



NEWHAVEN

Town Centre Concept Masterplan and Options Study

November 2016

Draft 01

Prepared for Newhaven Town Council by AECOM

My Community 

AECOM

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Introduction



Site Appreciation and Initial Workshop



Town Centre Concept Proposals



*Public Realm Improvements Strategy
Concept*



Next Steps







1. Introduction

Newhaven is a town in the Lewes District of East Sussex in England. It lies at the mouth of the River Ouse, on the English Channel coast, and is a ferry port for service to France. The Town has been the focus of regeneration and development initiatives.

Newhaven Town Council (NTC) are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town and are consulting with the community, so that they can make their views known on how they would like to see Newhaven grow and change in the future, and what they would like to keep and protect.

Through the Department for Communities and Local Government neighbourhood planning programme, AECOM has been commissioned by Locality to assist the NTC to explore masterplanning issues and design concepts relating to the redevelopment and improvement of the Town Centre.

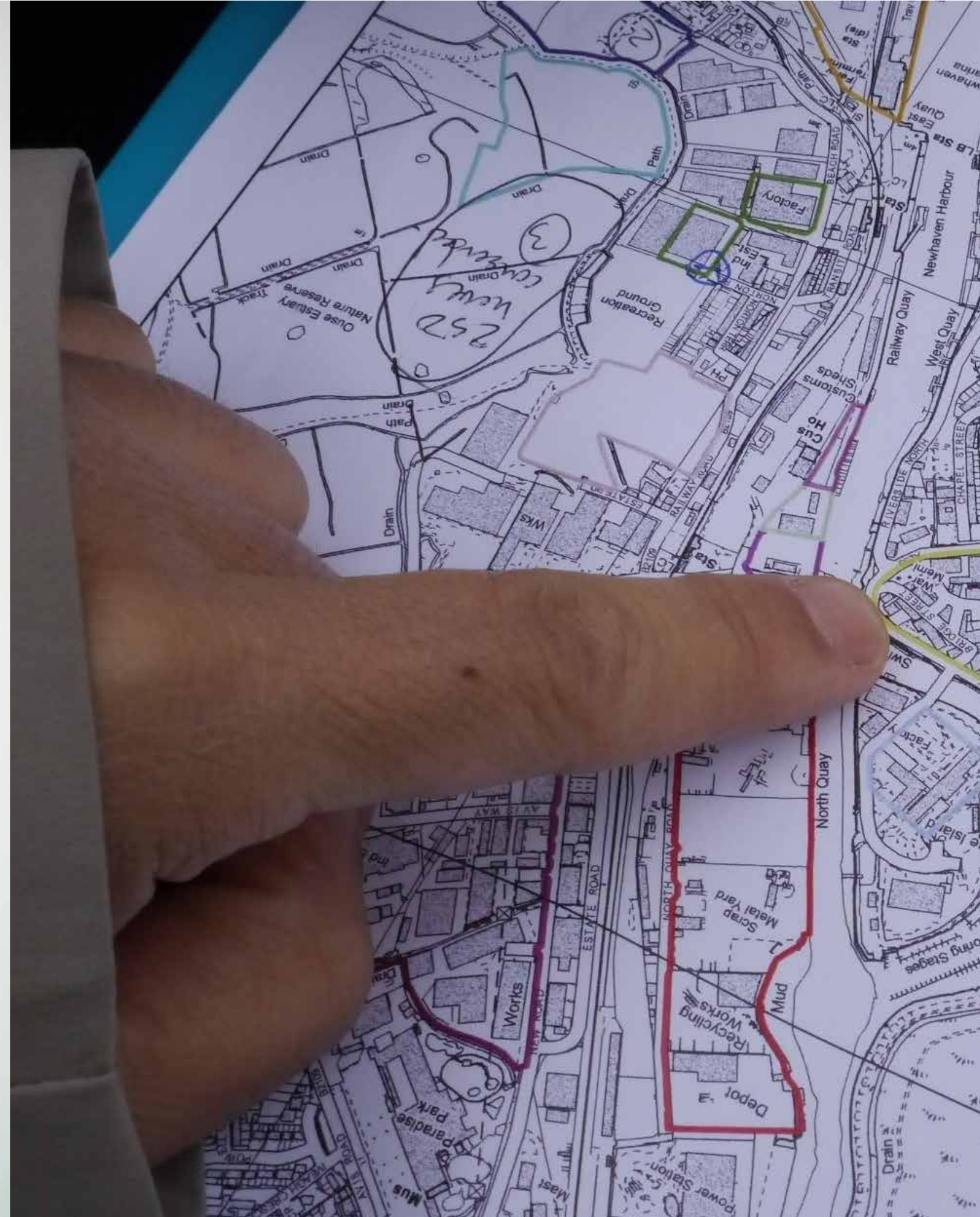
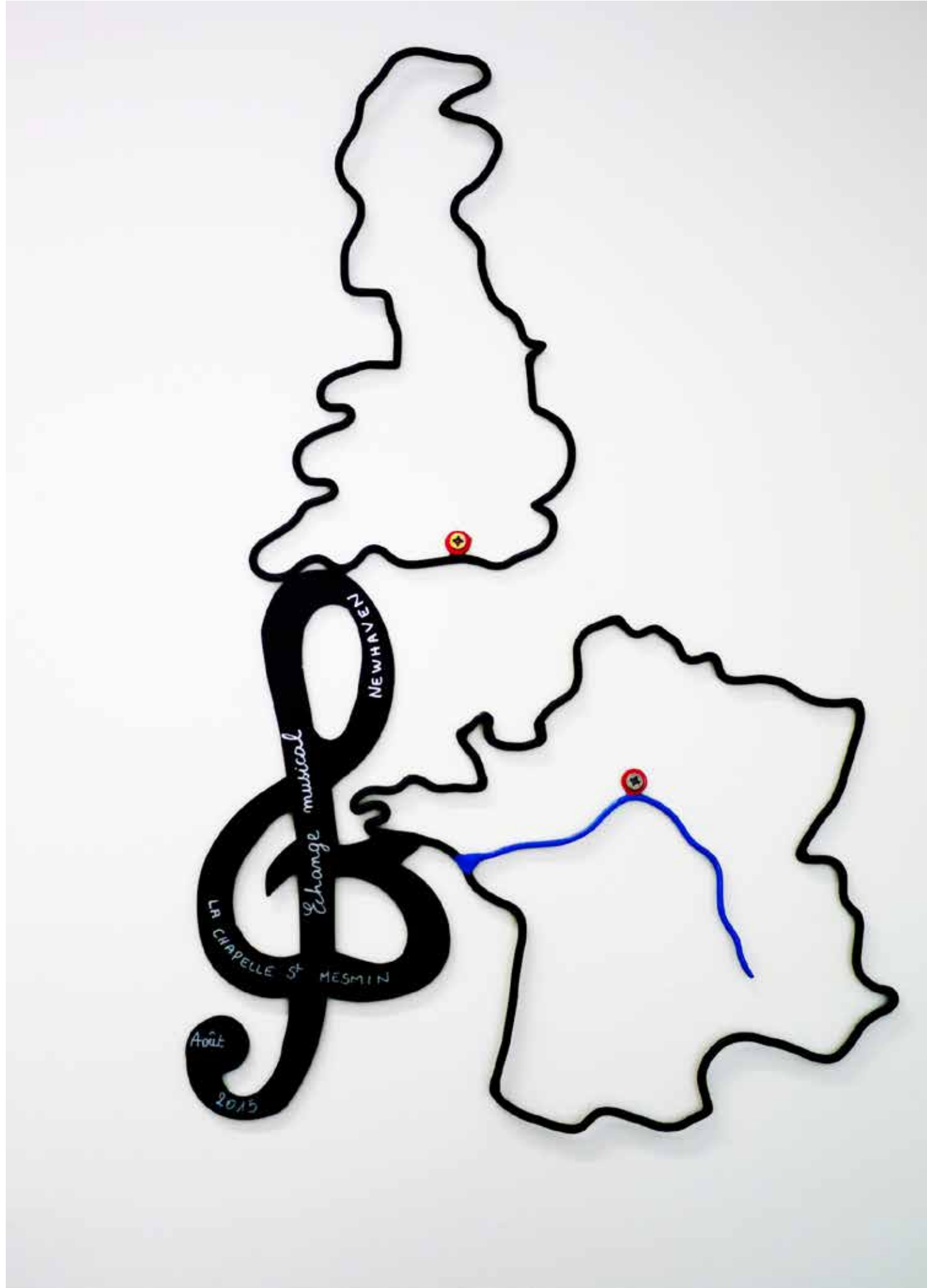
Work carried out so far includes an inception meeting with NTC members, a site visit and walkabout followed by a workshop. During the visit, representatives of the NTC showed AECOM staff the area, discussed the previous work they had carried out and relayed their desires and aspirations for the area together with a strong steer for the Concept Masterplan.

