

WATFORD HIGH STREET (NORTH) AND CULTURAL HUB MASTERPLAN

The Masterplan is to be developed,
defining and focusing this area as a place for
“People, Learning, Music, Culture and Living”



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We apologise for any errors or omissions in the above list and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints of this report.

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Watford High Street (North) and Cultural Hub is the next stage in the transformation and improvement of Watford town centre, and is part of an ongoing evolution since the 12th Century when it gained its Royal Charter to hold a market.

Our aim is to regenerate the north part of the town centre between West Herts College South and where Clarendon Road joins the High Street to provide a destination where education, cultural and leisure uses are concentrated in a much improved setting which reflects the heritages assets. To give further vitality to support the wider area we will provide much needed family homes.

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The Avenue
car park

The Library

The Town Hall
and Colosseum

Rickmansworth
Road

The Parade and
High Street

Sainsbury's

CitiPark Gade

Exchange Road
Flyover

Exchange House

Upton Road

A 4178

Rosslyn Road

INTRODUCTION

Background - Setting the Scene

Watford Town Centre is a vibrant and lively heart to the town which, despite being only 16 minutes from London by train, has maintained its pre-eminent position in the SW Herts sub-region and is not suffering from the decline facing many town centres up and down the country.

However there are some areas in Watford which look tired compared with the recently rebuilt area around the Intu Centre. The High Street is very long and seems to decline northwards where the Exchange Road flyover crosses. This area has lower end retail, but it also has independent restaurants and a number of pubs and nightclubs. The numerous charity shops and some vacant properties indicate a location on the margins of viability. However the area does have space for good quality outdoor seating for the restaurants and public houses in the area, creating a sense of pavement café culture that could be further enhanced. The space around The Pond hosts a number of events every year including an ice rink at Christmas, a beach in the summer and outdoor film screenings.

Beyond The Pond, the current configuration of the Rickmansworth Road cuts across the traditional street layout, with a pedestrian/cycle subway that leads to West Herts College, Watford Leisure Centre, Watford Central Library, The Colosseum Theatre, a Public House in a listed building, two NHS clinics, the Town Hall and a surface level car park.

There is a need to revitalise this wider area so as to help reinforce Watford's role as a key destination. At present many of the buildings north of Exchange Road require attention when compared with buildings further south along the High Street. Introducing more housing and encouraging business to invest will help the area to be transformed.

Change will provide an opportunity to enhance the setting of the historic buildings and the quality of the public realm, with vibrant new spaces framed by high quality buildings. There is also a need to change the 'fortress town' created by the multi-lane ring road which acts as a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists trying to access the centre.

The key objectives for the Watford High Street (North) and Cultural Hub are to increase footfall, develop a stronger retail, daytime and evening economy whilst enhancing the heritage assets in the area to complement the southern part of the High Street. More people living in the area will create more activity, attract more visitors and provide customers for more and better facilities, creating a virtuous circle of investment and improvement.

Planned area of the Masterplan Study

The masterplan study is to include the area from West Herts College extending South to where Clarendon Road joins the High Street. It is to encompass the following:

- The Town Hall and its car park
- The car park behind Watford Leisure Centre
- The Avenue Care Park and gyratory road

- Watford Central Library and the area adjacent to it
- The underpass under Rickmansworth Road
- The pedestrian route comprising the Parade and the High Street that runs from the under pass as far as where Clarendon Road meets the High Street
- New Watford Market and surroundings
- Area behind the High Street around the BT Telephone Exchange building

Masterplan Area



HERITAGE ASSETS

Much of the masterplan area sits within the Civic Core Conservation Area. Any proposals need to ensure that redevelopment improves the appearance of the conservation area and allows a better appreciation of the heritage assets.

Within the conservation area there are a number of Nationally Listed and Locally Listed buildings which will require careful assessment to ensure that any impacts to them are minimised, that their long term use and occupancy is secured and that their setting is enhanced.

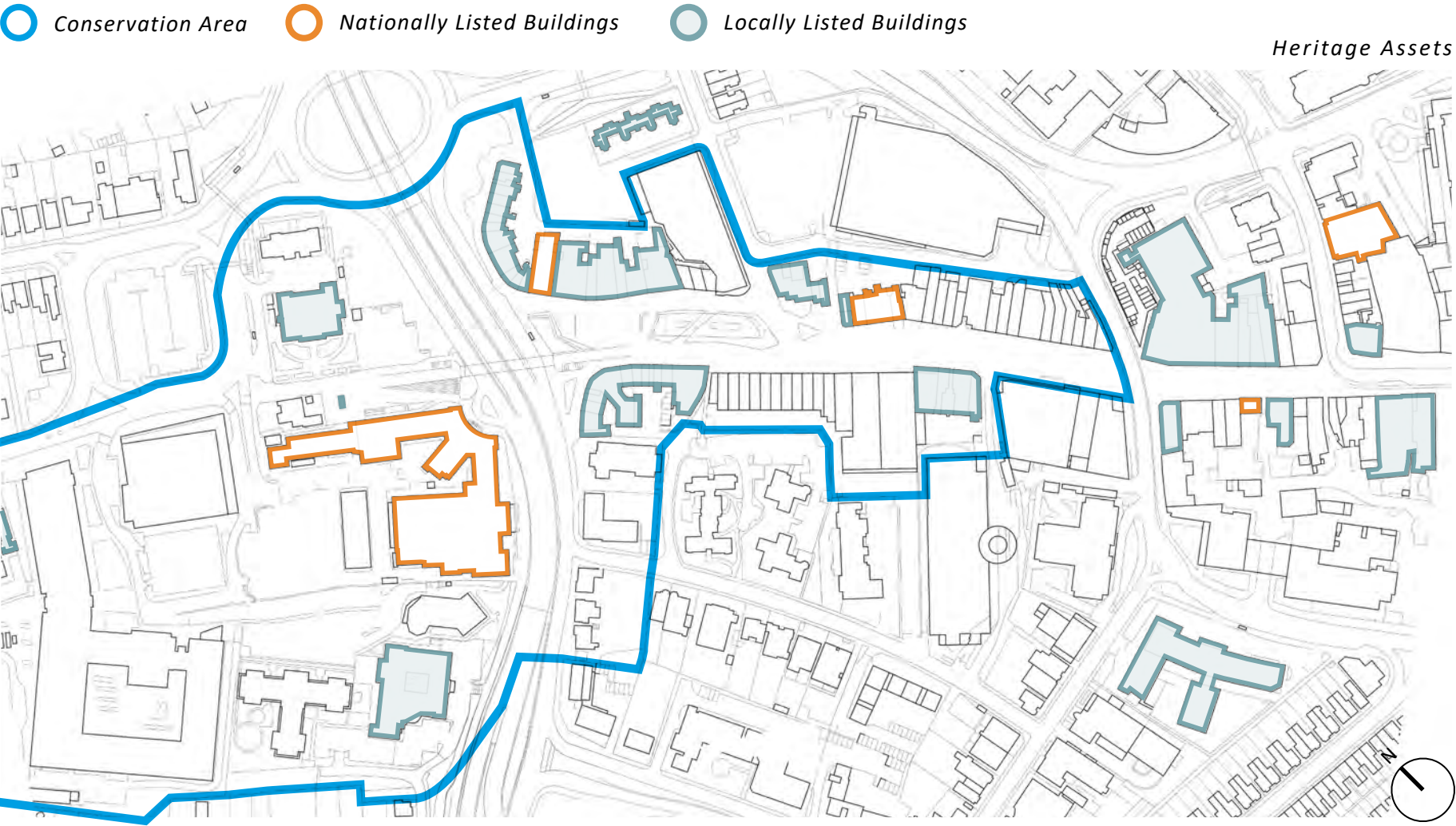
The most prominent Nationally Listed buildings are The Town Hall and The Colosseum along with the Peace Memorial. There two further Nationally Listed buildings on The Parade including Monmouth House and numbers 151-153.

The most prominent Locally Listed building is Watford Central Library along with a mix of Locally Listed buildings on both the west and east side of the north end adjacent to Rickmansworth Road.

The Town Hall and subway in the 1970s



Albert Road South being redeveloped in the 1970s



The Parade before the flyover was added



POLICY CONTEXT

NPPF

Chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stresses the importance of ensuring the vitality of Town Centres, and the role they play at the heart of local communities. The southern part of the High Street has been revitalised with the development of the Intu centre, now we need to look at the future role of the area along The Parade.

Watford Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy 2006 - 2031, Adopted 30th January 2013

The future of the town centre played a key part in the Core Strategy, and part of the section 'Our Vision for Watford' states:

3.1.4 Watford town centre will strengthen its regional role by developing further its vibrant mix of shops, offices, leisure and cultural activities, within a highly accessible pedestrian and cycle friendly environment. By 2031 the town will have extended its range of services and facilities further to provide activities for all age groups; a 'family-friendly town centre' at all times.

Part of the section 3.2 Strategic Objectives states in Strategic Objective 1: A family-friendly town centre:

3.2.1 To create a town centre, accessible by a range of transport modes, with a variety of services and facilities that provide for the needs and aspirations of residents and visitors of all ages, interests and backgrounds including high quality shopping and leisure and cultural activities supported by restaurants, cafés and bars, and an attractive accessible and safe environment.

Four Special Policy Areas (SPAs) were identified for key parts of the Town because of planned regeneration or other issues to be addressed. SPA1 covers the Town Centre and stated:

- The northern end of the Primary Shopping Area, the focus would be on improving the quality and identity of the public realm
- Ensuring that opportunities are provided for an increased range of retail and leisure activities for people of all age groups, interests and backgrounds.

