



Gillingham Town Centre Development Framework

Adopted Supplementary
Planning Document
July 2007



BARTON WILLMORE

7 Soho Square
London
W1D 3QB

tel. 020 7446 6888
fax. 020 7446 6889

bartonwillmore.co.uk

**Savell
Bird &
Axon**

K/14629/A5/Graphics/A Vision for Gillingham/
070724 Adopted Gillingham Town Centre Development
Framework - July 2007.indb

All the maps within the document are reproduced from/based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright and/or database right, 2006. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings 100024225.

Historic photos reproduced with kind permission of Medway Local Studies.

Cities Revealed® aerial photography copyright The GeoInformation® Group, 2003 and Crown Copyright © All rights reserved.

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the prior written consent of Barton Willmore.

Gillingham Town Centre Development Framework

Adopted Supplementary
Planning Document
July 2007



Medway
Renaissance

Following a period of consultation, on the 25th July 2007 Medway Council adopted the Gillingham Town Centre Development Framework as a Supplementary Planning Document. A separate report is available from Medway Council that summarises all the comments received during the consultation and the Council's response to them.

List of Figures

- Fig 1.1 Gillingham Town Centre Regeneration Process
- Fig 2.1 Gillingham Town Centre 1866
- Fig. 2.2 Gillingham Town Centre 1909
- Fig. 2.3 Gillingham Town Centre 1932
- Fig 2.4 Gillingham Town Centre 1993
- Fig 2.5 Retail Impact Plan
- Fig 3.1 Context Plan
- Fig 3.2 The study area
- Fig 3.3 Land Use Plan
- Fig 3.4 Town Centre Health Check
- Fig 3.5 Storey Heights Plan
- Fig 3.6 Activity Audit Plan
- Fig 3.7 Key Buildings Plan
- Fig 3.8 Figure Ground Study
- Fig 3.9 Strategic Movement Plan
- Fig 3.10 Movement Analysis Plan
- Fig 3.11 Constraints Plan
- Fig 3.12 Assets Plan
- Fig 3.13 The Wider Regeneration Context
- Fig 4.1 Objectives for Gillingham Town Centre
- Fig 4.2 Concept Plan
- Fig 4.3 Movement and Parking Strategy
- Fig 5.1 Framework Plan
- Fig 5.2 Retail Core
- Fig 5.3 Town Square viewed from the West
- Fig 5.4 Town Square
- Fig 5.5 Station Gateway
- Fig 5.6 Gillingham Hub
- Fig 5.7 Jeffrey Street Car Park
- Fig 5.8 Balmoral Gardens
- Fig 5.9 Junction of High Street and Marlborough Road
- Fig 5.10 Junction of High Street and Arden Street
- Fig 5.11 Junction of High Street and Canterbury Street
- Fig 5.12 Promoting additional planting along the High Street
- Fig 5.13 New frontages along Jeffrey Street
- Fig 5.14 BT Switch Centre
- Fig 5.15 Gala Bingo
- Fig 5.16 Mill Road / Fox Street
- Fig 5.17 Rear of High Street properties
- Fig 5.18 Town centre fringe areas
- Fig 6.1 Illustrative model showing key projects
- Fig 6.2 Illustrative model showing Phase 1
- Fig 6.3 Illustrative model showing Phase 2
- Fig 6.4 Illustrative model showing Phase 3

1. INTRODUCTION	7	5. KEY PROJECTS	57
1.1 Introduction	8	5.1 Framework Plan	58
2. GILLINGHAM PAST	11	5.2 Retail Core	60
2.1 Historic Evolution	12	5.3 Town Square	62
2.2 Retail Context	14	5.4 Station Gateway	64
3. GILLINGHAM PRESENT	16	5.5 Gillingham Hub	66
3.1 Introduction	18	5.6 Jeffrey Street Car Park	68
3.2 Town Centre Offer	20	5.7 Balmoral Gardens	70
3.3 Town Centre Health Check	22	5.8 West End Links	72
3.4 Urban Design Analysis	24	5.9 Market and Blossom Festival	74
3.5 Movement & Parking	28	5.10 Jeffrey Street	75
3.6 Constraints & Assets	32	5.11 BT Switch Centre	76
3.7 Policy Context	34	5.12 GALA Bingo	77
3.8 Wider Initiatives	36	5.13 Mill Road / Fox Street	78
4. GILLINGHAM FUTURE	38	5.14 Rear of 47, 59-75 High Street	79
4.1 Consultation	40	Town Centre Fringe	80
4.2 A Vision for Gillingham	42	6. PHASING & DELIVERY	81
4.3 Concept Plan	44	6.1 Phasing Principles	82
4.4 Themes: Retail	46	6.2 Phase 1	84
4.5 Themes: Market	47	6.3 Phase 2	85
4.6 Themes: West End	48	6.4 Phase 3	86
4.7 Themes: Town Centre Fringe	49	APPENDIX A - 1969 GOAD PLAN	88
4.8 Themes: Employment	50	APPENDIX B - 2005 GOAD PLAN	89
4.9 Themes: Public Realm	51	APPENDIX C - MEDWAY LOCAL PLAN	90
4.10 Themes: Movement	52	EXTRACT 2003	
4.11 Themes: Parking	54		
4.12 Themes: Residential	55		



1. Introduction

1.1.1 Introduction

Barton Willmore were appointed by Medway Council in February 2006 to produce a Development Framework to stimulate and guide the development of Gillingham Town Centre.

The Framework is a comprehensive and integrated tool for regeneration, including:

- review of existing studies to date;
- social, economic and environmental analysis;
- vision and land use framework;
- assessment of development opportunities for key sites;
- transport and parking strategy;
- public realm improvements.

We have split these elements into three distinct sections - Gillingham Past, Present and Future.

This is very much a 'visioning' document - summarising work to date, producing ideas for key sites and forming the basis for the next phases of work including detailed design and delivery strategy. The Framework will also be used as a tool to generate public and private funding and investment.

1.1.2 Related Work

The regeneration process (illustrated on the diagram opposite) began in 2004 with Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) funding over a two year period. A number of projects have already begun with the aid of this funding, including improvements to car parking areas and the creation of an Information Advice and First Point of Contact Service, an upgraded Library Service and Medway's Adult and Community Learning Service.

The 2004 Medway Waterfront Renaissance Strategy (MWRS) acknowledges that:

"Gillingham...remains an important district centre. Its role in regeneration needs to be closely defined as part of the next phase of the regeneration strategy."

As part of a wider piece of work, Medway Council appointed consultants DTZ Pieda Consulting to carry out a Retail and Commercial Leisure Study. The report (July 2005) recommends:

- for Gillingham to focus on providing convenience retailing, anchored by a vibrant and extended street market; and
- the need to open up gateways and promote stronger pedestrian linkages with the surrounding residential areas and within the centre itself.

Public engagement on community aspirations and regeneration priorities for the town centre took place in February and September 2005, informing the production of the Framework. More detail on community engagement is contained in section 4.1.

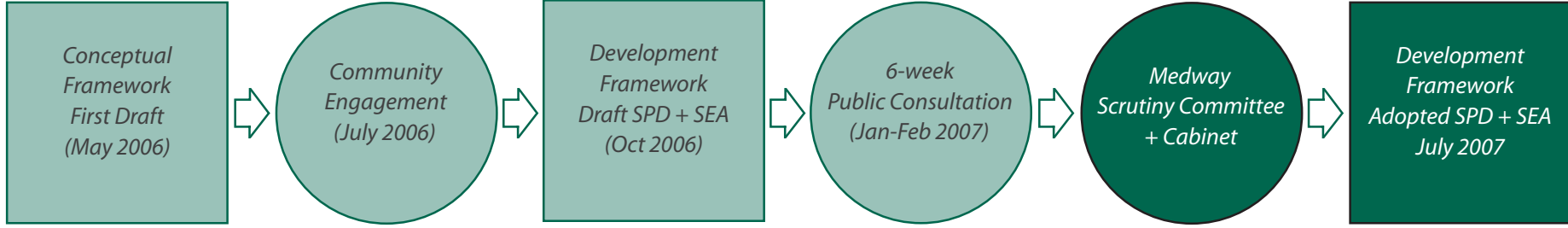
1.1.3 Status

The draft Framework was approved for public consultation by elected Members in October 2006. The Framework is accompanied by a separate Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and both were subject to a 6-week public consultation period in January and February 2007. Taking account of issues arising from consultation, the Framework has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), forming part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Medway Council. More detail can be found on the website www.medway.gov.uk.

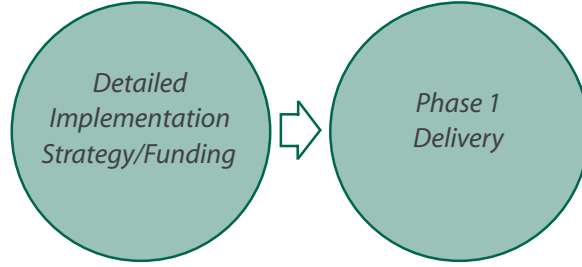
First Stage



Second Stage



Third Stage



1.1 Introduction

Fig 1.1 Gillinham Town Centre Regeneration Process





2. Gillingham Past

2.1 Historic Evolution

2.1.1 Evolution

The street plans demonstrate the evolution of the town centre since 1866. Key trends have been:

- Historic growth as a result of dockyards, military / naval activity;
- Rapid residential and commercial growth of low rise terraced housing and extension of the tram by 1909. Note in particular the Hippodrome theatre on the Balmoral Gardens site and the number of important civic uses including churches, pubs and municipal offices;
- A shift of focus of the town centre from the west to the railway station over time, including the new Victoria Bridge by 1909;
- Development of the passenger railway station in its current position by 1932, as well as the general post office in Green Street and more cinemas / theatres;
- Consolidation of some sites into larger retail units in the post-war period. The development of gaps in the urban fabric through creation of service yards and parking, creating a ring road character on Jeffrey Street. Pedestrianisation of the High Street.



Fig 2.1 Gillingham Town Centre 1866



High Street / Canterbury Street junction c. 1900

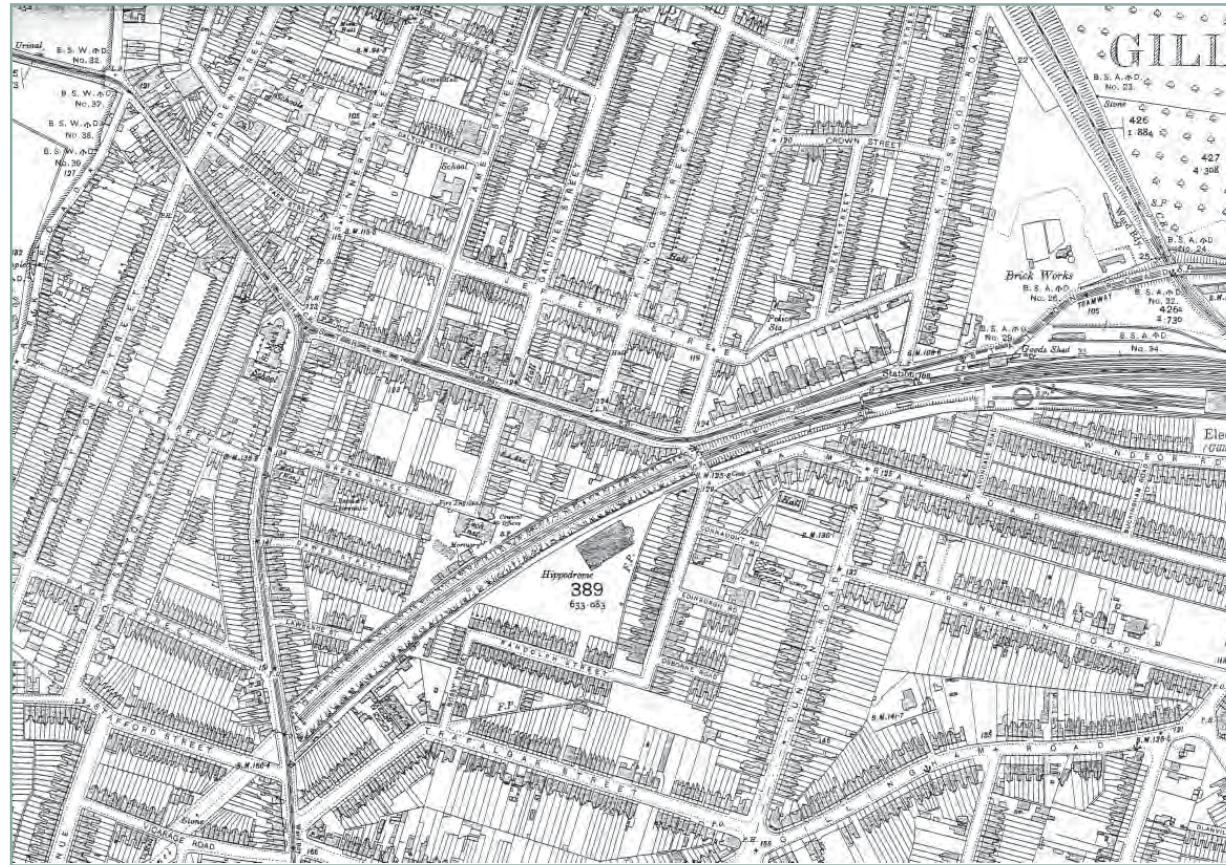


Fig. 2.2 Gillingham Town Centre 1909

2.1 Historic Evolution



Railway Hotel, Balmoral Road c.1900



Barclays Bank, High Street 1910



Co-operative Butchers, 1910



Trolleybus, High Street 1913

2.1 Historic Evolution

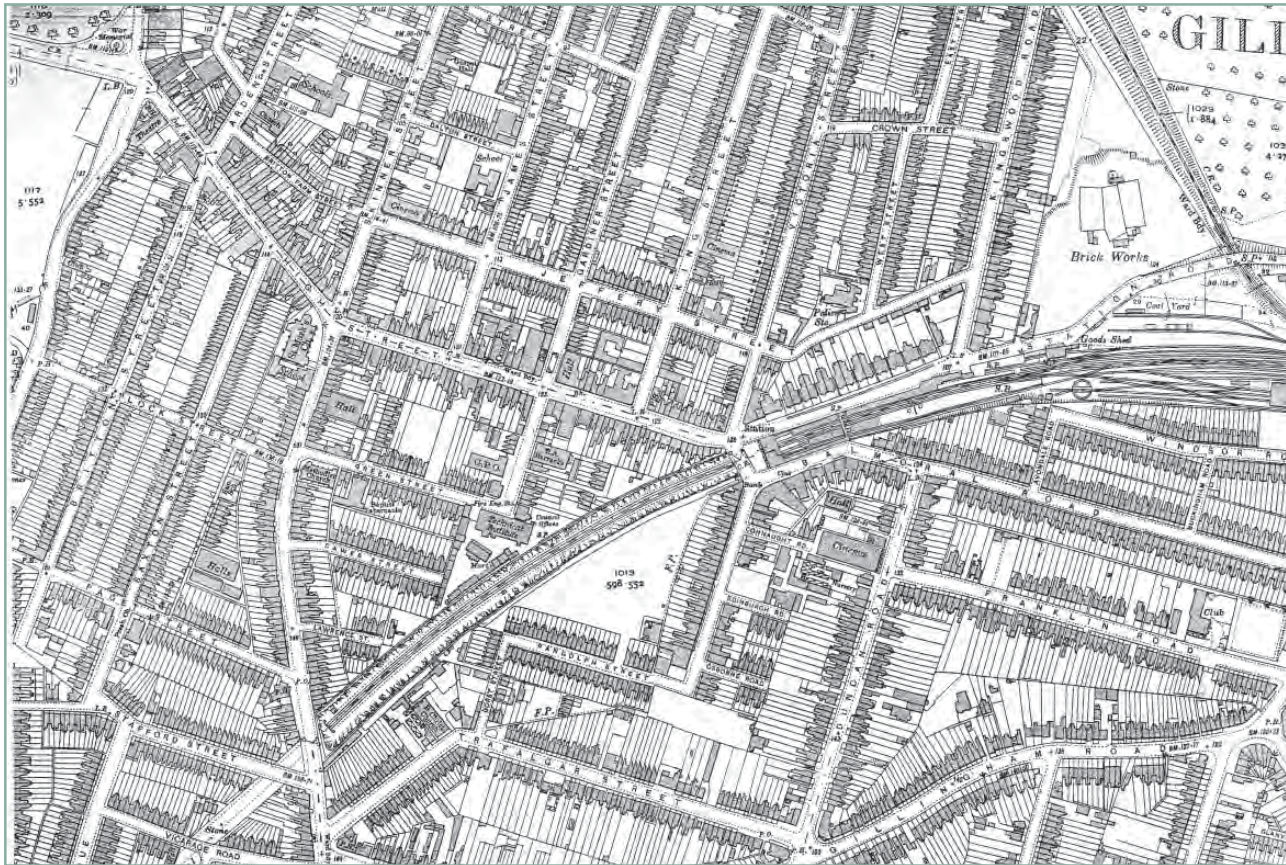


Fig. 2.3 Gillingham Town Centre 1932



High Street looking West towards Great Lines, 1950



High Street looking east towards railway station, 1950



High Street looking east towards railway station, 1961



Marks & Spencer, High Street 1964



Fig 2.4 Gillingham Town Centre 1993



High Street looking east, 1961



Above: Pedestrianised High Street, 1992
Below: Looking west from station, 1974



The market and High Street today

2.1 Historic Evolution

2.2.1 Key influences

The 1969 GOAD plan (Appendix A) highlights the rich diversity of uses present at that time. In common with many smaller town centres, external competition has greatly increased since the 1960s due to increased travel (offering a wider choice of places to shop, work and spend leisure time), the growth of out-of-town shopping from supermarkets and leisure / DIY to regional malls such as Bluewater - in Gillingham, particular factors have been as a result of dockyard closures and resulting unemployment. The diagram opposite illustrates some key local retail influences as a timeline.

- **1975 Chatham Pentagon Centre** – approx. 80 shops, including Boots and Sainsburys, 670 parking spaces (refurbished in 1990)
- **1979 Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre** - Kent's largest food hypermarket, Sainsburys Savacentre. Privately managed, covered shopping centre. 2,200 free car parking spaces. Includes M&S, BHS. Late night opening
- **Late 1980s Gillingham Business Park** – 10,540 sqm / 113,455 sqft gross floorspace, retailers include B&Q, Allied Carpets, Carpetright, Magnet, Harveys, MFI
- **Late 1980s Horsted Retail Park, Chatham** – 12,975 sqm / 139,666 sqft gross floorspace, retailers include Carpetright, Currys, Homebase, Pets at Home, Toys R Us, PC World
- **1990 Lakeside Regional Shopping Centre** – 132,287 sqm (1,424,080 sqft) of retail space, 13,792 free car parking spaces, late night opening
- **1991 Tesco, Courtney Road, Rainham** – 6,503 sqm (70,000 sqft) gross, 5,143 sqm (55,363 sqft) net, 449 parking spaces, out-of-centre store
- **1996 Asda, Chatham (Maidstone Road)** – 6,317 sqm / 68,000 sqft gross, 3,480 sqm / 37,467 sqft net. Out-of-centre store
- **1999 Bluewater Regional Shopping Centre** – over 154,000 sqm / 1,697,696 sqft retail floorspace, 320 shops, anchored by John Lewis, House of Fraser and M&S. Over 13,000 free car parking spaces, late night opening
- **2003 Chatham Dockyard Outlet Centre** – 15,000 sqm / 161,463 sqft designer outlet centre, 80 shops selling range of goods including clothing, luggage and home furnishings in a Grade II listed building at the Dockyard
- **Updated 2004 Strood Retail Park** – 9,738 sqm / 104,822 sqft gross floorspace, retailers include Argos, B&Q, Brantano, Carpetright, Next, Matalan
- **2005 Fremlin Walk, Maidstone** – new shopping centre on the Fremlin Brewery site, 32,515 sqm / 382,292 sqft retail floorspace, includes House of Fraser, easy access from A229
- **Whitefriars, Canterbury** – new shopping provision in the City including Fenwicks, Boots, Tesco Metro and Next
- **2005 Morrisons, Strood** - new supermarket