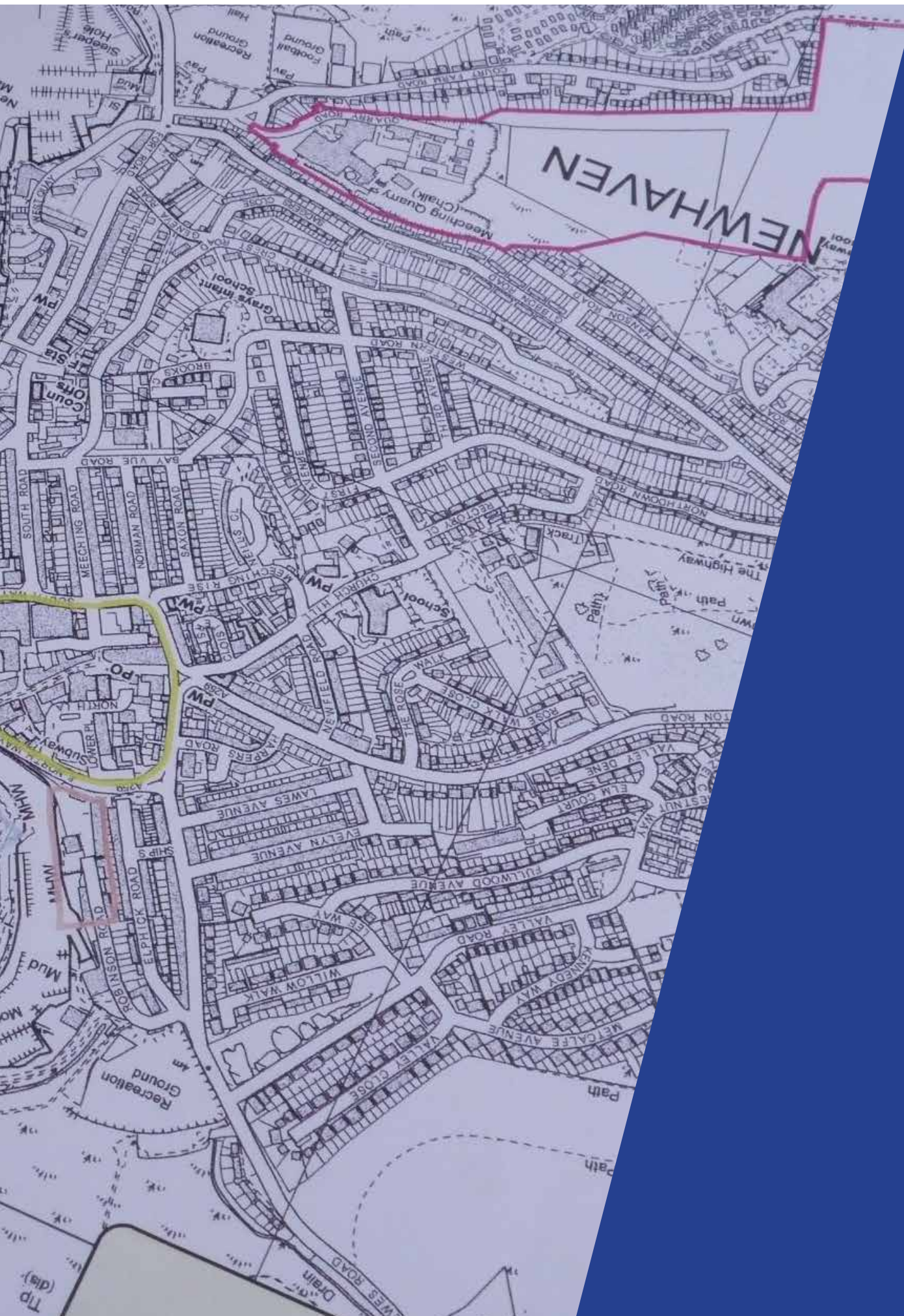
During the workshop initial desires and options were outlined and drawn together by the NTC and AECOM. With these AECOM produced an initial set of analysis drawings and a plan of proposals that was sent back for comments to the NTC. With the feedback a revised plan was produced. From this the NTC gave a steer to AECOM and it was decided that a Public Realm Improvements Strategy should be the focus of the next stage of work.

This document summarises the work carried out, including the Public Realm Improvements Strategy.

The following steps were undertaken to produce this report:

- Initial meeting and site visit;
- Area appraisal;
- Collating existing information from third parties
- Preparation of initial options for the redevelopment of the area,
- Revisions to the initial Concept Masterplan;
- Development of a Public Realm Improvements Strategy Concept for the Town Centre and;
- Preparation of this draft Concept Masterplan and Study Options document.





2. Site Appreciation and Initial Workshop

This section of the report briefly outlines the site and context appreciation and some of the issues and opportunities relating to Newhaven Town Centre. This forms the basis for the initial concept masterplans and the focus on the Public Realm Improvements Strategy.

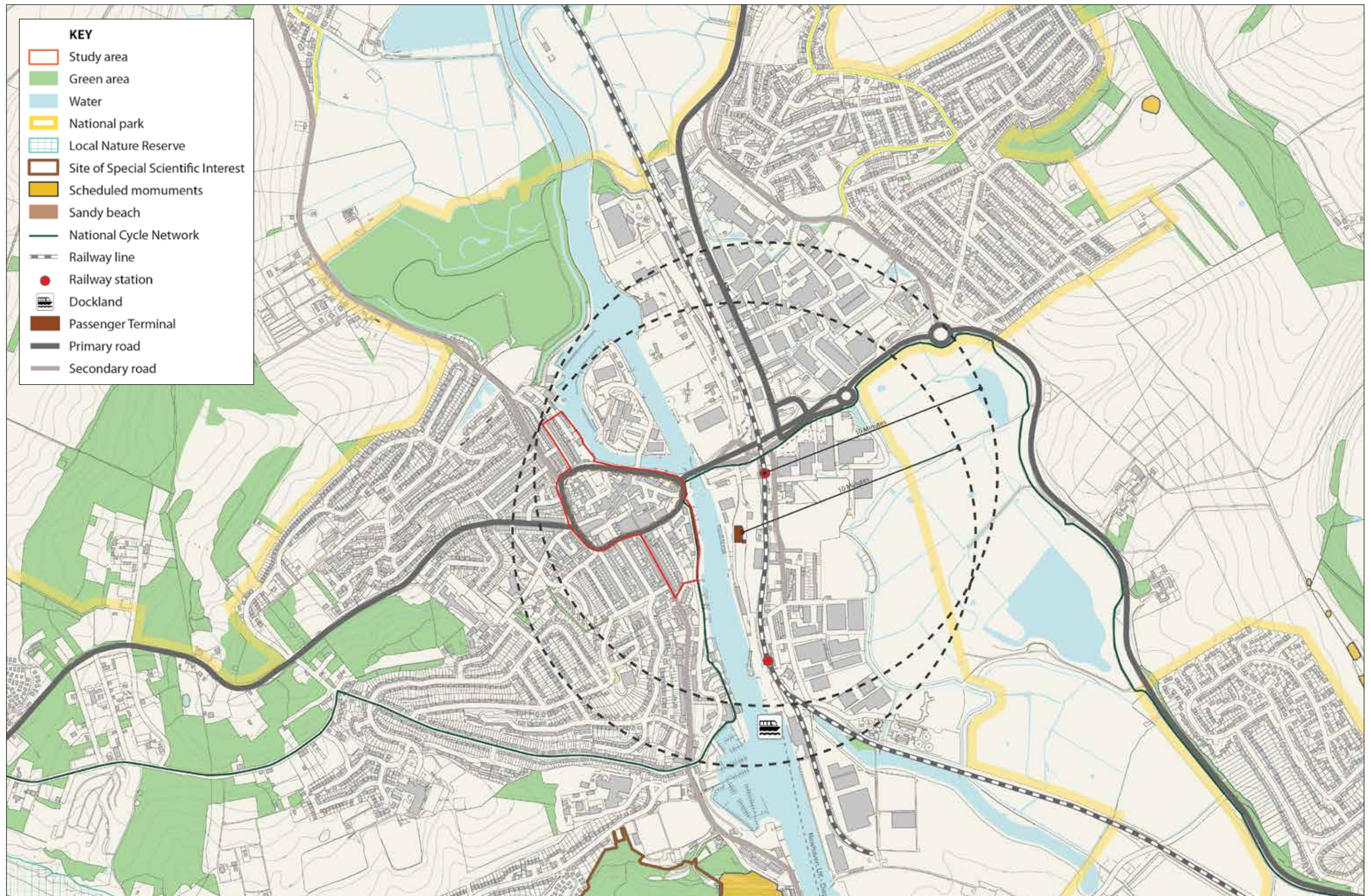


Figure 1. Map showing Newhaven Town Centre Study Area in red line and its context. Dashed circles show a 10 min walking catchment from the rail station and ferry terminal.

2.1 Context and Analysis

Newhaven Town centre is located to the west of the River Ouse mouth. The A259 is the main road bridging the river and connecting the east and west banks. Crucially it is the vehicular and pedestrian link with the ferry terminal on the east bank and the railways station; both about 10 min away by foot.

The Town Centre core is surrounded by a ring road - North Way / Lewes Road - with multiple access points along it. Due to its engineering solution, it joins the Town centre at different levels; sometimes at street level and others it is raised from the immediate areas. This creates a dislocation and discontinuity with rest of the surrounding streets.

The areas around the town are primarily residential to the west and south and a strong component of industrial uses related to the river and port activity to the east. A marina lies to far west part of Newhaven. This area is where new residential developments are emerging. Within the Town Centre there is strong concentration of mixed use, public facilities, shops and some residential.

The Town Centre has undergone a programme improvements and new development. The emerging results of this were visible during our site visit in the form of regeneration of shops and retail space and are an element fostering change.

These land uses, combined with the ferry activity, create different synergies related to visitors, residents carrying out day to day activities and port/marine activities. Movement within the different parts of the Town are difficult given the few crossing points and changes in level (see Figure 2).

East - west vehicular movements that do not stop in the Town centre go around the ring road. This concentrates a significant amount of vehicular traffic along the ring road which in turn creates severance with other parts of the town and an unpleasant pedestrian experience when accessing the town on foot. Similarly the layout of the town combined with the ring road disposition, creates an introverted Town Centre with backs facing the road. This results in a poor outlook from the Town and thus feels uninviting.

The site visit also informed a diagrammatic analysis of existing heights with the aim of identifying how much potential could there be for new development whilst keeping the low height and human scale of the Town (see Figure 3).

A closer examination of the inner areas of the Town Centre parts was carried out. This is presented as a series of comments in relation to issues and opportunities to consider for the redevelopment of the Town.