Watford Local Plan Part 2 (withdrawn)

Whilst this document was withdrawn in 2017 following legal advice, it sets out further thinking for improving the Town Centre and is a direction of travel for the new emerging Local Plan.

Conservation Areas Management Plan 2013:

The section on the Civic Core identifies a number of enhancement opportunities, some of which have been achieved but others remain relevant to the North Hub Masterplan including:

- Public realm improvement between the Town Hall and Library
- Land to the north and east of Watford Central Library needs improving
- Surface level car parks in the northern part of the area harm the amenity of the Conservation Area
- The flyover that forms the southern boundary of the Conservation Area is a negative feature

Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2017 (LTP4)

As the Local Highways Authority, the County Council has an important role in facilitating the Masterplan. Policy 8 Active Travel – Cycling of LTP4 seeks to deliver a step change in cycling in the town. Watford is identified as a Cycle Infrastructure Improvement Town in the documents and also as a Sustainable Travel Town.

SW Herts Growth and Transport Plan

The document discusses enhanced cycleways and facilities from the area around the edge of Watford town centre, enhanced public realm and cycling in the town centre and developing pedestrian and cyclist priority over motorised vehicles.

Supplementary Planning Documents

A number of Supplementary Planning Documents have been published by Watford Borough Council which the implementation of the Masterplan will need to take account including:

- Shop Front Design Guide 2013
- Watford Streetscape Guide 2013
- Skyline - Watford's Approach to Taller Buildings 2016
- Cycle Parking 2017
- Residential Design Guide 2016
- Commuted sums for the provision of affordable housing 2017
- Conservation Areas Management Plan 2013

Watford Town Hall



CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Watford Cultural Strategy 2018-2025 seeks to enhance the role of Watford as a creative and cultural destination, and the High Street (North) and Cultural Hub redevelopment and accompanying enhancement schemes will help realise that as part of a wider transformation of the town centre.

Wider improvements will provide opportunities for creative enterprise, cultural provision and participation for our local communities, business and visitors which will, in turn, strengthen Watford’s appeal as a creative destination.

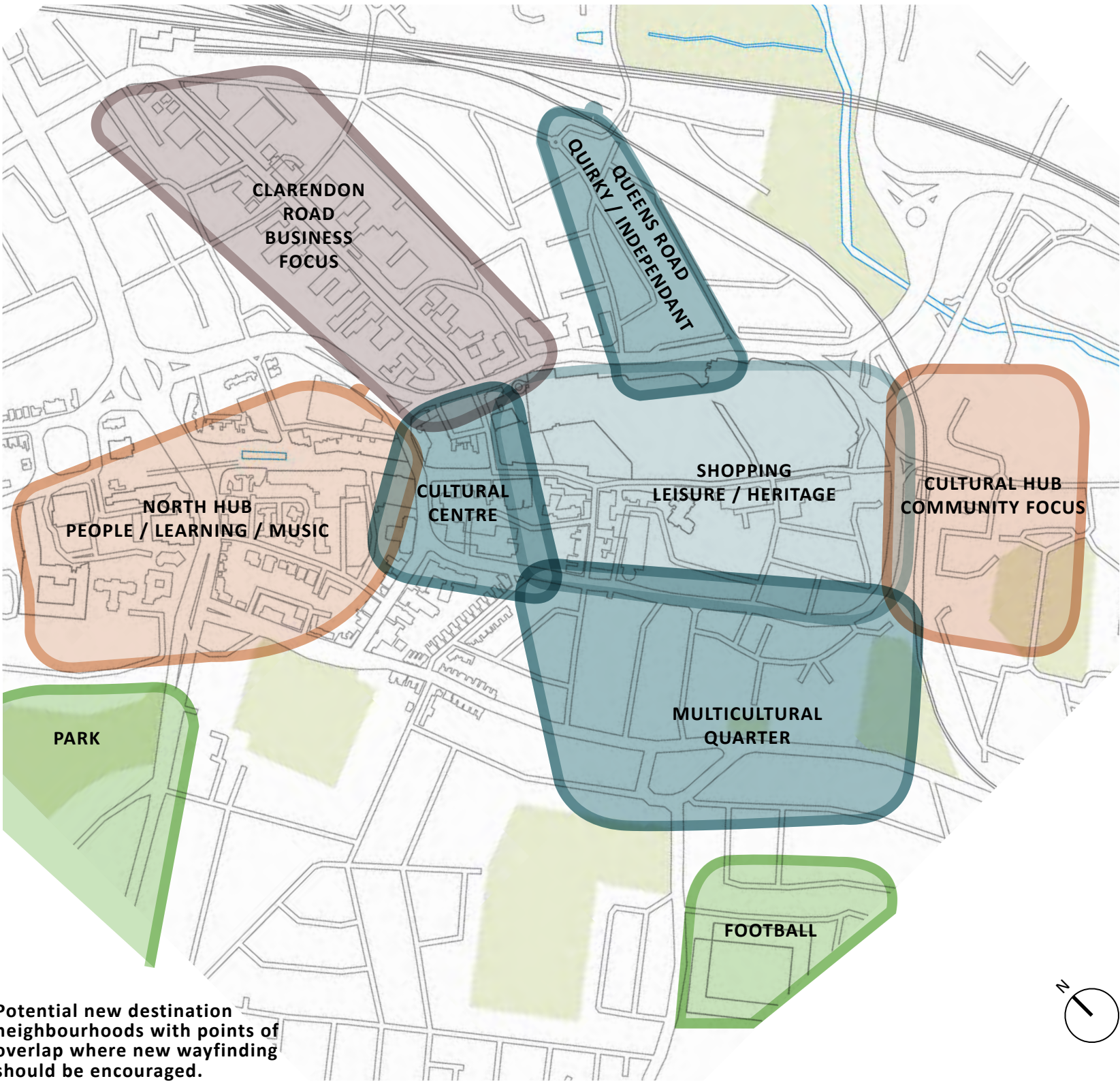
Outdoor screening, Watford town centre



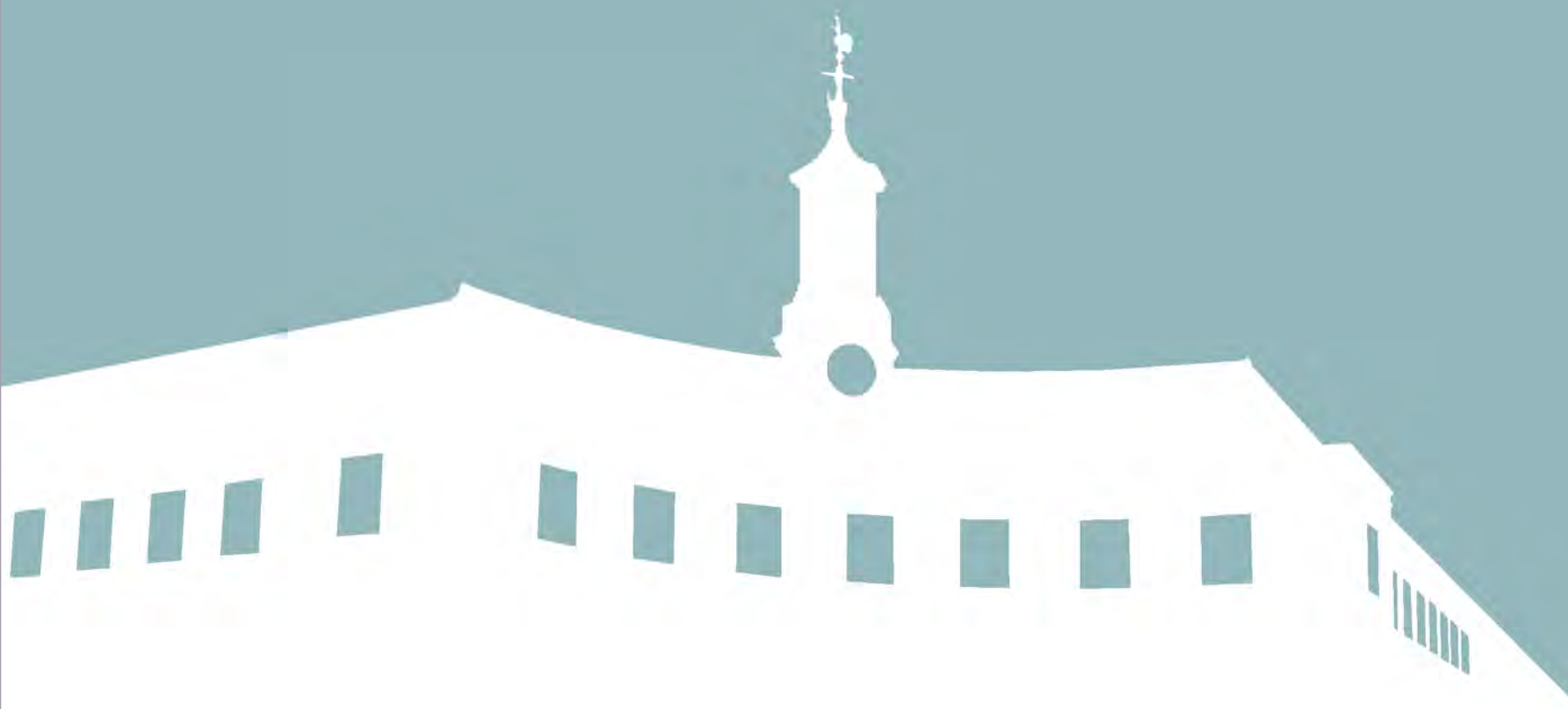
Climbing activities, Watford town centre



Watford Cultural Strategy Diagram



ANALYSIS & VISION



AREAS OF INTEREST

There are a number of key areas which have been identified as showing potential for redevelopment and improvement, and the Masterplan has grouped them under Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 3 will be part of a long term approach to transport improvements (involving car, cycle, pedestrian and public transport), some of which could start as soon as Phase 1 is underway, but it may take a lot longer for all benefits to be realised. Some of this needs more work on feasibility and will need extra funding.

