

COVENT GARDEN URBAN VILLAGE MASTERPLAN



Final Masterplan
December 2009

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1. Introduction

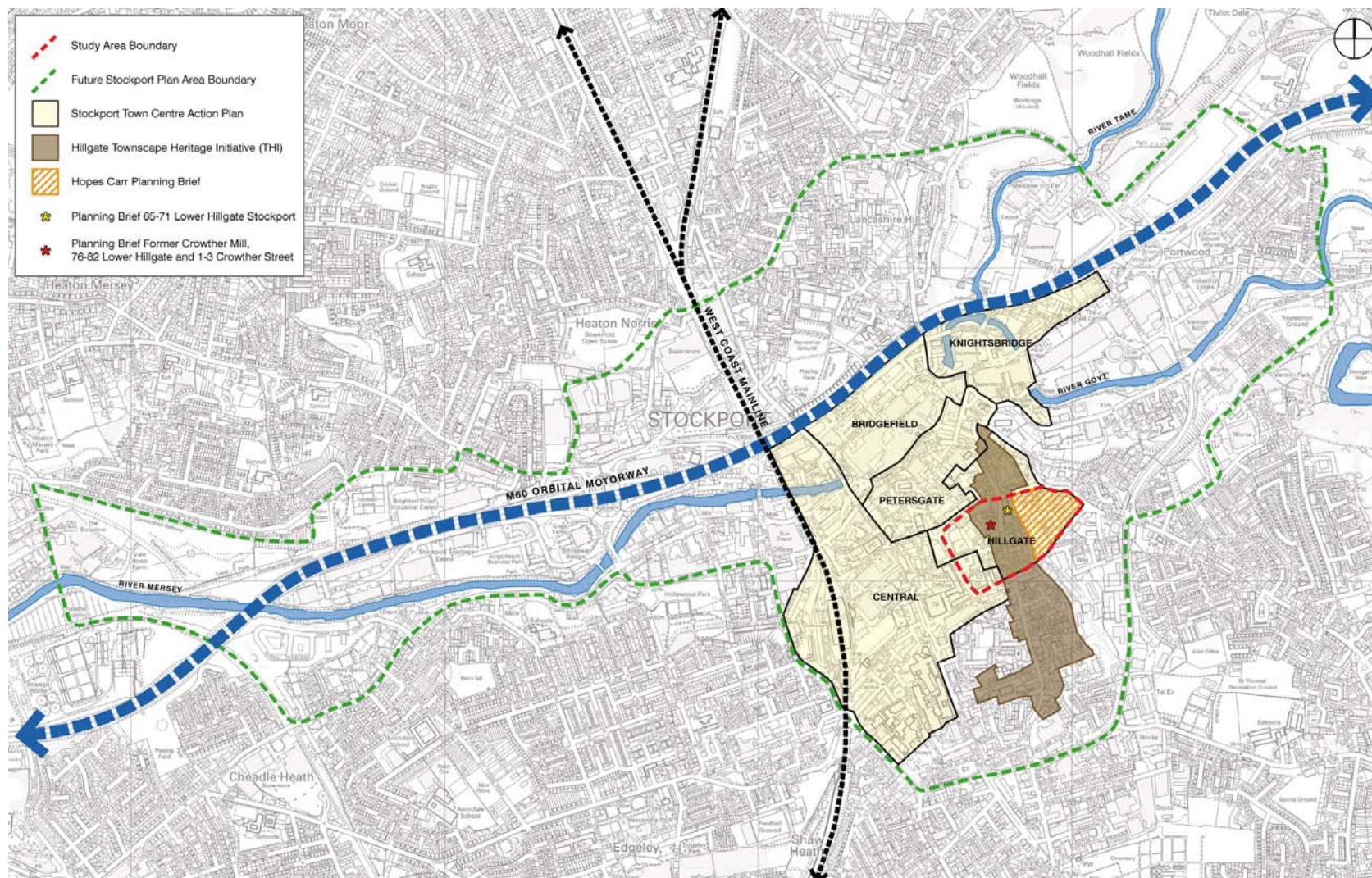
- 1.1 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (Stockport MBC) commissioned a multi-disciplinary team, led by GVA Grimley in June 2009, to prepare of a masterplan and implementation strategy for the Covent Garden area of Stockport. The aim is to guide the delivery of an appropriate, high quality residential-led, mixed-use scheme – to be known as Covent Garden Urban Village.
- 1.2 This forms a key priority for the Council's aspiration to drive forward the regeneration of Stockport Town Centre and will be Stockport MBC's largest single contribution, in housing terms, to their RSS targets and the AGMA Growth Point programme.
- 1.3 The Covent Garden Urban Village area includes Hopes Carr, which has been the subject of detailed and ongoing analysis over recent years, culminating in an application by Seddon Group Ltd in December 2007, which has been recommended for approval subject to a Section 106 agreement being signed.

Figure 1.1 Study Area



- 1.4 The introduction of more residential uses into Stockport Town Centre was identified in the vision for Stockport Town Centre and the M60 Corridor Future Stockport (2000), and defined in more detail the Town Centre Masterplan (2005). The masterplan identified a need to increase the residential population of the town centre, and deliver high quality, well designed homes to support and revitalise the local economy.

Figure 1.2 Site Location



- 1.5 This concept was reinforced in subsequent reviews of the masterplan in 2006 and the 2008 Stockport Town Centre Action Plan, the latter specifically encouraging the creation of an Urban Village at Hillgate.
- 1.6 With the support of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It was agreed to extend the scope of the Hopes Carr scheme to incorporate the Covent Garden area to the west to enable the delivery of a critical mass of development that will drive forward the regeneration of the Hillgate area and help establish a residential heart to the town centre.
- 1.7 Thus, this commission has taken a comprehensive approach to the regeneration of the wider area, in line with the aspirations of the Council, and the HCA.
- 1.8 A vision for the Urban Village was established in setting the brief for the masterplan. This is as follows:
- ‘to create a high-quality flagship neighbourhood aimed at families, in a highly attractive and sustainable environment’.***
- 1.9 The Brief set the aspirations for the ‘village’ as follows:

- deliver **200 family homes** in one of the borough’s most accessible locations, to high standards of design and sustainability;
- provide a significant improvement in the **mix of dwellings types and tenures** at the heart of Stockport Town Centre;
- balance the local housing market by **providing higher value properties** in an area currently dominated by affordable housing;
- see the creative **use of public sector assets** to enable the delivery of new homes;
- provide a **substantial economic boost** to existing small businesses in the Hillgate area, and the wider town centre, and also prove a **good base for potential new businesses**;
- **build upon past investment** in the area, such as the Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative, the HCA, and the Market and Underbanks SRB Programme, and provide significant investment in a Priority 1 Neighbourhood Renewal Area; and

- provide **significant improvements to the historic urban fabric** of the Hillgate area, and a key route into Stockport Town Centre.

1.10 It is envisaged that the Urban Village will play a key role in reconnecting the Hempshaw Brook with the two adjacent Conservation Areas and harnessing the topographic and historic character of the area to create an attractive and distinctive context for new development. Covent Garden Urban Village will draw upon the success of recent restoration and regeneration activity in the historic Markets, the Underbanks and Hillgate areas, to create an exemplar town centre neighbourhood.

Purpose of the Report

- 1.11 This report presents a masterplan for Covent Garden, addressing the issues and opportunities presented in the area. The analysis evolves to the identification of two masterplanning options for change, before providing a design and technical commentary on each and identifying a preferred option.
- 1.12 The Masterplan has been prepared by GVA Grimley, with support from Tom Lonsdale, Bowker Sadler, Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) and Davis Langdon.

Structure of Report

1.13 The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Covent Garden Study Area – provides a brief introduction to the study area.
- Section 3: Issues and Opportunities – identifies the key opportunities and constraints to development.
- Section 4: Strategic Framework – establishes the key principles to guide the redevelopment of the area.
- Section 5: Options for Change – presents two alternative approaches for intervention.
- Section 6: Recommendations – identifies the preferred option for change and makes recommendations regarding next steps.

1.14 This report is supported by a technical baseline report, which provides further information on the study area. This includes *inter alia*: planning policy context; market analysis; development context; urban design audit; technical conditions report; and land referencing.

- 1.15 This report is also accompanied by an Implementation Report, which is presented separately for commercial sensitivity reasons.

2. Covent Garden Study Area

- 2.1 The Covent Garden area ('study area') comprises circa 9.2ha, located on the southern fringe of Stockport Town Centre. Within the area are a number of active businesses and a range of residential dwelling types and tenures. This section provides a brief overview of the key characteristics of the study area and factors influencing the preparation of a masterplan, drawing upon information discussed in greater detail in the accompanying Baseline Study.

Site Context

- 2.2 Covent Garden is well located on the south side of the town centre, with excellent accessibility to Cheshire and the Peak District, whilst benefiting from proximity to the town centre.
- 2.3 Covent Garden is walking distance from Stockport Train Station, on the West Coast Mainline, with direct links to Manchester and London. There are also excellent road connections, with easy access to the A6, M60 and Manchester Airport.

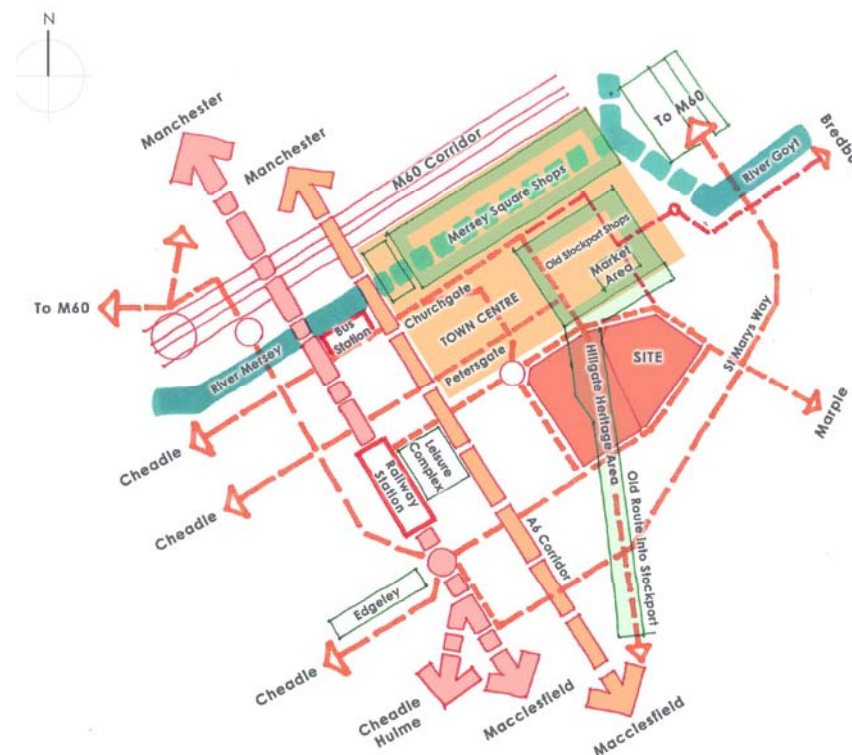


Figure 2.1: Stockport Context

- 2.4 The Covent Garden Area is located adjacent to the historic core of Lower Hillgate, the Underbanks and Market Place, and the civic core of the town, with a number of municipal buildings both within and adjoining the area.



