

# Masterplan Report

## Buxton Future High Street Fund

April 2020



**High Peak Borough Council**

*working for our community*



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## Introduction

- 1.1 High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) have applied to the Government's Future High Street Fund (FHSF) to support proposals to regenerate part of Buxton town centre. The proposals are focused on the area comprising Spring Gardens, The Springs Shopping Centre and the gateway to Buxton Train Station (see Figure 1).
- 1.2 This bid has been shortlisted by Government for funding and the HPBC have now prepared their final, Stage 2 submission – the Business Case. Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) have been appointed by High Peak Borough Council to assist in the preparation of the masterplan and Business Case and they lead a multi-disciplinary team including e\*SCAPE (urban designers), Pell Frischmann (transport and engineering) and Development Economics (economic modelling).
- 1.3 This Masterplan Report describes the masterplan proposals and the process of its preparation. This has included significant stakeholder and community engagement exercises, design evolution and viability testing. It is submitted alongside the Stage 2 FHSF submission to provide a full explanation of the proposals.
- 1.4 Although the key enabling funding source would be the FHSF, the proposals are supported by a balanced mix of funds including HPBC finance and private sector co-investment. The proposals have also been designed to complement and work alongside other funding sources, such as the Heritage Action Zone, that HPBC have been successful in securing. The result is a holistic masterplan that will deliver sustainable and transformative regeneration, creating a town centre fit for the 21st century. The proposals have been supported by viability assessment, a delivery strategy and evidence commitment from the private sector co-investor. Details of these are found in the confidential appendices that accompany this main report.
- 1.5 The masterplan focuses on the area within the defined FHSF boundary, but it has not been considered in isolation. The masterplan considers linkages and opportunities outside the edges of the FHSF area. It proposes a role for the FHSF area

that will integrate with and compliment, not compete with, other parts of the town centre.

## Future High Street Fund process

- 1.6 The Future High Street Fund was set up in 2019 to support places by co-funding transformative, structural changes to overcome challenges in their area. It is a two-stage process with two rounds of funding. The first stage required the submission of an Expression of Interest, for shortlisting to Stage 2. HPBC's submission for Buxton town centre was one of the first round entrants, and has been successful in becoming one of 101 entrants shortlisted for a Stage 2 submission following the EOI submission in March 2019. HPBC are now required to submit a Stage 2 submission by 30 April 2020.
- 1.7 The total value of the FHSF is over £1 bn. It was established in response to the challenges currently facing high streets and the need to facilitate their transformation. This is explained in the FHSF Prospectus:
 

*“Today, as consumer patterns change and spending increasingly moves online, our expectations of high streets are changing too. A renewed emphasis on ‘experience’ brings convenience, valuable services and a powerful sense of the community to the fore – that intrinsic desire for something that cannot be replicated online.”*
- 1.8 The objective of the FSHF is to “renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability”.



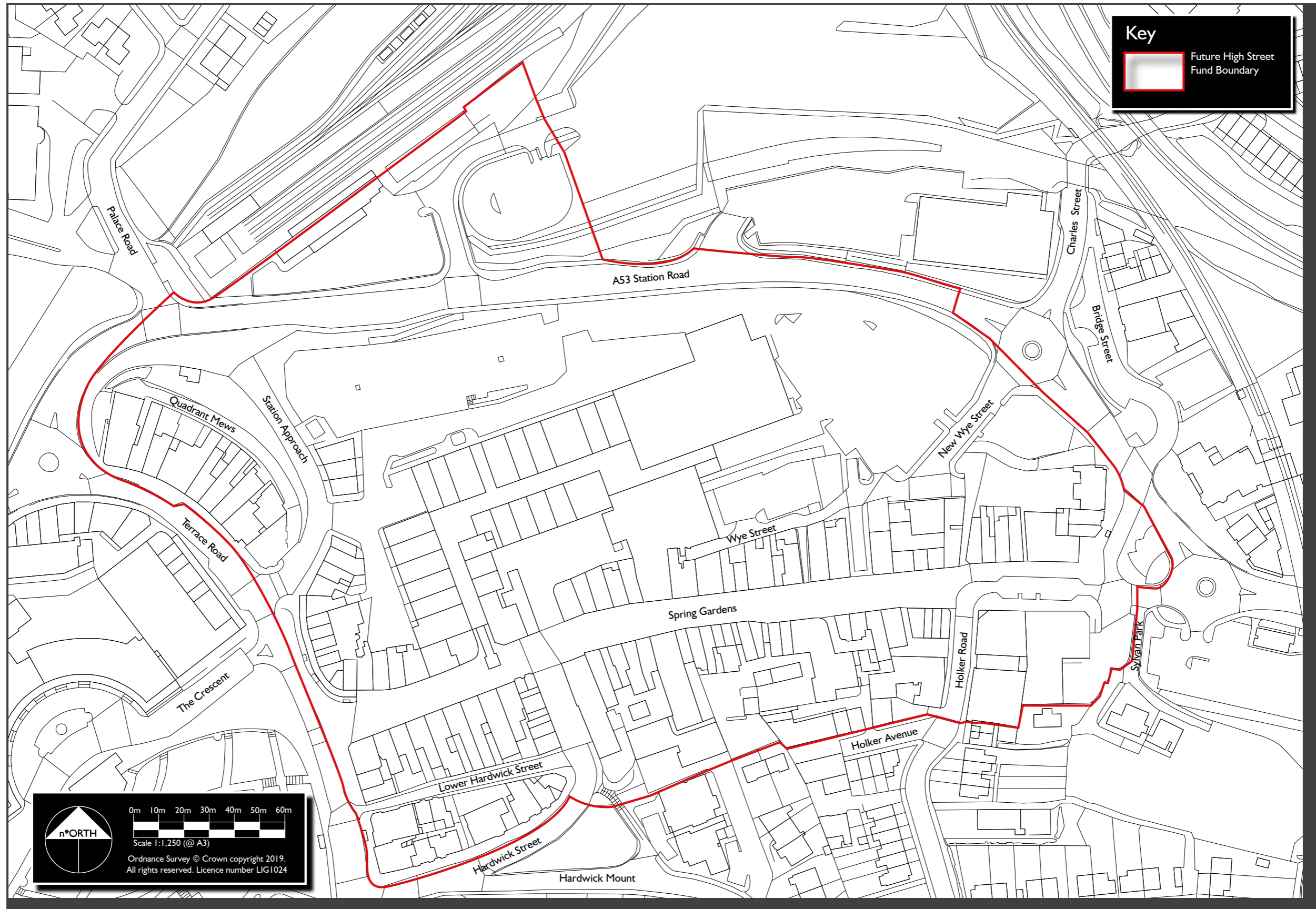


Figure 1: FHSF Area Boundary



## Background

- 2.1 A Town Centre Investment Programme was approved by High Peak Borough Council in February 2019. The programme outlined proposals to support the development of high streets and town centres, and recommended submission of funding bids (including the Future High Streets Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Highways England Designated Fund) to support delivery.
- 2.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) made new provision for town centre funding including a £675 million Future High Streets Fund (later uplifted to £1bn) to help diversify 'high street' areas; and a Heritage Action Zone fund to help restore historic high street properties and help find new economic uses for these properties.
- 2.3 The Government permitted only one FHSF bid and one Heritage Action Zone application from each local authority and have made clear that they will not accept bids covering town centre areas that are not facing significant challenges primarily identified as those having a higher rate of retail vacancies than the national average. Having presented the criteria, and considered the challenges and opportunities presented by each of the High Peak towns, the primary shopping area of Buxton was approved by Members as best placed to be the focus of both submissions and would benefit most from programme.

## Expression of Interest Stage

- 2.4 An Expression of Interest was made by HPBC to the Government's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) in March 2019.
- 2.5 The criteria for the scheme meant that an Expression of Interest covering the whole of Buxton would not been eligible, as the shop vacancy level across the town centre as a whole was below the national rate. An application was therefore developed focusing on the subarea facing the most challenge.
- 2.6 The FHSF proposals build upon a significant body of previous work, including:



- Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for Station Road (2007);
- Adopted Design & Place-making Strategy (2009);
- Adopted Local Plan (2016);
- Accelerated Housing Delivery Strategy (2016);
- D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan (2019-2030);
- Identified models of good practice for revitalisation of town centres (LGA Grimsey Review) 2017; High Street Report (Timpson report 2018);
- Draft Buxton Visitor Economy Strategy (March 2019);
- Draft Buxton Town Team Travel Plan (Feb 2019);
- Emerging One Public Estate Health Hub project (on adjacent land);
- Economic evidence on shop diversity, vacancy rates, Demographic and economic data, plus complaints/feedback from residents about town centre decline (which contrasted strongly from visitor feedback).

- 2.7 The Expression of Interest included the need to address key challenges:

- Disconnect between Georgian heritage, visitor appeal, and Low quality primary shopping zone
- Physical disconnect between railway station/former buxton water site regeneration area (to be new hospital and retirement housing) and Spring Gardens Primary shopping area
- Significant under-use of Upper floors including Heritage Assets
- Resident perception & dissatisfaction with Primary shopping zone
- Low level of start-ups and growth of small businesses

And the request for funding to:

- Develop options & business case for re-development of the under-utilised 'Springs' indoor shopping centre for more leisure, office uses and commercial uses + experienced focused retail/pop ups to blur distinctions between visitor focused area and primary shopping zone and extend the well-being and leisure focused appeal of the town into a revitalised town centre
- Develop options to create a new town centre pedestrian entrance from station, cycle interchange and improved gateway appeal between Station Road and Spring Gardens
- look at business case to increase town centre car parking (and introduce Smart technology, EV charge points) and simultaneously re-use some car parking for other uses to improve visual entrance
- Design options for a refresh of the public realm along Spring Gardens including rationalising of street signage & the 7 pedestrian crossings
- Commission Business case development for townscape grant and loan funding for capital improvements and upper floor conversions to private sector properties to improve appearance of town centre and increase residential and office use on upper floors (75% vacant at present)
- Review & cost existing wayfinding strategy & travel Plan so that this can be implemented
- Increase capacity by having dedicated officer who will establish landowner forum to engage with commercial property owners, lead on community liaison, engender increased civic pride and oversee above works.



2.8 Alongside the above, it was acknowledged that the FHSF project, if successful, would be part of a suite of regeneration projects as part of High Peak Borough Council's corporate priorities for 'Thriving High Streets'. This could include other initiatives both within Buxton and across the district to provide support for both business start-ups, existing businesses; and promote civic pride alongside support for re-use of heritage assets and delivery of the visitor economy strategy

2.9 The premise of the Expression of Interest was widely endorsed by private, public, voluntary and community sectors, with letters of support received from:

- Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Economic Partnership, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership, University of Derby, Buxton & Leek College, East Midlands Chamber, Federation of Small Businesses;
- Buxton Town Team, Vision Buxton and Buxton Civic Association, Buxton Crescent Heritage Trust, High Peak CVS
- Buxton Crescent Hotel & Thermal Spa; Parkwood Leisure (Buxton Pavilion Gardens) Buxton Opera House; Buxton International Opera Festival; Buxton Pavilion Gardens; Nestlé Waters UK (Buxton Water) and a signed letter from 23 Higher Buxton businesses (acknowledging and supporting application focus on Spring Gardens)

2.10 The FHSF is a two stage fund. It includes an initial revenue fund for selected areas to develop proposals and prepare a business case; and a second, capital fund to implement those proposals.

The government has made no guarantee that towns selected for first stage funding will receive second stage capital funding; it remains a competitive process assessed by the submission of the business case against criteria set out in guidance.

2.11 An expression of interest was made to the Government's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) in March 2019 and was approved in July 2019.