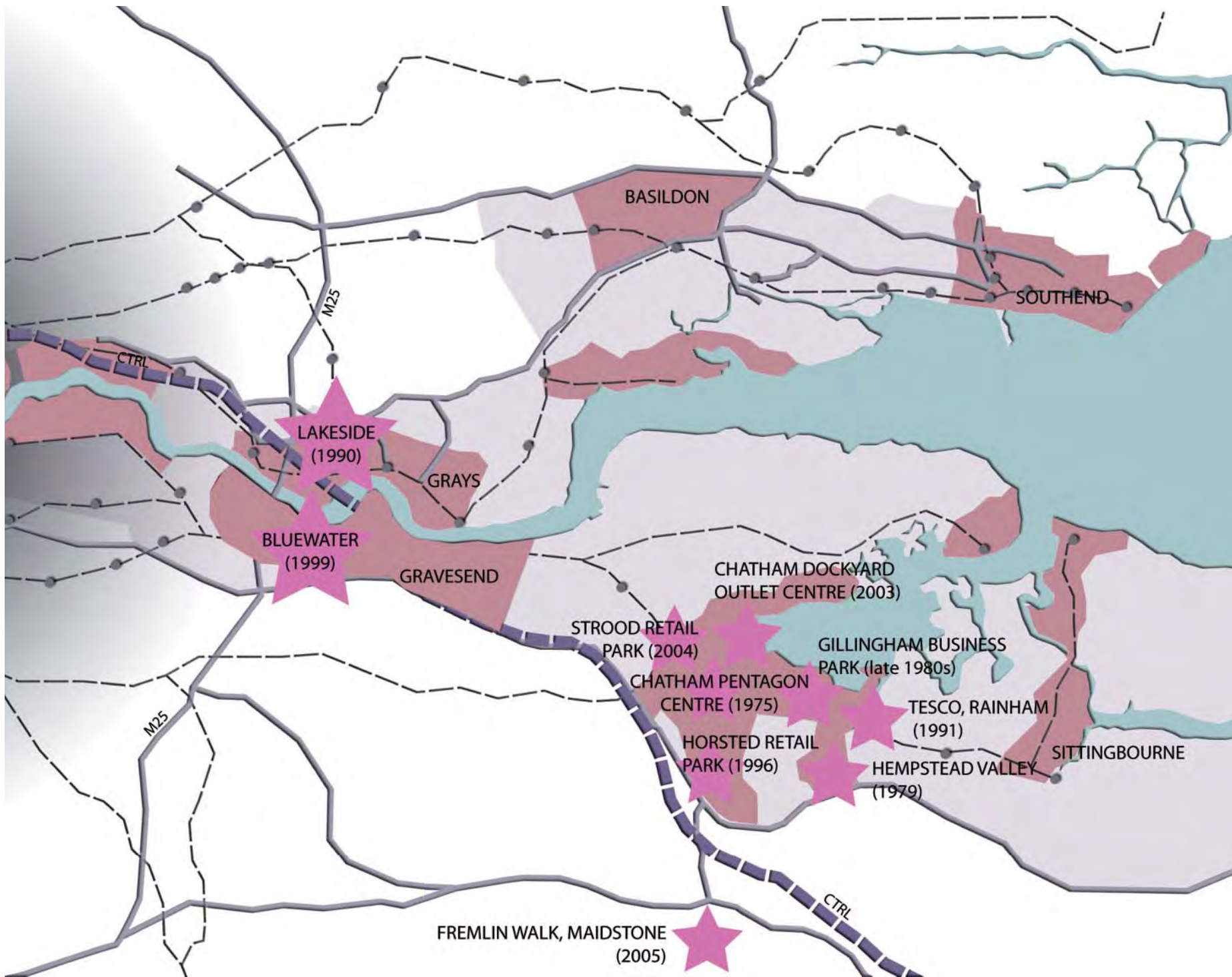


Fig 2.5 Retail Impact Plan

2.2 Retail Context



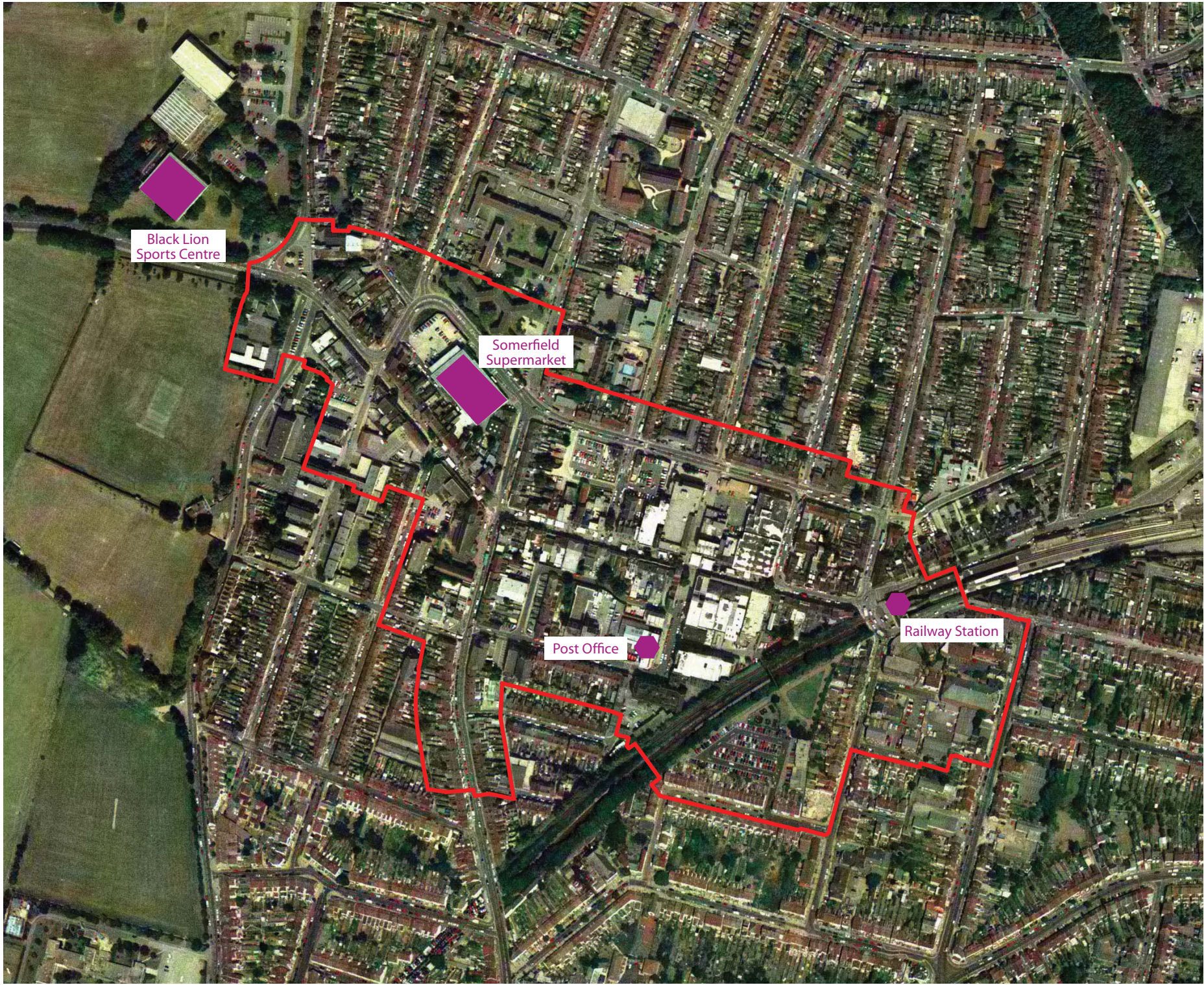
3.1.1 Study Area

The study area covers some 19 hectares (47 acres) of land in and around Gillingham town centre. It includes land within the Local Plan town centre boundary but also includes immediate context with adjacent residential areas and strategic open spaces.

The street scene montages taken during Spring 2006 are a valuable visual record of the current state of play - extracts from the High Street are shown on the cover of this chapter.



Fig 3.1 Context Plan



3.1 Introduction

Fig 3.2 The study area

3.2.1 Land Uses

This land use plan is supported by a 2005 GOAD plan for the town centre in Appendix B. Overall diversity and independence of uses has decreased since 1969, in common with many town centres, however a wide mix of uses remains with a particular emphasis on convenience and services rather than comparison shopping. The market (Saturdays and Mondays) is considered to contribute positively to the vitality of the High Street. Somerfield is a larger format store and has an extended range of choice.

There is a clearly defined retail core in the High Street with supporting professional / financial services from King Street to Skinner Street. East and west of these streets more food and drink uses are evident and increased amounts of residential over retail to the west. Town centre uses tail-off along Canterbury Street. Green Street works well with a number of key civic functions (Post Office, Adult Learning Centre etc).

3.2.2 Town Centre Health Check

The health check of the town centre is contained in the table above. DTZ Peida produced a Retail and Commercial Leisure Study for Medway Council in 2005. DTZ's main findings are summarised as follows:

- Gillingham is the second largest centre in Medway after Chatham with nearly 40,000sqm of floorspace and has the second highest proportion of multiple retailers out of the Medway centres.
- Gillingham has good sports and leisure facilities. It is home to Gillingham Football Club and has a large leisure centre located on the edge of the town centre.

- Gillingham has the lowest rental levels of all the Medway centres but these levels have been increasing slowly over the last eight years.
- Gillingham High Street is a linear pedestrianised street with some seating and trees. There is a lack of service areas so retailers are forced to use the main high street to off-load goods.
- Convenience shopping is the main attraction for Gillingham and market days (Saturday and Monday) prove to be the busiest days of the week - the market is the busiest in Medway.
- The poor choice of stores is perceived to be Gillingham's main weakness – lack of clothing stores, larger chain stores and department stores.
- Gillingham is primarily a local service and convenience based centre with people generally shopping elsewhere for their fashion and comparison goods needs.

From these findings, DTZ's recommendations are:

- For Gillingham to focus on providing convenience retailing, anchored by a vibrant and extended street market.
- The need to open up gateways and promote stronger pedestrian linkages with the surrounding residential areas and within the centre itself.

As well as the focus on convenience and connections, we consider that the need for new complementary uses such as leisure / evening activities, housing and employment can enhance and support the town centre.



3.2 Town Centre Offer

Fig 3.3 Land Use Plan

3.3 Town Centre Health Check

Fig 3.4 Town Centre Health Check

Convenience	Comparison	Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the main national players are present (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Morrisons); • Three national multiples selling convenience goods within the defined retail core of the town centre (small to medium sized supermarkets) - Somerfield, Co-op and Iceland • Aldi ('deep discounter') is located to the east of the defined retail core at Duncan Road; • National multiples anchor either end of the town (i.e. Somerfield and Aldi) with Iceland and Co-op in the core section of High Street. The units occupied by Iceland and Co-op are in close proximity; • 9% of total outlets in the centre are convenience outlets. Strongest convenience offer of the centres in Medway (in terms of proportion of total units devoted to convenience goods); and • Reasonable provision of individual convenience goods outlets (including 2 grocers, 4 bakers, 3 butchers, 3 CTNs (Confectionists / Tobacconists / Newsagents), • 1 off licence and 2 health food stores). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less comparison floorspace in Gillingham than the national average; • Only a limited number of national multiples in town centre: Woolworths, WH Smith, Peacocks, Shoe Express, New Look, Boots the Chemist, Wilkinsons, Bon Marche, JJB; • Concentration of comparison retailing in the section of High Street between King Street and Skinner Street (5 out of the above 6 multiples are in this section); • Further cluster of comparison retailing adjacent to Somerfield supermarket (includes Peacocks and large specialist cycle shop); • Multiple retailers typically from the 'value' end of the market; • Largest occupied unit is Woolworths; • 9 charity shops present in the town centre (i.e. double the national average); and • At present centre lacks the critical mass of facilities to support larger stores and multiples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 40% of total outlets are service related uses; • 7% of total outlets are for A3 uses (cafes and restaurants); • Predominance of cafes /value for money/ fast food outlets rather than high quality restaurants; • Low representation of A4 units (2%) indicating a shortage of bars, wine bars and public houses; • Comparable to national average in terms of number of A5 units (4%); • Clusters of A5 type businesses at the top end of High Street close to Victoria Bridge (includes McDonalds); and • Cluster of A2 businesses (banks and estate agents) on High Street between James Street and Skinner Street.
Vacant property	Commercial/Leisure	Miscellaneous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest vacant units in High Street are clusters of vacant units on Skinner Street. Former Co-op recently reopened with 3 national multiples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One nightclub in the town centre on Skinner Street (The Zone); • Former Gala Bingo Hall on Green Street; and • No cinema or theatre in town centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently refurbished Library on High Street (close to Britton Street); • Cluster of miscellaneous uses on Green Street including post office, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Adult Education Centre; and • Popular general street market (Mondays and Saturdays) with 60 or more traders selling food, clothes, household items.

Proportion of Vacant Street Level Property

- 9% which is below the national average (10%) (according to the DTZ Study);
- 23 vacant units in 2002 (source: GOAD);
- Main concentration within the secondary/tertiary shopping areas.

Accessibility

- Located on the A2, only four miles from Junction 2 of the M2
- Pedestrianised High Street
- 57% of respondents to DTZ's survey live within a five minute drive of the town centre
- 46% of people walk to the centre
- 18% arrive by public transport
- 30% of people travel by car (significantly less than all centre average of 44%) due to local trade draw and perception of lack of parking in the centre (hard to find, or hard to park near shops, or expensive parking)
- Railway station on Victoria Bridge close to town centre, Public car parks close to High Street

Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime

- Perception of safety concerns in central area in the evenings due to lack of evening economy
- Poorly lit underground car park and unwelcoming walkway between car park and Somerfield store in the Britton Farm Mall shopping centre

Pedestrian Flows

- Direct measure of number and movement of people in different parts of the centre;
- The street market is an important generator of footfall. Decline in pedestrian flows;
- between 2000-2003. Main concentration of flows on the corner of High Street and Skinner Street opposite St.Marks Church.

Customer & Resident Views and Behaviour

- 25% of shoppers said main reason for visiting centre was for top-up shopping or to visit bank/building society
- 80% of respondents visit the town one or more times a week
- Convenience is the main attraction (close to home or work)
- The market is a main attraction in terms of retail offer
- Majority of respondents to DTZ's street survey visit other centres for non-food shopping
- People generally shop elsewhere for fashion and comparison goods needs
- Poor choice/range of stores perceived as a weakness, particularly lack of clothing stores, chain and department stores
- More high street names desired and more food, drink and leisure activities

Environmental Quality

- Linear pedestrianised High Street
- Some seating and trees – street furniture looks tired
- Relatively clean area although rubbish evident on market days
- Lack of service areas for retailers – use main High Street to off-load goods
- Parked cars evident in pedestrianised area resulting in cluttered appearance
- Market would benefit from enhancement of its environment – scruffy appearance of stalls, chaotic layout
- Poor shopping environment of Britton Farm Mall shopping centre
- Large gaps in High Street due to recent vacancies
- Attractive church (St. Marks Church) on the corner of High Street and Skinner Street

3.4 Urban Design Analysis



3.4.1 Scale

Building scale is relatively uniform (2-3 storeys) with a few larger institutional buildings (e.g. BT switch centre), Bingo Hall and recent residential / mixed use developments around junction of Arden Street / High Street (up to 4 storeys).

Fig 3.5 Storey Heights Plan

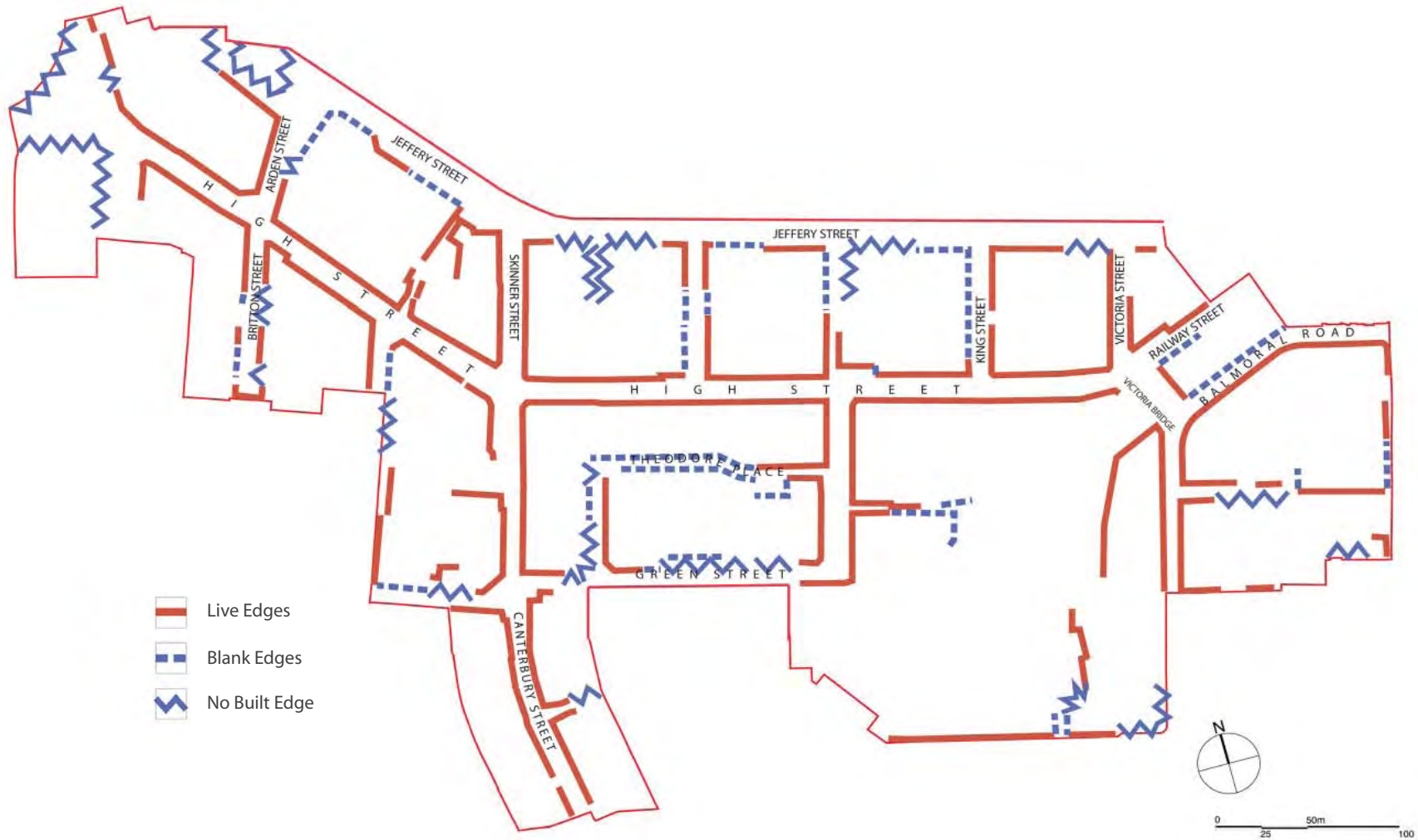


Fig 3.6 Activity Audit Plan

3.4.2. Frontages

Active frontages are evident along the High Street but immediately behind this the townscape quickly becomes fragmented with service yards, building flanks and small gap sites divorcing High Street from residential hinterland.

3.4 Urban Design Analysis

3.4 Urban Design Analysis

3.4.3 Key Buildings

There are no Listed Buildings within the study area however there are a number of buildings and spaces of character or distinctiveness, in particular the cluster of civic buildings within Green Street, St Mark's Church, Balmoral Gardens and the Library.