Phase 1 includes predominantly public sector owned land which can be assembled relatively quickly. These sites are more likely to be completed in the next five years. Some of Phase 2 will begin at the same time Phase 1 work is progressing. However Phase 2 is more complex with multiple land ownerships and more sites, and is therefore likely to take 5- 20 years to be completed.

Phase 1 includes:

1. Rickmansworth Road subway
2. The Town Hall
3. Land adjacent to Watford Library
4. The Avenue Car Park/Gyratory
5. The Avenue Clinic
6. The surface level car parks and offices behind the Town Hall/ The Colosseum including the other NHS clinic

Phase 2 includes:

7. The area around Sainsbury's and Iceland
8. The Studios row of buildings
9. Gade House
10. Watford Telephone Exchange
11. Wellstones Car Parks
12. Exchange House
13. Watford House Lane and New Watford Market

Phase 3 includes:

14. A new crossing on Rickmansworth Road to replace the subway

1 - Rickmansworth Road subway



2 - The Town Hall car park

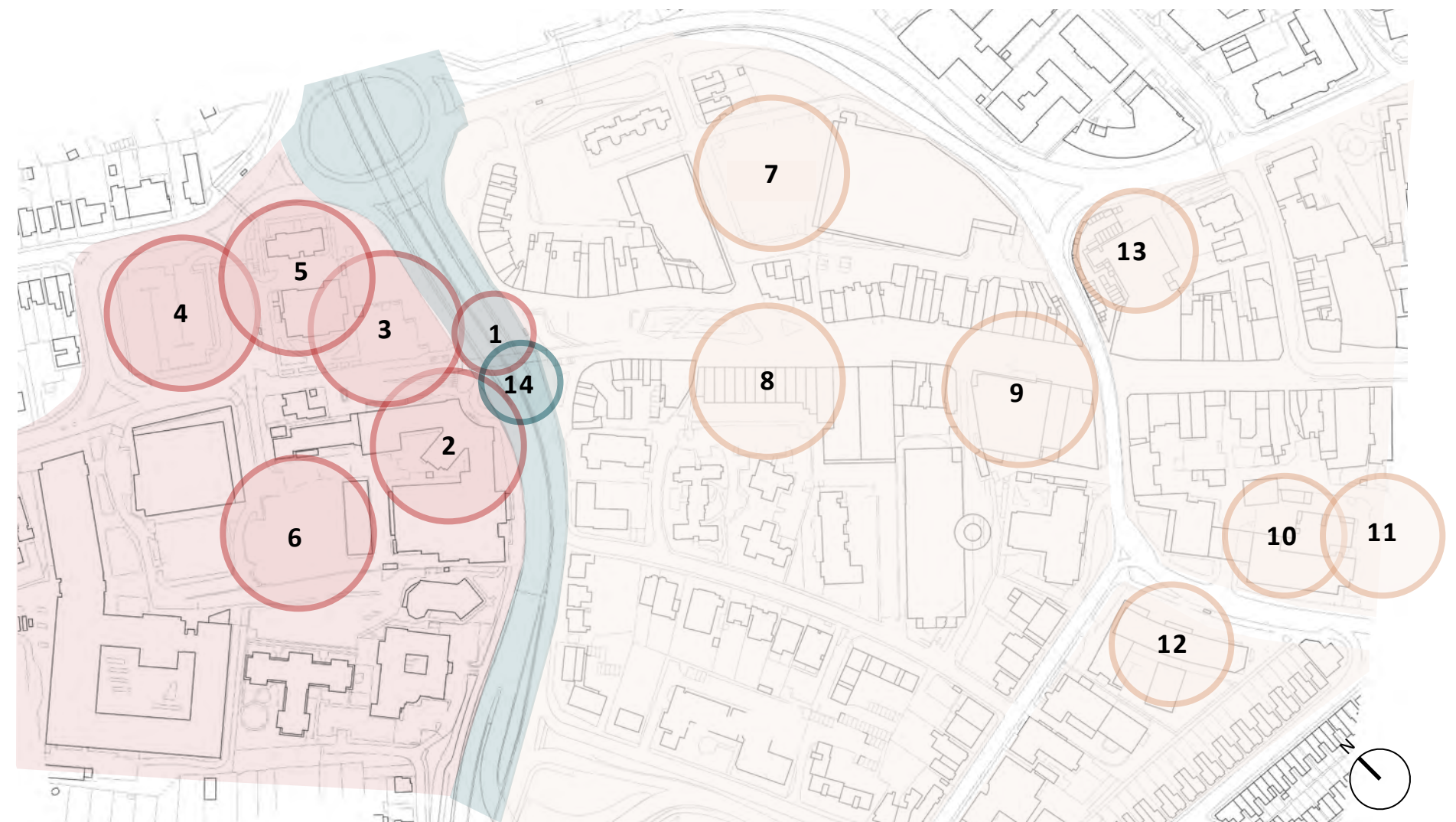


4 - The Avenue car park / Gyratory



○ Phase 1
 ○ Phase 2
 ○ Phase 3

Areas of Interest



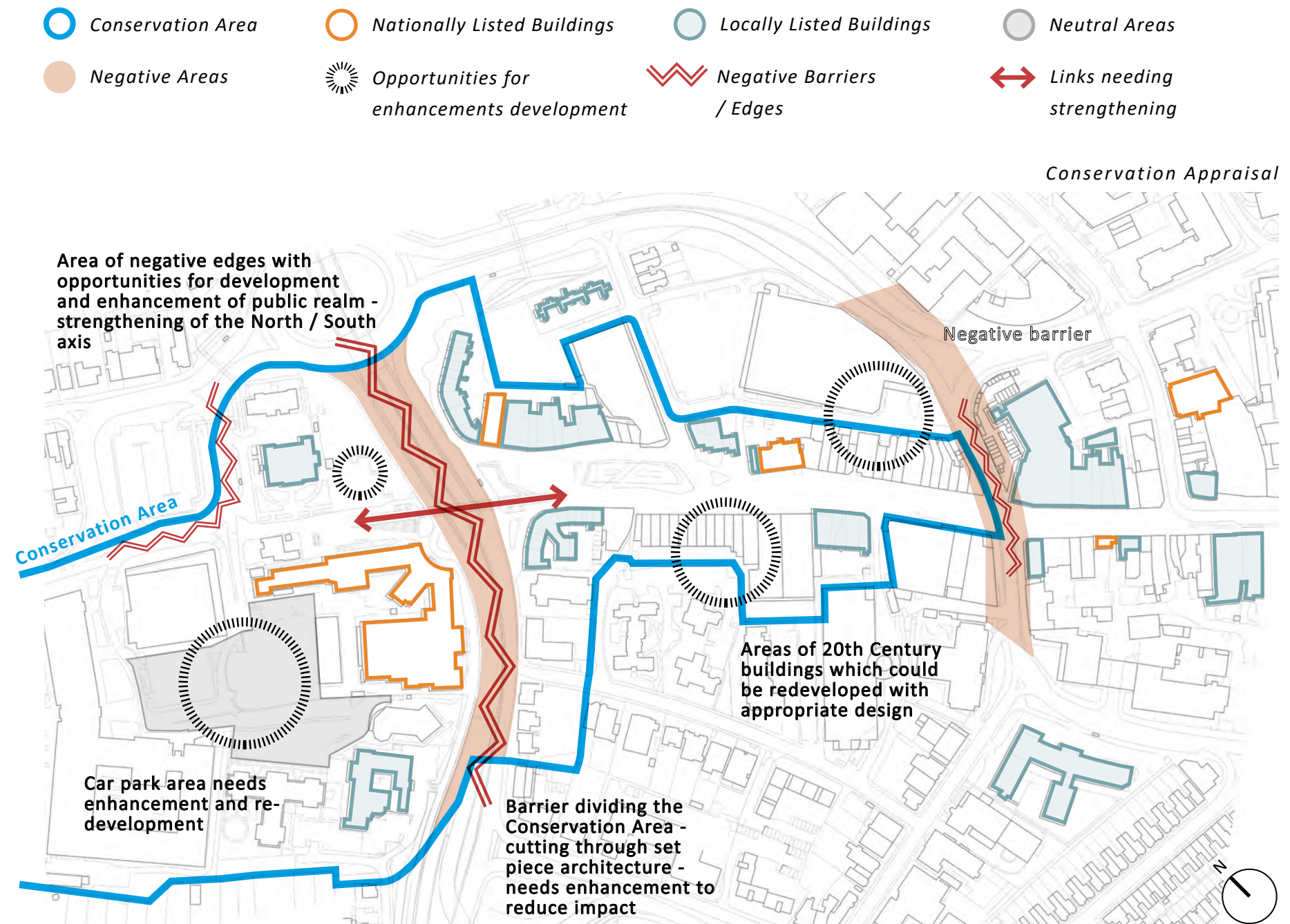
CONSERVATION AREA AND LISTED BUILDINGS

The Civic Core Conservation Area appraisal, updated in 2015, identifies areas which are considered to have a negative to neutral impact to the Conservation Area's significance. The most intrusive feature is the Rickmansworth Road dual carriageway, closely followed by the A411 Exchange Road flyover, both of which are considered to cause harm to the appearance of the Conservation Area. There are areas which are considered to be neutral, including the car parks where some of the harm has been ameliorated by landscaping and a number of the twentieth century buildings on The Parade.

