



## FREESCHOOL STREET REGENERATION

# NORTHAMPTON Supplementary Planning Document

September 2005

Ref: 2155



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# 1.0

# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose and status of the Document

This is a very exciting time for Northampton. The town is well placed to become a progressive and dynamic regional centre and a model of sustainable urban growth.

With a clear regeneration agenda, Northampton Borough Council is actively seeking to bring forward key town centre sites for comprehensive, quality-led redevelopment. The Freeschool Street regeneration area represents a major opportunity for the town. Situated midway between the railway station and the town centre, the site offers significant potential for high quality mixed-use development, including unique opportunities for urban living.

This Masterplan has been adopted by the Borough Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. It sets the scene for the implementation of high quality, imaginative development, re-establishing a strong character and identity for this neglected part of the town and bringing significant and lasting benefits for Northampton.

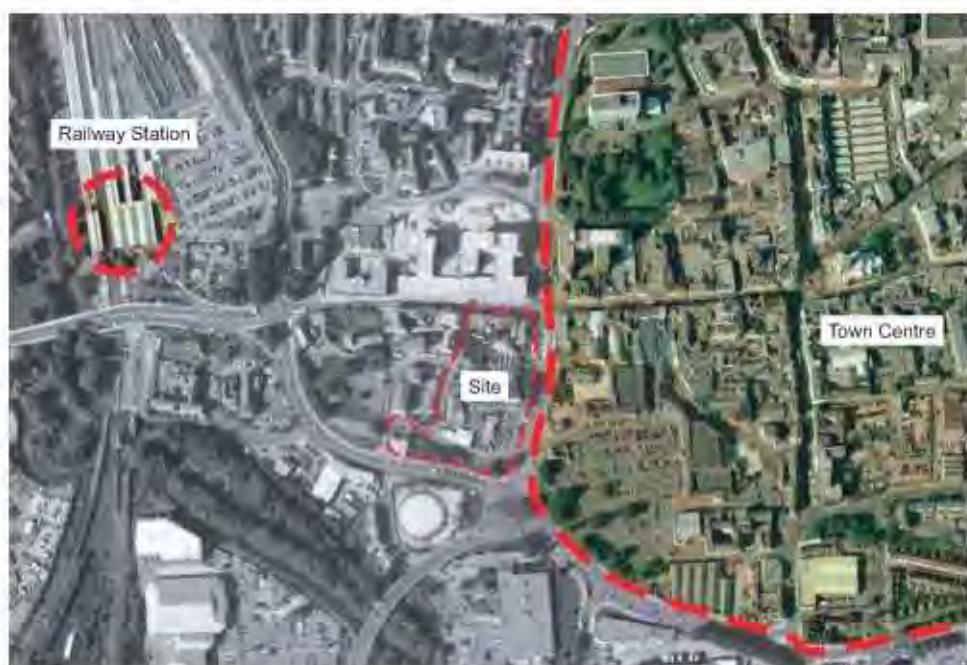
## 1.2 Background to the Masterplan

Strategically located on Northampton's Ring Road, the Freeschool Street regeneration area represents a key gateway to the town.

For many years this part of the town has presented a poor and unattractive image, characterised by predominantly light industrial uses set within semi-derelict and underperforming land.

In order to reverse this situation, Northampton Borough Council is promoting the comprehensive redevelopment and regeneration of the area.

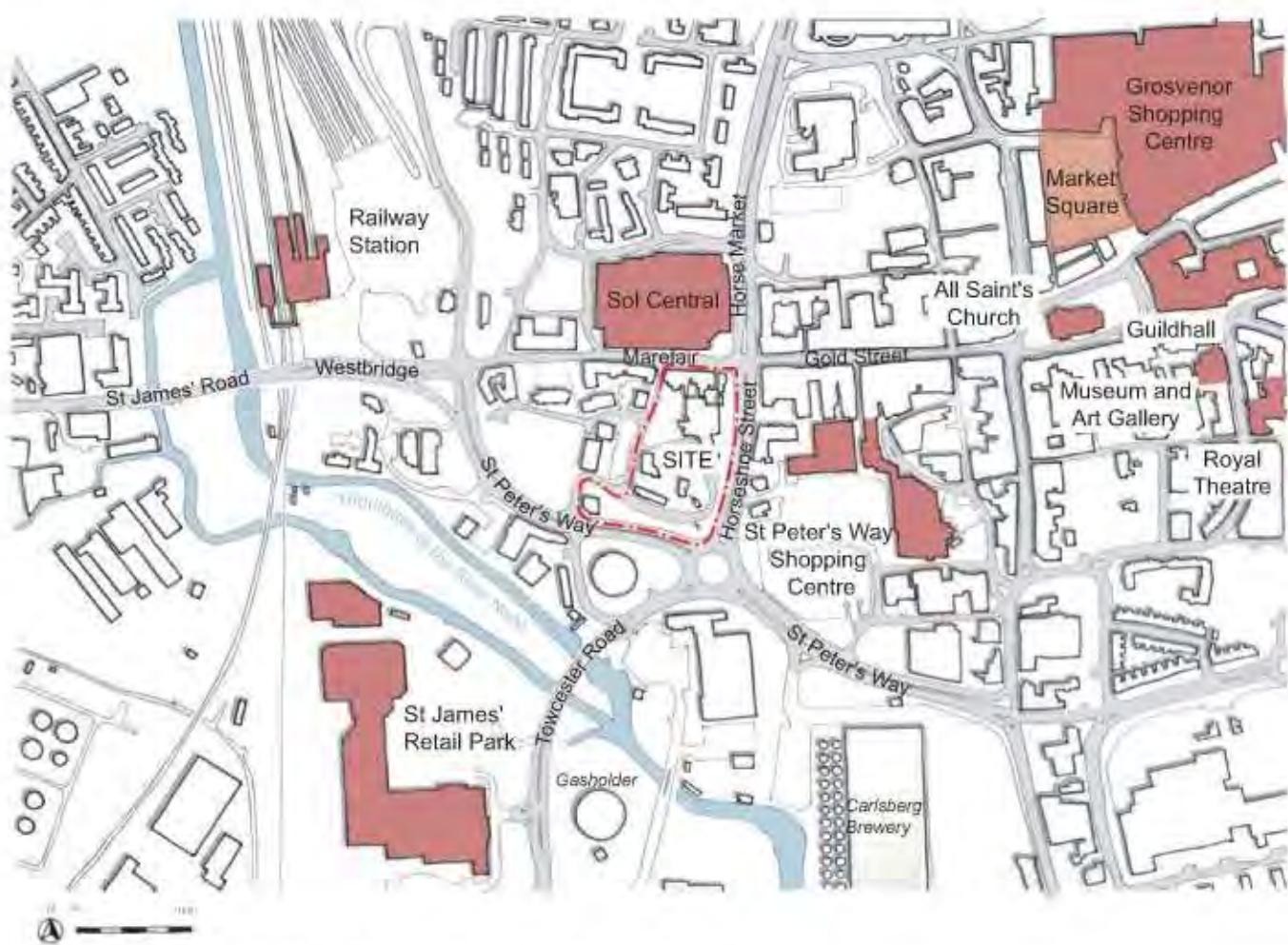
To ensure rapid progress in delivering change, Northampton Borough Council commissioned a multi-disciplinary team, led by Latham Architects:Urban Design, to draw up a comprehensive Masterplan and Delivery Strategy to cover the entire development site/regeneration area. This has provided the basis for the Supplementary Planning Document.



*Aerial photograph showing site in relation to Railway Station and Town Centre*

### 1.3 Study Area

The study area extends from Mare Fair in the north, to St Peter's Way in the south, bounded by Freeschool Street and The Green to the west and Horseshoe Street (Ring Road) to the east. The area includes land owned by Northampton Borough Council (currently used as a pay and display car park) as well as individual parcels of land in private ownership.



*Site Plan showing site location in relation to wider context of Northampton*

*View south towards gasholder*



*View of site from St Peter's Way*



*View of existing 'gateway' to site (junction of St Peter's Way and The Green)*



*View along Court Road*



## 1.4 The Consultancy Team

The consultancy team comprises urban design and planning consultants Latham Architects, supported by:

Knight Frank	- Property Consultants
Arup	- Transportation, Engineering & Sustainability
EC Harris	- Cost, Funding and Regeneration Consultants
CgMs Consulting	- Archaeology



Site plan showing study area and road network

View north showing council car park



1930's factory (Kickboxing Club) - backdrop to car park



View from Ring Road looking north west



Marefair - existing 19th century terrace



## 1.5 Requirements of the Brief

The Council's key objectives for the Freeschool Street Regeneration Area, contained within the project brief, are as follows:

- seek comprehensive redevelopment of important town centre gateway site
- promote landmark buildings of high quality and innovative design providing a strong identity for Northampton
- create a practical and deliverable vision continuing the regeneration of Northampton Town Centre
- provide/strengthen links to the surrounding town centre land uses
- set a framework against which planning applications can be determined
- maximise land values and wider community benefits

The following were highlighted as key elements of the brief:

### **Archaeology –**

The site is significant in archaeological terms and the majority of the site area is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument to reflect this. However, despite its status, the Council and English Heritage will encourage a sensitive and considered approach to redevelopment.

### **Highways –**

The Council have a presumption in favour of closing Court Road and Gregory Street to traffic, thus removing significant highway constraints.

The Masterplan must show how access and highways improvements can unlock the true potential of the site, with particular emphasis on lessening the barrier effect of the Ring Road.

### **Design/Layout –**

A clear high quality spatial plan is required to provide an aspirational yet pragmatic framework to guide future development and encourage market interest

## 1.6 Study Process

The process of developing the masterplan has been intensive, encompassing a wide range of activities aimed at:

- Understanding the physical context
- Appreciating the regional and local issues
- Identifying needs & aspirations for the future
- Setting the framework for change

Key elements of the study process have included:

### **Stage 1**

#### **Baseline Review**

Including local area analysis of built form, urban design, public realm, transport, infrastructure, landscape and property, including a review of sustainability indicators. A separate archaeology desk based assessment was also carried out.

### **Stage 2**

Options Development and Appraisal: Including review of potential development options. These were assessed on the basis of their urban design benefits and contribution to the wider townscape and appraised in terms of cost, value and sustainability.

### **Stage 3a**

Development of the Masterplan: Based on the options appraisals and feedback from stakeholders, a preferred masterplan was developed. The masterplan was the subject of a full sustainability appraisal workshop.

### **Stage 3b**

Development of a Delivery Plan and Marketing Strategy: A separate document was prepared on behalf of Northampton Borough Council, to support the main document, highlighting the necessary actions required to enable delivery of the masterplan.

## 1.7 Consultation and Stakeholder Involvement

Actively involving local landowners and other stakeholders has been a key part of the process of preparing the masterplan.

Borough and County Council officers, local councillors, English Heritage and land owners have all been party to the process.

Stakeholder review meetings were held at the end of Stages 1 and 2, during which landowners and other interested parties helped to crystallise the overall vision and direction, enabling development options and specific proposals to be tested as part of the overall masterplanning process.

The masterplan provides the basis for taking forward a shared vision for the future of this part of Northampton. It is this sense of 'ownership' that gives the masterplan its greatest chance of success and establishes a clear basis for implementation.

## 1.8 Report Structure

This report sets out the regeneration context, collective aspirations and overall vision for the site, providing a set of clear urban design objectives. The principal components of the Masterplan are set out in Section 5.0, including visualisations to illustrate proposed layout, coverage, built form and landscape character.

Due to the archaeological significance of the site, reflected in the Scheduled Ancient Monument designation for the majority of the site area, a summary of the key archaeological issues relating to the implementation of the Masterplan is included, (Section 6.0), together with a commentary on transport and infrastructure proposals.

A separate Delivery Plan has been prepared to highlight the options for site assembly and implementation.

A separate Sustainability Appraisal was also undertaken as part of the development of the masterplan. The appraisal process was transparent, systematic and iterative, enabling sustainability issues to be fully assessed and enhancement opportunities to be identified as part of a comprehensive package of redevelopment proposals.

*Site plan showing varied ownerships*



### Ownership

The site is currently in a number of separate ownerships, with the central section owned by the Borough Council

Northampton Borough Council



## 2.0

# Planning and Regeneration Context

### 2.1 Planning Policy

#### National Planning Policy Context

This masterplan draws upon and is supported by national planning policy, through a number of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). Key documents include:

#### PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on achieving sustainable development. The main aims of PPS1 are to promote sustainable and inclusive forms of development through the planning system by:

- promoting social cohesion and inclusion for all
- protecting and enhancing the quality, character and amenity value of the environment
- the prudent use of natural resources, re-using resources wherever possible and promoting the use of renewable resources
- promoting sustainable economic development that brings prosperity and jobs for all
- reducing the need to travel by locating development close to public transport routes
- promoting development on suitably located previously developed land and buildings through the form of higher density mixed use schemes
- promoting good design in order to achieve high quality development with lasting appeal, ensuring sustainable outcomes

#### PPG3 Housing

PPG3 sets out the Government's aims to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, promoting greater choice of housing which recognises the needs of the entire community and reduces social segregation. More sustainable patterns of development are promoted which make better use of previously developed land.