Access point to the Ferry Terminal



Bridge connecting east and west areas of River Ouse



Marina activity to the far south



Residential Areas around West Key

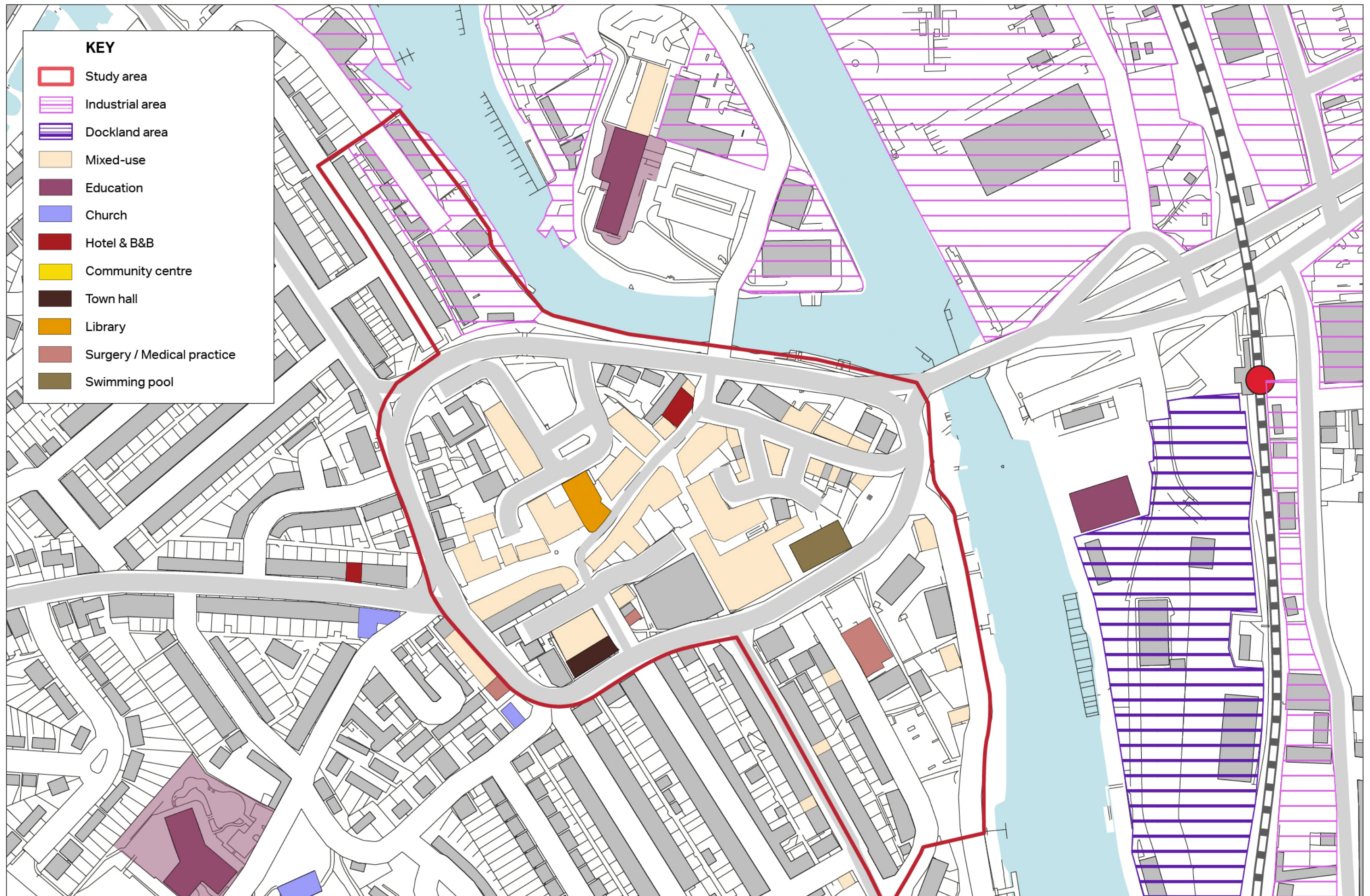


Figure 2. Map showing land uses within Newhaven Town Centre Study Area.

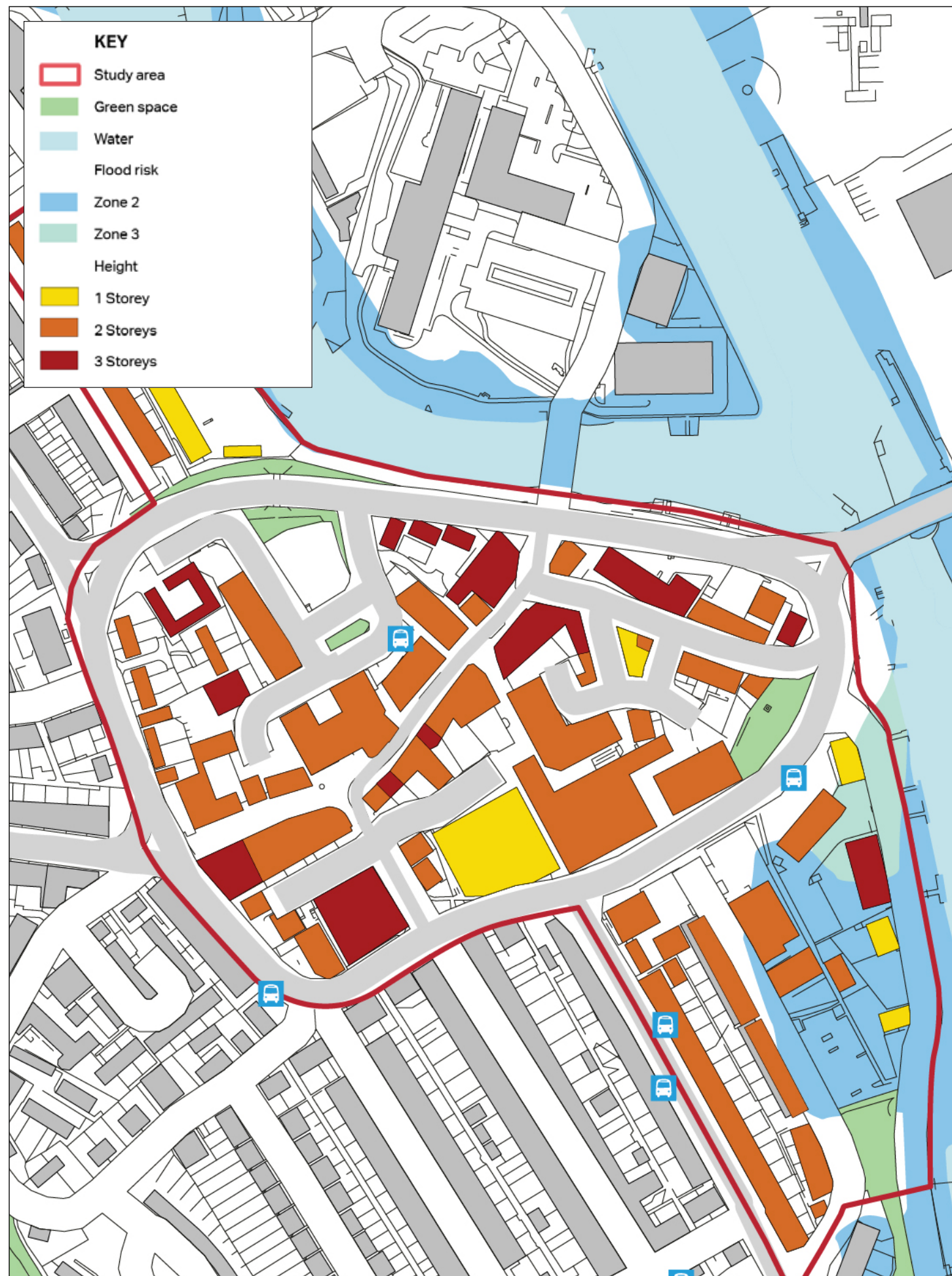


Figure 3. Map showing existing building heights and flood zones within Newhaven Town Centre Study Area..

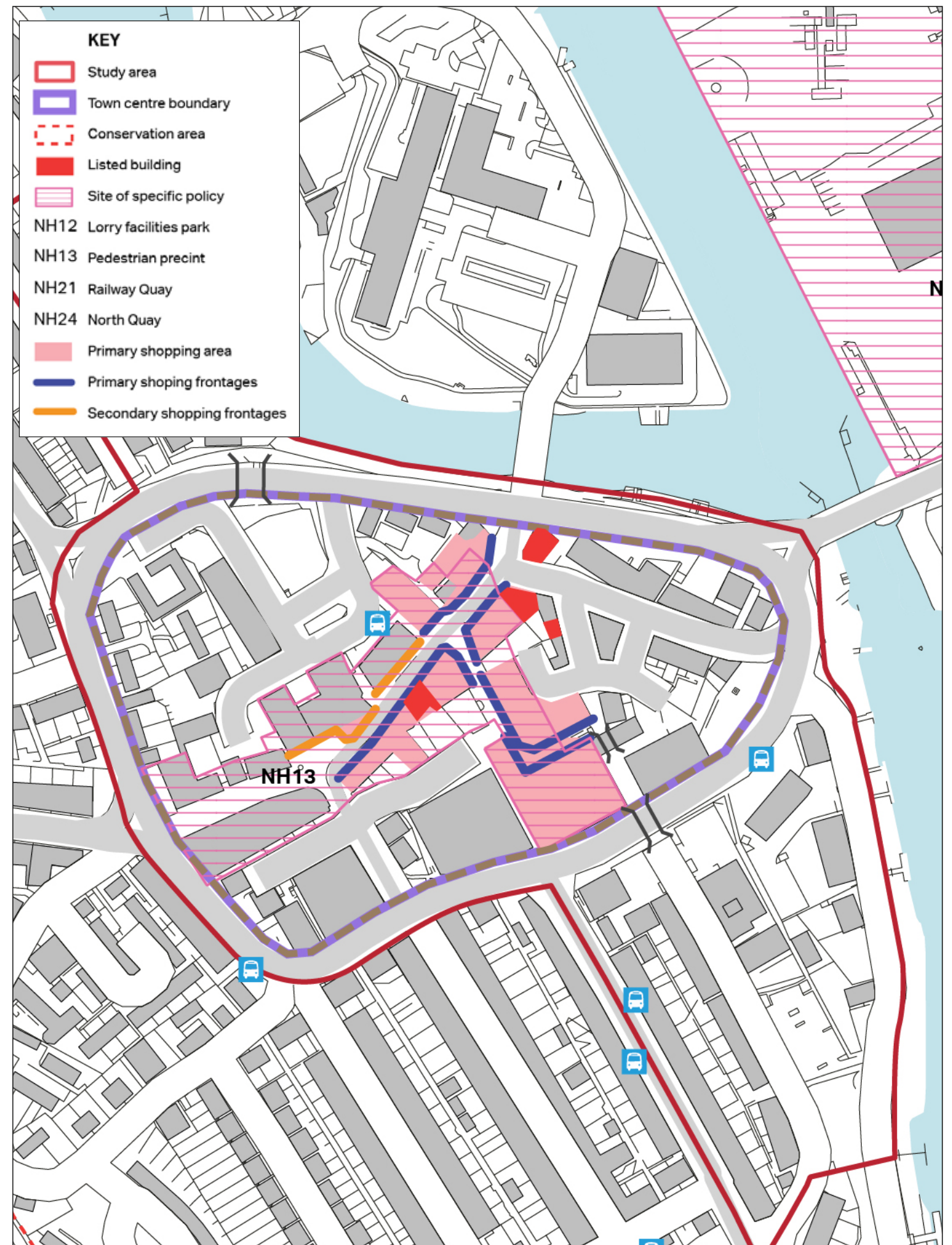


Figure 4. Map showing key policies and main shopping frontages within Newhaven Town Centre Study Area..