The appraisal notes that the northern part of the Conservation Area has undergone significant changes since the area was designated in 2001 but this has been done in a piecemeal fashion. This has resulted in there being no coherent approach to the public realm which looks tired and unloved. A more holistic approach is recommended which seeks to reinforce the north south axis route which is a key element of the Conservation Area and reflects the original street pattern in the area.

The Masterplan represents an opportunity for a heritage led approach to the public realm and to the scale and massing of new buildings within the area. The Masterplan should seek to secure the following heritage benefits:

- The removal of the surface level car parks
- Improvement or removal of the pedestrian underpass
- Downgrading of dual carriageway to single carriageway or enhancement of the dual carriageway to improve connectivity across this barrier
- Enhancement of the public realm north of the dual carriageway to a standard comparable with the area to the south
- Strengthening the north –south axis route through the northern section of the conservation area
- Ensuring any new buildings reinforce the character of the conservation area.



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Strengths

- Parts of Town Centre with sub-regional draw
- Existing cluster of community and leisure facilities
- Good public transport access
- Opportunities for more leisure use next to Watford Colosseum
- Opportunities for enhanced leisure offer
- Opportunity for enhanced leisure centre
- Accessible by public transport and cyclists
- Strong demand for office space and residential in Watford
- Good buildings with heritage value

Watford Market



Weaknesses

- Severance by Rickmansworth Road
- Poor footfall and declining uses
- Unpleasant underpass and cycle/pedestrian conflict
- Anti-social activities/drinking issues
- Poor pedestrian connectivity through many areas
- Constrained by the A411 Ring Road
- Northern area is poor relation to the Intu/High Street
- Tired 1960s and 1970s buildings that detract from streetscene
- Road dominated areas creating severance and noise
- Car parks dominate large areas
- Few family areas

The flyover severance



Refurbished public realm - The Parade



Rickmansworth Road severance



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Opportunities

- Create a family friendly area of the Town Centre
- Provide better pedestrian and cycle links
- Make better use of land
- Supply new residential uses and see more people active in the area
- Enhance setting and experience of heritage buildings
- Add to the variety of experience of the Town Centre
- Improve eating and leisure offer
- Bring vacant properties into use
- Chance to replace poor quality buildings
- Ability to create new jobs
- Improve early evening economy
- Possibility of installing Combined Heat and Power Systems

Cycle paths



Threats

- Delivery access to Colosseum and noise issues
- Fragmented landownerships make comprehensive redevelopment difficult
- Land assembly problems may need Compulsory Purchase Order
- Recent investment in some parts of the town centre could undermine other parts of the town
- Uses such as Sainsbury's need to be retained while replaced
- Developers may proceed with individual planning applications
- Unable to resolve transport issues

Watford Colosseum



The Parade



Sainsbury's Site



THE VISION - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Watford High Street (North) and Cultural Hub is to be developed, defining and focusing this area as a place for “People, Learning, Music, Culture and Living”

Aim

Our aim is to regenerate the northern part of Watford town centre by creating a new quarter and providing a destination where education, cultural and leisure uses are concentrated in a much improved setting which reflects the area’s heritage assets. To further enhance the vitality of the area by incorporating new homes within the heart of the scheme.

Objectives

- To regenerate the area around the Town Hall to make more effective use of the land and create a new vibrant quarter
- To develop, sustain and enhance heritage assets
- To review other underused sites within the North Hub area for development potential
- To review The Parade area as far as the High Street
- To review the gyratory road arrangement to provide an alternative traffic arrangement to reconnect the Avenue Car Park area to a new pedestrian area in front of Watford Leisure Centre
- To look at ways of improving the connectivity across the Rickmansworth Road for pedestrians and cyclists - possibly removing the vehicle and pedestrian underpasses

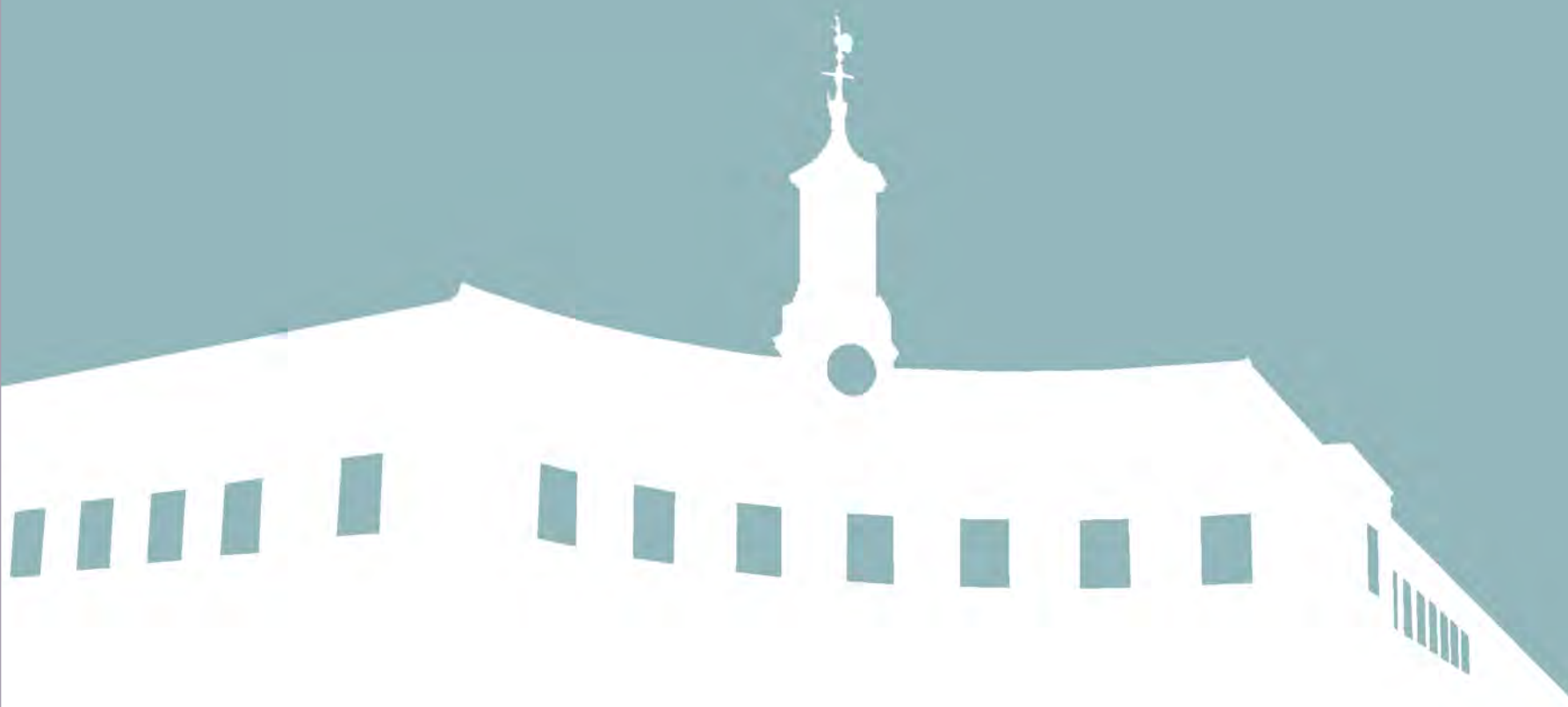
Existing view of Town Hall and Library



View of Town Hall and new museum from Peace Prospect



OPPORTUNITIES - AREA PROPOSALS



PHASES 1, 2 & 3 INTRODUCTION

Phase 1

During Phase 1 a network of new public open spaces will be created, along with more cafes and other attractions. New public art and tree planting will be introduced, along with cycle parking and cycle hire stands and improved public signing. Opportunities for improving the north part of The Parade will be looked at to achieve a better mix of uses and bring vacant buildings and upper floors into productive use.