In order to achieve this, the key aims include:

- creating mixed inclusive communities which encourage a better social mix and deliver affordable housing,
- re-using land and buildings with 60% of additional housing to be developed on previously developed land,
- promoting mixed use development and development linked to public transport,
- designing for quality and greening the residential environment
- increasing density to make the best use of land – encouraging high density development in town centres

#### PPG6 Town Centres

The government set out their objectives for the future of town centres in PPG6 as revised in June 1996. These objectives are:

- to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres,
- to focus development in locations where the proximity of business facilitates competition from which all consumers are able to benefit and maximises opportunities to use transport other than the car,
- to maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector
- to ensure the availability of a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities to which people have easy access by a choice of means of transport.

PPG6 supports the drive to attract investment to upgrade buildings and provide high quality new development, encouraging investment in retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses, promoting high density housing in town centres.

#### PPG13: Transport

PPG 13 sets out the Government's intentions on travel. The main emphasis is on the creation of sustainable forms of development that reduce the need to travel by car and promote access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities, services and housing by public transport, walking and cycling.

## **Northamptonshire Structure Plan 1996-2016**

Adopted in March 2001, the Northamptonshire Structure Plan (1996-2016) aims to provide a framework for a more sustainable Northamptonshire following six key strategic priorities:

- 1 Ensuring a scale of development that meets local needs and those from in migration (Policy GS1).
- 2 Managing assets and resources by conserving environmental assets, minimising impact on natural resources and optimising the use of brownfield land (Policy GS2).
- 3 Integrating land use and transport planning by having a disposition of land uses that encourages sustainable patterns and modes of movement, so as to reduce the need to travel (Policy GS3).
- 4 Implementing a development strategy that focuses development within the urban areas (Policy GS4).
- 5 Promoting quality design-led development with consideration of the visual appearance of the development in context, the need to encourage mixed use developments, plan out crime, and the needs of energy, resource and environmental conservation (Policy GS5).
- 6 Securing the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services for development (Policy GS6).

The Northamptonshire Structure Plan sets out their aims for town centres (Policies TCR 1 and TCR2). These policies seek to maintain and improve the vitality and viability of the town centres by:

- o supporting the role of town centres as the primary locations for shopping, culture, employment, entertainment and leisure
- o retaining and increasing the amount and range of housing
- o encouraging mixed use development
- o utilising Brownfield land, existing buildings and infrastructure
- o improving the quality of development
- o maintaining and improving the environment
- o improving town centre safety
- o reducing non residential and long stay car parking
- o improving traffic management and accessibility
- o improving access for people with special needs, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport

- o directing investment in retail, employment, leisure and other key uses to the town

In order to provide a long-term strategic policy framework for the sustainable growth of Northampton, the Structure Plan introduces Policy NPA1 which designates a Northampton Policy Area where provision is to be made for 19,300 dwellings and 390 hectares (ha) of industrial and commercial development in the period 1996 to 2001.

## **Northampton Borough Council – Draft Local Development Scheme April 2004**

In response to the Planning Green Paper 'Planning – Delivering a Fundamental Change' and the 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill' 2004 the Borough Council issued a draft Local Development Scheme identifying which Local Development Documents (LDD's) will be produced as part of the new Local Development Framework (replacing both the Local and Structure Plans) and by when.

Northampton Borough Council intend to replace all existing development plan policies with LDD's before June/July 2007. It is intended to produce Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, Proposals Map and Insets, Housing Land Release and Phasing and Site Specific Allocations, four Area Action Plans, and a number of core Supplementary Planning Documents.

In the meantime, the Local Plan and Northamptonshire Structure Plan will be 'saved' and have Development Plan status until June/July 2007

## **Northampton Borough Council – Northampton Local Plan – Adopted June 1997**

The Northampton Local Plan sets out policies and proposals adopted by the Borough Council for the development and use of land in Northampton in the period between 1993 to 2006. The Local Plan was adopted in June 1997 with the intention to:

- balance the needs of development with a need to protect and enhance the local environment
- to provide a planning framework as the basis for development control, thereby assisting developers in the promotion of acceptable development in terms of land use and design
- to ensure that the proposals conform with the Northamptonshire Structure Plan

### **Site Specific Policies**

The Northampton Local Plan allocates the Masterplan site as a development site with alternative or mixed land use proposals under Policy D26 and encourages a development of distinct townscape on the site. The council anticipate that, subject to compliance with other policies of the Local Plan and proposals not affecting the Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the site, planning permission will be granted on this site for high density residential development with an element of commercial/retail/leisure use (fronting Mare Fair and Horseshoe Street).

Almost all of the proposed development site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a reflection of its national importance. National policies are encapsulated in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeology Areas Act 1979 and are implemented by the Department of Culture Media and Sport, advised by English Heritage.

The policies of national government for sites of archaeological significance, which require detailed assessment and evaluation prior to planning consent, are outlined with reference to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16. The policies of the Borough which aim to protect and enhance the historic environment are contained within the present adopted Local Plan.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected under Policy E37. The policy states that:

Planning permission will not be granted for development on sites which have the potential for being of national or county archaeological importance unless adequate information has been submitted to the council demonstrating:

- a) that no archaeological remains of more than local importance exist on site  
Or
- b) in relation to archaeological remains of county importance that appropriate and satisfactory provision has been made either to preserve these remains within the development or for archaeological excavation and recording before or during development  
Or
- c) in relation to archaeological remains of national importance, that appropriate and satisfactory provision has been made to preserve the remains within the development

In addition, Policy E38 states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the character or setting of a nationally important ancient monument (whether scheduled or not), important historic landscape or the site of the battle of Northampton.

The Freeschool Street site is not situated within a Conservation Area, however the All Saints (Town Centre) Conservation Area covers the whole of Gold Street to the east. Future development must be designed sensitively so as not to compromise the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In accordance with Policy E40, The Borough Council will not grant planning permission for development unless its design, layout and landscaping pay adequate regard to the need to deter crime and vandalism. The ODPM's guide 'Safer Places – the Planning System and Crime Prevention' 2004 and Northamptonshire County Council's guide 'Planning out crime in Northamptonshire' provide guidance on how this can be achieved.

### **Housing**

The site lies outside the primarily residential areas indicated on the Local Plan Proposals Map. In order to comply with Policy H7, any residential development must ensure that a satisfactory residential environment, which complies with the council highway design guide and guide to parking standards is created. Development must not be piecemeal in character and should not result in the loss of potential for garaging, parking, social, educational, recreational or other facilities for which there is a need in the area, or trees or land of significant amenity value.

The Local Planning Authority specify that in order to gain planning consent, all residential development must be broadly in accordance with the design, layout and parking standards as set out in Appendices 7, 8 and 11 of the Local Plan (Policy H12). Under Policy H14, the council may require that amenity open space with facilities for Children's Play should be provided in association with new residential development by reason of the location, scale and character of the site. Policy H15 ensures that the proposed layout and ensuing residential density are designed in context with the character of the site, the character and amenity of the adjacent property, the highway implications of the proposed development and the design criteria set out in Appendix 7 of the Local Plan.

In residential schemes consisting of ten or more dwellings and where there is an established need, the council will encourage the provision of not less than 10% of the total number of dwellings as provision of mobility housing in accordance with Policy H17.

The Borough Council have recently published their 'Planning Policy Statement on Affordable Housing' (Dec 2004) which states that for any site of 15 dwellings plus, or measuring 0.5ha or above; a target of 35% affordable housing should be provided, and that proportions of homes for affordable rent and other tenures will be negotiated on a site by site basis.

#### **Business**

The council will only grant planning permission for B1 office development in the town centre, district centres (within or immediately adjoining) and existing or proposed business areas in accordance with Policy B24. The council also promote the use of upper floors of shops for B1 use so long as the proposal is not detrimental to the character and amenity of the locality and does not lead to unacceptable parking arrangements or traffic problems (Policy B30).

#### **Transport**

Proposals for major developments that require major improvements to existing or proposed roads must demonstrate that the necessary works will be implemented by the developer or other means (Policy T9).

Where proposals for development involve alteration to the highway, the council require that layout, access, egress and road design is considered acceptable and that there is a satisfactory relationship between highway standards, safety and environment (Policy T10).

The council specify (Policy T21) that resulting pedestrian flows from any proposed development must be safely accommodated without inflicting any vehicular/pedestrian conflict and that, in accordance with Policy T23, planning permission will only be granted subject to suitable measures to accommodate traffic and parking needs generated by the development.

#### **Car Parking**

Policy T17 of the Local Plan sets out that parking provision for new development must be in line with the parking standards as set out in Appendix 11, unless the development site is located in an area of good access to other means of travel and where there are no resulting traffic management implications.

Policy T24 indicates that developments within the town centre must comply with parking standards in Policy T17 unless there is an appropriate agreement to make provision in other ways, such as contributions to car parking elsewhere, or assistance to public transport.

In response to the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy in 2003, Northamptonshire County Council adopted their Supplementary Planning Guidance on Parking.

In residential developments the County Council recommends an upper threshold of 1.5 off street car parking spaces per dwelling as set out in PPG 3. However, as this site is within the town centre, maximum parking standards of 1 space per residential unit are considered appropriate.

In the calculations of parking provision for mixed-use developments, the extent of car parking provision will be dependent upon the final type and mix of uses proposed.

#### **Retail**

The council require that any new shopping development should be focused within or adjoining recognised shopping areas, be in scale and character with the surrounding area and be able to meet traffic and parking requirements (Policy R1). Proposed retail units must provide adequate service access and not adversely affect the proper operation of an existing service area or inhibit the potential for such an access (Policy R13).

## 2.2 Regeneration Context

### Background statistics

Northampton Borough Council have recognised the need for investment in the Town area and have published a Community Strategy (2002-2012) to help implement the change and ensure investment is targeted at areas and groups who require it.

The Strategy sets out the aims of the Local Strategic Partnership (launched on 30th October 2001) and provides a broad based partnership of local and regional organisations representing the public, private and voluntary sectors active in the Northampton area. The Partnership has recognised that "some neighbourhoods still have high levels of poverty and deprivation, low skills, poor educational achievement, high levels of ill health, crime and a poor environment."

The Partnership looks to 'improve the quality of life and aspirations of all residents of Northampton', setting out a range of aims covering a number of socially relevant topics for the Northampton area. The Castle Ward, within which the Freeschool Street study area is situated, is a prime example of the type of area the Partnership is seeking to improve by focusing on the aims set out in the Strategy.

Northamptonshire has a population of 629,676 (2001 Census). The resident population of Northampton is 194,458, with the population of the Castle Ward stated as 9,068 (2001 Census).

The top three employment industries in Northamptonshire, according to the 2001 Census are:

- Distribution, Hotels, Restaurants (23.3%)
- Manufacturing (20.7%)
- Public admin, Education, Health (20.0%)

(% of the total working population of Northamptonshire, 2001 Census)

Castle Ward is an area of higher unemployment (5.2%) when compared to the national average (3.4%). Northampton has an overall unemployment average of 3.1%. The Castle Ward also has a higher than average percentage of economically active full-time students (3.6%), compared to the national average of 2.6%; and economically inactive students at 6.7%, compared to a national average of 4.7%.

The Castle Ward has a high percentage of residents living with limiting long-term illness. 19.9% of the residents have a limiting long-term illness in the Castle ward compared with 15.9% of residents in Northampton and 18.2% Nationally

There is a high percentage of Council property within the ward - 28.2% of the property within the Castle Ward is rented from the Council compared to a National average of 13.2%. There is also a high percentage of privately rented accommodation in the Ward, 19.3% compared with 11.9% Nationally.

### Regeneration initiatives in Northampton

The Communities Plan – Buildings for the Future, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in February 2003 sets out the Government's aim to deliver successful, thriving and inclusive communities.

It identifies four Growth Areas in the greater South East, including the Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) Growth Area. The MKSM area includes the whole of Northamptonshire (divided into North and West), Milton Keynes, Luton and Bedfordshire and part of Buckinghamshire.

The introduction of growth areas is intended to bring together the best of design and planning to ensure that the built environment in new and expanded communities is of a high quality, and the surrounding countryside is protected and enhanced.

The West Northamptonshire area will play a key role in delivering the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan and the MKSM growth area agenda. In order to secure the regeneration and sustainable development of Northampton, Towcester and Daventry the West Northamptonshire Urban Development Corporation (UDC) was established in December 2004. Its role includes bringing land and buildings into effective use, encouraging the development of industry and commerce, creating an attractive environment to encourage people to live and work in the area.

**'Getting Northampton to Work'** – a scheme sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is seeking to improve the infrastructure of the East Midlands and in Northampton, improve a series of junctions leading into and through Northampton Town Centre, notably the A428, which is the main road through the Town Centre and which runs directly to the south of the Freeschool Street Study area.

