking is appropriate given it is no longer used to full capacity; the car park is under-utilised in the aftermath of the pandemic as commuter numbers have fallen. A longer-term view of the potential of this publicly owned land to contribute to the vitality and regeneration of the Town Centre is therefore a logical step forward.</p> <p>Laines Performing Arts School have an ambition to achieve a larger, purpose-built facility, more suited to their current and future teaching requirements.</p> <p>It is understood that these parties are willing to examine the potential to collaborate to allow a cohesive scheme to come forward. This would ensure a development that is greater than the sum of its parts and would enable new buildings to come together around well-designed public realm, which over time could become part of the network of town centre streets.</p> <p>Moreover, there is scope to bring additional buildings into the site plan to realise additional value and benefit. Option 1 therefore considers the opportunity arising from the inclusion of the Majestic Wine site.</p>

...continued overleaf

### Site and Development Considerations

Key planning and design considerations include:

- Making a valuable contribution to the town centre offer by delivering a mixed-use scheme incorporating the land-uses set out in the draft Local plan policy, delivering new high-quality active frontages to Hook Road and East Street;
- Improving the setting of the adjacent conservation area at the junction of Hook Road and East Street;
- The importance of mitigating any noise impact arising from the adjacent railway line;
- Protecting the residential amenity to homes to the north-west and north-east. Taller buildings should not lead to overshadowing of homes or private gardens, and should maintain the privacy of the existing homes;
- Ongoing access to and parking at the Rainbow Leisure Centre will be required, although some parking spaces may be relocated within the new scheme in order to deliver a new public square at the front of the leisure centre;
- The re-provision of some town centre car parking should be achieved at an amount to be agreed. Parking should be an integral part of building design, including podium parking, to ensure it has limited impact on the overall quality and appearance of the scheme;
- Smart technology parking solutions should be employed to facilitate a multiple-user parking system to avoid over-provision within a mixed-use scheme;

### Site and Development Considerations

- A high-quality public realm will be an important component of the scheme. Buildings should have active frontages overlooking routes and particular care should be taken to the design of ground floors, where there is the potential for small scale commercial, leisure and employment uses (including creative 'maker' spaces);
- High quality homes and student accommodation with dual aspect apartments and outdoor amenity space should form the principal land use; and
- New gas infrastructure should be incorporated into the scheme in a safe and discreet manner.

### Current Use

Public car park, retail units, education establishment, and utilities infrastructure containing redundant gas holders.

### Character Area Framework

Hook Road, East Street & former Gas Works



## SITE OPTIONS

**5.9** All options adopt the same efficient Masterplan structure with the following key features:

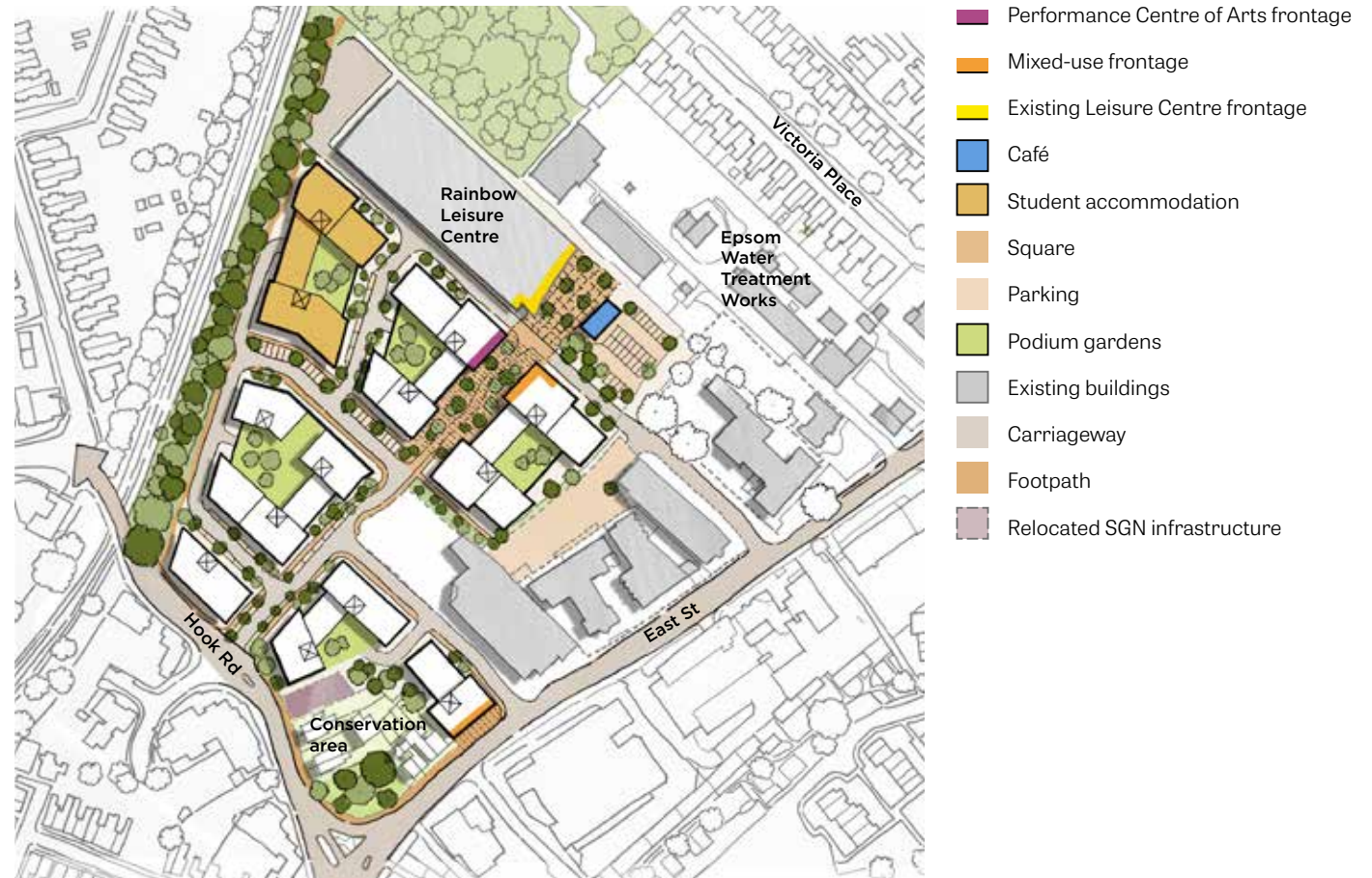
- Principle routes through the site connecting Hook Road and East Street. The routes meet at a new public space at the front of the Rainbow Leisure Centre. The emphasis is on pedestrian permeability to open up a new part of the town centre. Opportunities for soft landscaping to green the site are assumed.
- An efficient block layout incorporating podium parking, accessed via a network of low-key streets, with roof terraces over to enhance the outlook from dual-aspect apartments.
- Relocated Laines Performing Arts School to the centre of the site; this would enable a larger, bulker form to be developed without impacting on the conservation area or listed buildings. The current school site is redeveloped for apartments. Student accommodation is to the rear of the new school building to strengthen the feeling of a student / creative quarter.
- Similarly, taller buildings are assumed to be located in the centre of the site to minimise their impact on surrounding land-uses.

**5.10 Option 1** incorporates the maximum land area, including the Majestic Wine warehouse site to achieve a higher quantum of residential units. New frontages are created to Hook Road and East Street at a scale and height which is appropriate to the Conservation Area (a mix of 2, 3 and 4 storeys).



- Performance Centre of Arts frontage
- Mixed-use frontage
- Existing Leisure Centre frontage
- Café
- Student accommodation
- Square
- Parking
- Podium gardens
- Existing buildings
- Carriageway
- Footpath
- Relocated SGN infrastructure

**5.11 Option 2** excludes the Majestic Wine warehouse site. The rear of this site would impact on the overall amenity of the redevelopment. However, given the town centre location and the opportunity to improve the area overall, a high-quality mixed-use scheme could be achieved.





**5.12 Option 3** considers the impact on the site's potential if the Majestic Wine warehouse site and the multi-storey care park are both omitted, in order to establish whether a high-quality scheme could still be delivered. Whilst it remains possible to establish a partial pattern of development blocks focused on a new central route, the resulting decrease in residential units would undoubtedly undermine the chance to create a vibrant and attractive new quarter for the town centre.



- Performance Centre of Arts frontage
- Mixed-use frontage
- Existing Leisure Centre frontage
- Café
- Student accommodation
- Square
- Parking
- Podium gardens
- Existing buildings
- Carriageway
- Footpath
- Relocated SGN infrastructure

## Building Heights

- 5.13** The site already includes taller structures associated with the former gas works together with Hook Road multi-storey car park. The railway line to the north, the road infrastructure, and the leisure centre provide some separation between the site and nearby residential uses. Identified views incorporate heritage assets including listed buildings, and parts of the Epsom Town Centre, Adelphi Road, and Lintons Lane Conservation Areas, so heritage context considerations relating to the scale of development are important. However, investment in the area may provide the opportunity to enhance the setting of the heritage assets, for example through streetscape enhancements or the development of new buildings of a high architectural quality.
- 5.14** A view analysis (Appendix A : views 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33 and 37) has informed the work on the site options. Most of these views show townscape of no or very limited interest. The views typically include road infrastructure such as railings, traffic lights and signage, surface car parking that create gaps in the streetscape as they are devoid of buildings, or existing buildings dating from the post-war period, that do not reflect the finer grain of the surfacing groups of historic buildings elsewhere in the town centre. These views are not particularly sensitive to change and the proposed views, whilst

showing limited detail, indicate new buildings and uses with a form and layout that, following detailed design development, have the potential to create a more attractive and legible environment, and enhance the character of and activity within the local area.

- 5.15** Given the early stage thinking on the potential of the site, it is appropriate for the Local Plan to adopt a conservative position on future building height potential. As noted in the paragraph above, a more considered design exercise would be needed to demonstrate that taller buildings would not be harmful to their surrounding context and could in fact deliver benefits to the town centre, including townscape enhancements. Building heights beyond seven storeys may increase the capacity of the site to deliver more residential units. The benefits and disbenefits of such an increase would need to be thoroughly explored and evidenced through the planning process. However, the views analysis demonstrated that a tower located on the former gasworks site would likely appear incongruous with the prevailing character of this part of the town centre, and particularly prominent in and stark in views from and including sensitive visual and heritage receptors. Informed by this assessment, towers have not been incorporated into the master plan recommendations.



There is an opportunity to integrate the Rainbow Leisure Centre with the redeveloped gas works site



Example of higher density, mid-rise development, Eddington, Cambridge



Example of higher density, mid-rise development, Acton Gardens, London



## TOWN HALL, HOPE LODGE AND EPSOM CLINIC

### Capacity Study & Key Considerations

**5.16** These sites have been considered together as they represent an exciting opportunity to create a new residential area focused on an enhanced Dullshot Green. Nevertheless, it is possible for each site to come forward independent from the others. The sites are in public ownership and would deliver new homes on brownfield land whilst enabling the delivery of services and achieving local authority objectives.



## SITE INFORMATION

<b>Draft Local Plan site allocation</b>	SA2 – Town Hall, Hope Lodge & Epsom Clinic Residential development, comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new residential area focussed around Dulshot Green</li> <li>• At least 90 new homes</li> <li>• The total redevelopment of Town Hall, Hope Lodge Car Pak and Epsom Clinic</li> <li>• Building heights ranging between 2 and 4 storeys</li> <li>• The reprovision of some public parking on the Town Hall site</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership</b>	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, NHS Property Services, private ownership (Epsom Police and Ambulance Stations)
<b>Site Area</b>	1.61 ha
<b>Indicative Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Hall - 30–60 units, depending on dwelling mix and tenure mix with 1:1 parking ratio</li> <li>• Hope Lodge Car Park – approximately 20–25 dwellings and 1:1 parking ratio</li> <li>• Epsom Clinic &amp; Ambulance Dept – approximately 25 dwellings and 1:1 parking ratio</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Designations</b>	Adjacent to a Conservation Area
<b>Site and Development Considerations</b>	The options explored aim to make better use of brownfield land within the Town Centre and achieve sustainable, residential led mixed-use development.

### Site and Development Considerations

EEBC has expressed its intention to relocate to new accommodation which is more suited to post-Pandemic patterns of working. The current Town Hall is increasingly ill-suited to current day needs, and difficult to modernise in line with the Council's Climate Change objectives. Conversion or re-purposing the building is difficult and unlikely to prove viable, so the redevelopment of the site for new homes has been explored.

The Hope Lodge car park is owned by EEBC. Its redevelopment has been explored as part of a potential strategy to rationalise town centre car parking to help revitalise the town centre and prepare to be 'zero-carbon ready'.

The site of Epsom Ambulance Station has been put forward in EEBC's Local Plan 'call for sites'. Along with the adjacent Epsom Clinic, there is scope for new homes as part of a mixed-use scheme which could include a more modern clinic facility.

Whilst very close to the High Street, these sites are peripheral to the town centre and represent a transition to adjoining residential areas. As such, they lend themselves to a mix of house types including townhouses for family homes, as well as apartments.

Dulshot Green currently lacks a sense of place, and the opportunity exists to bring forward a new landscape scheme capable of enhancing residential amenity. This may include provision for play, informal sports, and community events.



<p><b>Site and Development Considerations</b></p>	<p>Key to the success of Dullshot Green will be its framing and containment through the layout of new development and the delivery of traffic calmed streets that prioritise pedestrian movement over the car.</p> <p>Key considerations for the allocated sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating strong frontages onto the public realm to enclose streets and enhance the sense of place;</li> <li>• Accommodating car parking in the rear of the block or integral to the buildings so that streets can offer pedestrian priority;</li> <li>• Maintaining height limits that respond to the transitional nature of the sites from town centre to residential neighbourhoods (generally four storeys);</li> <li>• Achieving a mix of homes, including family homes and affordable homes. The Town Hall site in particular is suited to family homes within terraced townhouses to continue the formal character of The Parade;</li> <li>• At Hope Lodge car park, any scheme would need to have regard to the listed building at 10 Hope Lodge; and</li> <li>• Any redevelopment of the Town Hall site should maintain the pedestrian connection through to the High Street.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current Use</b></p>	<p>Town Hall and surface level public car parks</p>
<p><b>Character Area Framework</b></p>	<p>Church Street</p>

## SITE OPTIONS

**5.17** The sketches for all sites promote residential development of mid-rise, medium density which is considered most suitable for this location. Site testing is limited to the Town Hall site. Although it has not been explored at the masterplanning stage, the Epsom Ambulance Depot/Epsom Clinic site could include a mixed scheme with new homes and a new clinic.

**5.18** **Option 1** for the Town Hall site explores the redevelopment of the whole of the site for townhouses and a limited number of apartments, and the rationalisation of the Town Hall car park from 80 to 54 spaces. Combined with the other sites Option 1 achieves a total of 90 homes.





- 5.19 Option 2** retains the Town Hall car park with 80 spaces. Consequently, the total number of homes is reduced to 73.



**5.20 Option 3** explores the redevelopment of the entire Town Hall site for apartments only, and as such represents the scheme with the most residential units across all sites. However, this should be seen as the least diverse and potentially less valuable scheme with fewer opportunities for family housing.

### Building Height

**5.21** Due to the context of the sites, heights above four storeys are not considered to be suitable. Views 17, 34, 35 and 36 assess the likely impact of the site options. The delivery of medium density development at the edges of Dullshot Green as shown in the views does represent a change in character when compared to the existing situation. However, in a town centre context it appears commensurate with the scale of the adjacent open space and provides a significant opportunity to enhance the functioning of the space. The introduction of new residents and potential investment in the green would very likely increase the use of the space and activity within it.





## DEPOT ROAD

### Capacity Study & Key Considerations

**5.22** Depot Road car park is a large expanse of surface car parking to the rear of Upper High Street, providing c. 380 public parking spaces. The land is owned by EEBC. Whilst the car park is important for the health of the town centre, the surface car park represents an inefficient use of land. The Masterplan presents an opportunity to explore alternatives.



## SITE INFORMATION

<b>Draft Local Plan site allocation</b>	SA3 – Depot Road and Upper High Street Residential development, comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 100 new homes;</li> <li>• The re-provision of public parking by the provision of a decked car park including 1x basement level and 4x above ground levels on Depot Road;</li> <li>• New access road; and</li> <li>• Building heights ranging between 2 and 4 storeys</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership</b>	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
<b>Site Area</b>	1.24 ha
<b>Indicative Capacity</b>	55-100 homes.
<b>Planning Designations</b>	None
<b>Site and Development Considerations</b>	The site is owned by EEBC and provides an opportunity to deliver new homes on a brownfield site, whilst transforming a backland area to a new place. The adjacent Lidl development, incorporating apartments above a new supermarket demonstrates how well designed mixed use development can contribute to the life of the town centre. The redevelopment of the car park can build on this successful model while enhancing the setting of the Lidl building.

<b>Site and Development Considerations</b>	<p>Moreover, consideration should be given to placemaking and pedestrian permeability. The potential exists to form a new street linking Upper High Street and Church Street in the event that the Epsom Conservative Club building can be incorporated into the scheme. In any event, emphasis should be placed on creating a good street with frontage development.</p> <p>Car parking can be re-provided in a decked structure of four storeys, and potentially with a basement level to achieve five floors of parking. This will enable most of the current parking spaces to be re-provided. In anticipation of future modal shift and decline in demand for parking space, this structure may be dismantlable. To enhance placemaking, parts of the car park could be wrapped with single aspect buildings for a mix of uses including small apartments and work spaces.</p>
<b>Current Use</b>	Surface level public car parks
<b>Character Area Framework</b>	Upper High Street & Depot Road



## SITE OPTIONS

- 5.23** The options for this site adopt the same layout and place making principles, whilst exploring a different dwelling mix.
- 5.24 Option 1** includes a majority of townhouses to achieve c. 53 units with associated residential car parking at a ratio of 1:1 for townhouses and 1:0.5 for apartments.



**5.25 Option 2** includes mainly apartments and achieves c. 100 units with 1:0.6 car parking ratio. A small number of townhouses are included with a 1:1 parking ratio.





## APPENDIX A: TOWNSCAPE & HERITAGE VIEW ANALYSIS

# APPENDICES

# EPSOM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

APPENDIX A  
HERITAGE & TOWNSCAPE  
VIEW ANALYSIS



# HERITAGE & TOWNSCAPE VIEW ANALYSIS

## I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

DLA has prepared indicative development schemes for various sites within Epsom town centre. As part of this exercise we were asked to consider locations within the town centre that might be suitable for new development that includes buildings that are taller than the existing surrounding townscape context. Based on an initial site visit and townscape appraisal, which identified broad character areas in and around the town centre, development schemes including taller buildings were prepared for the following locations:

### Hook Road, East Street, and Former Gasworks

This is a large brownfield site with potential for redevelopment and regeneration to create a new part of the town centre adjacent to existing facilities such as the Rainbow Leisure Centre. The site already includes taller structures associated with the former gas works together with Hook Road multi-storey car park. The railway line to the north, the road infrastructure, and the leisure centre provide some separation between the site and nearby residential uses. It incorporates heritage assets including listed buildings, and parts of the Epsom Town Centre, Adelphi Road, and Lintons Lane Conservation Areas, so heritage context considerations relating to the scale of development are important. However, investment in the area may provide the opportunity to enhance the setting of the heritage assets, for example through streetscape enhancements or the development of new buildings of a high architectural quality.

### Ashley Avenue

There are limited heritage assets in this part of Epsom town centre, which has been redeveloped in the latter part of the twentieth-century for large-scale commercial buildings. The existing townscape is of limited interest and sensitivity and redevelopment could enhance the area through the introduction of more active frontages, better quality architecture, and improved public realm.

Given the heritage and townscape sensitivities within Epsom town centre, and to test further the impact of the development schemes, particularly the taller building elements, DLA has subsequently undertaken a townscape assessment to consider the likely impact of the development schemes on key views.

Whilst this is not a full townscape assessment it provides an early indication of the likely impact of taller buildings and where they may contribute to placemaking, should the local planning authority wish to advocate this building type in certain locations within the town centre.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Inevitably there is an element of professional judgement required when considering subjective matters such as townscape and heritage impact, and in the selection of key views. The following steps were taken as part of our townscape assessment:

- An initial desk-based review to identify key views;
- A site visit to photograph and inspect the key views;
- Preparation of visualisations show the development schemes within the key views; and
- An analysis of the likely impact of the development schemes on the key views.

These steps are discussed in more detail below.

### Desk-based review

At this stage a review of desk-based resources was undertaken to understand potential key views relating to sensitive receptors including heritage assets and visual receptors such as public open space and residential areas. The following sources were consulted:

- EEBC Conservation Area Appraisals and/or maps. In some cases the maps associated with conservation area appraisals or the written descriptions within the reports identify key views, and these have been taken into account. Views were additionally selected based on the extent and layout of the conservation area, for example views along roads or across historic townscape that include the development schemes. The following

conservation areas were included in this exercise:

- » Epsom Town Centre
- » Stamford Green
- » Adelphi Road
- » Lintons Lane
- » Providence Place
- » Pikes Hill
- » Church Street
- » Burgh Heath Road
- » Worple Road
- » Woodcote

- The Historic England 'National Heritage List for England' mapping ([Search the List: Map Search | Historic England](#)). This enabled groups of listed buildings to be identified that might be affected by the development schemes.
- Online mapping and street views to identify potential sensitive visual receptors, such as public open spaces where people gather, nodes of activity, and sensitive uses such as residential areas.

Views were selected either including or from these receptors. Other views were selected to show areas of poorer townscape quality with the potential for enhancement through new development. A views plan was then prepared for further assessment on site.

### Site visit

A site visit then took place to assess the viewpoints on site. Each of the viewpoints was visited and two images were taken of each view using an SLR camera. One image with a 50mm lens to reflect the field of view of the human eye, and second at the widest possible angle to include more townscape context.

During the site visit the position of certain views selected during the desk-based stage were adjusted due to site conditions. Additional views were also selected on site that were not apparent during the desk-based review. In some cases the site visit demonstrated that a particular view selected at the desk-based stage would not be of use as the development schemes would not be visible, due to the distance from the schemes, or because there was a better alternative view.

The final selection of views informed by the site visit is provided on the 'Epsom Heritage and Townscape Views' map provided in this appendix, which shows views selected for testing in green and those deselected following the site visit in red. View 1 is not shown on the plan – this was a longer view inspected on site and was deselected. The selected view locations and associated sensitive receptors are summarised in the table below.