Phase 2

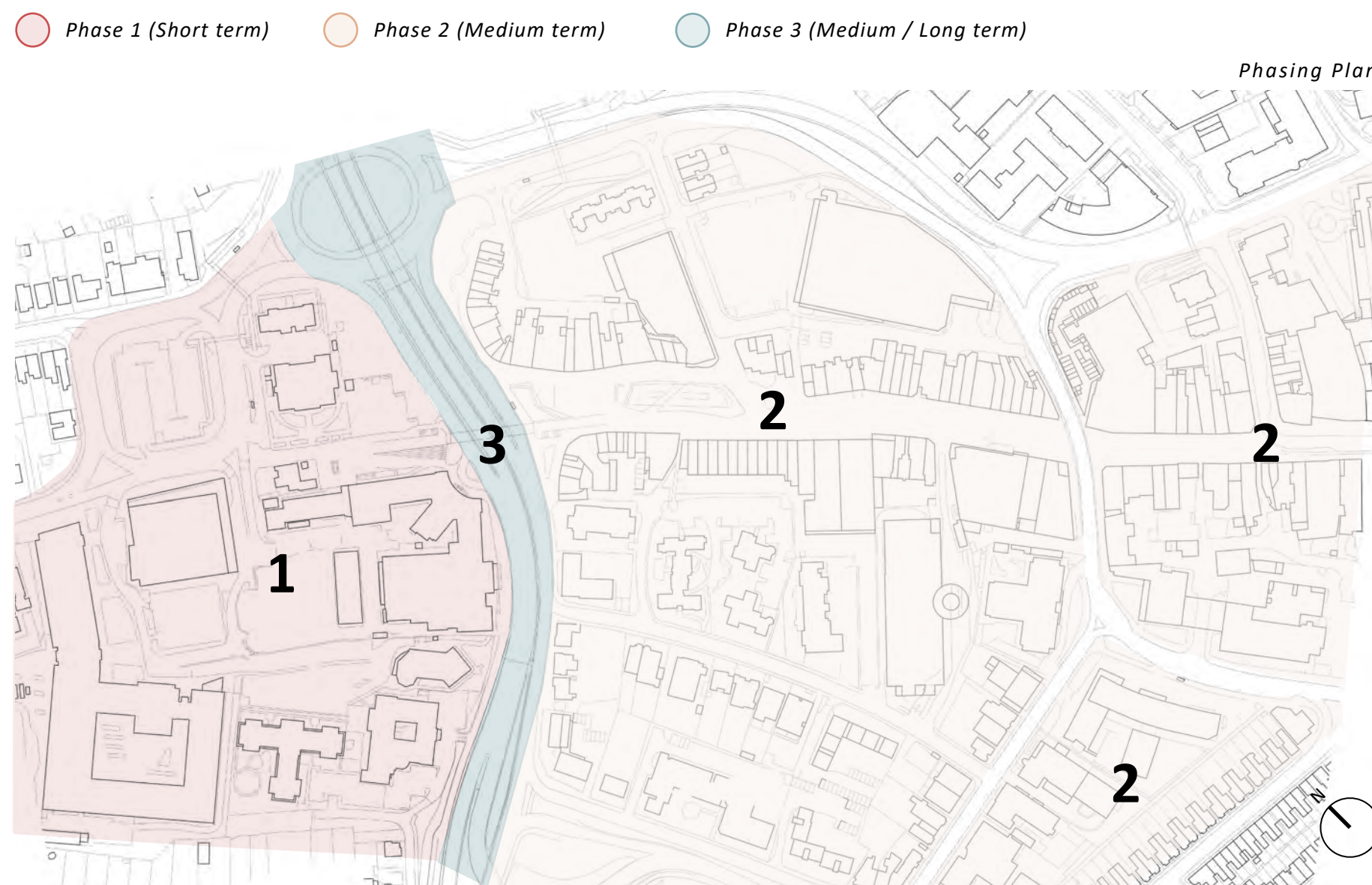
In Phase 2 six to eight discrete sites (depending on how the land is assembled) will be redeveloped and enhanced. Most of these sites are in private ownership and subsequently are more difficult areas to bring forward than the Phase 1 area which are mostly in public sector ownership.

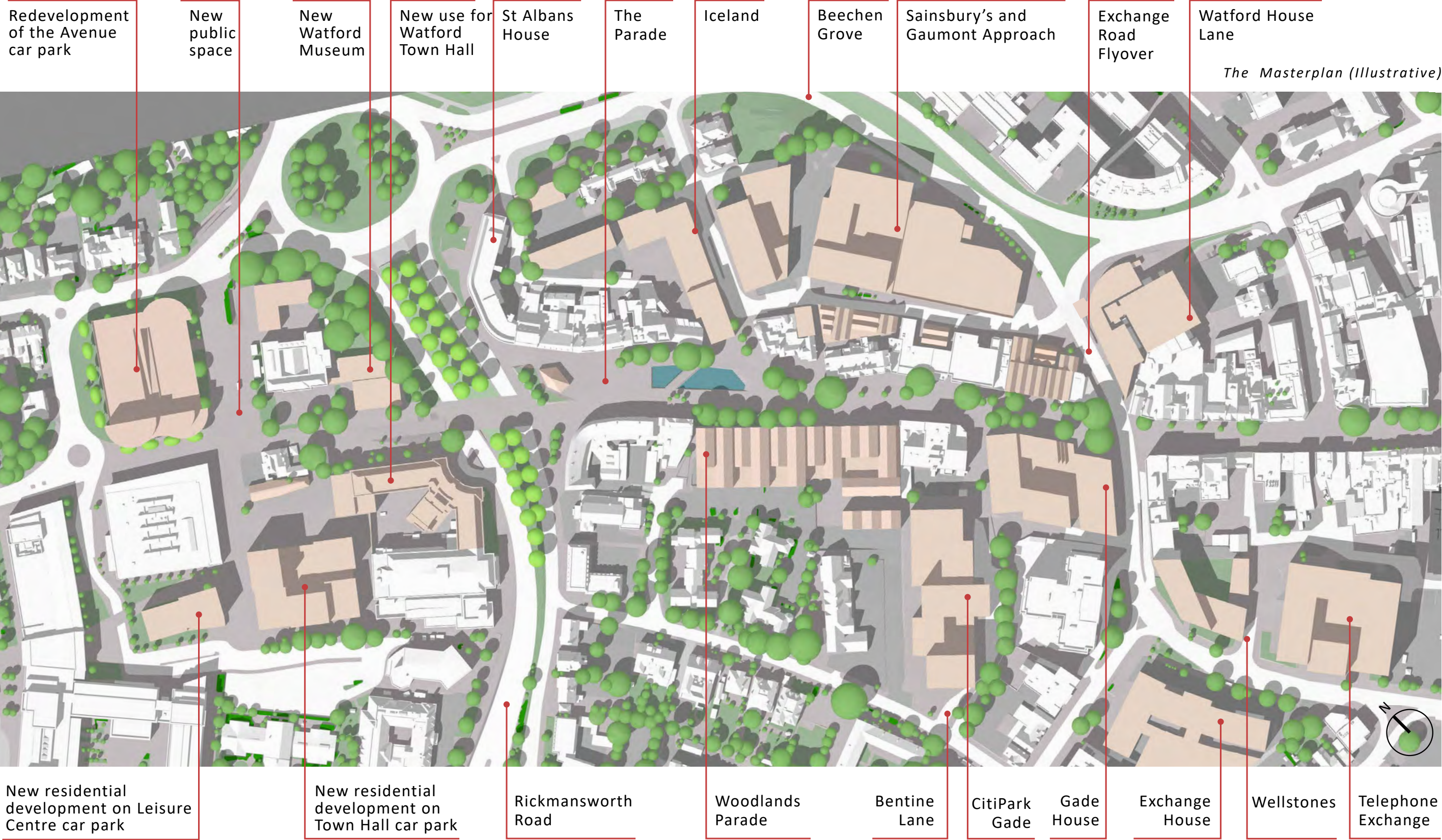
New landmark buildings with high quality design reflecting and enhancing the Conservation Area are needed on many of the redevelopment sites. Existing views of key buildings are to be enhanced, and better signage for pedestrians will be put in place. Movement corridors for pedestrians and cyclists within and outside the core area of the town centre will also be enhanced.

Phase 3

Phase 3 involves more long term and challenging transport improvements within the masterplan area and the surrounding roads that feed into the area. This could involve a new surface level crossing on Rickmansworth Road.

Further measures such as bus priority routes will be considered as part of a long term aim to make the town more sustainable. The introduction of wider pavements will allow pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooters to co-exist and move around more freely. 20 mph zones will also be phased in as part of a town wide initiative.