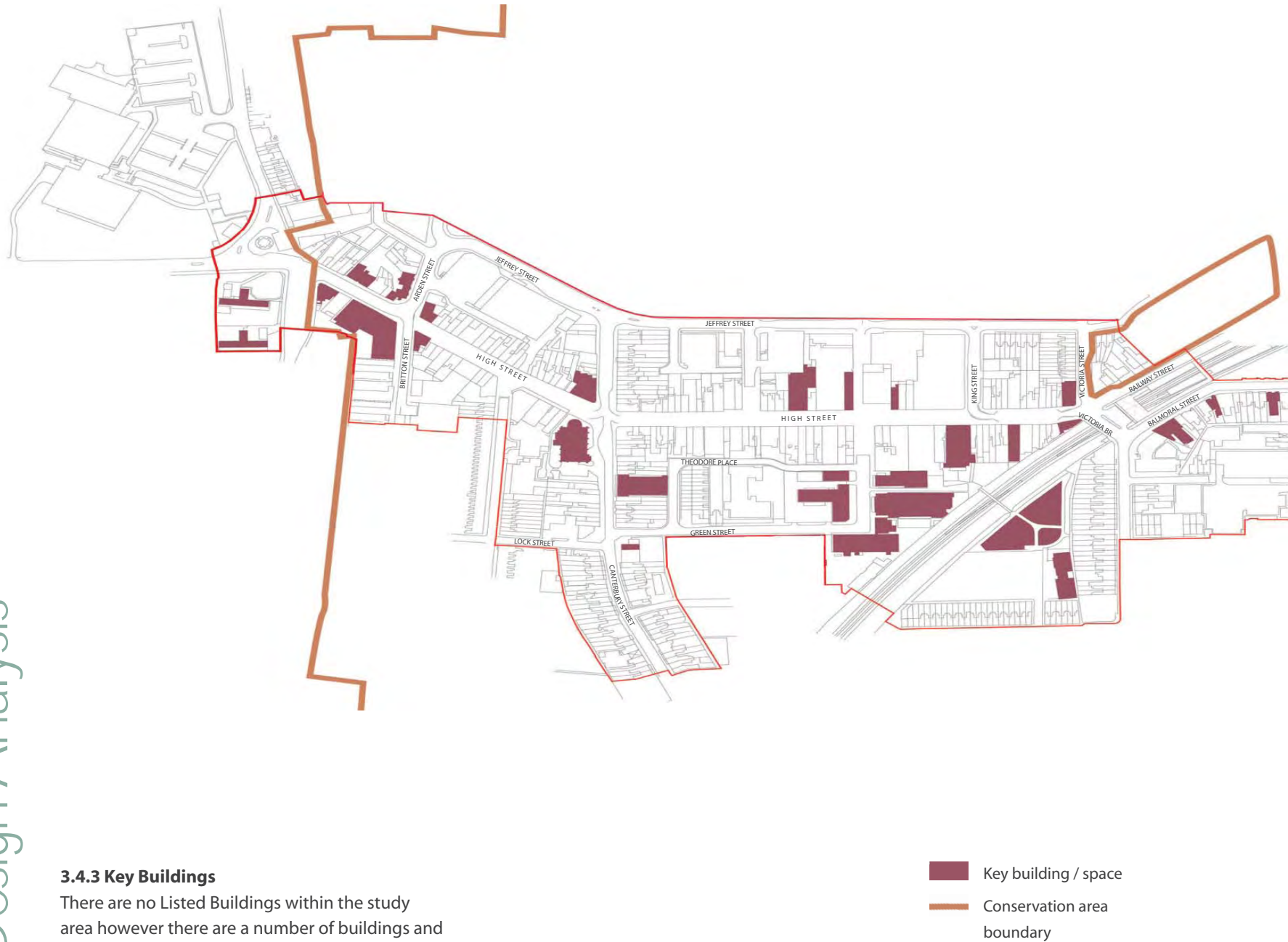
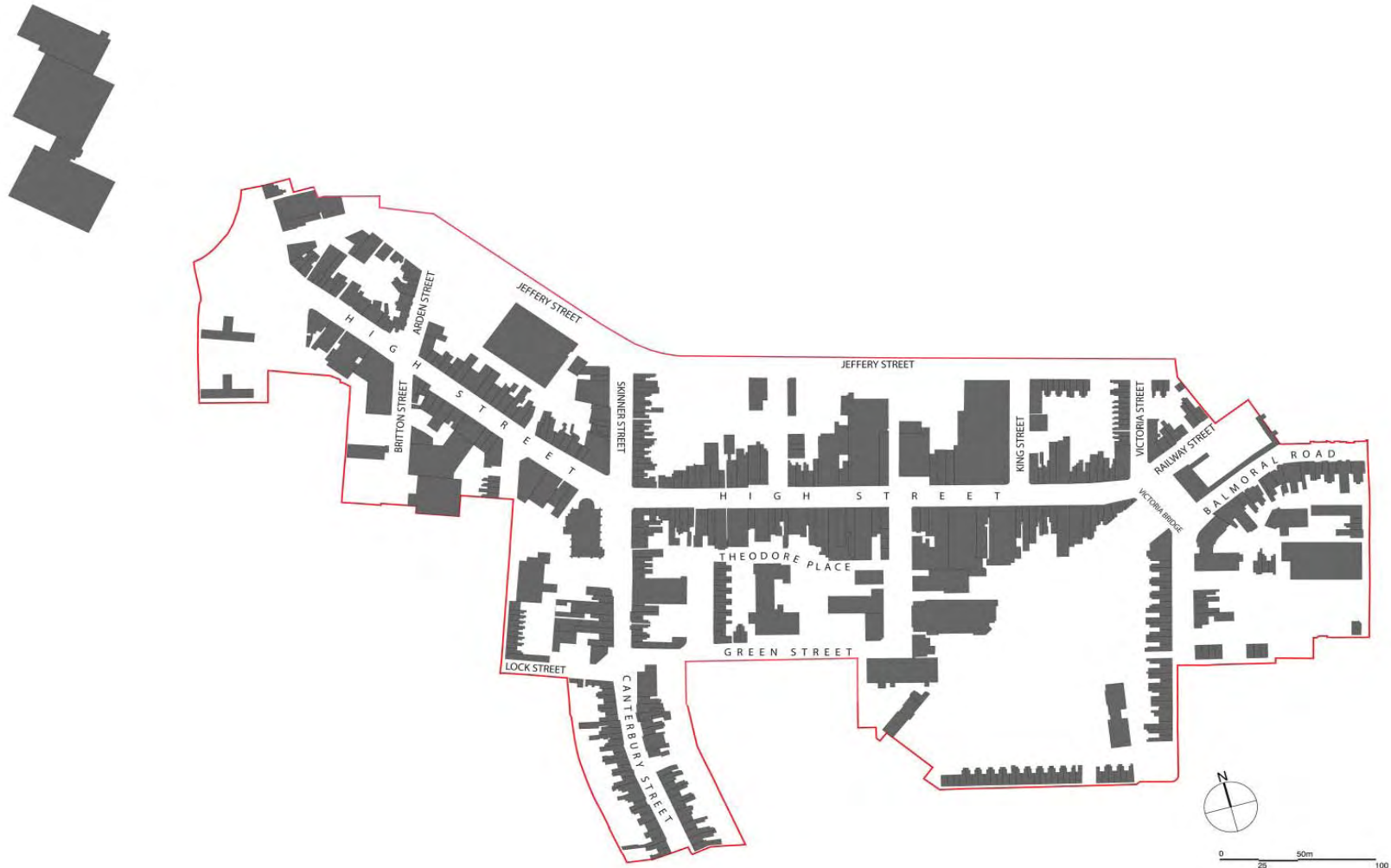


Fig 3.7 Key Buildings Plan



3.4 Urban Design Analysis

3.4.4 Enclosure
 The High Street has a uniform building line but the often domestic scale of the buildings does not offer substantial enclosure. The gaps behind the High Street are clearly evident.

Fig 3.8 Figure Ground Study

3.5.1 Public Transport – Bus Services

The existing town centre is relatively well served by public transport with frequent connections to the residential areas immediately to the north, south and east of the town centre. To the west of the town centre services focus on connections to and beyond Chatham. However there is currently no direct service from Gillingham town centre to the University campus or shopping and employment opportunities at the Historic Dockyard. Town centre bus stops are located in “pairs” at the Black Lion leisure centre, on Jeffrey Street (by Canterbury Street) and on Canterbury Street (St Mark’s Church). For the station, bus stops are located on the one-way King Street and Victoria Street. Visibility between the latter pair of stops and the rail station is poor.

3.5.2 Public Transport – Train Services

Rail connections to/from Gillingham station are excellent with 7 departures per hour during the morning peak period for main line stations in London. Journey times vary but are approximately 1 hour +/- 10 minutes. Gillingham is also well placed for stations along the north Kent corridor with Chatham, Sittingbourne, Faversham, Canterbury, Ramsgate and Dover all easily accessible. Journey times to London are expected to reduce following implementation of the Integrated Kent Franchise and introduction of domestic services on the CTRL. Traffic has been allowed to dominate the area in front of the station and the forecourt is not pedestrian friendly.

3.5.3 Vehicular Movement

There are three key routes in the area for traffic moving west-east. Approximately 1.25km to the south of the High Street lies the A2 corridor for

routes between Rochester-Chatham-Rainham and beyond to the M2 motorway. Approximately 1km to the north of the High Street lies the A289 “Gillingham Northern Link”, part of the strategic bypass to the Medway Towns providing a connection between the Medway Tunnel the A2 corridor and providing an alternative to crossing the river Medway in Rochester town centre.

Jeffrey Street is part of the third west-east route carrying traffic from Chatham and the Historic Dockyard area through Gillingham town centre to residential areas and other traffic routes to the east of the High Street. The town centre road network provides only two road crossings of the railway line, the first on Canterbury Street and the second at the eastern end of the High Street in front of the station. Traffic on four routes meets in front of the station and as such it is a particularly hostile environment for pedestrians.

3.5.4 Pedestrian Movement

The existing pedestrian crossings on Jeffrey Street are appropriately located but a study of recorded accidents involving pedestrians is recommended to identify any deficiencies. A number of visitors to the town centre are potentially “missing” the High Street. For example visitors to the Black Lion leisure Centre are unlikely to be aware that the High Street (for food and shopping) is within a 5 minute walk.

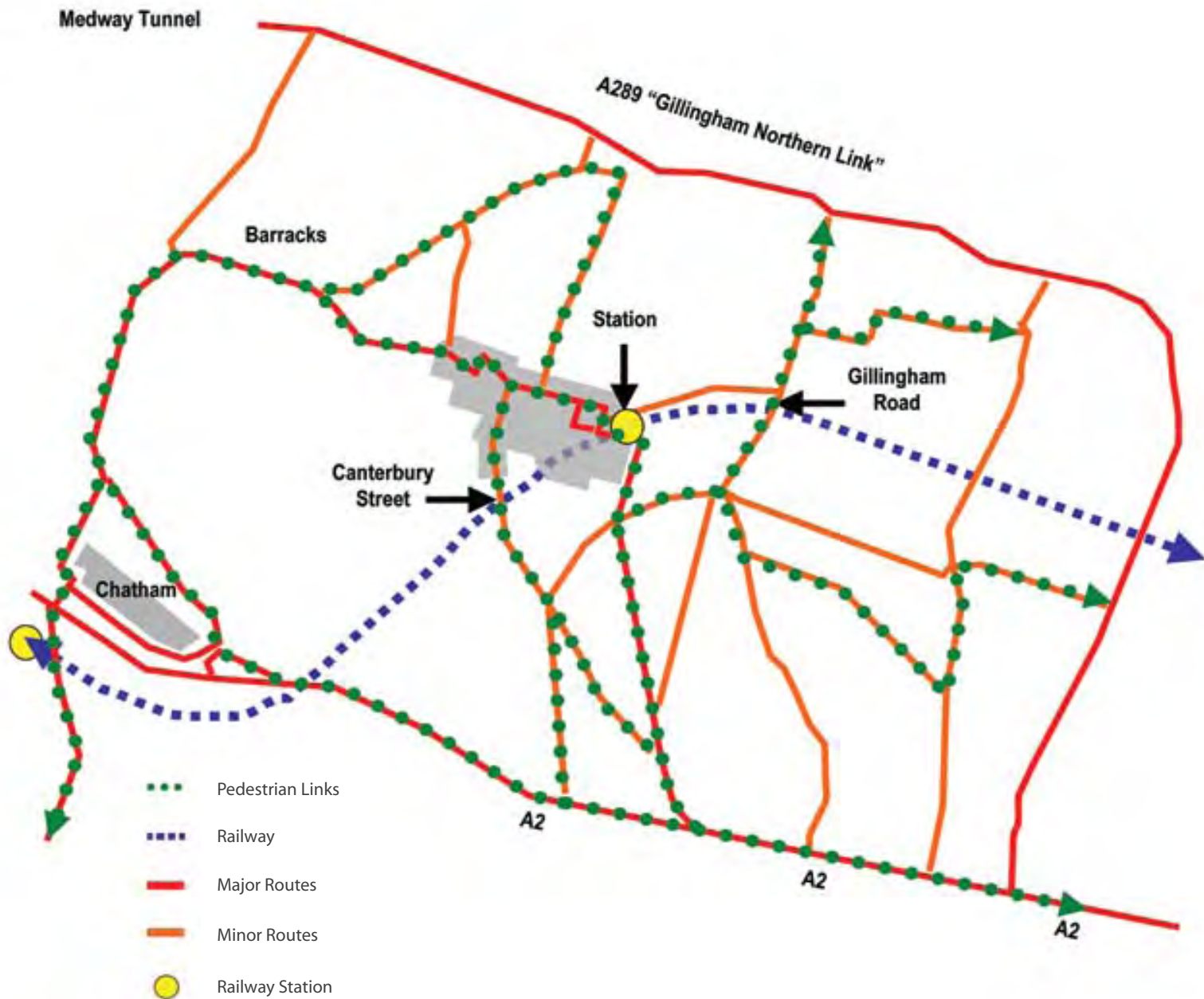


Fig 3.9 Strategic Movement Plan

3.5 Movement & Parking

3.5.5 Parking

The town centre has just over 600 spaces in total provided in a number of locations as follows (from west to east):

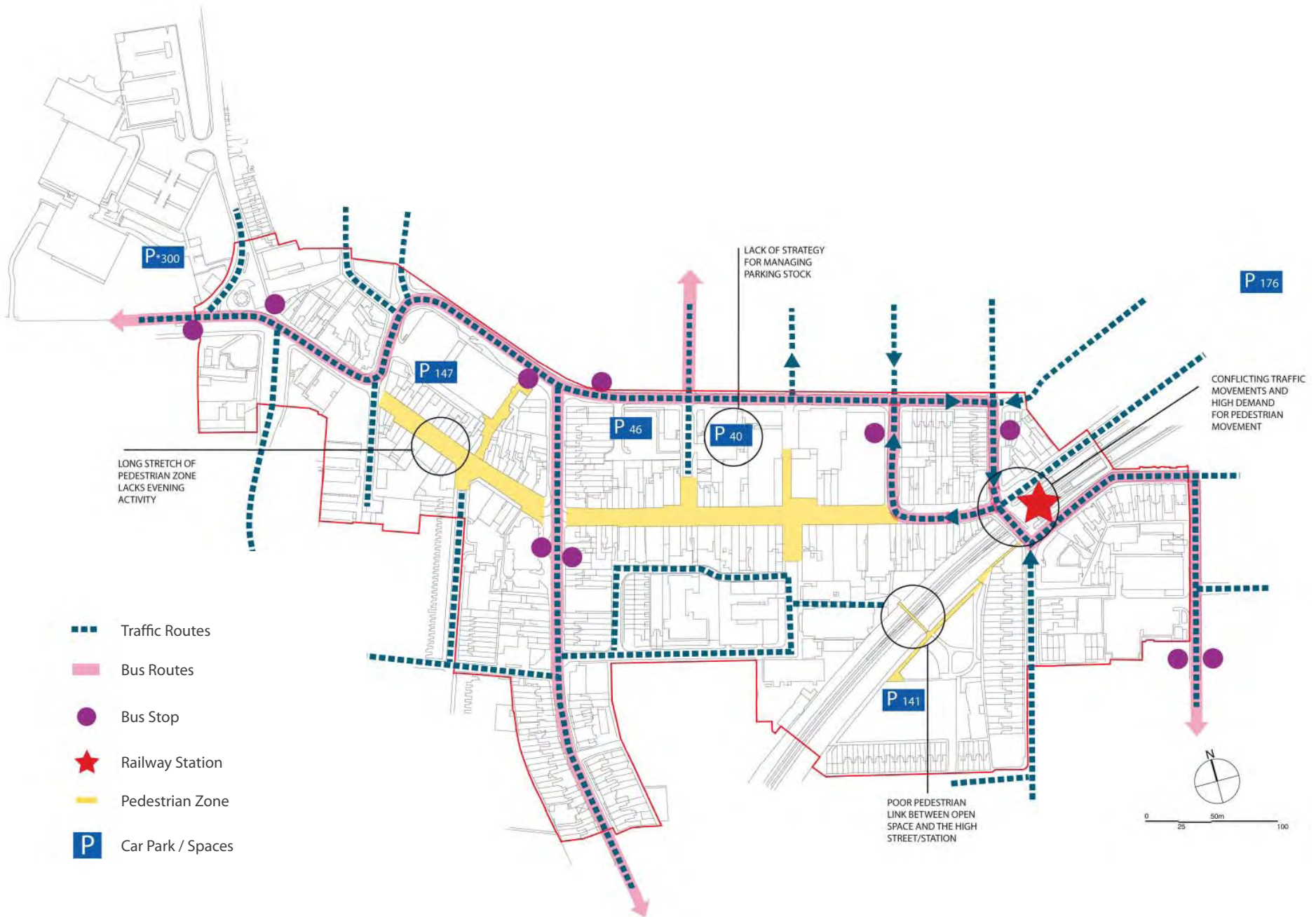
- Black Lion, long stay, free – 242 spaces;
- Britton Farm (Somerfield), short-stay, P&D – 147 spaces;
- Jeffrey Street, short-stay, P&D - 46 spaces;
- Littlewoods, short-stay, P&D - 40 spaces;
- Balmoral Gardens, short-stay, P&D – 141 spaces.

Further long-stay car parking for 176 vehicles is available to the east of the High Street on Railway Street at the Croneens car park and additional short-term parking is available on-street in a number of locations. Some of these bays are dedicated pay and display bays, others are dual-use bays provided as part of the residential controlled parking zones.

Demand for parking in the town centre peaks during the mid-morning / lunchtime period. Surveys undertaken identify a peak occupancy at the five car parks listed of 90% on a Wednesday and 96% on a Monday (market day). Feedback from visitors, residents and traders identifies a lack of parking in the town centre as one of several problems to be addressed. High demand for town centre parking is putting pressure on the dual-use residential parking bays such that residents are experiencing difficulties parking at certain times of day.

By comparison the other Medway town centres provide relatively high levels of car parking:

- Gillingham - 230 units, 616 spaces
- Chatham - 420 units, 2350 spaces
- Rainham – 130 units, 590 spaces
- Strood – 90 units, 610 spaces (at weekends), 285 weekdays
- Rochester – 160 units, 680 spaces



3.5 Movement & Parking

Fig 3.10 Movement Analysis Plan

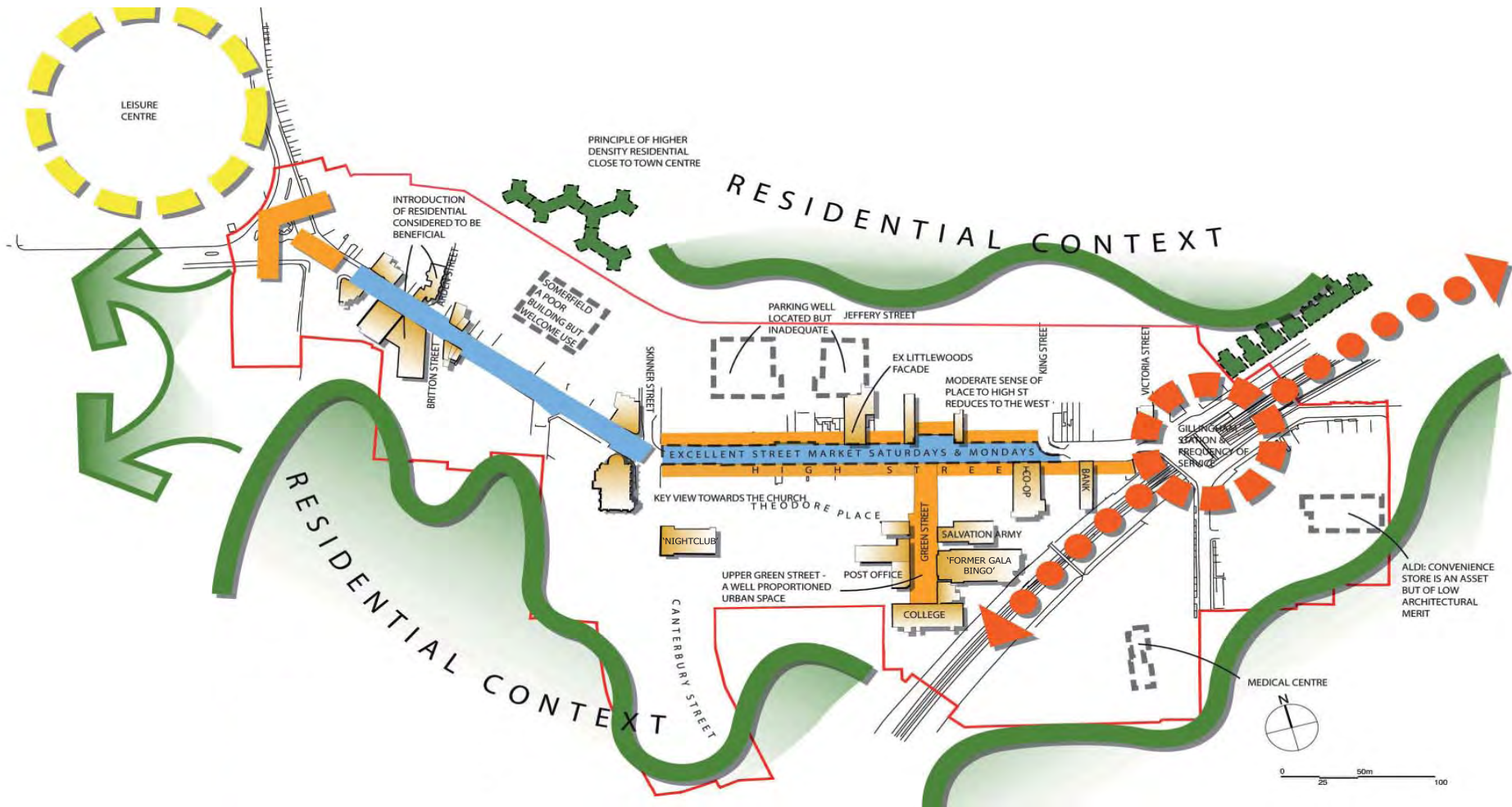


Fig 3.12 Assets Plan

3.6.2 Assets Summary

- Linear high street with vibrant street market
- Retail 'heart' with representation from key retailers - Somerfield, Co-op, WHSmith etc. - and supporting professional/financial uses
- Food and drink concentrated at eastern and western ends of the High Street- Gillingham promoted as a convenience centre with local catchment
- Residential infill already occurring at western end of High Street

3.6 Constraints & Assets Summary

3.7.1 Introduction

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that development proposals for Gillingham town centre comply with the key national, regional and local plan guidance, including advice set out in this SPD. The following is intended as a checklist of the policy and guidance notes considered to be of relevance to any regeneration proposal put forward for Gillingham town centre.

3.7.2 Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres

The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by

- planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and
- promoting and enhancing a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

In order to deliver the Government's objective of promoting vital and viable town centres, development should be focused in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them.

3.7.3 Regional Planning Guidance 9

Originally general guidance it has now been elevated to the status of a full development plan document by virtue of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. RPG 9 covers the period up to 2016.

Paragraph 5.12 states:

"Urban renaissance should incorporate mechanisms to revive town centres. Town centres have suffered from the last recession and from the diversion of investment to out-of-centre retail developments. To

reverse this trend there is a need to focus retailing development in town centres and to avoid further development in out-of-centre locations."

3.7.4 Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 has superseded the Kent Structure Plan 1996. The following policy objectives are considered relevant to the regeneration of Gillingham town centre:

- Policy SS5 - Mixed use in town centres and inner urban areas
- Policy QL2 - Priorities for the Public Realm
- Policy QL11 - The Protection and Enhancement of Existing Community Services
- Policy EP14 - Development at the Network of Strategic Centres
- Policy TP2 - Assessment Criteria for Transport Proposals
- Policy TP9 - Supporting Public Transport

3.7.5 The Medway Local Plan 2003

The development Strategy of the Plan (Policy S1) includes a priority for redevelopment and recycling of underused and derelict land within the Urban Area including Gillingham town centre.

Policy R5 focuses on retail in Gillingham Town centre and identifies a site for a new supermarket of up to 2000 sqm at the junction of High Street / Skinner Street / Jeffrey Street / James Street.