View	Location	Sensitive Receptors
2	West Hill looking south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stamford Green Conservation Area</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
3	West Hill looking south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stamford Green Conservation Area</li> <li>Grade II listed building (4 and 6 West Hill)</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
6	Church Street looking north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church Street Conservation Area</li> <li>Group of Grade II listed buildings</li> </ul>
7	Laburnum Road looking north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Church Street Conservation Area</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
8	Junction of Church Road and Albert Road looking north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pikes Hill Conservation Area</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
10	Middle Lane looking south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lintons Lane Conservation Area</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
12	Victoria Place looking south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lintons Lane Conservation Area</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
13	East Street looking south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group of Grade II listed buildings in distance at end of view</li> </ul>
14	East Street looking north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adelphi Road Conservation Area</li> <li>Group of Grade II listed buildings</li> </ul>
15	Junction of West Street, South Street and High Street looking south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area</li> <li>Group of Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings including Grade II* listed former Assembly Rooms</li> </ul>
17	The Parade looking east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taken from northern edge of Church Street Conservation Area (but not showing the conservation area)</li> <li>Public open space (Dullshot Green)</li> </ul>

View	Location	Sensitive Receptors
18	Ashley Road looking north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjacent to public open space (Rosebury Park)</li> <li>Adjacent to locally listed building</li> </ul>
19	Chase Road looking east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
20	Adelphi Road looking north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adelphi Road Conservation Area</li> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
22	Hook Road looking south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
24	The Grove looking north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential area</li> </ul>
25	Ashley Avenue looking west	
26	Leisure Centre car park looking south west	
27	Approach to Leisure Centre car park looking west	
28	East Street looking north west	
29	Hook Road looking north east	
30	Upper High Street looking south towards surface car park	
31	Upper High Street car park looking south west	
33	Depot Road looking east	
34	Church Street looking south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public open space (Dullshot Green)</li> </ul>
35	The Parade looking north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taken from northern edge of Church Street Conservation Area (but not showing conservation area)</li> </ul>
37	The Parade looking north east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed use including some residential opposite the Town Hall</li> </ul>

### Preparation of images using 3D model

The indicative development schemes prepared by DLA for the town centre sites have been added to a 3D model of Epsom, which includes the broad massing and scale of existing buildings and infrastructure such as roads, bridges and open space.

Images of the development schemes from the selected viewpoints were then taken from the 3D model, aligned to the 'as existing' photographs taken during the site visit. Where possible the images were based on photographs taken with a 50mm lens, although in some cases wider angle images were used where it was considered necessary to show more of the existing townscape context.

The photographs and 3D model images were then compiled to create the numbered 'existing' and 'proposed' visualisations of the development scheme provided in this Appendix. This has enabled an initial analysis of the impact of the development schemes on the views.

### Analysis

Our findings are presented in the next section. In brief, the existing and proposed views were considered having regard to the following matters:

- Existing views
  - » Quality, experience, type and condition of existing townscape
  - » Important groups of buildings with consistent architectural treatment
  - » Focal points
  - » Heritage assets and their settings
  - » Negative features – i.e. traffic, gap sites, poor townscape
  - » Type of view – i.e. short or longer view, filtered etc.
  - » Sensitivity to change
- Proposed views
  - » Height, scale bulk and massing/compatibility with existing townscape
  - » Form and layout
  - » Permeability and legibility
  - » Removal of existing harmful elements
  - » Potential to enhance townscape character, public realm/landscape, active frontages etc
  - » Impact on visual amenity – during the day and at night
  - » Prominence, who will experience the development
  - » Impact on setting of heritage assets

The 'as proposed' model images provided in the appendix provide an indication of the height, scale, form and massing of the development schemes and this has formed the basis of our assessment. They do not provide full architectural details such as proposed materials, façade treatment including horizontal and vertical emphasis, fenestration, roof line, and bay treatment and proportions. This information is crucial when considering the acceptability of a tall building.

Also important when assessing the impact of tall buildings is their impact on night time illumination, daylight and sunlight, wind, and microclimate in general. DLA has not undertaken any detailed technical studies when assessing the town centre development schemes.



### 3. FINDINGS

#### Historic core of Epsom (View 15)

Existing view 15 is located within the western end of the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area. Part of the Grade II\* listed Assembly Rooms, an important focal point, is partly within the view, together with other listed buildings dating from the eighteenth-century, which form an important grouping using attractive traditional materials, building forms, and details. The open space to the front of these buildings provides a setting to the heritage assets together with a place for public gathering and for public art installations. The prevalence of historic buildings and their settings results in a high quality townscape experienced by many users of the town centre. This part of Epsom is in a good condition and it is sensitive to change introduced by new developments.

The taller building proposed on Ashley Avenue is not visible from proposed view 15. This suggests additional height could potentially be accommodated in this location without impacting on the view from the historic core. Further testing would establish the point at which additional height becomes visible from the western part of the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area, breaking the established roof profile of the historic buildings.

#### Suburban residential areas (Views 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 24)

These longer views are from places on the southern and eastern fringes of the town centre, with typical features including streets trees, open space, green verges, and a lower density of development. Negative features are limited and residential uses predominate. Most views are from within conservation areas and some are close to listed buildings and their settings. Attractive and established residential areas such as these can be sensitive to change from new development that does not reflect prevailing characteristics.

In these views the development schemes are present either in the middle or far distance and the impact relates to relative form and scale compared to the existing context and particular roof profiles. With the exception of view 8, where no new development can be seen, the proposed views show that in overall terms the developments are reflective of existing context and do not appear out of scale.

Some of the taller elements are marginally above the existing roofscape (views 2, 3 and 24) and are likely to appear more prominent during the night when illuminated.

#### Other residential areas (Views 10, 12, 19, 20 and 22)

These views show residential areas that differ from those described above as they are more urban and denser in character with less street trees and green space. All are located around the former gasworks and some are from within conservation areas.

Given the lack of street trees architectural characteristics are more apparent in these areas. Apart from isolated listed buildings and parts of the Adelphi Road Conservation Area the townscape present is not particularly distinctive. There is however consistency as two-storey pairs and terraces of housing predominate set behind small front gardens with facing materials including brick, render and roof tiles. Low boundary walls are usually present between the gardens and the adjacent road and footway.

The views are sensitive due to the shared architectural characteristics described above and also the predominantly residential use. In common with other residential areas, parked cars are a negative feature, and are particularly evident on narrow streets.

With regard to the proposed views, elements of the development scheme for the former gas works are visible in all of the views to varying extents, with the tower being particularly prominent and stark in the longer views 10 and 19. The development is less prominent in shorter and glimpse views (views 12 and 20), demonstrating that the dynamic experience of the views and the development scheme would vary.

The scale change in views 10 and 19 would be experienced by the residents and visitors to the existing townscape, and illumination at night would likely have an impact on visual amenity. However, the 3D model used for this initial assessment does not include any of the refinements that would result from design development and would likely reduce the impact of the development, relating to the form and footprint of the taller buildings, and architectural detailing such as materials, fenestration including window reveals, and other elements of the facades.

Notwithstanding this, consideration should be given to a different building configuration that potentially creates a more gentle cluster of taller buildings in the views.

### **Open Spaces (Views 17, 18, 34 and 35)**

The principal open space affected by the development schemes is Dullshot Green, shown in views 17 and 34. This is not located in any conservation area but is a pleasant green amenity space within the town centre including several mature trees. Whilst there is a lack of seating the green space has some sensitivity as it provides a place for people to relax or gather. Existing development around the green includes 'Greenwood Court', a 4/5 storey residential building.

The delivery of higher density development at the edges of Dullshot Green as shown in the proposed views does represent a change in character when compared to the existing situation. However, in a town centre context it appears commensurate with the scale of the adjacent open space and provides a significant opportunity to enhance the functioning of the space. The introduction of new residents and potential investment in the green would very likely increase the use of the space and activity within it.

View 35 shows an existing pedestrian route leading to Dullshot Green from the east, with a brick wall on the northern side of the route. Dwellings are present to the south but not shown in the view. The 3-storey residential development shown in the proposed view would provide additional surveillance to the route whilst maintaining its function as a pedestrian connection within the town centre.

A larger green space at the edge of the town centre is Rosebery Park. Due to tree screening and the position of the park no views were selected for further testing from within the open space but view 18 is located on its north eastern edge. The new development shown the the proposed view provides the same opportunities for enhancement to the local area as those set out in relation to view 25 below. It is unlikely that such development would have any significant impact on the experience of visitors to Rosebery Park.



### **Ashley Avenue (View 25)**

This is a short view showing the road junction of Ashley Avenue and the A24/Ashley Road in the foreground and part of an existing commercial building on the northern side of Ashley Avenue, located behind a brick wall that directly fronts the footway. Neither the post-war building nor the road infrastructure provide an attractive townscape or environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and they are not particularly sensitive to change.

Whilst the as proposed view does not provide architectural treatment it demonstrates that a new building or buildings comparable in scale to the existing building would appear appropriate to the context and width of the road junction. Development and investment here would provide an opportunity to introduce more legible new buildings that activate the street, together with public realm to improve the pedestrian experience, potentially including a widened footway on the northern side of Ashley Avenue and more sensitive road infrastructure throughout.

### **Other commercial areas (Views 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33 and 37)**

Most of these views show townscape of no or very limited interest. The views typically include road infrastructure such as railings, traffic lights and signage, surface car parking that create gaps in the streetscape as they are devoid of buildings, or existing buildings dating from the post-war period, that do not reflect the finer grain of the surfacing groups of historic buildings elsewhere in the town centre. These views are not particularly sensitive to change and the proposed views, whilst showing limited detail, indicate new buildings and uses with a form and layout that, following detailed design development, have the potential to create a more attractive and legible environment, and enhance the character of and activity within the local area.

View 14 shows the eastern part of the Adelphi Road Conservation Area and includes positive and negative elements. The view includes mature trees and distinctive two-storey weatherboarded cottages that are listed at grade II. However, the foreground is dominated by road infrastructure and an advertising billboard is prominent in the background. New development and investment here has the potential to enhance the functioning of the area and the heritage assets (directly and with regard to setting). The

proposed view does show a scale change comparable with the change described in relation to views 10 and 19 above. Similar considerations relating to the detailed design of the buildings and their overall configuration also apply here. The tower is particularly prominent in this view and contrasts with the scale and form of the traditional buildings in the middle ground.

Finally, view 37 has been included in this section as it is close to commercial parts of the town centre. The view shows the original part of the Town Hall, which is first shown on the 1953 OS plan but we understand it dates from 1934. The townhouses shown in the proposed view are of an appropriate scale for a town centre location and would reflect the residential uses present to the south of the existing civic space.

## 4. SUMMARY

Broadly, the majority of the development schemes reflect local townscape context with regard to height and scale, or are not visible in the views.

We have identified opportunities for new development to contribute to the enhancement of townscape character and the setting of heritage assets.

Our initial appraisal has however demonstrated that a tower located on the former gasworks site would appear particularly prominent and stark in certain views from sensitive residential areas (Views 10 and 19), and also from a view north from East Street (View 14), which includes the Adelphi Road Conservation Area and a group of Grade II listed buildings.

For this reason consideration should be given to a different building configuration, potentially that creates a more gentle cluster of taller buildings in the views with a more appropriate impact on the visual and heritage receptors.





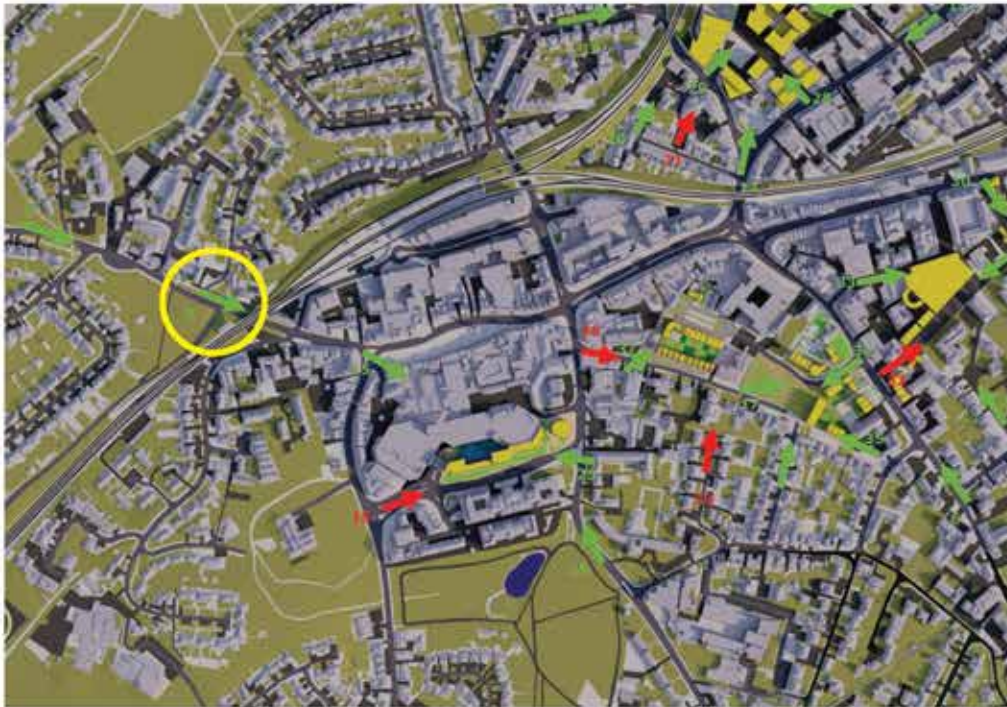
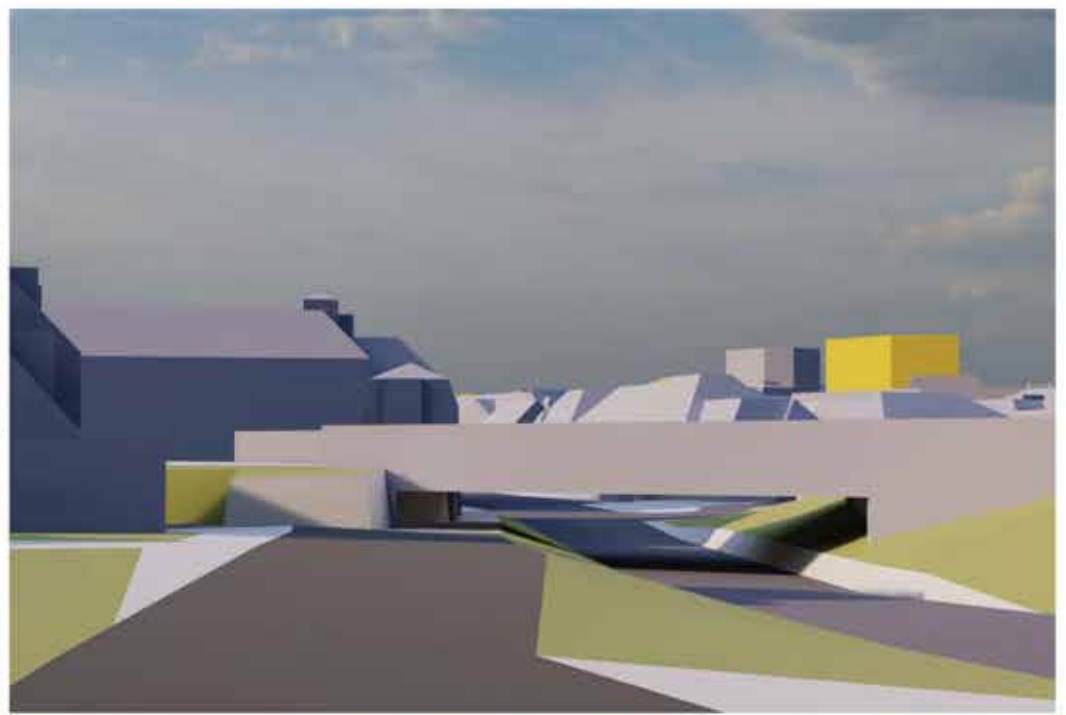
Epsom Heritage and Townscape Views