In early 2004, Alsop Ltd, undertook a visioning exercise in conjunction with the Borough and County Councils, for **Northampton's Cultural Mile**. This process was intended to open dialogue and spark discussion and debate. It did not offer fixed solutions. The thrust of the proposal was to celebrate the cultural strengths of Northampton, with a series of 10 interventions based around key destinations and forming a route between Nunn Mills, south of Becketts Park on the riverside, meandering northwards across the town to the Racecourse Park.

In January 2005, a **Waterside Development Framework and Masterplan** was published, covering a range of leisure and development opportunities for the Nene River Valley Corridor. This is of relevance to the proposal site, as the study area is in relatively close proximity to the river valley.

A number of areas/sites to be redeveloped/improved in the town in the coming years include:-

**Royal and Derngate Theatres** - A major attraction in Northampton, attracting people from across the region to a diverse range of performances and events held there. The theatres will be closing down in April 2005 for 14 months to undergo extensive refurbishment and modernisation. This will include the relocation of the present entrance to the theatre to Angel Street, aligning it to the path of the Cultural Mile.

**Greyfriars House** - This houses the main bus station and terminus in Northampton. It is a 1970's building, linking to the popular Grosvenor Shopping Centre. It is rightly seen as a top regeneration priority for the Council.

**Grosvenor Centre** - There is potential to expand this successful centre onto the bus station site.

**Castle Sidings** - This area, next to the railway station, has been identified as a possible employment site for the future.

**Carlsberg Brewery** – A major employer in the town, Carlsberg are looking to expand but are currently limited by the River to the south of the brewery. There may be scope to expand to the east, by removing the existing row of buildings and re-routing the road (which would be possible with the restructuring of the road system under the 'Getting Northampton to Work Scheme').

### Possible links

Potential exists for new development to link to the following:

**Primary Care Trust (PCT)** - There is possible scope for linkages with PCT as the only medical facility in the area is the General Hospital. Locally, there is already a LIFT scheme in Sixfields but the PCT have been looking to locate something nearer to the General Hospital.

**Citizens Advice Bureau** – The Citizens Advice Bureau is currently looking to move from their current location in Northampton and they are seeking a site which is easily accessible to all.

**Sure Start** – A Sure Start facility on the site would reinforce the Council's aim to encourage education and get people back into learning. This would also provide access to local education schemes for ethnic minorities within the community.

## 2.3 The Local Property Market

The following represents a brief commentary upon the Northampton property market, which is intended to provide a summary of the current market conditions for the following land-uses, namely: Offices, retail, leisure and residential.

It is based upon extensive research undertaken with regard to the current status of the marketplace and a structured telephone survey of the principal property agents active within the area.

### Northampton Office Market

Northampton does not possess a well-defined office core. The town centre has continued to lose key office occupiers to out-of-town locations, which have the advantage of modern stock, good parking provision and fast dual carriageway links to the M1. Within the town centre, there is a variety of stock predominantly located around the Marefair and Greyfriars/Lady's Lane areas.

Some of Northampton's largest outdated office blocks from the 1960s and 1970s, (which had blighted the town's image as an office location), have been converted to other uses, e.g. The 204,000 sq ft former Barclaycard HQ on Marefair which was demolished and replaced by the Sol Central leisure and retail development close to the subject site. 82,000 sq ft of new office accommodation is expected for completion this year. Of the space currently underway, it is understood that 79% is available.

Northampton is categorised as an "average" sized office centre with circa 116,700 employees. Of particular note is the 'Financial & Business Services' sector (F&BS) which accounts for some 22.6% of jobs in Northampton. Another major sector of employment being the Public Services which accounts for 24.9% of the total.

Northampton has seen average growth over the last decade. Since 1992, total employment in Northampton has expanded by 2.1% pa. Formal employment forecasts for Northampton indicate subdued growth prospects. Between 2003 and 2008, the total number of employees is likely to rise by 1.3% pa. Over the same period, prospects in Northampton for F&BS employment, the key driver of office demand, are positive, with growth of 2.7% pa expected.

Many of the larger banking and insurance firms in Northampton appear committed to the town, and remain amongst the largest employers. A number occupy large bespoke complexes, despite some rationalisation in recent years.

Northampton had an estimated office stock of circa 4.4 million sq ft at the end of 2003. 6.8% of this space was completed since the end of 1999, so can be categorised as 'new stock'. Latest take up statistics in Northampton are estimated to be 122,000 sq ft at the end of 2003 - 2004. A large percentage of the take up was attributable to the 115,000 sq ft purpose built development by Scottish & Newcastle, who also later took a further 26,000 sq ft of space at Northampton Business Park.

Availability in Northampton was estimated to stand at 366,000 sq ft at mid-2004. This compares with the peak of 972,000 sq ft at the end of 1993. Current availability equates to an availability rate of 8.3%. The largest employers in Northampton include Barclays who employ 4,000 staff (250 redundancies in July 2004) and Nationwide Building Society.

Top rents in Northampton were reported to stand at £13.00 psf at mid-2004 and, in out of town locations, stand at an average of £11.92 psf.

There is a high void rate within the office stock in the vicinity of the site, which ranges from modern specialist offices in multi-let buildings such as Sol House which is currently being marketed at circa £10.00 psf, through to small, self contained offices just off Mare Fair (Saxon Court) from £8.00 psf which are being offered on flexible lease terms.

*Offices to let - Marefair*



*Sol House*



*Sol Central*



*Saxon Court*



## Retail Market

Northampton's primary catchment area is extensive but largely rural. It extends east to include Wellingborough and south beyond Roade; to the west it stretches as far as Daventry. To the north, Leicester, Rugby and Kettering limit the catchment area, while to the south it's catchment overlaps with that of Milton Keynes.

The town has an estimated primary catchment population of 350,000 and an above average rate of growth is forecast in the period 2001 to 2008.

Northampton's retail offer is largely mainstream, although there are a broad range of national multiples and the town boasts major department stores including Beatties and Debenhams.

Northampton has a broadly average proportion of managed floor space with around 31% of the total retail floor space accounted for by the town's 3 managed shopping centres.

The Grosvenor Centre, which has entrances on Abington Street and Market Square, is the largest and most dominant of these centres; it was purchased by Legal & General in 1999. The Centre is anchored by Beatties department store and Littlewoods, and accommodates a standard range of national multiples. BHS is not within the centre but does have frontage along the main mall. On the upper floor, there is a J Sainsbury superstore.

The prime pitch in Northampton is located on the lower level of the Grosvenor Centre and includes Wood Street, as well as the stretch of Newland Walk extending eastwards from WH Smith. Retailers with entrances on prime pitch include Beatties, BHS, WH Smith, Miss Selfridge, Barratts, Top Shop/Top Man and Superdrug.

In view of the anticipated expansion of Northampton's population, further scope for high quality retail development is envisaged. There is a need for the town to counteract the increasing draw of nearby Milton Keynes.

There is limited supply of speciality and up market retailing within Northampton. Beatties department store accommodates a variety of upmarket brands whilst St Giles Street has a number of up market shoe shops. There is potential for the subject site to provide Northampton with the opportunity to expand its range of specialist shops.

Anecdotal evidence suggests prime rents in Northampton at £130 psf Zone A. Outside the core retail area, Zone A rents fall away rapidly. On The Drapery, local agents estimate that rents now stand at around £70-£75 psf Zone A.

## Leisure Market

Northampton has a range of leisure facilities within the town. However, the stock is limited compared to other towns of a similar size. Existing bars are principally located around the Market Square, Bridge Street and Fish Street.

There are currently a mixture of local and national operators, with a limited number of 'up market' bars and restaurants within the town centre. There is clearly potential to increase/strengthen the range of quality bars and restaurants within the town centre.

Sol Central (adjacent to the subject site) is a 200,000 sq ft retail and leisure complex. There are currently a number of vacant units on the ground floor with frontage to Mare Fair. This may be due to the size and layout of the units and the fact that the building has a strong internal focus, with access to leisure facilities via an internal atrium.

## **Northampton Residential Market**

According to the latest census data there are 80,822 households in Northampton.

Number of households (percentage)

	<b>Northampton</b>	<b>England and Wales</b>
One person households	29.8	30.0
Pensioners living alone	12.6	14.4
Other All Pensioner households	8.1	9.4
Contained dependent children	30.4	29.5
Lone parent households with dependent children	7.0	6.5
Owner occupied	71.9	68.9
Rented from Council	15.3	13.2
Rented from Housing Association or Registered Social Landlord	2.9	6.0
Private rented or lived rent free	10.0	11.9
Without central heating	6.5	8.5
Without sole use of bath, shower or toilet	0.4	0.5
Have no car or van	25.2	26.8
Have 2 or more cars or vans	30.5	29.4
Average household size (number)	2.4	2.4
Average number of rooms per household	5.3	5.3

Resident population (percentage)

	<b>Northampton</b>	<b>England and Wales</b>
Under 16	20.9	20.2
16 to 19	5.3	4.9
20 to 29	14.7	12.6
30 to 59	41.5	41.5
60 to 74	11.1	13.3
75 and over	6.6	7.6

Northampton has seen considerable growth in house prices over recent years. This strong price performance has begun to level off in recent months and it is expected that price rises will moderate considerably through the next 6 months.

There has been limited development of apartments within the town centre. There have been several factory conversions by independent developers and substantial development is currently being seen on the fringe of the town. The town has a substantial stock of good quality Victorian terrace housing.

The rental market is strong, led by students and professionals. The weight of demand has led to rental increases, particularly for good quality accommodation, with levels ranging from £400 - £900 pcm.

With the improvement of the high speed train service between Northampton and London, an increase in commuter purchasers may be foreseen.

The investor market is still strong taking advantage of low interest rates and the demand from the rental market. The strength of demand is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, barring any unforeseen economic downturn.

There has been considerable press speculation that the property market is heading for a crash. However, when one considers the fundamentals of a relatively strong economy, full employment, rising population and increasing household numbers, together with planning policy slowing the supply of developments coming 'on-stream' and the lowest level of new build completions since the second world war, it is difficult to believe that the housing market will "crash".

Undoubtedly however, the current climate represents a more difficult trading period and this is being reflected in the margins that house-builders and developers are putting into appraisals when considering purchasing land. Over the coming months, the prediction is that the gap between vendor's expectations and the purchaser's view on price will narrow. Vendor's ability to keep pushing up prices has come to an end, although house-builders are still eagerly pursuing sites, which are well located and appropriately priced. It is expected that house builders will want to minimise risk and therefore they will become involved in more joint ventures with landowners.

Unlike the commercial market place, it is very difficult to identify specific facts and figures relating to the residential marketplace within Northampton, since the residential market place (both collated records and agent analysis) is far less structured.

In addition, the marketplace tends to be far more dynamic and responsive to demands than the commercial sector with a high level of confidentiality attached to any market transactions.

Since there is currently very limited residential development within the town centre area, it is difficult to be precise with regard to values. There are several national house builder developments on the outskirts of the town with prices starting at £132,000 for a 2 bedroom apartment. Good quality centrally located apartments are achieving an average of circa £220/sq.ft.

The following data illustrates the price increases over recent years, confirming the sharp growth in property values experienced right across the housing sector:

Date	Secondhand dwellings		
	Inter War Semi-Det	Post 60s Detached	Post 60s Flat
Jul 04	150,000	290,000	120,000
Jan 04	140,000	275,000	110,000
Oct 03	137,500	220,000	102,000
Apr 03	125,000	205,000	90,000
Oct 02	120,000	185,000	80,000
Apr 02	103,000	175,000	70,000
Oct 01	98,000	168,000	63,000
Apr 01	75,000	135,000	48,000
Oct 00	72,000	130,000	43,000
Apr 00	70,000	125,000	42,000
Oct 99	70,000	120,000	38,500
Apr 99	60,000	112,000	37,000
Oct 98	57,000	110,000	37,000
Apr 98	56,000	107,000	37,000

Source: Valuation Office Agency from their Property Market Reports (PMRs)





The historic maps show how the area has evolved over the centuries, with the original line of Gregory Street which is still clearly visible to this day.

The early map by John Speed (1610) shows the former castle and mound in close proximity to the site.

The town walls and gates can also be seen, enclosing Northampton to the south, east and north. The Freeschool is also identified (ref: Y 'Free Schole')



John Speed - 1610 - showing historic line of Gregory Street

Later maps show the steady industrialisation of the area, with the appearance of factory buildings and workshops as well as the early gasometers immediately to the south of the site.

The remains of St Gregory's Church can also be seen to the north of Gregory Street.