Little Underbank



Lower Hillgate



High Street



Crowther Street



Hillgate Terrace



Bishop's Blaze Passage



Hopes Carr Warehouse



Churchgate Mill/Workshop

Historical Development

- 2.5 Covent Garden is steeped in history. Its industrial legacy is linked to the rise and fall of the textiles industry. Covent Garden was initially developed in the 18th century with the advent of the silk and textile market, and through the 19th century to serve the cotton industry. Hempshaw Brook was an important source of power for mills in Hopes Carr.
- 2.6 Industrial expansion led to the growth of residential and service industries along Hillgate, with the creation of new street networks across former farmland.
- 2.7 By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century these industries died out and were replaced by a mixture of manufacturing and service industries. These have continued to decline and at present only a few, small, lower value businesses remain.
- 2.8 The area includes a number of buildings associated with its original use, although over time many have been lost and have fallen into disrepair.

- 2.9 Hopes Carr is also remembered locally as the site of the 1967 Stockport plane crash, where 72 passengers were killed, when a DC4 British Midland crash-landed on the site near Waterloo Road. A memorial to those killed, and the bravery of those who rescued 12 people from the wreckage, is located on site.
- 2.10 Beyond Hopes Carr, the decline of traditional manufacturing in Stockport has been reflected in the decline of activity and business along Hillgate, the role of which has been superseded by the growth and expansion of the A6. In the last 40 years business activity along Middle and Lower Hillgate has declined and with it the closure of many businesses and services.
- 2.11 However, more recently the route has been the focus of investment activity through the Hillgate Townscape Heritage Initiative and new residential development and retail investment has been secured.
- 2.12 Of particular interest is the redevelopment of new family housing along Crowther Street, by Johnnie Johnson Housing Association, which features the steps painted by L.S. Lowry in the 1930s, depicting the steeply cobbled steps with 19th century terraced houses alongside. In the 1970s the original houses were demolished while the cobbled steps remained. The new housing

scheme was designed by Bowker Sadler, and won Stockport MBC's Conservation & Design Awards 2006.

- 2.13 At the top of these steps, the Stockport Homes social housing flats (Covent Garden) and a number of more recent municipal buildings and surface car parks have been developed over the last 50 years, replacing most of the older period buildings in this area.
- 2.14 Despite the loss of much of the original urban form, the remaining period buildings, located along Hillgate and within Hopes Carr, help to maintain the inherent character of the area.



Crowther Street – 'Lowry Steps'



Covent Garden – Socially rented maisonettes

Land-Use

2.15 Due to this history, existing land-use across the study area varies in type, condition and activity. The changing role and function of Covent Garden has led to a diverse variety of uses, allowing the area to be considered through four principal character areas:

- **Covent Garden** – a small estate of social maisonettes, with a small playing park and a variety of semi-private public realm.
- **John Street** - an area of large municipal buildings (including the police station, tax office and law courts), with surface car parking and green verges.
- **Middle and Lower Hillgate** – a mix of traditional shop fronts and larger, more modern retail units; residential infill and conversion; refurbished office space; and a number of public houses and public spaces. Several redundant gap sites and vacant/redundant buildings also exist along this route.
- **Hopes Carr** – a mixture of period commercial and old industrial premises; old and new offices, including listed buildings and a period public house; areas of vacant and

derelict land surrounding Hemphshaw Brook; and several small terraced houses.



Covent Garden - Social Housing



James Street - Police Headquarters on Lee Street



Middle and Lower Hillgate - Mixed Use Retail



Hopes Carr - Hemphshaw Valley Vacant Site

Urban Design

2.16 A full Urban Design Audit is included within the Baseline Report, however key issues are summarised below:

- **Historic Legacy** – Covent Garden features a number of period and listed buildings, which contribute to a special heritage character. These attributes are recognised in the Conservation Area status of both Hillgate and Churchgate. The condition of period buildings varies considerably within the study area, from recently refurbished buildings along Hillgate, to semi-derelict mill buildings in Hopes Carr.



Lower Hillgate – View to Brewery and Church

Despite the decline evident in some locations however, the remaining period buildings contribute to a special local character.

- **Land Use** - Covent Garden includes a variety of commercial and civic uses on Churchgate and Piccadilly, with a concentration of traditional high street retailing on Hillgate, interspersed with small areas of residential apartments on Covent Garden and Watson Square. Hopes Carr includes a number of active and redundant commercial uses, including large areas of vacant land.
- **Internal Views and Glimpses** - The topography creates a number of interesting views and glimpses of both significant buildings and streetscapes. Internally, the Piccadilly edge of the civic area permits views across the plateau to the 1950s housing blocks; the public square at Covent Garden provides views to housing blocks, glimpses of the Civic Quarter and street views along Hillgate; the intersection of Crowther Street and Hillgate, creating a dramatic view of the 'Lowry Steps'.
- **External Views and Landmarks** - Views from within the study area, to the surrounding urban environment and beyond are also provided, including the series of vistas focussed towards the town centre from a number of elevated

platforms across the study area. Key landmarks, such as the Unicorn Brewery and St. Mary's Church create a sense of arrival on the descent from Hillgate; from the higher level of the plateau above the Piccadilly roundabout, a panorama, incorporating the skyline features of the Railway Viaduct, Grand Central, the Town Hall, high-rise housing and office blocks as well as surrounding rooftops and the distant hills of the Peak District; from within, at the higher level of Wesley Street, an open aspect, embracing views of the natural features of the Hempshaw Valley, Lavender Mill and the backdrop of listed buildings on the eastern edge.

- **Under-Utilisation** – the decline of Covent Garden over the last decade has resulted in large areas of vacant, declined and under-utilised sites and buildings. This is particularly evident in Hopes Carr, which has a number of semi-derelict buildings and over-grown vacant sites, and across the wider area in the distribution of surface car parks, either temporary or formal, which are located on former clearance sites. This under-used characteristic of Covent Garden portrays a degree of decline, despite the evident opportunity that is created in these locations.

- **Active and Passive Surveillance** – The extent of under-utilised sites and buildings throughout the study area and including the plethora of surface car parking has resulted in significant areas of the study area with little or no active or passive surveillance. Within these locations, community safety is reduced and anti-social behaviour and vandalism are evident. This is a particular problem in Hopes Carr, which not only suffers from a lack of active surveillance, but due to the valley environment, benefits from no surveillance at all.
- **Scale and Massing** – The historic development of Covent Garden has created a mix of building scale and mass, influenced in part by the topography and the early industrial uses. The vast majority of buildings across the area are no more than 3-4 storeys in height, with the major exceptions being the Council Tax Office (5 storey) and the Hopes Carr Mill (7 storey). Also of note, is the significant Stopford House (7 storey) civic building on Piccadilly, just beyond the study area boundary. The more recent industrial and commercial units are generally 1-2 storeys in height, although the overall massing of the building can appear larger.

Figure 2.2 Under-utilisation



- **Major Routes** - The area is bounded by major thoroughfares, Wellington Street to the north, Waterloo Road to the south, Churchgate to the east and Piccadilly to the west. Churchgate and Piccadilly provide connections to the historic core of Market Place, the Underbanks and the Town Centre. There are two key north south routes, Hillgate, which is the medieval route to and from the town centre, and, Hopes Carr, which provides service access to the Lower Carr and Hempshaw Brook.
- **Current Links** - The current infrastructure beyond the Covent Garden area is related to the historic network, allowing connections to the town centre, Market Place, the A6 Corridor and public transport connections; the exception being St Mary's Way which provides an alternative inner ring route to the M60 Corridor, the A6 Corridor and adjacent neighbourhoods. The landform limits access and the choice of possible connections within the study area, which include a number of historic routes and street patterns.

Planning Context

- 2.17 As emphasised in the accompanying Baseline Study, there are a range of policies, strategies and programmes at the national, regional, county and local level that will influence change and development within Covent Garden village.
- 2.18 The Covent Garden Masterplan proposals will contribute to the Government housing targets and vision established through the Sustainable Communities Plan and Housing Green Paper. In doing so, it must conform to the statutory national planning guidance established in PPS1, PPS3, PPS4, PPS6 and other key guidance, which have a substantial bearing on land use and development.
- 2.19 Furthermore, the Masterplan proposals must align with the policies, principles and vision set by the statutory adopted North West regional development plan documents – the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy.
- 2.20 Local planning policy, enshrined within the adopted Stockport UDP Review, details the underlying development principles which the Masterplan must take into account. Notably, the Masterplan area covers two specific policy designations (TCG

3.5 and 3.6) and falls partially within a Conservation Area designation. As such, guidance regarding Stockport Council's special control over development in Conservation Areas and heritage-related policies must receive particular attention.

2.21 Stockport Council has also produced a number of guidance and Supplementary Planning Document's (SPGs and SPDs) to further guide proposed development within the Borough. Of particular importance to Covent Garden are the following:

- **SPG: Town Centre Housing** - which acts as a guide to developers in the construction of residential development in Stockport Town Centre; and
- **SPG: Recreational Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments** - which presents Stockport Council's standards of recreational open space and landscaped amenity area provision and the requirements for all new developments to incorporate these features.
- **Crowther Mill Planning Brief (May 2004)** – which provides a guide for development of this site within the context of the Hillgate Conservation Area.
- **Town Centre Public Realm and Lighting Guide (Sept 2006)** – which establishes the quality parameters within

which public realm schemes are to be delivered in the town centre.

2.22 Finally, Stockport Council has completed a number of local regeneration strategy documents to establish a guiding framework to plan change and investment within, and around Stockport Town Centre. Of particular significance to the development of Covent Garden Masterplan are:

- **Town Centre / M60 Gateway Regeneration Strategy (2000, revised 2006)** - within which Covent Garden / Hopes Carr is identified as a key action area for regeneration;
- **Stockport Economic Development Strategy 2002-2012 (2002)**, - which establishes the redevelopment of Covent Garden as an 'urban village' as a key priority project to promote development, home ownership and maximise investment into Stockport town centre; and
- **Hopes Carr Stockport Planning Brief (2004)**, which provides clear guidance to potential developers including its history, policy linkages and permitted uses.