VIEW 2





VIEW 3





VIEW 6





VIEW 7





VIEW 8





VIEW 10





VIEW 12





VIEW 13





VIEW 14





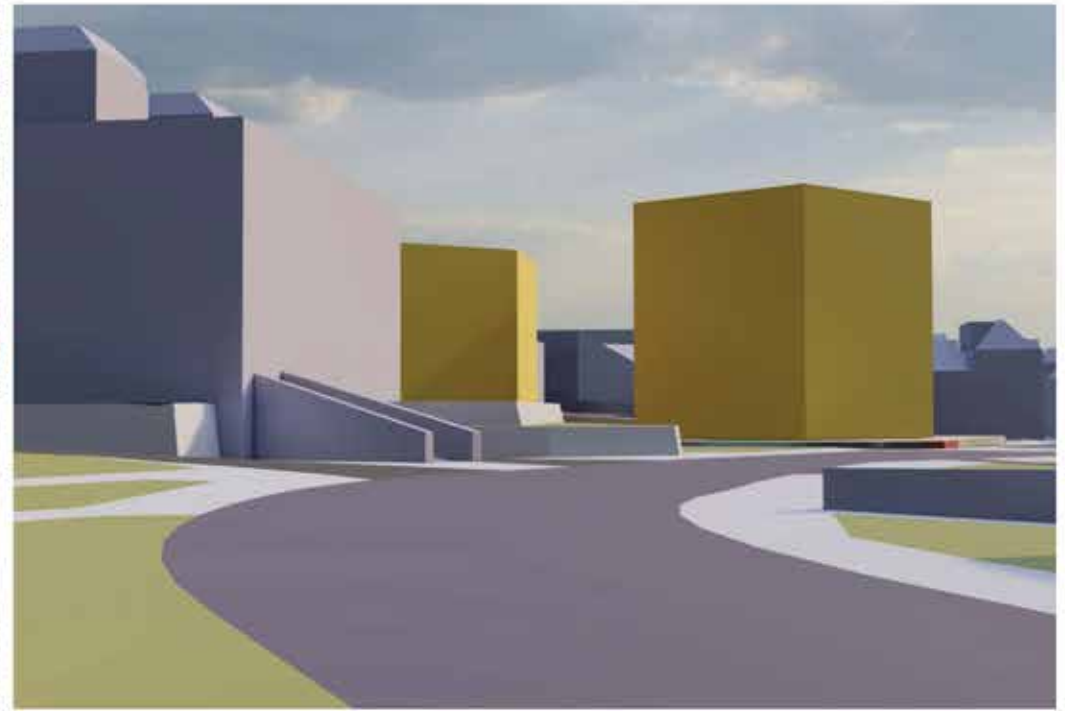
VIEW 15





VIEW 17





VIEW 18





VIEW 19





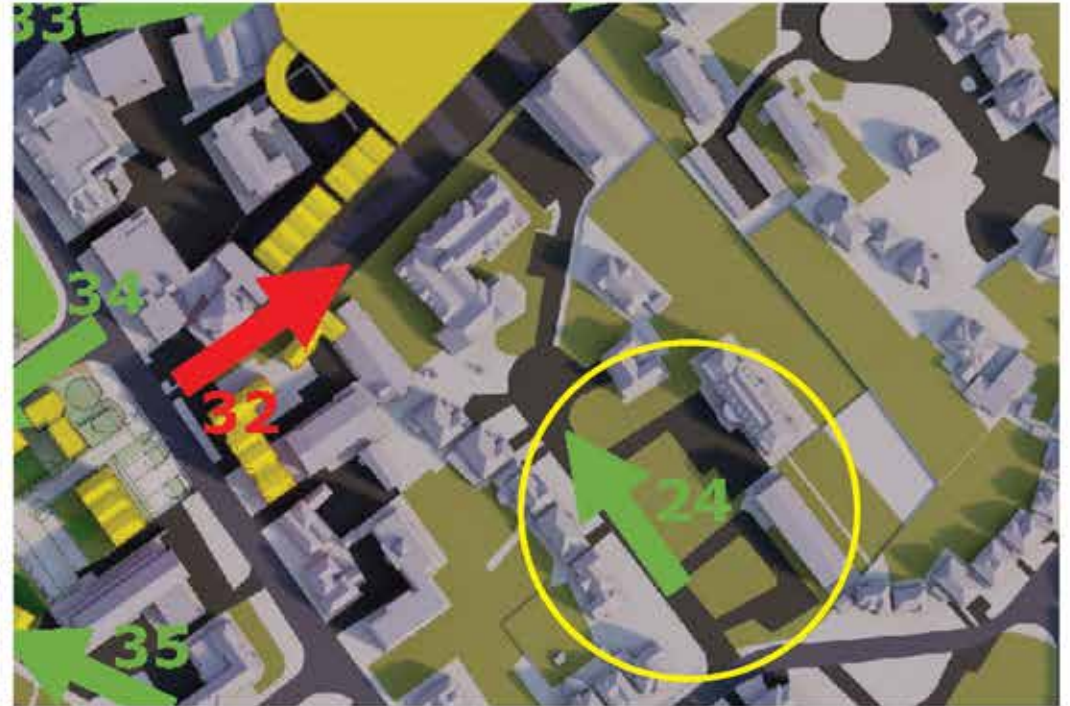
VIEW 20





VIEW 22





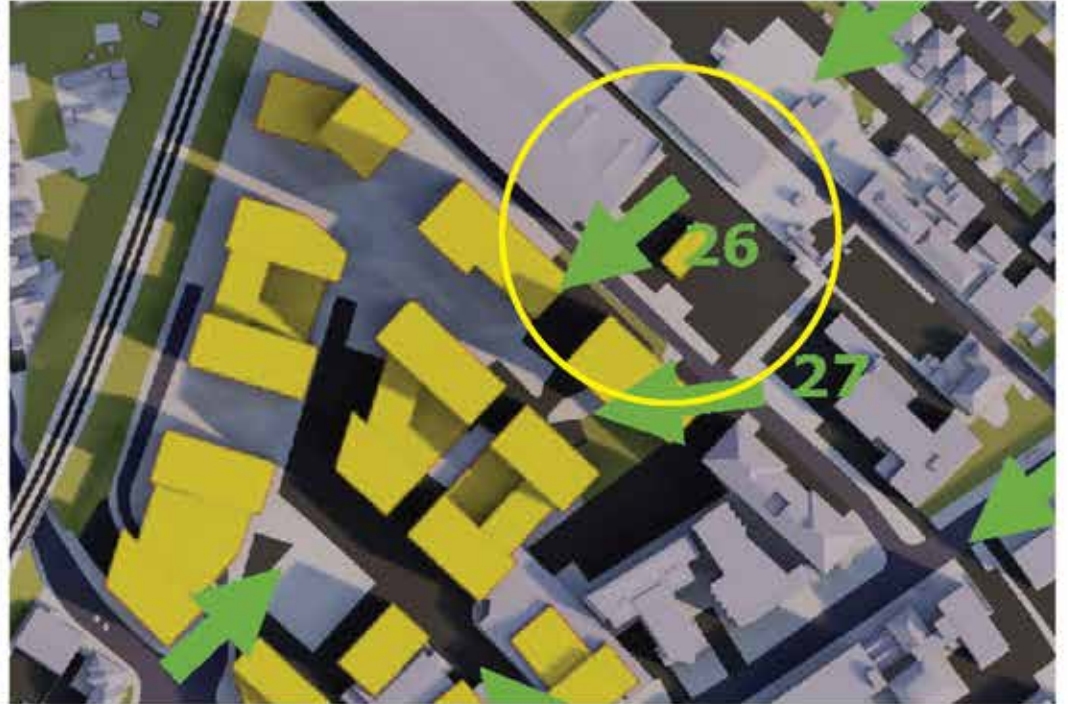
VIEW 24





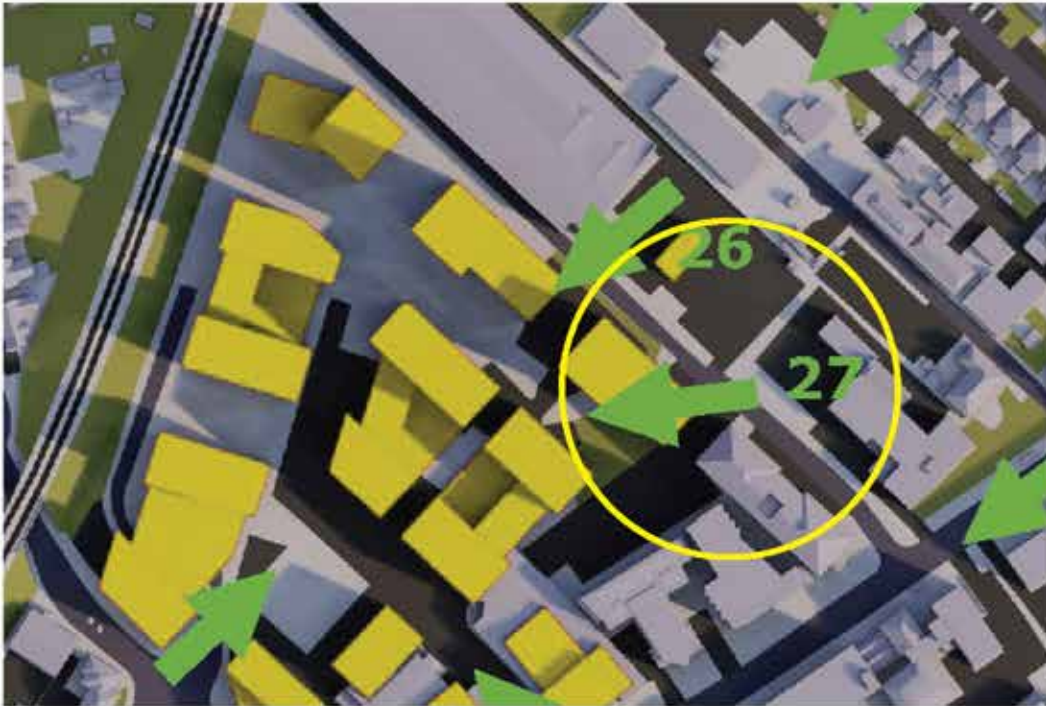
VIEW 25





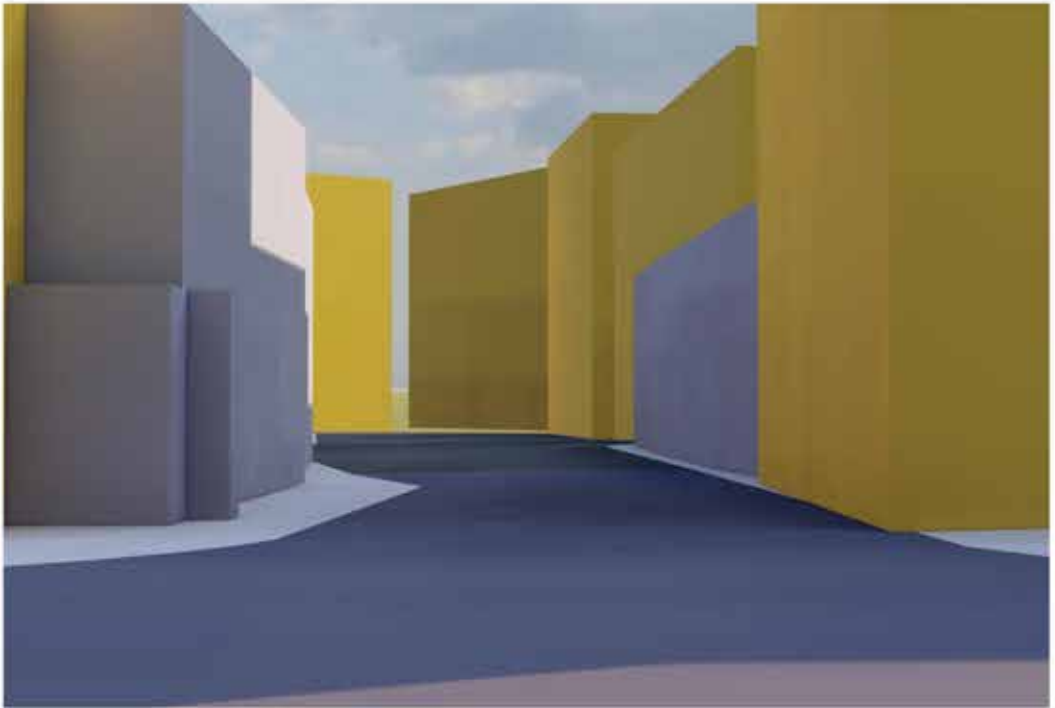
VIEW 26





VIEW 27





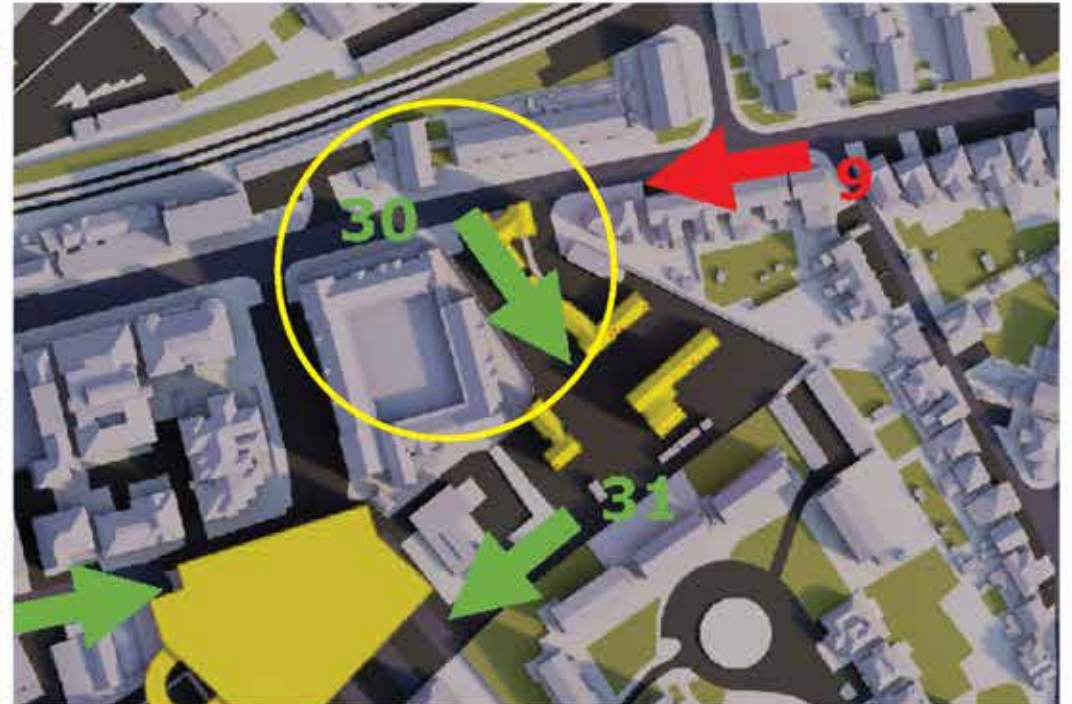
VIEW 28





VIEW 29





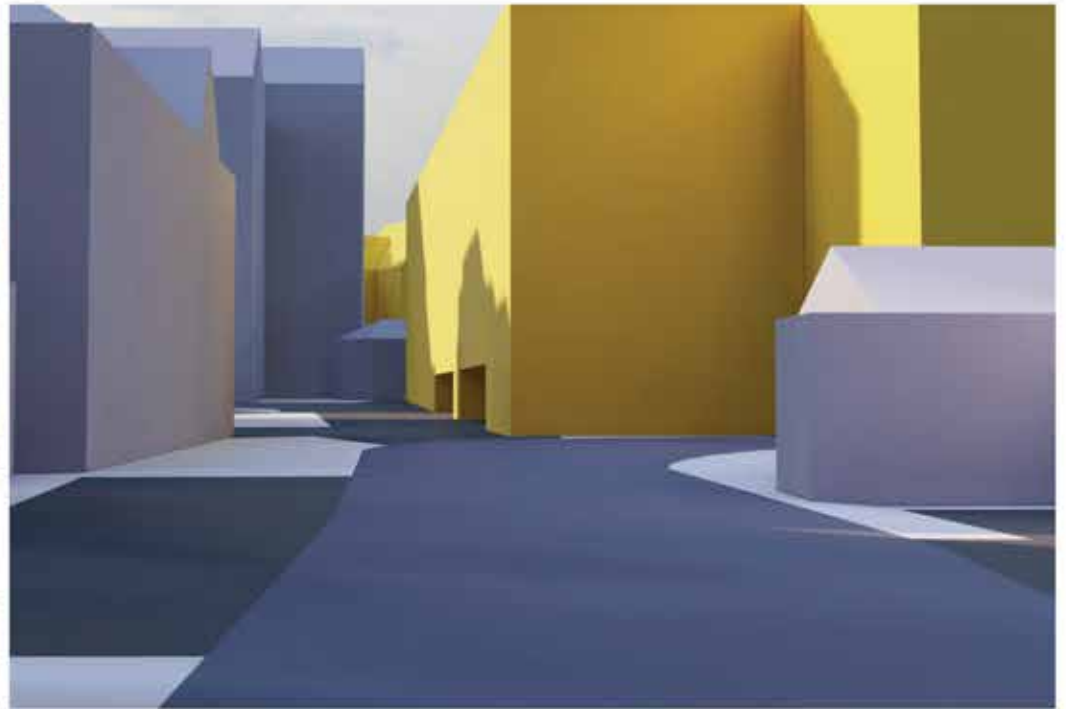
VIEW 30





VIEW 31





VIEW 33





**VIEW 34**





VIEW 35





VIEW 37







## APPENDIX B: STAGE 1 BASELINE REPORT

# APPENDICES

# EPSOM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

STAGE 1 BASELINE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023









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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Role & Function of the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

- 1.1 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has committed to preparing a new Epsom Town Centre Masterplan to set out the vision for the Town Centre up to the year 2040, and to provide a framework to help guide development decisions within Epsom Town Centre. The Epsom Town Centre Masterplan will be a key piece of evidence to inform the Council's Local Plan (2022-2040) by identifying development options for specific Epsom Town Centre sites and identifying how the wider town centre could be improved through a focused approach to placemaking.
- 1.2 The role and nature of town centres has been changing significantly with the contraction in High Street retail arising from the growth in online shopping and a growing demand for leisure and recreation. The accelerating pressures of climate change are forcing us to think again about our buildings, spaces and lifestyles, and the COVID pandemic has changed people's working patterns as well as our homes and green spaces.
- 1.3 In light of the climate emergency, EEBC committed to their [Climate Change Action Plan](#) in 2020, which involved setting an ambitious target of achieving carbon neutral operations by 2035. This 4-year plan relies on a range of measures to help reduce the council's own emissions as well as promoting good practice

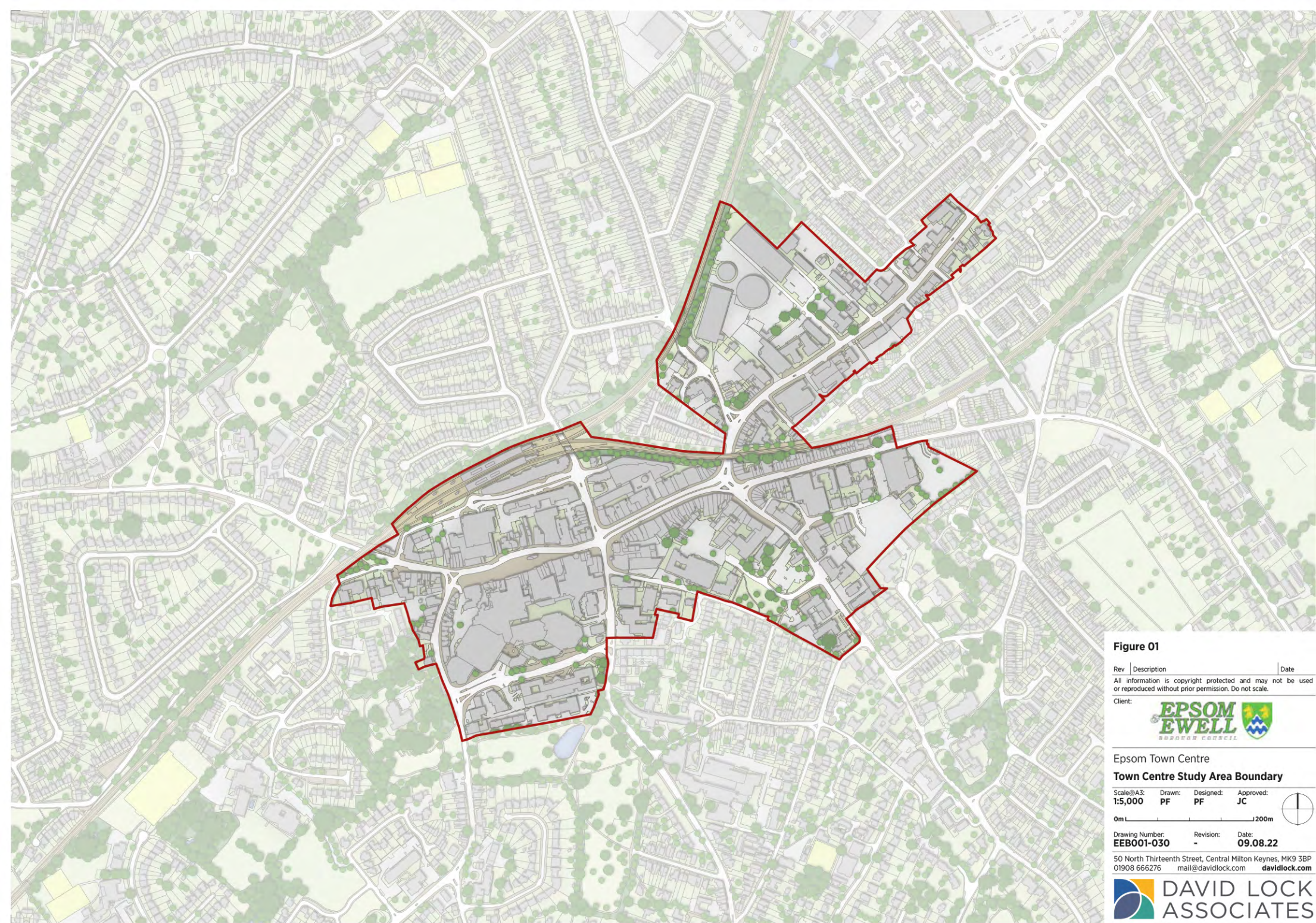
throughout the borough. This commitment to good practice will be a cornerstone of the Town Centre Masterplan.

- 1.4 The Masterplan will establish an overarching vision for Epsom Town Centre that will enable sustainable development including new homes and a thriving retail and business environment, as well as strengthening Epsom's cultural, creative and recreational offer.
- 1.5 The Masterplan will explore the key development opportunity sites to identify not only their future potential but to provide a clear framework and principles for development in the town centre, bringing uses and buildings together to create a unique sense of place and allowing future proposals to be assessed in a comprehensive manner to address the following:
- The parameters for development of the key sites (the Ashley Centre, University for the Creative Arts campus, Southern Gas Network/Hook Road site, and the Town Hall/Depot Road site)
  - The facilities and infrastructure that would be needed to support the development of key sites (parking, servicing, retail, social, community, transport)
  - Environmental and travel improvements to the town centre that could be facilitated through development proposals (through development itself, CIL and S106)
  - Key principles for retention, enhancement, or repair of those parts of the town centre that would not be subject to major development proposals

**Stage 1 Baseline Report**

1.6 This Stage 1 Baseline Report brings together the findings of the initial survey and analysis of the current town centre. In particular, it highlights how and why the findings are relevant to the ensuing Masterplanning exercise, and it highlights where it may be appropriate to explore a range of options for the key sites before identifying a preferred solution.





**Figure 01**

Rev	Description	Date
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Client:



Epsom Town Centre

**Town Centre Study Area Boundary**

Scale@A3:	Drawn:	Designed:	Approved:
1:5,000	PF	PF	JC

0m 200m

Drawing Number:	Revision:	Date:
EEB001-030	-	09.08.22

50 North Thirteenth Street, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3BP  
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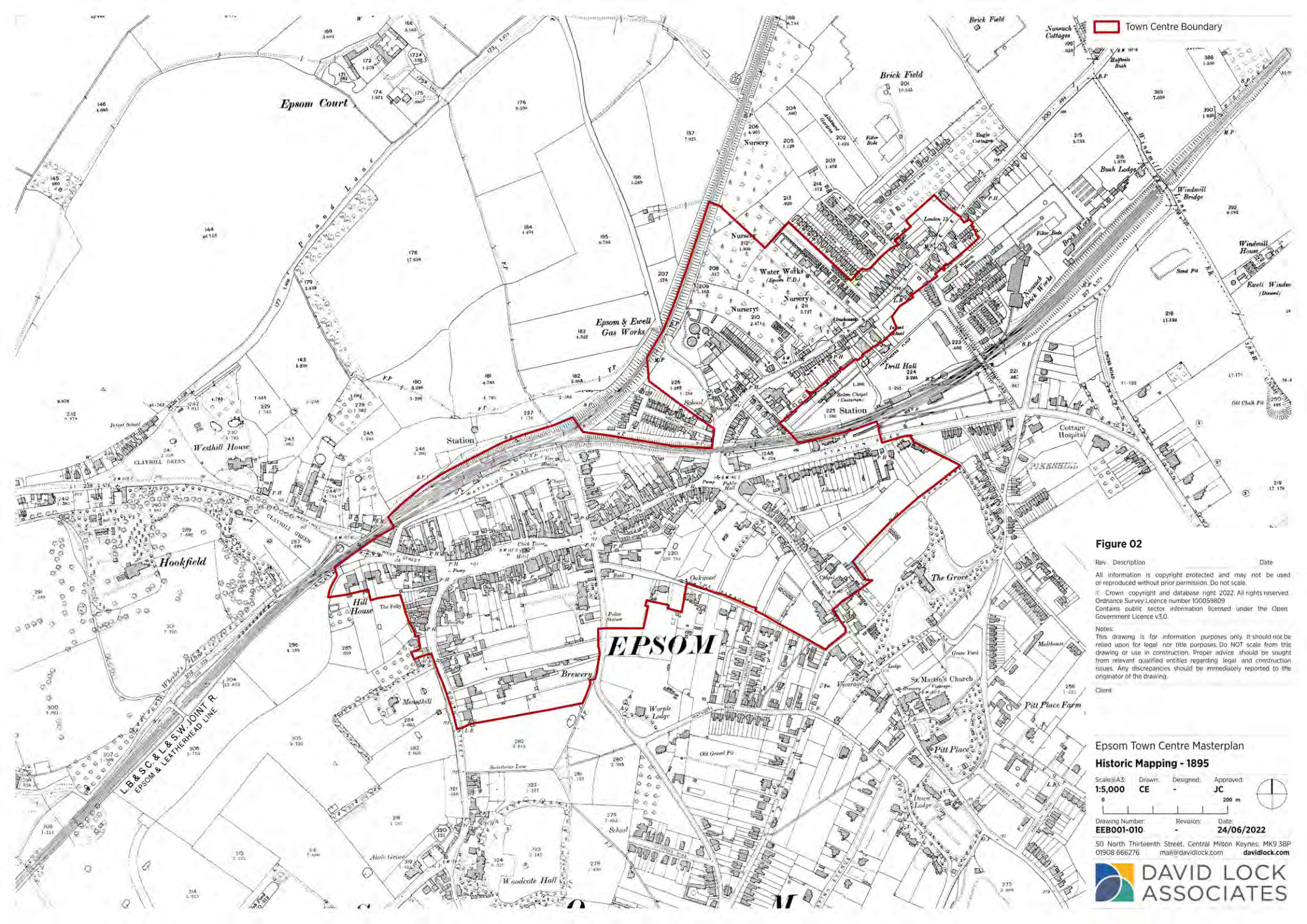
## **2.0 EPSOM TOWN CENTRE: PAST & PRESENT**

### **Growth of the Town Centre**

- 2.1 The modern town of Epsom has its beginnings in the Middle Ages, although there is evidence of human habitation of the area dating back to the early Bronze Age. There are parts of the current town centre's structure and layout which have their foundation in the medieval period, evidenced by the principal historic street structure and burgage plot pattern. That these features have endured over many centuries is testament to their continued relevance and value in urban planning and placemaking.
- 2.2 Epsom's unique history and qualities are well documented including its early success as a spa town, the production of Epsom Salts and the establishment of the races in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The first railway station opened in 1847, and the town experienced major growth in the interwar period. The historic maps presented here reveal the town centre's physical expansion between 1895, 1934 and 1953.
- 2.3 As the town has grown, the town centre has expanded to serve the needs of a growing population. The diagrams below highlight the areas of town centre change between 1870 and 1983. What is of particular relevance to the Masterplan is the fact that the town centre has avoided any large-scale comprehensive redevelopment schemes and as a consequence its medieval structure remains largely intact. Change has been accommodated within this

structure, and whilst redevelopment dating from the 1970's and 1980's has undermined the human scale and attractiveness of the centre, in the main it remains legible with an overarching heritage character.