### Stage 2

2.12 Lambert Smith Hampton were appointed as lead consultant following a competitive tender process to qualifying businesses on the HCA framework in September 2019. They undertook a baseline analysis to gather together an understanding of the study area, its current situation, and the opportunities that can inform the FHSF proposals. This included significant in-depth analysis of the factors which would impact on town centre as well as identifying deliverable opportunities and commercial aspiration including:

- Desktop analysis and policy context;
- Commercial assessment, property market review, demand and investor analysis;



- Townscape examination;
- Transport and pedestrian movement analysis and broadband capacity;
- Ongoing stakeholder consultation;
- Development of an emerging preferred masterplan option;
- Secondary consultation on emerging option with a range of statutory consultees and prospective investors;
- Early draft business case;
- Public consultation

2.13 The Business Case has now been prepared and submitted. It rests upon an agreed Emerging Masterplan, which is presented and explained within this report.

### Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

2.14 Simultaneous to the Future High Street Expression of Interest assessment period, in June 2020, there was a call for a single-stage application to establish Heritage Action Zones. This fund has similar objectives to the FHSF in that eligible areas had to be town centres facing significant challenge, but funding

had to develop the heritage value of the eligible area and so could compliment but not duplicate initiatives with the FHSF expression of interest. The council has been awarded an in principle award of £913,500 under the HAZ scheme. The grant agreement is expected in April 2020.

2.15 The key deliverables under this scheme include:

- Shop front restoration grants for heritage buildings
- Grant funding to support viability gaps to bring forward empty heritage properties
- Offer of a complementary facelift scheme to allocate small grants towards modern units to improve colour scheme and signage
- Community engagement and cultural programme development
- Exploration of the restoration and continuation of the missing colonnade around the Cavendish Arcade
- Heritage interpretation at key visitor entrance points
- Funding and delivery of an education pack for school children.

## Governance

2.16 The Expression of Interest to FHSF proposed that governance arrangements for the revenue project, would include the conversion of the Visitor Economy Strategy Board (VES Board), into a Steering Board of Stakeholders with oversight by the Council's Transformation Board and Economy and Growth Select Committee. To this end, in August 2019 revised terms of reference were taken to VES Board together with proposals to extend the membership. These were accepted, although the VES Board declined to change their name as originally proposed. If the business case is approved the VES board will continue in an advisory role but a tighter FHSF Delivery Board will be

established of parties with strategic or co-investment interest in the project with representation from the VES board and synergy with Heritage Action Zone. This will include appropriate sub-groups to oversee specific elements.

2.17 The Board will also oversee delivery of the HAZ and, in line with Historic England requirements, VES members will lead community engagement and cultural programme through development of sub groups.







## Issues & Opportunities

3.1 The consultant team first undertook a comprehensive baseline review of the issues and opportunities facing the FHSF area. This both informed the FHSF proposals that were subsequently developed and also acts as a robust evidence base to support the Business Case and emerging masterplan. A separate Stage 1 Report has been prepared which documents this analysis and can be referred to for full details.

3.2 The issues and opportunities analysis included the following workstreams:

- Planning policy review
- Summary of regeneration initiatives and relevant significant development proposals
- Townscape analysis
- Retail healthcheck review
- Property market review
- Transport and movement overview assessment
- Fibre broadband capacity review

3.3 The accompanying plans in this section illustrate some of the key features of the study area at present. It is vital that the proposals build upon the distinctive character of Buxton, which derive from its heritage, and so this has been well understood.

3.4 The following ‘SWOT’ analysis table provides an overall summary of the most pertinent findings of the issues and option analysis.

## Summary SWOT Analysis

| Strengths   | Weaknesses   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent heritage context</li> <li>• Strong townscape character</li> <li>• Key strategic location: gateway to the Peak District</li> <li>• Strong tourism offer</li> <li>• Easily accessible by public transport</li> <li>• Town centre still has a strong comparison sector</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The centre now only has Waitrose as an anchor store, following loss of M&amp;S</li> <li>• Some improvements needed to public realm</li> <li>• Weak gateway and arrival at Station</li> <li>• Poor linkage to and through the study area</li> <li>• No eastern anchor/destination</li> <li>• Vacancy rate above the national average</li> <li>• Limited 4G public provision</li> </ul> |
| Opportunities   | Threats  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong group of stakeholders supporting positive change</li> <li>• Solid body of local design guidance</li> <li>• A flexible planning policy context supports change</li> <li>• Many local development and current regeneration initiatives</li> <li>• HAZ funding</li> <li>• Opportunity to make better use of upper floors</li> <li>• New University provision in the study area</li> <li>• Healthy residential market</li> <li>• Interest from hotel operators</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong comparison sector risks further decline given wider retail trends</li> <li>• Waitrose may leave the study area</li> <li>• Re-provision of University accommodation could also be a threat</li> </ul>   |

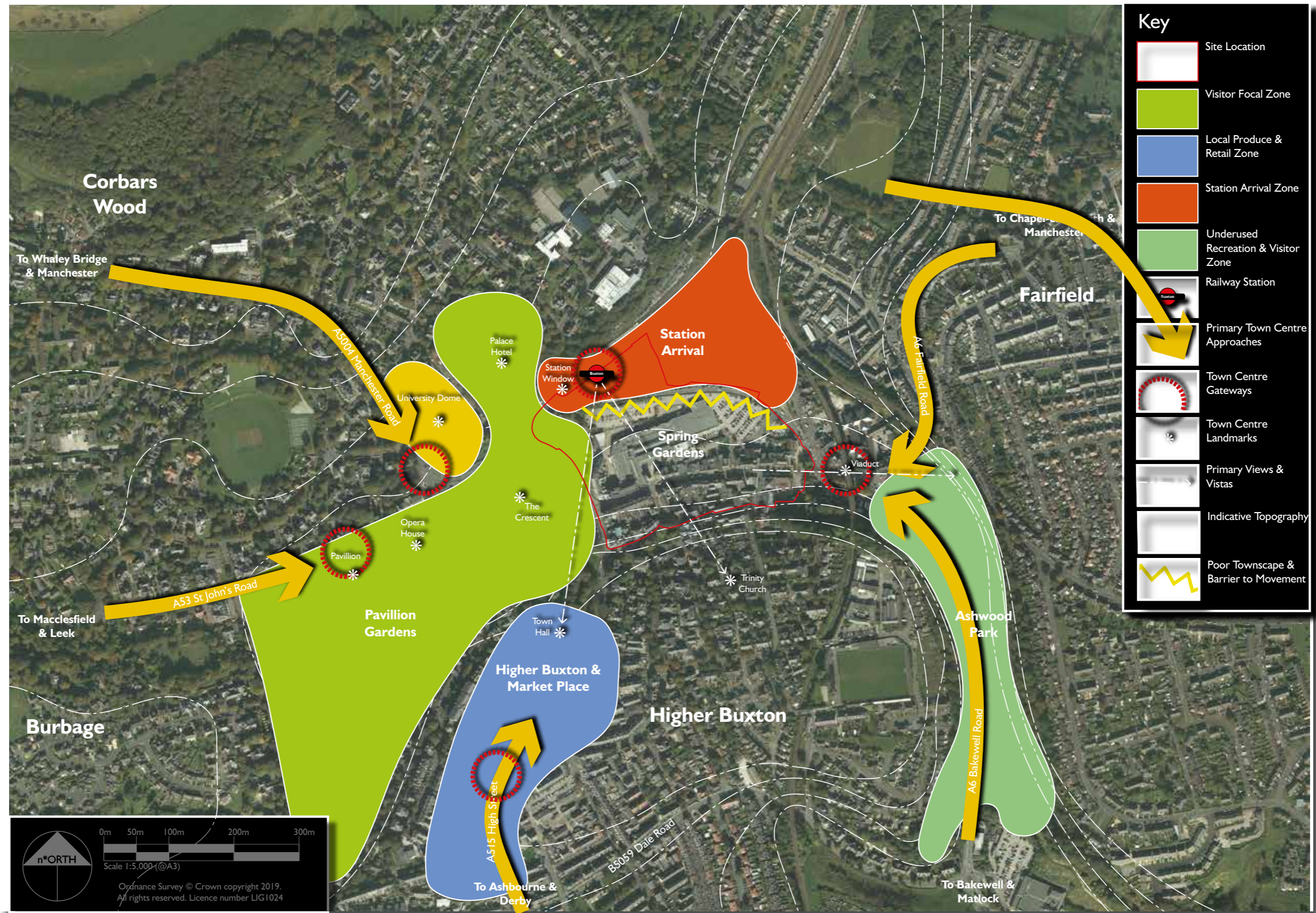


Figure 2: Town Context

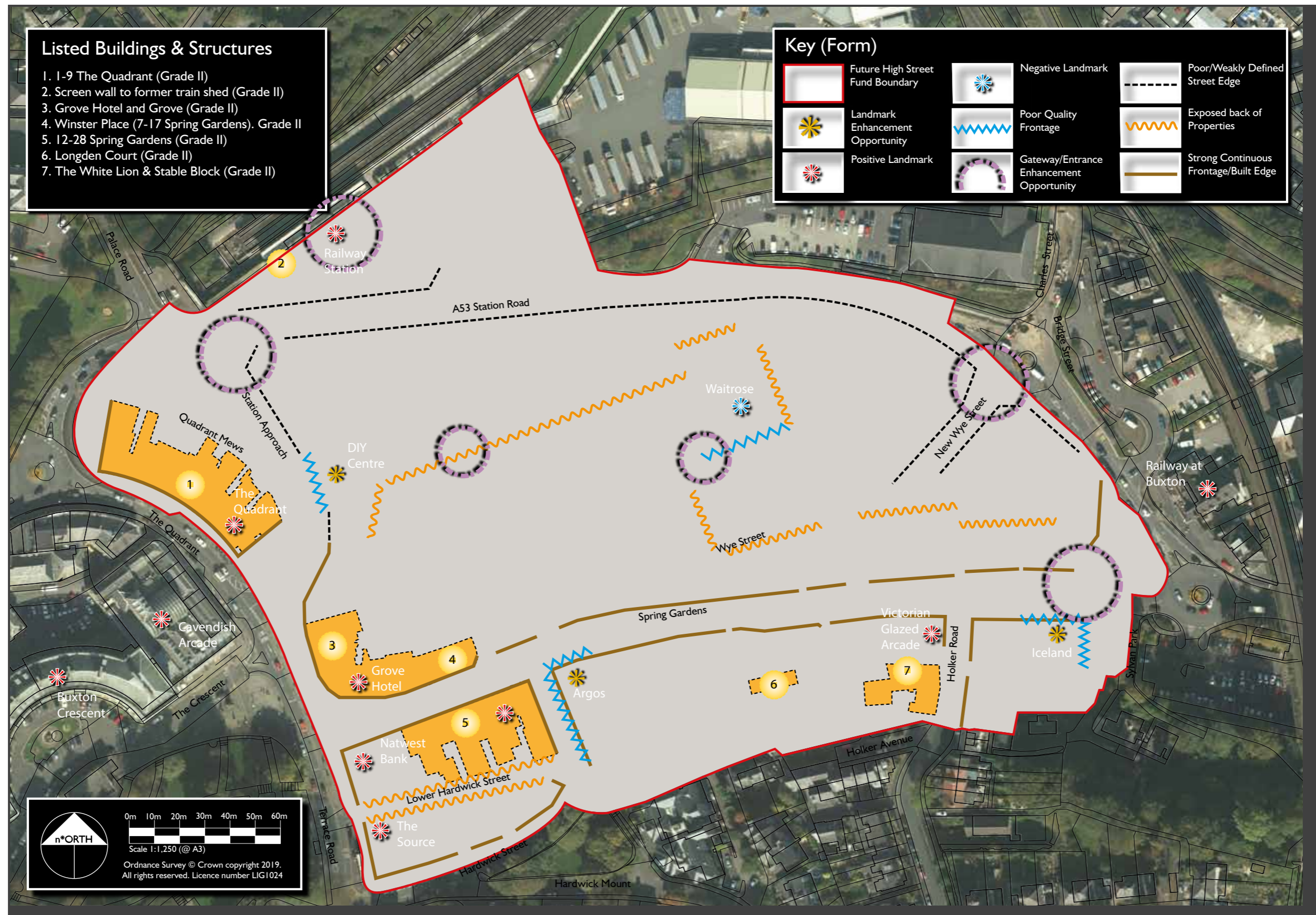


Figure 3: Townscape Analysis: Form



## Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1 A key part of the process has been consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the wider community. Stakeholder engagement is continuing and occurred throughout the process of preparing the bid.
- 4.2 The engagement and consultation consists of two overlapping phases: a stakeholder engagement phase that extends throughout the FHSF process; and a targeted community consultation phase at Draft Masterplan stage. Key activities for each are summarised below.
- 4.3 This section summarises the community and stakeholder engagement process. For a fuller account please refer to the separate Consultation Report.