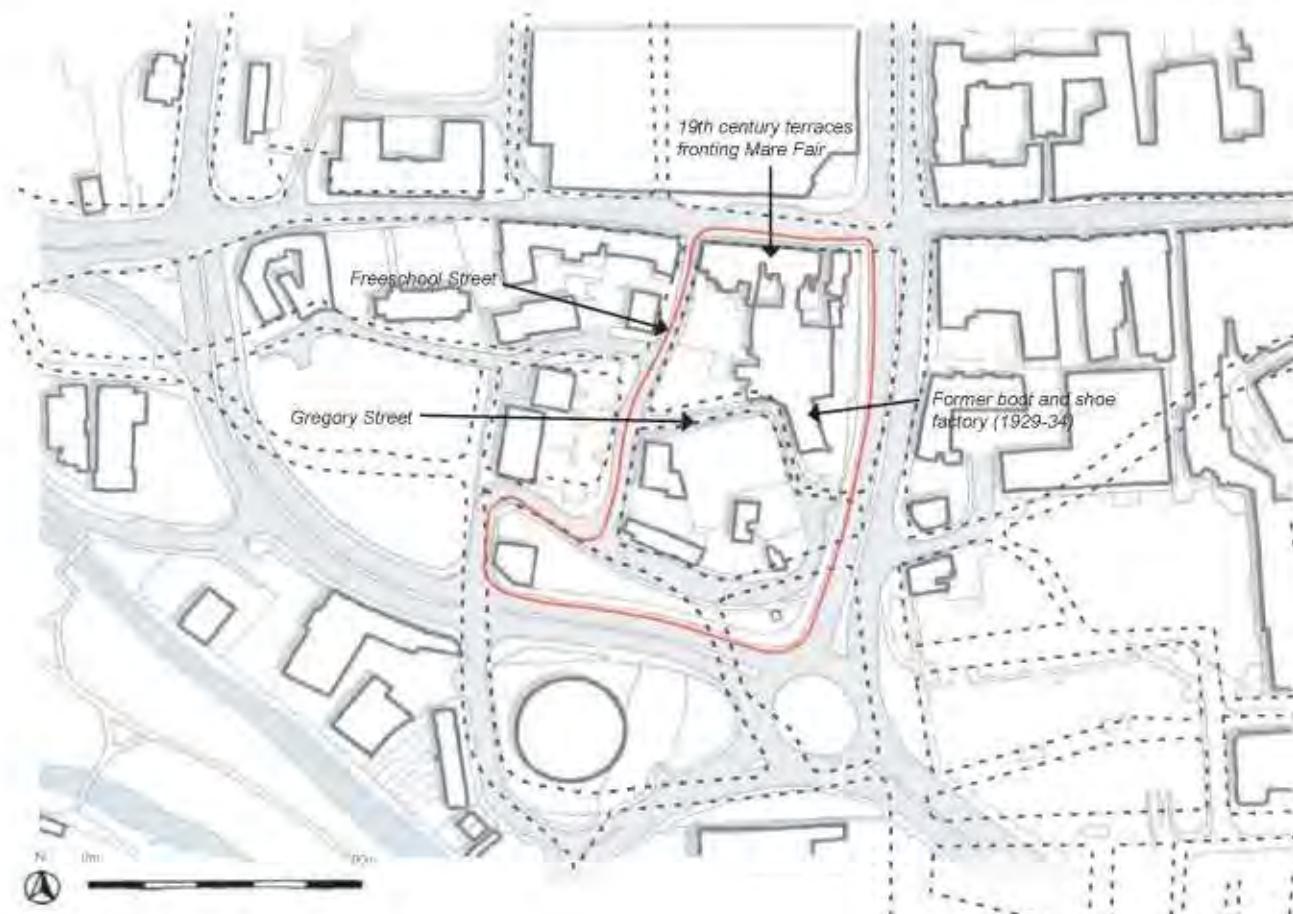


2nd edition historic map - 1899



Historic map - 1934

The historic maps pre-date the introduction of the Ring Road, the effect of which has been to create a significant barrier between the site and the town centre. The image below illustrates the number of historic routes that have been severed by the Ring Road.



Site Plan as existing with historic routes dotted

## Building survey

All of the standing structures within the proposed development site have been appraised as part of the archaeological desk study. None are of listable quality but the terraced properties along Mare Fair provide a physical link with Gold Street to the east and the lower parts of Marefair to the west. The Sol Central building is unfortunate in that it dominates the lower terraced properties on Mare Fair to the south, but the historic link remains clear between these properties and the preceding medieval period when long narrow tenements were a characteristic of Northampton and other medieval centres.

Gregory Street is the only thoroughfare within the site which maintains an historic route between the former church of St Gregory and housing to the south. It also continues the earlier route of Woolmonger Street to the east.

## Site Conditions

The site conditions have been assessed both in terms of the statutory designations of the majority of the site as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and in terms of past archaeological activity.

The archaeological deposits within the proposed development site have been compromised in part by 19th century cellarage but significant areas still appear to survive within perhaps 1m of the current ground surface. This is sufficiently shallow to warrant a mitigation strategy, whatever form development proposals take.



Extent of cellarage



Church of St Peter - Grade I Listed



Hazelrigg House Grade II\* -  
(Oliver Cromwell allegedly slept here the night before the Battle of Naseby in June 1645)



Former All Saints School - Grade II Listed

## Developing Proposals

During the master planning exercise, the design team worked closely with the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments for this area, consulting with the conservation teams from the Borough and the County. The objective of these discussions being to define a strategy which will allow development within the Freeschool Street area, whilst affording protection to the historic resource as required by the conditions of the Ancient Monuments Act.



*Northampton Gas Light Company  
- locally listed*



*St Peter's Green - Scheduled Ancient Monument*



*Former Maltings - locally listed*

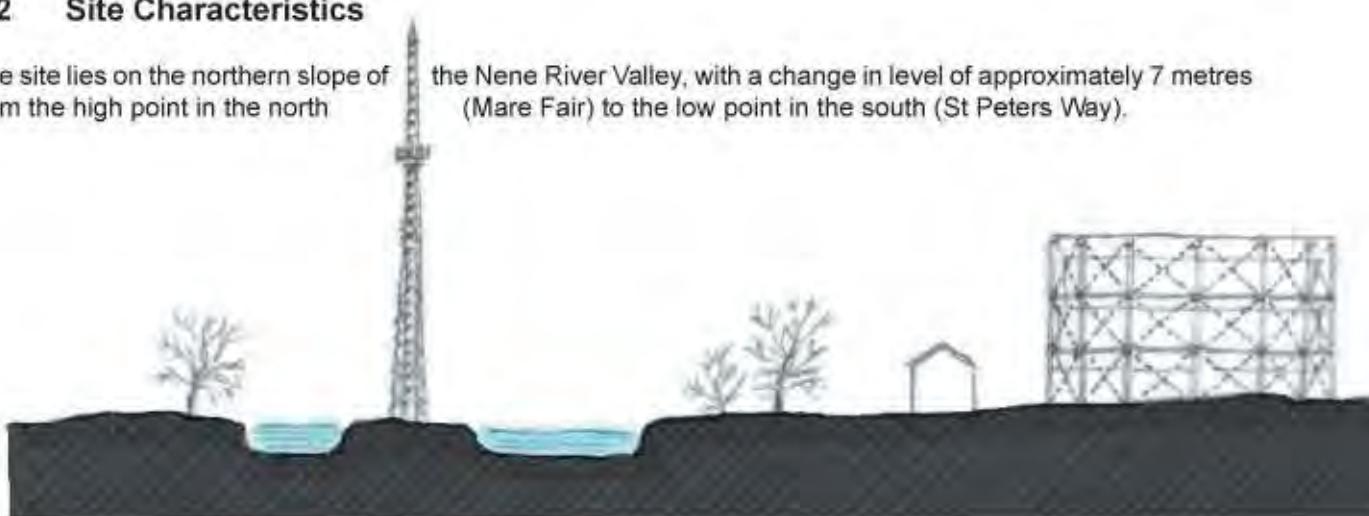


*Site Plan showing Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings and the edge of All Saints Conservation Area*

### 3.2 Site Characteristics

The site lies on the northern slope of from the high point in the north

the Nene River Valley, with a change in level of approximately 7 metres (Mare Fair) to the low point in the south (St Peters Way).

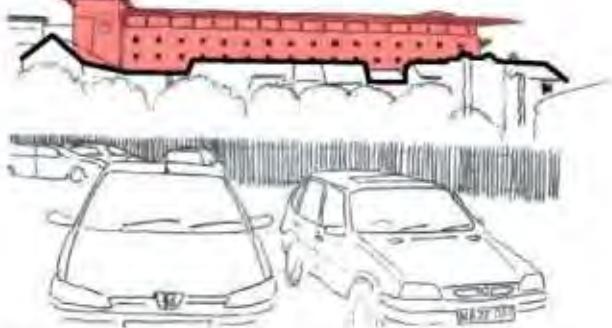


The townscape character of the surrounding area is based on a pattern of formal streets with buildings of generally 3 storeys in height, with occasional 2 and 4 storey buildings interspersed. This results in a fairly consistent and 'tight' urban grain. However, there are some notable exceptions:

The adjacent Sol Central building, with its large footprint and at six storeys in height, dominates the 3 storey terraced properties on the southern side of the street. In addition, because of its plan configuration (central circulation space) and the fact that many of the ground floor lettable units fronting Marefair are currently empty, the building does not currently provide an active or attractive frontage to the street.



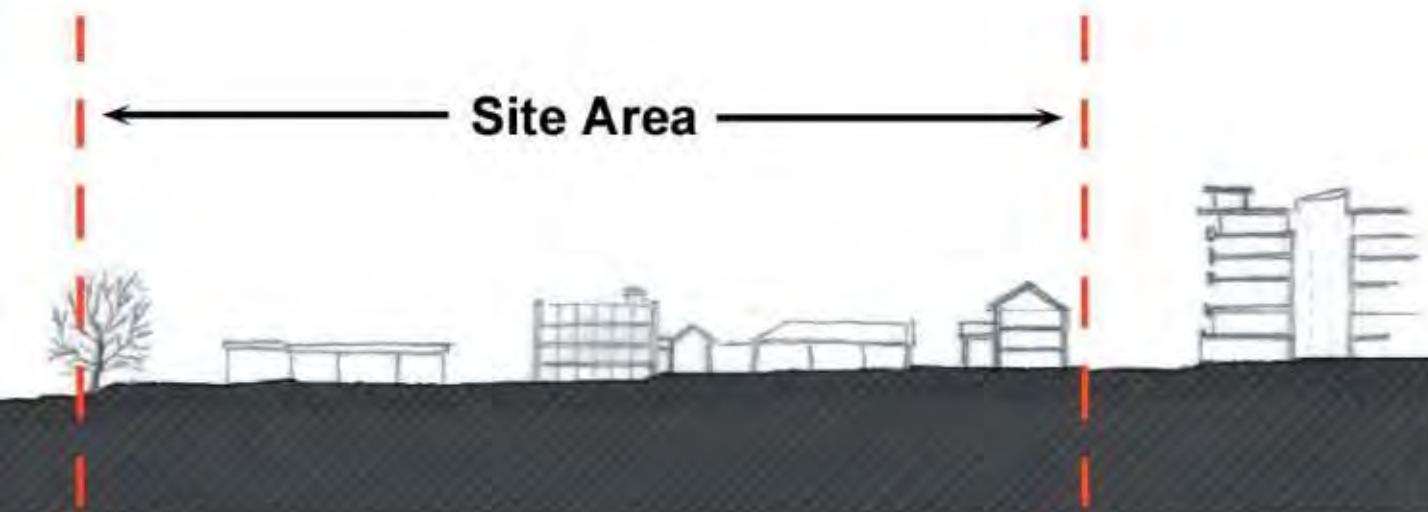
*'Dead' frontage to Marefair*



*Sol Central looming over victorian terraces & car park - analogous to ocean liner*



*Scale comparison - Marefair*

*Indicative cross section*

Directly south of the site, lies a large gasholder. This is a prominent landmark in the town, immediately adjacent to the ring road/St Peter's Way. This, together with the mix of existing semi-industrial uses, including car repair workshops, etc. help to characterise the area as a relatively poor quality environment, particularly when considering it's proximity to the town centre.

*Gasholder*

Located at the most prominent part of the site (the corner of St Peter's Way and Horseshoe Street) lies a prefabricated electricity sub-station. Consideration should be given to its relocation and/or screening to enable the true 'gateway' potential of this area to be exploited.

*Electricity sub-station - corner of St Peter's Way and Horseshoe Street**nearby Carlsberg Brewery*

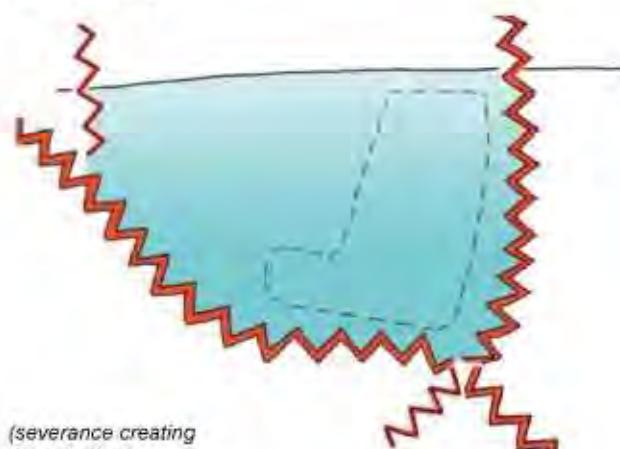
In carrying out the baseline review, a number of key site characteristics were identified. These capture the nature of the place at this point in time and highlight the primary issues which the masterplan should address to ensure the successful regeneration of the area. Actions have been identified to combat the negative effect that these characteristics have on the site and its image as a key gateway to the town centre.