Town Centre Boundary

**Figure 02**

Rev. Description Date

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Client:

**Epsom Town Centre Masterplan**

**Historic Mapping - 1895**

Scale: A3 Drawn: CE Designed: JC Approved: JC

1:5,000


0 200 m

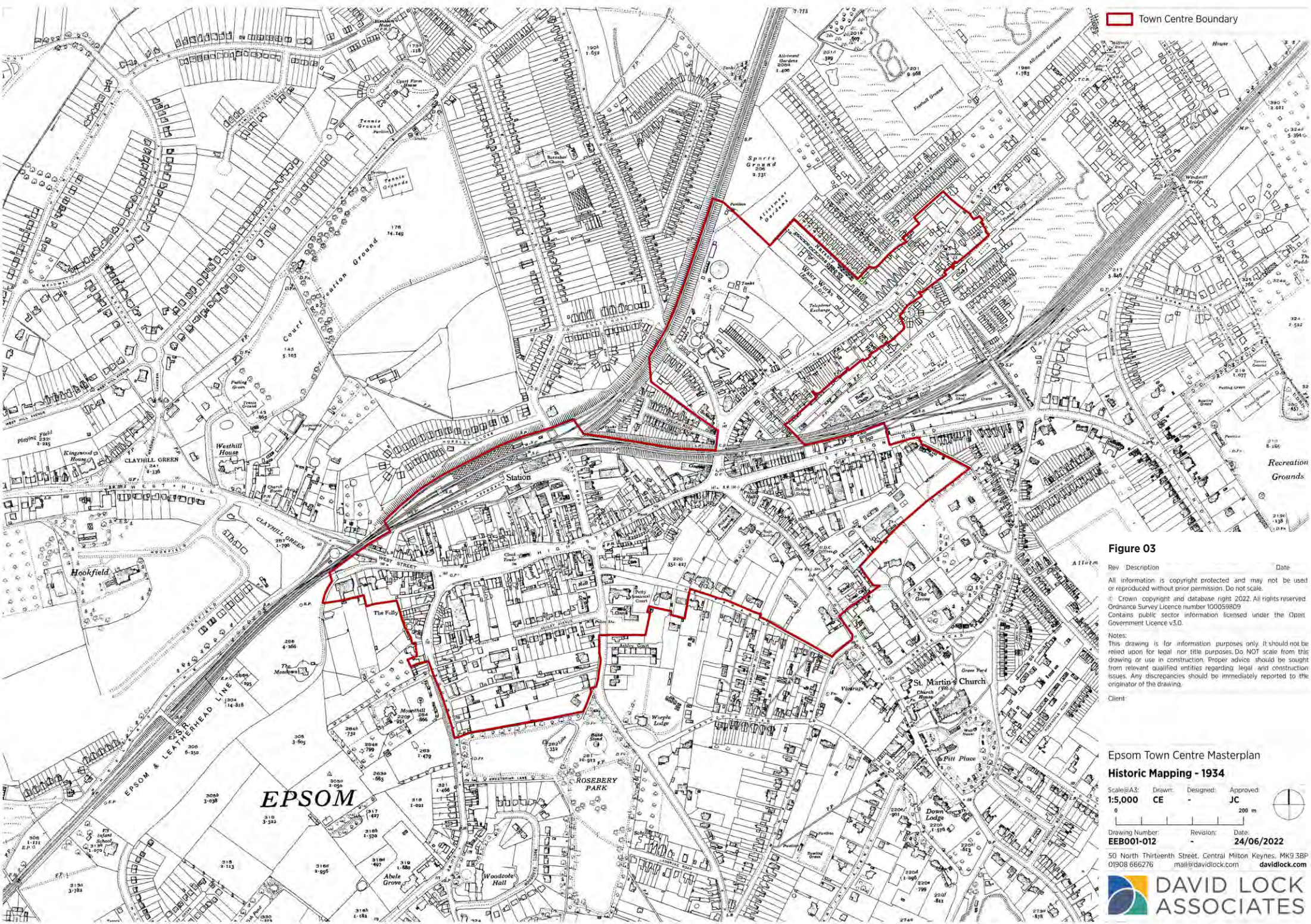
Drawing Number: **EEB001-010** Revision: - Date: **24/06/2022**

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 Town Centre Boundary



**Figure 03**

Rev	Description	Date
1	Issue for information	24/06/2022

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Client:

**Epsom Town Centre Masterplan**  
**Historic Mapping - 1934**

Scale: A3: 1:5,000  
Drawn: CE  
Designed: JC  
Approved: JC

0 200 m

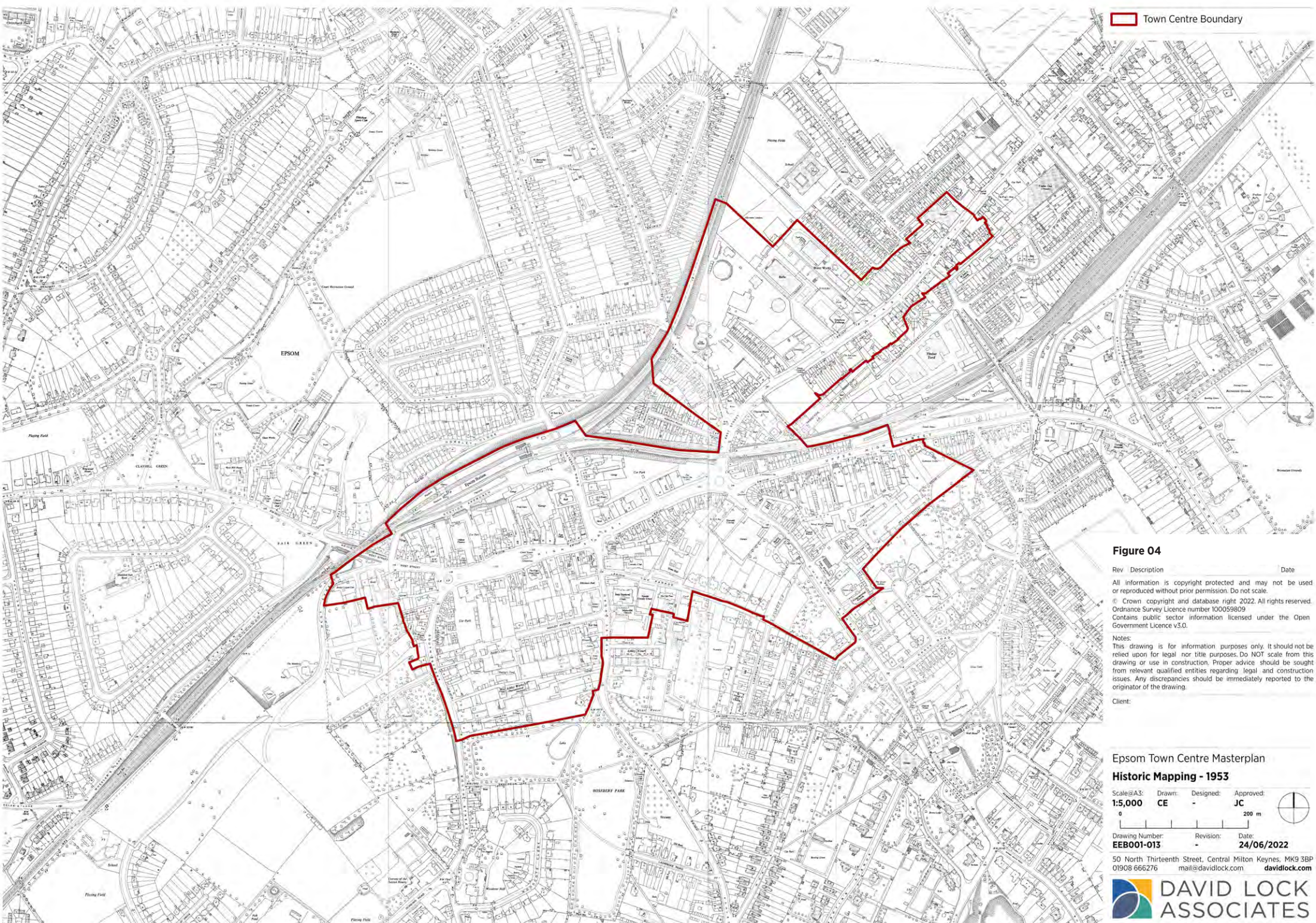
Drawing Number: **EEB001-012**      Revision:      Date: **24/06/2022**

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 Town Centre Boundary



**Figure 04**

Rev Description Date

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Client:

**Epsom Town Centre Masterplan**

**Historic Mapping - 1953**

Scale@A3: Drawn: **CE** Designed: **JC** Approved: **JC**

0 200 m 

Drawing Number: **EEB001-013** Revision: **-** Date: **24/06/2022**

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**1870**

- The core of the centre is recognisable, but it is much smaller.
- Tight urban fabric forms the High Street, with the burgage plot pattern still very evident.
- Market Square reads as an informal space created by increased distance between building fronts.
- The town is served by two railway stations.
- Further east, Victorian terraced housing lines the former Station Road, and gas and water works highlight the growth in utilities to support the town.

**1913**

- Development begins to intensify the urban core, infilling gaps in the street frontage, replacing older buildings, and forming frontages for more streets, such as along Church Street.
- Development pattern still follows key roads.
- Little development around the train stations.
- Expansion of industrial activities at the Water and Gas Works.

**1934**

- Significant expansion of Epsom Train Station, with alleyways connecting it to the Market Square.
- Beginning to see some larger footprint buildings constructed, which represent a notable departure from the burgage plot

pattern where houses were constructed on long narrow plots with narrow street frontages.

- All of the present-day streets are visible and fully formed, leading to a cohesion between the west and east parts of the town centre.

**1973**

- Significant intensification and infill particularly extending high street buildings to fill their plots.
- Replacement of many high street buildings between 1950-1970, most notably along the eastern section of High Street, allowing for the widening of the carriageway.
- Further highway interventions including roundabouts at each end of the High Street mark the increased need to manage traffic within the town centre.
- Buildings have larger footprints, leading to a coarser grain
- Larger footprint buildings are being delivered – particularly towards the East and North.

**1983**

- Main development focused on the land clearance and construction of the Ashley Centre which dramatically changed the urban landscape and character of the town centre with an inwards looking building and multistorey car park. This is a marked departure from the traditional centre



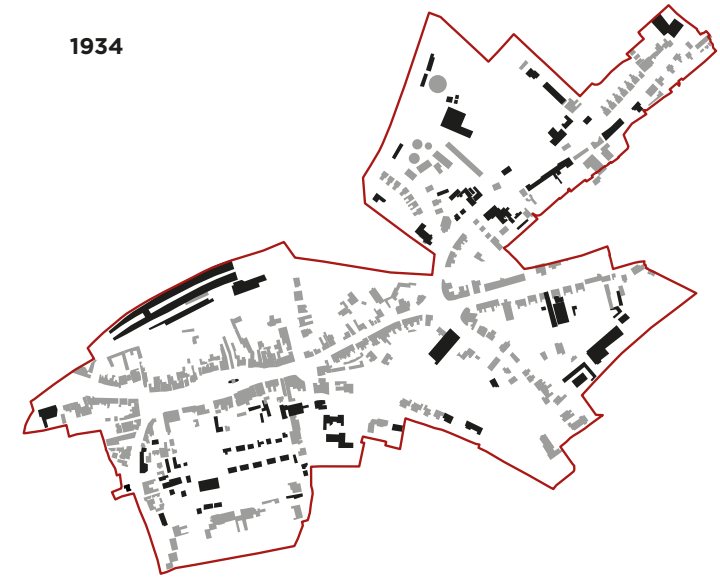
1870



1913



1934



1973



1983



Figure 05

Rev	Description	Date
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Epsom Town Centre

Historical Growth - 1870-1983

Scale@A3:	Drawn:	Designed:	Approved:
Not to scale	PF	JB	JC



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focused on outdoor streets and spaces, fronted by human scale buildings.

- On East Street, a pattern of replacing historic buildings with large footprint office buildings continues.

- In general terms, land has been used efficiently, with infilling of blocks and land parcels adding to the intensity of the town centre.

### ***Implications for Masterplanning***

2.4 There are a number of useful points to draw from this overview of change over time, which are useful to the Masterplanning exercise:

- The structure of the town centre has proved adaptable to change over time. Even where the architectural response has detracted from the overall character, the town centre has remained recognisable.
- Many historic buildings remain, and there are areas where the traditional fine-grained pattern of development remains strong.
- The town centre has grown but remains compact and walkable. Highway interventions in the 1970's to accommodate traffic contributed to the loss of some historic fabric and paved the way for a car dominated environment, to the detriment of the pedestrian experience.
- The town centre has grown towards the station, but links between the two are weak. Recent development has failed to secure better connectivity.



## Heritage

2.5 This section explores the characteristics and qualities of the town centre from a heritage perspective. Figure 4 is a historic environment map identifying the following heritage assets in and around Epsom Town Centre:

- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Other potential non-designated heritage assets (discussed in more detail below)

2.6 The entire Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area falls within the town centre boundary. The conservation area is focussed on the historic core of Epsom and includes a concentration of listed buildings around West Street, South Street, and the wide Market Square in the western part of the High Street.

2.7 Individual buildings date from the emergence of Epsom as a spa town in the C17 onwards, with the earliest buildings including the Grade II\* listed Assembly Rooms, built in c.1692, and the Grade II listed buildings the Spread Eagle Hotel (now Lester Bowden) and Albion Public House (now McCafferty's), which date from the C17 and early C18 respectively. These buildings and others such as the Victorian clock tower provide focal points within the historic townscape.

2.8 The survival of a high number of historic buildings within the conservation area results in this part of the town centre retaining its traditional and historically significant fine grain of development, and in turn a variety of shops, restaurants, pubs and other commercial uses that contribute to the vitality of the conservation area. The town centre enjoys a high level of pedestrian activity enhanced by the pedestrianised Market Square.

2.9 There is consistency in building heights of 2-3 storeys and a prevailing roofscape comprising hipped and pitched tile or slate roofs sometimes located behind parapets. Whilst red brick predominates there is some variety in the façade treatments within the conservation area with many buildings faced in painted render and examples of the use of applied timber framing, pargetting, stonework, weatherboarding, and terracotta. The townscape within the conservation area contributes positively to the character of the town centre as a pleasant and enjoyable place to visit.

2.10 Appropriately detailed shopfronts and signage is present within the conservation area, including an example of a C18 bow windowed shopfront (127-9 High Street, Pearl Chemist). These contribute to the positive experience of visiting the town centre. However, there is an opportunity for enhancement through the replacement of less sensitive later shopfronts and signage with more appropriate designs that better reflect local historic

character and incorporate surviving historic features such as pilasters and corbelling.

2.11 Other issues that could be considered by the Masterplan include traffic and pedestrian management measures within the conservation area. Whilst the town centre seems to enjoy high footfall and the Market Square provides a pedestrian friendly environment, elsewhere barriers limit pedestrian movement and appear to give priority to cars. The Masterplan could consider more sensitive approaches to traffic management where appropriate to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings.

2.12 The potential redevelopment of infill sites also provides an opportunity for enhancement. This does not necessarily require a historicist approach to architectural design, but regard should be had to the fine grain of development, fenestration patterns, and building forms that contribute positively to the conservation area and the wider town centre.

2.13 Some of the opportunity sites within the town centre encompass listed and locally listed buildings. It will be important to understand the significance of these heritage assets when considering and designing new development and to take any opportunities available to enhance or better reveal the significance of the heritage assets.

2.14 A small part of the town centre around East Street and Hook Road falls within the Adelphi Road Conservation Area, which is located directly north of the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area between the two railway lines serving Epsom from the east and north.

2.15 The larger part of the Adelphi Road Conservation Area located outside of the town centre boundary is focussed on Adelphi Road and comprises terraces and pairs of mainly two-storey nineteenth-century residential properties. Within the town centre boundary and arranged around the road junction formed by East Street and Hook Road are a three-storey terrace with commercial units at ground floor level, Hook Road School, a single Grade II listed school dating from 1837-40 with large 3-storey linked extension, and a group of semi-detached properties and restaurant, most of which are listed and faced in weatherboarding.

2.16 The commentary above relating to shopfronts also applies here. However, potentially the most pertinent issue for the Masterplan to consider is the junction between Hook Road and East Street, which is the former location of Epsom's first cinema, the Electrical Theatre Company built in 1910 and demolished in 1953. The junction currently comprises traffic islands and a grass verge dominated by a billboard advertisement. There is an opportunity to enhance the conservation area through a sensitive redesign of this junction.



- 2.17 A single building within the town centre boundary is also located in the Church Street Conservation Area. This unlisted 2-storey red brick building is known as Heath House and is thought to date from the early 1930s.
- 2.18 Parts of the wider conservation area are adjacent to the town centre boundary and one of the opportunity sites identified by EEBC. The conservation area comprises the historic core of old Epsom around the late medieval church of St Martin's. Several listed and locally listed buildings are present.
- 2.19 The Stamford Green Conservation Area is adjacent to the western edge of the town centre. There is a marked change in character when one emerges from the railway bridge at the western edge of the town centre into the Stamford Green Conservation Area. Here the commercial character of the town centre with green space and suburban residential development. Development of scale within the town centre, particularly at its western edge, is likely to affect the setting of the conservation area.
- 2.20 Other conservation areas are shown on DLA's historic environment map that either abut the town centre boundary and/or an opportunity site or are located nearby. These conservation areas largely comprise 2-storey residential development in the suburbs around the town centre. Some include listed and locally listed building, and these are also shown on the map, as are buildings located outside of any conservation area. As for the other heritage assets discussed above, the impact on the setting and significance of these heritage assets are important considerations and any opportunities to enhance or better reveal significance should be taken.
- 2.21 The Planning Practice Guidance (2022) notes that local planning authorities may also identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications. It is therefore important to be mindful of potential non-designated heritage assets when considering the Masterplan, particularly any buildings located within the opportunity sites that have been identified by EEBC. Based on visual inspection and a historic mapping review two potential non-designated heritage assets are noted with the opportunity sites:
- The original parts of the Town Hall: this is first shown on the 1953 OS plan, but we understand it dates from 1934.
  - Surviving buildings associated with the former Water Works. Buildings are shown in this location on OS plans dating from the late nineteenth-century and the current configuration appears to be shown complete on the 1934 plan. Their retention could potentially form a buffer between larger-scale development on the opportunity site and the adjacent Linton's Lane Conservation Area.
- 2.22 These buildings are identified on the Historic Environment map. Consideration should be given to further research to understand

their significance and potential for retention and reuse as part of the town centre Masterplan.

***Implications for Masterplanning***

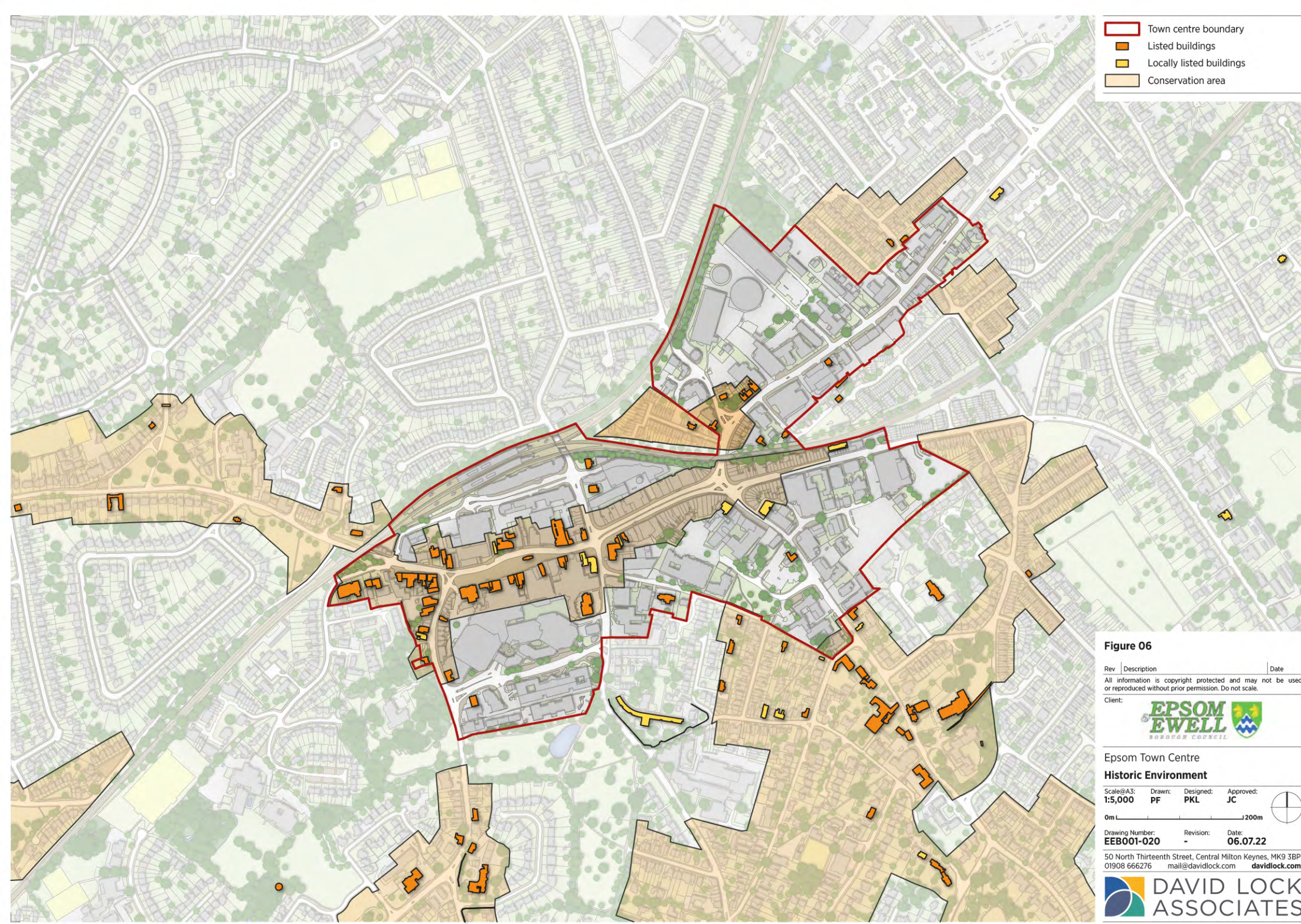
2.23 As part of the wider development of the Masterplan, it is prudent to consider the potential for taller buildings in and around the town centre. As a starting point for any development proposals, a Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) / Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) should be prepared to establish the catchment area from which the development can potentially be seen. Selection of viewpoints for further testing would then follow taking into account the location of sensitive heritage receptors. Important heritage considerations would include:

- The impact on important / sensitive views from and including heritage assets, particularly the impact from proposed taller buildings or higher development densities;
- The quality of the proposed architecture and its relation to the existing assets;
- The impact on historic roofscapes;
- The impact of the proposals at ground level including at key street frontages;
- The management of traffic and pedestrian movement within the Conservation Area;
- Any direct or indirect enhancements to heritage assets proposed; and

- Cumulative impacts of committed and proposed development in the Town Centre on the character and setting of heritage assets.



- Town centre boundary
- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- Conservation area



**Figure 06**

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Client:		



Epsom Town Centre  
**Historic Environment**

Scale@A3:	Drawn:	Designed:	Approved:
1:5,000	PF	PKL	JC

0m 200m

Drawing Number: **EEB001-020**      Revision: -      Date: **06.07.22**

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**Current Land Use and Activity**

- 2.24 Figure 5 shows uses at ground floor level. The town acts as a service centre and a popular place to shop and work. It has a vibrant retail economy, with a range of national multiples well balanced with independent shops. This latter point is noteworthy as access to good quality local shops has been found to be important in generating a sense of pride and community, which in turn generates a sense of wellbeing.
- 2.25 Unsurprisingly, High Street is the principal focus for retail activity and food and drink. In more peripheral locations, for example along East Street and Ashley Avenue, focus switches to employment use comprising offices from various time periods and in various states of repair. There are early signs of permitted development rights being exercised here, with several offices being converted to residential. The results are varied, and arguably the standard of some housing conversions falls below the standard the Council would seek in the case of new build homes. This should signal a warning about the importance of maintaining and improving the environment and setting of such locations so that the town centre maintains its ability to attract visitors.
- 2.26 There are limited amounts of civic, cultural and leisure use, comprising the Town Hall, public library, the Rainbow Leisure Centre, cinema and Playhouse Theatre. Attractive residential areas, many with conservation area status, abut the boundary in

all directions. The proximity of a walk-in catchment appears to have been crucial to the survival of the town centre during the Covid lockdown as more people worked at home instead of commuting to large employment centres. This reinforces the observation that Epsom is a popular service centre.

- 2.27 However, it lacks a diversity of uses in general, and beyond shopping and working, there appears little to attract visitors to the centre. The Council and other key stakeholders must be wary of other potential threats to the vitality of the primary retail areas in particular. This includes the liberalisation of the Use Classes Order and the granting of permitted development rights allowing redundant retail (and office) units to be converted to residential without planning permission. This is part of the UK Government's attempt to revive the high street, although there is a risk that footfall will reduce as a consequence where too many retail units are lost to residential.
- 2.28 Other town centre uses include small amounts of healthcare, community use and education including the Laine Theatre Arts School. The University for the Creative Arts (UCA), whilst outside the town centre boundary, lies in close proximity and its staff and students represent an important group of town centre users.