### Activities: Stakeholder Engagement Phase

- A stakeholder workshop was held on 25 November 2019. This was hosted by the VES/Town Centre board and comprised around 20 stakeholders, including local businesses, voluntary sector organisations and civic groups. Groups represented on the Board include Vision Buxton, Marketing Peak District & Derbyshire, Buxton Crescent Trust, Buxton Festival, the University of Derby, Buxton Civic Association, Buxton Town Team and others. The event formed an important stage in the evolution of the masterplan. Three concept options were presented, with an interactive exercise then undertaken to understand and comment on the options and to agree the basis for a preferred option. This informed the development of the Draft Masterplan.
- Briefing with HPBC Buxton members – 9th January 2020: this meeting was open to all Buxton Councillors. The background to the FHSF bid was explained and the current emerging masterplan was presented, This was followed by questions and answers, and feedback from Members.
- Presentation and discussion with the Visitor Economic Strategy and Town Centre Board (VES Board) on 29th January 2020: a follow up to the first stakeholder workshop, the current Draft



Masterplan was presented, with an explanation of how this had responded to comments from the first workshop. LSH and HPBC also explained how other considerations (namely FHSF criteria; viability, co-investor and landowner views; and practical considerations) meant that it was not always possible to make the changes that stakeholders requested.

- Stakeholder Officer Engagement: throughout all phases of the project, and particularly during masterplan development, the consultant team have engaged with professional officer stakeholders, This has included Derbyshire County Council Highways; Northern Rail; Historic England; and HPBC Planning, Regeneration, Conservation and Tree officers. Engagement has included ongoing dialogue and comments received on the Draft Masterplan. LSH have also engaged with discussions with existing landowners and businesses; and potential operators and investors, to understand the current market and property context.

### Activities: Community Consultation Phase

- 4.4 The purpose of the exercise is to share the current emerging Draft Masterplan proposals in order to test them and influence their continued evolution. A secondary aim is to raise awareness of the FHSF and the objectives for Buxton town centre and to seek broad support and consensus.

- 4.5 The Draft Masterplan consultation phase consisted of the following events and activities:

- A 'Drop-in Day' in the Springs on Saturday 1st February 10am-2pm;
- Briefing and Q&A with HPBC Members on 6th February 2020;
- A second, evening Drop-in Day in the Springs on 10th February;
- Targeted engagement with young people at Buxton & Leek College on Monday 11th February;
- Public drop-in day (Buxton Town Hall) 17th February.

- 4.6 At all of these events the public exhibition material was presented (see Appendix 1) and members of the project team (consultant team and/or HPBC team) were on hand to explain the proposals and answer questions.



### Feedback

- 4.7 Over 800 people were engaged with the public consultation events plus a further 70 at a youth consultation event. 445 formal responses were received within the consultation period, and a further 15 have been subsequently received shortly after the deadline.
- 4.8 Feedback was sought via a Comments Sheet (Appendix 2). The display material was also available online, as was a digital version of the survey. Forms could be returned at the above events or via email to HPBC. All forms (hard copy forms and online responses) were then collated and analysed by LSH. The comments form sought background data on the respondents; their views of the current FHSF area; and then asked their overall views of the Draft Masterplan proposals and their main likes and elements they would change or add.



### Summary

- 4.9 The consultation exercise has been successful in engaging with large numbers of people. 460 comments sheets were returned, with many more people attending one of the events and viewing the material.
- 4.10 The consultation has also been successful in generating a consensus and widespread support for the proposals, with 67% of respondents describing the proposals positively (Question 6) and 65% respondents stating that they would be more likely to visit the area if the proposals were implemented (Question 10), therefore representing a two-thirds majority generally in favour of the proposals.
- 4.11 There has been notable support for several specific elements within the masterplan: the station link; the parking proposals (moving from surface parking to multi-level parking below development terraces); and the new public space with opened-up river (on the site of the existing Waitrose car park) – these related elements have all been highlighted as popular proposals. This is important as these are fundamental elements within the proposed strategy and for creating development opportunities that would enable benefit:cost ratio outcomes required to secure funding.
- 4.12 There have also been comments raised on a number of elements which many people wish to change or add.. Many of these comments contradict one another (for example some people wanted more parking; others less); relate to elements of the scheme which have been commonly supported; others relate to suggestions to change use of property/land which is in private ownership and would be contrary to the financial interests of the landowners; other suggestions would otherwise prejudice the viability of the scheme. There are many points raised that will be appropriate to consider at the detailed design stage.
- 4.13 We have also received separate detailed consultation responses from stakeholders, notably Buxton Town Team, the Buxton Civic Association and Buxton Town Team. We have responded separately and directly to these stakeholders. Their comments have also been added to the analysis undertaken and summarised within the Consultation Report. Many of their

comments are generally similar to the most common points raised by others. We did engage directly with these groups from an early stage, including at the Stakeholder Workshop in November when their feedback on options influenced the design of the Draft Masterplan. The response provided to these groups has been uploaded onto the Council's FHSF webpage.

- 4.14 In summary, the consultation exercise has generated widespread engagement and provides a good basis of community consensus and support for the proposals.

## Design Evolution

### An Evolving Masterplan

- 5.1 The masterplan proposals have evolved through an intensive iterative design process which has been directly linked to the requirements of the FHSF bid requirements, the commercial market advice and the stakeholder engagement process.
- 5.2 Once our townscape assessment was completed as part of the baseline appreciation of place some initial spatial testing options were developed which examined the level of interventions that could be accommodated within the FHSF area. These options not only investigated the magnitude of the proposed interventions but also the mix of uses, amounts of floor spaces created and the level of new public realm proposed in terms of the creation of a more permeable townscape and creation of spaces to attract and hold visitors to the town centre.
- 5.3 The preferred option emerged from feedback from the stakeholder options workshop, which was held on 25 November 2019 as described in Section 4. The consensus from this workshop identified a mix of elements from Options B and C as the basis for the Preferred Option.
- 5.4 The Options are described below:

### Option A: Low/Minor Intervention

- Primarily retained The Springs in its current form and with its current uses, but with the existing Waitrose store enhanced to provide a better foodstore footprint with the potential for more active frontages.
- Better links between the Station and Spring Gardens proposed which included better crossing points on Station Road and enhancements to the route through the car park, along with a new multi-storey car park to the rear of The Springs.
- Some new residential uses adjoining Station Road, Station

Approach and New Wye Street to activate the streets and partially screen the unsightly car parks or create improved urban blocks.

- Exploration of the potential to bring the underused upper floors back into use for commercial or residential use.
- Potential to open up views to the River Wye, currently lost within a culvert and hard channel to the rear of Spring Gardens.
- Finally, the refurbishment and reopening of The Grove Hotel to pull visitors and tourist through into this part of the town centre.

### Option B: Intermediate Intervention

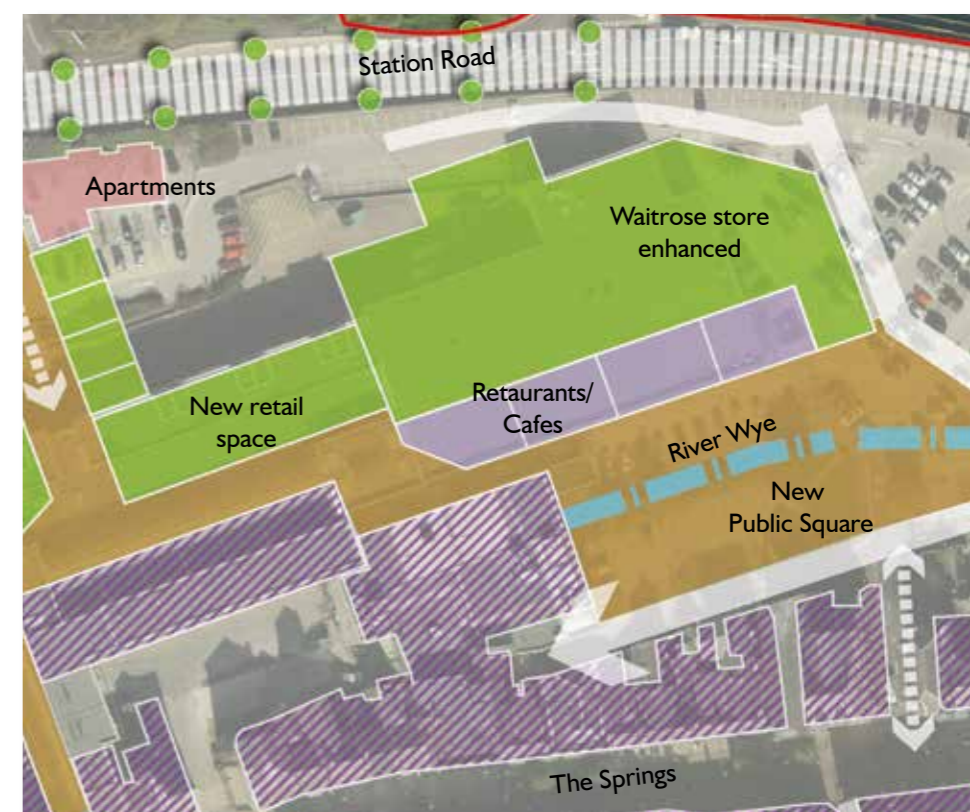
- Partial redevelopment of The Springs with the existing Waitrose store enhanced to provide a better foodstore footprint, food and drink uses, with the potential for more active frontages and the creation of upper floor uses in terms of offices or studio spaces.
- New Station forecourt space proposed which creates an enhanced arrival point and orientation to draw visitors/commuters into Spring Gardens and create a new pedestrian street which will also futureproof the green travel plan for the adjacent Health & Public Sector Hub, by delivering a sustainable walking route for employees to the new Hub.
- River Wye set into a new Public Square flanked by the enhanced Waitrose store and new College building.
- New Residential buildings along Station Road, Station Approach and Bridge Street activating the street and screening the rear of The Springs and Spring Gardens.

### Option C: Major Intervention

- Partial redevelopment of The Springs with the existing Waitrose store enhanced to provide a better foodstore



Option A - Improved links between Station and Spring Gardens



Option B - Partial redevelopment of The Springs



footprint with the potential for more active frontages and the creation of upper floor uses in terms of residential apartments and car parking.

- New leisure building, potentially a cinema, enclosing the eastern end of 'New Wye Square' with decked parking above with office building to the rear fronting Station Road.
- Food and drink units fronting the southern side of Wye Square and screening the rear of existing buildings fronting Spring Gardens
- The Springs totally redeveloped with a mix of new retail units, cafes, restaurants with a mix of residential and commercial space above.
- New forecourt space outside the Station which flows across to a new Square opposite the Station which then leads down, via ramps, steps and lifts into the redeveloped Springs area. Basement parking situated below the Square.



- A mix of townhouses and apartments along Station Road, Bridge Street and Station Approach.

## Emerging Preferred Draft Masterplan

5.5 Once these options had been tested and the feedback received the level of intervention that could practically be achieved within the scope of the FHSF was agreed and a preferred draft option emerged which brought together various aspects of the three initial options in the form of an emerging sketch masterplan.