2.23 The Masterplan will provide an additional layer of detail to guide development activity within the Covent Garden area.

Market Context

- 2.24 Stockport sits within the traditionally wealthy, high demand southern housing market area of Greater Manchester, with residential market values consistently outperforming the wider city-region. Nevertheless, Stockport Town Centre substantially underperforms within this context and this is exacerbated by high levels of social rented accommodation, socio-economic deprivation in neighbouring communities and the perception of crime, anti-social behaviour and dilapidation.
- 2.25 However, projected population and household growth is high. Providing a supply of housing to stem out-migration and create better housing choices, to meet the needs of the most economically active residents, is a key requirement in retaining population. There is also a substantial requirement for affordable housing across the borough, for both low cost market and social rented accommodation.
- 2.26 Stockport Needs Assessment suggests that the imbalance towards social-rented accommodation in the town centre should be addressed by a focus on the market sector and low cost market housing developments.

- 2.27 To date, the housing market within the town centre remains extremely under-developed. Where flats have been developed, the sale of properties has been slow and greater diversification of housing type is needed to match supply with demand. Covent Garden provides an opportunity to respond to the recommendations of the Needs Assessment by diversifying the range of housing types and tenures within the town centre, to meet the latent demand for higher quality stock in a sustainable location.

Development Context

- 2.28 The development context for Covent Garden is influenced by a number of key considerations, which impact upon the developability of sites within the study area. These are discussed in more detail in the accompanying baseline document, but broadly include:
- **Development Pipeline** – analysis of current applications, planning consents and development activity reveal an array of activity planned within and immediately adjacent to the Covent Garden study area. These include the planned expansion to the civic functions of Stockport MBC; a number of residential applications, which consider a change in use

from retail/commercial to residential focus; and the Seddons application for a mixed-use scheme at Hopes Carr. Whilst the market conditions have stifled progress on many of these schemes, they indicate a perception that there is demand for this type of use, albeit in more stable market conditions.

- **Land Ownership** – land referencing reveals that there are few key stakeholders in terms of substantial land-holding. Of these, Stockport MBC retains a significant interest in the west of the study area, providing a sound basis upon which to commence land assembly. Other key landowners include Seddons/Inspired Development, Petros, Daniel Graham, AB Byrne and the Secretary of State. Part of the Council's land has been committed to Seddons/Inspired Developments as part of a Joint Cooperation Agreement signed March 2006.
- **Topography** – Substantial gradients in the centre of the site; the plateau to the west (around London Place) and the significant level changes evident within Hopes Carr, together with the north-south cross fall along two key through routes; have significant implications for development. These will not only contribute towards diversity in building form, but will restrict accessibility in certain locations. Topographical issues will therefore need to be fully considered in urban

design, architectural and engineering terms; offering both an opportunity as well as a constraint to development.

- **Parking** – Due to the under-utilised nature of Covent Garden in its current form, the area absorbs a significant amount of parking provision. There are a number of surface car parks across the site, which offers the potential for redevelopment. Some of these are owned and/or managed by the Council, whilst there are several privately run temporary and permanent car parks, in addition to a significant amount of on-street parking. Whilst new development in the area will have to address the new, displaced and continuing parking requirements within the site, it has become apparent that a number of parking issues remain unresolved or emerging within Stockport Town Centre, in particular, the prospective displacement of parking spaces associated with the extension of Stopford House. Also, of importance is the displacement of Council parking, related to the potential redevelopment of the London Place car parks.
- **Technical Constraints (Topography, Transport and Access, Utilities and Infrastructure, Environmental and Archaeological)** – a number of technical issues, identified in the Baseline Study, will affect the overall cost of

development. However, these are predominantly related to the remediation of Hopes Carr, which has laid in a semi-redundant nature for some time, and the complexities caused by the pronounced landform and watercourse.

- 2.29 These characteristics have been used to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints (SWOC) Analysis included in the following section.

3. Issues and Opportunities

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints

- 3.1 The site characteristics, discussed in the previous chapter, can be used to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints (SWOC) Analysis of the study area. This analysis is included overleaf and is used to inform the development of a strategic framework for Covent Garden.

		Weakness
Policy	Planning and regeneration policy supports the regeneration of Covent Garden as a residential extension to the town centre and is recognised as a key component in the wider regeneration of the town centre.	Existing policy requirements regarding access to open space and accessibility are hindered by the unusual topography of the site. S106 and social housing requirements may also impact upon the viability of the site, given the significant remediation costs expected in some areas.
Location	Covent Garden is situated on the door step of the town centre within walking distance of the Stockport Train Station, with direct trains to Manchester and London. Therefore, the site is ideally located to benefit from the amenities of the town centre and the connections to key city centres.	Stockport Town Centre has a poor reputation for anti-social behaviour, particularly in the evening, which will impact on the desirability of this location for residential use. Generally the centre is not widely recognised as an established residential market.
Landmarks and Views Strengths	Within the Covent Garden Study area there are a number of attractive period buildings, which appear prominent on the street scene. Key landmarks within the wider area include the Robinson's Brewery; St Mary's Church; historic buildings along Churchgate and Hillgate; and the civic buildings, which are prominent to their surroundings.	Potential views are obscured from overgrown vegetation, tree screens, billboards, retaining walls and embankments in some locations. Poorly regulated recent infill development in some locations, has a negative impact upon the overall streetscape and townscape.
THI Investment	Recent investment through the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) has enabled the conversion and restoration of historic buildings and public realm along Hillgate. This investment has enhanced the unique character of the area and provides a strong context for further regeneration.	The decline of the role and function of Covent Garden in the last century has left derelict industrial buildings, vacant sites and redundant uses. This is predominantly ad-hoc in nature and detracts from the overall vibrancy of the built environment.
Opportunity Sites	There are a number of under-utilised sites, which present significant opportunity for redevelopment.	The lack of active use creates significant areas with little or no surveillance, either active or passive. This raises concerns over community safety and increases the potential for anti-social behaviour.
Topography	Covent Garden is characterised by its extreme topography, which includes a deep river valley at Hempshaw Brook, which rises to a plateau in the west (Covent Garden and civic core) and steps up in the east to Churchgate, providing far reaching views and an interesting urban form.	Movement in Covent Garden is restricted by level changes and the fragmented remains of the historic route network, for pedestrians and vehicles, particularly in the Hopes Carr area. The topographical context will influence the developability of certain sites and have implications on the cost of development.
Connectivity	Hillgate (lower and middle) provides a secondary through-route to the town centre, whilst Piccadilly, Waterloo Road and Wellington Street provide strong peripheral routes into the wider movement network, connecting to the town centre and the sub-regional network.	Pedestrian movement and the quality of the public realm are reduced along Wellington Street, due to the speed of traffic, which serves to disconnect Covent Garden from the town centre.

Market	<p>Active development interest in the area suggests that the potential for a more residential-led function of Covent Garden would be successful.</p> <p>Latent demand for affordable housing across the borough and a need to stem out-migration of higher income earners through the creation of a more aspirational stock.</p>	<p>Current market conditions have stagnated development activity</p> <p>Tenure imbalance within the town centre has a bias towards social rented accommodation, which has resulted in a limited choice of housing type and tenure within this area.</p>
		Constraints
Historic context	A strong heritage legacy has resulted in a number of listed and character buildings disbursed across the site, in various condition and utilisation, which provide the opportunity for refurbishment and reuse to add value to the townscape of Covent Garden.	The industrial manufacturing past of Covent Garden raises a number of remediation and contamination issues, which are prominent in Hopes Carr. Addressing these issues will be costly and will have an impact on the financial viability of new development.
Topography	Key views are visible across the site from prominent locations at London Place car park; along Hillgate; and across Hopes Carr from Wesley Street. From these locations there are views to key landmarks within the town centre.	There are a number of embankments, retaining walls and terraces built in response to the land form, which create constraints to development. Responding to topographical issues will have an implication on the cost of site development.
Policy	The masterplan for Covent Garden provides a guide for development activity, there is potential to develop this further into former local planning policy – either as a supplementary or DPD.	Policy Planning and design considerations related to the Conservation Area status.
Opportunities Under-utilised Sites	There are significant areas of under-utilised land across the study area, which are clustered into two core areas; surface car parking and land embankments adjacent to the civic core and areas of semi-redundant land at Hopes Carr. Both areas offer significant development opportunities.	The development of surface car parking will displace parking across the study area and beyond. This is particularly relevant for the potential development of the London Place car parks, which are used by the Magistrates Courts and Council employees. Therefore, development here would be dependent upon the provision of alternative parking elsewhere in the town centre.
Site Utilities	Gas and water mains run alongside and within the site, including a 6.6k V cable along the length of Hopes Carr. Initial technical investigations suggest that a lower density residential scheme will have a far lesser impact upon utility provision, than previous higher-density proposals for Hopes Carr.	Underlying service and utility channels, which have implications on the potential design of new development. The density of development will dictate the impact on utility provision and therefore the costs of any upgrades required.
Hempshaw Brook	The landform and watercourse at Hempshaw brook present an opportunity to create a special natural amenity environment, which will add interest to the urban environment and create an improved natural space for flora and fauna.	<p>Hempshaw Brook, left redundant over time, has grown into a shrub land, which raises issues regarding flora and fauna.</p> <p>Upstream industrial activity could impact upon the amenity potential</p>

	A flood risk assessment (SKM 2007) carried out for Hopes Carr has confirmed that Hopes Carr is not at risk from flooding nor is it the cause of flooding downstream.	of the brook.
Remediation	Through adequate remediation there is the potential to enhance the quality and diversity of the Hempshaw Brook valley and create an attractive amenity environment for local residents.	Significant site remediation and decontamination requirements related to the redevelopment of the Hopes Carr site. Previous waterborne contamination issues related to off-site source, further upstream.
Ownership	Large areas of land in the west of the study area are owned by the public sector, which provides a sound basis upon which to commence land assembly.	A comprehensive approach to land assembly would be required to bring forward development opportunities in response to the fragmented land ownership.
Covent Garden	The potential redevelopment of the Covent Garden flats would enable the re-provision of improved housing choices and allow the configuration of new buildings to be integrated more effectively into the urban environment. This will open up new pedestrian connections and improve natural surveillance of the public realm.	Several blocks of flatted social accommodation in variable condition, which fails to integrate with the surrounding urban context. These blocks are occupied and any intervention here would require the relocation of existing residents.
Market	Opportunity to diversify the housing market within the town centre and introduce higher value housing products and a variety of private sale and low cost home ownership products.	The private-sector residential market in this area is untested and constrained by the perception of the town centre and related problems of anti-social behaviour.