***Implications for Masterplanning***

- 2.29 To increase the appeal and vibrancy of the town centre, the Masterplan should identify opportunities for a more diverse mix of uses. In considering what might be appropriate, regard should be had to post-COVID trends including increased home working, as well as changes in the way people shop and spend their leisure time. Additionally, the Masterplan should look to capitalise on the town’s specialist uses to distinguish Epsom from competing locations. The planned expansion of the UCA, for example, brings with it an opportunity to diversify the economy through creativity.
  
- 2.30 To maintain a healthy retail offer, the Masterplan should identify those locations where retail should be prioritised. It can prompt the exploration of whether an Article 4 Direction might be imposed to protect retail floorspace against conversion to residential in some places. Beyond that core area, additional residential homes can help to support the vibrancy of the town centre. Ensuring high standards of residential amenity is likely to be key to the success of this approach.

**Building Heights**

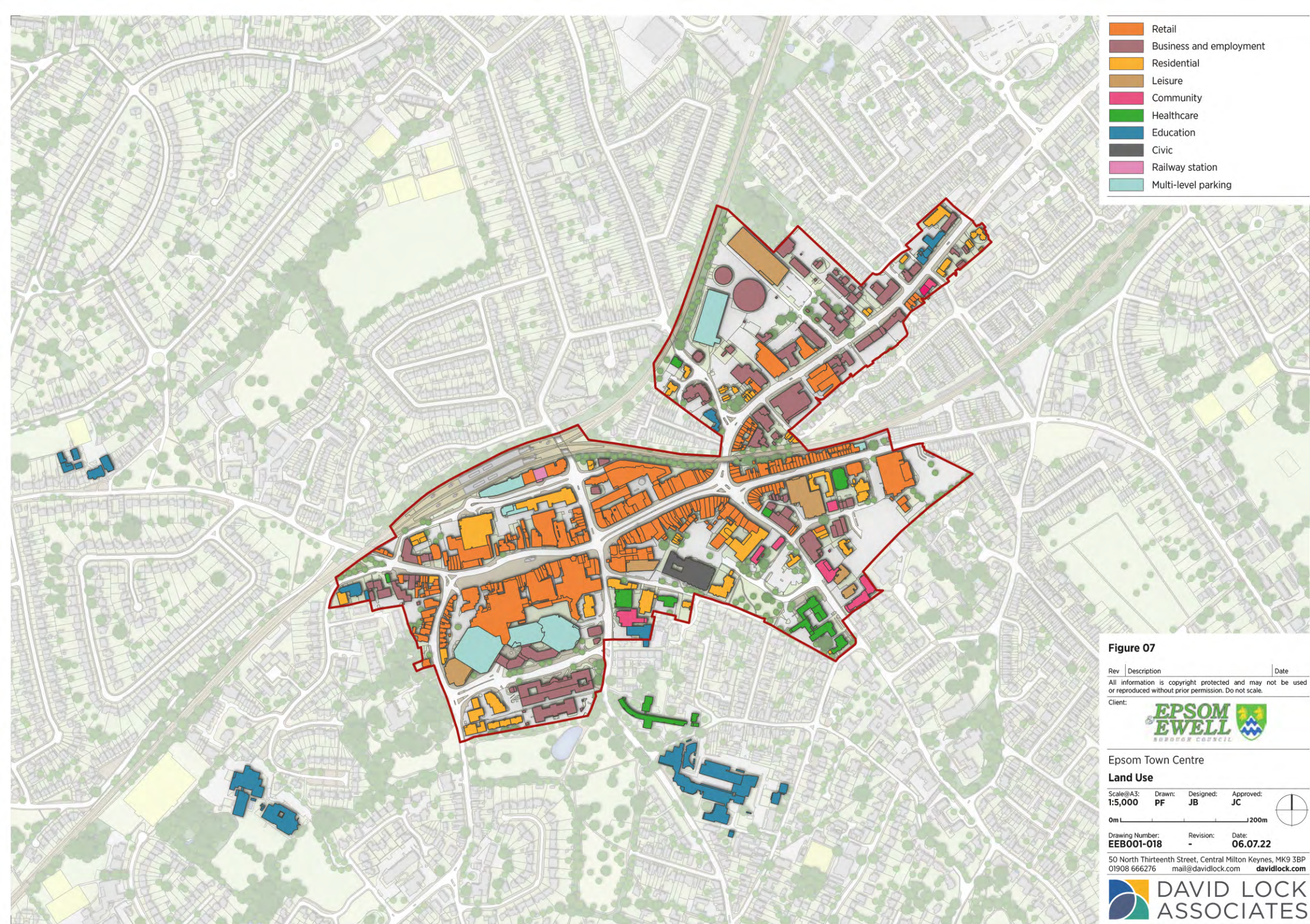
- 2.31 Building heights are shown in Figure 8. The town centre is generally low to mid-rise. There is a marked difference to observe between the historic High Street and East Street, where three storey buildings dominate, and the remainder of the centre. Within High Street, even though individual building heights vary according to their individual design and the period they originate from, there is a cohesion and a prevailing human scale.
  
- 2.32 In the remainder of the town centre, cohesion is largely absent, with no apparent rationale for the location of different building heights, which go up to eight storeys. This correlates with a move away from contextually responsive architecture and the shift towards larger footprint buildings which generates a distinct character change, with greater massing and bulk, and a looser, coarser urban grain. The overall result is lack of harmony and a loss of the human scale, leading to a less than satisfactory urban environment.

***Implications for the Masterplan***

- 2.33 A strategy for building heights and densities should be part of the Masterplan to inform future development proposals. The strategy should be informed by the character and built fabric of the town centre and its immediate surrounds, including recognised heritage assets. Appropriate responses to massing should be included in this exercise. In addition, the role of taller buildings in



- Retail
- Business and employment
- Residential
- Leisure
- Community
- Healthcare
- Education
- Civic
- Railway station
- Multi-level parking



**Figure 07**

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Epsom Town Centre

**Land Use**

Scale@A3: <b>1:5,000</b>	Drawn: <b>PF</b>	Designed: <b>JB</b>	Approved: <b>JC</b>	
0m	200m			

Drawing Number: <b>EEB001-018</b>	Revision: -	Date: <b>06.07.22</b>
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placemaking and townscape quality should be considered. Paragraph 2.23 highlights the importance of appropriate assessments for future tall building proposals which might affect heritage assets; this would act as a further level of refinement to inform detailed design.

### **Active Fronts and Building Entrances**

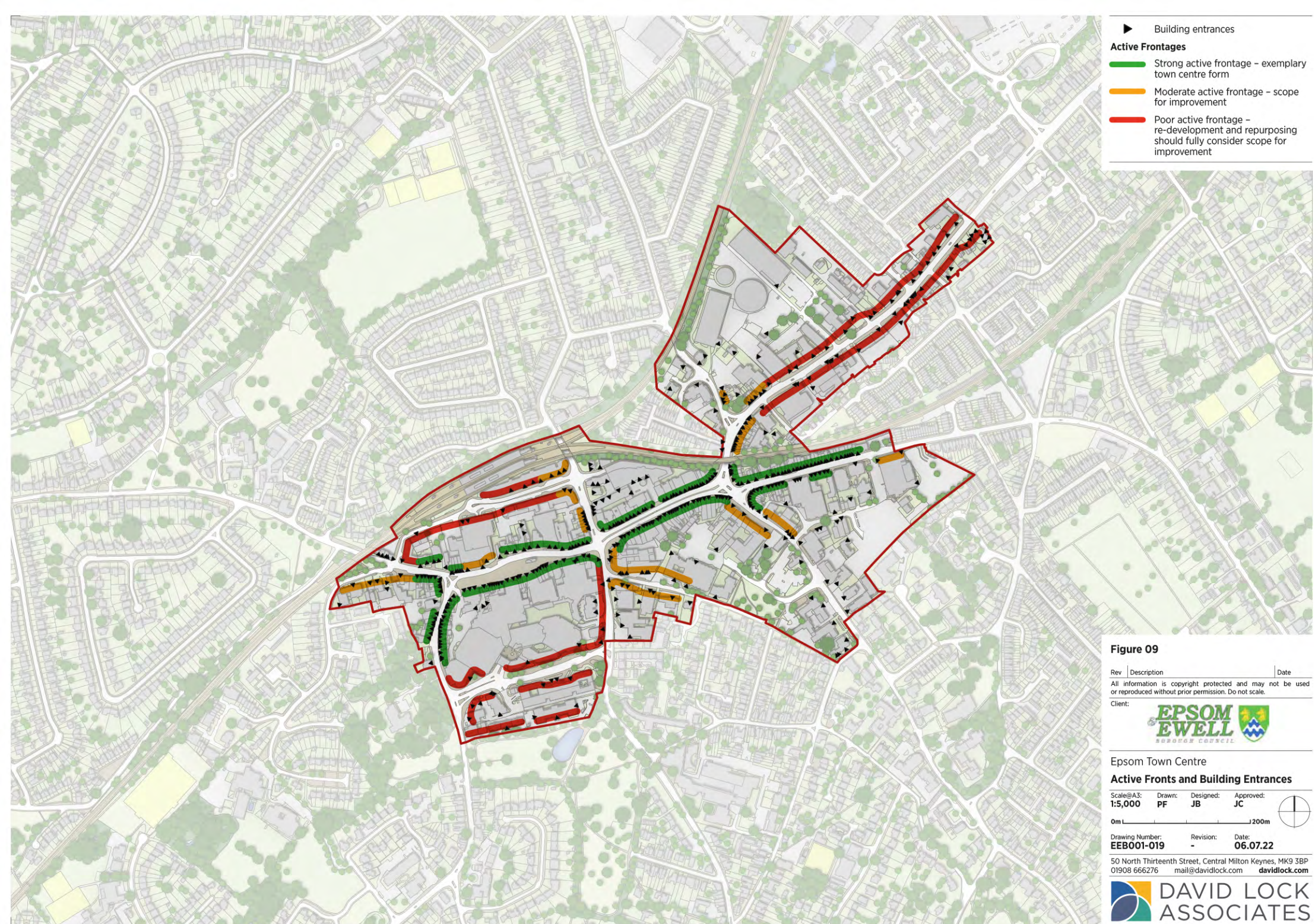
- 2.34 Considered alongside land use, the extent of active building frontages coupled with the frequency of building entrances often has a strong correlation with levels of busyness within a street or space. In urban design, it is a useful indicator of locations where the build fabric is capable of supporting activity and vibrancy, which reinforces the appeal and attractiveness as well as the safety of these places.
  
- 2.35 Within Epsom Town Centre, this narrative is very apparent, with the close knit, fine-grained historic development derived directly from a pattern of burgage plots having the strongest and most active fronts and the greatest frequency of front doors on the street. Consequently, these places experience the greatest concentrations of footfall and offer the most appealing street life.
  
- 2.36 The reverse is also true. Areas such as East Street have weaker frontages and fewer entrances and therefore activity significantly decreases away from High Street, particularly where large bulky buildings are located.

### ***Implications for the Masterplan***

- 2.37 The nature and design of the built form is crucial to the future success of the town centre. The Masterplan should include a general presumption towards continuous active frontages, where visual and physical interaction between the inside of the building



- ▶ Building entrances
- Active Frontages**
- █ Strong active frontage - exemplary town centre form
- █ Moderate active frontage - scope for improvement
- █ Poor active frontage - re-development and repurposing should fully consider scope for improvement



**Figure 09**

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Client:		



Epsom Town Centre  
**Active Fronts and Building Entrances**

Scale@A3: <b>1:5,000</b>	Drawn: <b>PF</b>	Designed: <b>JB</b>	Approved: <b>JC</b>	
0m <span style="float: right;">200m</span>				

Drawing Number: **EEB001-019**      Revision: **-**      Date: **06.07.22**  
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and the public street can be maintained. In addition, the Masterplan should identify future destinations where concentrations of activity will help to bring new life to the town centre. Here, particular regard should be given to achieving the right mix of uses within the type of built form which can support activity.

### Public Realm, Connectivity and Green Infrastructure

- 2.38 The quality of the town centre public realm, that is the spaces between buildings which are accessible by the public, varies to a significant degree. Recent enhancement works to Market Square are functional in their design and their detail, providing a tidy space which clearly demarcates the traffic free zone and provides space for markets. However, the opportunity to create an exciting and inspiring pedestrian experience within a distinctive Market Hall and craft an exemplary setting for the main historic fabric of the town centre has perhaps been missed since the enhancement was not holistically design-led.
- 2.39 Lining Market Square to the north, and more generally within the town centre, the impact of highway engineering is largely detrimental to the quality of the place. While the necessity of accommodating through traffic along the A24 is unlikely to abate in the near future, the presence of large numbers of vehicles conflicts with the objective of enhancing the town centre as a place for people.

- 2.40 Specific issues are evident within the public realm which reinforce the disparity between people and vehicles. Road signs, guard rails, extensive carriageway markings, multiple lanes of traffic and wide junctions all hamper pedestrian movement. The experience of the pedestrian is affected by environmental issues including the visual amenity of public space, the state of repair and cleanliness of the public highway, air quality, climatic comfort and personal security (perceived and actual).
- 2.41 Furthermore, it is observed that the experience of arriving in the town centre is underwhelming and unwelcoming. On the street, gateway places are traffic dominated, and built form does not celebrate or signal 'arrival'. Similarly arriving by train is dispiriting and there is no immediate indication of the onward route to find the heart of the centre.
- 2.42 The relative strength of physical connections to and within the town centre will underpin its success or decline, particularly if walking and cycling are to be encouraged as part of the response to climate change. Overall, the town centre is compact and walkable, but individual block dimensions are substantial, which reduces permeability. Cut throughs within blocks either depend on access to private land and therefore cannot be guaranteed 24/7, or force pedestrians through inhospitable places including multi-storey car parks.

2.43 The core of the town centre is urban in character and therefore the absence of street trees is not unexpected. However, compact dense urban areas can suffer from the heat island effect, and while this is by no means extreme in the town centre, tree planting would help to mitigate the impact of rising temperatures as well as improving the overall pedestrian experience.

2.44 Beyond the immediate core, there are attractive green spaces such as Rosebery Park, which can cater for, in particular, an enlarged town centre residential population.

**Implications for the Masterplan**

2.45 The Town Centre Masterplan is a once in a generation opportunity to establish a deliverable ambition to improve the public realm. This can bring wide reaching benefits, and it will be important to both understand what makes a good space and how any planned improvements can be achieved. Public realm quality helps to generate footfall. It stands to reason that places that are perceived to be attractive become busy, and this in turn increases their attractiveness. Research carried out by the *Project for Public Spaces* (a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping cities improve their public spaces for the benefit of the community) has identified a range of measurable factors that make a great place. These are shown in the diagram below.

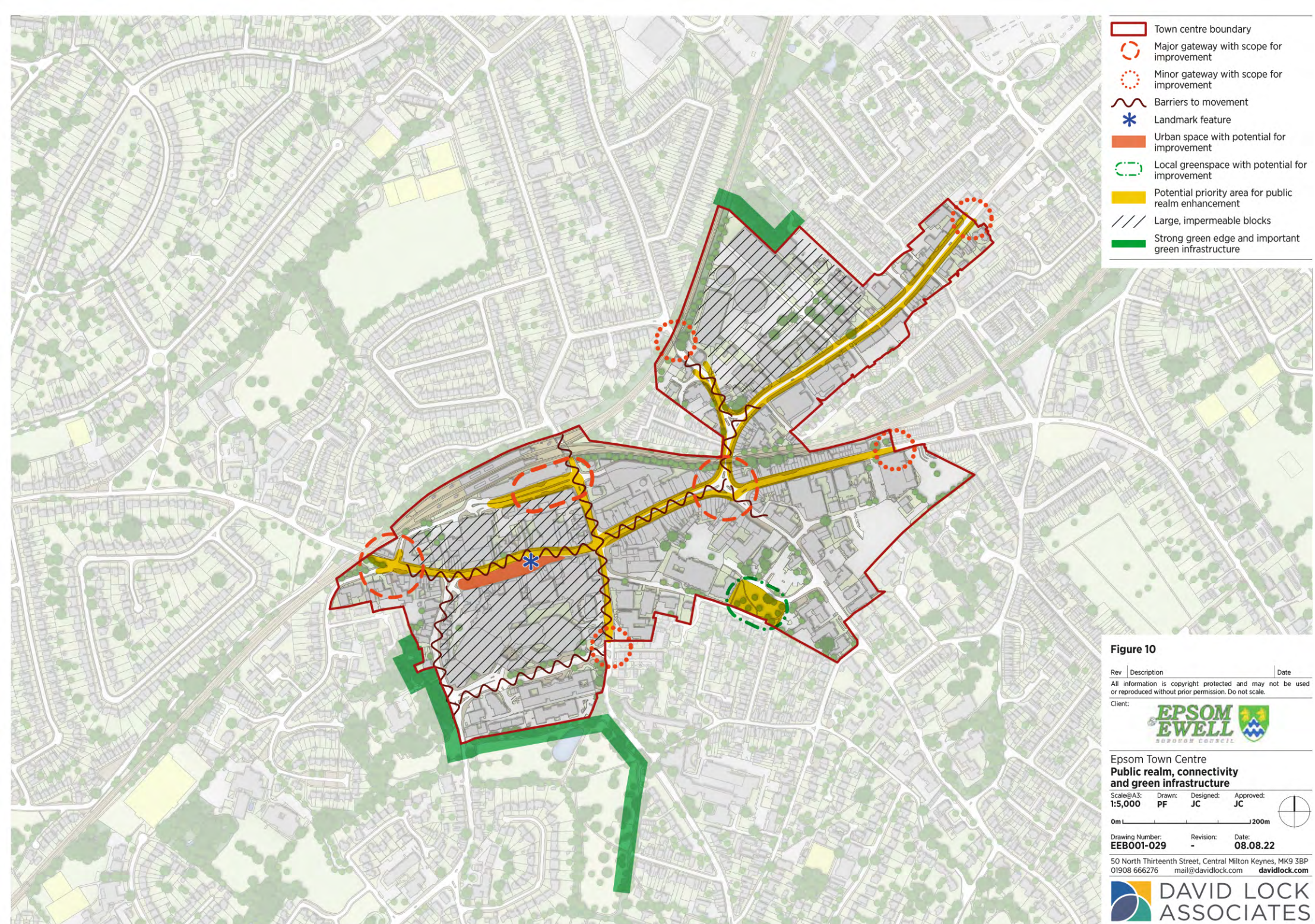


2.46 What is clear from the diagram is that 'uses and activities' (i.e. shopping, working, living) count for only a part of what makes a place successful, and consideration also needs to be given to sociability, access and linkages, and comfort and image.

2.47 Public realm enhancement schemes, when designed sensitively and delivered effectively, can have a transformational impact on the attractiveness of a place and the opportunity for new activities and public life. The award-winning City Park in Bradford city



-  Town centre boundary
-  Major gateway with scope for improvement
-  Minor gateway with scope for improvement
-  Barriers to movement
-  Landmark feature
-  Urban space with potential for improvement
-  Local greenspace with potential for improvement
-  Potential priority area for public realm enhancement
-  Large, impermeable blocks
-  Strong green edge and important green infrastructure



**Figure 10**

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Client:		



**Epsom Town Centre  
Public realm, connectivity  
and green infrastructure**

Scale@A3:	Drawn:	Designed:	Approved:
1:5,000	PF	JC	JC

0m 200m

Drawing Number:	Revision:	Date:
EEB001-029	-	08.08.22

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centre offers an excellent example of the way in which high quality public realm can help to transform a place. This report by the Academy of Urbanism judging panel for the 2013 awards highlights the importance of good design, an emphasis on 'quality over quantity' and the need for a tenacious approach.

<https://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/city-park/>



*'Mirror Pool' at Bradford City Park, designed by Gillespies Landscape Architects*

2.48 Bradford City Park represents an important public sector intervention and an attempt by the district council to take land

that is in public ownership and make a targeted investment for the benefit of the city centre.

2.49 Opportunities to improve connections should be identified in the Masterplan. For new opportunity sites, care needs to be given to how people will access and move through those areas, and where the wider town centre connectivity can be enhanced through the design of these areas, it should be identified in the plan. New connections should be safe, attractive and lined with active fronts. To be meaningful, they should connect to the next area (i.e. they should not function as dead ends), and it should be legible to the pedestrian through the design that onward connectivity is possible.

2.50 Finally, the Masterplan can identify opportunities to introduce street trees, green areas and other green infrastructure features. To improve amenity for new and existing residents, it will be desirable to provide opportunities which mirror those available in suburban locations, for example, opportunities for green circular walks, exercise and dog walking routes and places of calm for relaxation.



### Public Ownership & the Role of the Council

2.51 Land within the town centre is, unsurprisingly, in multiple ownership. Landowners for most of the identified opportunity sites are engaged with EEBC through the local plan Call for Sites process, which is positive. In addition, EEBC owns substantial tracts of land within the centre; some of these have associated leaseholds indicating the need for close partnership working with developers, and others are controlled entirely by EEBC. This means that the EEBC can take a proactive approach to planning, design and delivery to help improve the town centre.

2.52 To be effective in this role, support for the vision for the town centre will need to come from the whole of the Council. Delivering the Masterplan will cut across several service areas. It may be helpful for EEBC to regard itself as a 'pro-active curator' of the town centre, having regard to a range of factors that can influence future outcomes. In particular, ensuring the experience of the visitor is a positive one will give people a reason to continue to use the town centre. This overlaps with, but goes beyond the need to enhance the public realm to include initiatives from simple street cleansing regimes to initiatives that bring the public realm alive with events and entertainment. All of this will help to drive footfall, which in turn will support local businesses. The approach of the Royal Borough of Greenwich and TfL to the revival of Eltham High Street combines public realm works (pavement widening, removing street parking, decluttering, new bike lanes and new

seating, as well as improved lighting and signage) with direct interventions to deliver a mixed use place.



Eltham High Street, SE9 by East architecture, landscape, urban design for RB Greenwich.

2.53 In addition, close collaborative with Surrey County Council will be needed to ensure a joined-up approach – the County Council employs officers responsible for a place-based approach to service delivery, which should ensure a collaborative approach is effective.