Gillingham town centre is designated as a District Centre in the retail hierarchy, along with Strood, Rainham, Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre and Rochester. There are over 200 retail units totalling approximately 38,690m² gross retail/service

floorspace. Half the floorspace is comparison shopping and there is potential for new investment in convenience floorspace provided the selected site properly relates to the rest of the centre and so underpins the existing retail offer.

The following policies are considered relevant:

Retail

- Policy R5 - Retailing in Gillingham
- Policy R11 - Town Centre Uses and the Sequential Approach
- Policy R12 - Mixed Use Schemes
- Policy R13 - Retail Uses and the Sequential Approach
- Policy R17 - A2 and A3 Uses and Change of Use

Housing

- Policy H3 - Affordable Housing
- Policy H4 - Housing in Urban Areas

Leisure

- Policy L1 - Existing Leisure Facilities
- Policy L2 - New Leisure Facilities

Built Environment

- Policy BNE1 - General Principles for Built Development
- Policy BNE2 - Amenity Protection
- Policy BNE9 - Design of Commercial Frontages

Economic Development

- Policy ED1 - Existing Employment Sites

Transport

- Policy T1 - Impact of Development
- Policy T3 - Provision for Pedestrians
- Policy T4 - Cycle Facilities
- Policy T5 - Bus Preference Measures
- Policy T7 - The Rail Network
- Policy T15 - Parking Strategy
- Policy T22 - Provision for People with Disabilities

3.7.6 Medway Local Development Framework (LDF)

The following Core Strategy policies have just reached submission stage. They are material considerations but as they have not been adopted for development control purposes they should be afforded little weight.

- Policy CS17 - Town Centres
- Policy CS18 - Retail Development

3.7.7 Medway Guide to Developer Contributions (Draft)

This draft Supplementary Planning Document sets out the approach to Planning Agreements in accordance with Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Developers are expected to have had full regard to this guide before submitting planning applications to the Council.

3.8.1 Surrounding Regeneration Activity

There are numerous wider regeneration projects that are completed or planned in the local area, particularly to the west of the town centre. These include:

- St Mary's Island – a substantial new community of 2000 homes on a 100 acre site, promoted jointly by Countryside Properties and SEEDA;
- Chatham Maritime – a premier business location for Kent, currently containing 85,000 square metres of office floorspace and creating 3500 jobs. The area incorporates employment, learning, retail and leisure destination linked to restoration of the Historic Dockyard;
- Universities at Medway – an expanding £50 million joint campus based in Chatham Maritime accommodating the Universities of Kent and Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church University and Mid-Kent College. The campus will serve some 6000 students by 2007;
- Chatham Town Centre – major renewal and expansion of the town centre and waterfront, including changes to the road network
- Great Lines City Park – Proposed restoration and enhancement of the defences as a unique historic landmark and world class park. It is intended to put forward a bid for World Heritage Status for the Chatham Historic Dockyard and the Great Lines
- Black Lion Sports Centre - expansion plans may include a new running track and Olympic-standard training facilities

- Former Azko Chemical Works – mixed use regeneration of an important riverside site including over 300 homes, ancillary retail and food and drink uses

3.8.2 Medway Waterfront Regeneration Strategy

Although not specifically covered by the 2004 Medway Waterfront Renaissance Strategy (MWRS), the report acknowledges that:

"Gillingham...remains an important district centre. Its role in regeneration needs to be closely defined as part of the next phase of the regeneration strategy."

It is important for Gillingham town centre to look outwards to these regeneration areas and harness opportunities for linking in with them.

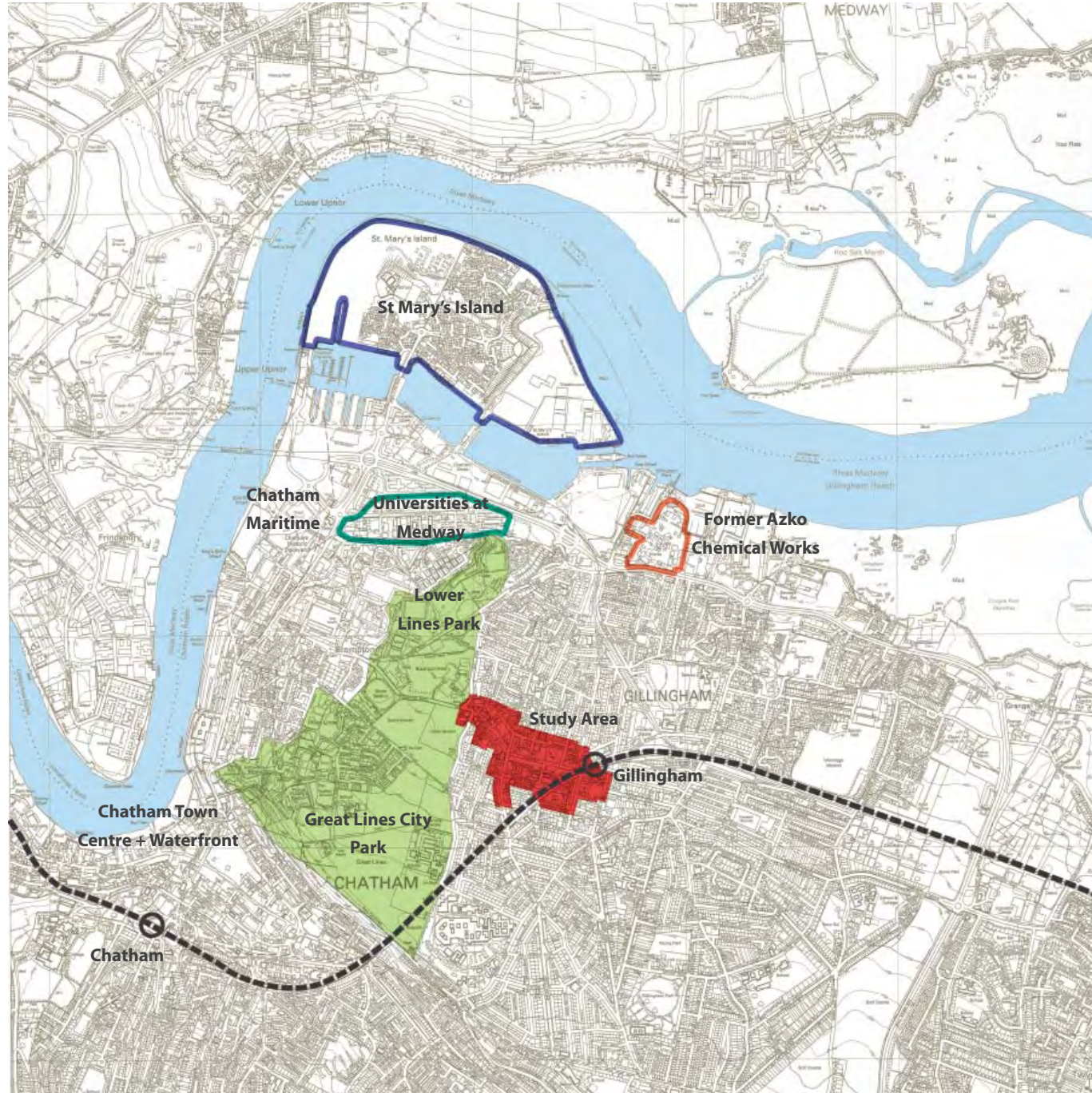


Fig 3.13 The Wider Regeneration Context

3.8 Wider Initiatives





4. Gillingham

Future

4.1.1 Introduction

The ideas for the future of Gillingham have evolved from a series of consultation events with businesses, residents, key stakeholders and community groups. The following sections outline the extent of consultation to date, outcomes from the consultation and how these have been incorporated into the Framework.

4.1.2 First Stage (February and September 2005)

A week of consultation events took place in February 2005. These took the format of:

- Workshops for independent and larger retailers, restaurants, café, bar / clubs and local residents;
- Displays in the town centre where suggestion slips were available either for immediate completion or postal return;
- Street surveys;
- Work with a local primary school; and
- distribution of leaflets at key points within Gillingham including Gillingham FC, railway station and Medway Hospital.

Feedback from the events and leaflets identify the main priorities as:

- Improved parking;
- Improvements to the railway station;
- More visible policing and extended CCTV;
- Improvements to the overall image – a focal point and public square within a bright, clean, safe and vibrant High Street;
- Wider choice of shops;
- More effective management of the market;

- Creation of more green spaces;
- Activities for young people, including leisure facilities;
- Closer relationship with Gillingham Football Club; and
- Better library services including internet access.

In September 2005 a second period of consultation took place and the top three priorities were selected as initial projects for town centre improvement. Since then, action has included the library (improved facilities and Medway contact point) and parking area improvements. The outcomes were highlighted in the brief for the Framework.

4.1.3 Second Stage (July 2006)

Consultation on the initial analysis and ideas within the Draft Conceptual Framework has consisted of workshops with Medway officers and a series of daytime and evening events during July, targeted at the Town Centre Forum (a body of independent traders), Gillingham businesses, market traders and stakeholders. Publicity consisted of leaflet drops to several thousand residents and business addresses, specific invitations to comment, posters and exhibition boards. The draft report was also placed on the Council website medway.gov.uk.

A summary of views arising from the second stage consultation follows.

Business and Economy

- encouragement for larger and independent retailers;
- desire for a 'village' feel to the High Street;

- manageable rents;
- retention of historic / attractive buildings and improvement of others;
- wholesale support for the market with better management and stall design;
- additional employment uses.

Community Infrastructure

- support for retention and improvement of green space in Balmoral Gardens and increased access to Great Lines;
- provision for young people.

Housing

- new housing only if adequate parking is provided;
- improvements to existing town centre housing.

Leisure and Culture

- support for café culture and evening uses with increased seating on pavements;
- wider use for Black Lion Sports Centre including potential Olympic training venue;
- desire for a small scale venue for a variety of events;
- keen for a new town square as a focus for events and activities.

Parking

- need for additional and clearly signposted parking for shoppers;
- concern at pricing for parking;
- desire to protect residential parking on side

streets and avoid worsening of the existing situation.

Transport

- support for improvement to the railway station and Victoria Bridge as a gateway and public transport hub;
- relocation of bus stops;
- extended cycle routes.

Outcomes

In light of the second stage consultation, the Framework has been significantly revised and updated. Changes have included:

- Showing positive links to wider initiatives;
- Reworking the concept diagram to make intentions clearer;
- Explaining the strategy for different issues in more detail;
- Revising the Framework Plan as a land use framework with more detail on key sites for change; and
- Updating the phasing and delivery strategy.

There are a number of operational issues arising from consultation that cannot be addressed by the Framework. These issues can be resolved through the existing town centre management structure and coordination of relevant Medway Council departments.

4.1.4 Third Stage (January - February 2007)

In January and February 2007 an extensive programme of statutory consultation was undertaken, including an exhibition and workshop, copies of the Framework on display in public buildings and website information. Consultees were asked for their views on five key themes:

- town centre uses;
- public spaces;
- transport and movement;
- residential development; and
- car parking.

60 replies were received. With the very wide range of comments received, it was difficult to reach a conclusion on what local people really wanted. The Framework has been amended to take account of the responses received. These are factual corrections taking account of recent planning permissions, a re-examination of the supply of public car parking (including options for additional car parking beyond the core retail site) and a schedule of potential outputs produced for each phase.

4.2.1 Introduction

Businesses, residents and key stakeholders have expressed a clear desire for change and improvement. These objectives define key aspirations for the future of Gillingham town centre. Overarching themes include the need for a deliverable vision, maintaining and enhancing sense of place, and effective strategies for parking and movement.

4.2.2 Make Gillingham a Delightful Place

First and foremost is the desire to improve the physical and functional fabric of the town centre - through the uses present, activity and events, the design quality of new buildings and the public realm.

4.2.3 Define a Clear Role for Gillingham in the Context of the Medway towns

Gillingham will continue to have an important market town role for local shopping with an emphasis on value and choice, public services and food and drink. This should be enhanced through additional retail, leisure, cultural, residential and employment uses. Crucially, Gillingham should be a 'town centre' not just a 'shopping centre'.

4.2.4 Improve pedestrian connections

Promote attractive routes from nearby areas to the town centre particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, removing the 'concrete collar' surrounding the town centre. Part of this is about recreating lively streets overlooked by buildings rather than the service yards and blank walls that presently exist.

4.2.5 Review Car Parking Provision

The lack of convenient car parking is a recurring

theme through consultation. Creating more parking - in a convenient central location - and reducing conflict with residential parking should be a priority. Parking for cyclists can also be improved as part of a balanced strategy.

4.2.6 Promote an evening economy

The town centre effectively shuts down early in the evening, replaced with concentrated activity in a few pubs, restaurants and nightclub. More evening / leisure destinations, attracting a more diverse crowd than at present, would promote a more civilised environment if managed effectively.

4.2.7 Address community safety concerns

New uses, buildings and activity at different times of day can help create the perception of a safer environment which becomes self-fulfilling. The more people use the town centre, the more people feel safe in the town centre.

4.2.8 Review Rental Levels

Whilst beyond the scope of this framework and the control of Medway Council, rental expectations and demands need to be balanced to prevent further loss of key businesses and encourage smaller independent businesses as well as larger multiples.

4.2.9 Transform the public realm

The space between buildings includes streets, lighting, materials, street furniture and public art. All must be of the highest quality and reinforce the unique character of Gillingham. New public spaces can be created to act as focal points / meeting places and existing public spaces can be redesigned to allow a better balance between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

4.2.10 Harness Opportunities

Wider initiatives such as expansion of the Universities of Medway, the 2012 Olympics, Great Lines City Park and regeneration of surrounding areas should be harnessed. How can Gillingham town centre contribute to / embrace these projects?

4.2.11 Promote Deliverable Change

It is vital that the framework promotes ideas that are capable of being implemented within a reasonable timescale, including some projects that can be started straight away.



4.2 A Vision for Gillingham

Fig 4.1 Objectives for Gillingham town centre

4.3.1 Introduction

The Development Framework provides a spatial strategy to guide the future direction of Gillingham town centre regeneration. This section presents an overview of the concept and strategy based on particular areas and themes:

- The main retail area;
- The market;
- The western end of the town centre;
- The town centre fringe;
- The public realm;
- Movement;
- Parking; and
- Residential use.

Chapter 5 deals with site specific opportunities and proposals forming the Conceptual Framework in more detail.



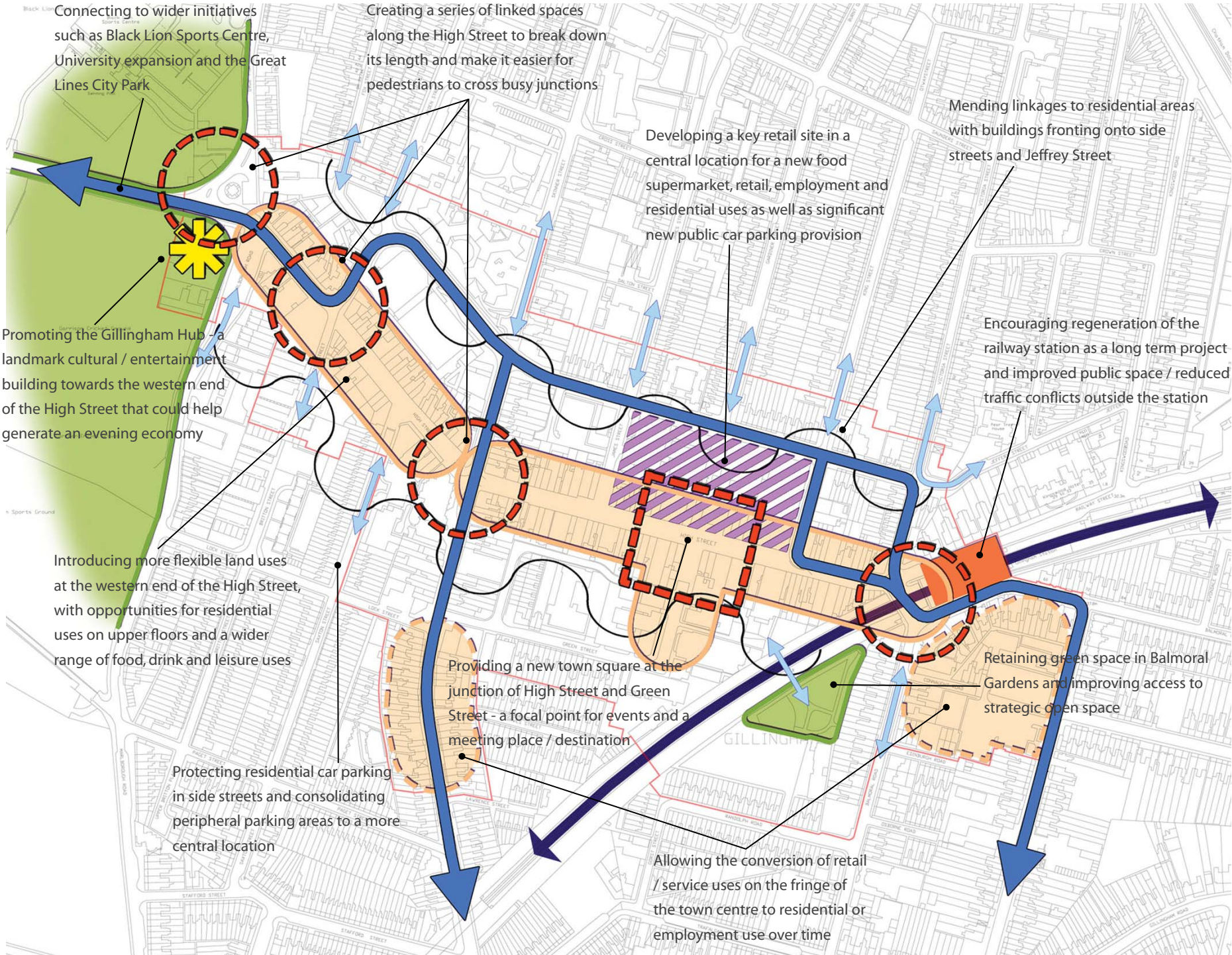


Fig 4.2 Concept Plan

4.3 Concept Plan

4.4.1 Role

Gillingham will maintain and enhance its role for convenience shopping serving a primarily local catchment, anchored by a vibrant and extended street market. There is a strong desire to retain and promote smaller, independent businesses as well as larger national chains, to reinforce the unique offer that Gillingham provides. Introducing further residential and employment uses will help generate additional demand for retail floorspace in the medium term.

4.4.2 Retail Heart

The core length of the High Street is essentially from the railway station to the junction with Canterbury Street. This is where the majority of new or improved retail floorspace will be focused. In addition this should be the location of new central town centre car parking, using either multi storey or basement level structures. On upper floors, employment and residential uses will be encouraged subject to adequate levels of car parking provision and amenity.

4.4.3 Key Retail Site

A key retail opportunity site including a new medium-sized foodstore and car parking is proposed within 1-2 of the blocks north of the High Street, linked to a new town square (see Public Realm). This will require site assembly by Medway Council or a developer to implement the scheme. One option would be to close Sadlers Walk in order to combine two blocks together, creating a viable mixed use scheme. It is likely that employment and residential uses would be conceived as part of this project. This site would be instead of, or as well as, the foodstore site identified in Policy R5 of the Medway Local Plan.

4.4.4 Green Street

The scale and mix of existing uses in Green Street is welcomed. A new town square is proposed at the junction with High Street that would result in new or improved retail frontage. Public realm improvements and new uses can help to fulfil its potential - this could include reuse of the Gala building and longer term regeneration of the Adult Education Centre.

4.4.5 Station

Upgrade of the railway station is desirable to create a gateway destination, including improved public realm on the station forecourt and Victoria bridge junction. There is potential for a small metro-style foodstore within the station building and ancillary service uses. A more comprehensive approach could see a new structure built over the railway tracks to accommodate more development however this would need to accommodate the change in levels from east to west and the relationship to the Railway Street Conservation Area.



An active local High Street



Variety in retail frontages



Creating new town centre floorspace



A vibrant street market...



...bringing activity to the street



Sensitive use of stalls and coverings

4.5.1 Market

The street market is considered to be a valuable asset for the town centre and is one of the more vibrant in Medway. It is important to retain its central location. Whilst catering for 'value' and a primarily local catchment now and in the future, more effort can be made to promote 'quality' (for example through greater emphasis on local or organic produce) and 'variety' (perhaps by introducing occasional themed markets). The design of stalls could be more beneficial to the local townscape. Some thought should also be given to the position of stalls on market days linked to the new town square (see Public Realm).

4.5 Themes: Market

4.6.1 Introduction

West of Canterbury / Skinner Street, whilst retail is likely to remain there should be more flexibility to introduce complementary town centre uses for food and drink, leisure and community facilities such as the library. Improved linkages to and from the leisure / open space of Black Lion and Great Lines is a priority. There may be opportunities to vary the building line (e.g. using projecting canopies) and provide more outdoor seating areas along this section of the High Street to increase visual interest.