Site plan showing study area

The key site characteristics may be described as follows:

### 'Isolated'

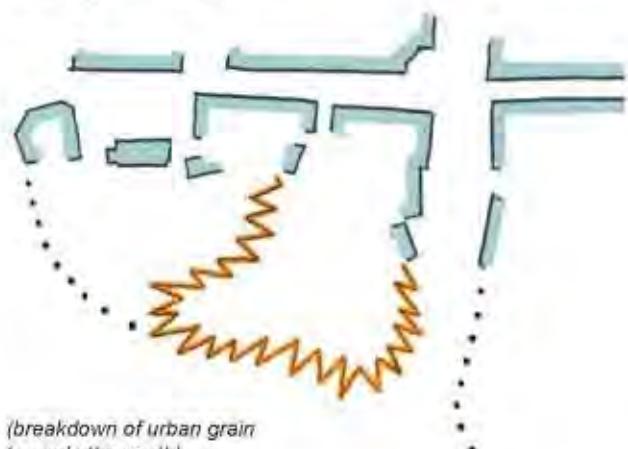


Cut off from the Town Centre by the Ring Road, the site does not connect well with its surroundings and currently forms an island.

#### Action:

*remove sense of isolation through integration*

### 'Fragmented'

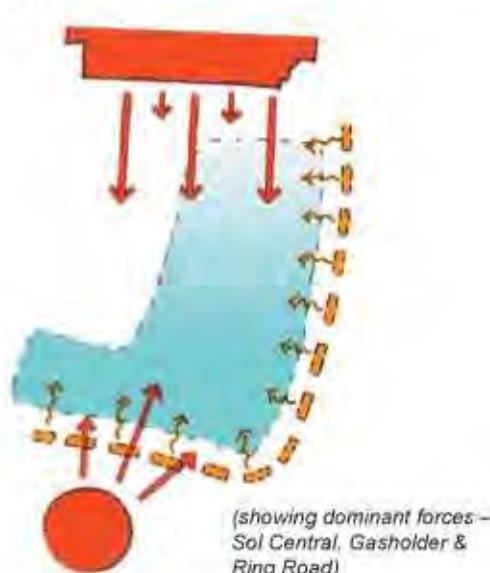


The tight urban grain and strong building line to Mare Fair, breaks down markedly towards the south, with large areas of open/vacant land, superfluous roads and a mix of randomly positioned buildings

#### Action:

*address fragmentation through townscape repair*

### 'Dominated'

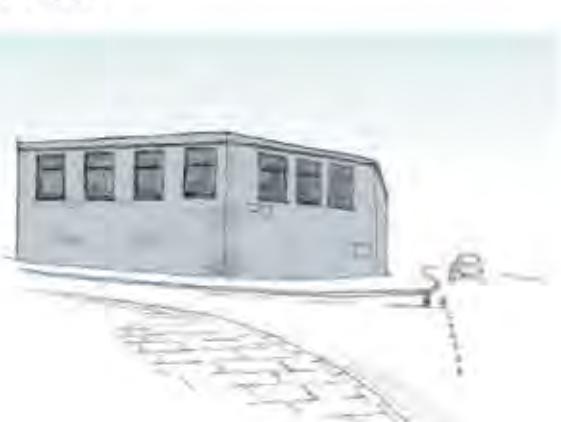


There are several dominant forces which have an adverse impact on the site, including the mass and scale of neighbouring development and the traffic noise from the primary road network adjacent.

#### Action:

*combat domination with distinctive character/identity*

### 'Desolate'



(negative image – boarded up/derelict buildings, 'gap' sites, etc.)

The site presents a very negative image, with boarded up and derelict buildings & inappropriate and low value uses in close proximity to the major traffic route through the town.

#### Action:

*change negative perceptions through re-branding*

### 3.3 Local Landmarks



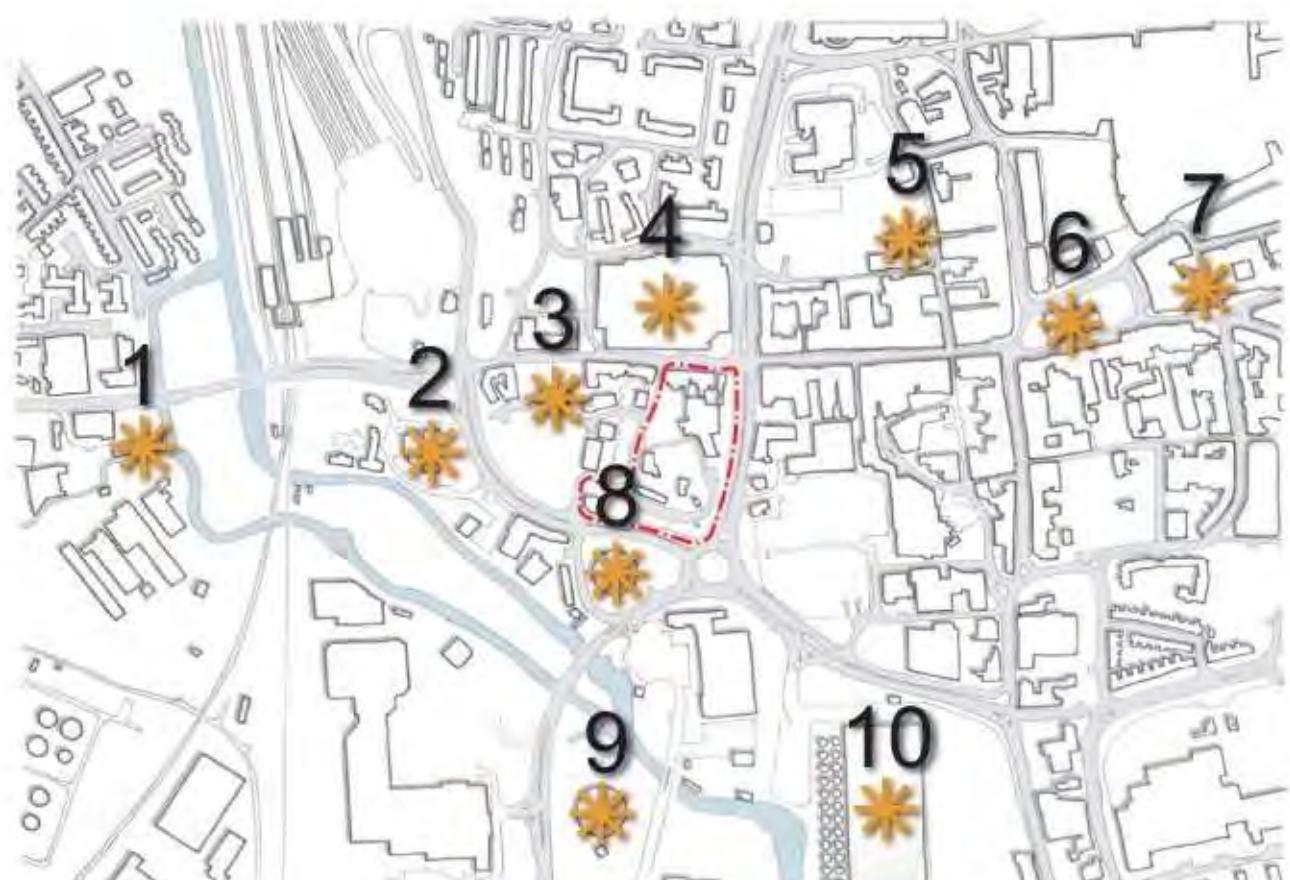
View from St Peter's Way to distant Express Lift Tower



Riverside Maltings



All Saints Church - cupola



- 1 - Former Maltings
- 2 - Former Maltings
- 3 - Church of St Peter
- 4 - Sol Central

- 5 - College Street Baptist Church
- 6 - All Saint's Church
- 7 - Guildhall
- 8 - Gas Holder

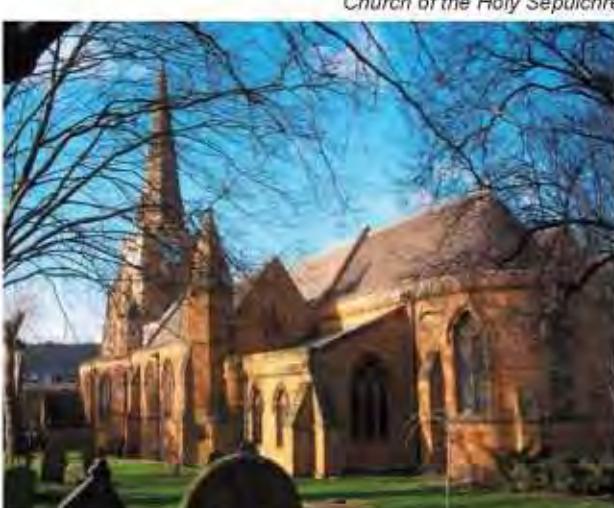
- 9 - Gas Holder
- 10 - Carlsberg Brewery

A number of key landmarks can be found in close proximity to the proposal site. These include important elements of Northampton's industrial heritage, as well as religious and civic destinations. All Saints Church is a major landmark in Northampton, with its distinctive cupola (visible from the proposal site) signifying the presence of the Town Centre.



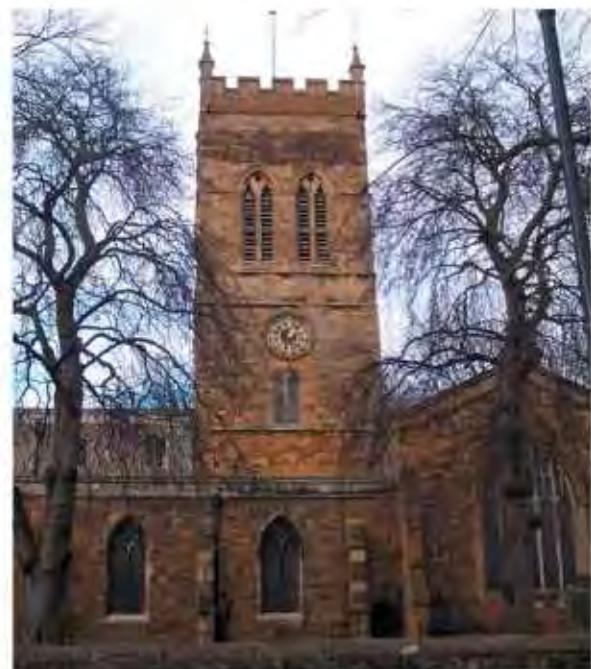
*The Guildhall - All Saints church visible in the distance*

There are many other important landmarks just beyond the boundary of the site, which are within easy walking distance. These include the impressive Guildhall, just to the east of All Saints Church as well as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and St Giles' Church, to the north and west of the site respectively. The Derngate Theatre is also an important cultural landmark for the town.



*Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

*78 Derngate - Charles Rennie Mackintosh Museum*



*St Giles Church*

*Derngate Theatre*



### 3.4 Land Uses

The site is currently host to a mix of secondary retail and take away/restaurant uses, located on the ground floor of the 19th century terraced buildings fronting Mare Fair, with light industrial buildings/repair workshops to the south. The central part of the site is dominated by surface car parking (Council owned 'pay and display' car park).



Industrial buildings



Pay &amp; display car park



St Peter's Way - retail centre in the distance



View east along Gold Street to Town Centre



Retail/A3 uses fronting Mare Fair



Site Plan showing land use

In the vicinity of the site, the general pattern of use is retail, service and A3 café bars and restaurants along Gold Street with the higher quality 'offers' tending to be concentrated towards All Saints Church and the Town Centre to the east.