- Town Centre Boundary
- EPSOM AND EWELL COUNCIL
- SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
- SURREY HEATH COUNCIL
- BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY
- NETWORK RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED
- THAMES WATER UTILITIES LIMITED
- NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE
- NHS PROPERTY SERVICES LIMITED
- LONDON BAPTIST PROPERTY BOARD LIMITED (THE)
- THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (SOUTHERN SYNOD) TRUST LIMITED
- TRUSTEES FOR METHODIST CHURCH PURPOSES
- WORLD MISSION SOCIETY CHURCH OF GOD
- OTHER COMMERCIAL OWNERS
- PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

**Figure 11**

Rev	Description	Date

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Client:

Epsom Town Centre Masterplan

**Land Ownership Plan**

Scale@A3: 1:5,000    Drawn: CE    Designed: -    Approved: JC

Drawing Number: **EEB001-006**    Revision: -    Date: **16/06/2022**

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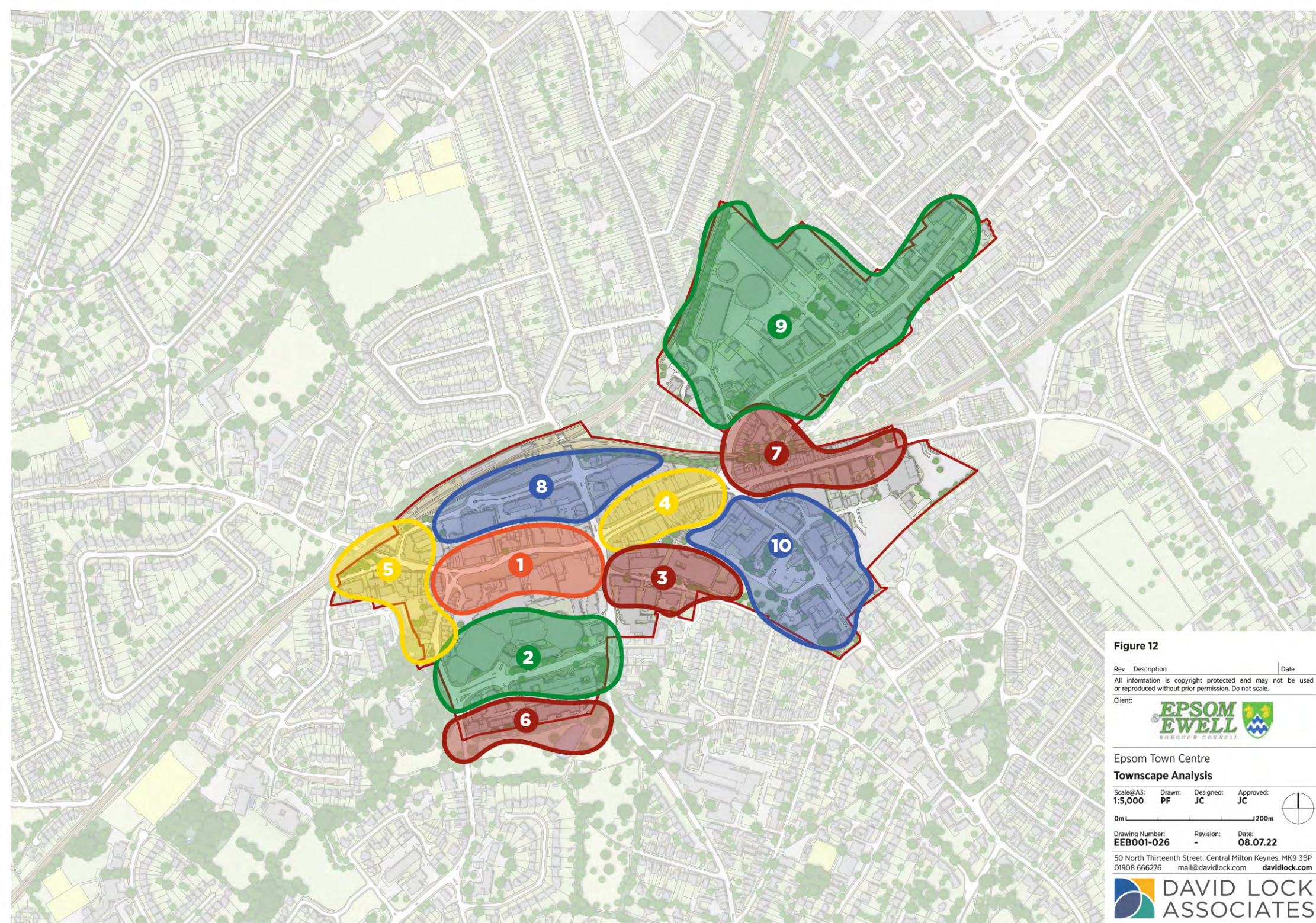


**Place-Specific Challenges**

2.54 It is useful to consider how each of the issues outlined so far can be brought together in Masterplanning, so that a comprehensive set of ideas can be formulated. This is best achieved using a 'place-specific' approach, allowing all of the challenges present in a given location to be considered, solutions identified and delivery roles and responsibilities established.

2.55 Table 1 provides a first step towards this outcome. It summarises the issues for distinct parts of the town centre. It aims to highlight and explain the key differences from an urban design perspective, which can help to inform a place-based approach to the Masterplan.






**Figure 12**

Rev	Description	Date
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Client:		



Epsom Town Centre  
**Townscape Analysis**

Scale@A3: <b>1:5,000</b>	Drawn: <b>PF</b>	Designed: <b>JC</b>	Approved: <b>JC</b>	
0m <span style="float: right;">200m</span>				

Drawing Number: **EEB001-026**      Revision: **-**      Date: **08.07.22**  
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**Table 1 – Place-based approach**

<b>Place</b>	<b>Summary of Characteristics</b>	<b>Possible Masterplan response</b>
<p><b>Market Square</b></p> <p>This is a rich and interesting environment that is clearly of a human scale. Market Square is well framed with active frontages and recent public realm improvements, whilst of moderate quality, have helped to make this a successful place, with spill out space for cafes and restaurants attracting customers and bringing vibrancy and interest, even on non-market days. The positive qualities of Market Square are compromised by highway engineering, which is unsympathetic and makes pedestrian access to the square frustrating and difficult.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic building pattern derived from burgage plots has established a clear and consistent building line maintained over time.</li> <li>• The public realm is clearly defined as a consequence, but the north and south sides of the space are separated by a busy road, with limited crossing opportunities.</li> <li>• Many historic buildings have been retained including buildings of local significance such as the Assembly Rooms.</li> <li>• some late 20<sup>th</sup> Century interventions, which vary the building line and tend to be insensitive to the Conservation Area, for example the TK Maxx building.</li> <li>• Building heights vary from 2-4 storeys.</li> <li>• Materials include a use of red-brick over a sustained period, with the occasional use of white render. Roofs are red tile in the main.</li> <li>• Features such as dormer windows, varied patterns in fenestration over time and celebrated building entrances help to create variety.</li> <li>• The clocktower is a significant local landmark, anchoring the place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New development form should closely follow the grain and pattern of the prevailing burgage plot morphology and be consistent in height with the surrounding properties.</li> <li>• A palette of materials should be set out, with principles requiring new proposals to use selected materials in an architecturally appropriate way.</li> <li>• Approaches to building entrances, fenestration and shop-front design should be appropriate for the conservation area setting.</li> <li>• A wider public realm enhancement scheme should be considered, to link the north and south sides of the square by making crossing much easier for pedestrians. Cycle lanes should be provided for safe cycling.</li> <li>• Routes to the station should be improved through a combination of measures including through the design of new development, lighting, and way-marking.</li> </ul>

Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>Ashley Avenue</b></p> <p>This street attracts few pedestrians and lacks life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominated by large scale late 20<sup>th</sup> Century office buildings unsympathetic in scale and character to the historic Market Square immediately north.</li> <li>• Large slab like buildings with no variety in detailing or materials, and offering very limited interaction with the street, particularly at ground floor, leads to very limited interest.</li> <li>• The landscape edge to the northside of the street, with several mature trees, helps to lift the pedestrian environment, and mitigate the dullness of Global House.</li> <li>• The street proportions (building height to street width) are generally comfortable, although this diminishes at the western end of the street where the multi-story car park entrance and Playhouse are located.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any redevelopment should introduce an active frontage to the street.</li> <li>• The street should be well enclosed, with frequent entrances.</li> <li>• A contextually driven approach to building heights should be pursued across all opportunity sites.</li> <li>• Existing trees should be retained.</li> <li>• Public realm enhancement works should be integral to the proposals, supporting pedestrian movement to the town centre, Rosebery Park and UCA. Cycle lanes should be introduced.</li> </ul>



Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>The Parade</b></p> <p>An area of transition between the core of the town centre and greener residential areas along The Parade and beyond.</p> <p>The street has limited animation but is generally of a human scale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic and hotel uses set back from the street edge with boundaries formed by railings and hedges.</li> <li>• Buildings are generally three story, with large footprints and substantial bulk, although this is largely successfully mitigated by the pattern of fenestration and a sense of overlooking the street.</li> <li>• New development with yellow bricks and slate coloured roof tiles represents a departure from the prevailing red brick and red tile within the town centre and appears out of character.</li> <li>• Pedestrian footpaths are narrow in places.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New development form should successfully manage the transitional nature of The Parade, reflecting the quality and design principles of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century residential development.</li> <li>• A palette of materials should be set out, with principles requiring new proposals to use selected materials in an architecturally appropriate way.</li> <li>• Buildings should be setback with appropriate boundary treatments to match those along The Parade.</li> <li>• Redevelopment should ensure through routes within blocks are improved and made safe and attractive for pedestrians.</li> </ul>

Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>High Street East</b></p> <p>The northern side of the street was redeveloped in the 1950's to allow for dualling of the carriageway. Even though the street retains its human scale, its inhospitable nature means it is a place to pass through, rather than dwell.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fine-grained environment with the historic burgage plot pattern largely evident through the shopfront pattern at ground floor.</li> <li>• Strong active frontage, and very clearly defined public realm.</li> <li>• Buildings lack the variety of Market Square and 20<sup>th</sup> Century interventions have varying degrees of success, so there is less of interest, but overall, the retention of the historic grain makes for a busy street with a wide choice of shops.</li> <li>• Materials are predominantly red brick with red roof tiles, consistent with much of the town centre.</li> <li>• The pedestrian environment is compromised by guardrails along the centreline of the carriageway, which reinforce the sense that the street is dominated by vehicles rather than people.</li> <li>• This is further reinforced by large traffic junctions at either end, with long wait times for crossing, and at the junction with East Street a dominance of tarmac.</li> <li>• There is a lot of street clutter, and surface materials do not match the standard of those at Market Square.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streetscape enhancements should be treated as a priority to improve the pedestrian and cycle experience. This should be achieved through a wholesale review of the public highway including the junctions at each end.</li> <li>• Any redevelopment should be responsive to the existing morphology of the high street.</li> <li>• A palette of materials should be set out, with principles requiring new proposals to use selected materials in an architecturally appropriate way.</li> </ul>



Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>West Street</b></p> <p>A small scaled, fine grained pocket of development at the western periphery of the town centre study area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The positive character of the historic buildings is compromised by Oaks House, a 1980's office building, and by a proliferation of street clutter and road markings.</li> <li>The railway bridge marks the threshold between town centre and wider settlement, and the junction between West Street and Station Approach is under-realised as a gateway opportunity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The gateway character of this area should be recognised and elevated to ensure an uplifting welcome. This should include improvements to the public realm, in particular, the junction with South Street. Works should create a positive setting for listed buildings.</li> <li>Redevelopment of existing sites should respond to the immediate scale and morphology of the site. A contextually driven approach to building heights should be pursued across all opportunity sites.</li> </ul>

Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>Rosebery Park edge</b></p> <p>Mixed office and residential development flanking the northern edge of Rosebery Park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two storey 1930's residential flats in red brick and brown roof tile have a domestic scale and character, in contrast to the adjacent office buildings, which are 2-3.5 storeys.</li> <li>A mix of yellow and red brick, and generally pastiche or nondescript in nature.</li> <li>Largely hidden from within the park by mature trees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any future redevelopment should create strong and active frontages overlooking Rosebery Park.</li> <li>A contextually driven approach to building heights should be pursued across all opportunity sites.</li> </ul>

Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>Upper High Street &amp; Depot Road car park</b></p> <p>Upper High Street has a distinct Edwardian terrace along its northern side, but other buildings are of mixed architectural quality. Immediately to the rear of the southern side of Upper High Street, the Depot Road car park presents an opportunity for redevelopment.</p> <p>Generally, the area lacks a sense of place and has little to no cohesion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terraces with shop units at ground floor and residential and office spaces above.</li> <li>• The south side of the street accommodates mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> Century redevelopment with a mix of commercial and residential properties fronting Upper High Street and Depot Road. The new Lidl store, with residential apartments above, whilst not particularly sympathetic to nor informed by the surrounding context, does represent a step change in the quality of redevelopment seen in the town centre in recent years.</li> <li>• The street has a lower environmental quality, with poor surfacing, narrow footpaths and general street clutter.</li> <li>• Footprints are large and bulky, generally 3-4 storeys. Materials comprise light red/orange bricks and red/orange roof tiles, with very limited reference to local tradition.</li> <li>• Some industrial units are located on Depot Road, adjacent to a large surface car park overlooked by offices and apartments with balconies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public realm enhancements should recognise the transitional role of Upper High Street. Opportunities for mixed use development could help to strengthen the level of street activity.</li> <li>• The redevelopment of Depot Road car park could help to deliver cohesion within this area, creating an improved setting for new and existing residential development and bringing life to the area. Better connections with residential areas to the south and east should be achieved as a result.</li> <li>• A contextually driven approach to building heights should be pursued across all opportunity sites.</li> </ul>



Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>Station Approach</b></p> <p>In contrast to other parts of the town centre, Station Approach feels denser. Not 'of Epsom' and 'could be anywhere'. Busy as a result of the function of the street rather than an attractive place to be.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The street width to building height ratio is greater, with 5-7 storey contemporary buildings and no setbacks creating a more urban setting for the station.</li> <li>• Buildings lack architectural integrity.</li> <li>• Traditional materials are absent, and instead yellow brick, glazed walling, white and blue render and coloured tiling around building entrances are evident.</li> <li>• Street lighting is contemporary and is set within a narrow central reservation with guard rails and poor-quality landscape planting, and pedestrian crossing opportunities are limited.</li> <li>• Frequent parking bays and a taxi rank lead to a vehicle dominated street.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of a wider effort to improve the town centre, enhancements to the public realm should be pursued. These should improve the welcome experience of passengers and clearly highlight the route to the town centre.</li> <li>• Improvements to the pedestrian route through the underground car park should be considered.</li> </ul>

Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>Hook Road, East Street &amp; former Gasworks</b></p> <p>The gasworks is comprised of several separate component parts including the formed gas holders, Hook Road multi-storey car park, Laines Theatre Arts school and small-scale offices. Hook Road is an important gateway from the adjoining residential neighbourhood to the north. East Street is a peripheral office location, past its best, with some apparent pressure for conversion to residential under PD rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial and redundant land and buildings, leading to a run-down character. Railway lines the site to the north.</li> <li>• Listed buildings on the corner of Hook Road and East Street are a particular sensitivity.</li> <li>• The adjacent Rainbow Leisure Centre is an important destination that will help to anchor any redevelopment.</li> <li>• The gas site has limited frontage to East Street.</li> <li>• 1980’s office development, with large footplates and a non-vernacular style line East Street</li> <li>• East Street is hostile to pedestrians and dominated by traffic particularly at peak hour.</li> <li>• A mix of materials, many not-suited to Epsom, adds to the poor urban environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas works is a major redevelopment opportunity. Separate land ownerships must be reconciled through a comprehensive approach to site planning.</li> <li>• Frontages to Hook Road and East Street should be improved, recognising the arrival points to the centre and the likely increase in residential development, signalling the need for much improved urban amenity.</li> <li>• A contextually driven approach to building heights should be pursued across all opportunity sites.</li> <li>• The layout of new development must avoid creating dead-ends. Pedestrian permeability and uses capable of generating footfall must be considered. Links to the Rainbow Leisure Centre should be included as part of the layout.</li> </ul>



Place	Summary of Characteristics	Possible Masterplan response
<p><b>Church Street</b></p> <p>An area of transition between the town centre and surrounding residential neighbourhood, with a mix of different uses. This area lacks a distinct character and any sense of place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and early 21<sup>st</sup> Century large footprint buildings, generally lacking in architectural value and out of keeping with the local vernacular.</li> <li>• Use of yellow and orange/brown brick, with later additions utilising white render and hung tiles.</li> <li>• This dominant development form is interspersed with a small number of historic buildings, which add small pockets of interest and value.</li> <li>• Closer to the centre the public realm is tightly defined along Church Street, but there are fragmentations formed by surface public and private car parks, where public space 'leaks' and the urban environment loosens with distance from the town centre.</li> <li>• Dullshot Green is a welcome green space with numerous mature trees but is poorly framed and generally not well overlooked.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for infill development overtime should help to bring animation and a sense of enclosure to the area.</li> <li>• A comprehensive approach to the masterplanning of the wider area, with Dullshot Green as a focal point, would help to deliver better outcomes where sites are to be progressed by separate landowners.</li> <li>• A landscape plan for Dullshot Green could be pursued to create a more useable and attractive green space close to the town centre. Play provisions for new homes should be included.</li> </ul>

### 3.0 TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

3.1 A movement and access strategy will form part of the Masterplan. To inform this strategy, this first stage is a transport baseline exploring issues with existing sources of information to identify challenges and opportunities. Findings will be integrated with urban design inputs to devise a series of transport components for the Masterplan. Initial discussions have taken place with the Highway Authority (see Appendix 1).

#### Surrey Local Transport Plan 2022 – 2032

3.2 Surrey County Council (SCC) Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2022 – 2032 provides the overarching framework for transport policy for the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan. The transport plan builds on existing measures, developing new measures that align with the following principles:

- Avoid – Reduce the number and length of trips needed by improving land use planning, travel planning and levels of digital connectivity.
- Shift – Shift travel to more sustainable modes: public transport, walking and cycling, away from car use.
- Improve – Improve emissions intensity and energy efficiency of vehicles and operational efficiency of roads, through technology improvements.

3.3 The objectives for the Surrey Local Transport Plan are:

- Net Zero carbon emissions – To rapidly reduce carbon emissions, ensuring that Surrey is on track for net zero emissions by 2050.
- Sustainable growth – To support Surrey’s growth ambitions and enable business and people to prosper sustainably.
- Well-connected communities – To provide well connected communities that encourage social mobility and ensure no-one is left behind.
- Clean air and excellent quality of life – To create thriving communities with clean air, excellent health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

3.4 The Local Transport Plan vision sets out the aspiration for the transport system in Surrey in 2032 and beyond: *‘A future-ready transport system that allows Surrey to lead the UK in achieving a low-carbon, economically prosperous, healthy and inclusive county with excellent quality of life for all residents, whilst seeking to enhance the built and natural environments.* The policy areas cover measures which Avoid, Shift and Improve travel and support improvements in all three types of accessibility:

- Place making – Planning for place (localisation);
- Digital connections; and
- Transport system - Active travel/personal mobility; public/shared transport; demand management for cars; demand management for goods vehicles; efficient network management; promoting zero emissions vehicles; and supporting behaviour change.



3.5 Surrey LTP projects include mobility hubs; car clubs and future technology.

**Characteristics of movement**

***Epsom Town Centre Transport Plan***

3.6 A strategic approach is needed for the town movement system that responds to:

- Climate Change and Transport Decarbonisation – To promote development travel patterns that minimise and mitigate climate change impacts and develop transport systems more adaptable to climate change effects.
- Better accessibility and connectivity – To support growth and regeneration opportunity sites and key regeneration sites and ensure they are well connected and integrated into the movement network.
- Encouraging a modal shift – This is a national and Surrey wide challenge to encourage a significant shift from private car use to public transport with much better choices for people to walk and cycle to and from the town centre.
- Public transport – Build on the SCC bus services improvement plan and work with partners to enhance the bus network and public transport connectivity over the short/medium term.

- New technologies – Consider the rapid emergence of new transport technologies which is changing how people and goods move around the borough and wider region.
- Air Quality, Noise and Environmental quality - The prioritisation of traffic in the town has reduced the amount of 'effective space' available for walking and cycling and it detrimentally impacts on urban environmental quality and conditions for a good quality of life.

3.7 The transport plan is for investment in new or reconfigured sustainable transport infrastructure that builds and applies the measures in the Surrey LTP.

***Terms of Reference for the Masterplan***

3.8 This high-level transport baseline has been undertaken using information provided by the Council. The information is a snapshot of broad characteristics of movement.

3.9 Further assessment is needed to understand the scale and complexity of movement and public life in the town centre. Key findings, using the following headings:

- Public transport connectivity (bus and rail);
- Walking routes and road crossings;
- Cycling routes and facilities;

- Town Approaches; and
- A24 – The Road from London to the South Coast

3.10 There is further analysis on town centre car parking in the following section.

3.11 The transport input has involved mapping existing transport elements and preparing a series of plans, see Appendix 2.

### **Headline Findings**

3.12 Opportunities to make enhancements exists on the town approaches roads, and on High Street, Upper High Street, Waterloo Road and Ashley Road. There are other places where opportunities exist for pedestrian priority streets to explore in preparation of and engagement on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

3.13 Bus and rail interchange in town is complicated. It needs to be integrated into a way finding system. There are multiple opportunities for physical transport infrastructure enhancements to fix problems, some movement, others place (i.e. sub-optimal environment under rail bridges, junctions that give negative first impressions).

3.14 There are issues with bus layover and operations in Ashley Avenue that should be examined and a need for long term planning for Mass Transit systems and Crossrail 2.

3.15 A high-level strategic review has been undertaken with an initial analysis of available parking data provided by the Council. This needs review and a more detailed car parking brief agreed with the Council and Highway Authority with clear objectives and outputs.

3.16 Will future car parking trips follow the established retail and leisure activities? Will retail be the main driver for peak demand for car parking in the future town centre?

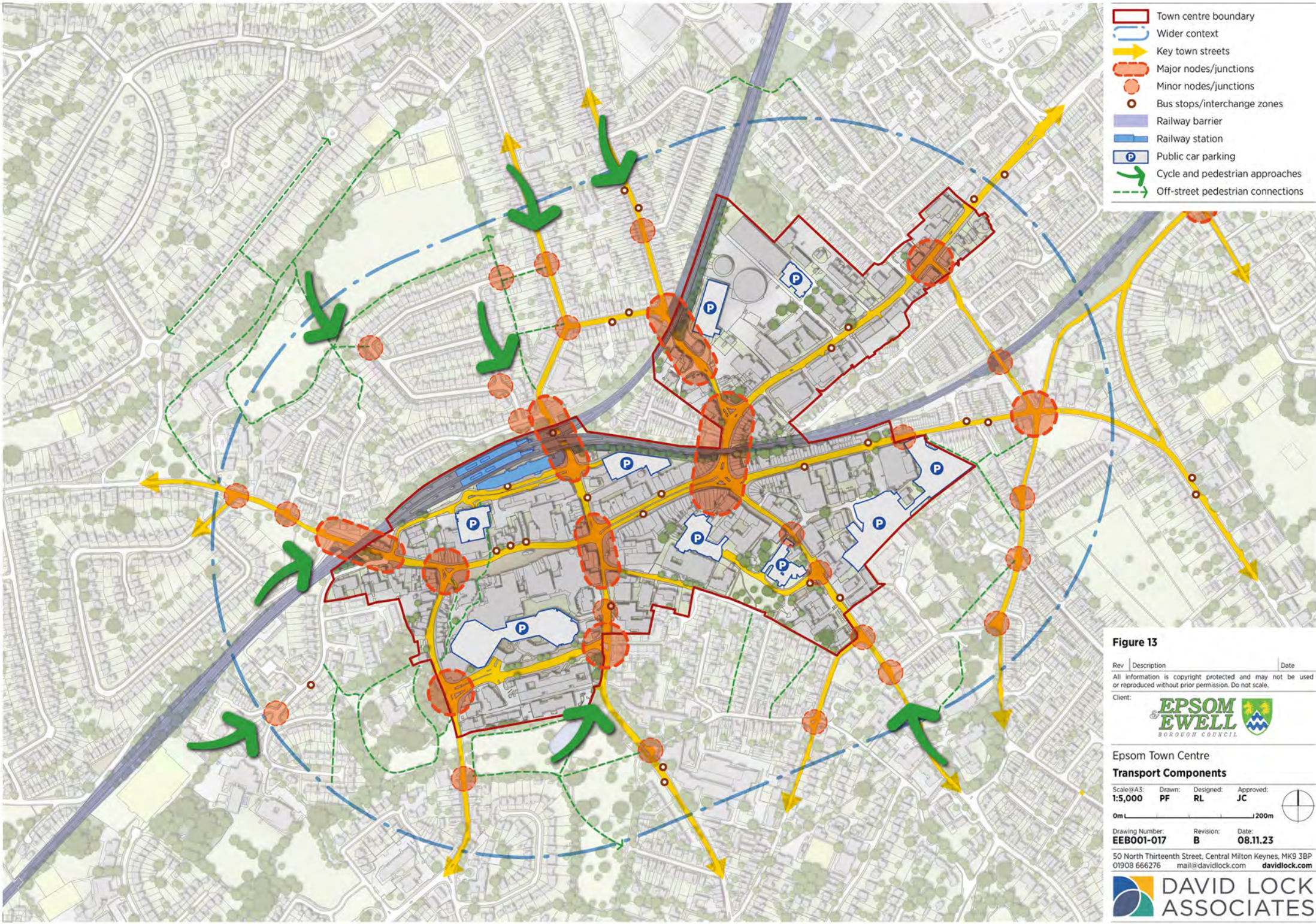
3.17 Reducing overall capacity may mean that if a visitor who travels by car can't park in their first choice then they are likely to look for an alternative car park. How many times will they do that before they go somewhere else by car, or make an alternative journey choice (i.e. ride, walk or take a bus to the shops). There is a seesaw of provision for public car parking and provision of quality public transport and active travel.