4. Strategic Framework

Project Vision and Strategy Development

- 4.1 As defined at the outset of the commission, the vision for the Covent Garden Urban Village Masterplan is:

‘to create a high quality flagship neighbourhood aimed at families, in a highly attractive and sustainable environment’

Design Objectives

- 4.2 Drawing upon the baseline analysis and the design opportunities discussed in the previous section, a series of design objectives were presented for consideration in preparing a masterplan for Covent Garden. These include:

- to create a new urban framework;
- to develop new connections;
- to enhance the status of junctions and public meeting points;
- to create quality urban form and landscape;

- to integrate under-utilised sites with its surrounding context and bring back into viable use vacant land and buildings;
- to improve permeability and transparency;
- to improve active and passive surveillance and therefore, community safety;
- to incorporate public realm and ‘green’ amenity areas; and
- to revitalise the vibrancy of the area and contribute to the vitality of the town centre.

- 4.3 These objectives are taken into account in the formulation of a Strategic Framework for the area.

Urban Village

- 4.4 The Dictionary of Urbanism¹ refers to an Urban Village as:

“a part of a town or city with a distinct identity and a mix of different uses, including housing; an urban neighbourhood; an urban quarter”.

- 4.5 Specifically, the book also makes reference to the Urban Villages Group, which was established in 1989, and discusses the key

¹ Robert Cowen 2005

components of an Urban Village, as identified in their 1992 publication:

4.6 *“An Urban Village should be big enough to support a wide range of uses and amenities (including primary and nursery schooling), yet small enough (about 40 hectares) for all its buildings to be within easy walking distance. It should have a combined working and resident population of around 3,000 – 5,000, a variety of sizes and types of buildings, and a mixture of tenures for housing and employment uses. It should be promoted by a single body made up of land-owning, developer and other interests, managed by a purpose-made management company, and developed and managed with public involvement. It should be ecologically balanced. Preferably a single individual or organisation should control all land. The Urban Village should be designed with a masterplan, supported by a detailed design codes.”*

4.7 Whilst the exact size of an urban village, in terms of its population, number of households and mix of uses, varies between reference and publication, the essence of an Urban Village is to create a well designed, mixed use neighbourhood, which provides places to live, to work and enjoy as part of a

more sustainable environment. This includes the provision of local amenities, such as shops and education services.

What makes Covent Garden Special?

4.8 The unique characteristics of Covent Garden can be considered on two levels. Firstly, the wider context:

- Covent Garden is well located on the south side of the town centre, benefiting from excellent accessibility to Cheshire and the Peak District, whilst benefiting from proximity to the town centre.
- Strong history and location on the historic route into the town centre.
- Nationally recognised through featuring in paintings by L.S Lowry, including a painting of Crowther Street steps.
- Located adjacent to the civic core of Stockport Town Centre, with a number of municipal buildings both within and adjoining the area.
- Proximity to Stockport Train Station, on the west coast main line, with direct links to Manchester and London.

- Proximity to Stockport Bus Station and frequent bus routes along the A6, through Stockport and Manchester.
- Strong road connections, with easy access to the A6, M60 and Manchester Airport.

4.9 Secondly, the local site characteristics:

- Strong history related to the development of Stockport, reinforced through a number of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.
- Adjacency to the historic heart of the town centre and the main shopping area: this enables Covent Garden to 'borrow' from the town centre ingredients that should exist in an urban village, but that it is perhaps too small to support by itself.
- A natural setting created by the Hempshaw Brook valley.
- Recent investment into a number of important period buildings and streetscape.
- The strong topography and landform, which provides far reaching views from the plateaus in the east and west.
- Relatively self-contained and free from heavy traffic.

4.10 Overall, this is a 'special' part of Stockport with considerable potential.

Covent Garden Urban Village: Place making

4.11 The challenge is to fulfil the aspirations of the 'model' urban village, given the size of the area, the pronounced topographical constraints etc, all of which will have implications for cost, access and connectivity. Conversely, these very complications can be reconfigured and packaged to turn them into attributes in establishing a distinctive sense of place and holistic identity for Covent Garden.

4.12 If the premise of 'smallness' is accepted the antidote to this restriction is to be found in its relationship with neighbours and particularly Stockport Town Centre. Here Covent Garden enjoys the excellent virtue of being very close to the town centre and with well established residential areas also nearby. These constituents of a whole town must and can be made to work together in mutual support. In design terms this can be likened to the difference between 'darning' and 'patching': a darn becomes part of the whole and moves with it, whereas a patch is always something different and is weakest at its edges where it abuts rather than fuses with the whole.

- 4.13 The masterplan for Covent Garden therefore aims to restore some of the natural features of the area, celebrating a series of visual and physical connections, bringing the area back into the collective consciousness of Stockport people and stimulating new flows of vitality.
- 4.14 Observation and analysis reveals other characteristics of the area that can be seen as either handicaps or assets. The presence of an existing community, both residential and business, will present interesting challenges for them, the Council, designers and the delivery team. It must be a given that those already living and trading in the area should benefit from the regeneration, but there are likely to be diverse opinions on what might constitute improvement. A fundamental issue is the retention or otherwise of the flats on the plateau, the decision on which option to pursue setting the character of what is achievable on the west side of the valley.
- 4.15 Memories abound on this site but they have become lost behind the layers of decay and modern intrusion. Reawakening such memories can be the catalyst for a sort of place-making that is often lost when everything is new. The approach here has been to evoke memories of a vibrant and treasured place, combining literal relics, such as the ancient buildings and sett-paved alleys,

with artistic ingredients that gesture towards future stories. Whilst 'place-making' has entered the everyday vocabulary it is more helpful to adopt the notion of 'place-revealing': this is not passive nostalgia, it uses a vital design language of today for the contemporary interventions and ensures a legible age-structure to the fabric of place.

Developing the Strategic Framework

Image and Credibility

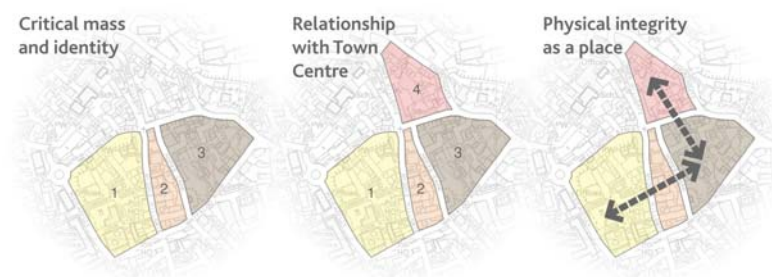
- 4.16 The creation of a new urban village is a brave act on the Council's behalf, but the simple erection of new buildings and marketing them will not adequately distinguish the initiative from other new developments on the market. There must be a cohesive image for the whole area that will establish the credibility necessary to persuade investors that they are buying into something more than the property alone. Covent Garden will begin to mean something to the wider public if the following conceptual gains can be engineered.

Visibility, integrity and relationship to the town centre

- 4.17 The three discrete segments of the site, identified in the baseline analysis, need to be integrated into a single neighbourhood

entity for residents and visitors. Even with these three segments fused into one the fourth segment, occupied by the Brewery and the edge overlooking Churchgate, has the effect of separating the village from the town centre: the optimum solution to this is to secure improvements to this area in the same style and timeframe as the main village. Finally, the four segments need to be well served by movement routes for pedestrians, both between the segments, as well as to and from the town centre.

Figure 4.1 Relationship with the town centre



Core Actions

Structure, Edges and thresholds

- 4.18 The prospective edges of the new village must be marked by new development that faces outward to declare the area's urban

presence and confidence. The gaps in existing fabric make this possible, but the quality of architecture for infill will be crucial to making a positive impression. At key points of entry into the village the threshold should be marked by public realm design gestures and good 'gateway' architecture.

Current Role and Stigma of Hopes Carr

- 4.19 The industrial past of the Hopes Carr area is well known and it will be difficult to displace this image in the minds of prospective investors in the short term. Even good quality architecture inserted tentatively as infill is unlikely to achieve the fundamental change of image required, so extensive and bold redevelopment of the entire area is recommended, leaving in place only the most important heritage relics.

Lower and Middle Hillgate

- 4.20 The strength of Lower and Middle Hillgate as a movement corridor has survived well and has the potential to form the central spine of the new urban village. To do this it needs to receive further public realm enhancement and measures to safeguard its ground floor activity. Infill of the gap-sites will be important in restoring the street character and plenty of natural surveillance onto the street for pedestrians to feel safe there.

However, infill alone may fall short of achieving the regenerative character, so the ideal way forward will include replacement of some lower grade property in favour of bold new street architecture.

Harness the benefit of Robinson's Brewery

- 4.21 The conceptual action of using the area around the Brewery to forge linkages with the town centre can only be achieved with the active participation of its owners, but the rewards could be great for both those investors and the town. The Brewery is an important component of the town's heritage and urban character so urban design measures to make it feel part of the urban village would contribute greatly to the distinctive identity of the village.
- 4.22 Public realm improvements along Apsley Street and Harvey Street will improve pedestrian connections to the town centre and would help to draw people into the village and afford village residents a route less compromised by vehicles than Lower Hillgate. However, the optimum scale of intervention would be quite dramatic at the point where this route connects with Little Underbank: rather than the current steps to part way up Rostron Brow, including possible redevelopment at 7-9 Lower Hillgate to