4.6.2 Gillingham 'Hub'

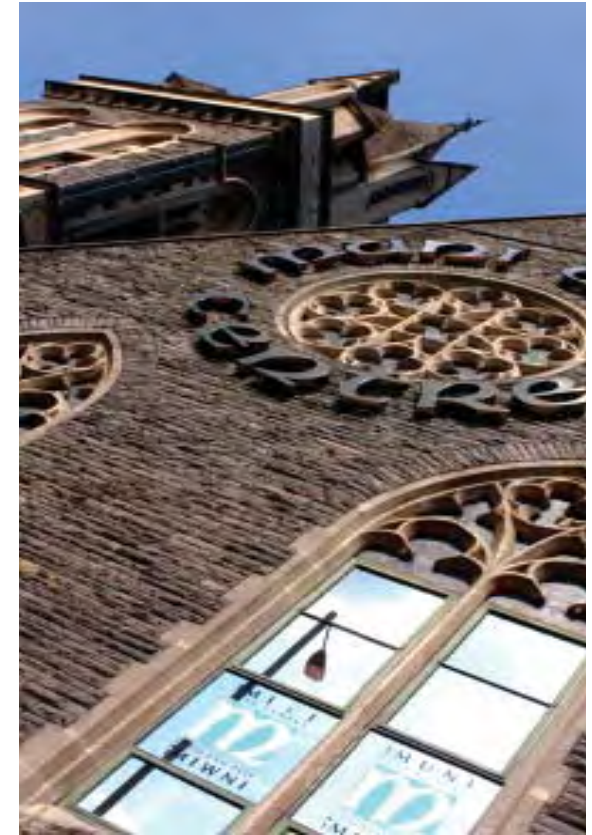
The Gillingham 'Hub' is proposed as a landmark cultural facility for Gillingham but also drawing on a wider catchment. This would provide an anchor for an expanding evening economy at the western end of the town centre and would need to be carefully managed to protect residential amenity and attract a wide range of users. The building would be flexible in design but could include an independent cinema (or space to screen occasional films), a performance / meeting space and a café / bar.

One potential location is the nursery at the junction of Marlborough Road and High Street that would provide a gateway site to the town centre. We promote redevelopment of the single storey buildings adjacent to the MoD Sports Ground and eventual reclamation as civic use / open space, linking Great Lines City Park and Black Lion Sports Centre.

Redevelopment would have to be for civic / cultural uses and the important setting within the Conservation Area must be taken into account. Any displaced uses would have to be relocated to an appropriate place within the town centre or incorporated within the development.

4.6.3 Somerfield

Whilst Somerfield is a valued asset, in the longer term the entrance and covered arcade could be improved and opened out into a courtyard space lined with small retail units and upper floor uses. The Somerfield car park and service yard on Jeffrey Street would benefit from environmental improvements to screen what is a negative space. Longer term redevelopment opportunities to provide active frontage onto Jeffrey Street should be encouraged.



Local cultural facilities

Intimate social spaces and outdoor seating areas



4.7.1 Canterbury Street

Conversion of commercial uses to residential is already occurring on Canterbury Street, which retains a valuable Local Centre function. Where residential uses are permitted, environmental improvements and off-street parking will be sought to enhance the amenity of the area, including reinstatement of front boundaries. Change of use will remain the choice of individual businesses within the existing policy framework.

4.7.2 East End

East of the railway station, a similar process of conversion to non-town centre uses may occur naturally over time through residential infill and conversions, although recent investment (at the Aldi supermarket for example) is to be welcomed and respected.

4.7.3 Balmoral Gardens

Balmoral Gardens is a valued green space and will be retained and enhanced. An expansion of the PCT health centre would result in the reconfiguration of the open space. Town centre car parking will be retained on site until equivalent alternative public car parking in a more central location is provided, in which case the car park area may be suitable for residential use. Adequate parking would have to be retained to serve the health centre.

4.8.1 Medway Regeneration Framework

Enhanced employment opportunities are crucial to the regeneration strategy for Medway and Thames Gateway and an important component of creating sustainable communities. Medway has set a target of creating 26,500 jobs by 2016 and 40,000 jobs by 2026. The Medway Regeneration Framework proposes to achieve this using a four-step approach:

- Step 1 – create new jobs through business support and growth of existing businesses in key sectors. Place focus on high tech manufacturing / engineering, creative industries, environmental technologies and higher education whilst encouraging other sectors offering good growth potential including health / social services, construction, logistics, business services, and tourism / retail / leisure;
- Step 2 – enhance image and identity through marketing / PR to support inward investment, ensure provision of cultural infrastructure in large scale regeneration projects, including an exhibition centre and quality hotels;
- Step 3 – increase skills base within the Medway workforce - by focusing on economic development; the needs of, and latest ideas in, business; focus on individual needs including vulnerable groups; and joined-up working among training providers;
- Step 4 – balance employment with other uses in town centres to ensure that town centres are regenerated to become vibrant and attractive locations for business. Priorities include improved accessibility, assembly of sites for quality business space and provision

of targeted managed workspace in each town centre.

4.8.2 Application to Gillingham

Gillingham town centre is a naturally attractive and sustainable location to do business by virtue of accessibility (47 minutes by train to London Victoria; proximity to the A2), presence of supporting uses (retail, leisure, food and drink) and extent of local workforce. The Medway Waterfront Regeneration Strategy states the goal for Gillingham are to:

“Redefine the role of Gillingham as a hub for regeneration by implementing a range of environmental enhancements in the town centre to boost investor confidence and undertaking a feasibility study of the potential of Gillingham as a small business hub.”

These goals link to the Medway Regeneration Framework by concentrating on improving image and identity through the quality of the environment and cultural opportunities (Step 2) and providing for the requirements of the small-medium sized business sector (Step 4). Environmental enhancement and design quality are recurring themes within the Framework. Provision of appropriate business space in the town centre can be achieved by targeting particular development sites.

New small business floorspace (and supporting uses) will be encouraged in redevelopment of sites off the High Street or on upper floors along the High Street.



New space for small businesses...

...will create additional demand for town centre uses





Well-used active town centre spaces



Protection and enhancement of green spaces

Tree planting and public realm improvements



4.9.1 Introduction

New proposals for public realm must be of the highest quality and reinforce the sense of place for Gillingham.

A sequence of five key spaces are proposed along the length of the High Street to break down the perceived length of the town centre, increase clarity and improve pedestrian movement across busy junctions.

4.9.2 Town Square

A new town square at the heart of the town centre will offer a strong civic focus, linked to the development of the key retail site. It would be a meeting place, a place to rest / enjoy a coffee, an events space and a focus for the market on market days. The town square is an ambitious project prioritised through consultation and can be achieved by removing a limited number of properties on the southern side of the High Street at the junction of Green Street, opening up the High Street to create a well-proportioned space.

4.9.3 Station Gateway

Rethink of the space outside the station is proposed as a priority, linked to improvement / redevelopment of the railway station facilities. Measures could include:

- reduction of Victoria Bridge to one lane of traffic (signalised);
- increased footway widths on both sides of Victoria Bridge with a pedestrian crossing point following the desire line to the High Street more closely;
- narrowing of the entrance to Victoria Street to reduce confusion / conflicts at the junction; and

- better relationship of bus stops to the railway station.

Consideration should be given to closing the station forecourt to all but essential vehicles.

The most radical solution to improving the station's connectivity with the High Street would be to close the Victoria Bridge to traffic, allowing a pedestrian zone or access for buses only. However, the next available traffic route over the railway line is a level crossing at Gillingham Road and would result in additional delay as well as causing increased traffic flow through residential streets. This option is not therefore recommended.

4.9.4 High Street

Greater tree planting along the High Street would improve the visual perception of the town centre whilst maintaining the essence of the street market and space for service vehicles / parking. The use of cherry / blossoming tree species could help create a distinct sense of place - there is a clear 'blossom' link to Gillingham's Japanese / Will Adams heritage. Improvements at 3 junctions of the High Street (with Canterbury Street, Arden Street and Marlborough Road) will improve linkages to leisure facilities and open space to the west.

4.9.5 Delivery

Public realm improvements will be funded wherever possible by contributions arising from related development sites within the town centre. Chapter 5 demonstrates how these will be linked.

4.10.1 Getting to the town centre

Access and signing from the A289 Gillingham Northern Link should be addressed to encourage town centre access from the north rather than more constrained railway crossings to the south. Pedestrian and cycle connections to Great Lines, waterfront regeneration areas, the university campus and proposed university accommodation should be improved.

4.10.2 Pedestrians

The redevelopment of the town centre should be planned to create high quality pedestrian routes between key destinations such as car parks, bus stops, rail station and open space. A strategy for providing improved pedestrian route information is recommended for development and a network of “finger post” signs and information boards will raise awareness of the facilities and amenities that are available in the town centre, such as the library, markets, etc. Distances or approximate walking times could be introduced to the signs. Improving the safety and design of pedestrian links to the town centre (e.g. from Balmoral Gardens) should coincide with development projects in those particular areas.

4.10.3 Public Transport

It is recommended that consideration be given to relocating the King Street bus stop to the High Street to provide improved visibility and interchange between the railway station and bus services. This should be complemented with improved directional signage and public transport information for pedestrians. All town centre bus stops would benefit from “re-branding” with improved shelters, seating facilities and information displays.

4.10.4 Traffic Management

At the western end of the High Street, between Canterbury Street and Britton Street, maintaining vehicular access will be retained since it provides additional activity to the street, allows short-stay pay and display parking and contributes positively to an evening economy. This approach could be extended to other areas of the High Street during the evening.

It is not considered appropriate to introduce traffic to the full length of the High Street during the day as this would displace the market activities which are a key feature of Gillingham town centre. Similarly it is not considered beneficial to allow “buses only” to the High Street.



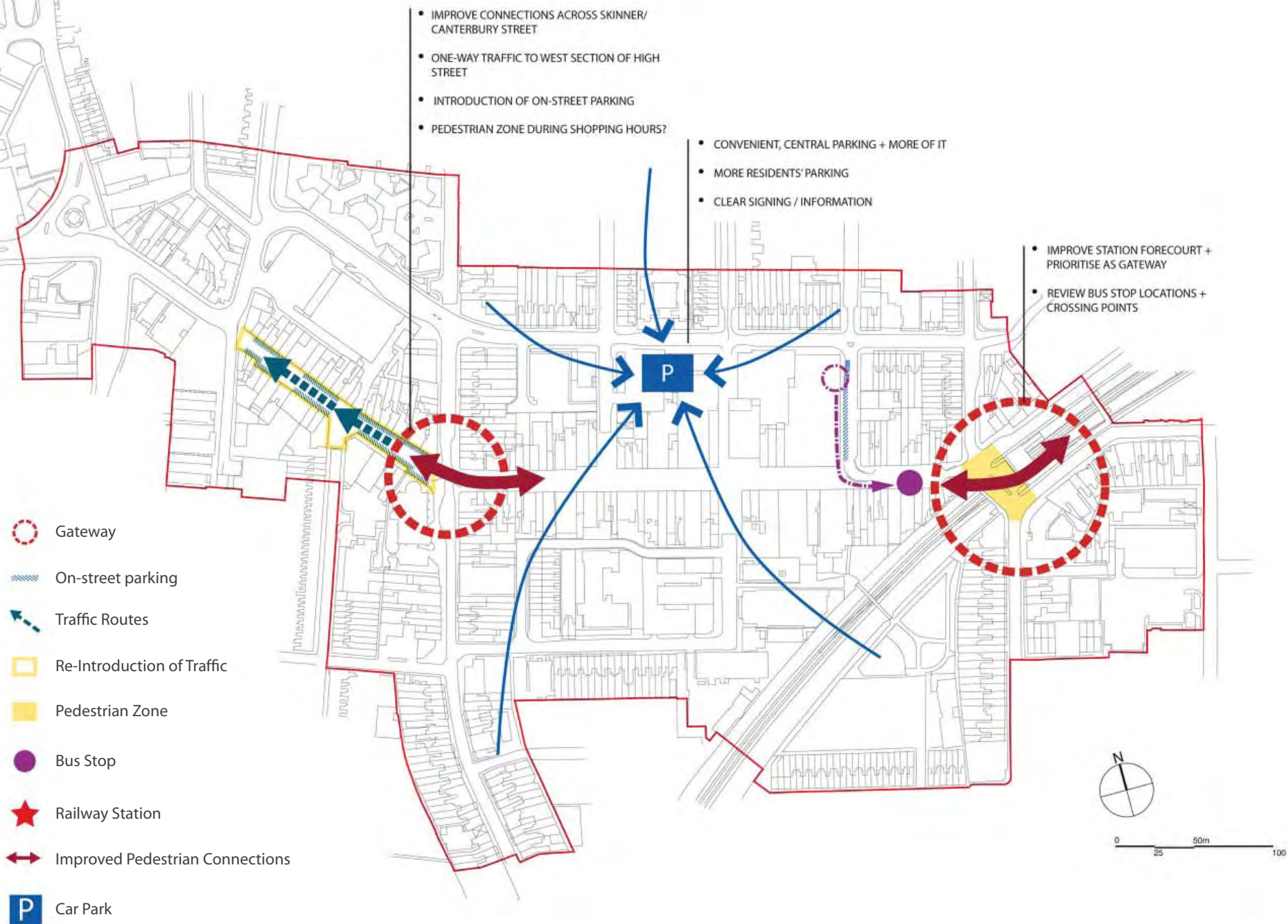
Encouraging improvement of the railway station



Positive traffic management



Relocating bus stops to achieve better interchange



4.10 Themes: Movement

4.11.1 Town Centre Parking

It is considered beneficial to enhance the vitality and viability of Gillingham town centre by promoting an increase in the supply of town centre car parking spaces, consolidating parking in a central location, in line with an overall strategy for parking in Medway that seeks to discourage unnecessary travel by car through varying tariff structures. A net gain of approximately 200 short-stay parking spaces is suggested, comprising:

- 300 public spaces (Retail Core site);
- Less 40 spaces (former Littlewoods forming part of Retail Core site);
- Less 46 spaces (Jeffrey Street car park).

If the BT site were redeveloped for decked car parking this would generate approximately an additional 200 spaces. It is recommended that a review of parking charges and on-street parking provision - the balance between residents' and shoppers' parking - is undertaken as a priority.

4.11.2 Balmoral Gardens

In the longer term 141 spaces at Balmoral Gardens may be redeveloped but only if it can be demonstrated that this would not harm the viability and vitality of the town centre. This could not happen until alternative provision at least equivalent to the number of spaces lost were made. Some parking would have to be retained to serve the health centre.

4.11.3 Signing

As an interim measure the existing parking stock in the town centre would benefit from improved signage with a comprehensive car park signing strategy identifying short and long stay parking destinations on the main approaches to the town centre. Each car park should be branded on the signs and include the number of spaces (such as 'Britton Farm 147 spaces').

A system of 'live' information would offer real time information as to spare spaces in car parks which would reduce the need for people to drive around and search for a space. This would optimise existing capacity and investigation of costs relative to the scale of the town centre should be undertaken.

4.11.4 Black Lion Sports Centre

Black Lion Sports Centre (242 spaces) is used informally as town centre parking and this should be allowed to continue, subject to maintaining effective operation of the Sports Centre.

4.11.5 Residential Parking

An increase in off-street car parking spaces and review of charging structures should reduce the reliance on dual-use parking bays - which is problematic particularly on market days and as an alternative to using pay and display car parks - that can then revert to purely residential parking, easing pressure on side streets and offering environmental improvements.



Reducing conflicts between shoppers' and residents' parking



Secure and convenient car parking

Promoting alternatives - walking and cycling





Student accommodation could enliven the town centre

Courtyard housing



4.12.1 Introduction

New residential uses in and around the town centre (particularly within the town centre fringe but also above shops / offices) will help to increase local demand for shops and services and balance provision of new housing in the waterfront regeneration areas.

Development of residential uses is also an important element of the strategy to reconnect adjacent residential areas to the town centre, providing safe, overlooked streets. This process has already started at the western end of the High Street. The requirements of this approach must be:

- to provide adequate levels of on site residential parking, whilst also recognising the town centre's excellent public transport accessibility and opportunities for cycling and walking. Encourage alternatives means of travel, for example providing secure cycle storage on-site;
- where lower levels of parking are proposed, methods to restrict car ownership should be introduced, for example legal covenants attached to the purchase of properties;
- to ensure adequate levels of residential amenity for new and existing properties.

4.12.2 Housing Mix

Policy H10 of the Local Plan requires a balanced provision of housing in new developments. Whilst a mix including market and affordable housing should be sought, as well as family-sized accommodation, particular target housing needs will be :

- student accommodation. The universities have a pressing need for more bedspaces to cater for growing student populations. Not all of this demand can be met at the campuses, although some 400 bedspaces are to be provided as part of the redevelopment of the former AZKO chemical works site. The town centre would be an ideal location for student accommodation close to facilities and within reasonable walking / cycling distances of the Chatham Maritime campus. The town centre could also be the focus for student union facilities / activities (see Gillingham 'Hub');
- apartments for single people, couples and elderly. There is a market for reasonably priced 1-2 bedroom apartments given the proximity to railway links to the other Medway towns and London and town centre facilities including supermarkets and healthcare.

5. Key Projects

5.1.1 Introduction

The Framework Plan identifies key policies and projects to guide future regeneration of the town centre. The ideas are based upon our analysis, consultation with Council officers, residents, businesses and community groups and build upon the concepts outlined in Chapter 4.

As part of this process we have produced sketch proposals examining site specific opportunities for development sites and public realm - a series of indicative design proposals for different parts of the town centre with a brief description and list of development principles.

These are by no means definitive and there may be a number of alternative solutions for each site. Other ideas have been considered and recognise the need for flexibility, varying land uses, urban form and timing. There is a wide spectrum of other potential ideas that may arise through consultation or discussions with particular landowners. We therefore focus on key principles guiding future development rather than a blueprint.

5.1.2 Key Projects

The key projects where some form of public intervention (through site assembly, site disposal or highway works) with commercial or community expertise is considered necessary are as follows:

- 1 - Retail Core (Section 5.2);
- 2 - Town Square (Section 5.3);
- 3 - Station Gateway (Section 5.4)
- 4 - Gillingham Hub (Section 5.5);
- 5 - Jeffrey Street Car Park (Section 5.6);
- 6 - Balmoral Gardens (Section 5.7);

- 7 - West End Linkages (Section 5.8);
- 8 - Market and Blossom Festival (Section 5.9);
- 9 - Jeffrey Street (Section 5.10).

Other projects can fit into the overall framework in the short or longer term through a mixture of private and public initiatives and are as follows:

- 10 - BT Switch Centre (Section 5.11);
- 11 - Gala Bingo (Section 5.12);
- 12 - Mill Road / Fox Street (Section 5.13);
- 13 - Rear of 47, 59-75 High Street (Section 5.14).

Areas on the town centre fringe where a more residential character could develop incrementally over time and where more general guidance is given are as follows:

- 14 - Canterbury Street (part) and Area bounded by Connaught Road / Balmoral Road / Duncan Road (Section 5.15).

In addition, public realm commitments (where a financial contribution or direct works will be sought) are identified in the summary section for each development site.

-  Town centre core
-  Secondary frontage
-  Supporting civic/cultural uses
-  Opportunity sites
-  Town centre fringe
-  Improved frontage
-  Conservation area
-  Open space
-  Avenue planting
-  Key public space
-  Potential road closure

5.2.1 Description

The retail core forms a key component of town centre regeneration, combining public car parking and new retail development with ancillary employment and residential uses wrapping round the perimeter of the block. This site has been chosen due to:

- The limited extent of land ownerships in relation to the size of the site;
- The central location at the heart of the town centre; and
- The opportunity to access a large central car park and service yard from Jeffrey Street.

In Summer 2007 the former Co-op store was subdivided into three retail units for occupation by three high street retailers. This site has advantages over the existing Policy R5 site identified in the Local Plan, which has a higher number of ownerships and is less central. However if a scheme were to come forward for the R5 site it would be treated positively.

The preferred solution is for a medium-sized supermarket of 30,000-40,000 square feet (gross area) with additional smaller retail units / concessions fronting onto the High Street. The foodstore would be of sufficient size to act as a main food shopping destination to meet the needs of a local catchment and of a scale appropriate to Gillingham. Larger store sizes (up to 70,000 square feet) have been considered however this may have a detrimental impact on other town centre businesses due to the extent of non-food sales typical of this size of store. New units fronting onto the High Street should however focus on comparison shopping / food and drink uses.

One option would be to combine the two blocks separated by Sadlers Walk into a larger development site. Whilst resulting in the loss of a pedestrian route to the High Street, this is not considered the most important desire line and the benefits of combining the two sites may outweigh the disadvantages.

Keys buildings to be retained would include the art deco façade of 118-120 High Street (formerly Littlewoods) and 124 High Street (Social Club). Active frontage and entrances should be provided to all elevations, including the Jeffrey Street elevation which is currently poor in townscape terms. This will be a landmark development providing a setting to the new town square therefore design should be of the highest quality.

Parking could be provided at basement level, using the level change of 3 metres from the High Street to Jeffrey Street. Alternatively, a multi storey structure could be used however this is less efficient due to the extent of ramps etc required. Some 400 parking spaces would be created, although 40 spaces would be lost from the existing car park. Some of the new spaces, say 100, could be reserved for the private uses within the block or a dual use arrangement could be considered.