5.6 At this stage the masterplan reverted to a series of hand drawn sketches as various use mixes, floor areas and building forms were explored, along with the form of the public realm and the need to bridge the challenging topography. The sketches not only explored the masterplan in plan form but also in three dimensions with the development of a series of cross sections looking in some detail at the changes in level and how these could be creatively exploited as well as looking at the vertical stacking of uses within individual buildings.

5.7 This sketch stage was used primarily to test the proposals in terms of commercial viability, prior to going out to a series of public consultation events.

5.8 The emerging preferred sketch masterplan included the following elements:

- A new gateway from the Station set out to exploit a strong visual axis from the Station to Trinity Church tower.
- A new stepped pedestrian street in the form of 'Station Terrace' which provides direct and clear 24/7 access between the Station and adjacent Health & Public Sector Hub to Spring Gardens, flanked by apartments and workspace.
- New apartments overlooking Station Road with the corner building on Station Approach re-using the existing former LMS Station wall that remains in-situ.
- Basement parking over three levels below Station Terrace

which also provides for the retention of the existing service yards with access via left in and left out junctions with Station Road.

- Some remodelling of the external and internal layout of the Springs.
- Waitrose redeveloped into a larger store with no additional uses over it.
- Creation of new Square (Wye Square) with the river as the focus.
- New leisure building and potential college fronting Wye Square.
- New food and drink pods also fronting Wye Square.
- Inclusion of a new public toilet and Changing Places facility as part of the new Square.
- New apartments overlooking Bridge Street
- New area of public realm in the form of a square and art installation set into Spring Gardens at its junction with Holker Road.
- Refurbishment of the single storey glass pavilions to the front of the White Hart.
- Exploration of promoting and developing craft and food uses in the 'Yards Quarter' to the south of Spring Gardens.
- Exploration of reusing upper floors for commercial and residential uses.
- Redevelopment of former M&S for a single store or development of an arcade of smaller retail uses.
- Longer term opportunity to replace the poor architecture of the current Argos store with a better designed building.

- Removal of street clutter and The Springs canopy from Spring Gardens and creation of a new area of public realm in the form of a Square to create a focal space at this important junction of pedestrian routes.
- Development of layby by the station for buses and other sustainable forms of transport.

5.9 This masterplan was supported by an accommodation schedule and sketch cross-sections as mentioned previously.

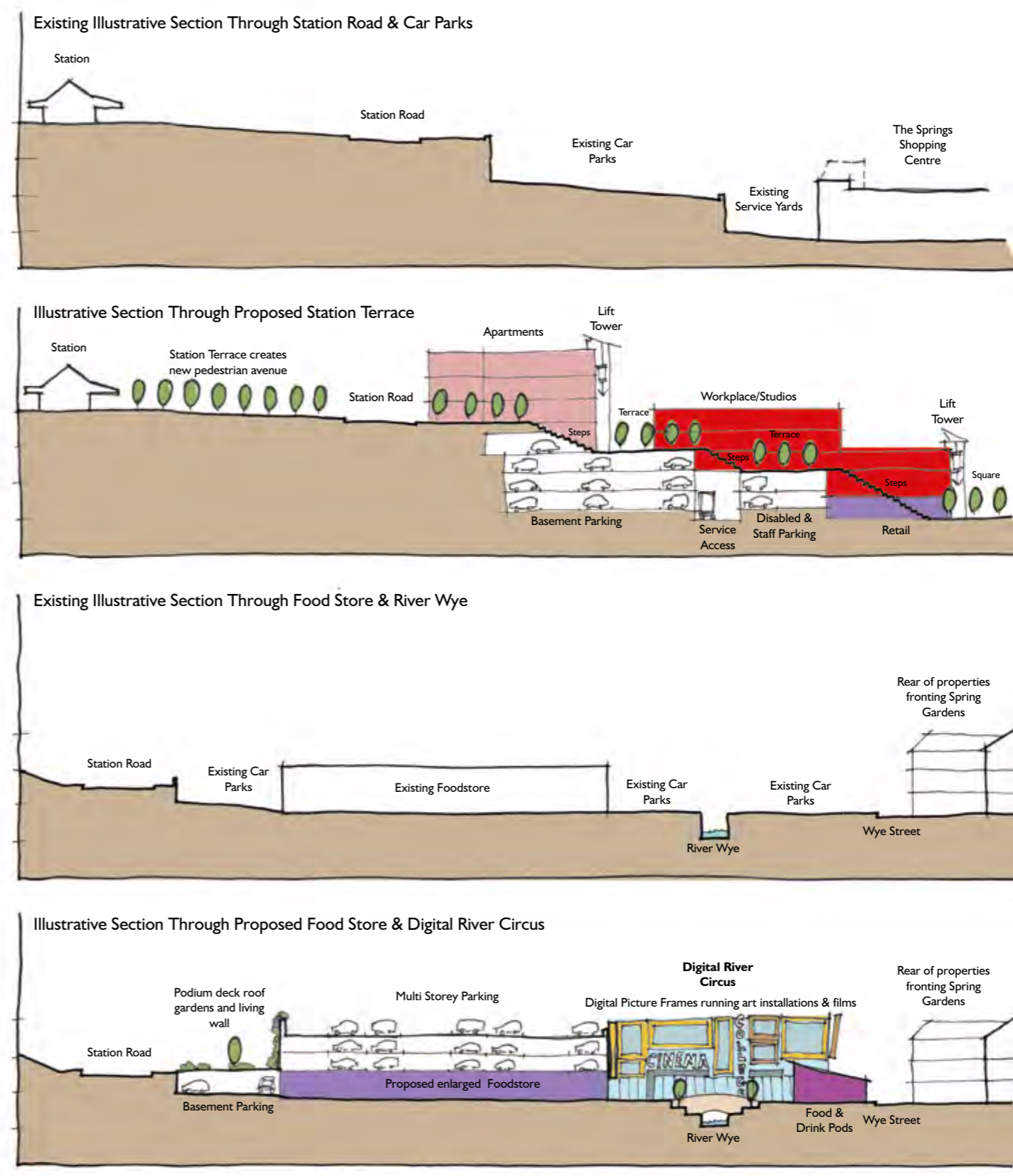
5.10 Once the above masterplan was reviewed by the client team and wider consultant team it was refined into a version for use in the Public Consultation events. This fine tuning included:

- Addition of a café and convenience shop in the ground floor of the apartment buildings opposite the Station on Station Terrace.
- Retention of existing retail uses in The Springs and less internal remodelling.
- Removal of parking over the current Waitrose.

5.11 In addition to the above, a separate upper storeys plan was developed which illustrated the vertical mix of uses at the upper floors, as well as a drawing setting out the potential basement parking layouts and levels to illustrate the number of potential replacement parking spaces proposed. The cross sections were also drawn up and formalised which illustrated the massing of buildings, the accommodation of the changes in levels and how the basement parking could be accommodated under the buildings and proposed Station Terrace.

5.12 In order to graphically communicate the plans in the consultation event a 3D massing model and hand drawn artists' impressions were prepared which further elaborated on the proposals as described previously.

5.13 Widespread community consultation was then undertaken on the preferred option, as outlined in Section 4. This asked people their views on the proposals overall, and to identify elements that they liked best, would wish to remove; and other elements that they may wish to add.



Emerging Masterplan - Sketch Cross Sections



## Finalisation of the Masterplan

5.14 Once all the community's comments were received and analysed, and feedback was received from the client and other key stakeholders the required changes to the masterplan were agreed and undertaken in preparation for the use in the final submission.

5.15 These final changes included the following elements:

- Reduction in parking outside the station and an increase in the area of public realm proposed.
- Accommodation of space for cycle hire facilities outside the station as well as secure cycle lockers for use by commuters and other train users.
- Resolution of levels issues along Station Terrace to provide choice and alternative routes for disabled users of the facilities on this street with improved access between Station Road and Spring Gardens including ramps, walkways and a lift.
- Removal of the left in and left out access to the basement car parks with one access to all undercroft and basement parking via New Wye Street.
- Secure on street bike stands at key locations in and around Spring Gardens.
- Inclusion of a space for a potential Library and community hub as part of the development around Wye Square.
- Adjustments to the food and drink pods to enable delivery vehicles to turn round whilst using Wye Street.
- General refurbishment of Spring Gardens with removal of street clutter, painting of lamp columns, replacement of and planting of new street trees and cleaning of existing paved surfaces.

- Inclusion of greater number of sustainable features including solar panelling, green roofs and proposals for rainwater capture (or similar).

5.16 As with the previous consultation version of the masterplan the revised plan is supported by an upper storey masterplan, cross sections, basement parking layouts, 3d Massing Model and hand-drawn artists impressions.

5.17 In addition, a roof level plan has also been developed which assisted in the final changes to the 3D massing model and artists impressions.

5.18 In essence the masterplan has undergone a continued evolution throughout its development and has been robustly tested at every stage commercially, physically and socially and these final proposals are robust and look forwards to a reinvigorated town centre that does not solely rely on retail for its economic and social success.



## The Masterplan

### Introduction

6.1 The Emerging Masterplan presents the proposals that will transform the Spring Gardens/Springs area to become a town centre that addresses current challenges and delivers a town centre fit for the 21st century. These proposals have been integrated into a holistic masterplan that brings these projects together into a coherent whole and is also cognisant of the surrounding context and other proposed changes adjacent to its boundaries. Most importantly, the masterplan, whilst providing a modern town centre experience, is built upon the local character of Buxton and its special heritage, and is designed to deliver a distinctive town centre environment that will be complementary to the town's existing offer.

6.2 The Emerging Masterplan, presented in this section represents the current version of the masterplan proposals. It has been developed by HPBC and their consultant team, and has been through community and stakeholder consultation, where it has been endorsed, and responds to comments raised. This Emerging Masterplan has formed the basis of the projects and developments that have been assessed and costed within the Business Case for the FHSF submission.

6.3 The Emerging Masterplan displayed here is indicative in nature but has been designed with delivery in mind, including review and approval by the key partners that will drive the projects through to delivery. It presents the fundamental principles of the proposals that will transform this part of the town centre, in a form that is deliverable. The masterplan proposals will continue to be developed in detail as projects move toward delivery.

### Key Principles

6.4 The key principles for Spring Gardens have been identified through the FHSF brief and further tested and developed through stakeholder and community consultation. These principles have guided the masterplan development and will be used to monitor its successful delivery:

- Diversifying the area to include uses other than retail (e.g. residential, workspace, leisure and education);
- Enhancing the retail environment and increasing footfall to support existing shops
- Improving the street environment on Spring Gardens – with more quality public spaces for events and to relax, enjoy and meet people in;
- Promoting more use of upper floors of existing buildings – for residential, commercial and workspace uses;
- Creating a more direct and attractive pedestrian route from the train station to Spring Gardens via The Springs;
- Relocating and moving pedestrian crossings to make it easier for people to walk across Terrace Road and Station Road whilst also not delaying through traffic;
- The town centre shall encourage the increased use of the public realm for children's play by introducing interactive artworks and sculptural street furniture which enables children to enjoy playing in the streets and spaces created as part of this project. Creating a streetscape for active use by children will encourage families to use this part of the town centre, hold them in the public realm and in turn provide benefits to the shops, restaurants and cafes by having families using their services. Buxton's town centre will become known for its 'play streets';
- Improving car parking provision – making sure there is no net loss of spaces whilst also meeting the needs of new uses and delivering better quality parking.

### Focal Areas for Change

6.5 Proposals have been grouped into three main focal areas. Transformational projects will be concentrated where the most significant change can be achieved, creating new anchors to draw people to this part of the town centre. Working with

an understanding of desire lines and ground levels we have sought to link the new anchors with existing attractors such as the train station, by creating direct and attractive new linkages to draw additional footfall through the area. These changes will benefit existing business and complement areas such as Spring Gardens, where the historic built form is an important existing asset but where changes are needed to complement the wider proposals and enable it to reach its full potential.

6.6 The three focal areas are described below alongside the key proposals for each. These are explained in more detail in the following sections.