### **Public Transport Connectivity**

#### *Bus Services*

3.18 Epsom Town Centre is a major hub for bus services with a total frequency in the region of 40 buses and hour with 20 separate bus routes with services stopping at one or a collection of the 28 separate bus stops located in the town centre area.





- Town centre boundary
- Wider context
- Key town streets
- Major nodes/junctions
- Minor nodes/junctions
- Bus stops/interchange zones
- Railway barrier
- Railway station
- Public car parking
- Cycle and pedestrian approaches
- Off-street pedestrian connections

**Figure 13**

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Client:		



Epsom Town Centre  
**Transport Components**

Scale@A3: <b>1:5,000</b>	Drawn: <b>PF</b>	Designed: <b>RL</b>	Approved: <b>JC</b>
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Drawing Number: **EEB001-017**      Revision: **B**      Date: **08.11.23**  
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- 3.19 The town is served by five bus separate bus operators; Metrobus, London United, Falcon Buses, Arriva/Stagecoach and Buses 4 U.
- 3.20 Bus patronage figures are increasing but they are not back to pre-pandemic levels.
- 3.21 In the last few years Surrey County Council have been developing an enhanced partnership with bus operators and other stakeholders. This year Surrey County Council publishing the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and submitted the Bus Services Improvement Plan for Surrey.

*Rail Services*

- 3.22 Epsom Station has rail services on the Southern and South Western Lines with trains to central London stations, other places in the Surrey and the south-west London area.
- 3.23 The Masterplan is interested in planning for long term, so projects like Crossrail 2 should be kept on the table and integrated with transport strategy for the town centre.
- 3.24 Accommodating growth with development and remodelling of road and rail networks is needed alongside policies to support a modal shift to sustainable transport modes.

*Cycling Routes and Facilities*

- 3.25 Safety matters to cyclists in traffic dominated places, like on radial routes into town. There are cycle routes and facilities in the town

and there is much more that can be done to encourage and support people to cycle. Key cycling issues and opportunities:

- Strategic Approaches: The characteristics of traffic flow, the mix of vans and HGV, the volume and speed all need to be considered for cycling routes and facilities.
- Town Streets: Sharing space at very low traffic speeds is the context to shape place. For cyclists to be and feel safe, traffic volume/speed must be reduced. Solutions are needed that can engage people and fit with heritage, built form and landscape.
- Cycle Parking: There is a lack of cycle parking in the town and there is a need to support facilities for electric bicycles. Looking ahead, concepts like Cycle Hire, interchange hubs and better access by bike to open spaces should be explored.

3.26 In some places cyclist provision is good, but major barriers exist, like road and railway severance, road safety, and bottlenecks at gateways - the sore throats of the town.

3.27 There is lots of best practice design and planning guidance on cycling in towns and there is a need for innovation and experimentation to learn what works where and why.



3.28 SCC are preparing an Epsom Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan this year. A full cycle route and facility audit should be undertaken.

#### *Walking Routes and Road Crossings*

3.29 The Masterplan will promote better walking and cycling facilities in the town centre and there could be options for interchange and mobility hubs for park/walk/cycle.

3.30 There are major opportunities to improve walking routes and road crossings by reconfiguring road infrastructure, like Ashley Road/Waterloo Road, Upper High Street. There should be a strong ambition and delivery programme, like safe routes to school that proposes tangible, bespoke footway and cycleway improvement works.

3.31 The headline findings point to a pedestrian environment on the town approaches and in the majority of the central streets where mobility is hindered by a lack of space provision for people, especially those with disabilities.

3.32 Like most town centres there is a major deficit in knowledge of pedestrian movement. The town bus stops have been mapped, but not the routes people take to/from stops or routes people take crossing the road or after they have parked the car, or where the few public seating places, or publicly accessible toilets are located.

3.33 A way finding audit is required to support walking and crossing. It's the basis for a social public life activity. Observation is needed of the interchange zones between destinations like Epsom railway station, main car parks, zones of bus stops and retail footfall drivers. The railway is the main physical barrier in the town. All the crossing points need enhancing. More activation. More place making investment.

3.34 The Masterplan will focus on streets and spaces in the town centre with the priority for people who walk, cycle or use micro-mobility systems. There is need for the promotion of low-cost enhancements to deliver high benefits that run longer term. Such examples like junction improvements, side road raised tables, street trees, benches, wide/direct pedestrian's crossings, better and more cycle space for bikes.

#### **Town Approaches**

3.35 Town Approaches are streets that function as key connecting routes to the gateways into and out of the town centre. They are the physical connecting paths to all places in Surrey and South West London. To correctly devise tactics for the town approaches we require knowledge from inside and outside the Masterplan.

3.36 The Masterplan is interested in the streets inside the town centre. The principal objective is to provide more and better-quality space for people, especially in places that pinch movement and restrict mobility of people walking and cycling.

**A24 – The Road from London to the South Coast**

- 3.37 The A24 has a movement function. In traffic terms the A24 carries in the region of 24,000 vehicles a day through the town centre.
- 3.38 There are issues with loading and servicing, especially on High Street. Often congestion and delay results from enforcement issues with parking and loading restrictions. The A24 is a place where people walk and cycle, although it's not clear how many people walk, cycle or use public transport.
- 3.39 In the town centre the one-way gyratory accommodates these flows and at peak times helps to store traffic and reduce queuing on the approaches. This is likely to have limited effect over time as the road system blocks gateways and key pinch points.
- 3.40 While the traffic is not moving, the A24 continues to have a place function that operates on pedestrian scale/speed. These human needs offer different solutions to 'de-prime' the A24 in Epsom. The idea is to reconfigure space and to re-purpose with new functions and/or adapted purposes to what is needed in the future (i.e. Mass planting in towns of street trees for shading).

**Town Centre Parking****Terms of Reference**

- 3.41 This is a high-level strategic review of town centre public car parking and an initial analysis of available data. It can be used to scope and agree with the Council and highway authority the next stages of a parking study.
- 3.42 Epsom town centre has parking for private vehicles; provision for public parking; private non-residential parking and new residential/mixed-use development related parking.
- 3.43 The focus for the Masterplan and therefore this initial baseline review is on public car parking with findings to further explore options for future town centre car parking.
- 3.44 Making changes to parking policy and provision is interconnected with better public transport provision and a step change in cycling and walking provision on the A24 and Town Approaches.

**Public car parking usage**

- 3.45 This baseline study has used information on the usage of the Council operated car parks. The Council have provided car park visitor numbers for the Ashley Centre, Hope Lodge, Hook Road, Town Hall, Upper High Street and Depot Road.



Examining the Council parking data in 2019/2020 there were 1,461,083 car park visits; in 2020/21 there were 695,149 car park visits; in 2021/22 there were 1,170,395 car park visits and in 2022/23 there were 1,206,580 car park visits. During the first six months of 2023/24 there were 584,805 car park visits. This shows how the pandemic has affected car parking visitor numbers, although usage is incrementally increasing although not back to pre-covid levels. The Council has data showing the breakdown of what has been happening at each of the sites on a monthly basis.

#### ***Transport Policy Position – Surrey Local Transport Plan***

3.46 The Surrey Local Transport Plan (LTP) has a policy in place entitled Demand Management for Cars, which is one of the nine policy areas in the LTP and a Parking Strategy. The Demand Management for Cars Policy Area in the LTP aims to support mode shift and reduce car use by reducing the priority given to cars over other modes through measures including:

- Altering parking supply and charges
- Traffic calming
- Engaging with eco-levy (pay as you drive) developments
- Using charging revenue to support sustainable modes

3.47 The policy area includes a section on reducing the area of urban centres allocated to parking spaces and increasing parking charges will put car travel on a more even footing with other modes in terms of payment per trip. This would help to move away from the current situation where costs are largely paid upfront each year and at each fuelling, meaning that the current cost of each new car trip is relatively low. We will work with Districts and Boroughs to review parking measures including:

- Reducing the amount of parking available and relocating it to less central locations
- Increasing parking charges with tariffs reflecting emissions impacts
- Introducing parking charges in new areas

3.48 The LTP provides the platform for other parking policy including Workplace parking levy, incorporating parking charges within a Mobility as a Service framework, eco levy (or pay as you drive), new technology, real time information on parking availability, EV charging, parking clubs, enforcement and cross cutting links to behaviour change.

#### ***Transport Policy Position - Epsom & Ewell Borough Parking Strategy***

3.49 The Epsom & Ewell Borough Parking Strategy, June 2012 seeks to identify the main parking problems that face the borough and the solutions that will be introduced to resolve them. The strategy

outlines that meeting car parking demand is a significant issue for much of the Southeast of England. An accessible highway network, perceived inefficiencies in the public transport network, high levels of car ownership and affluent residents have resulted in a very mobile population. Accommodating such mobility has become a problem not only for highway management (in terms of traffic congestion and volumes) but also in terms of providing appropriate parking provision to meet demand at residential, shopping and employment centres.

3.50 Demand for parking provision is only one part of the issue. Evidence shows that inefficient travel patterns and car usage are a significant source of carbon dioxide emissions, which contributes to climate change. Parking provision, management and enforcement can be used alongside other measures to encourage more sustainable travel and car use. The Council acknowledges that there is a fine balance to be made (in terms of parking charges) to ensure that the continued economic vitality and viability of Borough is maintained.

3.51 The strategy noted the Council will require a minimum of 450 spaces at Depot Road and Upper Street. The strategy is over 10 years old and needs updating to take into account the pandemic and changes in town and borough wide mobility and public transport patronage.

**Transport Policy Position - Epsom & Ewell Borough Parking Standards**

3.52 For new residential development, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council have 'Parking Standards for Residential Development SPD' which was produced in December 2015. The Epsom SPD sets the standard as 0.75 space for 1 & 2-bedroom flats; 1 space for larger flats/up to 3-bedroom house; and 2 spaces for 4+ bedrooms.

**Town Centre Parking Capacity**

**Historic public parking capacity**

3.53 The Epsom Parking Strategy 2012 outlines the town centre parking capacity, highlighting that generally that provision will be met. The table below provides a summary of how parking capacity has changed in the town centre between the publication of the Epsom Parking Strategy in 2012 compared to the current situation (October 2023).

Location	Available spaces in 2023	Available spaces in 2012	Comments / change in available capacity since 2012
Ashley Centre	649	797	Capacity reduced by 148 spaces (additional 135 spaces exist on floor 4 that are private use)
Hook Road	530	628	Capacity reduced by 98 spaces.



			Facility closed on Sundays
Town Hall (front)	8	Not listed	
Town Hall (rear)	85	77	Capacity increased by 8 spaces
Hope Lodge	83	67	Capacity increased by 16 spaces
Upper High Street	180	194	Capacity reduced by 14 spaces. Some of these spaces are leased to a car wash operator.
Depot Road	258	233	Capacity increased by 25 spaces
Rainbow Centre	72	116	Capacity reduced by 44 spaces. Note a further 39 spaces are available at Newplan House (evening and weekend only) which are excluded from the figures.
West Hill	12	12	
Epsom Gateway (Atkins)	0	186	A Saturday only facility that is no longer available for use.
Ebbisham Centre, NCP	132	130	Capacity increase of 2 spaces. Site know as Epsom Square

Epsom High Street NCP	85	80	Capacity increased by 5 spaces
Total	2,094	2,520	

**Current Public Parking Capacity**

3.54 In comparing data sourced from the Epsom and Ewell Parking Strategy 2012, which identifies that in 2012 there was a total of 2,520 of public car parking spaces in the town centre, this indicates that there has been a reduction of 426 publicly available spaces over the past 11 years. 175 of these are a result of the Epsom Gateway Car Park, also known as Atkins car park, ceasing to be available for public use from 23 October 2022 in addition to other changes to reconfigure car parks and the leasing of parking spaces to external organisations, which has reduced the available supply of spaces for public use.

**Initial Observations from the data**

3.55 Visitors to the town have their own preference about the different types of facility. Some people wish to park in surface car parks, others are happy with a multi-storey. When considered the type of facility total public car park spaces of 2,094 as follows:

- 4 multi-story car parks (Ashley Centre, Epsom High Street, Ebbisham Centre, and Hook Road Public parking capacity is 1,396 car parking spaces.
- 6 'off-street' surface car park areas (Town Hall front, Hope Lodge, Upper High Street, Depot Road and Rainbow Leisure

Centre) that during both weekdays and weekend times provides 675 car parking spaces.

- street zones (West Street and front of the Town Hall) that provide 20 'on-street' car parking spaces.

3.56 There are no existing or planned park and ride or train and ride facilities or data available on people who drive and park in areas near town and walk the last mile or so.

3.57 Facilities like these could be further away, like station on the Guilford line, or edge of town places for short term/free car park like at Court Recreation with 15 spaces off Court Lane and 55 spaces off Pound Lane.

**Car Parking Occupancy levels & Usage**

3.58 The Council holds data for its own car parks on daily usage, however this information is not available for the three car parks operated by private operators in the town centre. To understand the cumulative car park usage across the core town centre car parks, in July 2023, the council undertook detailed surveys of nine public car parks usage using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems over three days at nine town centre car parks.



3.59 The car park usage surveys were undertaken from 7am to 8pm on Wednesday 12 July, Thursday 13 July and Saturday 15th July 2023 and included length of stay, disabled parking space use and car park accumulation. The results provide a snapshot of how the car parks are used, both in isolation and collectively. The combined car park data for all 9 sites that together contain 2,097 of available car parking spaces (although as noted above these figures include 23 staff parking spaces for the Rainbow Leisure Centre) where the observed at a peak usage was 1,206 spaces or 58% of the total. This was recorded during the time period 11:15 to 11:30 on Thursday 13 July 2023.

Rainbow Centre	95*	94	99% utilisation	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Ebbisham Centre NCP	132	102	77% utilisation	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Epsom High Street NCP	85	38	45% utilisation	Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
All sites combined	2,097	1,206	All car parks 58% utilisation	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2023

\* Note the Rainbow Leisure Centre Car Parking Figures include 23 parking spaces to the rear of the site which are reserved for staff use. This is due to the entrance to the staff parking being located in close proximity to the entrance to the public parking and both the staff and public parking sharing an exit. The ANPR data was therefore unable to determine whether the vehicles entering were staff vehicles or those using the pay and display.

Location	Available Capacity (spaces)	Observed Park Usage (spaces)	ANPR survey for peak accumulation	Survey date
Ashley Centre	649	493	76% utilisation	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Hook Road	530	246	46% utilisation	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Town Hall (rear)	85	75	88% utilisation	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Hope Lodge	83	47	57% utilisation	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Upper High Street	180	117	65% utilisation	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
Depot Road	258	199	77% utilisation	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Possible Car Park Sites for Redevelopment**

3.60 The car parking footfall numbers have not yet got back to higher use before the pandemic. Travel patterns are changing and for car parking the future year vision is hard to pin down. The approach for public car parking is twofold; site and town centre level.

3.61 At site level or town level it’s possible to increase, reduce or keep the same parking capacity. The public car park sites being considered for potential redevelopment are detailed in the table below. The table also displays the range in monthly visitors for each car park based on data sourced from the Councils Parking Team for the 18-month period from April 2022 to September 2023:

<b>Car Park</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Range in Visitors per month recorded between April 2022 and September 2023)</b>
Town Hall Car Parks	97	11,600 – 15,500
Hook Road	530	6,000 – 8,000
Upper High Street	180	5,300 – 7,100
Depot Road	258	12,700- 17,100
Hope Lodge	83	5,400 – 8,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,148</b>	<b>41,000 – 55,700</b>

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3.62 Together the parking sites provide for 1,148 spaces, which is about half the current capacity of parking spaces available in the town centre.

3.63 The car park occupancy data supplied for Hook Road by the Council and findings of the ANPR surveys undertaken in July 2023 shows the potential to reduce overall levels of public car parking, although further analysis and review is needed to be clear on the level and mix of public/private spaces.

3.64 This initial data snapshot highlight parts of the town centre could see a reduction in public car parking, but other areas may need to keep or provide additional capacity. Options include planning for a new multi-story car park(s) and provision public car parking at all the sites.

3.65 Difficult at this stage to understand nature of demand for rail and future retail related parking, changes in land use within the town centre and area wide footfall effects in last 2 years.

3.66 Demand for car parking is closely related to future mobility and polices should follow the County, to cover issues like technological change, intelligent transport systems and climate resilience.

**Recommended steps for a car parking study**

3.67 A future parking study to examine overall provision and individual site provision is recommended and it must reflect policy



approaches in the Surrey County Council Local Transport Plan - Demand Management for Cars.

- 3.68 It is recommended that the Epsom Parking Strategy 2012 is updated to provide an up to date, robust Strategy. Additional surveys are recommended in December to provide seasonal based data.
- 3.69 The scope is in part dependant on what the Masterplan options and development scenarios are to be developed and tested.
- 3.70 A technical specification will need scoping and tasks/surveys commissioned. That's a project in itself, to be agreed and commissioned with traffic survey companies.
- 3.71 All sites with public car parking provision should be examined and the evidence used to explore opportunities to consolidate parking to enable more comprehensive redevelopment.
- 3.72 The future study should direct future demand for public parking, reflecting commuting trends and to support a successful and vibrant town centre.

## 4.0 FUTURE EPSOM TOWN CENTRE

### Post Covid 19: Town Centre Trends

- 4.1 Revitalising town centres has been an increasingly prominent challenge for some time. While the pandemic did exacerbate the decline in many areas, it also shone a light on the trends and characteristics that made town centres / high streets vibrant, attractive, healthy and perhaps most importantly, resilient. Epsom's town centre seems to have admirably weathered the pandemic storm, but its continued resilience can only be secured by anticipating and responding to changing market trends.
- 4.2 Pre-pandemic, 'successful' town centres relied on a high share of office workers within a wide and affluent catchment area. However, it is now abundantly clear that low footfall levels and consumer spending power cannot sustain high-street amenities in the long-term and, as such, town centres should diversify their offer from exclusively retail/food/drink consumption towards being places of production. Establishing town centres as attractive and viable spaces for entrepreneurship and investment is key to ensuring that the demand for high street retailers will follow.
- 4.3 Research<sup>1</sup> highlights an important distinction inadvertently made by the pandemic – the performance of the high street reflects the wider economic strength of the town centre, but it does not drive

it. Therefore, it is prudent to consider means to holistically strengthen the town centre economy in order to:

- facilitate opportunities for high-skilled, high-paid jobs in the town centre;
- respond more acutely to changing customer demands; and
- support mental and physical health of residents and visitors.

4.4 Epsom is well-connected to London and its surrounding suburbs, but more can be done to intensify income generation within the town to attract young professionals and high-skilled workers to such an opportune location. The first objective entails providing not only the 'right' kind of commercial spaces but also a variety of residential properties within suitable locations close to the train station and the A24. An increased proportion of 1-2 bed flats and smaller (co-working) office spaces for people who do not wish to fully work from home can see a significant shift in the way the town centre is used, and the nature of jobs being retained.

4.5 Patrons' preferences are rapidly expanding beyond the conventional 'cookie cutter' high street to encompass an appetite for varied experiences, civic spaces, digital integration and more wellbeing amenities. Online sales, particularly fashion retail, have

<sup>1</sup> [Cities-Outlook-2022-2.pdf \(centreforcities.org\)](#)



continued to rise with an associated decrease in demand for retail floorspace being observed across the UK. However, market trends demonstrate that there is still a strong case for bricks-and-mortar shopping – particularly when combined with internet shopping.

competing and nearby towns, measure footfall and consumer behaviour and provide insights to support the future management of change through the Masterplan and subsequent policy framework

- 4.6 This fluidity of change must be met with a town centre that is able to adapt and develop in order to remain healthy and attractive. At the fore of this change is rising demand for Experiential Shopping and Competitive Leisure, both of which offer young and mature audiences a sense of ‘adventure’ and exploration of the town centre in a way that transcends digital limitations. This may include artworks, live events, cafés, lounging areas, local/independent businesses, hobby classes, nurseries, virtual reality displays and even co-working/educational spaces interwoven within the town centre tapestry.
- 4.7 Users are also increasingly in search for means to live sustainably in places that boost their physical and mental health. Expanding local cycling and walking infrastructure, enhancing local access to nature and ensuring public transport systems are affordable and reliable will enable the town centre to draw in more footfall from various groups in and around Epsom and will support people’s ability to work, live and play in the town post-pandemic.
- 4.8 Specific data on the performance of the town centre is not currently available. Organisations such as Springboard<sup>2</sup> can provide useful analytics to help benchmark Epsom against

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<sup>2</sup> Springboard | Retail Footfall Counter And In-Store Analytics ([spring-board.info](http://spring-board.info))

**Future Need**

4.9 The Local Plan evidence base documents considered relevant to the Masterplan proposals are:

- Epsom & Ewell Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (2020)
- Epsom & Ewell Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment Update (2021)
- Spatial Economic Growth Strategy (2020)
- Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2023)

**Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment**

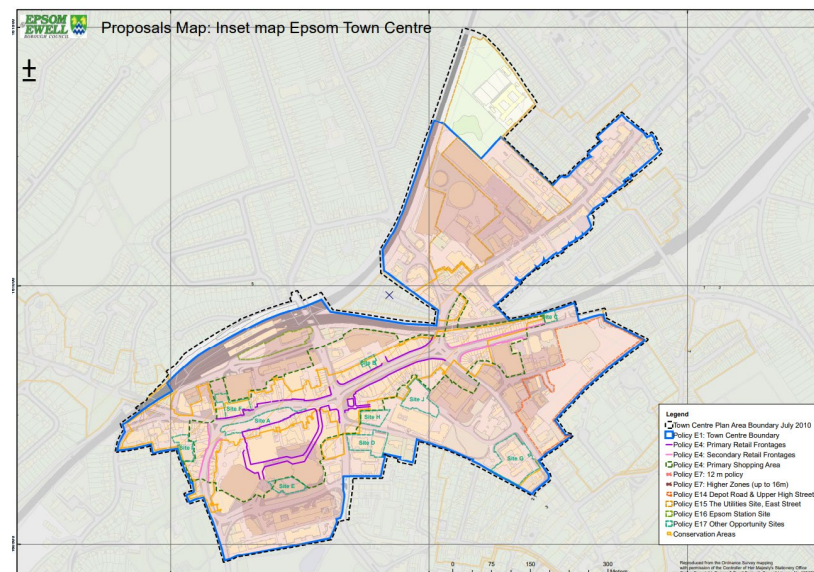
4.10 The Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment<sup>3</sup> was updated in 2021 since much of the 2020 recommendations were considered to be out-of-date in the context of recent planning reform, wider national/economic influences and the need for flexibility to ‘bounce back’ post-Covid.