PHASE 1 TOWN HALL AREA

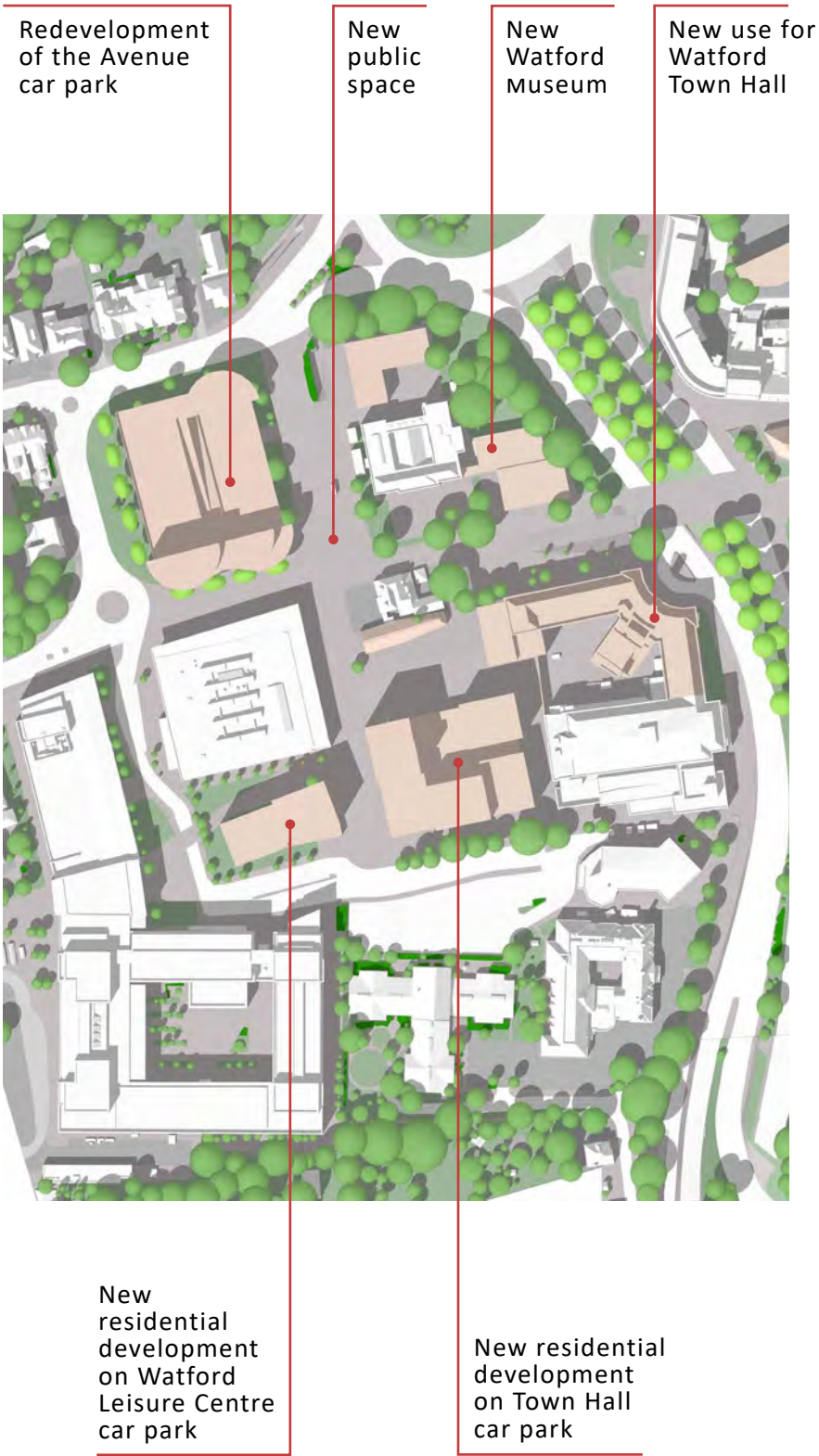
The Town Hall is a prominent listed building completed in 1939. However it no longer meets the requirements for modern office use. Significant alterations would be required to achieve a modern office environment to create the most efficient working environment for the Council. Alternative uses have been considered and the one which would be most appropriate and will have the least impact on the building is a 4 or 5 star hotel.

The introduction of modest dormer windows in the roof space would allow bedrooms to be introduced and a small extension to the side where the current prefabricated extension is located would be necessary to create a new entrance for the hotel. It is envisaged that the entrance from Rickmansworth Road would be retained allowing separate access. The conference and function room areas could still be used by the Council for key meetings and events but would also be made available for weddings and conferences. A number of public buildings and former town halls in the UK have already been converted, greatly enhancing the buildings and ensuring the building's longevity.

Proposed view of Town Hall area



Phase 1 Masterplan (Illustrative)



Ariel view of proposed Phase 1 (Illustrative)



PHASE 1 LEISURE CENTRE AND CIVIC CENTRE CAR PARK SITES

Phase 1 will also involve a number of changes of use, demolition, redevelopment and public realm enhancements creating an enhanced and improved area of the Town Centre.

The car park at the rear of the Town Hall and existing office block will be redeveloped as a residential area with a strong focus on family sized homes and play areas for children. Green roofs and other sustainability features will be incorporated, including solar panels and water saving technologies. General improvements to the public realm and appearance of the rear of the buildings will be needed. It is also important that pedestrian and cycle routes are retained and new ones created.

Existing car park



View of new residential buildings and square



Aerial view of proposed redevelopment of car park sites



PHASE 1 THE LIBRARY, MUSEUM, GALLERY & COMMUNITY SPACE

To reinforce the learning and cultural elements in this area, Watford Museum will be relocated from the Lower High Street into a bespoke building sited next to the Library. It will have a community space, gallery, multi-use rooms, café and other features, making it part of a learning, cultural and leisure based centre-point in the area.

The NHS Clinic behind the Library could be combined into a row of buildings facing the redeveloped Avenue Car Park, providing other office uses and active fronts facing a shared pedestrian, cycle and public transport area.

More cycle parking will be needed along with cycle hire facilities as part of the town wide initiative to bring cycle hire to Watford (see Cycle Routes section).

View of Watford Library and new Museum



Proposed view towards War Memorial



PHASE 1 THE AVENUE CAR PARK/GYRATORY

The Avenue Car Park is encircled by a one way system of roads with car park users having to use an underpass, where antisocial activities happen. Furthermore it is not attractive nor feels safe for evening users of The Colosseum or Watford Leisure Centre in winter.

The Council is looking at closing part of Hempstead Road changing from one way to two way traffic circulation. The closed area would become a new shared surface for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport access. These changes to the road network will still maintain access to existing properties. Many existing properties in the area also need access for servicing and deliveries, and provision for these activities will be included and ideally improved.

Current road layout showing one way traffic circulation



Proposed road layout showing two way traffic circulation



PHASE 1 THE AVENUE CAR PARK/GYRATORY

The Masterplan includes proposals to increase public parking provision at The Avenue Car Park. The car park will be redeveloped, two storeys underground and three above and will offset losses of car parking behind the Town Hall and Leisure Centre, and there will be street level access rather than a subway.

The design of the scheme on and adjacent to the current Avenue Road car park will need careful consideration. As the first things visitors from the north see when coming into Watford first impressions count. It is important that the buildings are of good design with green walls and stylish architectural features/ treatment of corners which soften the impact of large structures. The introduction of other uses will further help create a strong atmosphere in this location.

View of Hempstead Road and Avenue car park



Proposed development of the Avenue car park



PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ADJACENT TO THE PARADE

The proposals outlined here are indicative at present, but they set out an ambitious and long term programme of change for the town centre. They will not happen all at once and will require considerable effort from a range of partners to deliver.

The area around Sainsbury's is proposed for redevelopment, preferably with a new supermarket having an entrance onto The Parade. The new supermarket will make better use of the land with a mix of residential and offices uses above it and on land adjacent to it.

The area around Iceland and Pryzm could also be improved with taller buildings and improvements made to the rear of St Alban's House. Opportunities for play areas for children and car clubs for new residents will be encouraged.

A section of The Parade that includes Gade House and Woodlands Parade detracts from the streetscene and offers an opportunity for redevelopment and improvement of the Bentine Lane area to the car park which is currently an uninviting route to Rosslyn Road. The Gade Car Park is underused and could be reduced in size, with an office and residential redevelopment creating an active streetscene.

The area around Wellstones and Wells Yard, including Watford Telephone Exchange and the car park facing Exchange Road is a further area in need of improvement. Creating better pedestrian connections across the site from Marlborough Road along with a mix of office and residential development, and some small scale amenity areas will greatly transform the area. A key development opportunity will be replacing the Watford Telephone Exchange and creating a better 'edge' to the core of the town centre.

The corner of Upton Road and Exchange Road can also be redeveloped (the loss of the Locally Listed building would have to be justified in terms of benefits) with a mixed use scheme and cycle and pedestrian improvements to link up with the improved public realm.

The area around New Watford Market offers opportunities for redevelopment and could develop a more circular route for pedestrian movement rather than fizzling out at the end of the market. Watford House Lane could become part of a mews style street with more interest and retail/restaurant uses rather than a left over piece of land after the ring road cut through the original street layout.



PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ADJACENT TO THE PARADE

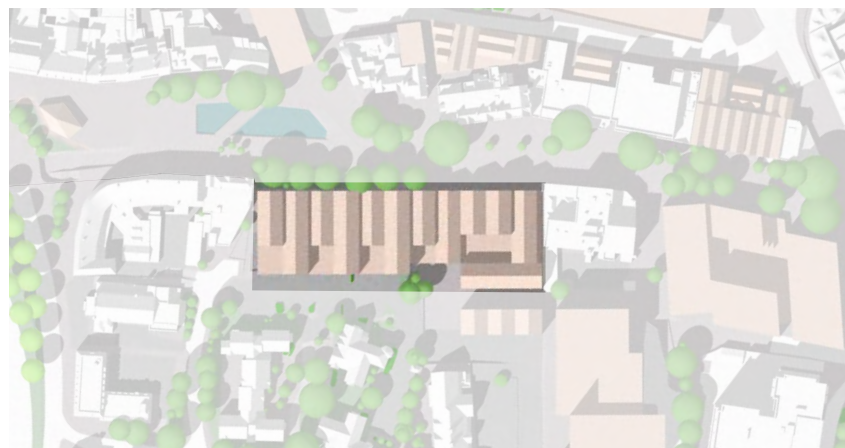
SAINSBURY'S / GAUMONT APPROACH

- Regenerate area to rear of shops
- Provide modern Sainsbury's store
- Place mixed use above the Sainsbury's Store
- Create public amenity space



WOODLANDS PARADE

- Poor quality post-war buildings detract from the potential, and attractiveness, of the Parade
- Replace with a more complex and visually inspiring streetscape
- Residential use on upper floors



AREAS SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET - WELLSTONES

- Regenerate shabby area off the High Street
- Relocate the Telecom building
- Improve pedestrian and cycle access through the area



ALBERT ROAD SOUTH

- Tackle eyesore area
- New residential and affordable housing
- Car club for new and existing residents
- New children's play area



BENTINE LANE / CITIPARK GADE

- Replace underused car park with a smaller one
- Provide new office or residential buildings
- Improve the unpleasant lane through the area
- Investigate making Rosslyn Road two way traffic



EXCHANGE HOUSE

- Opportunity to create a new landmark building on the corner
- Redevelop the traffic route
- Create public space opposite where traffic used to go



PHASE 3 RICKMANSWORTH ROAD CROSSING / SUBWAY

The Masterplan proposes addressing the barrier created by the Rickmansworth Road dual carriageway; by creating a new surface level crossing for cyclists and pedestrians and removing the current subway. This will give a much safer and more pleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists from the Hempstead Road to The Parade and will provide opportunities for higher quality public spaces fronted by the new uses in the area. There will be two key spaces and a new route to the entrance to college replacing the existing route used by many through the car parks.