### Station Gateway and Station Terrace

- Station Gateway: Enhancing the station forecourt to become a town centre gateway and sustainable transport interchange.
- Station Terrace: Creating a new pedestrian street from the train station and health hub (which is being constructed



Improved crossing facilities over Station Road

#### Note:

Images in this section illustrate similar concepts as delivered elsewhere in the UK, in order to provide an impression as to how these might look.

on the site next to the station), directly into The Springs shopping centre and Spring Gardens. This will bring people directly past shops and cafes in the town centre.

- New multi-level parking: Creating a new multi-level car park behind The Springs underneath Station Terrace - which makes use of the change in level and hides the parking and the existing Springs building

## Wye Square and the Springs

- New public space: the new multi-level parking allows a new public high quality space (Wye Square) to be created on the existing Waitrose car park.
- New development: Wye Square will be the focus for new development proposal facing the square, such as a new commercial leisure attraction (for example a cinema), family restaurants, a new further education facility and a new public library.
- Existing uses will also be enhanced, the Waitrose building will have a new façade to face the new square; there will be an enhanced entrance and internal improvements to The Springs.

## Spring Gardens

- Public realm transformational change: improving Spring Gardens by creating new public space nodes for events, entertainment and socialising, removing street clutter, resiting and upgrading crossings.
- Bringing upper floors back into use: increasing residential or office use on upper floors by tackling the barriers to bringing them into use.
- Improving the historic buildings: Grants to help restore historic shop fronts will be delivered by the complementary £1m Heritage Action Zone scheme.



## Public Square Examples

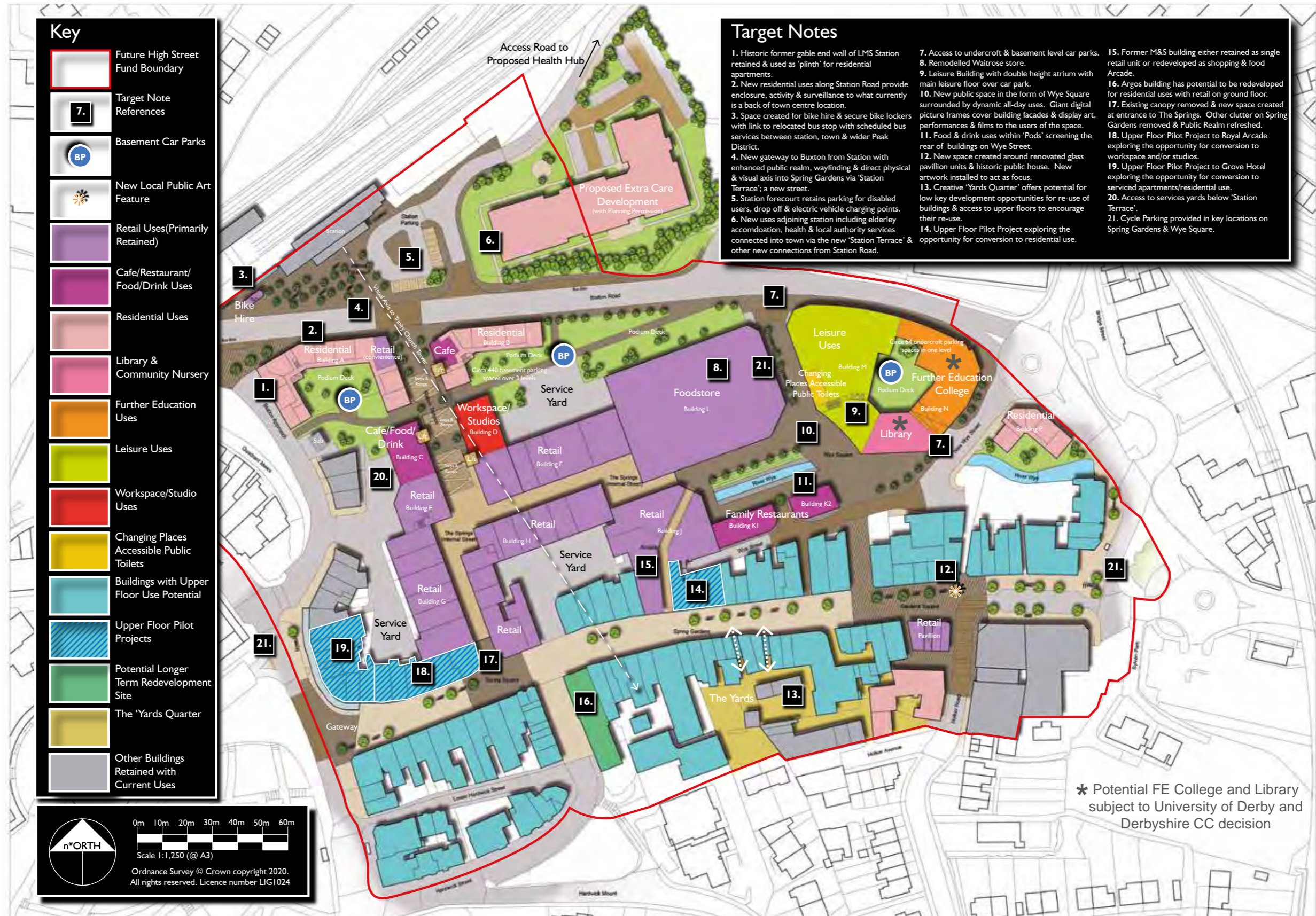


Figure 5: Masterplan (Ground Floor Uses)





Figure 6: Masterplan (Upper Floor Uses)

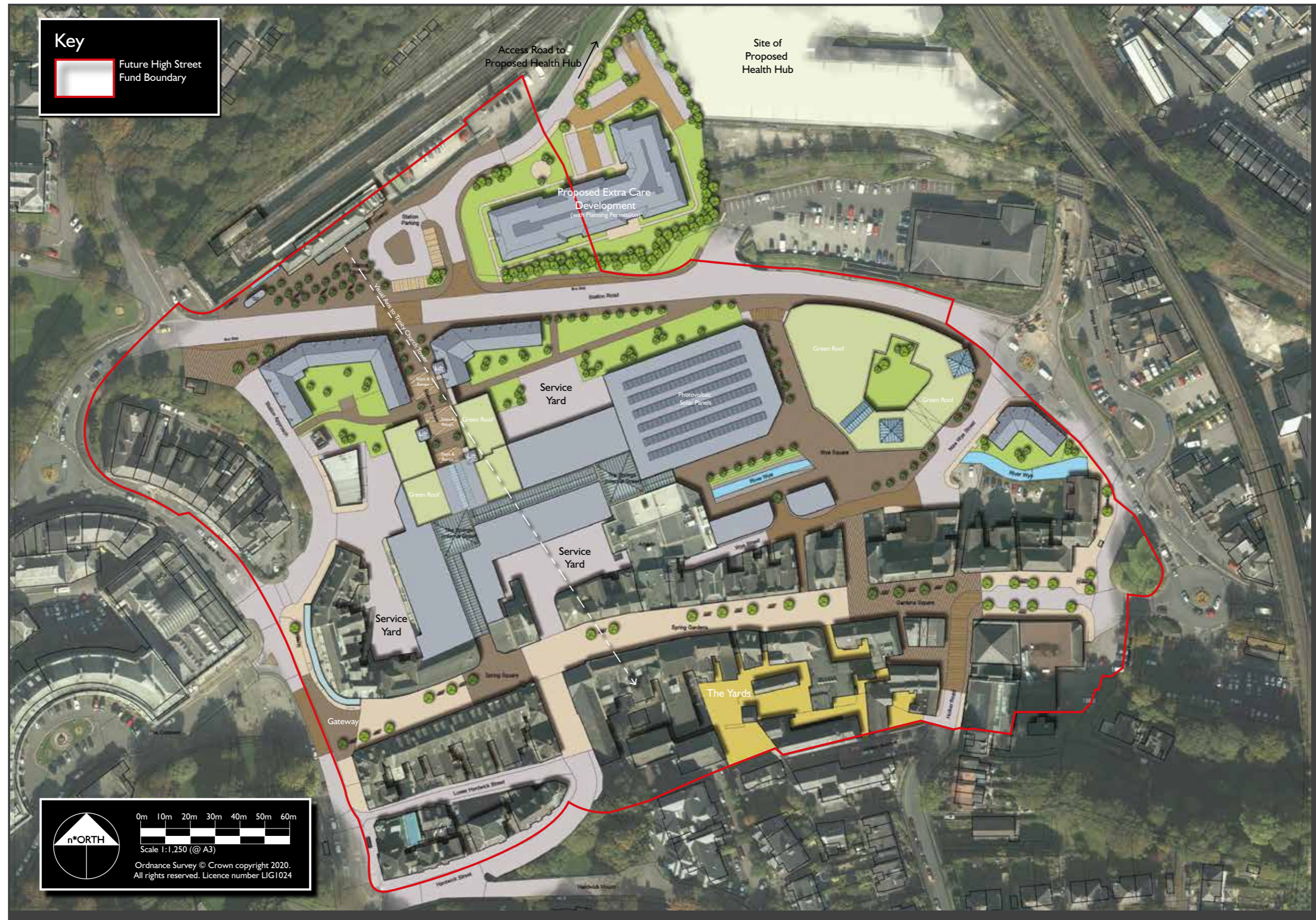


Figure 7: Masterplan (Roof Plan)

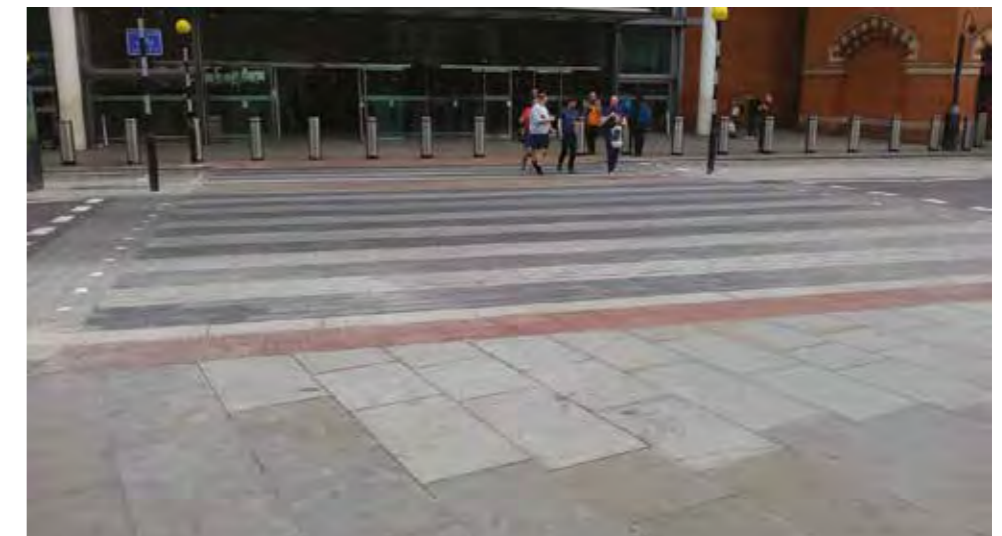
## Station Gateway and Station Terrace

6.7 Proposals include:

- Creating a new transport hub in front of the train station – with bus turnaround, taxi rank, disabled parking, pick-up/drop-off parking and cycle parking, secure bike lockers and opportunity for cycle hire;
- Creating a new wider pedestrian crossing to prioritise pedestrian movement across Station Road to improve the link to the station (other crossings will be removed to make sure that vehicle flows are not significantly impacted);
- New apartment development (or retirement living) to face onto Station Road (though with vehicle access from the south within the new parking proposals). Active ground floor uses to face the Station Gateway (convenience store and café) to draw footfall across Station Road and onto Station Terrace;
- Retention of the historic former gable end wall of the LMS station as a plinth within new residential apartment development;
- Creating a new pedestrian street ('Station Terrace'), flanked by apartments and workspace, which provides direct and clear 24/7 access between the Station and adjacent Health & Public Sector Hub to Spring Gardens. This will be designed to address the change in levels with steps, ramps and lifts. It will also provide accessible movement for all.