5.2.2 Issues

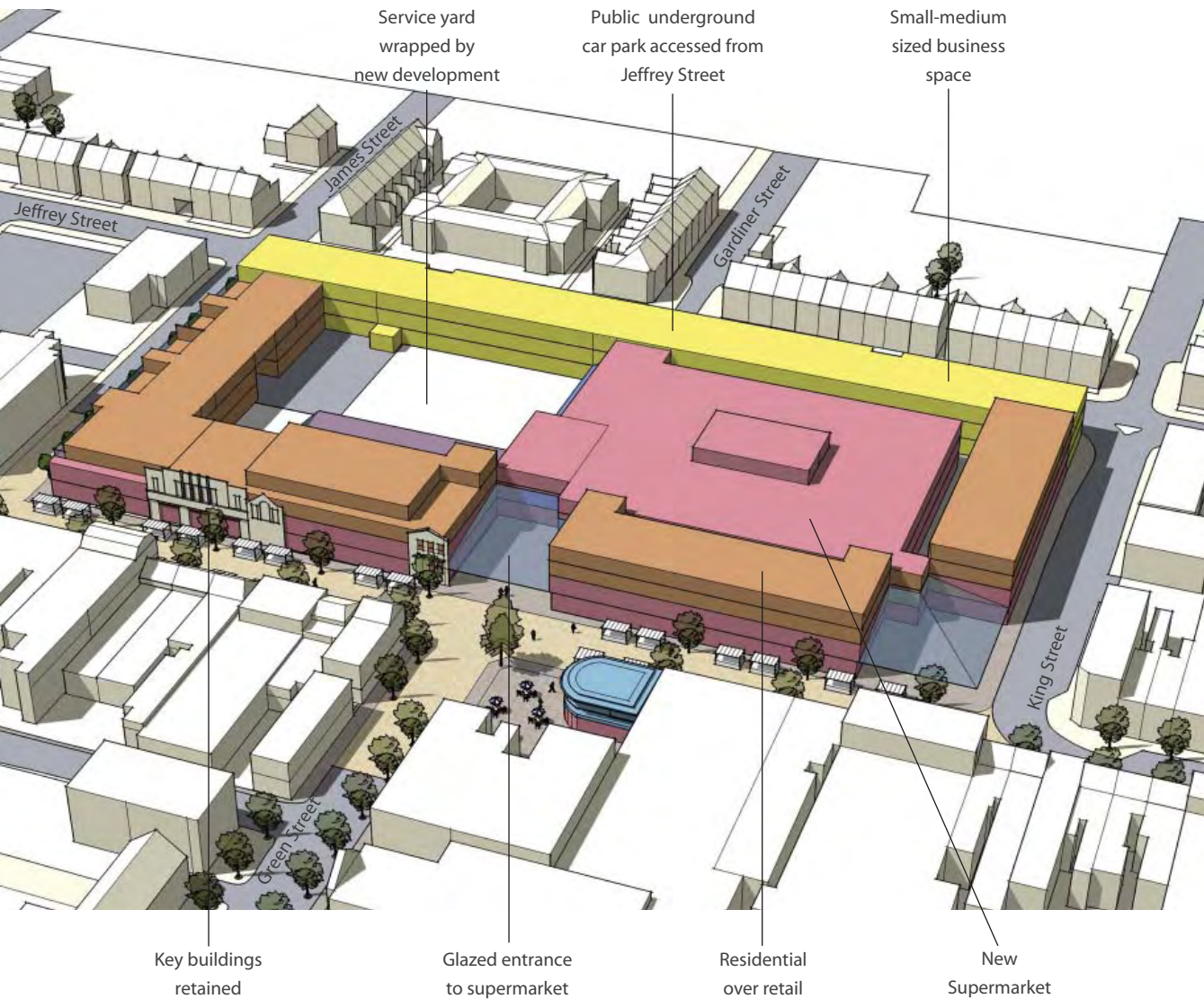
- The impact on existing businesses and temporary loss of car parking to be caused by redevelopment;
- The size of store and mix of uses;
- Potential service diversions on Sadlers Walk;
- Need to provide alternative public toilets.



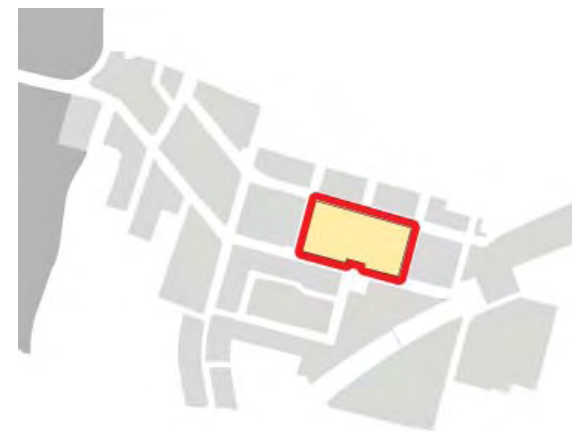
5.2.3 Summary

- Land Uses: retail including medium-sized supermarket; offices / food and drink (ancillary); residential on upper floors
- Scale: 3-4 storeys, the High Street should have the principal elevation
- Access: vehicles from Jeffrey Street
- Parking: basement level or multi-storey structure. 400 spaces (300 public / 100 private spaces)
- Servicing: direct from Jeffrey Street / Sadlers Walk. Service area within the block
- Public realm commitments: Town Square (5.3); Jeffrey Street (5.10)





- Retail
- Employment
- Leisure/Community
- Residential



5.2 Retail Core

5.3.1 Description

The Victorian High Street in Gillingham was originally a linear route connecting Brompton to the railway station. The town centre has therefore evolved as a long stretch of activity without a recognisable heart. A new town square will offer a strong civic focus in the centre of the core retail area. It would be a meeting place, a place to rest / enjoy a coffee, an events space and a focus for the market on market days. The position of the square would help to break up the perceived length of the High Street and create a legible environment. It would also provide a strong connection to Green Street which works well as a street for secondary and civic town centre uses.

A pavilion in the centre of the square or off to one side could act as an interactive community resource, for example providing web access. A larger, focal tree with seating around it could be used to identify the space.

Whilst most of the site falls within the public highway, the town square proposal requires removal of a limited number of properties on the southern side of the High Street at the junction of Green Street, opening up the High Street to create a well proportioned space. This would provide improved commercial frontage for several properties grouped around the new space.

5.3.2 Issues

- Acquisition and demolition of 133-139 High Street
- Need to define uses for the square
- Could be linked to redevelopment of the core retail site
- Creating room for the market

5.3.3 Summary

- Land Uses: retail / food and drink uses around the edge of the square
- Scale: n/a
- Access: as existing
- Parking: n/a
- Servicing: n/a





Fig 5.3 Town Square viewed from the west



5.3 Town Square

Fig 5.4 Town Square

5.4.1 Description

The railway station and Victoria Bridge is a key gateway to Gillingham. Introduction of CTRL domestic rail services will increase the strategic importance of Gillingham station. Rethink of the space outside the station is proposed as a priority, possibly but not necessarily linked to improvement of the railway station facilities.

Substantial improvements could be made without altering the building line of the station, to include:

- Widening of footways on the southern side of Victoria Bridge, perhaps restricting traffic to one lane with revised traffic light phasing (subject to acceptable impact on traffic flows and bus reliability);
- A pedestrian crossing point following the desire line to the High Street more closely;
- Improvement in surface materials on the forecourt;
- New active uses within the station building;
- Narrowing the entrance to Victoria Street to reduce confusion / conflicts at the junction for northbound vehicles; and
- Better relationship of bus stops to the railway station - relocation of the westbound King Street bus stop to the High Street.

The most radical solution to improving the station's connectivity with the High Street would be to close Victoria Bridge to traffic, allowing a pedestrian zone or access for buses only. However, the next available traffic route over the railway line is a level crossing at Gillingham Road and would result in additional delay as well as causing increased traffic flow through residential streets. This option is therefore not recommended.

The proposal illustrated shows a new station building set further back from the junction, allowing a larger space for pedestrians, drop-off / servicing and high quality hard landscape.

Redevelopment of the railway station would be a complex task to be discussed with, and implemented by, the owners Network Rail and service providers. Potentially this could improve station facilities and provide additional retail or employment floorspace to support the town centre. The existing building is not of particular architectural merit and therefore replacement would be acceptable in principle. Important to the success of the redevelopment approach would be to address the relationship to the Railway Street Conservation Area and level changes in terms of scale, design and massing.

5.4.2 Issues

- Need to assess impact on traffic flows at Victoria Bridge junction
- Engage with Network Rail to consider options for station redevelopment
- Relationship to Conservation Area

5.4.3 Summary

- Land Uses: Railway Station with ancillary retail / employment uses
- Scale: 2-3 storeys
- Access / Servicing: from existing / new forecourt
- Public realm commitments: Station forecourt and Victoria Bridge junction (5.4)

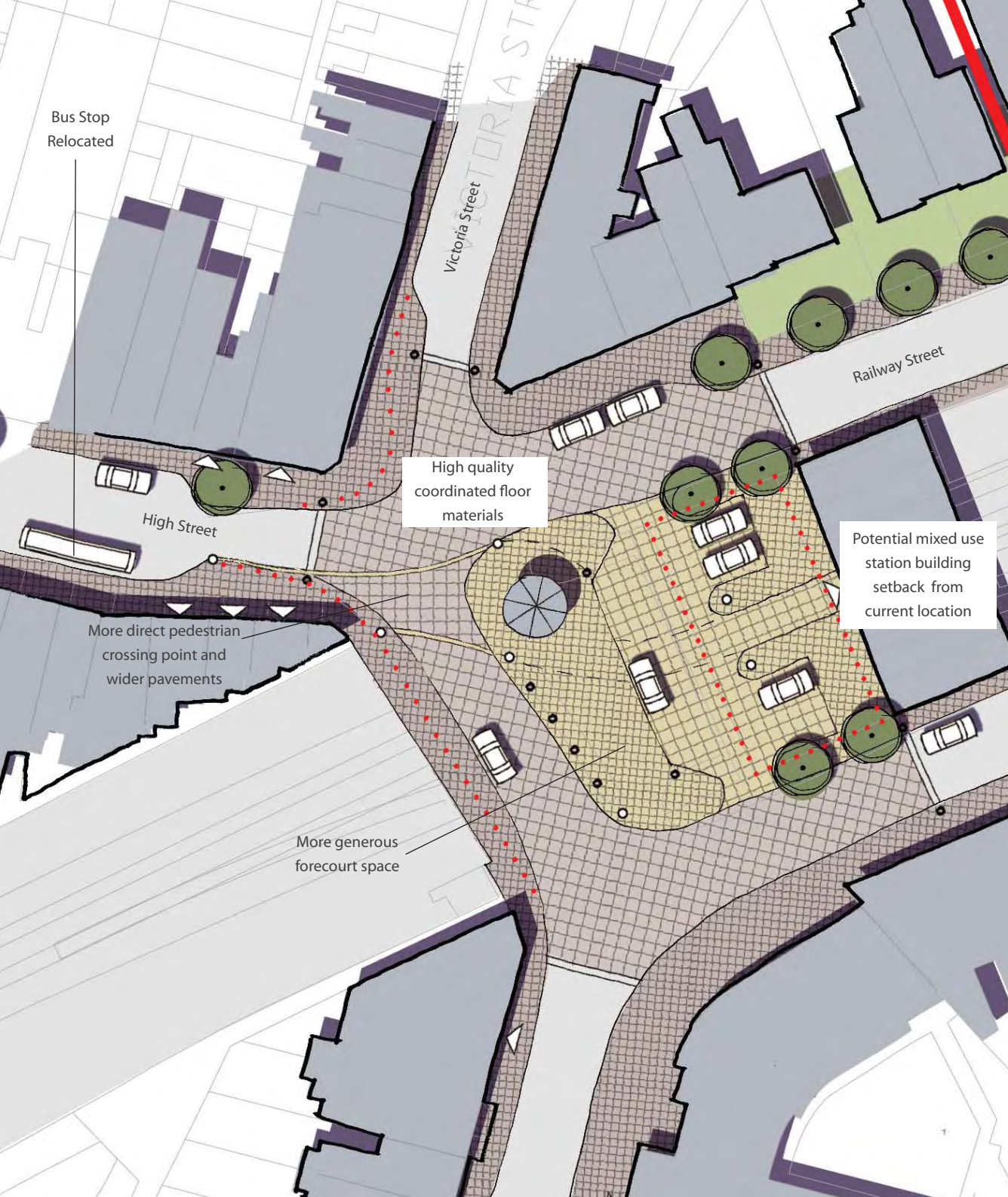
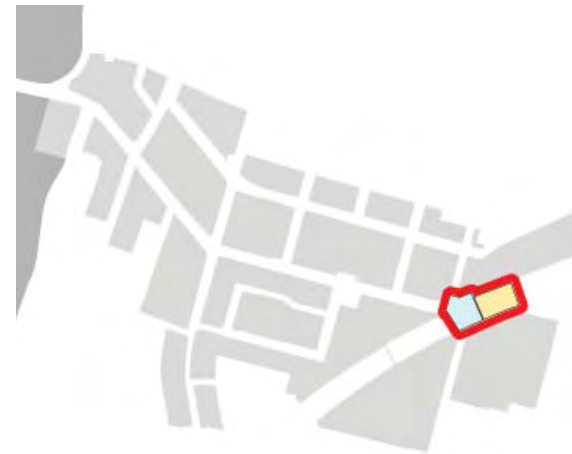


Fig 5.5 Sattion Gateway



5.4 Station Gateway

5.5.1 Description

Consultation has identified a demand for a locally based community facility we have named the 'Gillingham Hub'. Uses could include:

- Independent cinema (or space to screen occasional films);
- Performance / meeting space;
- Café / bar

A preferred site is the nursery at the western end of the High Street, considered suitable because:

- The site is a gateway to the town centre from the west;
- It provides an active edge to the proposed Great Lines City Park;
- It can support an expanded evening economy at the western end of the town centre
- The existing nursery buildings are of poor quality;
- The site is surrounded by relatively few residential properties, meaning the venue could accommodate a wide range of activities;

If this site is taken forward the nursery facilities would need to be replaced. An alternative site for the nursery or the hub is the former Gala Bingo hall on Green Street (see 5.12). Although this site is less well-related to the western side of the town centre, a more central location may present spin-off benefits to the core retail area.

5.5.2 Issues

- Site selection and potential acquisition
- Need to replace existing nursery use on site
- Need detailed design / feasibility study
- Scale and relationship to Conservation Area critical
- Investigate funding sources

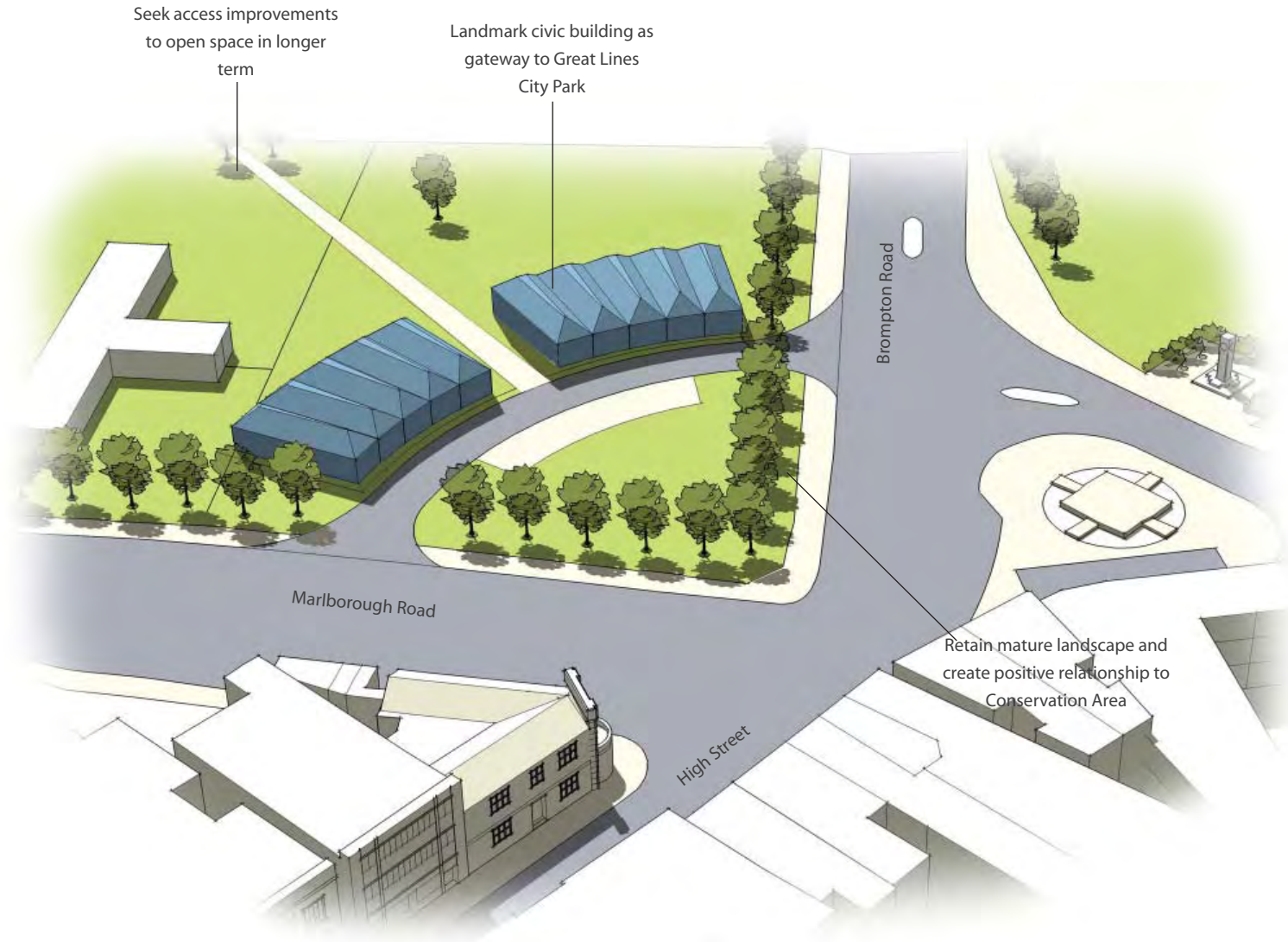
5.5.3 Summary

- Land uses: Community use / nursery
- Pavilion building to include high-ceilinged flexible ground floor space
- Access / Servicing: from Marlborough Road as existing
- Parking: Staff parking on site. Use of existing public spaces on Marlborough Road. Potential overspill parking to Black Lion?
- Public realm commitments: West End Linkages (5.8)



Existing single storey buildings on the site





5.5 Gillingham Hub

Fig 5.6 Gillingham Hub

5.6.1 Description

Jeffrey Street car park currently provides 46 town centre parking spaces. From Jeffrey Street the site presents a significant gap in the townscape, exposing rear service areas. The car park represents a rare opportunity to meet demand for additional residential or employment provision in the short term - being a vacant site of a suitable size close to the High Street but not in a position where it would compete for retail space. Redevelopment of this site would provide an active frontage to Jeffrey Street and form a clear perimeter block with servicing and private space in the middle of the block, contributing to a safer environment. Parking demand created by the new uses would have to be met on-site.

Clearly redevelopment would result in the loss of a limited amount of town centre parking, however this would be reprovided within the core retail site (see 5.2) in the medium term. It is likely also that re-evaluation of town centre parking charges could result in additional space that is currently underused being taken up.

The Universities at Medway have a requirement for some 200 bedspaces in the short term and the town centre has been identified as an appropriate location for at least some of this accommodation, due to the presence of local facilities and public transport. We would recommend consideration of this site since it could be made available in the short term and is in public ownership.

5.6.2 Issues

- Loss of some town centre parking (until provided on the core retail site)
- Establish market demand and feasibility design
- Discussion with potential developers

5.6.3 Summary

- Land Uses: Residential (student accommodation), offices / business use
- Scale: Up to 4 storeys on Jeffrey Road frontage
- Access / Servicing: from existing service road
- Parking: On site
- Public realm commitments: Jeffrey Street (5.10)

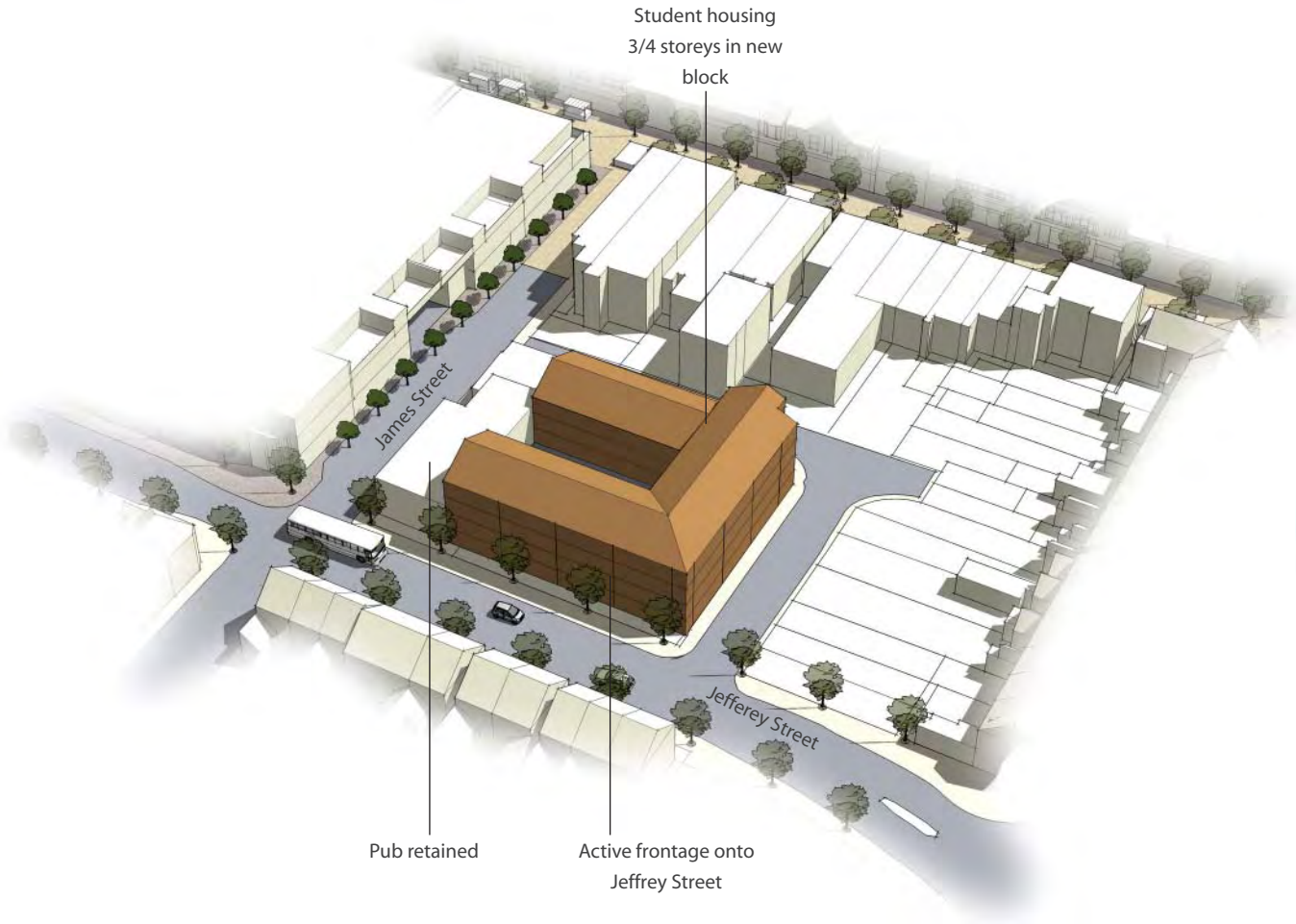


Fig 5.7 Jeffrey Street Car Park

 Residential



5.6 Jeffrey Street Car Park

5.7.1 Description

Balmoral Gardens generated considerable interest in public consultation. There was a strong desire to retain town centre parking on the site, unless it could be provided satisfactorily elsewhere in the town centre. There was also concern to ensure retention of green space at this end of the town centre. There are issues of safety of pedestrian links over the railway line and to the railway station, as well as lack of overlooking of the open space which encourages anti-social behaviour.