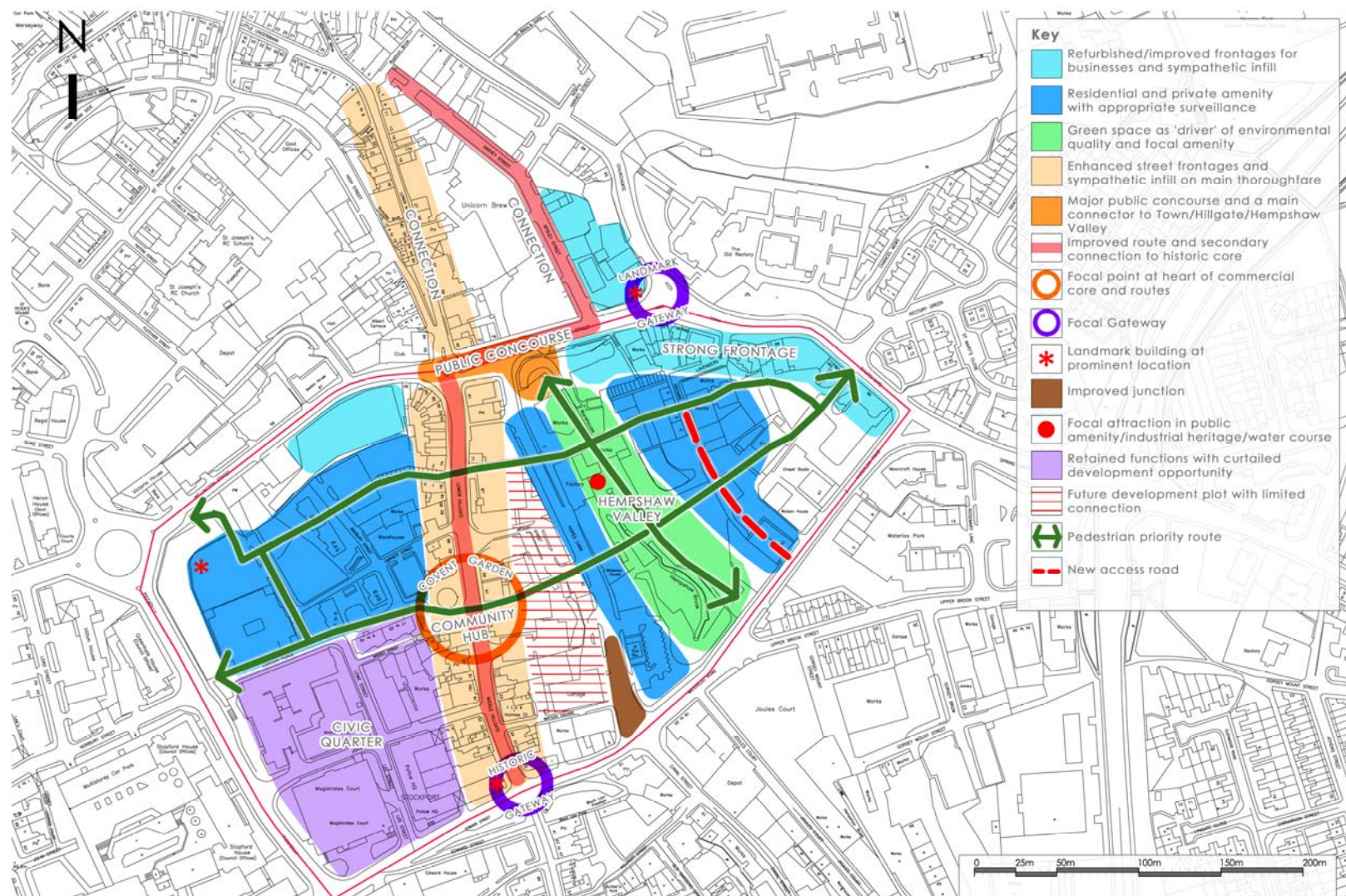
create a much grander and safer direct link with good views along Little Underbank.

Strategic Framework

Movement Hierarchy

- 4.23 It is important to understand that the proposed alterations to traffic management and treatment of highway sections are all governed by important urban design principles without which the legibility and character of the urban village will be compromised.
- 4.24 The overarching principle is generally to guide the town's strategic vehicular movements around the edges of the village in order to both reinforce its legibility and to protect the pedestrian environment of its interior from excessive vehicular volumes and speeds. In simple terms, the intention is to promote Churchgate, Waterloo Road and Piccadilly for through-traffic; retain local traffic and town centre access on Wellington Street and Hillgate, but to calm them for improved pedestrian experience; and to reduce all other roads for use primarily by residents of and visitors to the village itself.

Figure 4.2 Strategic Framework Plan



Nodes and Focal Points

- 4.25 Whilst walking distances within the area and between it and the town centre are all manageable the dynamic of pedestrian movement also relies on incentives in the form of destinations and gathering points. These need to be nurtured by means of additional calming, enhanced architectural qualities and location of facilities. For instance, the existing space at the junction of Covent Garden with Hillgate would work well as a community hub for the village, whilst the junction of Wellington Street with Hillgate can be extended to form a vital 'stepping stone' to facilitate movement between the village and the town centre.

Gateways and Thresholds

- 4.26 The strengthening of a built edge has been mentioned above and particular mention should be made of the top end of Middle Hillgate at its junction with Waterloo Road and also the junction of Wellington Street with Churchgate: in both of these locations the quality of architecture, paved surfaces and street furniture all need to be coordinated to announce entry into Covent Garden.

Open Space Network

- 4.27 The typology of urban villages demands that they be relatively dense and urban in character, which means that the streets and hard spaces described above must perform much of the function required of open spaces in a residential environment. To do this their design needs to be safe and attractive to children but also function as part of a hierarchy of open spaces in which larger green spaces are accessible within easy reach in surrounding neighbourhoods. The masterplan interprets this principle by providing some private gardens; small green spaces shared by a small group of dwellings; and also providing a major new publicly accessible neighbourhood park in the Hempsshaw Brook valley: to ensure the park's safety and popularity it is designed with extensive overlooking by habitable rooms and will require a dependable management regime.

Pedestrian Connectivity

- 4.28 The pedestrian connectivity described earlier is achieved by the dual means of creating pedestrian-friendly streets and linking them in an east/west direction by forging new pedestrian routes that project the existing routes on Crowther Street and Covent Gardens and extend them across the Hempsshaw Brook park to

connect property on the east of the valley and beyond Churchgate.

Figure 4.3 New Pedestrian Linkages created from Hopes Carr



High Quality Public Realm

- 4.29 It is implicit in the above design principles that the quality of public realm throughout the area must be both high and consistent. Where development is new, the public realm must be designed as an integral component and at the same time as the architecture, but the critical area will be the environs of the Covent Garden flats if they are retained: here a fundamental reconfiguration and upgrade of external spaces would be necessary if the existing spaces are not to undermine the image of the whole.

Scale and Massing

- 4.30 Due to the conservation area status of a significant proportion of the study area, it is important that new development responds appropriately to the scale and massing of surrounding built form. Variations in height and scale can be catered for within this development, due to the undulating topography of the site. However, it is essential that new developments complement the massing of adjacent buildings, particularly when integrating modern design and period buildings.

Integrating Built Form

4.31 The Hillgate area forms part of two conservation areas, which include a number of period and architecturally important buildings and infrastructure. The development of new buildings within this context must therefore fully respond to the conservation area status. The use of high quality design, build and materials will ensure that new buildings positively contribute to the historic character of the area. This should include the application of high quality modern design in order to achieve the visual indicators of regeneration and high standards of sustainability.

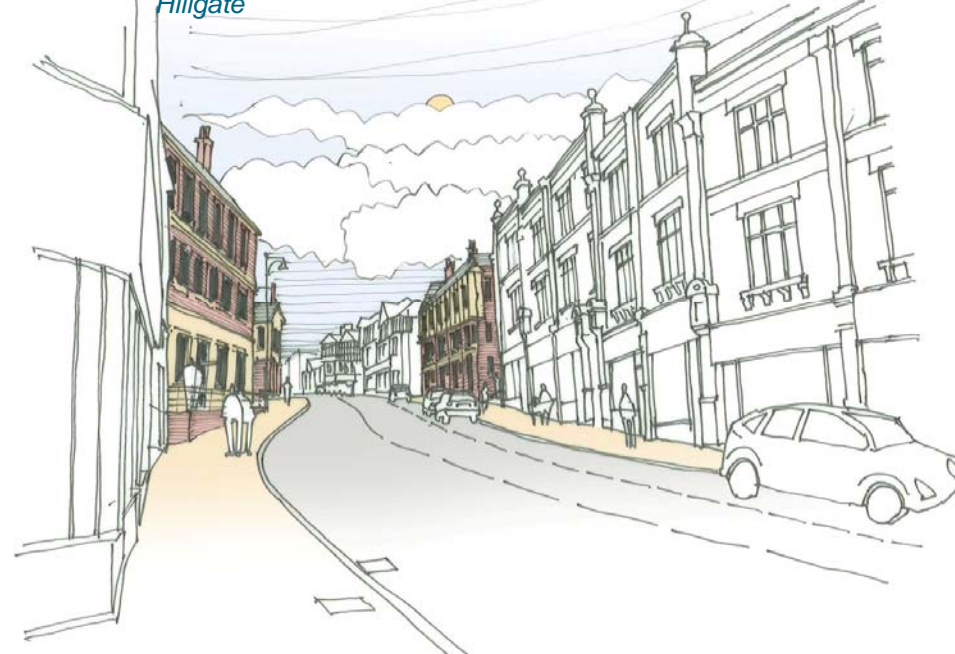
4.32 English Heritage and CABI provide guidance² on the approach of Integrating old and new, identifying that a successful project will:

- 'relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it;
- respect important views; respect the scale of neighbourhood buildings;

- use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings; and
- create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting'.

4.33 This guidance is highly relevant to intervention in Covent Garden.

Figure 4.4 Integrating new development into gap sites along Hillgate



² Building in context – New development in Historic Areas 2001

5. Options for Change

- 5.1 In response to the Strategic Framework, which provides a structure for the regeneration of the study area, two principal options for change evolved for the Covent Garden area. These present two different approaches for the development of the area, based on establishing different physical 'fixes' – considering existing uses and buildings, and whether or not they are considered 'fixes' in the long-term.

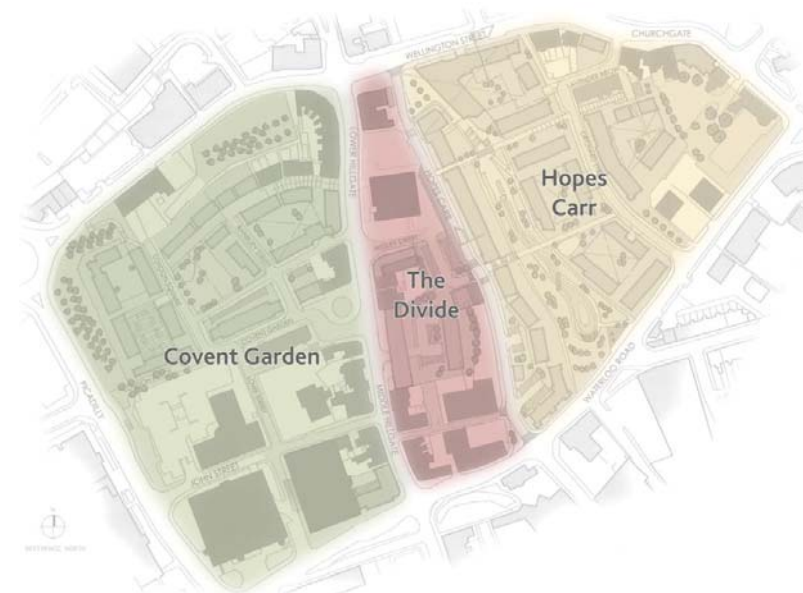
Neighbourhood Zones

- 5.2 The Baseline Report and the Implementation Report consider the analysis and delivery of the scheme in three separate zones:

- **Covent Garden**
- **The Divide**
- **Hopes Carr**

- 5.3 These are referenced in the following description and evaluation of the options.