Bike Shelter



New Pedestrian Crossing over Station Road



Bike lockers



Stepped terrace to address changes in level



Mixed-uses - apartments above shops



Soft landscaping and tree planting within public realm



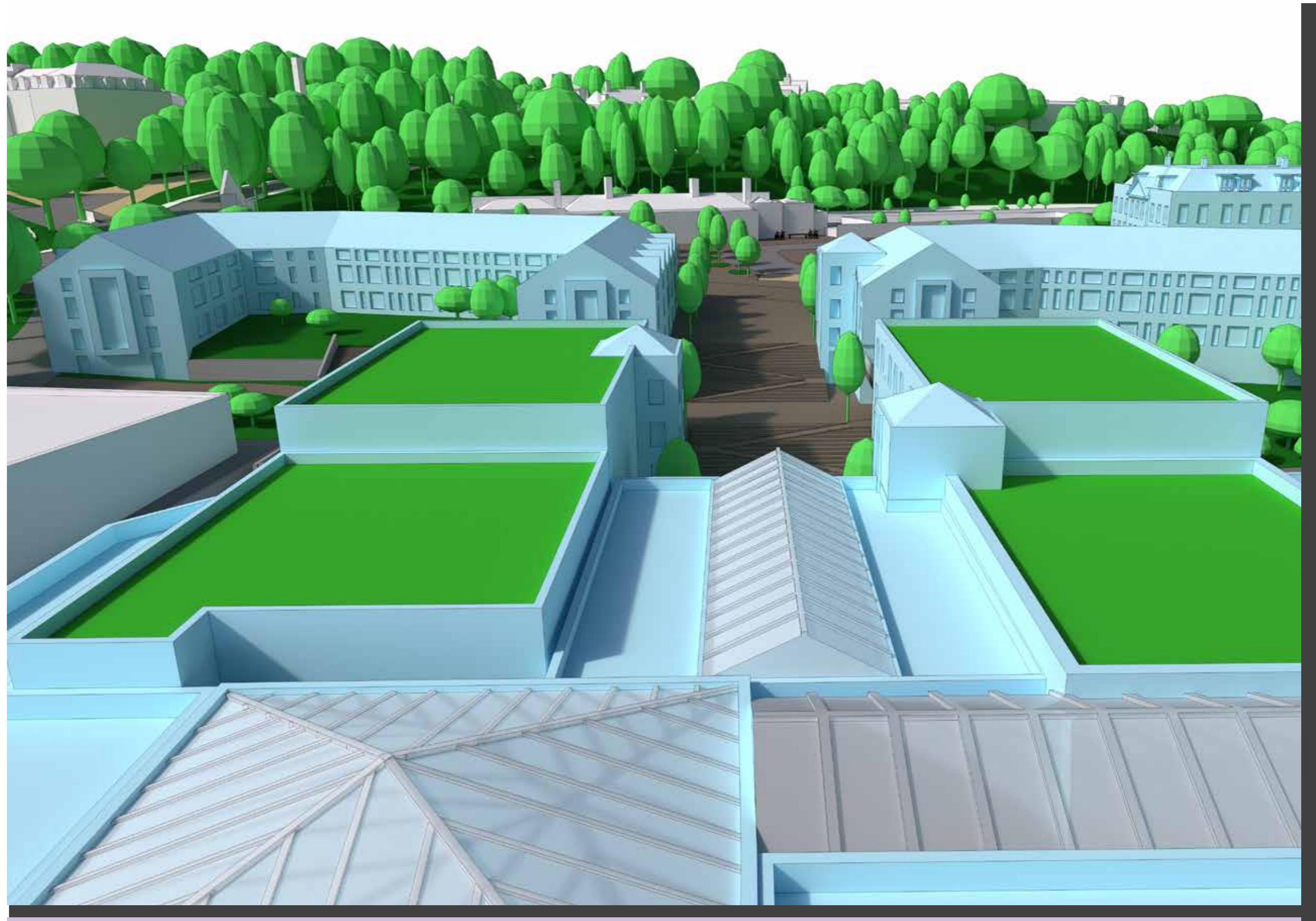
Artists Impression: Station Terrace



Green roofs and podium gardens



Artists Impression: Station Gateway



CGI - Station Terrace



CGI - Station Gateway

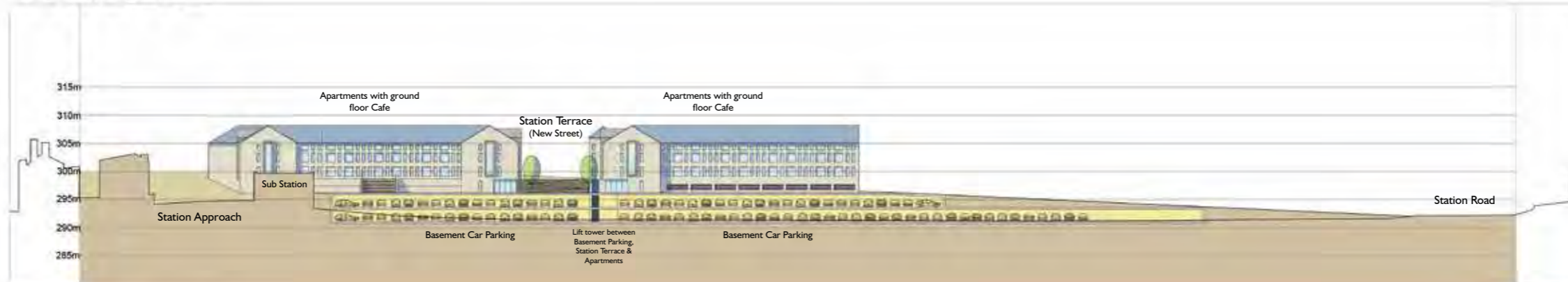




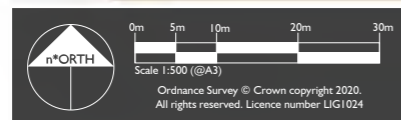
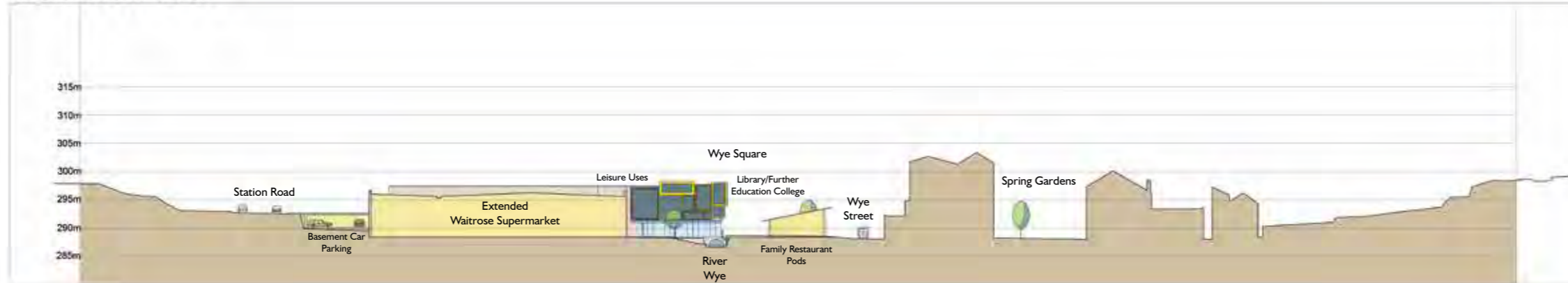
Section AA



Section BB



Section CC



Proposed Site Sections

6.8 Underneath Station Terrace will be the new town centre parking. The parking proposals incorporate the following:

- Providing new multi-level car parking behind The Springs which will make use of the change of level and hide the existing unattractive building.
- Wye Street surface and decked parking replaced
- 93 spaces more provided than the existing provision (with large enough bays for modern SUVs)
- Also incorporates servicing for business
- Green podium spaces at ground level above
- As modern transport demands alter during this century (for example with electric vehicles, driverless vehicles, less private car demand) there will be opportunities to repurpose parts of this space and to reduce and alter the parking offer.

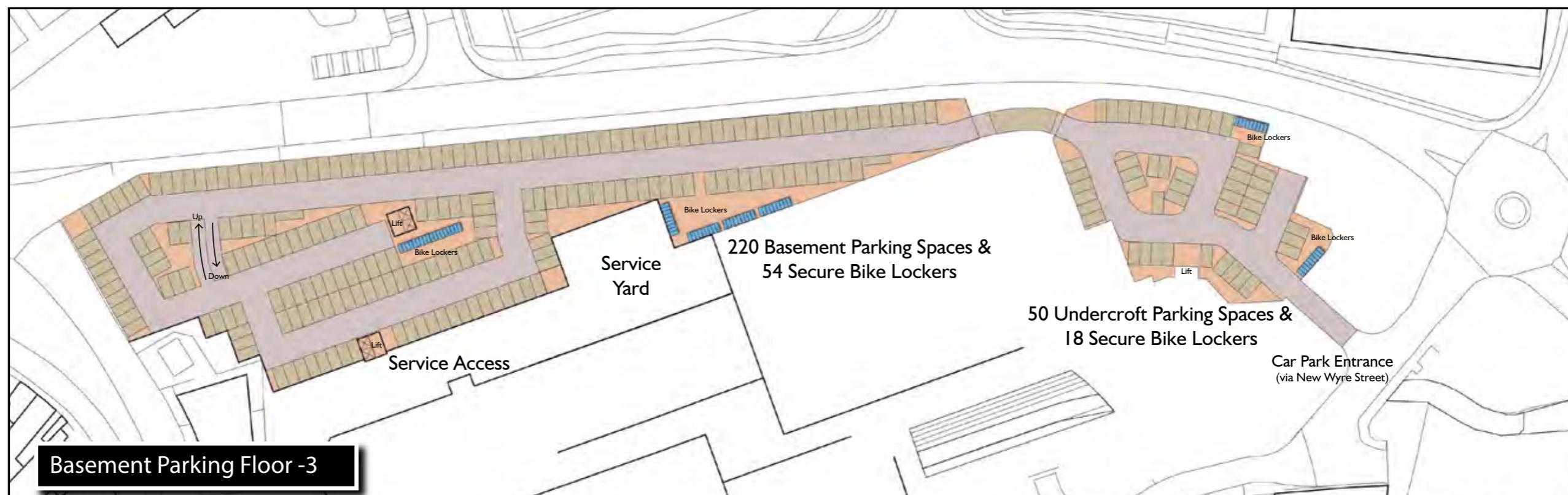


Figure 7: Basement Parking Plan (Locations and Floor 3)