Proposals for a new health centre are being pursued by Medway Primary Care Trust in consultation with Medway Council. This may result in reconfiguration of the existing green space and presents the opportunity to rethink the layout of the site.

The illustrative proposals identify two options.

5.7.2 Option 1

Option 1 shows the new health centre with the public car parking remaining but in a slightly different form. This leaves the public parking quite remote from the High Street. Improvements to the open space / pedestrian links may be more limited for this option.

5.7.3 Option 2

Reduction of public car parking will only be acceptable if alternative provision is made in the town centre, for example for the Retail Core site. Residential use in this location would provide an acceptable relationship to existing residential properties and would also allow overlooking of the parking and public realm at different times of day, contributing to a feeling of safety.

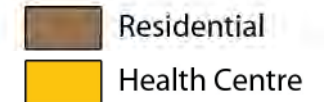
Rear gardens should back onto existing rear gardens, creating clear private and public spaces. Residential parking would be provided for each property, with operational and visitor parking for the health centre retained. In this option, the open space could be improved and funding contributed towards improving the design and safety of the pedestrian link over the railway line, perhaps using lighting, use of more welcoming materials and a more open structure.

5.7.4 Issues

- Loss of town centre parking (unless reprovided elsewhere in the town centre)
- Need to retain / improve existing open space
- Any residential development to contribute towards open space improvements

5.7.5 Summary

- Land Uses: open space; health centre; town centre parking (Option 1) or residential; health centre (Option 2)
- Scale: 2-3 storeys. New residential to be assessed against impact on amenity of existing residents
- Access / Servicing: as existing from Randolph Road. Pedestrian links retained and improved
- Parking: 141 public spaces as existing (Option 1); or residential on site plus public spaces for health centre (Option 2)
- Public realm commitments: Balmoral Gardens (5.7) and footbridge





Option 1



Option 2

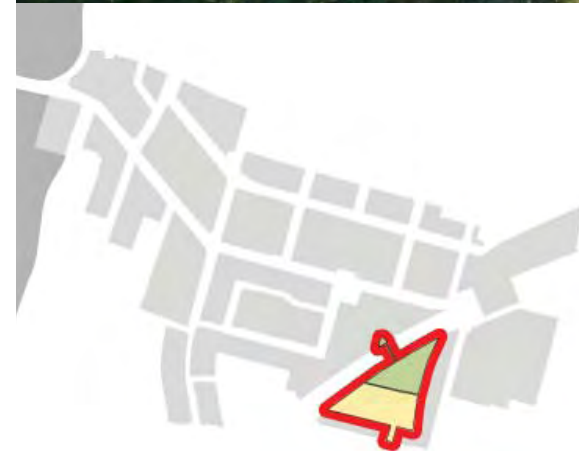


Fig 5.8 Balmoral Gardens

5.7 Balmoral Gardens

5.8 West End Linkages

Fig 5.9 Junction of High Street and Marlborough Road



5.8.1 Description

The western end of the town centre will become a focus for food and drink and leisure uses, including evening uses, as well as increasing amounts of residential accommodation. As well as consideration of the management of these various activities, thought should be given to improving pedestrian / cycle connections between the High Street core and the leisure / open space uses of Black Lion Sports Centre and Great Lines and University campus.

The Great Lines City Park masterplan produced by Medway Council identifies the Marlborough Road / High Street junction as a gateway to the Park. This presents the opportunity to promote more pedestrian-friendly junctions between this point and the main retail area. Focus should be on improving crossing points, particularly at the junctions of Canterbury Street and Arden Street with the High Street, for example by providing raised tables and change in surface materials at junctions to calm traffic. Improved signing to town centre destinations from the west should be promoted to improve legibility. High quality materials should be used throughout.

5.8.2 Issues

- Explore potential funding sources
- Detailed design and implementation
- Potential links to Great Lines City Park project

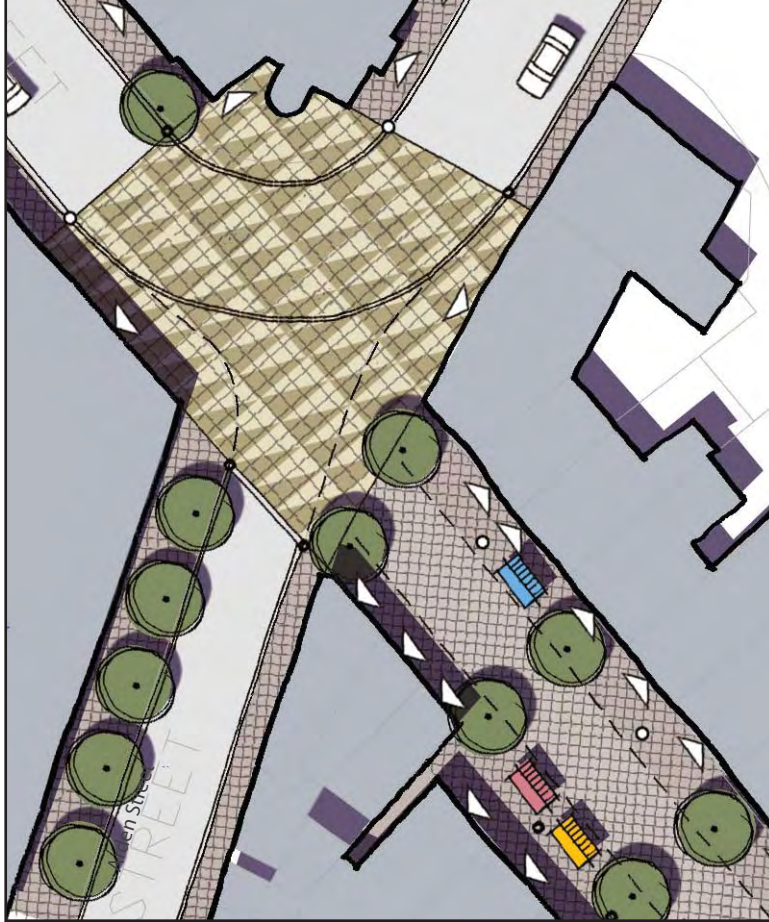


Fig 5.10 Junction of High Street and Arden Street



Fig 5.11 Junction of High Street and Canterbury Street

5.8.3 Summary

- Land Uses: n/a
- Scale: n/a
- Access / servicing: n/a
- Parking: n/a



5.8 West End Linkages

5.9.1 Description

As discussed in Section 4.3, the market is a valued asset that can be diversified in a number of ways. The focus should be on retaining its local function and emphasis on value that distinguishes Gillingham from other Medway town centre markets - with the possible exception of Strood, that is not in direct competition with Gillingham. However attempts should be made to diversify the offer of the market on particular days and consumer testing may be required to define appropriate additional produce.

Review of the market function and operation has taken place in 2007. An attractive, robust and coordinated design for market stalls is envisaged, although it is likely they would remain temporary structures that would be removed on non-market days. Studs should be used to clearly delineate bays for market stalls and effective management of the layout is crucial.

The Town Square project (section 5.3) offers scope to reconsider the layout of the market and this would be reviewed in detailed planning.

Further tree planting would improve the scale and proportions of the High Street. Additional market stall space created within the town square (see 5.3) would free up space within the High Street for additional tree planting in the High Street and Green Street subject to maintaining adequate servicing / loading space and assessment of underground services.

Underground services could be retained if planters were used above ground. We suggest blossoming species such as Cherry that would

provide Spring colour and would not become too dominant in relation to adjacent buildings. The blossom could be linked to a Spring event to celebrate the anniversary of Will Adams arrival in Japan, which would need to be complementary to the September festival that currently runs on an annual basis.

These two measures would add additional life and colour to the High Street, on both market and non-market days, in what is envisaged to be a short term project.

5.9.2 Issues

- Market review integral to review of management
- Feasibility testing of additional tree planting
- Town Centre Management coordination of Will Adams / Blossom festival themes

5.9.3 Summary

- Land Uses: Market and public realm
- Scale: n/a
- Access / Servicing: to be reviewed as part of planting strategy
- Parking: n/a

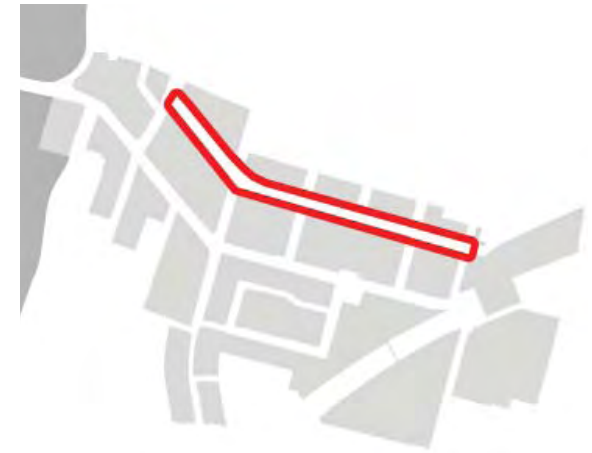


Fig 5.12 Promoting additional tree planting along the High Street





Fig 5.13 New frontages along Jeffrey Street

5.10.1 Description

Jeffrey Street creates a poor impression of the town centre for vehicles travelling along it and other users accessing the town centre from adjacent residential areas. Over the years it has developed a 'ring road' character and gaps in the urban fabric have developed, primarily for car parks and service yards. Whilst these fulfil useful town centre functions, it is important from an economic and public safety point of view to improve the environmental quality of this corridor and make it a 'living street' once again.

These issues can be addressed through redevelopment of vacant / underused sites (as shown in other sections of this chapter), reintroducing residential and employment uses fronting onto the street. There is also scope to improve the quality of the street environment, for example by:

- Setting new buildings back from the footway to allow for ornamental tree planting;
- On sites where redevelopment is unlikely in the short term consider public art / lighting / landscaping initiatives to reduce the perception of a blank façade;
- Review pedestrian crossing points and consider pinch points at crossings to reduce the perceived width of the street.

These improvements should be funded through Section 106 / 278 contributions arising from redevelopment of adjacent sites.



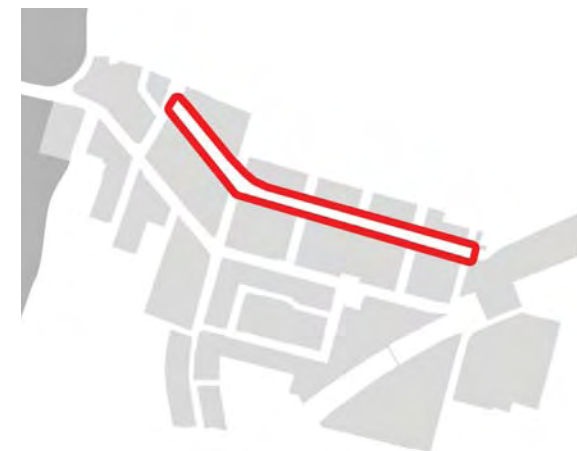
In the longer term, any development sites coming forward will be expected to positively front onto, and improve, the public realm.

5.10.2 Issues

- Prioritise improvements
- Ensure Section 106 / 278 funding mechanisms secured from redevelopment of adjacent sites
- Consider Medway core funding for highway crossing improvements

5.10.3 Summary

- Land Uses: residential and employment uses fronting onto the street
- Scale: 3-4 storeys
- Access / Servicing: n/a
- Parking: current parking restrictions to remain in place to allow larger vehicles to pass each other



5.10 Jeffrey Street

5.11 BT Switch Centre

5.11.1 Description

The BT Switch Centre on Green Street is a large office building occupying a relatively small site behind the High Street. Research is required with the landowner as to the current operations and occupancy within the building. However it may be that less space is required to maintain operations, releasing the site for whole or partial redevelopment in the medium term.

Acceptable land uses would include residential, employment or community use, or a combination of the above, subject to creating a satisfactory relationship in activity and scale to existing residential properties adjacent to the site in Green Street.

Further town centre parking (approximately 200 spaces) as an alternative to, or as well as, the Retail Core site has been considered in Option 2. The site is close to the High Street and Green Street shops, although access from Canterbury Street along Green Street is relatively narrow. Access and traffic management would need to be carefully managed to maintain residential amenity.



5.11.2 Issues

- Establishing current and future landowner requirements
- Creating an acceptable relationship with existing houses

5.11.3 Summary

- Land Uses: residential, employment (A2/B1), community use; Car Parking (Option 2)
- Scale: 2-4 storeys subject to impact on amenity of existing residents
- Access / Servicing: as existing from Green Street / Theodore Place
- Parking: must be provided on site; public car parking (Option 2)
- Public realm commitments: Town Square (5.3)

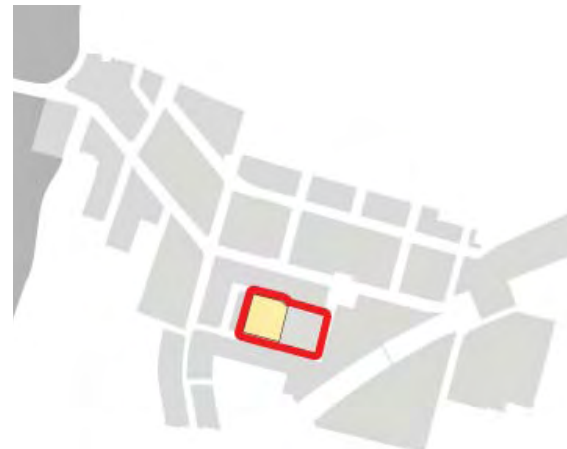
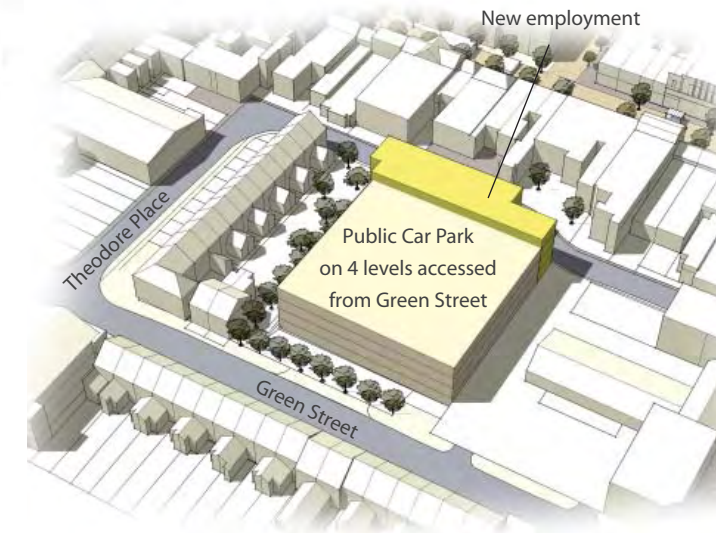


Fig 5.14 BT Switch Centre



Option 1 - Employment and Housing



Option 2 - Car Park and Employment



Fig 5.15 Gala Bingo

5.12.1 Description

The Gala Bingo site offers considerable potential for reuse as a community / leisure facility. It may also be suitable for an ancillary retail / food and drink use at the front of the building with a community / leisure use to the rear. Its previous use, scale and internal layout lend itself as an alternative site for the Gillingham Hub (section 5.5) venue and it is not adjacent to any residential properties. The site does not currently provide any parking and careful thought is required to manage drop-off arrangements (e.g. for taxis).


If options to reuse the existing building were exhausted, redevelopment would be acceptable in principle. This may enable a more active frontage onto the service road at the rear of the Co-op and pedestrian link to Balmoral Gardens. The front elevation is of considerable architectural merit and should be retained as part of any proposal.

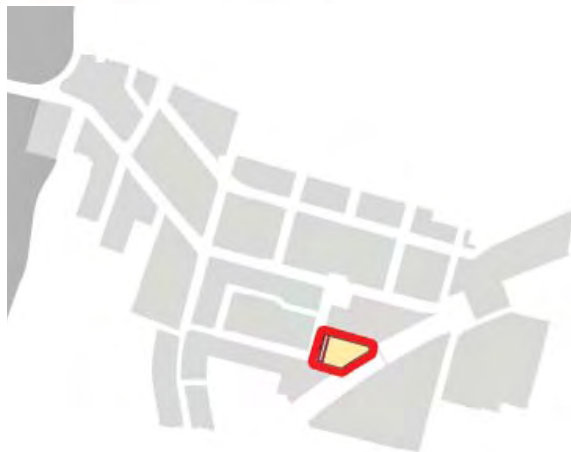
5.12.2 Issues

- Viability of new leisure / community uses
- Provision of drop-off / loading area
- Potential options for redevelopment

5.12.3 Summary

- Land Uses: leisure / community venue; retail / food and drink (ancillary to main use)
- Scale: as existing (3 storeys)
- Access / Servicing: as existing from Green Street
- Parking: n/a
- Public realm commitments: Balmoral Gardens (5.7); Town Square (5.3)

 Leisure/Community



5.13.1 Description

This is an allocated housing site in the Medway Local Plan (2003) and its short term redevelopment will continue to be encouraged in line with the planning brief prepared for the western end of the town centre. Currently the sites represent gaps in the urban fabric. Planning permission for residential development was granted for part of the site in March 2007.

The Mill Road site has potential for frontage onto both Mill Road and Fox Street, positively contributing to the Conservation Area. Mill Road is the dominant elevation and 3-4 storey development is considered appropriate, perhaps with apartments or mews houses enclosing a courtyard as shown in the diagram and townhouses of 2-3 storeys fronting onto Fox Road. The smaller Fox Road site will require careful design to provide a corner response to the junction with Jeffrey Street and respecting the amenity of adjacent houses. Parking requirements should be met on site.