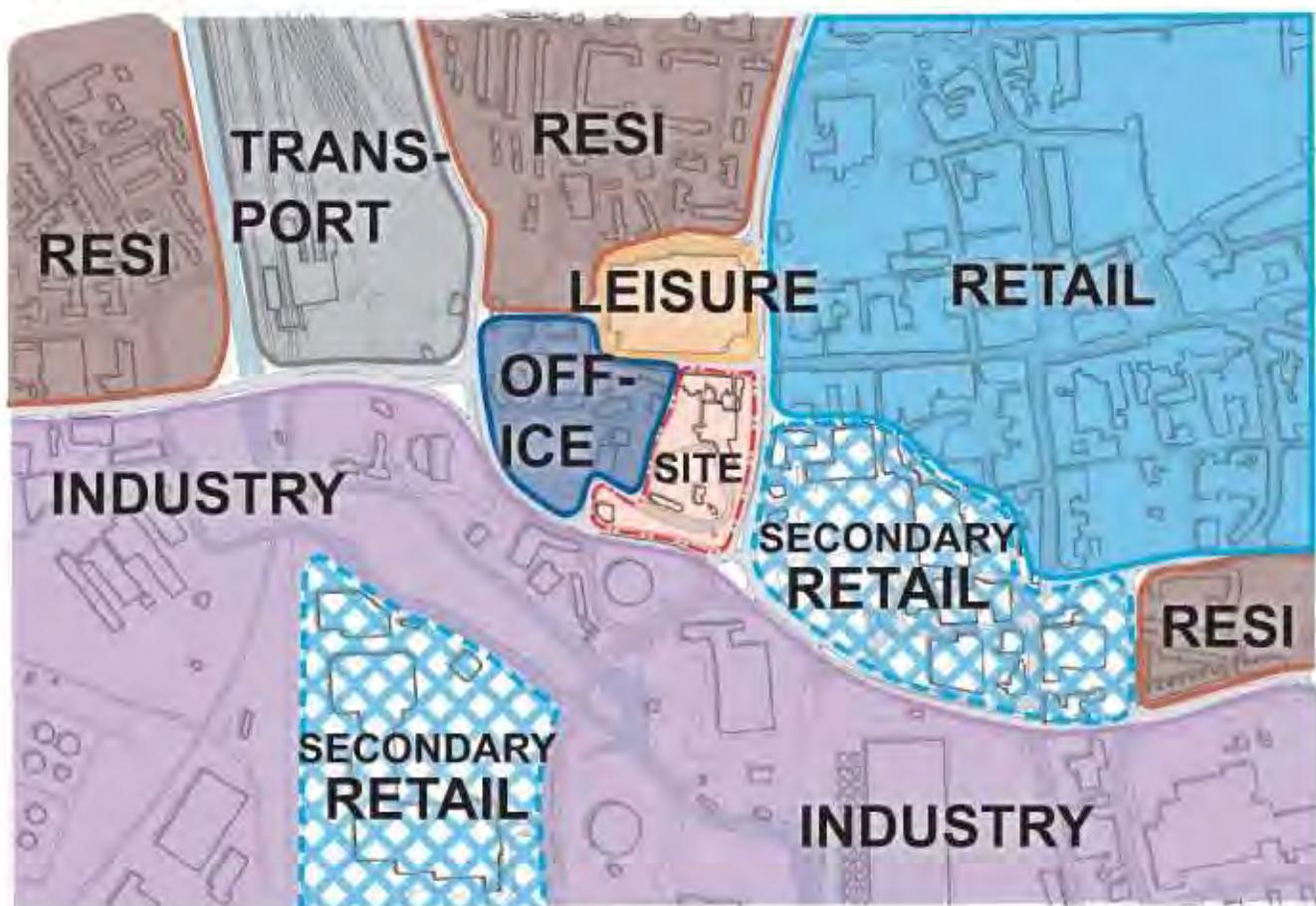
Directly north of the site, the recent Sol Central leisure development forms a dominant block fronting Mare Fair. This is a largely introverted building, containing bars and restaurants, a casino, cinema and general amusements, arranged around a central atrium space.

To the east of the site, across the Ring Road is St Peter's Walk - a large retail development with extensive car parking fronting the ring road/Horseshoe Street. This links to the town centre via a small pedestrian mall which connects to Gold Street.

Immediately west of the site is a four storey residential development - this forms a partial barrier to pedestrian movement between the site and St Peter's Green.

The pattern of uses around the site have been mapped to show the broad perception of character zones and the relationship of the site to these. Despite their close proximity to the town centre, recent retail developments, including St Peter's Walk and St James' Retail Park appear to follow 'out of town' development principles, with large, single volume retail buildings and extensive areas of surface parking forming bland frontages to main roads.

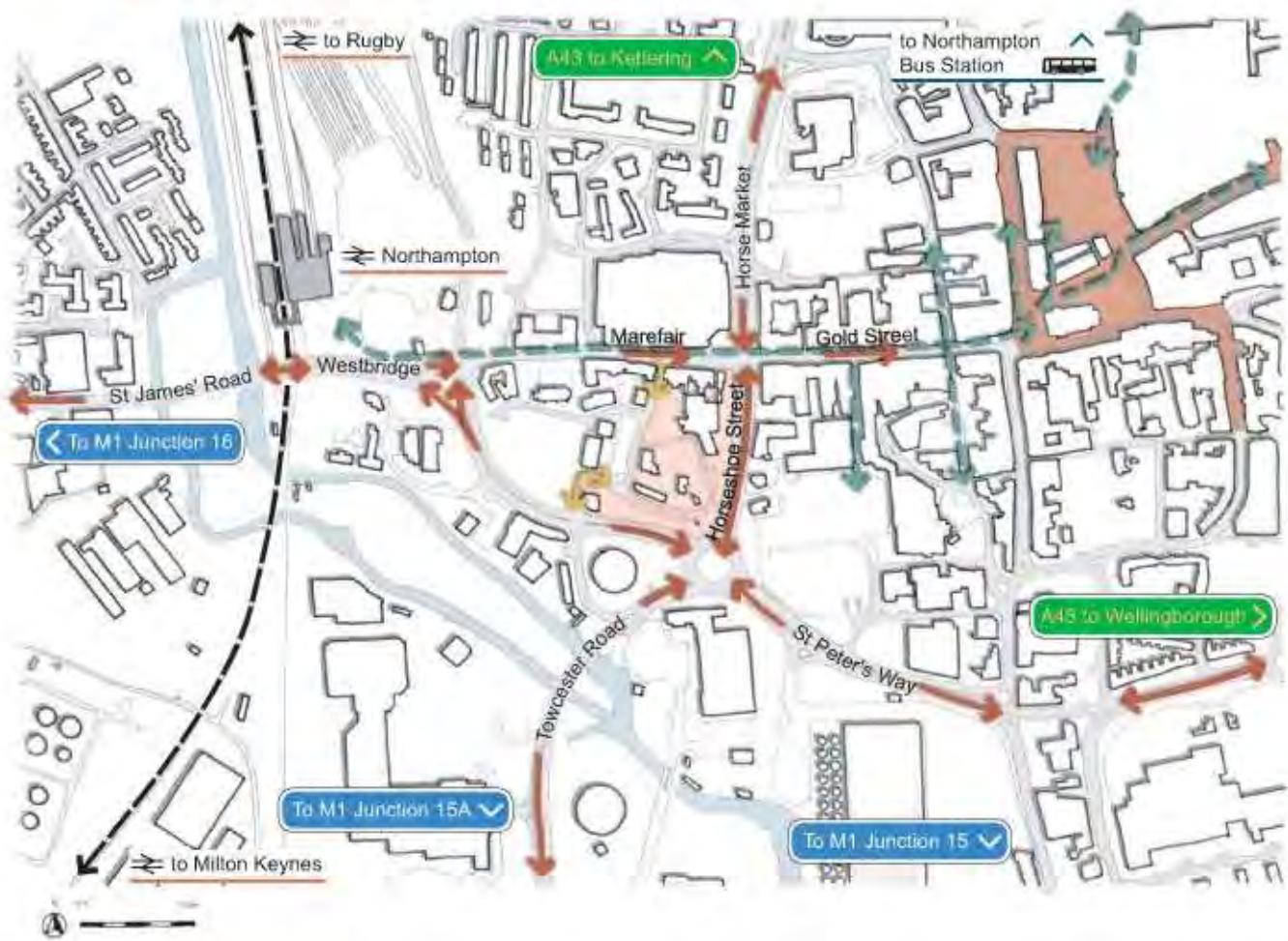
The impact of the perceived 'industrial zone' to the south is also highlighted. This has a key role in shaping the character of the site and forms a major detractor, acting as a visual barrier between the site and the attractive river corridor to the south. Areas of existing residential development are limited to small pockets of housing, with the exception of the large Spring Boroughs housing estate just north of the site. This contains council and housing association stock from the mid - late 20th century, much of which is currently undergoing refurbishment.



*Indicative plan showing broader land use zones (as perceived)*

### 3.5 Movement and Accessibility

- Railway
- Primary vehicular route
- Access to site
- Primary pedestrian route
- Pedestrianised zone



Site plan showing key access routes and movement patterns



Railway Station -  
'Welcome to Northampton'

The site is bounded to the south by the Ring Road/St. Peter's Way, a dual two-lane carriageway highway that comprises the main east/west route across the south of the town. Horseshoe Street, a dual two-lane carriageway, bounds the site to the east. Horseshoe Street and St. Peter's Way intersect with Towcester Road at a four arm roundabout on the south-eastern gateway to the site.

The Green, leading into Freeschool Street is a two-way single carriageway road that bounds the site to the west. The Green intersects with St. Peter's Way at a priority junction on the south-western edge of the site, with all vehicular movements permitted. The north of the site is bounded by Mare Fair, a single carriageway road that operates for general traffic in an eastbound direction and for buses only, in a westbound direction.

The northern section of Freeschool Street, between Mare Fair and St. Peter's Street operates in a one-way southbound direction. St. Peter's Street is a cul-de-sac for vehicles, and a pedestrian route that links the site from the west, with the important wildflower meadow and amenity space (St Peter's Green), St. Peter's Church and the town's railway station beyond.

Gregory Street provides access to the council owned surface car park, via Freeschool Street. Court Road is a parallel route to St. Peter's Way within the site that connects Gregory Street in the east with The Green.

The site is within five minutes walking distance of the town's railway station,. The northern edge of the site fronts Mare Fair which is the primary west to east route between the railway station and the town centre. The Town Centre Manager has commented on the lack of appeal and continuity in the walk from the railway station to the Town Centre. The general consensus is that there needs to be a much more attractive frontage to Mare Fair, including improved links to Sol Central.

The principal vehicular access to the site is currently off St. Peter's Way via the priority junction with The Green. There is secondary access available for vehicles from Mare Fair via Freeschool Street to the north.

The centre of the site is currently occupied by a surface car park, with around 60 parking spaces available on a 'pay and display' basis. There are also some on-street pay and display parking spaces on Court Road that are likely to be lost as part of the redevelopment proposals.

### **Safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians**

The Northampton Local Strategic Partnership aim is to encourage more people to use alternative methods of transport to get to work such as buses, trains and cycles. The Freeschool Street area could link into this by providing a safe pathway for cyclists and pedestrians to the Town Centre and improve the physical environment of the walk between the Railway Station and the Town Centre.

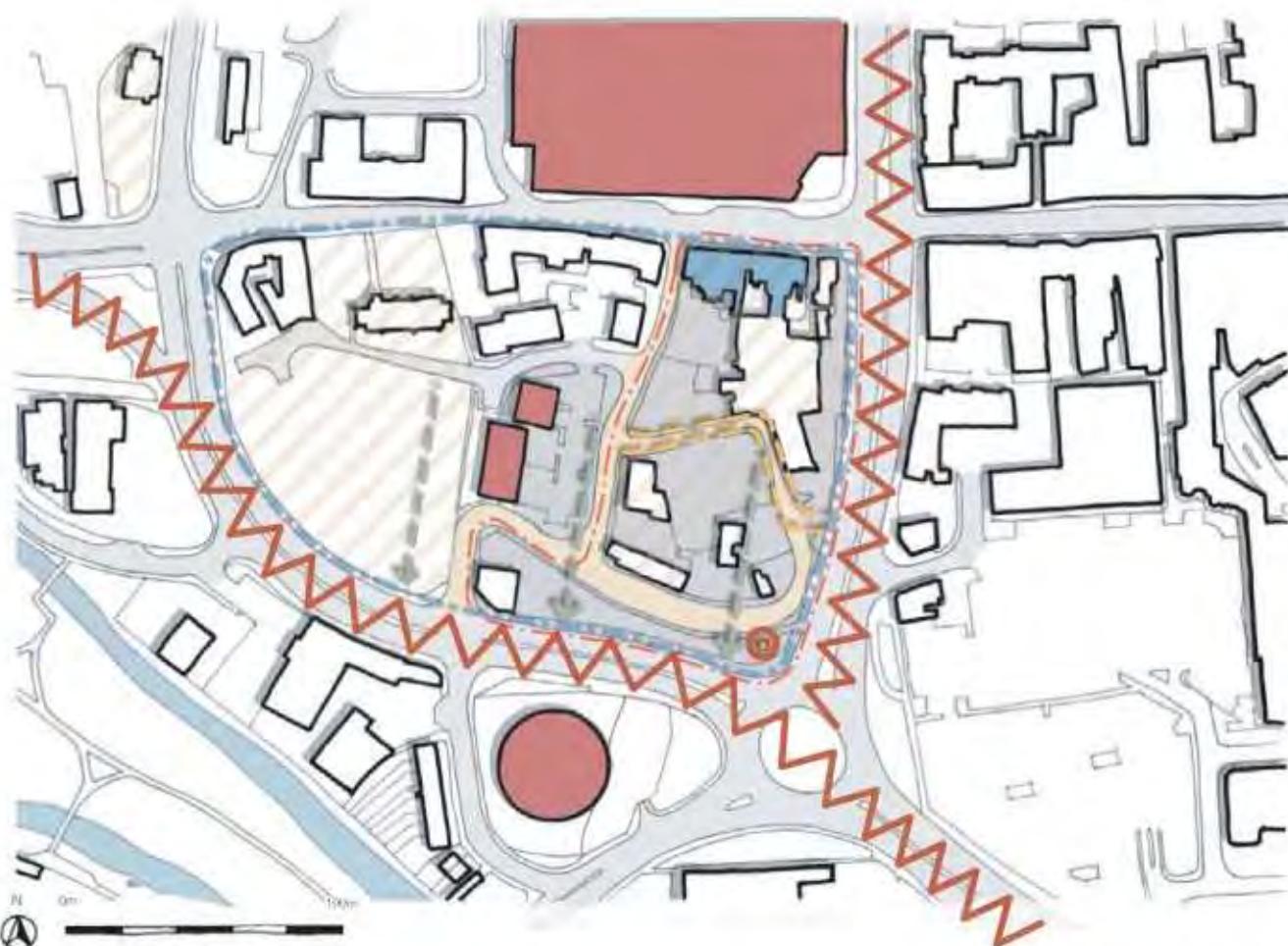
Opportunities should also be explored to link the site with the developing Riverside Walk, which follows the path of the River Nene east/west through Northampton.