The public realm will be finished to a high quality and include new street trees to provide shade in summer and pleasant environment in which to dwell and enjoy the cafes and other attractions in the area.

View of the proposed surface level crossing on Rickmansworth Road



Phase 3 (Illustrative diagram)



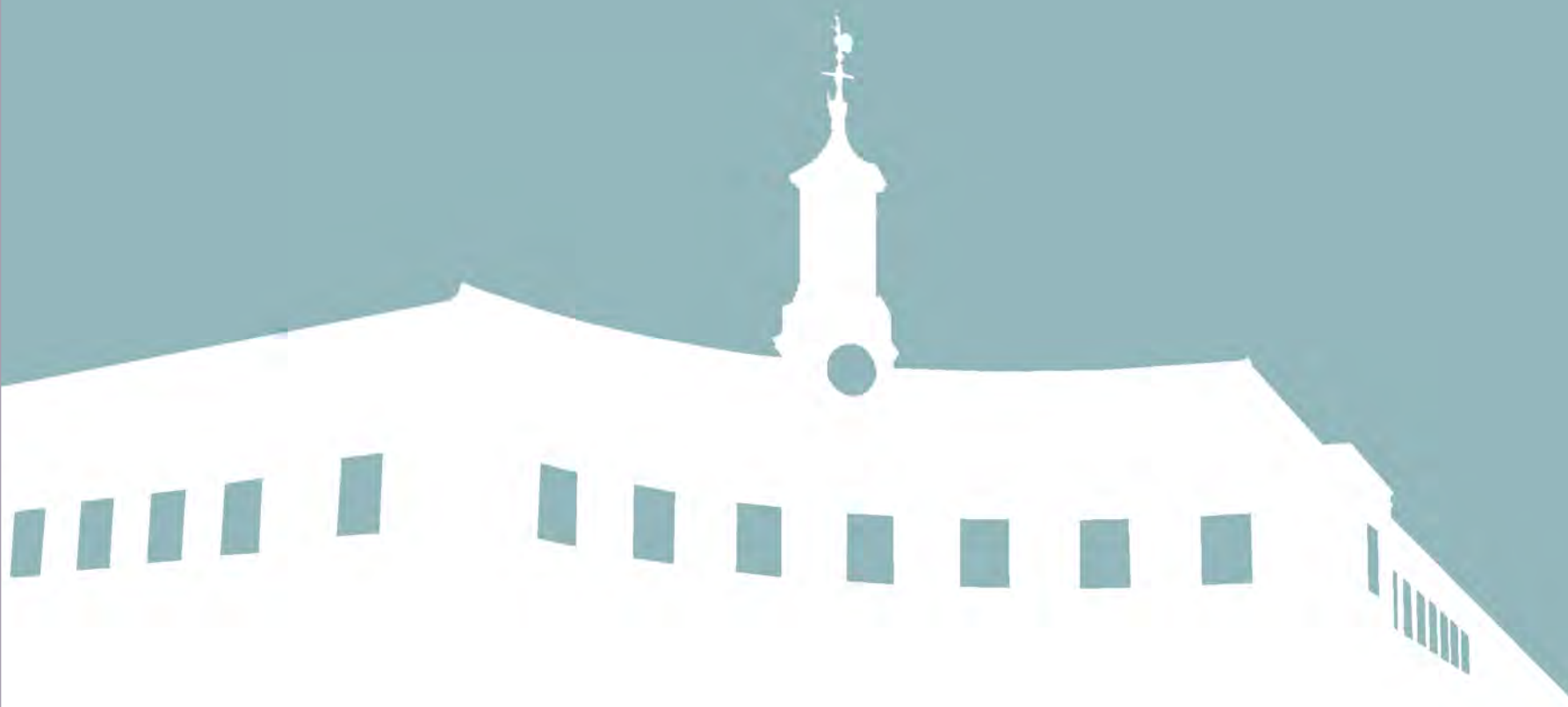
Current subway



The current subway and area outside Town Hall



PUBLIC REALM AND CONNECTIVITY



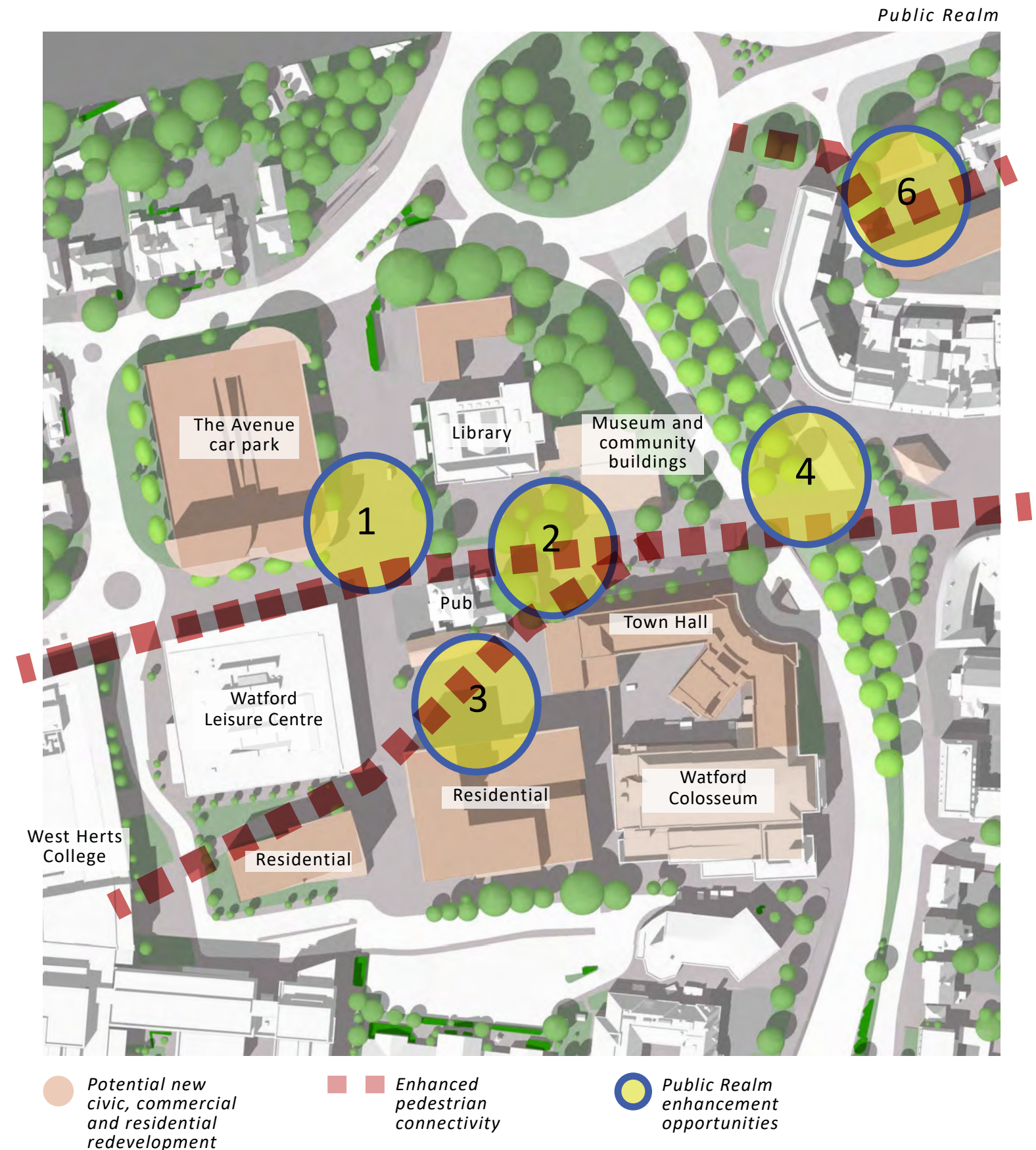
PUBLIC REALM

Although Watford is justifiably proud of having the highest number of parks with Green Flag status in Hertfordshire, the town centre is lacking in greenspaces. These can however be provided with more urban tree planting schemes, new small scale amenity spaces with sensory planting, small scale shrubs in the right locations, rose gardens, greenery along sustainable drainage systems, green roofs on buildings and living green walls instead of a row of bricks or concrete.

The aim is to provide a green thread running through the town centre, introducing a new series of public open spaces which connect with the existing green spaces surrounding the town centre. Other features including more seating for people to rest, new children's play areas, trim trails and similar will all be encouraged.