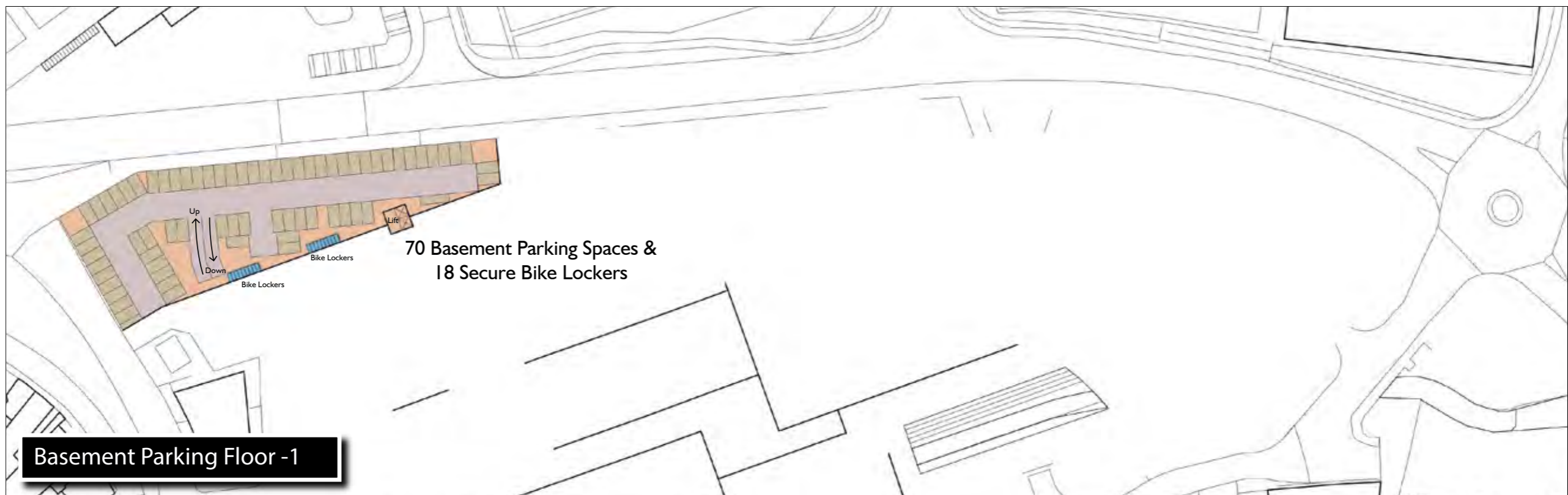
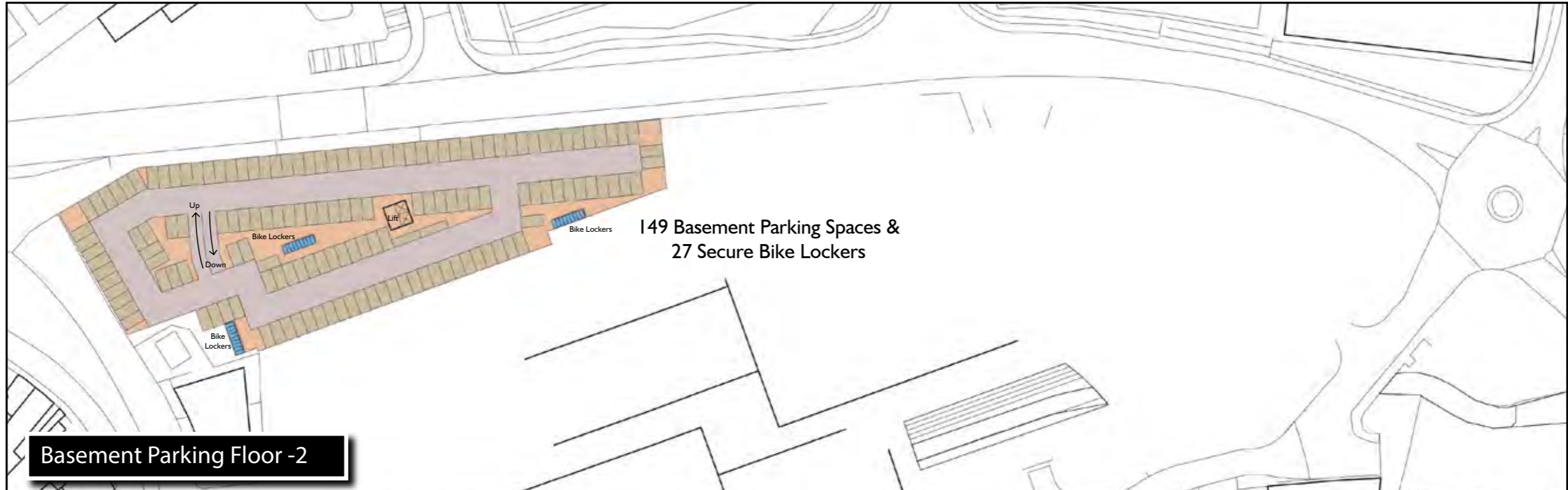


Figure 7: Basement Parking Plan (Floors 1 & 2)

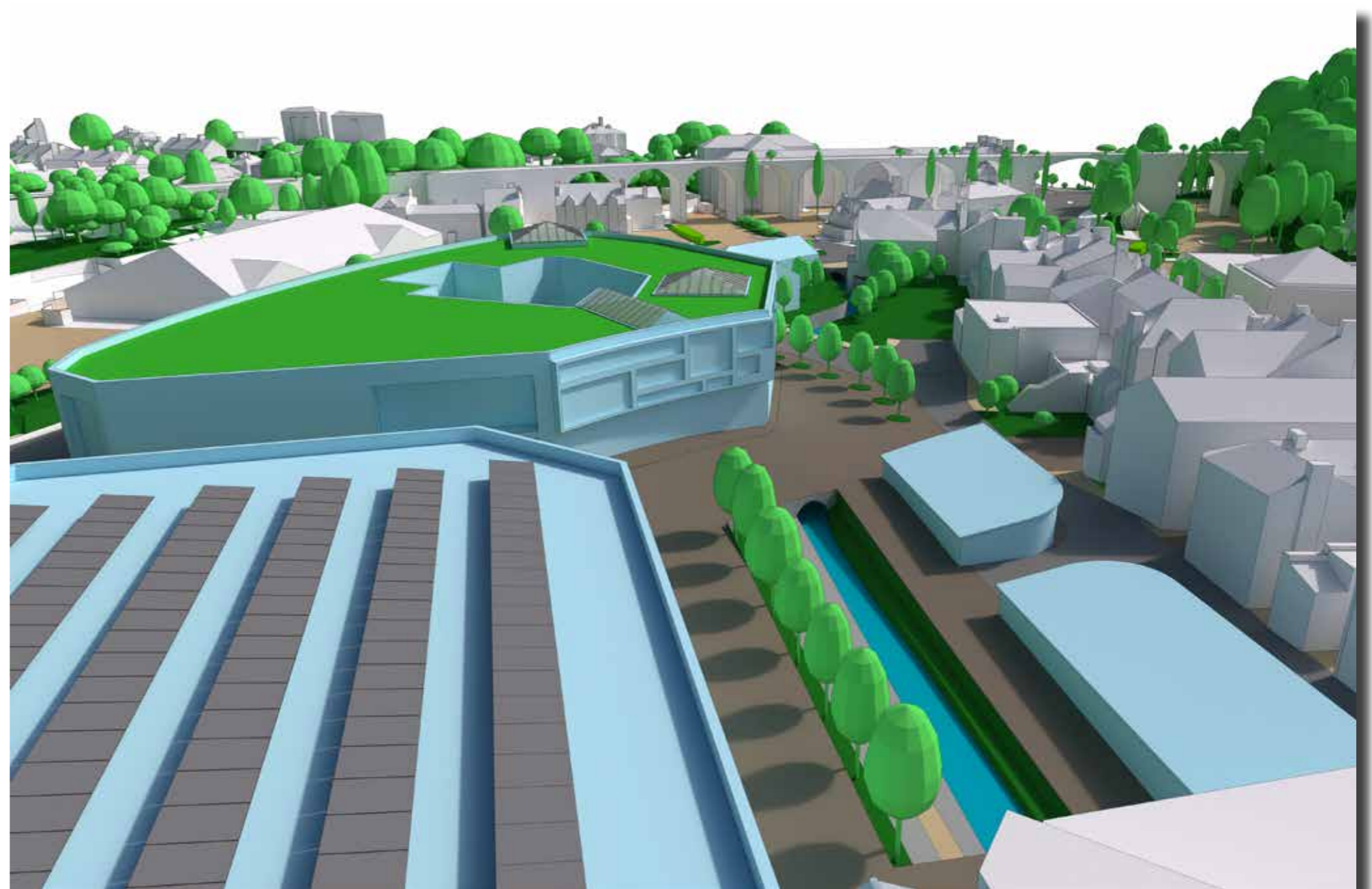
### Wye Square and the Springs

#### 6.9 Proposals include:

- Using existing surface level car parking to create a new high quality public space - Wye Square – including making a landscape feature of the revealed River Wye.
- Introducing a major new leisure attraction (such as a mainstream cinema) with complementary family restaurants near to it which will provide new facilities and mask the rear buildings of Spring Gardens.
- Improving the appearance of the current Waitrose store to face the square.
- Installing a new giant digital screen on a façade of the new building, this will be used to present arts and local information, creating a feature and attracting people to the new space.
- Introducing new public toilets and a Changing Places (fully disabled accessible) toilet.
- Providing a potential new college facility for further education courses delivered by Buxton & Leek College College (subject to University of Derby decision).
- Providing a potential new public library facility, potentially combined with a community crèche (subject to Derbyshire County Council decision).
- A new three-storey apartment building on the opposite side of New Wye Street to complement this new town centre eastern gateway and provide opportunities for town centre living.
- Improving the appearance of the pedestrian route to and from Spring Gardens via Wye Street.
- Internal refurbishment and enhancements to The Springs, including removing the canopy on Spring Gardens, an

enhanced entrance to Wye Square and a new entrance to Station Terrace.

- Opportunities for green roofs and solar panels on new and existing roofs.



CGI - Wye Square



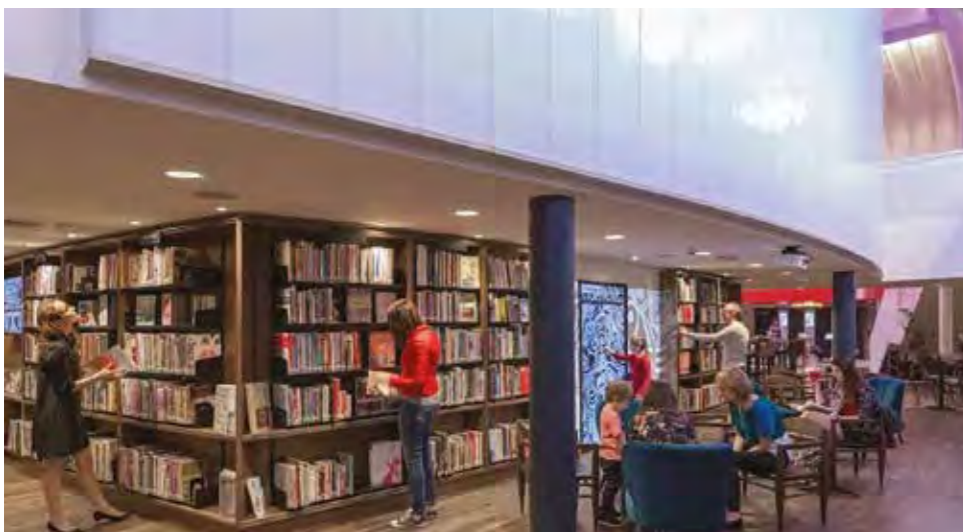
Revealing the River Wye



New College Building



Artists Impression: Wye Square



New Library



Digital Screens



New restaurant uses overlooking Wye Square

## Spring Gardens

- Enhancing the gateway to the rest of the town centre by creating a new wider pedestrian crossing directly at the end of Spring Gardens across Terrace Road (other crossings will be removed to make sure that vehicle flows are not significantly impacted).
- Promoting the re-use of vacant upper floors: e.g. by providing residential accommodation in the former Grove Hotel and the Royal Arcade building next door, and working with landlords to bring workspace and residential to the upper floors of other properties.
- Bringing a new retail use back to the former M&S store - this may be another large store or may be broken up for several smaller stores for independents. In both options, a route will through will be preserved.
- Grants to help restore historic shop fronts on Spring Gardens delivered by a supplementary £1m Heritage Action Zone scheme which the Council has already secured funding towards.
- Exploring opportunities to improve rear courtyards as the 'Yards Quarter' with spaces for independent creative businesses above and behind shops.
- Improving the street environment of Spring Gardens by reducing street clutter (including the concrete cubes) and providing new seating.
- Providing new public space focal points on Spring Gardens, linking with wider development proposals. These will include new surfacing, new seating and opportunities for street entertainment, which could form part of wider town centre festival trails. These spaces will also provide an opportunity for local artist-led public art which will reflect Buxton's distinctive character.