### 3.6 Constraints - Summary

The key constraints to development may be summarised as follows:

- Isolated, 'island' site characterised by low value land uses
- Poorly connected to town centre with physical barriers (ie. Ring Road)
- Fragmented ownerships, (with particular reference to Mare Fair)
- No clear focus or sense of place
- Weak identity/image
- Presence of existing sub station on prime frontage to Ring Road
- Existing medieval line of Gregory Street (may constrain development options/layouts)
- Poor road configuration (Court Road/The Green)
- Poor quality/inappropriate scale of recent surrounding development
- Likelihood of contaminated land and associated problems
- Topography (cost implications associated with retaining structures, basements, etc.)
- Scheduled Ancient Monument status (limiting developer freedom)
- Existing 19th century terraced block fronting Mare Fair (albeit unlisted and just outside Conservation Area)
- Existing business uses - alternative premises would need to be found to enable relocation



Constraints Plan

## Key

- |  |                                 |  |   |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
|  | Physical barriers to site       |  | Poor road configuration                                   |
|  | Existing sub station            |  | Poor quality / imposing scale of neighbouring development |
|  | Isolated 'island' site          |  | Low value land use  |
|  | Existing line of Gregory Street |  | 19th Century terrace                                      |
|  | Sloping site                    |  | Scheduled ancient monument                                |

### 3.7 Opportunities - Summary

The key development opportunities may be summarised as follows:

- Highly prominent position on Ring Road - gateway to Northampton town centre
- Proximity to town centre – retail and leisure core, established businesses
- Proximity to the railway (commuting/travel opportunities) – northern edge of site fronts primary walking route between railway station and town centre
- Proximity to the river corridor (leisure and amenity opportunities)
- Topography & south facing aspect (views across river valley)
- Opportunities for undercroft/basement parking (subject to archaeology)
- Important Heritage - Scheduled Ancient Monument status and nearby Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings (stimulating pride and identity, attracting visitors)
- Medieval line of Gregory Street (opportunities for historical reference through contemporary development)
- Close proximity to Conservation Area (high quality design/development, increased values)
- Close proximity to St Peter's Green – (important wildflower meadow and amenity space)
- Key views, including All Saints (providing points of difference, adding value & creating a sense of place)
- Scale of development opportunity provides scope to create a distinctive, new destination to complement and enhance the town
- The Borough Council have a large landholding within the overall site, aiding deliverability
- Willingness on the part of landowners and stakeholders to bring development forward



Opportunities Plan

**Key**

- |  |                                 |  |                                    |
|--|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
|  | Prominent position              |  | View to All Saints                 |
|  | Town centre                     |  | Proximity to river corridor        |
|  | Conservation area               |  | Proximity to green space           |
|  | Grade I / II* listed building   |  | Southern aspect                    |
|  | Medieval line of Gregory Street |  | Primary route from station to town |
|  | Green space                     |  | Frontage to primary route to town  |
|  |                                 |  | Strong frontage to ring road       |



## 4.0

## The Vision

The vision for the Freeschool Street regeneration area seeks to capture the aims and aspirations of Northampton Borough Council and all stakeholders:

**To continue the regeneration of Northampton Town Centre through the creation of a distinctive and sustainable mixed-use urban development and high quality gateway to the Town Centre**

The vision may be realised through:

- Sensitive, high quality, comprehensive redevelopment
- Creation of innovative, landmark buildings, providing a strong identity for Northampton
- Provision of improved pedestrian links to the town centre and surrounding area
- Improvements to infrastructure and enhanced traffic management / movement
- Transformation of the overall quality of the environment and the enhancement of distinctive assets, including topography and location
- Creation of a new destination and focus for urban living, economic and cultural activity

In helping to realise the vision, the masterplan demonstrates how, through mixed-use, high density development; land values and community benefits can be optimised, setting an urban design framework against which future planning applications can be determined.



## 4.1 Urban Design Principles

From the vision set out above, a number of key regeneration principles have guided the preparation of the masterplan. These over-arching principles are derived from national policy and supplemented with a range of site specific objectives that respond to the baseline review & analysis, technical constraints and stakeholder feedback. They are summarised below:

### **Growth and Spatial Links:**

- Strategic site, key part of long term expansion proposals for the Town Centre to assist with regeneration of businesses and communities

- Integrate site with Town Centre physically and economically

- Provide jobs, homes and urban amenities for new and existing communities

### **Implementation:**

- Engage developers and secure stakeholder support and private sector finance

- Provide attractive and accessible delivery strategy for project implementation



### **Regeneration:**

- Improve accessibility to jobs

- Promote cultural heritage

- Explore synergy with existing night time attractions in close proximity

### **Sustainability:**

- Establish a new mixed use sustainable community

- Provide a range of urban living opportunities – varied 'house' types and tenures

- Promote high quality development with lasting appeal

- Reduce need to travel by providing a sustainable mix of uses with access to a range of transport options

- Provide jobs and social/transport infrastructure for new and existing communities

- Improve links to new and existing open/green space

- Promote environmental care

## 4.2 Specific Objectives

A number of specific objectives were evolved to inform development and land use proposals. These are as follows:

**Integrate new development with existing urban grain, addressing scale differential between Sol Central & Gold Street, etc.**

**Create architectural landmarks adjacent to the Ring Road**

**Preserve/open up views of All Saints Church (Cupola) from key points within the site**

**Provide strong urban 'edge' to the site, adjacent to the Ring Road**

**Provide clear and legible pedestrian (and cycle) routes through the site, linking existing local destinations, eg. town centre, riverside, railway station, retail core, etc.**

**Improve visual and physical relationship to local attractions, landmarks and green space**

**Promote high density development (close to the town centre)**

**Allow flexibility in design and encourage developer innovation**



In order to tackle the key issues during the options appraisal phase, the following actions were taken:

All vehicular access opportunities were explored, in light of guidance from the Borough Council Highways Department, challenging existing arrangements and improving connectivity, legibility and efficiency

Potential pedestrian crossing points were considered to dramatically improve links to local destinations, eg. town centre, railway station, riverside, etc.

Careful consideration was given to the mix of uses, based on a presumption in favour of residential development (range of 'types and tenures') with complementary retail/leisure activities

Options were explored for the creation of strong new public frontages to the Ring Road, to provide a protective 'shield' to public and private courtyard/amenity spaces within the site

The retention of the C19 terraces forming the frontage to Mare Fair was carefully considered, including a frank assessment of existing issues, in terms of marketability, townscape value, etc.

Options to relate new development to existing dominant buildings in the vicinity were considered (eg Sol Central), ensuring a measured response, based on a clear understanding of the wider townscape character

All possibilities were examined to ensure permeability through the development site, including an appreciation of known desire lines and primary pedestrian flows, eg. links to St Peter's Green, St Peter's Walk retail centre, etc.

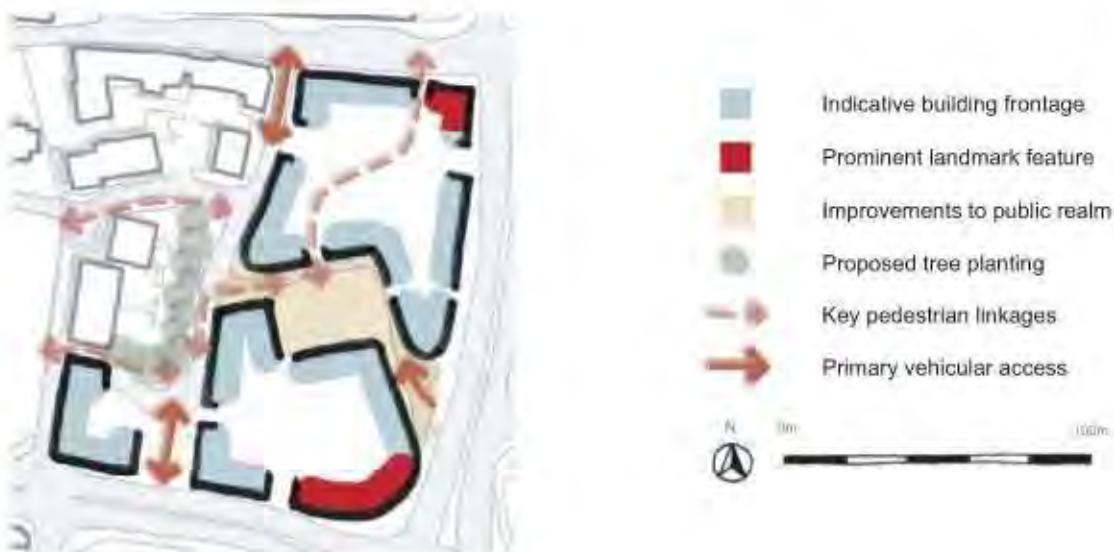
Technical constraints were assessed, including extent of utilities and infrastructure provision

The potential to meaningfully interpret the site's important heritage value was fully explored - eg promoting the retention of the existing line of Gregory Street and examining other possibilities based on the findings from the Archaeological Study

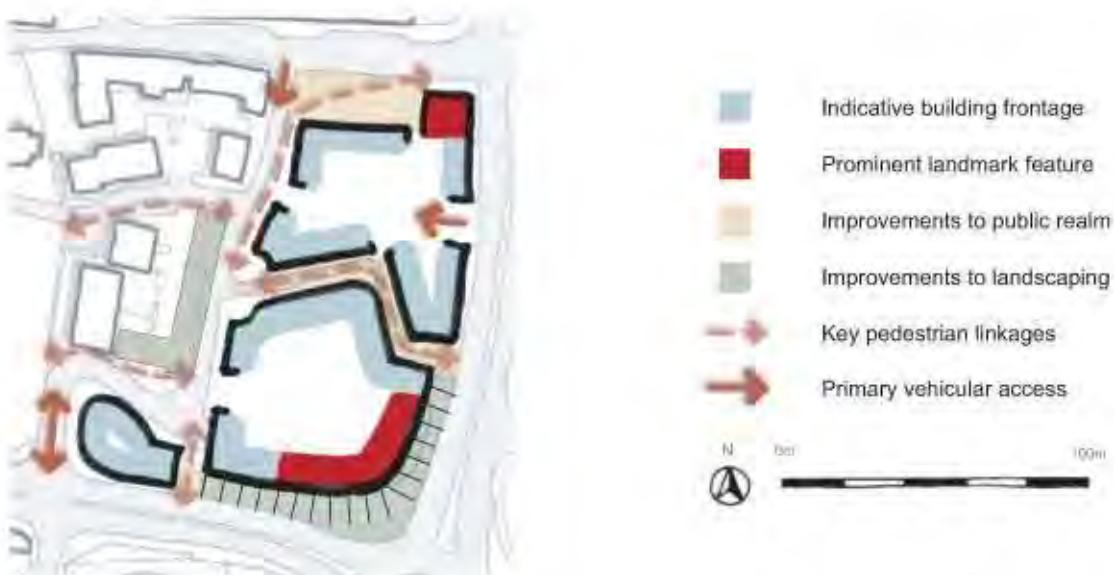
Early concept proposals were prepared to illustrate the general development principles, showing how the established urban design objectives could be met, based on two possible scenarios -

- 1 Creation of Town Square/retention of terrace fronting Mare Fair
- 2 Creation of contemporary mews street and redevelopment of terrace fronting Mare Fair

### Scenario 1



### Scenario 2



The concept proposals included consideration of various vehicular access options in order to improve movement through and around the site. These proposals were presented to stakeholders and detailed options were then developed to explore a range of possibilities for the site. Following the initial stakeholder meeting, there was a presumption in favour of the creation of a new town square (Scenario 1) as a focus for development.