The following areas all offer opportunities for new public spaces and improved urban greenspaces;

- Part of the car park behind Watford Leisure Centre
- Part of the car park behind the Town Hall
- The access routes to Watford Colosseum
- The Town Hall and its service yard
- The rooftops of the Avenue car park
- The closed section of Hempstead Road gyratory system
- Watford Central Library and the area adjacent to it
- The pedestrian area of The Parade and the High Street
- The area behind the High Street around the Watford Telephone Exchange



PUBLIC REALM

Public Realm



Opportunities for public realm enhancements

1. New shared surface created by closing this section of Hempstead Road gyratory system- opportunity for active uses at ground floor of new buildings
2. Improved public space between Town Hall and Library – opportunity to improve setting of the War Memorial
3. New square – opportunity for people from adjoining buildings to use it
4. New surface level crossing – opportunity to improve the route for pedestrians and cyclists between the High Street and Town Hall area
5. Existing public space on The Parade – area for regular events and activities
6. New residential square
7. Upgrading of the environment on side streets connecting to The Parade and High Street

CYCLE ROUTES

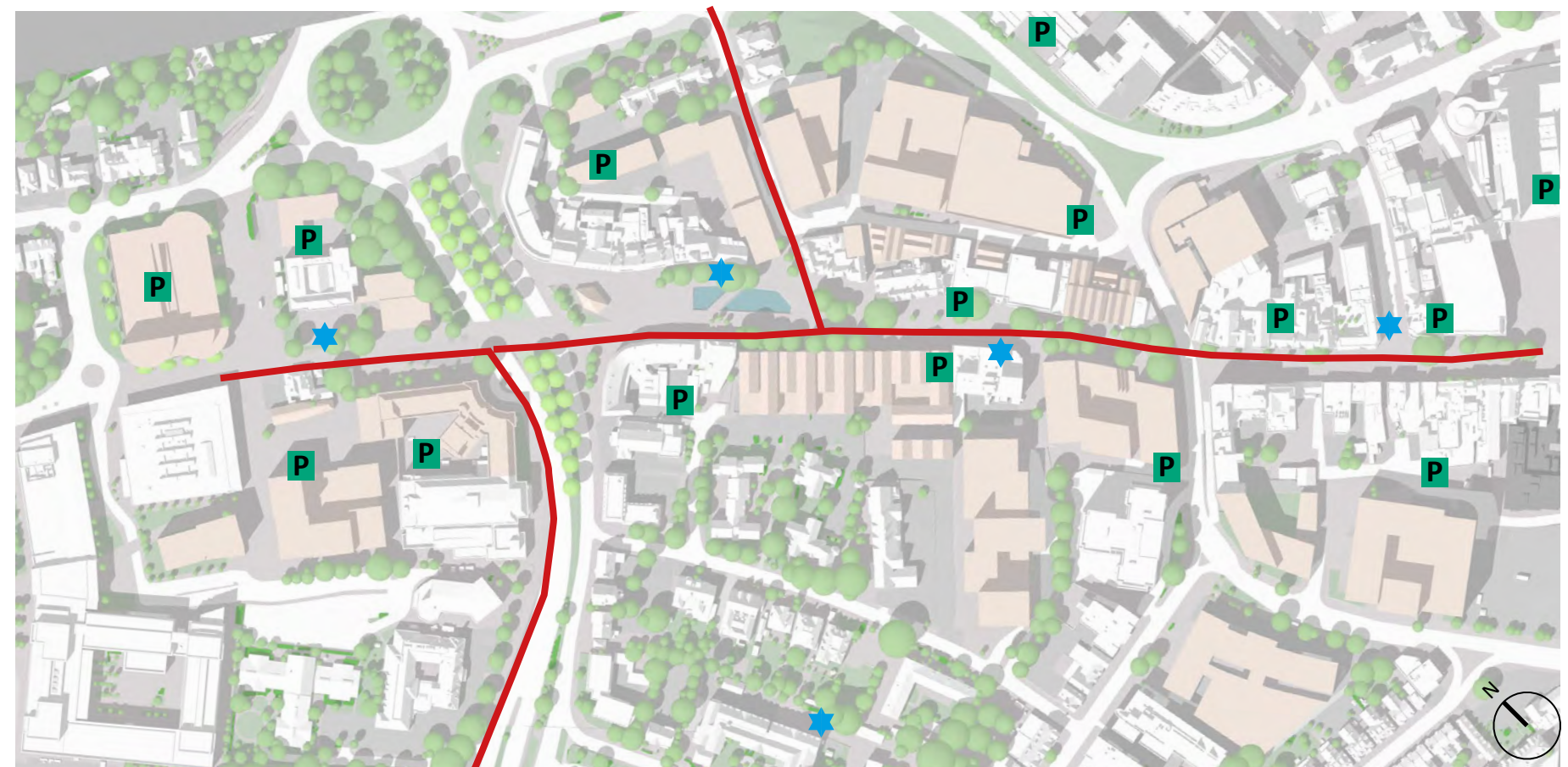
Cyclists share space with pedestrians in the town centre, however the road dominated traffic around Beechen Grove and Exchange Road impedes cycle and pedestrian movement and even makes it hazardous in a number of locations.

The NPPF is keen to see improvements in cycling as part of its strategy of supporting sustainable transport. A compact town with increasing amounts of people and congestion problems needs to reverse the car dominated principles of fifty years ago and encourage greener transport and new cycle links.

Encouraging cycling also has health benefits, however studies of people generally show a reluctance to cycle much due to feeling unsafe on roads. Zig zagging subways are another barrier where the comfort and speed of car users was deemed paramount. In the long term this can be tackled, but there are choices to be made where the ease of transport for the car is impeded, slowed and in some cases becomes subordinate to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

The Mayor of Watford is developing a Bike Share Scheme in the town, with cycles for hire on street, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Cycle Infrastructure

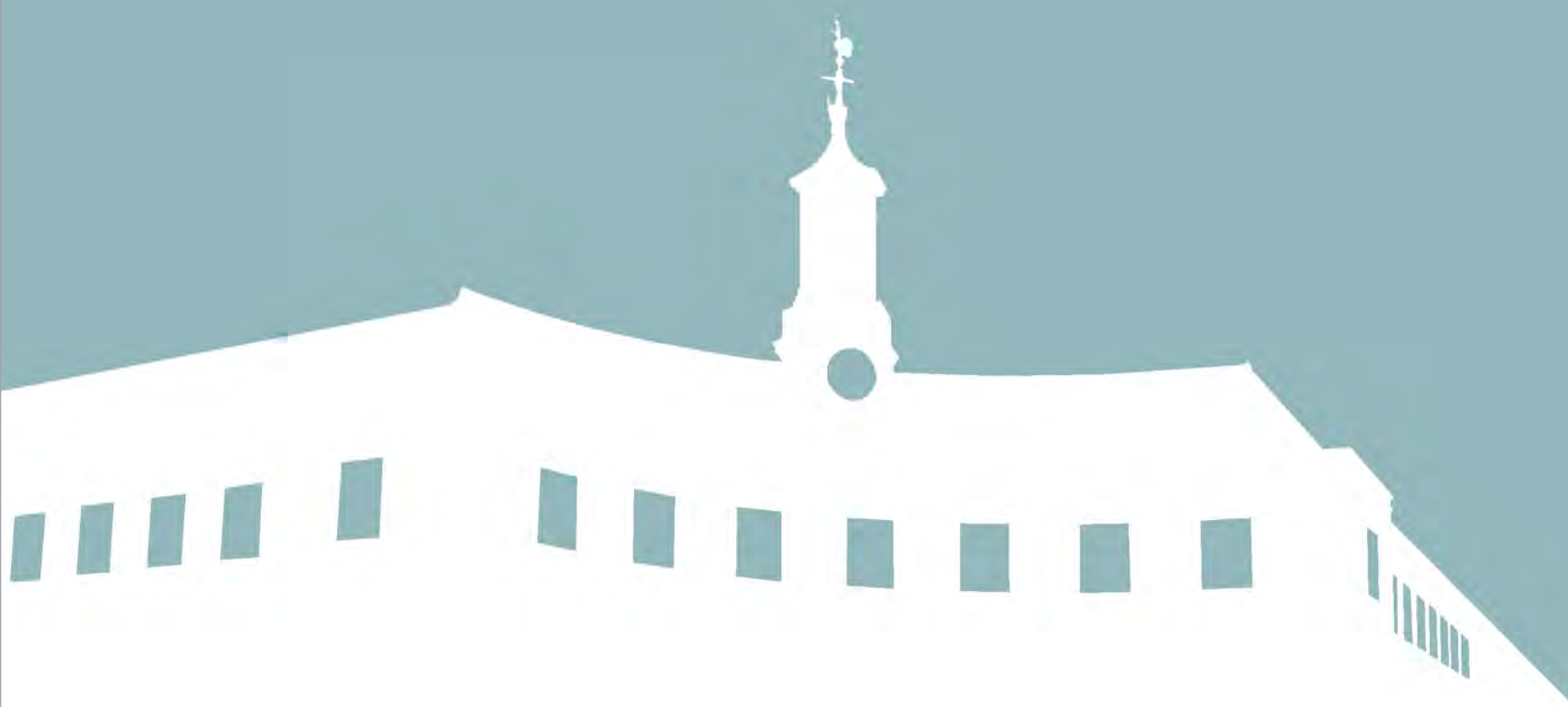


★ Indicative bike share locations P Cycle parking — On and off road cycle routes

Cycle path outside Town Hall



DELIVERY



NEXT STEPS

Watford Borough Council will carry out public consultation on this Masterplan in the summer of 2019. Following the consultation, representations will be reviewed and appropriate changes made to the final document, with adoption scheduled for late 2019. The document will then be used to guide future decisions on development proposals and investment in new infrastructure.

The Council has an active role to play as both landowner and local planning authority in redeveloping the area but acknowledges that delivering the vision and objectives of the Masterplan will require the involvement of a number of other organisations, including other landowners and developers.

The Masterplan will be used by the Council to engage with key stakeholders and landowners to bring forward development of their individual sites in line with the aspirations of the Masterplan. A delivery plan for Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 will be drawn up in due course.