5.13.2 Issues

- Balancing residential units with parking
- Environmental improvements to key junction

5.13.3 Summary

- Land Uses: residential
- Scale: 2-4 storeys
- Access / Servicing: as existing from Mill Road / Fox Street. Parking: on site
- Public realm: West End Linkages (5.8)

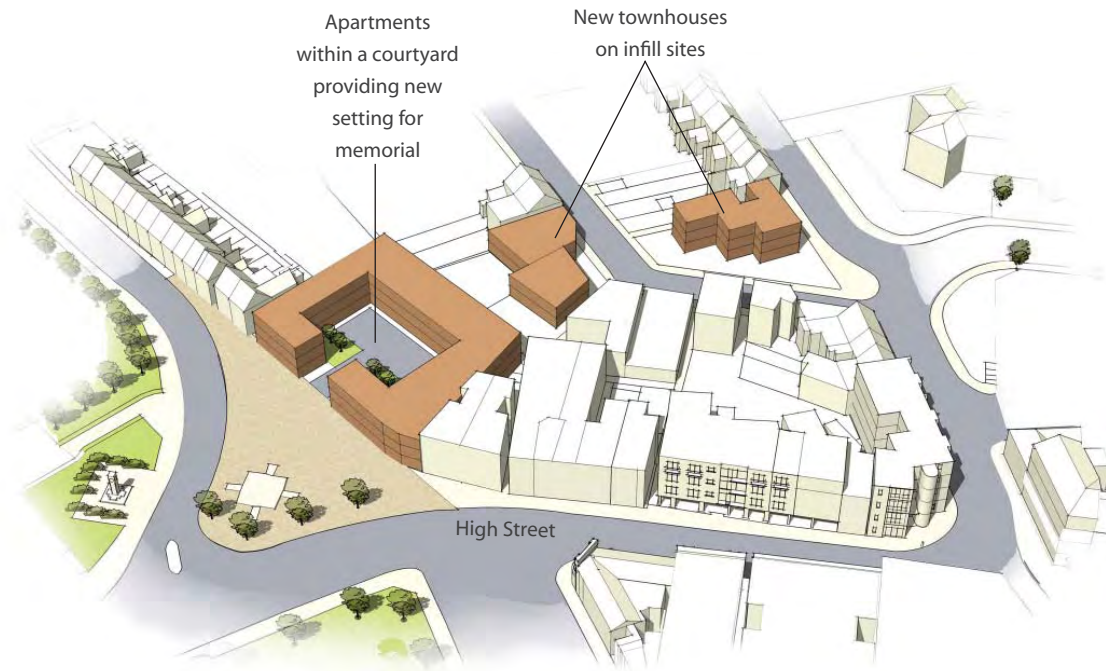


Fig 5.16 Mill Road / Fox Street

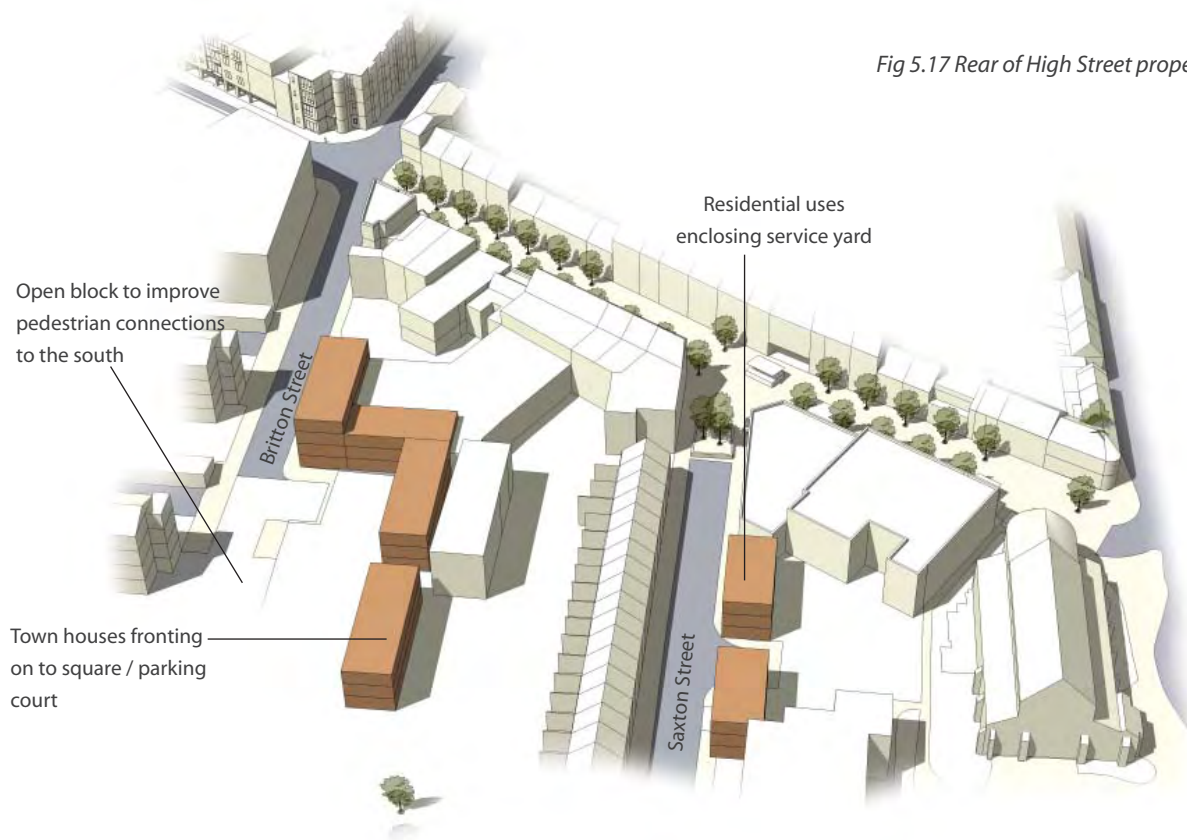




5.14.1 Description

These two backland sites currently contain service yards that are suitable for infill residential development subject to maintaining satisfactory service facilities for the High Street businesses they serve. Infill development would reinforce links from residential areas to the High Street and improve the feeling of safety and security generally. 2-3 storey development is considered appropriate to the backland location. Due to the restricted nature of the sites, parking provision may need to be reduced from current standards and this may favour certain forms of residential use with reduced parking requirements (e.g. retirement or student accommodation).

Fig 5.17 Rear of High Street properties



5.14.2 Issues

- Assess servicing requirements of commercial uses
- Relate scale to High Street and adjacent residential areas

5.14.3 Summary

- Land Uses: residential
- Scale: 2-3 storeys
- Access / Servicing: retain servicing to High Street shops accessed from Britton / Saxton Street
- Parking: n/a. Restrict car ownership or control through tenure
- Public realm commitments: West End Linkages (5.8)

5.15.1 Description

These areas, identified on the Framework Plan as the town centre fringe, will continue to play a supporting role for the town centre for the foreseeable future. What the Framework envisages, in the longer term, is for pressure for conversion of sites into non-town centre uses, for example employment or residential. There is no objection in principle to this process continuing, since core retail and service functions will remain on the High Street. This process would enable environmental improvements to be made, for example:

- Reinstating front garden boundaries to properties on Canterbury Street;
- Providing off-street parking to the rear of properties, accessed via an archway from the main street (only applicable if sites are redeveloped); and
- Creating better relationships between residential and non-residential uses.

Business decisions will of course be left to choice of individual landowners. A future LDF policy change could result in removing the local centre destination for Canterbury Street however this would be subject to statutory public consultation. Existing policies on environment and land use can manage the process of change.

5.15.2 Issues

- Potential removal of local centre designation to Canterbury Street

5.15.3 Summary

- Land Uses: retail / services, residential conversions / infill
- Scale: 2-3 storeys
- Access / Servicing: as existing
- Parking: additional off-street parking to be provided in new development; front gardens to be reinstated

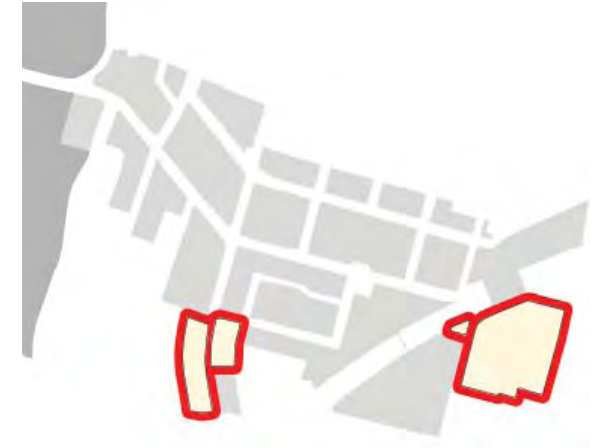


Fig 5.18 Town Centre Fringe areas

6. Phasing & Delivery

6.1 Phasing Principles

6.1.1 Phasing Principles

We have considered the need for phasing of the proposals which is likely given the extent of development and environmental improvements. The following diagrams set out three suggested stages based on priorities over a 10-year period however the Framework should respond flexibly to opportunities as and when they arrive. Some larger and complex projects (e.g. the Core Retail site) may be initiated early but take time to complete. Most projects will need to be preceded by more detailed design and feasibility studies and where necessary seeking funding sources.

6.1.2 Balancing Parking Numbers

Crucial to effective phasing will be balancing town centre parking at different stages of the process. Initially there would be some spaces lost through development of the Jeffrey Street and Littlewoods car parks in Phase 1 however the review of the parking / charging strategy should balance the extra demand on other spaces. Once the Retail Core site is developed, there will be extra spaces and an opportunity to review demand and supply of town centre and residents' spaces.

6.1.3 Outputs

For each phase approximate floorspace for different land uses is recorded. This is based on indicative capacity studies only and each site will need to be tested through detailed design and planning. Taken together the phases represent approximately 7,000 square metres of retail, 300 extra public car parking spaces, 4,750 square metres of office space, 2,250 square metres of leisure use, a new PCT of 2,000 square metres and some 200 new homes. It is likely this would be supplemented by other initiatives independent of the Development Framework.





Fig 6.1 Illustrative model showing key town centre projects

6.1 Phasing Principles

6.2 Phase 1



Phase 1 - Indicative Schedule

- Supermarket - 3,750sqm gross
- New / Improved Retail - 3,175 sqm gross
- Office - 4,750sqm gross
- Health Centre - 2,000sqm gross
- Residential - 100 dwellings approx.
- Public Car Parking -200 spaces net

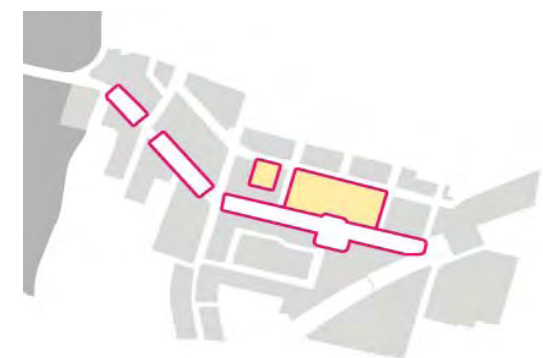
Fig 6.2 Illustrative model showing Phase 1

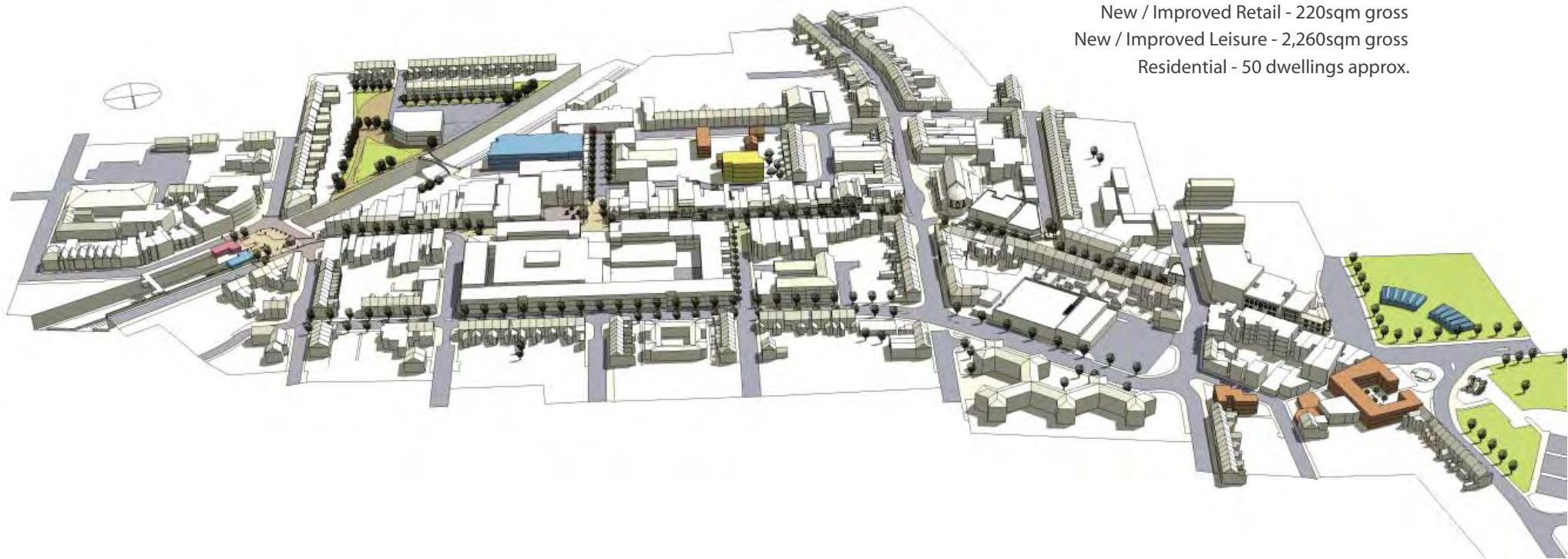
6.2.1 Phase 1

A clear priority is an ambitious first phase, to signal positive change in the town centre, undertake 'good housekeeping' and achieve some early wins.

6.2.2 Key Outputs

- Retail Core Site and Town Square – site assembly
- Disposal of Jeffrey Street Car Park and development of student accommodation
- New LIFT Health Centre in Balmoral Gardens
- High Street tree planting, environmental improvements and events
- Resolve operational issues – street environment, security
- Review of market management and design
- Review of parking charging linked to reallocation of some on-street parking spaces to residents' parking





Phase 2 - Indicative Schedule

New / Improved Retail - 220sqm gross
 New / Improved Leisure - 2,260sqm gross
 Residential - 50 dwellings approx.

Fig 6.3 Illustrative model showing Phase 2



6.3.1 Phase 2

Stage 2 progressively extends the town centre offer with a focus on leisure and environmental improvements.

6.3.2 Key Outputs

- Station gateway and improvement
- Gala Bingo site
- Development of Gillingham Hub and West End Linkages
- Jeffrey Street Environmental Improvements
- Development of Mill Road / Fox Street site (could be Phase 1)
- Redevelopment of BT Switch Centre

6.4 Phase 3



Phase 3 - Indicative Schedule

Residential - 50 dwellings approx.

Parking - 100 spaces net (if BT site redeveloped for parking and Balmoral Garden redeveloped for housing)

Fig 6.4 Illustrative model showing Phase 3

6.4.1 Phase 3

Stage 3 envisages spin-off developments in backland locations and town centre fringe areas, consolidating Gillingham as a sustainable and desirable town centre location.

6.4.2 Key Outputs

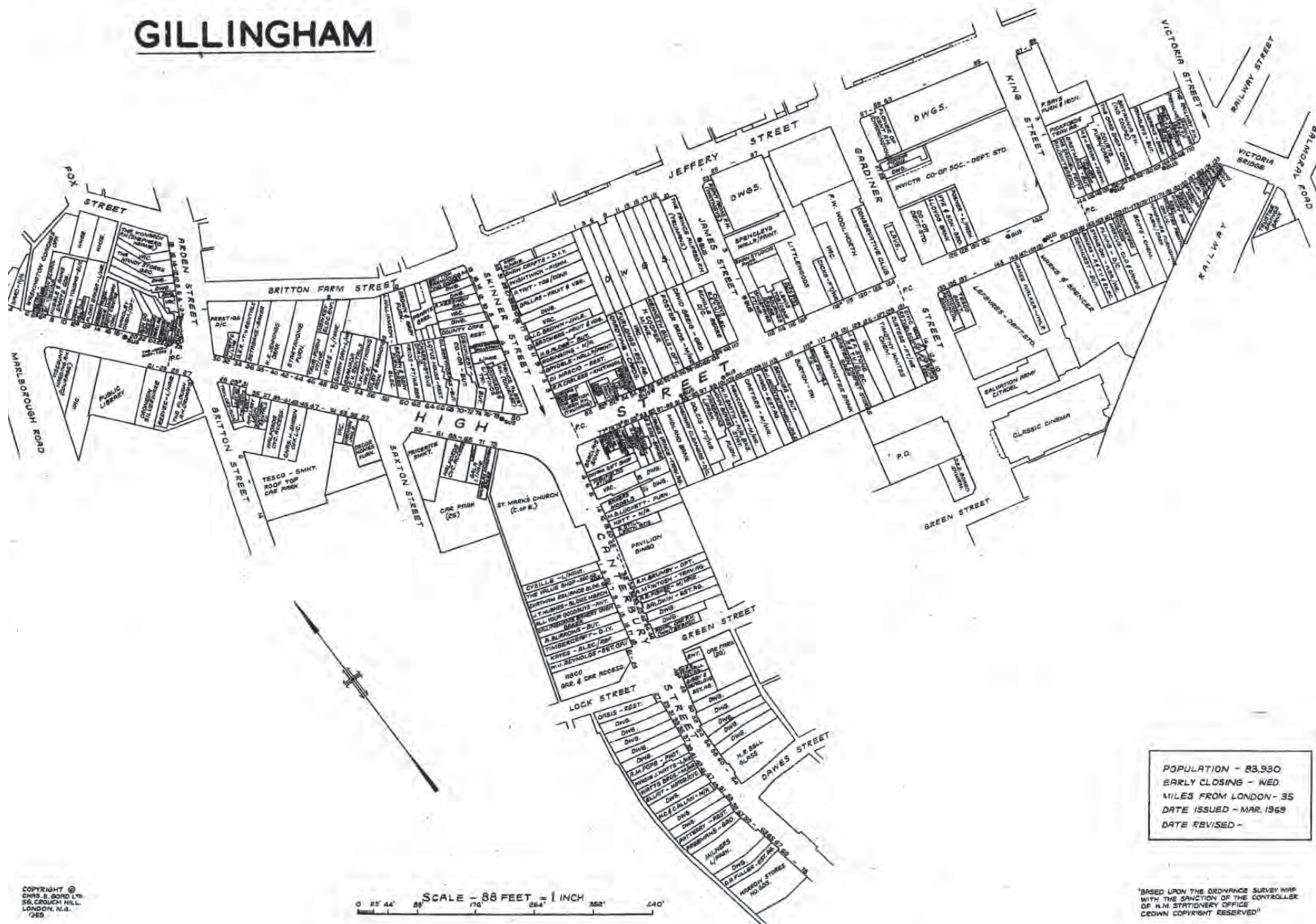
- Further town centre development (Somerfield? Redevelopment of Gala Bingo site?)
- Evolution of town centre fringe areas
- Residential development in Balmoral Gardens (if alternative town centre parking developed)



Appendix

Appendix A: 1969 GOAD Plan

GILLINGHAM



COPYRIGHT ©
CHRIS E. BOND LTD.
56, CROUCH HILL,
LONDON, N.E.1
7JG

SCALE - 88 FEET = 1 INCH
0 25' 44" 50' 75' 100' 125' 150' 175' 200' 225' 250' 275' 300' 325' 350' 375' 400'

POPULATION - 83,990
EARLY CLOSING - WED - 35
MILES FROM LONDON - 35
DATE ISSUED - MAR. 1969
DATE REVISED -

*BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP
WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER
OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE
CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED

GILLINGHAM (KENT)

SURVEYED: 6 JUNE 2005

experian



goad
www.goadplans.co.uk
www.goadplans.co.uk
0800 091011
goad@goadplans.co.uk

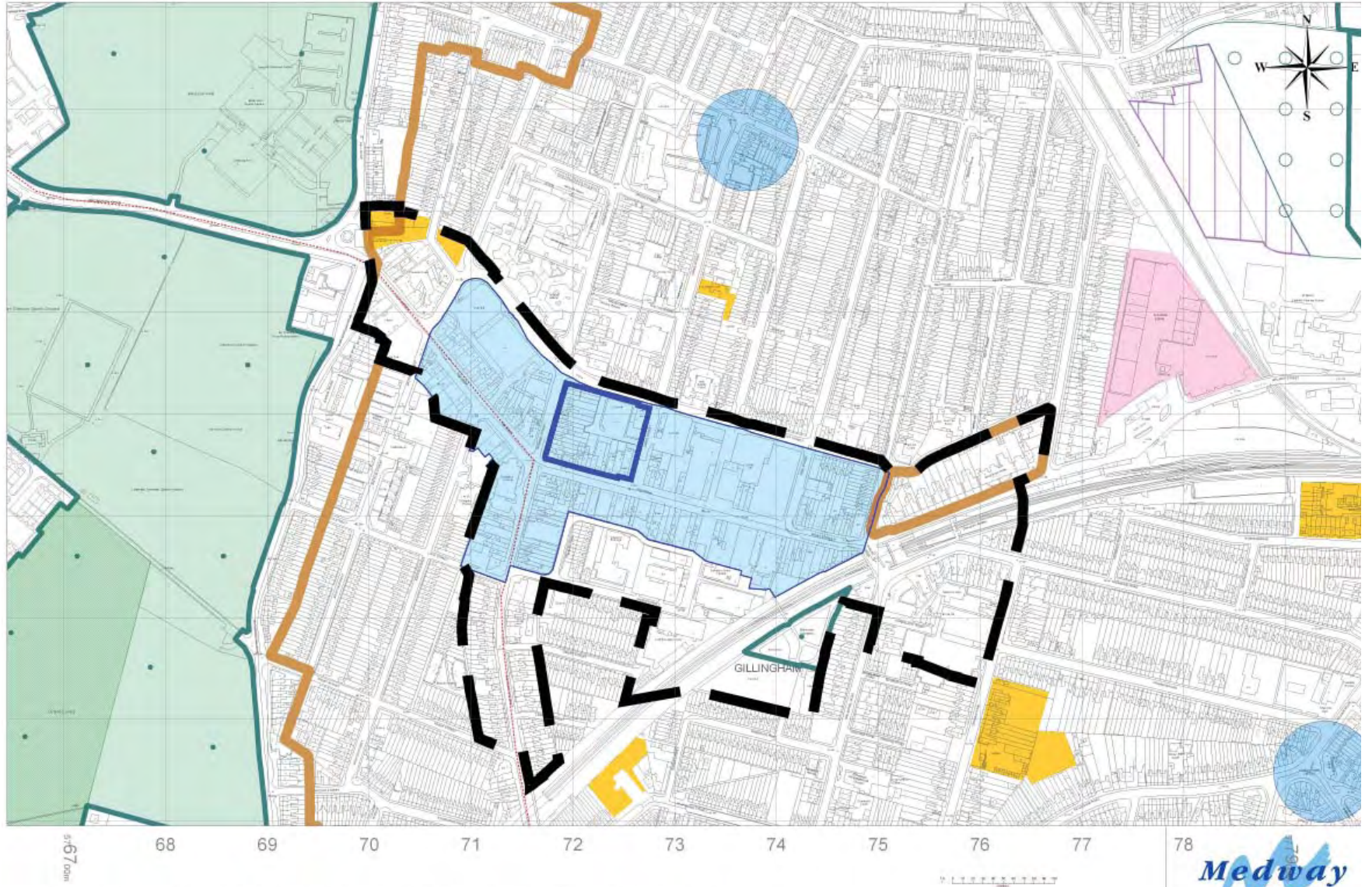
SCALE 1:1000

COPYRIGHT AND CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE
This plan is the property of Goad Plans and is not to be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of Goad Plans. All rights reserved. © Goad Plans 2005.

goad
plans.co.uk

Appendix B: 2005 GOAD Plan

Appendix C: Medway Local Plan Extract 2003



Reproduced from/based upon the Ordnance Survey Mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. ©Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Medway Council Licence No. 100024225, 2006

Scale: 1:5000 at A4 16/02/06