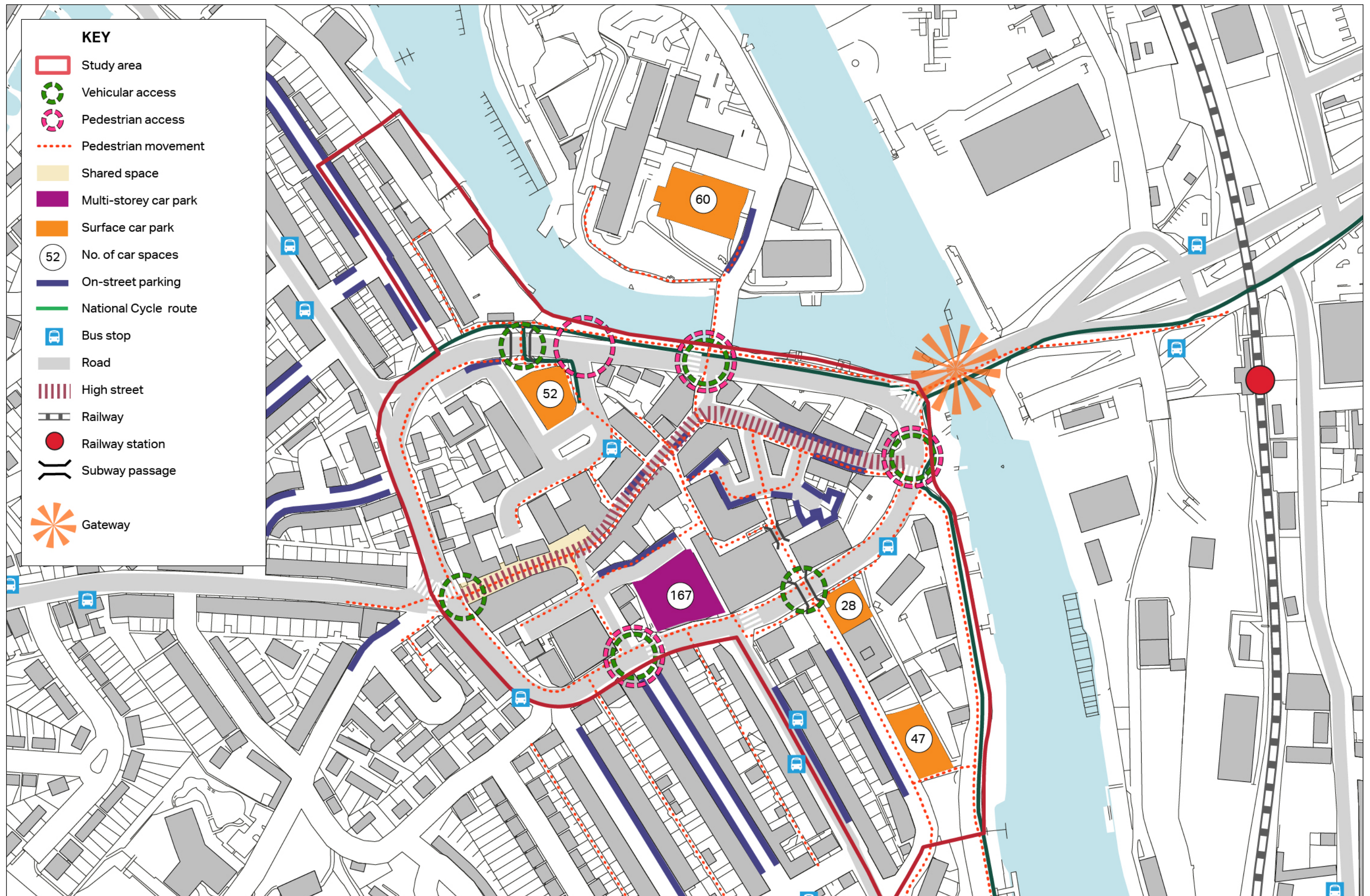


Figure 5. Map showing the movement, gateways and frontages analysis of areas within the Town Centre Study Area.

During the site visit and engagement with the NTC it became clear that the main problems were concentrated within the Town centre. Thus, this area became the focus for ideas and intervention.

The town centre functions along two different patterns. One is the vehicular movement along the High Street with strong connection to Meeching Road and Bridge Street.

The main access frontages and vehicular access points are located along these streets. Because of the layout and disposition of roads, the Town Centre functions in an introverted way. Meaning that this area as a whole turns its back to the rest of Newhaven, and importantly it creates a poor and unattractive outlook when approaching the Town Centre.

This negative effect is compounded by the nature of the ring road that has a vehicular emphasis to the detriment of the pedestrian movement. This makes it difficult, unpleasant and sometimes unsafe to reach the Town Centre by foot.

2.2 Site Issues

The site visit and the workshop with NTC members and AECOM highlighted a number of issues mainly related to the Town centre core and its environs.

- The ring road which surrounds Newhaven Town centre concentrates a significant amount of vehicular traffic coming from the surrounding areas which creates a barrier and a discontinuity between the Town centre and the rest of the urban area.
- Access points to the Town centre core are visually unattractive and unappealing. Pedestrian and vehicular gateways to the Town centre are not clearly identifiable from the ring road.
- Building facades look unattractive, tired and in need of maintenance. A poor public realm appearance along with outdated and unappealing street furniture, signage and shop fronts contribute to a poor visual appearance of the streetscape in general.
- Cars parked along High Street and Bridge Street and in the inner part of the built-up area are visually intrusive, reduce the quality of the area and ruin overall Town centre street scene.
- The severance created by the raised ring road around the Town centre along with the presence of underpasses has generated a visible poor and unpleasant pedestrian experience when accessing the town on foot.
- The presence of sub utilised residual spaces and numerous blank walls within the Town centre creates unsafe and unwelcome feeling.
- Town centre is pedestrian unfriendly and uninviting with most of the space shared with vehicles and used for car park uses.
- The Town centre area is an introverted site with a backs and fronts problem due the ring road layout and the internal street disposition. This creates a poor and unattractive outlook when approaching the Town Centre from the ring road and when walking within its core.



Road severance



Poor outlook on main access points



Poor public realm appearance



Residual spaces that feel unsafe and unloved



Difficult access due to ringroad levels in relation to centre access



Town Centre backs facing ringroad and rest of Town

2.3 Site Opportunities

However some of the site issues also offer opportunities to enhance the Town Centre; these were identified as follows:

- Enhance the access to the Town centre creating attractive gateways and improve the overall outlook of the urban area changing the perception of the ring road.
- Use the sculptures/installations already on site to make entry points to the Town centre easily identifiable by different themed sculpture/ installation.
- Take advantage of existing Town pattern and of the strong concentration of mixed use, public facilities, shops and residential buildings in order to create a positive, lively and vibrant centre for the surrounding community.
- Take advantage of the ongoing regeneration initiatives along with new development opportunities to improve the public realm and regenerate the Town centre area.
- Make most of the fact that the Town centre is well served by public transport being about 10 minutes away by foot from Newhaven Town railway station and Newhaven ferry terminal. Moreover the area is served by numerous buses towards Brighton and Eastbourne.
- Create a friendly and inviting pedestrian environment, making road crossing safer, and pedestrian experience within the Town centre more pleasant.
- Create natural surveillance and safer environments bringing life and new uses to sub utilised and residual spaces in the Town centre.
- Regenerate public realm enhancing building facades and regularising signage and shop fronts. Improve the environment of the Town centre improving the pavement strategy and enhancing greenery.
- Take advantage of the proximity to the water enhancing the views to the river to improve the environment of the Town centre.



Bring life to unloved squares and spaces



Potential to enhance greenery on the Town



New attractive facilities could be enhanced with public realm improvements to create new gateways



Potential to implement a programme of facade improvements



Existing facilities could be reprovided and combined with new development to intensify use, aid feasibility and regenerate public space



Create a positive public realm outlook that helps business thrive



Make safer and attractive crossing that change the perception of the road as a space for vehicles only



Improve the outlook of access points



Create active public spaces



Take advantage of subutilised sites for new development



Build on local art heritage and history



Improve the appearance of the High Street





3. Town Centre Concept Proposals

Part of the engagement with the NTC involved carrying out a workshop between members of the Group and AECOM. During this workshop a number of ideas and desires for the Town centre were outlined.

As a result AECOM generated a first Concept Plan showcasing the different ideas and how these could be assembled as a cohesive whole. It offered a combination of new development and public realm interventions at a significant scale. Yet the concept also kept buildings and parcels separated so these could be taken and mixed by the NTC to test different approaches.

The NTC considered this overall concept plan and gave AECOM feedback as to what they considered feasible and in line with their local aspirations and priorities. This resulted in a Revised Concept plan. The emphasis of this plan was to focus on fewer new development areas and more on public realm improvements.

With a steer from the NTC the last part of the work stream focused on developing a Public Realm Improvements Concept. This is covered in Section 4 of this report.