4.11 The up-to-date analysis demonstrates that there have been limited change in the well-balanced composition of Epsom town centre post-pandemic with the small fluctuations being reflective of national trends. The number of convenience, comparison and financial and business services have seen a very small decrease,

<sup>3</sup> [Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment Update \(epson-ewell.gov.uk\)](https://www.epson-ewell.gov.uk)

whilst retail and leisure services have grown in number. Fortunately, Epsom town centre’s proportion of vacant units remains below the national average.

4.12 The updated Assessment underscores that the overall strategy for Epsom is not one of growth but of consolidation and it makes specific recommendations for the Epsom Town Centre, as set out below.



4.13 The updated Assessment stresses the need to retain the Primary Shopping Area and the Primary and Secondary Shopping



Frontages (Figure 7) as existing; and to encourage town centre living and non-retail uses on vacant or redundant upper floors to ensure footfall and a vibrant daytime, evening and night-economy. This generally also leads to much needed external refurbishment in many parts of the town centre.

4.14 Within its recommendations, specific sites were earmarked for future development. Epsom Square is envisioned to be the focus of the daytime/evening leisure economy (restaurants as a priority over bars/pubs/clubs), to be incorporated into the Secondary Shopping Frontage. The Old Town / Market Place, identified under Plan E, should remain the focus for a mix of street-based activities, including pavement cafes, street entertainment and a permanent market. The forthcoming Town Centre Masterplan should also seek to establish wider relationships between the Epsom Playhouse Theatre and the town centre evening and eating/drinking economy, to promote linked trips and wider economic benefits for the town centre. The following development opportunity sites – also identified in Plan E – remain available:

- The Utilities Site: part implemented for housing. The remainder of the site should be considered for mixed-use redevelopment.
- TK Maxx store, Upper High Street: a key attractor/anchor within the heart of the Town Centre’s Primary Shopping Area. The upper floor comprises a leisure gym use which should be retained. Opportunity for intensification and additional town

centre residential units as the site also benefits from a pedestrian access route directly through to Epsom train station.

4.15 It is recommended that some element of control is exercised over the uses in character areas to prevent non-Use Class E within the Primary Shopping Frontage (including sui generis) and within the Secondary Shopping Frontage aside from the former Use Class A4 (drinking establishments). EEBC are encouraged to adopt Article 4 Direction to limit permitted changes of use from Use Class E to Use Class C3 (dwellinghouse) in the town centre.

4.16 The forthcoming Town Centre Masterplan should seek to set out a policy framework and strategy for each of the key vision/character areas, setting out the uses permitted in each location, as per the recommendations of the updated Assessment. A strong strategy for each area will assist in investment decisions and locational choices for operators as they recognise the vision and future site opportunities.

#### ***Spatial Economic Growth Strategy for Epsom and Ewell***

4.17 The 2021 Addendum to the Spatial Economic Growth Strategy<sup>4</sup> forecasted key trends in the period 2017-2037 based on the evidenced impacts of COVID-19 impacts, as follows:

- Many medium and large businesses will downsize their office space (not so much for small 1-2500sq ft offices), but this

<sup>4</sup> [Addendum to Local Plan Spatial Economic Growth Strategy for Epsom & Ewell \(epsom-ewell.gov.uk\)](https://www.ewell.gov.uk/Assets/Local%20Plan%20Addendum%20to%20the%20Spatial%20Economic%20Growth%20Strategy%20for%20Epsom%20and%20Ewell.pdf)

will not be for some time due to current leases and/or break clauses. Additional demand for very small offices can be expected. Serviced office operators have seen increased demand for 1-2 person offices from those who do not want to work from home the whole time and wish to be in an office environment part of the week, sometimes paid for by the company.

- In terms of High Street impact, demand for a wider range and higher quality of amenities is expected to emerge to support local working environments. This includes high quality local shops, faster reliable Internet access, supportive communities and pleasant streets, places to go out, more local employment space, housing, exercise and sports facilities.
- The shift to online retail is reported as potentially leading to a huge shift in the role of the high street. This can see newly available business space being taken up by office users, start-ups, pop ups, community centres and residential developments.
- Despite excitement around the 15-minute city concept, research and opinion sees a halfway point between the proposal and the current reliance on city centres. This will see more local amenities spread across small neighbourhoods, whilst more specialist ones will find themselves still in the centre of the city.

- Demand for industrial and warehouse space will be booming for the foreseeable future, arising from a shift from retailers giving up their shop fronts and focusing more on storage and distribution; more delivery businesses springing up, for example one offering an e bike freight service; and a number of people running businesses from home now demanding industrial premises.

Industrial and warehouse users do not appear to require radical reconfigurations as is being observed in the office sector. Epsom & Ewell does not have enough industrial premises, due to a lack of space and low levels of funding and investment. Demand far outweighs the supply. The existing stock is considered old and unexciting.

#### ***Epsom and Ewell Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)***

- 4.18 The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) January 2023 estimates the jobs growth that may occur in the borough between 2022 and 2040 based upon two jobs growth scenarios, using a baseline forecast and higher growth Custom Growth Scenario (CGS). Table 2 below shows employment land requirement forecasts based on the midpoint of the two aforementioned jobs growth scenarios.



4.19 The HEDNA (2023) recommends that existing land use for offices are intensified or regenerated in the Town Centre and East Street.

**4.20 Table 2: Projected floorspace and land requirements (2022-2040)**

Land Use	Floorspace (sqm)	Land Required (ha)
Offices / R&D (Class E(g)(i)(ii))	19,437	1.2
Light industrial (Class E(g)(iii))	9,021	2.3
General industrial (Class B2)	9,554	2.4
Warehousing (Class B8)	18,157	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,169</b>	<b>10.3</b>

**Development Viability**

4.21 The UK property market has experienced a fall in confidence due to market uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, worsening cost-of-living crisis and wider macroeconomic effects of the Russia-Ukraine war, such as supply chain shortages.

4.22 The latest RICS Residential Market Survey (October 2023) indicates a somewhat subdued market, with new buyer enquiries and instructions generally declining reflecting a tighter lending climate. House prices have fallen across the UK, reflecting cooling demand. The RICS is however predicting a broadly stable outlook for sales market activity for the year to come. In the rental market, rising demand and restricted supply is driving rents upwards. This is expected to continue, with rents predicted by the RICS to rise by around 4% on average across the UK over the next twelve months.

4.23 The UK property market has shown great resilience through the worst of the pandemic and its associated lockdowns. Market activity was boosted through a series of market interventions, such as Stamp Duty Land Tax holidays and business rates relief. Restricted supply has further bolstered house price inflation, even when demand has been modest. Therefore, market commentators recognise that despite the current challenges, there are opportunities to be exploited, particularly in stronger locations. This section considers the separate property market sectors in Epsom.

**Residential**

- 4.24 Across the UK, house prices have generally increased steadily over the past ten years with values exceeding pre-recession rates in 2014. Epsom's property prices have generally mirrored the national trend, with values increasing by circa 52% in the last ten years<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.25 Even over the past two years, with market uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK residential market has experienced growth of over 23%<sup>6</sup>. However, the worsening cost of living crisis is resulting in a bleaker economic outlook. This is slowing market activity and leading to a national fall in house prices as buyers exercise caution while lenders tighten their mortgage approval criteria. Despite this, house prices in Epsom remain on a slight upward trajectory. According to Rightmove, house sale prices in Epsom are up overall by 2% on last year, indicating a strong local market.
- 4.26 In terms of properties on the market, evidence from Zoopla and Rightmove shows a high concentration of one- and two-bed flats across the town centre boundary. This is largely reflective of a town centre location, which typically comprises a higher number of apartments and a tendency towards a more transient population. On average, asking prices for one-bed flats is

currently around £260,000 while two-bed flats attract around £350,000. Within the town centre boundary, there is a significant premium for new build flats compared to existing properties. This can be as high as 20%.

- 4.27 At the time of writing (November 2023), there were only three houses on the market within the town centre. These four-bed detached and semi-detached properties are listed at an average of £890,000. This equates to approximately £5,890/sqm, which is not dissimilar to the rest of Epsom. However, the limited supply of houses on the market may create unreliable results.
- 4.28 An analysis of the Epsom town centre property market by postcode has also been undertaken, although it is imperative to note that these postcodes also overlap with areas beyond the town centre boundary. Sales evidence indicates that average house prices range between £470,000 and £640,000, depending on the postcode. This is largely in line with the average for Epsom as a whole, but lower than the Surrey average. The table below depicts the average sales values for Epsom Town Centre postcodes.

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<sup>5</sup> Foxtons: <https://www.foxtons.co.uk/living-in/epsom>

<sup>6</sup> Savills: UK Housing Market Update July 2022  
[https://www.savills.co.uk/research\\_articles/229130/330343-0](https://www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/330343-0)



**Table 3: Average Property Prices by Postcode (November 2023)**

Postcode	Location	Average Price	% of Epsom Average
-	Surrey	£661,000	109%
-	Epsom	£607,000	100%
<b>KT17</b>	Town Centre and Environs	£612,000	101%
<b>KT18</b>	Town Centre and Environs	£641,000	106%
<b>KT19</b>	Town Centre and Environs	£564,000	93%

Source: Rightmove/Home.co.uk

4.29 The data reviewed shows that terraced properties are in short supply, together with larger (four- and five- bed) properties. Terraced (KT17), semi-detached (KT18) and detached (KT19) properties spend the least amount of time on the market. Additionally, across the three postcodes, detached properties have experienced the highest growth in sold prices, with weakening growth for flats. While this somewhat indicates higher demand for larger properties, potentially exacerbated by overall lower supply, it is important to note that this data is based on the stock that is available on the market and may not be fully representative of the overall position. Crucially, this data also captures areas beyond the town centre boundary.

4.30 According to data collated by property agent Foxtons, properties in Epsom have experienced continuous growth over the last 5 years, with average house prices growing by circa 2.6% in the last year<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, most properties in Epsom, even within the last year, are sold within 3 months, indicating a resilient market with positive activity rates. The existence of ongoing demand for housing reinforces the potential for residential use to play a part in underpinning long-term growth in the town centre, which works towards enhancing the health and vibrancy of the centre's evening economy. However, it is also crucial to consider this growth against affordability in the Borough. Latest data from the ONS shows that property prices in Epsom and Ewell are currently 20 times average earnings, which is more than double the England average (8.3).

4.31 The rental market in the town centre postcodes also generally reflect the Epsom average, as shown in the table below. The significant jump in price for 5-bed rental properties likely signifies low supply of these types of properties, or an increased popularity in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). HMOs typically benefit from greater rental incomes and capital growth based on the model of charging rents per room. With a large student population in Epsom, this is likely to boost the rental income for any HMO properties. In general, however, flats make up the largest number of properties in the rental market.

<sup>7</sup> Foxtons: <https://www.foxtons.co.uk/living-in/epsom>

**Table 4: Postcode Comparison of Asking Rents in Epsom (November 2023)**

	Property Type			Number of Bedrooms					Postcode Average
	Room	Flat	House	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	
<b>Epsom</b>	£650	£1,650	£2,675	£1,288	£1,650	£2,225	£2,675	£3,900	£2,175
<b>KT17</b>	£600	£1,550	£2,000	£1,300	£1,652	£2,050	£2,900	£3,900	£1,675
<b>KT18</b>		£1,523	£2,950	£1,325	£1,545	£2,125	£2,400	£5,500	£2,686
<b>KT19</b>	£700	£1,720	£2,550	£1,350	£1,6,25	£2,300	£2,650	£2,850	£2,300

**Source:** Home.co.uk

4.32 Overall, data reviewed indicates a sustained sales and rental market overall, despite the weakening national picture, with particularly strong demand for terraced houses. This may reflect the nature of the stock on offer. The picture also supports a general trend where the demand for flats is less certain than that for houses. It is also worthwhile considering the role that students play in the rental market, where demand is highest during term-time and lowest over the summer period.



**Commercial**

- 4.33 The Council's Economic Development Strategy sets out the vision for delivering sustained economic prosperity across the Borough, including through the retention of highly skilled residents and graduates. The Strategy identifies the need for a business growth hub to support the existing University for the Creative Arts and North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot). Attracting high quality inward investment and employment opportunities and expansion of key businesses are also highlighted as key priorities.
- 4.34 'Go Epsom', which is Epsom's Business Improvement District (BID), recognises the importance of supporting existing businesses while encouraging new business start-ups and brand names to establish in Epsom, all while enhancing the quality of the environment and the overall appeal of the town.
- 4.35 The employment and commercial floorspace market is strongly shaped by the local economy. In Epsom, the greatest number of jobs are in the '*Human health and social work activities*' (4,430 jobs) and '*Professional, scientific & technical*' (5,520 jobs). There are also large numbers employed in the '*Wholesale and retail trade*' (4,430 jobs) '*Education*' (4,350 jobs) and Construction (2,720 jobs) industries, as reported in the HEDNA (2023). . This is largely consistent with the overall picture for the South-East region of the country.

- 4.36 The town centre offers a variety of floorspace, indicating a diversified economy. The market currently includes availabilities for a mix of smaller units (circa 250 sq. ft), to larger units well in excess of 10,000 sq. ft. Much of the business floorspace is located around Upper High Street, East Street and Church Street. According to data from EGI, offices in Epsom town centre currently attract around £20 -30 per sq. ft depending on the location and standard of accommodation.
- 4.37 Data from recent investment deals indicates that office properties currently attract a yield of around 6-7.5%, although some properties have higher yields. This is on the lower end of typical office yields in South-East towns (approximately 7.5%)<sup>8</sup>. The combination of rent and yield indicates a value profile unlikely to support speculative office development, with new floorspace anticipated only where this is for an identified occupier.

**Retail**

- 4.38 Retailing in towns and cities has experienced structural change over the years in response to technological, societal and other advances, including a surge in online shopping and out-of-town retail development. This change was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw a reliance on online retailing and last-mile logistics.

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<sup>8</sup> Knight Frank <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/522/documents/en/investment-yield-guide-may-2022-9051.pdf>

- 4.39 Data from the ONS<sup>9</sup> indicates that, at the time of writing (November 2023), retail sales volumes remain above their pre-Covid levels reflecting recovery from, and the market disruption of the pandemic. However, recent inflation and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, high energy/fuel costs and supply chain shortages arising from international unrest have created challenging conditions for retailers, with costs increasing and consumer confidence falling. Indeed, sales volumes have declined steadily over the last year, whilst sales values and costs have risen. There remains an expectation of uncertainty over coming months.
- 4.40 The Epsom & Ewell Retail & Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (2020), and its subsequent 2021 Update, recognises Epsom as a healthy, well-performing town centre with '*good levels of vitality and viability*', largely owing to the Council's own policy stance on consolidating the town centre offering and restricting out-of-centre development. The Study finds that, while Kingston and Sutton are both higher order retail destinations in the wider catchment area, Epsom Town Centre has continued to grow its market share and improve its floorspace performance. This reflects a national move back towards market towns and away from higher order centres, supported by changing working patterns.
- 4.41 The town centre's primary retail focus is The Ashley Centre, a shopping centre comprising several national retailers including Next, Marks and Spencer, Sports Direct, Waitrose, WH Smith and Boots. The closure of House of Fraser, which previously anchored the shopping centre, is likely to have a noticeable impact on footfall.
- 4.42 Data from EGI shows lease transactions for eight units in the past 12 months, namely JD Sports (4,453 sq. ft), Jones the Bootmaker (1,500 sq. ft), Monsoon (1,800 sq. ft), Deichmann shoes (8,000 sq. ft), Gail's (5,958 sq. ft), Phone Gadget (1,200 sq. ft), Next (8,000 sq. ft) and Sports Direct (9,085 sq. ft).<sup>10</sup> It is also confirmed that Primark will be taking the majority of the former House of Fraser unit. At the time of writing, there are three vacant units between 750 and 3,200 sq. ft. Units in the shopping centre currently attract rents in the region of £48 - £65 per sq. ft.
- 4.43 Outside of the shopping centre, there is further representation of national retailers (such as TK Maxx and Café 1) and local independent retailers on High Street, Upper High Street, Waterloo Road, South Street, West Street and Epsom Market. Retail units outside the shopping centre generally attract lower rents in the region of £20 - £27 per sq. ft.
- 4.44 Evidence from the town centre indicates that yields are currently around 6-7%, but higher in more secondary locations. This is

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<sup>9</sup> ONS:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/bulletins/retailsales/september2023>

<sup>10</sup> EGI Radius Data Exchange



consistent with yields in regional cities (such as Manchester and Birmingham, where yields are around 6.5%), but better performing than secondary retail locations (such as Truro and Leamington Spa, where yields are around 8.5%).

- 4.45 Epsom's proximity to markets such as Kingston and Sutton means that it is not considered by the wider catchment as a destination for comparison shopping. Despite this, evidence suggests that retail performs a strong, positive role in the town centre. The retention of national retailers and local independent retailers continues to be significant in maintaining local spend from residents and enticing people visiting Epsom to spend whilst in the town. The local and individual traders represented provide a varied offer which differs from that available in other centres.

### **Leisure**

- 4.46 Evening and visitor economies play a key role in attracting spend to an area and promoting business growth. The Epsom Downs Racecourse, which is less than two miles south of the town centre, is a key visitor attractor in the borough. Epsom's Market Place also hosts regular events, including the Epsom Derby Festival events and annual Christmas Light shows.
- 4.47 In Epsom, the commercial leisure sector is mainly represented by a varied mix of food and drink outlets (in or around High Street, Waterloo Road and Epsom Square), the Odeon Cinema, Epsom Playhouse and hotel/guest accommodation servicing the visitor

economy. A six-screen Picture House cinema is also anticipated to open in Epsom Square.

- 4.48 There is a wide variety of food and drink outlets to choose from, including restaurants, cafes, bars, street kiosks and more specialist food stores. The selection includes national multiples such as Nando's, ASK Italian, Pizza Express and McDonalds, to more local independent restaurants.
- 4.49 The Odeon Cinema has 8 screens and can seat over 740 people. The Epsom Playhouse, a theatre and regular venue for professional productions, children's shows and community events, seats over 500 people in its main auditorium and smaller studio space. The theatre is also a key attractor in the wider sub-region.
- 4.50 There are two hotel chains represented in the town centre – Travelodge Epsom Central and Premier Inn Epsom Town Central. The Surrey Hotel Futures Report 2015 indicated that hotel companies were interested in Epsom as a suitable location for 3 Star/Upper Tier Budget and Budget hotels. The existing provision meets the immediate need for budget hotel provision in the town centre, providing a combined capacity of 122 rooms.

### **Viability**

- 4.51 Given the nationally uncertain property market, and the prevailing somewhat more positive market conditions in Epsom town centre, it is vital that the Master Plan capitalises on the relatively strong local market to meet both local and visitor needs. This provides a

positive platform on which to develop appropriate, sensitive, and deliverable plans for future development.

4.52 To support the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) that was subject to public consultation, a Local Plan Viability Study was published in January 2023. Overall, the study demonstrates a positive indication of viability and deliverability across the borough, but as is common for many locations, this can be more challenging where existing use values are high.

4.53 As with all locations, viability will depend on specific site circumstances and the mix of development proposed. Values may differ based on the location and quality of the offer, and will also be impacted by demand, supply and other economic factors. Build costs may also differ based on factors such as site type (e.g., brownfield/greenfield), density (taller buildings typically attract higher costs), build quality and policy requirements.

4.54 It is worth noting that the BCIS Five Year Forecast indicates that build prices are likely to increase by 14% over the next five years<sup>11</sup>. This upward trajectory reflects a combination of factors, including more stringent policy requirements (such as costs attributed to meeting Biodiversity Net Gain and energy efficiency standards) and supply shortages. However, this does not automatically result in unviable schemes as viability is based on the relationship between values and costs. Therefore, where value

increases meet or exceed cost increases, viability is less likely to be challenged.

4.55 While the overall UK market exercises some caution to reflect growing uncertainty around the economic outlook, the Epsom property market overview indicates a positive prospect for deliverable development. The clear evidence of market and development activity highlights a resilient market position which the Masterplan should positively seek to capitalise on.

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<sup>11</sup> BCIS Five Year Forecast <https://www.rics.org/uk/products/data-products/insights/bcis-five-year-forecast-building/>



## 5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 This report has highlighted a range of factors which need to be considered holistically in order to progress the Masterplan. This includes:

- An understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses inherent in the physical fabric of the town centre which impact on its success as a place to visit, live and trade. The physical fabric encapsulates both privately owned land and property and the public realm.
- A review of transport matters which impact on the town centre, and which may affect the future town centre outcomes.
- An overview of the current car parking provision within the town centre, and the need for a further study.
- Current and emerging planning policy and associated evidence base information. Also, important designations including conservation areas and listed buildings.
- A market overview and commentary relating to development viability.

5.2 There are several next steps which should be taken to reach a draft Masterplan capable of informing the new Epsom & Ewell Local Plan:

- Preparation of an Urban Design Framework for the town centre setting out the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Future connectivity, with particular regard to structuring development and encouraging footfall, and creating a safe and attractive environment;
- Active fronts, including new development and repair of the existing built fabric;
- Key nodes and gateways; and
- Scope for new landmarks and other measures to improve legibility.

- Consideration of appropriate land uses, their distribution and the amount/capacity to accommodate new uses. This should include consideration of uses which will drive footfall.
- Establishing criteria to be taken into account when considering taller buildings. This might include the proximity of heritage assets, impact on important views, surrounding context, opportunities for placemaking and achieving critical mass.
- Options for key development opportunity sites, with specific regard to different building heights scenarios.
- Outline ideas for enhancing the public realm throughout the town centre to achieve a cohesive, uplifting, welcoming and attractive setting for town centre life.

- Consideration of specific opportunities for EEBC to play a significant role in driving the delivery of the Masterplan, acknowledging their extensive land holding within the centre and potential to partner with private sector developers.
- The preparation of draft recommended proposals for the Masterplan, to inform EEBC's emerging Local Plan (2022-2040).