Figure 5.1 Neighbourhood Zones



Option 1 – Minimal Intervention - building out existing opportunity sites

Option 1: Concept

- 5.4 Option 1 uses residential-led infill development to re-establish a residential component and create a critical mass of activity to change the role and function of the area into that of a residential

neighbourhood. Predominantly working around existing uses to replace lost buildings and develop vacant sites.

- 5.5 Gap sites are developed and under-utilised buildings are redeveloped to provide new residential opportunities.

Figure 5.2 Option 1 Concept Diagram



- 5.6 Option 1 includes the following interventions:

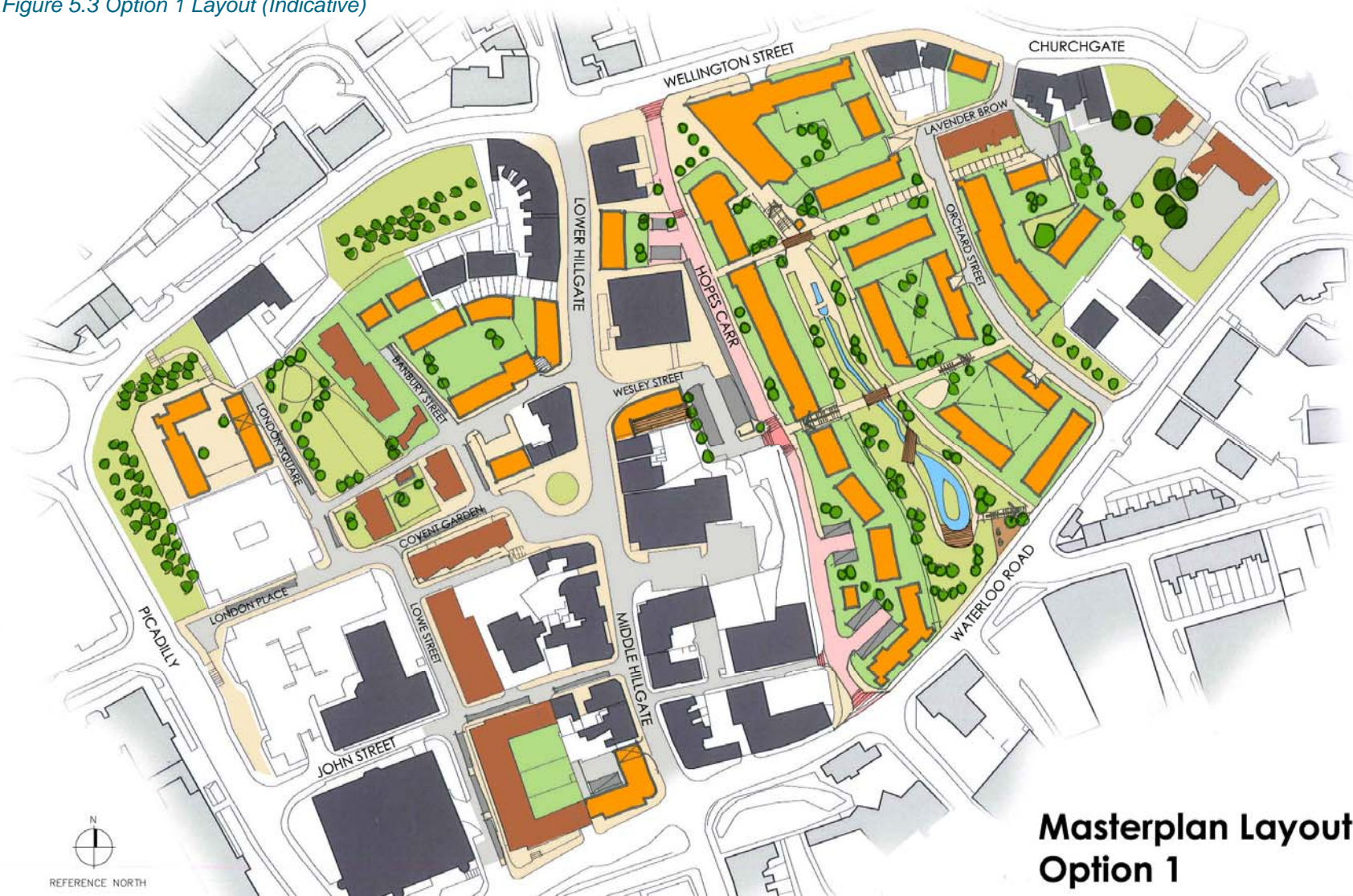
- Stockport Homes' residential stock on Covent Garden is retained and refurbished.
- Large retail units on Hillgate remain as viable businesses.
- Infill development of gap sites along Hillgate to provide new residential-led accommodation with the opportunity for ground-floor active uses.
- Redevelopment of Crowther Mill site as a residential-led development.
- Development of SMBC surface car park to provide new residential opportunities.
- Refurbishment of the Police HQ for alternative office-based use.
- Residential-led redevelopment of the Hopes Carr site.
- Active ground floor uses encouraged in key locations.
- Enhancement of Hemphshaw Valley to create an amenity green space.
- Vacant period buildings brought back into viable use.
- Vacant sites incorporated into new development.

5.7 Specifically, Option 1 delivers:

- 277 residential units (236 new and 41 refurbished households)
- 336 residential and commercial car parking spaces
- 1,375sq.m new and refurbished office/commercial space.
- 9 A1 and A3 retail units (1,400sqm)
- Residential density of 48 dwellings per hectare.

5.8 An indicative layout for Option 1 is included overleaf.

Figure 5.3 Option 1 Layout (Indicative)



**Masterplan Layout
Option 1**

Option 2 – Maximum Change - exploring redevelopment opportunities

Option 2: Concept

- 5.9 Option 2 proposes a greater level of intervention to replace declining and under-utilised stock, and redevelop large out-of-scale retail units to create a more integrated residential neighbourhood. The aim of this is to re-establish east-west connections across Covent Garden and create a more physically linked urban environment.
- 5.10 Within Option 2 the Covent Garden area (site of Stockport Homes stock and public sector car parking), becomes the focus for a new residential redevelopment. The large retail units along Hillgate are relocated to allow greater east-west connectivity across the site and create new residential-led opportunities along Hillgate, which are more in-keeping with the surrounding context and its status as a conservation area.
- 5.11 To deliver Option 2 public sector car parking to serve the civic core is displaced off-site. A new multi-storey parking provision is recommended to consolidate parking opportunities within the town centre.

Figure 5.4 Option 2 Concept Diagram



- 5.12 The key differences between this concept and Option 1 include the following interventions:
- Residential redevelopment of Stockport Homes' site.
 - Residential led-redevelopment of large retail sites to create east-west links and replace lost urban form.

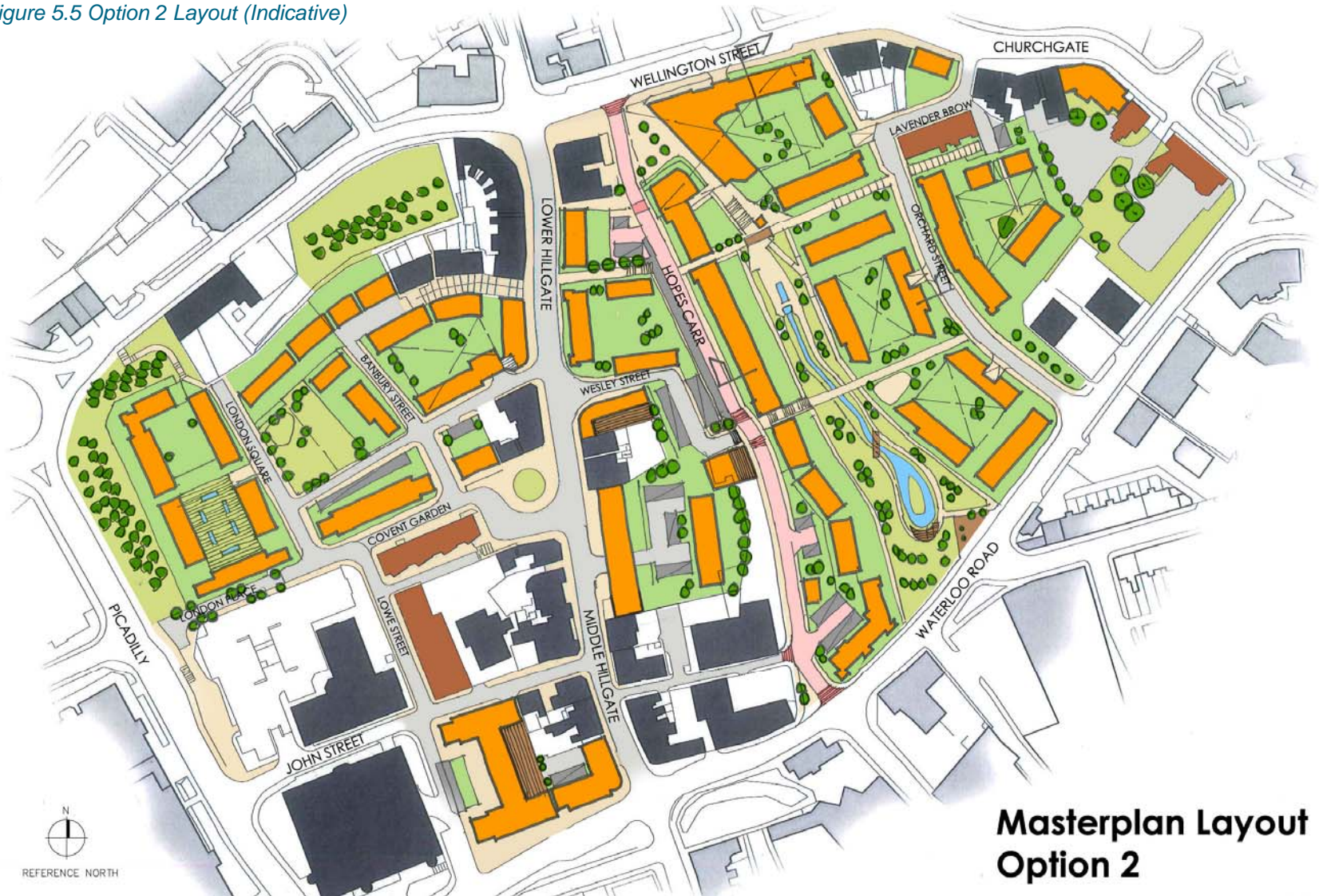
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- More extensive residential development on 'Plateau' car park sites.
 - Redevelopment of the Police HQ and associated parking area to provide new office opportunity.
 - More radical site-assembly measures within the Divide to facilitate new residential development to reconnect the area and open up new east-west connection.
 - More assertive measures to infill the Churchgate edge
 - Additional pedestrian connections possible
 - Required acquisition of key sites.