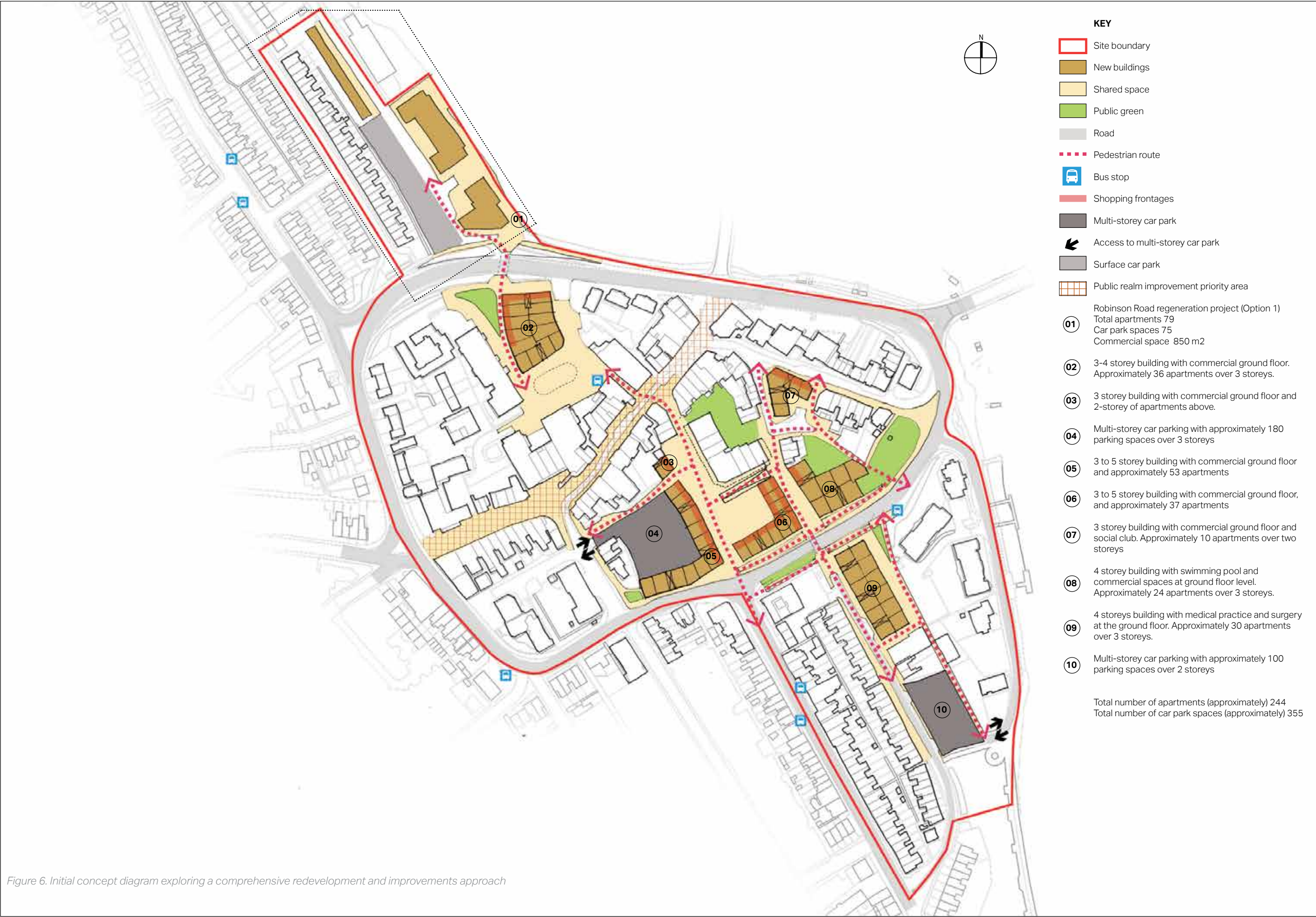


Figure 6. Initial concept diagram exploring a comprehensive redevelopment and improvements approach

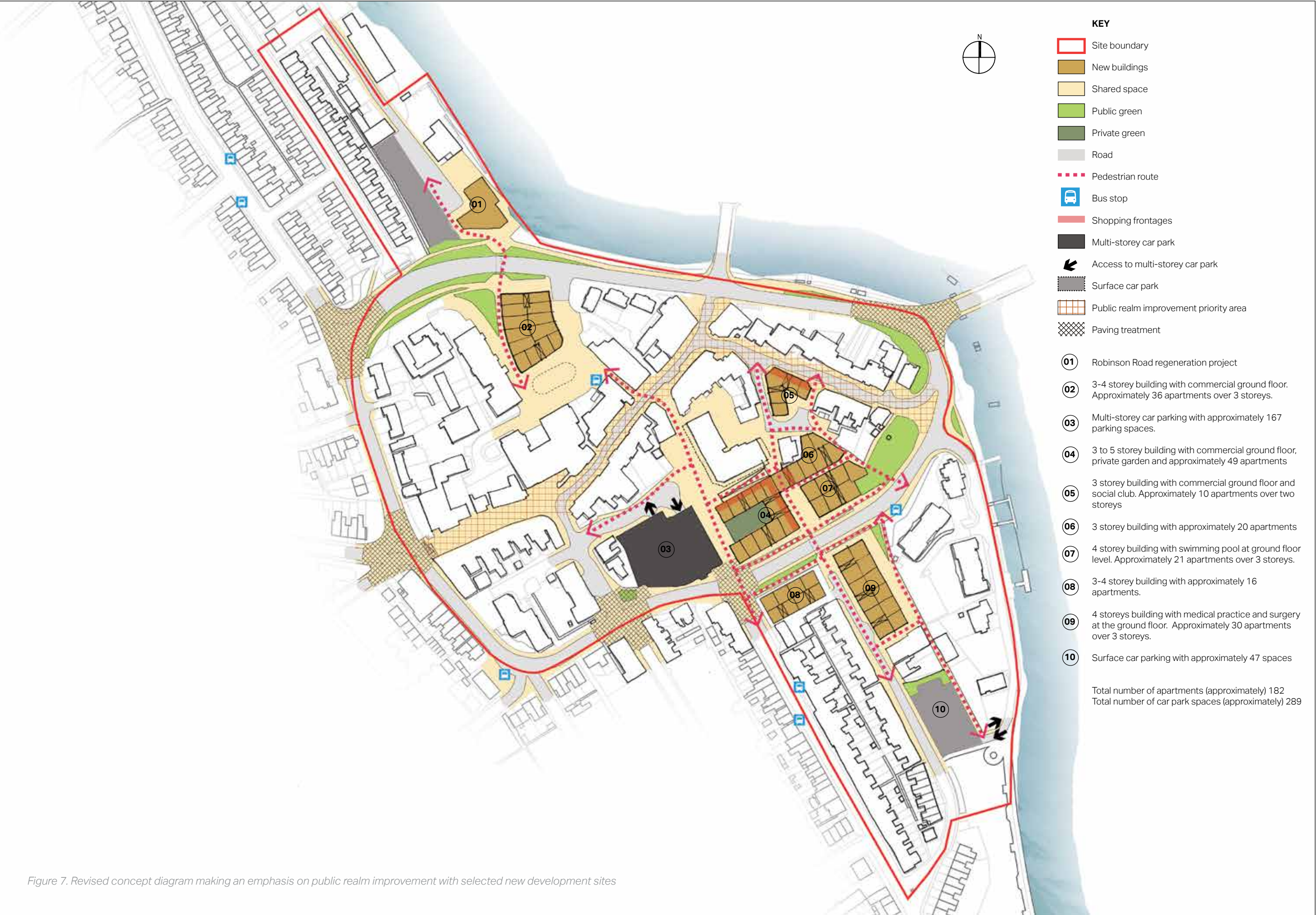
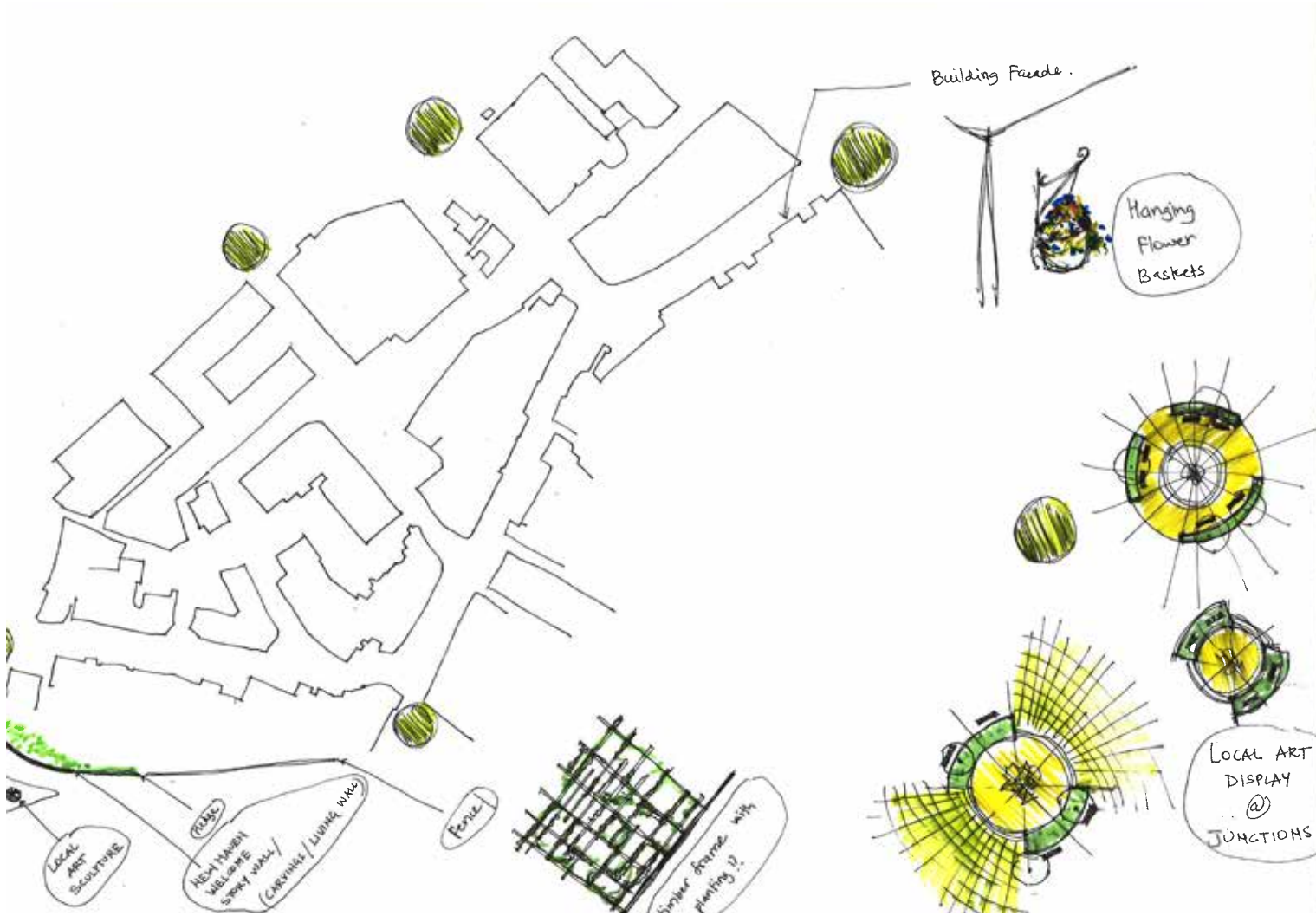


Figure 7. Revised concept diagram making an emphasis on public realm improvement with selected new development sites





4. Public Realm Improvements Strategy Concept

This section of the report develops a proposal for improvements to the public realm. It explains the concept and thinking behind the improvements with diagrams explaining the design process.