- Creating an enhanced public space in front of Hats Travel (formerly Thomas Cook) and improving the historic buildings here.
- Removing the existing canopy at the entrance to The Springs and creating a new public space here.
- Cycle parking provided in key locations on Spring Gardens and Wye Square.

## Other Projects

6.10 The proposals also include other projects that are not limited to the three focal points. These include:

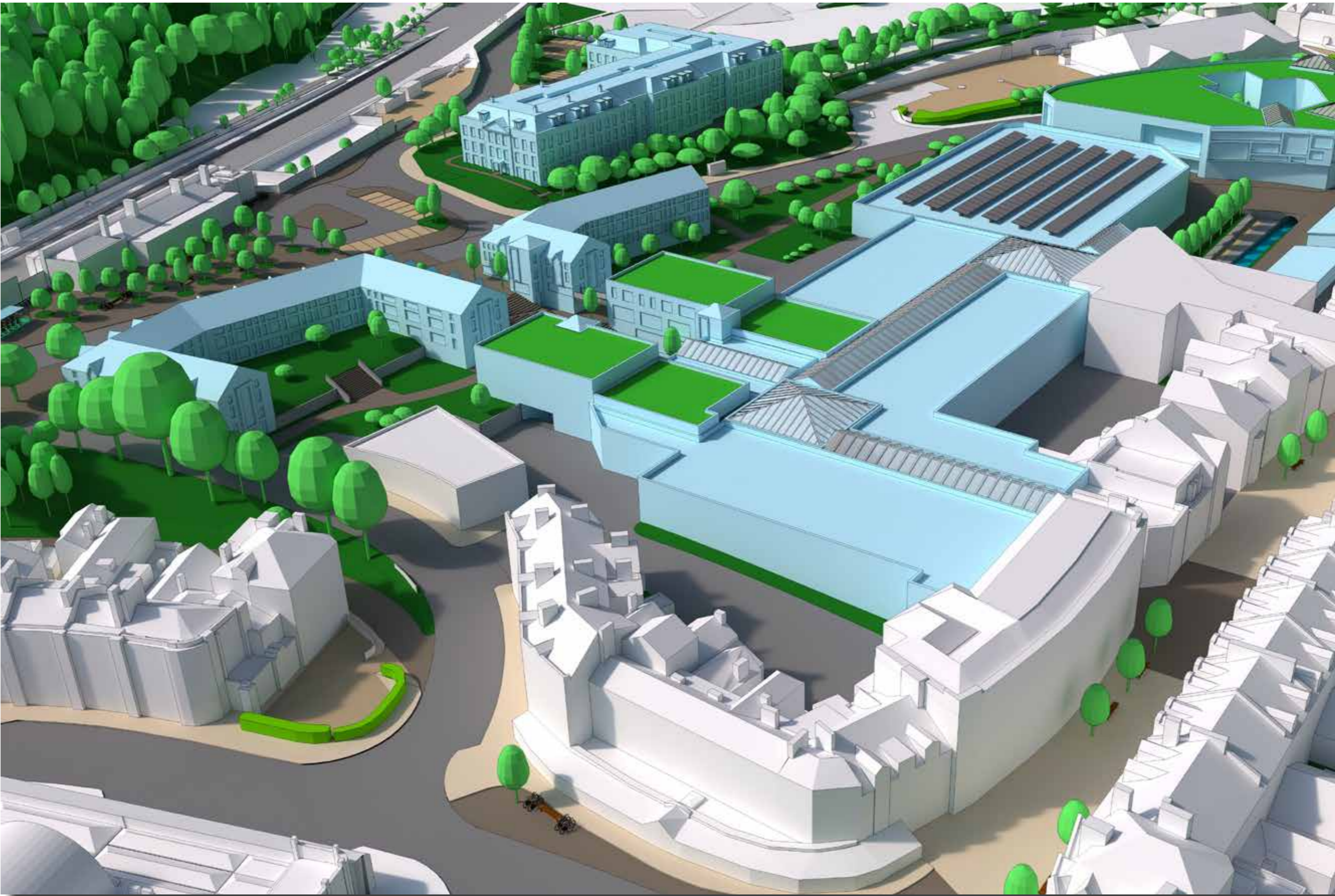
- New electric vehicle charging points and card payments within the car park as well as providing spaces for staff and commuters who may need a longer time period.
- Improving fibre broadband to support local businesses.



Public Art as play



Bike stands integrated within the public realm



CGI - Aerial perspective showing redevelopment of The Springs



Photomontage - Gardens Square

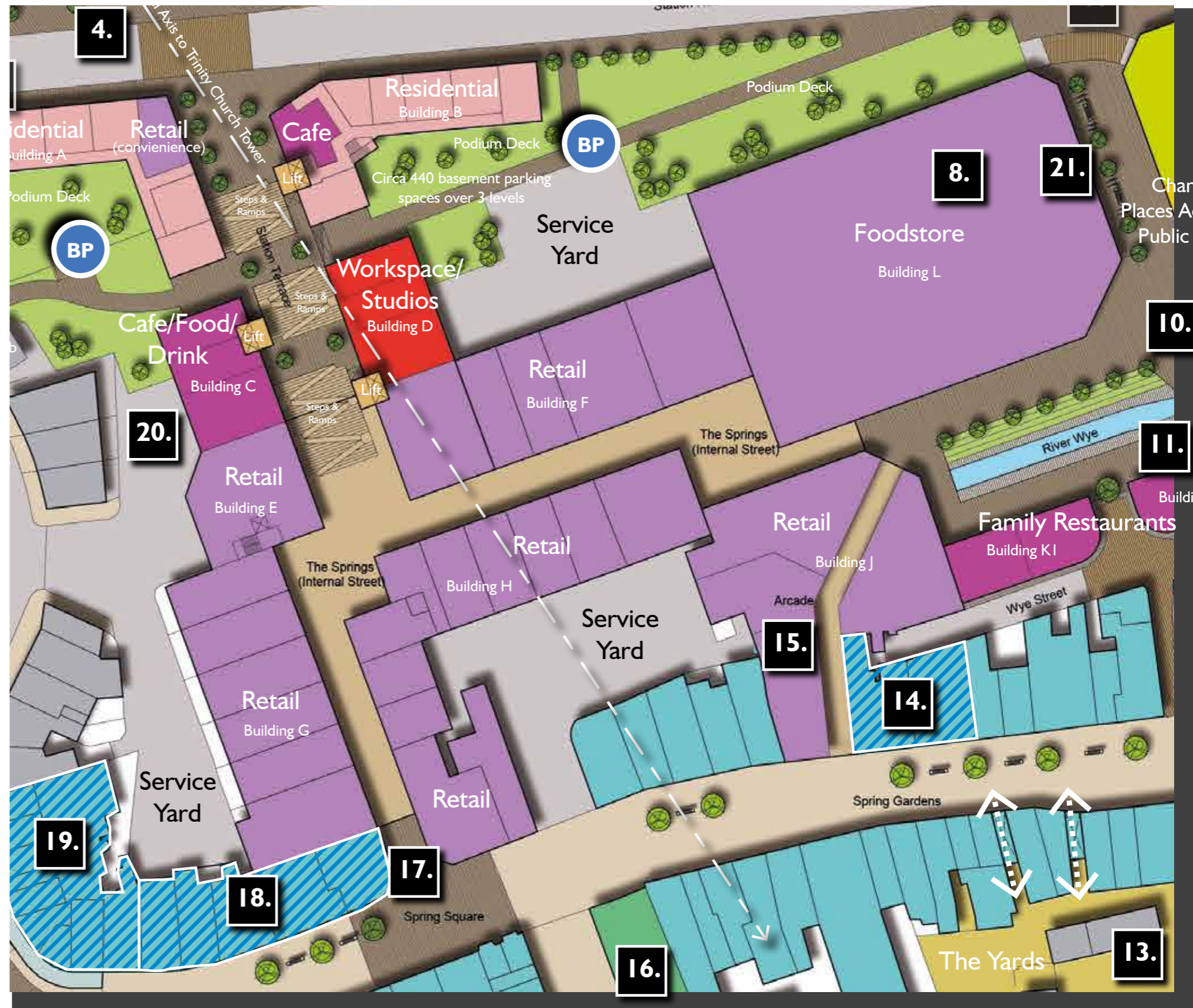




Photomontage - Spring Gardens

## Next Steps


















- 7.1 The current proposals have accompanied HPBC's submission of the Business Case to the Government's Future High Street Fund. Hopefully this will result in the granting of funding to enable these proposals.
- 7.2 HPBC have also been working with key development partners to enable the proposals to be brought forward.
- 7.3 Further work, working with development partners, will be need to progress delivery options and to develop the masterplan proposals into detailed designs.
- 7.4 HPBC will continue to engage with stakeholders through the following stages.
- 7.5 The new proposal will need to secure planning permission. At this stage there will be further public consultation on the detailed proposals with opportunity for public comment.
- 7.6 The challenges to town centres remain a key concern, especially in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the retail and hospitality sectors. The proposals presented here will provide Buxton with the strongest opportunity to withstand these challenges in the longer term and provide for a positive future.



The Masterplan (Inset)

# 7. NEXT STEPS

### Key

-  Future High Street Fund Boundary
-  Target Note References
-  Basement Car Parks
-  New Local Public Art Feature
-  Retail Uses (Primarily Retained)
-  Cafe/Restaurant/Food/Drink Uses
-  Residential Uses
-  Library & Community Nursery
-  Further Education Uses
-  Leisure Uses
-  Workspace/Studio Uses
-  Changing Places Accessible Public Toilets
-  Buildings with Upper Floor Use Potential
-  Upper Floor Pilot Projects
-  Potential Longer Term Redevelopment Site
-  The 'Yards Quarter'
-  Other Buildings Retained with Current Uses

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m 60m  
 Scale 1:1,250 (@ A3)  
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### Target Notes

1. Historic former gable end wall of LMS Station retained & used as 'plinth' for residential apartments.
2. New residential uses along Station Road provide enclosure, activity & surveillance to what currently is a back of town centre location.
3. Space created for bike hire & secure bike lockers with link to relocated bus stop with scheduled bus services between station, town & wider Peak District.
4. New gateway to Buxton from Station with enhanced public realm, wayfinding & direct physical & visual axis into Spring Gardens via 'Station Terrace': a new street.
5. Station forecourt retains parking for disabled users, drop off & electric vehicle charging points.
6. New uses adjoining station including elderly accommodation, health & local authority services connected into town via the new 'Station Terrace' & other new connections from Station Road.
7. Access to undercroft & basement level car parks.
8. Remodelled Waitrose store.
9. Leisure Building with double height atrium with main leisure floor over car park.
10. New public space in the form of Wye Square surrounded by dynamic all-day uses. Giant digital picture frames cover building facades & display art, performances & films to the users of the space.
11. Food & drink uses within 'Pods' screening the rear of buildings on Wye Street.
12. New space created around renovated glass pavilion units & historic public house. New artwork installed to act as focus.
13. Creative 'Yards Quarter' offers potential for low key development opportunities for re-use of buildings & access to upper floors to encourage their re-use.
14. Upper Floor Pilot Project exploring the opportunity for conversion to residential use.
15. Former M&S building either retained as single retail unit or redeveloped as shopping & food Arcade.
16. Argos building has potential to be redeveloped for residential uses with retail on ground floor.
17. Existing canopy removed & new space created at entrance to The Springs. Other clutter on Spring Gardens removed & Public Realm refreshed.
18. Upper Floor Pilot Project to Royal Arcade exploring the opportunity for conversion to workspace and/or studios.
19. Upper Floor Pilot Project to Grove Hotel exploring the opportunity for conversion to serviced apartments/residential use.
20. Access to services yards below 'Station Terrace'.
21. Cycle Parking provided in key locations on Spring Gardens & Wye Square.

The Masterplan