5.13 Specifically, Option 2 delivers:

- 308 residential units (292 new and 16 refurbished households)
- 518 residential and commercial car parking spaces
- 5,075sq.m new and refurbished office/commercial space.
- 9 A1 and A3 retail units (1,400sqm)
- Residential density of 51 dwellings per hectare.

5.14 An indicative layout for Option 2 is included overleaf.

Figure 5.5 Option 2 Layout (Indicative)



**Masterplan Layout
Option 2**

Recreation Provision

- 5.15 The improvement of existing and creation of new recreation and amenity environments are considered in both options to create a family-friendly neighbourhood. This includes the enhancement (Option 1) or reposition (Option 2) of the play area on Covent Garden; additional hard and soft landscaping to Covent Garden Square and the proposed public realm at the corner of Wellington Street and Hopes Carr. This is supported by public realm improvements along Wellington Street to create a more pedestrian friendly environment, with improved linkages to the town centre.
- 5.16 The enhancement of Hempshaw Brook into an amenity 'green lung' is proposed in both options and would include the creation of an informal natural environment: enhancing natural vegetation; exposing historic mill artefacts; formalising the watercourse and creating a reed filter lagoon to provide a wildlife refuge. This area would incorporate informal and formal public footpaths and footbridges, which would be overlooked by residential accommodation.
- 5.17 We also consider the potential relocation of the air crash memorial in line with previous consultation with the families of those lost, which was undertaken by ID4 Living/Seddons during

the preparation of a planning application for the site. This would enable the memorial to be repositioned to overlook the brook, creating a more respectful location in a parkland setting.

Option Evaluation: Summary

- 5.18 The obvious advantage of Option 1 is that it offers much more deliverable gains in the short to medium term, coupled with less intrusive site-assembly. These gains, as set out above, are not to be lightly dismissed in that individually they are welcome ingredients and may well arrest the decline of the area. On the other hand it is doubtful that they will cumulatively amount to the aspiration described in the Vision. There is a more serious risk in that the reduced level of confidence evident in the proposals may either discourage inward investment in the first place or at least lower the quality level that the private sector is willing to invest because of expectations of added value.
- 5.19 For these reasons it is considered important to explore the potential consequences of choosing Option 1 when measured against the design objectives in the Vision. These include:
- Retention of the existing flats in the Covent Garden area will make it very difficult to nurture a mood and character of progressive urban growth. Attempts to do so would

necessitate major expenditure on the built fabric and fundamental reconfiguration of the external spaces around them, all requiring complex and costly consultations and probably still falling short of the image necessary to stimulate long-term confidence.

- The reduced flexibility of the works described above would impose a constraint on the layout of movement infrastructure desired to promote east/west permeability.
- Continuation of the car-parking on the plot north of London Place would further impair the pedestrian experience for those walking towards or from Piccadilly.
- The same parking would isolate any development on the former Sunday School site, reducing its viability and sense of inclusion in the overall village.
- Loss of either or both of the above housing developments would at least delay creation of a legible edge to the village, when viewed from Piccadilly and further west.
- Loss or delay of residential-led redevelopment to replace the inappropriate built form on Hillgate will perpetuate the sense of Hillgate being a marginal neighbourhood, lacking the intimate feel and safe atmosphere thought

essential to restore the strong sense of place once enjoyed here.

- The nature of buildings and the spaces around and between them in the Divide will continue to discourage and impede pedestrian movement between the three segments of the village identified in the analysis, thus mitigating against the holistic integration imagined in the Vision.
- The most limiting consequence of the perpetuated divide would be the isolation of the Hopes Carr segment. Deprived of its ability to feed off the relative strength and character of Hillgate, this area would be difficult to promote as anything much more than a brownfield development site on former industrial land – a type currently being shunned by the private sector for obvious reasons.
- It would clearly be impossible to foster a strong sense of the Hopes Carr road being an ‘internal’ street, so the natural design response is to develop an architectural edge on its eastern side: this would then constrain any later attempt to internalise the street if and when the Divide is redeveloped.

- Option 1 leaves gaps in the Churchgate edge, weakening the overall improvement of the gateway at the junction with Wellington Street. A similar constraint is imposed on the Hillgate gateway by retention of a less than ideal building marking the corner with Waterloo Road.

5.20 A detailed technical evaluation of the Options has been provided by Sinclair Knight Merz. This is included in the appendix.

Design Evaluation – Preferred Option

5.21 Based on the design considerations outlined, Option 2 is recommended as a preferred master planning option for the Covent Garden area to deliver a comprehensive and sustainable urban structure. Whilst this would take time to deliver, particularly in connection with the relocation of the larger retail units on Hillgate, the overall impact of the scheme would be to create a sustainable residential community, which is well connected to both the town centre, and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

6. Conclusions

Financial Evaluation – Preferred Option

6.1 The Masterplan is supported by an Implementation Report, which compares the costs associated with the delivery of each option. This report also considers the implications of a range of issues that will have a bearing on implementation including *inter alia*:

- Site acquisition and land assembly
- Clearance and remediation
- Off-site parking
- Construction
- Infrastructure and Public Realm
- Affordable Housing

6.2 The Implementation Report is presented separately due to the commercial sensitivity of its content. However, we briefly discuss the key conclusions below.

Development Appraisals

6.3 Development appraisals have been run to compare the costs associated with each option and the likely funding requirements needed for delivery. Within this assessment a funding requirement (gap) is identified for both options.

- Option 1 = £9.2million funding requirement
- Option 2 = £20.3million funding requirement

6.4 Clearly Option 2, which represents the maximum intervention approach, requires a greater level of funding support in order to ensure viability working alongside a development partner. This principally reflects the fact that the site requires significant land assembly and remediation, whilst site topography also leads to comparatively expensive construction costs.

Variations in Option 2 to identify the Preferred Option

6.5 The Implementation Report considers the deliverability of Option 2 and therefore identifies several aspects of the masterplan that are likely to be brought forward by the private sector in the long-term and are therefore not considered necessary for public sector intervention at this time. Whilst intervention on these sites forms part of the long-term aspiration of the masterplan, for the

purposes of evaluation the cost of delivery to the public sector, these are excluding from the cost analysis to create a Preferred Option. These include:

- **Police Station** – whilst it is anticipated that the police function may be relocated within the medium term, as part of a wider consolidation of public sector services, the refurbishment and reuse of the building, as opposed to the redevelopment of the building, would equally benefit the long-term sustainability of this area. Further feasibility work would be required to consider different options for this building. Therefore, whilst the options are prepared to considered two different alternatives for its future, it is likely that this building and its associated parking, could remain *in situ* in the long-term and therefore its retention has been assumed in the delivery strategy.
- **Retail Units** – the preferred option would include the long-term relocation of the large retail units on Hillgate and the redevelopment of the sites to provide a scale and mass of development, which is more in keeping with the wider context. However, both of these businesses are viable at the current point in time and their acquisition would be extremely costly. Planning consent for residential development has also been secured for one of the retail

units (Offizone), suggesting that the owner(s) is seeking to relocate in the short term. Therefore, whilst the replacement of these large retail units is aspired to, for the purposes of the delivery strategy we are assuming that the furniture retail unit (Peter Carlson Interiors) will remain *in situ* for the short-medium term, whilst the Offizone site is considered for redevelopment/intervention.

- 6.6 Adjusting the cost analysis to take account of these variations, reduces the funding requirement (gap) for the Preferred Option:

- Preferred Option = £14.3million funding requirement

Early Acquisitions

- 6.7 To assist with delivery several properties, which are currently on the market or are strategically positioned, are identified for early acquisition to assist with land assembly.

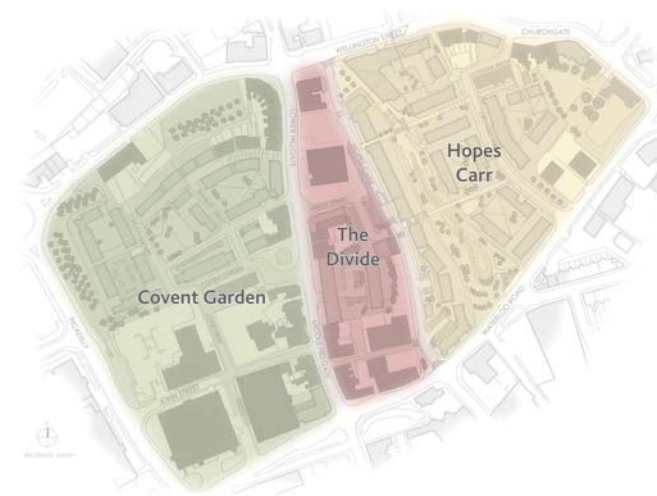
Development Zones

6.8 The Implementation Report considers the delivery of the scheme in three separate delivery zones:

- Covent Garden
- The Divide
- Hopes Carr

6.9 Whilst, the timeframe for delivery would overlap, with different aspects of deliver, such as remediation coming forward at the same time as construction in other areas of the study area, it is likely that the three parcels would each require a different approach to delivery.

Figure 6.1 Development Zones



Funding

- 6.10 National funding streams are assessed in terms of their ability to bring forward delivery and assist with early land assembly and development activity.
- 6.11 Further recommendations regarding the implementation and delivery of a masterplan for Covent Garden are made in the accompanying report.

Next Steps

- 6.12 The Implementation Report concludes with the identification of a series of Next Steps. These are included below:

Hopes Carr

- 6.13 A private sector partner, ID4/Seddons, is in place in this site (and the strategy does not prevent this partner being given the chance to help deliver 'The Divide' or Covent Garden zones).
- 6.14 However, this current Masterplan completely changes the scheme that should be the subject of agreement between the Council and Seddon Group Ltd. We therefore recommend:
- Appointment of development adviser to facilitate a revised agreement, based upon an agreed development brief in line with the Masterplan;
 - Revised outline planning application, based upon the Masterplan;
 - Appointment of legal advisers to assist with this process and wider CPO action should this be necessary.

- 6.15 Overall there is much to be done and critical to this is aligning the public sector interests and identifying public funding to facilitate the delivery process.
- 6.16 The fact that Seddon Group Ltd have recently secured Investment Partner status with the HCA means that they are also able to access NAHP funding for this zone as part of the Regular Market Engagement programme. Further, should a commitment be made to secure a revised outline consent in the next few months, it may also be possible to apply for Round 2 Kickstart funding, albeit subject to a detailed planning consent for the Kickstart plots.
- 6.17 Seddon Group Ltd are currently preparing a Kick Start Round 2 Funding application for the site.