It offers an example of how gateways and the high street could be improved to revive the history of the Town.

The ideas centre on public realm and are offered as a menu that can be combined or further refined.

4.1 Introduction

Newhaven is a town with a strong sense of identity which is enhanced by the South Downs, the River Ouse and the coast. The people of Newhaven are proud of the maritime heritage of their town and the continuing status of the town as a Port.

There are two main elements in the Proposed Public Realm Improvement Strategy Concept :

- Entry Points/ Gateways Improvements
- High Street Improvements

4.2 Concept for the Entry Points / Gateway Improvement

The inspiration for the proposed design is taken from the random sculptures/ installations that have appeared in the Town. There are various Entry points to the Town Centre which are identified with a yellow circle in the diagram. In the proposed improvement strategy concept, each entry point will be identified by different themed sculpture/installation. The objective is to make each Entry Point to the Town Centre distinctive which will reflect the History and Character of the Town.

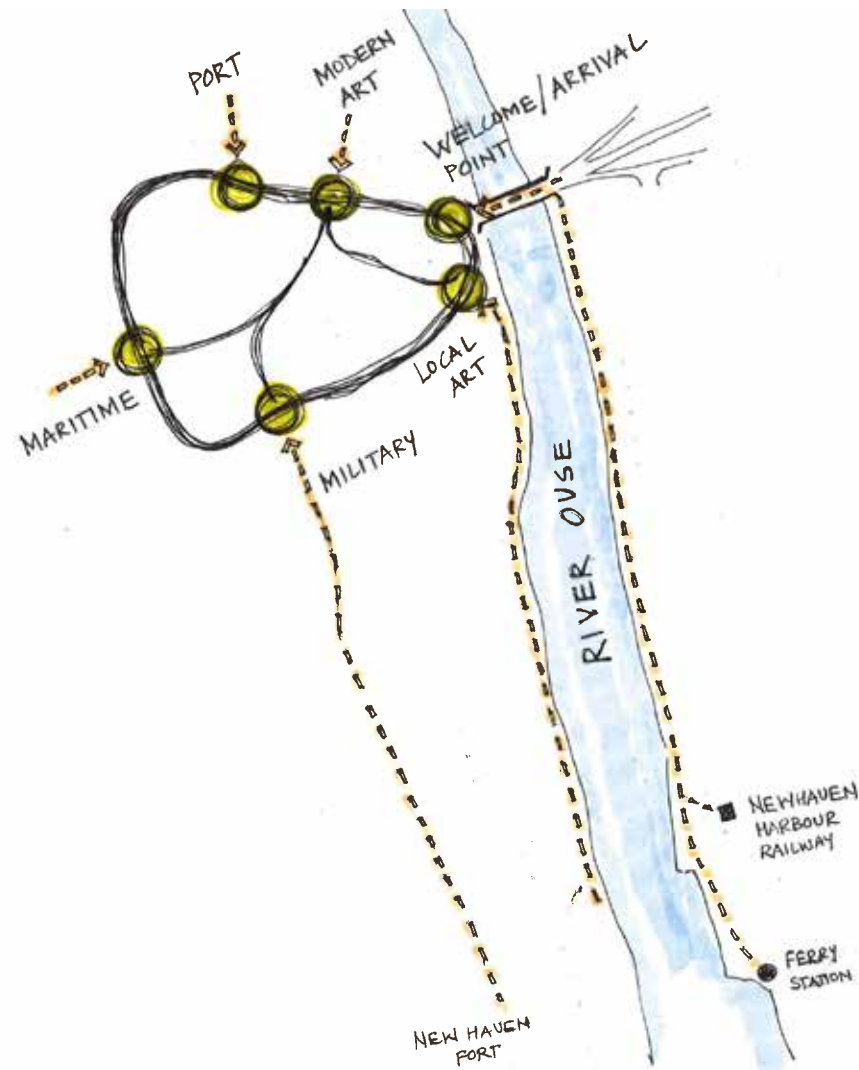


Figure 8. Sketch showing Site Context and Concept

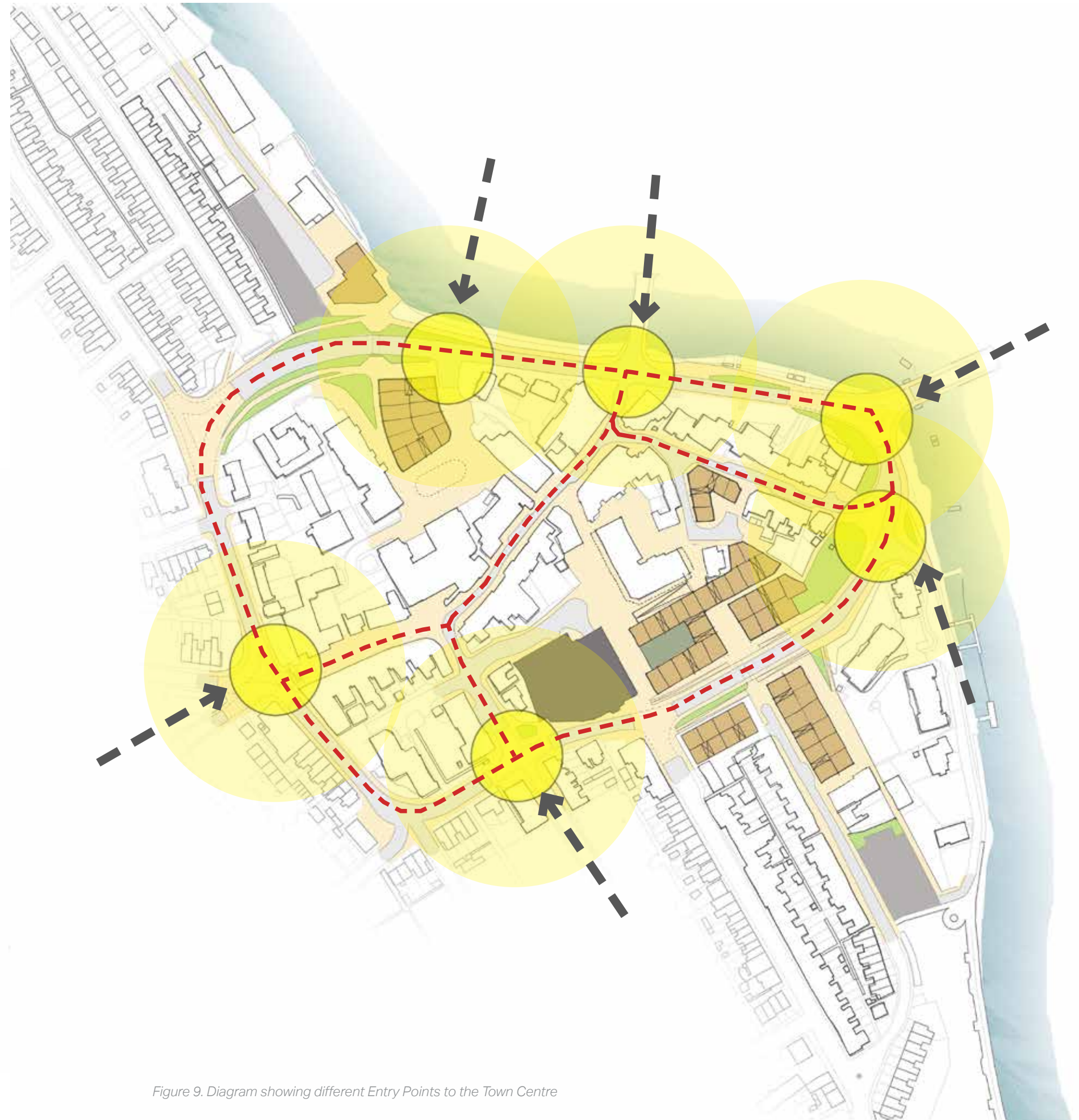


Figure 9. Diagram showing different Entry Points to the Town Centre



Newhaven Port, Bird Sculpture



Sculpture of a Cormorant in Newhaven Quay



Cormorant Statue on the River Ouse



Wings of the standing Cormorant with cut-out designs of fish.



Newhaven Fort WWII memorial sculptures of soldiers



Mermaid sculpture at Newhaven

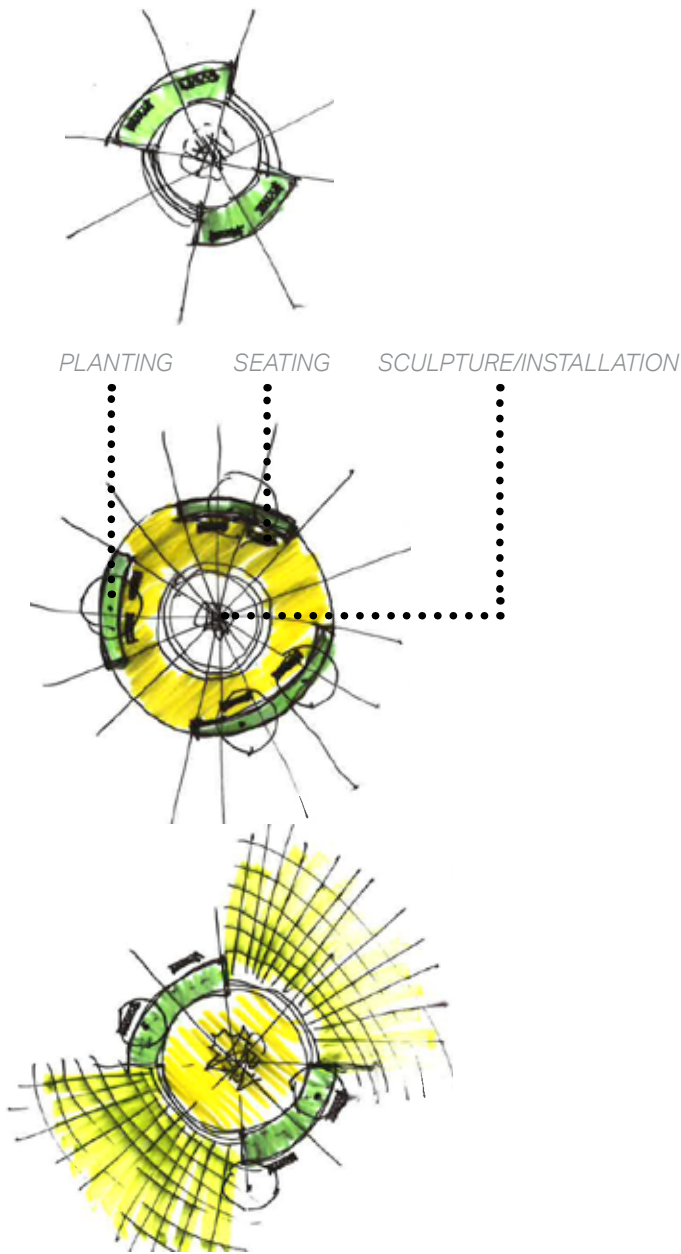
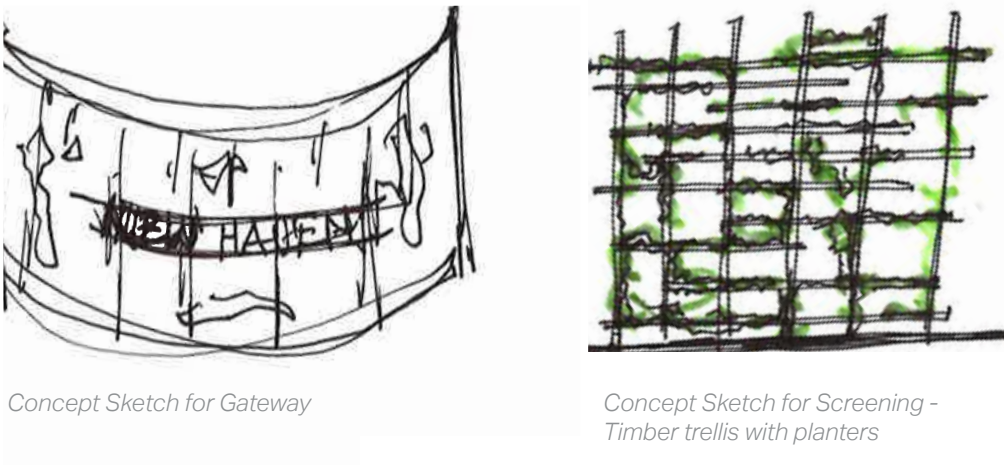


Figure 10. Concept Sketch options for different Entry Points/ Gateways

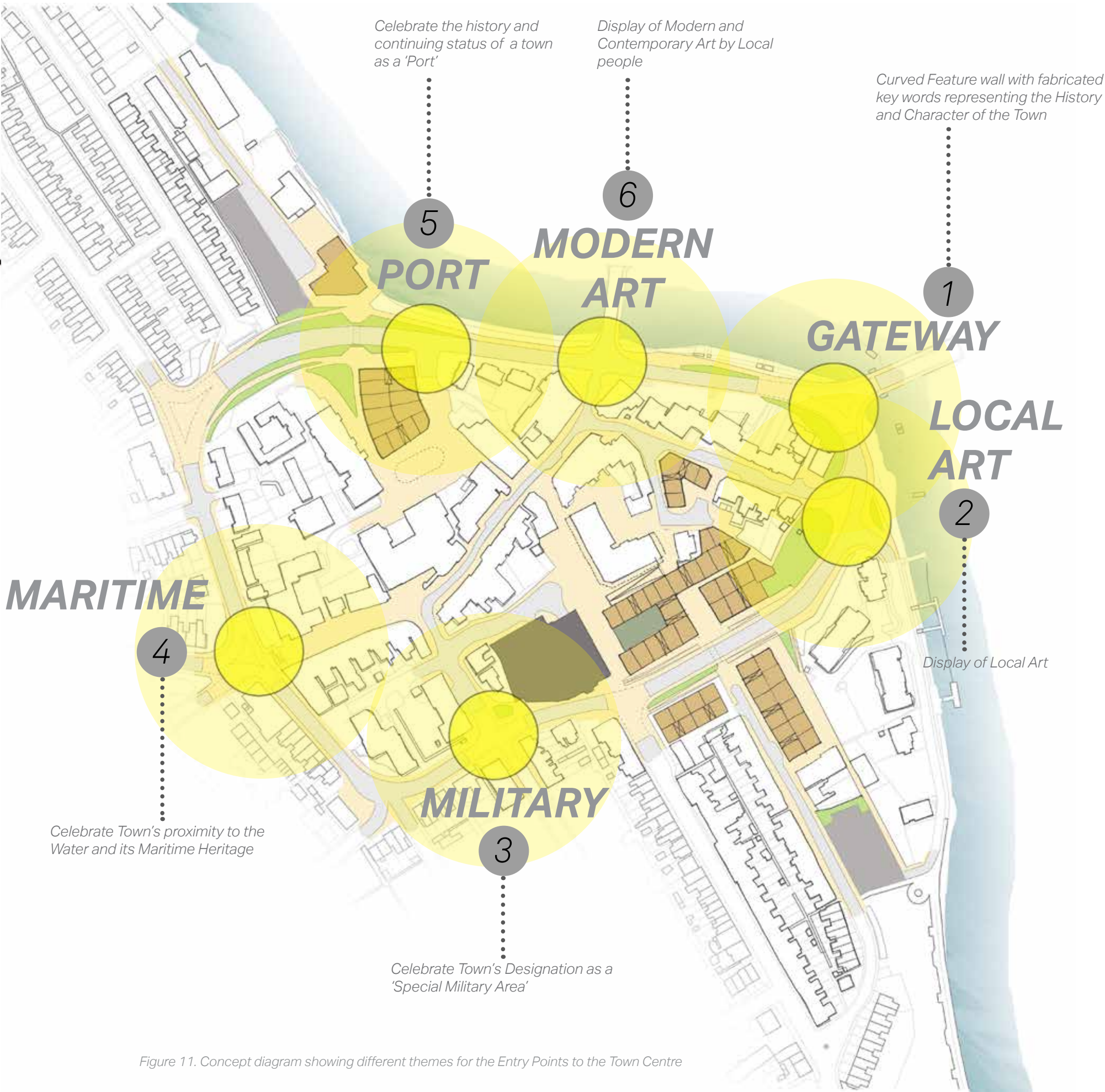


Figure 11. Concept diagram showing different themes for the Entry Points to the Town Centre



A feature wall



Use of 'Water' as recreation



Display of Local Art



Timber Boat as a play equipment



Metal sculpture with key words



Temporary installation with Umbrellas

4.3 Example of Proposal for Gateway 1

We have taken one of the entry points and made and developed the concept. This entry marks the access from the A259. This is a main entry point for people arriving via the Ferry or Railway Station. In a way it is the 'front of house' for the Town Centre. As such we have sought to produce a strong entrance with reference to Newhaven's history.

Existing Issues:

- Vehicular dominance
- Too much signage and clutter
- Unattractive rear backs of properties
- Weak visual appearance / poor outlook as main entry point

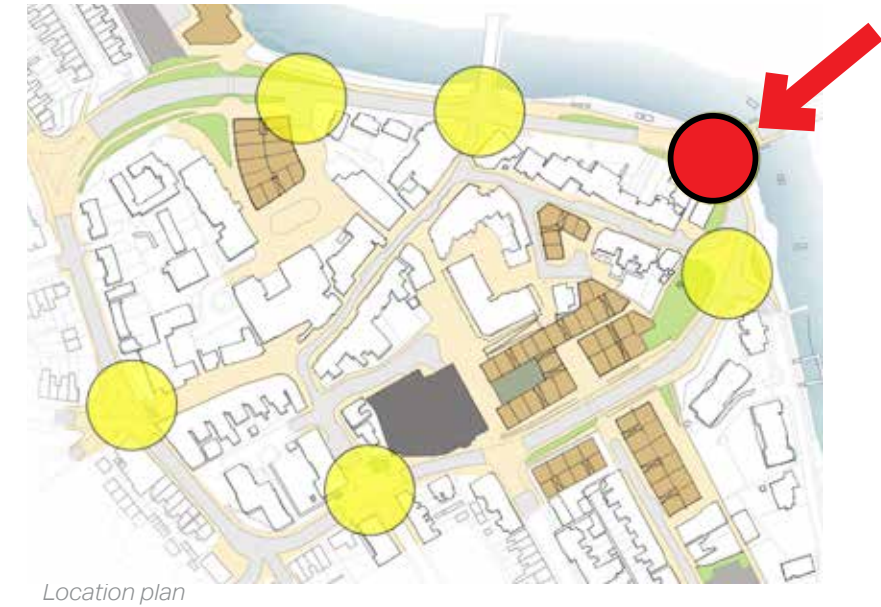


Figure 12. Photograph of existing environment at access point from A259

Benefits :

- Make a strong access statement
- Create an attractive Gateway
- Create safer pedestrian environment
- Change perception of the road
- Screen unattractive backs with timber trellis and planters

Curved Feature wall with fabricated key words representing the Town

**WELCOME
PORT HARBOUR
MARITIME
MILITARY**

Timber trellis with planters to screen unattractive spaces

Low level planting in front of the curved feature wall

Central island with low level planting

Green Strip running alongside the Road



Figure 13. Photomontage showing improved environment with an artistic wall with historical themes. Other options could include a green wall with water features

4.4 Concept for the High Street Improvements

High Street has three main Entry Points which showcases the Modern Art, Maritime Heritage and Military history of the town. The 'Route A' is a shared surface between Vehicles and Pedestrians. 'Route B' is used by the pedestrians with a provision of Service vehicle access for loading/unloading.