Covent Garden & 'The Divide'

- Conduct an independent valuation of all assets to be acquired/transferred;
- Appoint advisers to produce a detailed delivery plan, conduct negotiations, prepare development brief and lead the process to procure a partner;
- Negotiate to acquire all 3rd party property interests;

-
- Agree the transfer of all publicly owned land to the Council (e.g. SoS);
 - Reach agreement with Stockport Homes to redevelop and re-provide social housing;
 - Reach agreement with Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust on repositioning of their relocated car parking spaces;
 - Appoint legal advisers to assist with CPO and partner procurement;
 - Utilise CPO Powers if necessary (only if necessary after proof that negotiations have failed to reach agreement);
 - Produce and ratify at Council a Development Brief for the site;
 - Commence process to procure a partner.

6.18 It will be possible for the Council/HCA to avoid the requirement for a development brief and subsequent procurement process in these two areas by extending Seddon's role in the Urban Village. The delivery strategy does not preclude this approach, although should it be adopted it will be critical that the Council/HCA ensures quality and diversity of design throughout the Urban Village by close adherence to planning policy including the Masterplan document.

Appendix – Accessibility Evaluation of Options

The following technical summary has been provided by Sinclair Knight Merz, in an evaluation of both masterplanning options.

Appraisal of both Options 1 and 2

- i. In terms of vehicular access, both Options 1 and 2 maintain the arrangement of the existing highways in the Covent Garden area of the site, since it gives an appropriate level of vehicular access and permeability, although, it is suggested that Garnett Street be widened to facilitate ease of access to the underground car parking associated with the proposed residential development blocks on its northern frontage. Maintaining the arrangement of the existing highways also ensures that the traffic generated by the proposed residential and commercial development will be distributed across a number of access junctions thereby minimising its likely traffic impact.
- ii. Vehicular access into the 'Divide' area of the site is provided via Hillgate, which is maintained as is in both Options 1 and 2 as it offers an excellent level of vehicular accessibility. Recently implemented public realm works have already improved the amenity for users of this corridor.
- iii. Although the Hopes Carr area of the site is fronted by existing highways, namely Wellington Street, Churchgate, Waterloo Road and Hopes Carr, vehicular penetration into the site is limited. Both Options 1 and 2 seek to make best use of the existing vehicular connections with Churchgate whereby the junction with Lavenders Brow is maintained as is the existing access serving Churchgate House. A new access on the Waterloo Road frontage and a new internal spine road will facilitate vehicular access to the car parks associated with the residential and commercial units. Again, the vehicular movement strategy ensures that the traffic generated by the proposed development is distributed over a number of accesses thereby minimising the likely traffic impact.
- iv. Both Options 1 and 2 include for the traffic calming and an improvement to the public realm on Hopes Carr to reduce traffic speeds, discourage its use by through traffic and

improve the amenity for future residents. The existing Hopes Carr/Waterloo Road junction would also be aligned further to the east in an attempt to improve the visibility to the right when egressing Hopes Carr. Both options also include for the traffic calming and an improvement to the public realm of the section of Wellington Street between its junctions with Churchgate and Hillgate. The suggested traffic calming on Wellington Street is seen as an extension to that proposed by SMBC for adjacent sections of Churchgate and is primarily aimed at reducing traffic speeds rather than restricting through traffic volumes. The overall objective of the traffic calming and public realm improvements is to change the character of Wellington Street by improving pedestrian linkages to the wider town centre and giving it a sense of place, rather than maintaining it solely as a conduit for vehicular movement.

- v. In terms of pedestrian accessibility, both options seek to improve pedestrian linkages to/from and penetration into the various parts of the site via the provision of new footpaths, public squares and connections to the adjacent highways. Pedestrian movement in a north/south direction is appropriately provided for in both options, however, retention of some of the larger retail units in the 'Divide' area as part of

Option 1 reduces the ability to forge new and improve existing pedestrian routes in an east/west direction.

- vi. A similar approach to the provision of parking has been adopted for both options whereby a combination of on-street parking, surface parking and underground parking is proposed to ensure, as far as is practically possible, that the future provision is located in close proximity to the development blocks that it is intended to serve. Parking for both options is suggested at a level that is less than the maximum provision allowable via strict application of the maximum town centre parking standards thereby reflecting the accessible nature of town centre site, although, an allowance has been made for visitors parking. In overall terms, a total of 471 private parking spaces are suggested for Option 1 and 532 private spaces are suggested for Option 2. Existing on-street Pay & Display parking is retained where possible to cater for both the existing/proposed retail uses and visitors to the area. It is acknowledged that a residents parking scheme may need to be established for the site to ensure that on-street provision is available for residents use.

- vii. Both Options 1 and 2 will result in the displacement of varying numbers of existing areas of off street SMBC (private) parking and Pay & Display parking. These spaces will need to be re-provided in a multi-storey car park and a site on nearby Fletcher Street has been identified as a possible location for such a facility and is discussed in more detail within the following section.

Details of Option 2

- viii. Option 2 will maintain the existing arrangement of highways within the Covent Garden area of the site. Access will be maintained via Lee Street, John Street, Covent Garden, Lowe Street and Garnett Street, although it is likely that Garnett Street will need to be widened. The formation of simple priority junctions will be maintained.
- ix. The 'Divide' area will continue to be accessible by vehicles from Hillgate and Hopes Carr via Wesley Street and Watson Square. The formation of simple priority junctions will be maintained.
- x. As detailed earlier the existing vehicular access into the Hopes Carr site is limited to Lavender's Brow and the access serving Churchgate House.
- xi. A new, appropriately scaled access junction (in the form of a simple priority controlled junction), is proposed on the Waterloo Road frontage, which, in combination with an internal spine road, facilitates vehicular access to the various surface and underground car parks associated with the proposed residential blocks. Access into the main underground car park located within the north-west portion of the site will be provided via Lavenders Brow with egress direct onto Wellington Street.
- xii. In order to change their nature to one that is more 'pedestrian friendly', the section of Wellington Street between Churchgate and Hillgate and the length of Hopes Carr will be subject to an element of traffic calming and an improvement to the public realm to reduce vehicle speeds and discourage through traffic. As proposed by SMBC on Churchgate, traffic calming measures are likely to be in the form of a combination of speed cushions, raised junction plateaux and a reduced speed limit of 20mph. Hopes Carr will be narrowed and realigned to provide wider footways along both frontages

and raised plateaux are suggested at the junctions of Wellington Street, Waterloo Road and Watson Square.

- xiii. The junction of Hopes Carr with Waterloo Road will be narrowed and realigned to improve visibility for egressing vehicles.
- xiv. The site within Option 2 will be highly permeable to pedestrians and cyclists in an east / west and north / south direction.
- xv. In terms of east / west routes, the existing steps on Piccadilly will be retained and will connect into the existing footway network through the Covent Garden site onto Hillgate.
- xvi. Four pedestrian routes will be provided through the 'Divide' site, the three existing routes via Watson Square and Wesley Street and Bishop Blaize Passageway and one new footway located north of Wesley Street. The new footway will connect with Crowther Street to the west and a new footway into the Hopes Carr site to the east. This will lead pedestrians and cyclists into the north-west portion of the Hopes Carr site and onto the new spine road via the relocated Lavender Steps. The pedestrian route via Wesley Street will connect into a second new footway into Hopes Carr which will lead

pedestrians across a new bridge in the proposed Park and Hemphshaw Brook and on to the new internal spine road.

- xvii. In terms of the north / south connections, the existing steps from Wellington Street onto London Square will be retained and connect into the existing footway network within the Covent Garden site and onto Edward Street.
- xviii. Hillgate and Hopes Carr will continue to be good pedestrian routes linking the site with town centre to the north. A network of footways will be provided along the Brook, through the Park area and along the frontages of the residential units providing a link between Waterloo Road and Wellington Street.
- xix. Parking for the residential, commercial and retail units will be via a combination of on-street, surface and underground parking and comprise a total of 532 private parking spaces. A summary of the car parking to be provided, including pay and display, has been included as Table 1.
- xx. A total of 106 residential parking spaces will be provided for the Covent Garden site, of which 13 will be on-street, 12 will be within the building curtilage, 20 will be provided within courtyards, 14 will be integral and the remaining 47 will be

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- provided within the underground car park accessed from Garnett Street. A total of 92 commercial spaces will be provided within the building curtilages and on-street.
- xxi. With regards to the 'Divide' site a total of 85 residential parking spaces will be provided, of which 35 will be on-street, 24 will be within the building curtilage, 24 will be provided within courtyards and 2 will be integral.
- xxii. A total of 158 residential parking spaces will be provided for the Hopes Carr site, all of which will be provided within the underground car parks, 3 of which will be accessed from the internal access road whilst the fourth will be accessed via Lavenders Brow with vehicles egressing via Wellington Street. A total of 91 commercial parking spaces will be provided via on-street, underground and courtyard car parks. Staff and visitor parking for the 4 retail units will be provided within the Hopes Carr site.
- xxiii. Due to the level of car parking provided for the development, the existing topography and to maintain the maximum amount of green space possible, underground car parking has been proposed for a number of the residential and commercial blocks within the Covent Garden and Hopes Carr site.
- xxiv. Parking is suggested at a level that is less than the maximum provision allowable via strict application of the maximum town centre parking standards thereby reflecting the accessible nature of the town centre site and its transport infrastructure, although, an allowance has been made for visitors parking.
- xxv. The following standards have been used;
- Residential Car Parking - 1: 1 plus visitor provision
- Commercial Car Parking - 1: 50sqm plus visitor provision
- Retail Car Parking - 1 operational space per unit plus visitor provision
- xxvi. Car parking has been located as close as possible to the development blocks it is intending to serve.
- xxvii. With regards to the existing 147 Pay and Display spaces located within the site a total of 66 spaces will be re-provided for use by visitors and businesses. The majority of these will be located along Hillgate, Hopes Carr and the new internal spine road.
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- xxviii. As a result of the redevelopment a total of 78 car parking spaces associated with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council will be displaced. A site on Fletcher Street has been identified as a potential location for a multi-storey car park to accommodate SMBC car parking. The car park would need to accommodate a minimum of 78 spaces (displaced spaces) however, the number of spaces required is likely to be much higher due to the redevelopment of the civic centre and the relocation of staff.
- xxix. The Preferred Option also includes the displacement of 73 car parking spaces currently used by the Magistrates Court and owned by the Secretary of State. This would combine to create an overall displacement of 127 spaces associated with the public sector, which could be accommodated within a new multi-storey car park on Fletcher Street.