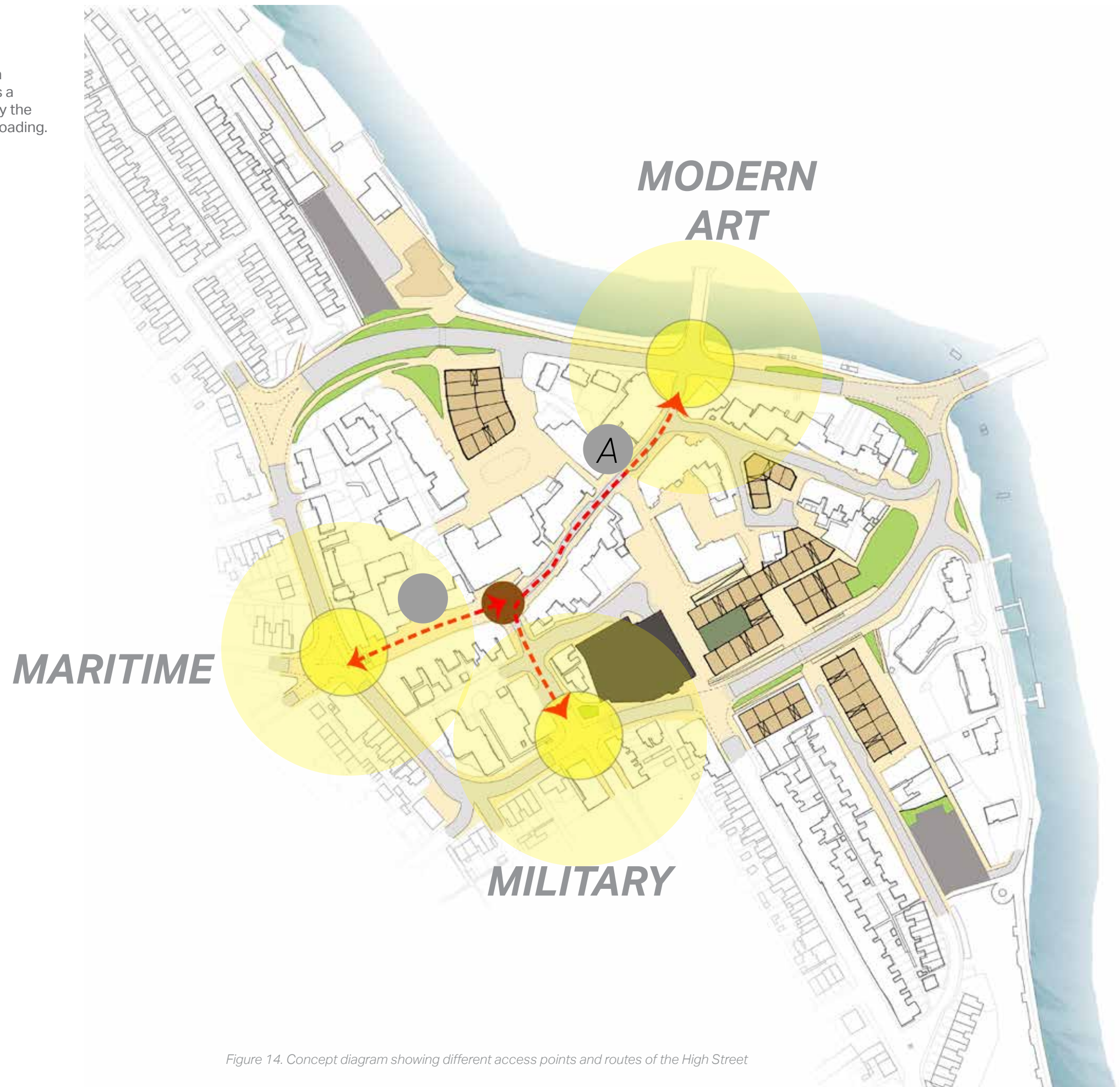
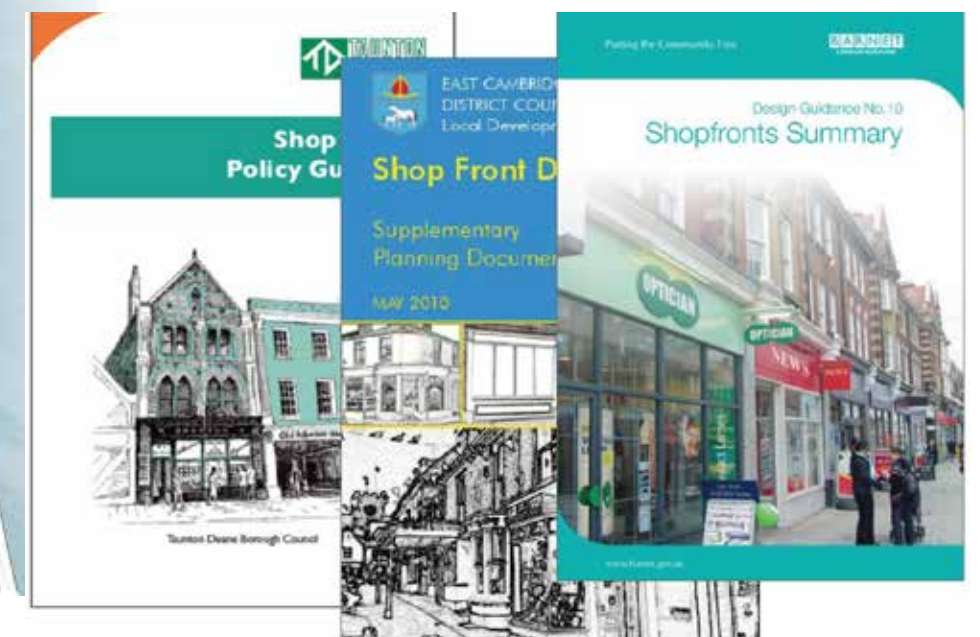


Figure 14. Concept diagram showing different access points and routes of the High Street



Example of strong and pleasant High Street frontage and signage. Marlborough High Street

Examples of High Street frontage and signage guidance



Frontage Improvements Programme

Another suggestion would be to develop guidance for frontage improvements. This could bring a consistent language/identity and palette of colours and materials. It could address issues such as:

- regularise signage and shop fronts to improve character;
- Prepare/adapt design guide for frontage treatment and quality of signage and fascia (colours, scale, lighting, etc.);
- Consider grant/loan scheme to help owners/landlords occupiers;
- Encourage/facilitate more active use/occupation of upper storeys.

Figure 15. Concept diagram showing proposed areas for frontage improvements

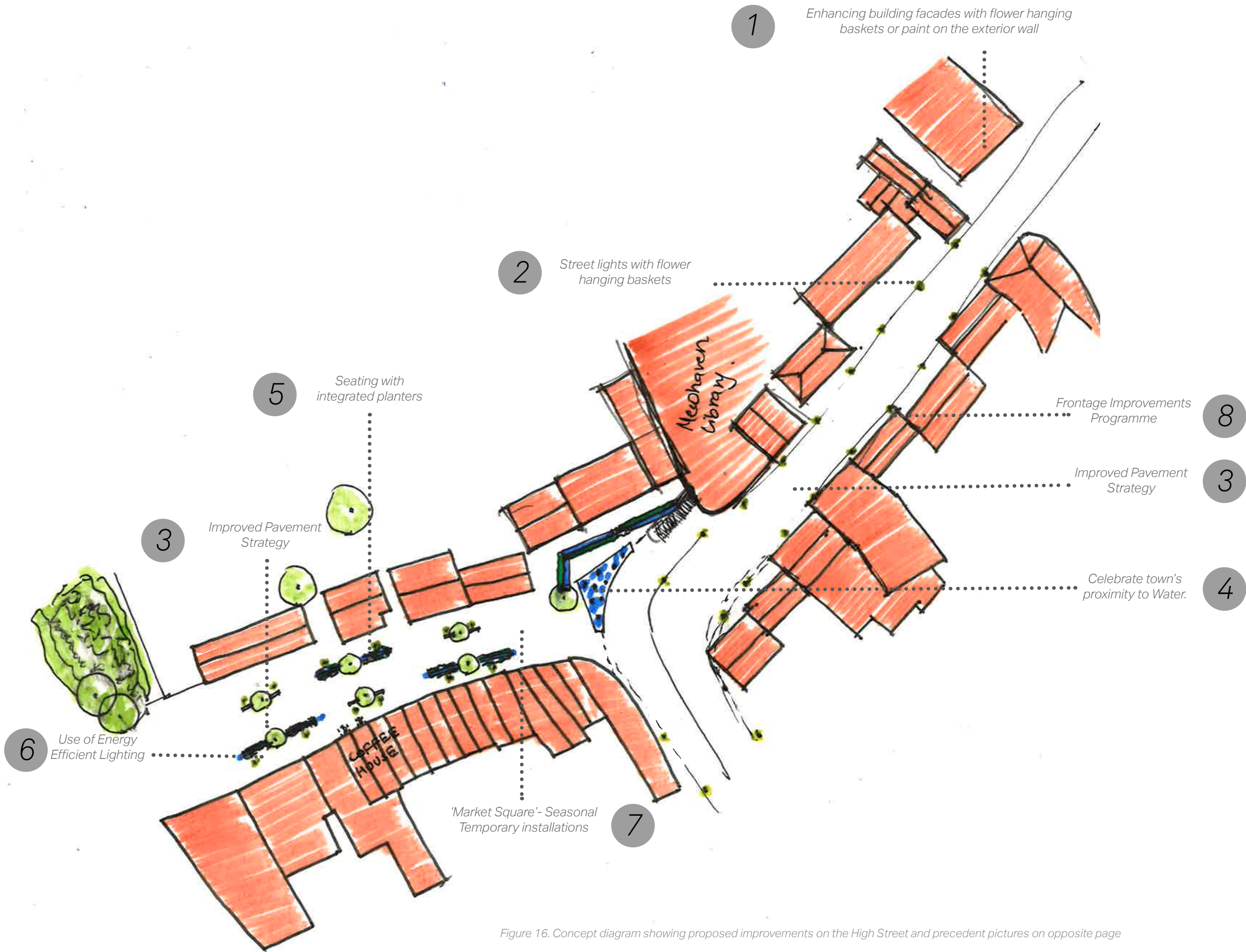


Figure 16. Concept diagram showing proposed improvements on the High Street and precedent pictures on opposite page



Hanging Flower Baskets to improve the appearance of the facade



Improved pavements and reduction of clutter



Use of designer energy efficient lighting; possibly connected to information points



Coloured walls to improve the appearance of the facade



Play and interact with 'water'



Possible temporary installations for special events. Experimentation with light and shadow



Street lights with hanging flower baskets. Lighting could be LED and energy efficient



Seating with integrated planters



Frontage Improvements



Figure 3.24 Shop front design guidance



5. Next Steps

Following feedback and steer from the NTC, AECOM has produced this report with an emphasis on a Public Realm Improvements Strategy.

The NCT will consider the proposals presented in this document and will provide feedback to refine it. Thereafter the final document will be produced with recommendations on how to use the report to progress the Neighbourhood Plan.

If you require further information
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