### 4.3 Options Study

The options were developed as shown below. Each option was appraised against the requirements of the brief and the specific objectives (4.2) and in light of further feedback from stakeholders.



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4

A brief summary of the positive and negative attributes of each option is given below, culminating in a detailed description of the preferred option (4):

#### Option 1

*Town square with diagonal pedestrian link between Mare Fair and New Square*

##### For:

- + Celebrates line of Gregory Street through creation of town square
- + Retains existing Mare Fair Terrace (except Nos 5-7)
- + Creates strong visual and physical diagonal link between Mare Fair/ Gold Street and proposed town square
- + Rationalises road layout to create new junction between Freeschool Street and St Peter's Way

##### Against:

- Diagonal route (north east) compromises undercroft parking layout
- Re-alignment of Freeschool Street and Court Road requires services diversions and stopping up orders
- Cost implications associated with undercroft parking arrangements and landscaped decks/garden courts



## Option 2

*Creation of Mews Street following line of Gregory Street, based on demolition of existing buildings fronting Mare Fair and comprehensive redevelopment*

### For:

- + Retains the existing layout of Freeschool & Gregory Streets and The Green limiting services diversions, road closures, etc.
- + Creates mews style street to follow medieval line of Gregory Street
- + Creates new frontage to Marefair with improved scale relationship to Sol Central
- + Improves retail/commercial opportunities fronting Marefair

### Against:

- Requires demolition of existing terrace with some architectural and townscape value (Marefair frontage)
- Tighter plan configuration reduces permeability through site
- Narrow street arrangement compromises privacy
- Retention of The Green compromises movement/legibility



## Option 3

*Retention of Court Road and The Green*

### For:

- + No changes to infrastructure and corresponding cost/time savings

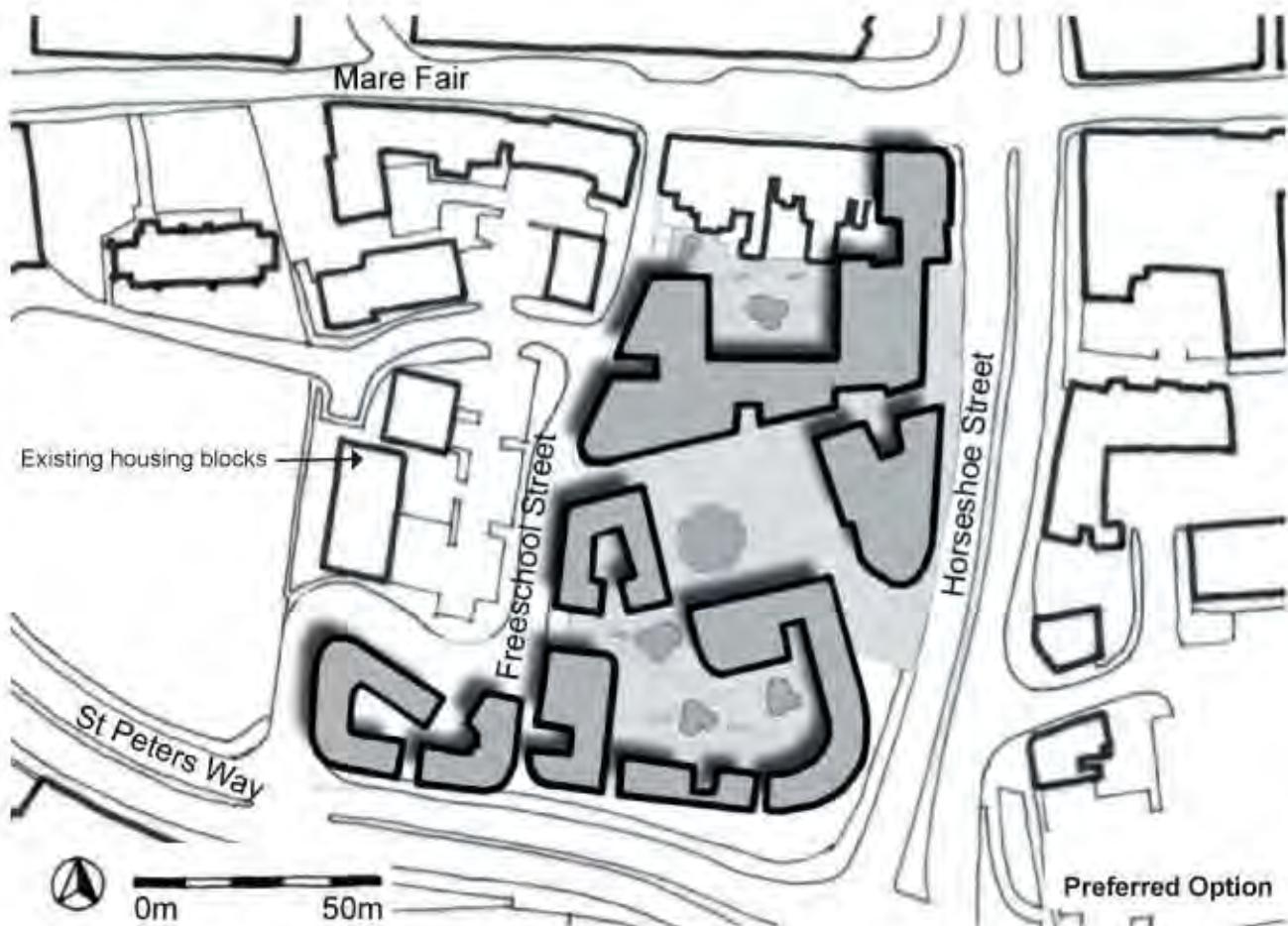
### Against:

- This option illustrates how retention of the existing road configuration (Court Road and The Green) fundamentally constrains development
- Reduced density/coverage/value as a result of loss of development land fronting St Peter's Way (Court Road)
- Limited provision for secure parking / inefficient land use
- Creation of 'island' block of development at south western corner of site due to constraining road configuration



Following careful consideration and financial appraisal of the individual options, a preferred masterplan emerged - see below:

#### Option 4



The preferred option is modelled on Options 1 & 2 with minor revisions to address the negative effect (inefficient land use) caused by the suggested diagonal route. This option is based around the creation of a new town square, and includes the retained terrace fronting Marefair, with a new prominent landmark building on the corner (Nos. 5-7).

This option also represents the optimum solution in terms of the balance of uses, having a smaller proportion of the commercial/retail space in comparison with the earlier proposals (Options 1-3), where the higher percentage of non-residential space began to have a negative impact on the overall viability of the development.

The preferred option includes the rationalisation of existing roads within the site, ie. The closure of Court Road and retention of The Green. This proposal also assumes that Gregory Street will be closed to through traffic, to enable the creation of a new and distinctive town square. The retention of The Green opens the way for earlier development of the southwestern corner of the site, which has existing permission for a low-density block of apartments albeit on a smaller scale than proposed by the Supplementary Planning Document. Any further planning applications for this section of the site would need to be in line with the parameters of scale and urban design principles set out within this document.

The preferred Masterplan is described in greater detail in Section 5.0



## 5.0

## The Masterplan

- New town square - focus for development
- Active frontages - retail/A3
- 'urban living' - mix of apartments
- secure undercroft parking
- private roof gardens
- £35m construction project
- Phased development



Opportunities to integrate and reinforce the existing urban grain are maximised, whilst increasing permeability through the site and enhancing the street scene with landmark buildings. The intention is to create a unique environment with strong links to the town centre and immediate surroundings.

High quality, landscaped public and private spaces are a key feature of the masterplan, creating interest and activity and addressing 'Secured by Design' principles (ref: Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire - Supplementary Planning Guidance, December 2003).

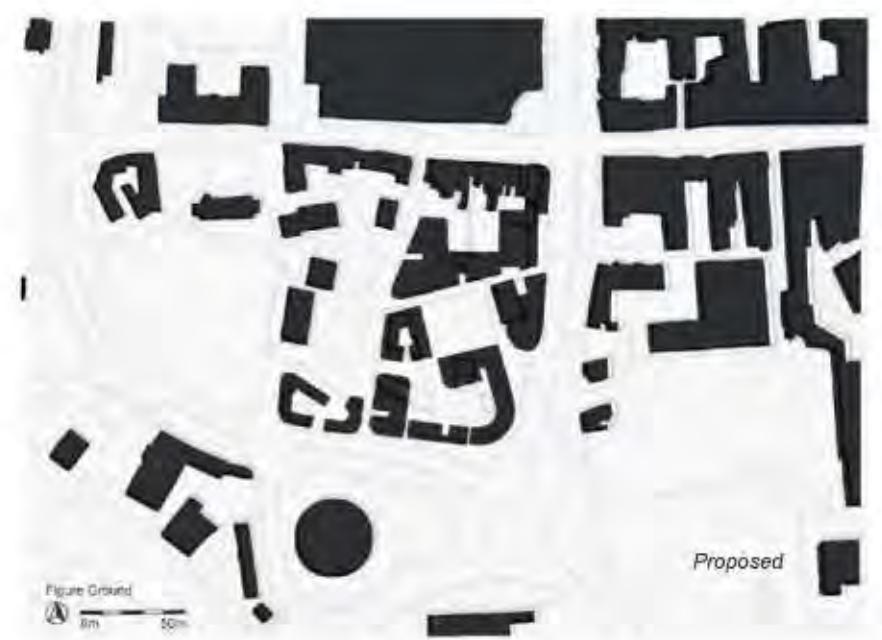
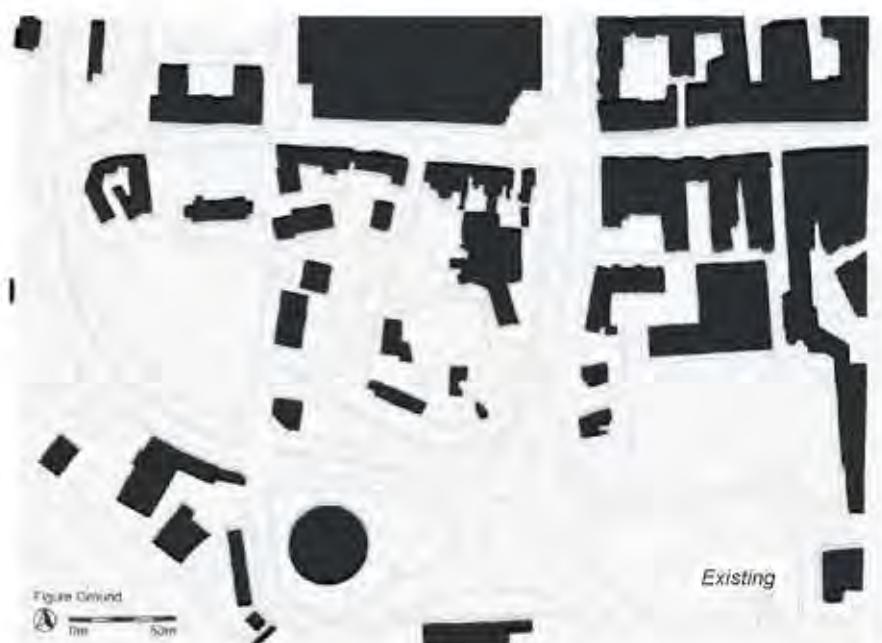
The proposed mix of residential, retail and A3 uses will create a sustainable and attractive destination for Northampton. Views both into and out of the site have been carefully considered. Key views are celebrated and new orientation points and landmarks are created to provide a truly distinctive development.

A key characteristic of the site is the fact that it is bisected by Gregory Street, a narrow historic route, connecting Freeschool Street in the west to Horseshoe Street in the east. This thoroughfare and focal point forms a key feature of the masterplan, bounding a new urban square, which will become the focus for the development.

## 5.1 Urban Grain

The figure/ground study below illustrates how comprehensive redevelopment will repair the urban fabric and combat the sense of fragmentation across the regeneration area. This will be achieved through the establishment of definite 'edges' in relation to Horseshoe Street and St Peter's Way, reversing the negative effect of the Ring Road.

New development is shown to reflect the finer urban structure and grain of the surrounding area, in response to existing street patterns, eg Gold Street to the east of the development site.



## 5.2 Density and mix of uses

It is suggested that the existing 19th century terrace fronting Mare Fair is retained and refurbished to provide enhanced retail and A3 uses and activity opposite Sol Central, although the site of the existing detached property adjacent to Horseshoe Street (Nos. 5-7 Mare Fair) is to be redeveloped as it provides a key gateway opportunity and pivotal link between the town centre and the new square.

Nos. 5-7 Mare Fair



The proposed building frontage to Horseshoe Street will be activated with retail/A3 at ground level, turning the corner from Mare Fair and providing an attractive walking route between Mare Fair and the proposed Town Square.

The intention is to enhance and extend the town centre 'offer', through the provision of specialist outlets and café/bars arranged around the square. These units will also provide a new frontage to Horseshoe Street, with high visibility from the Ring Road.

The eastern side of the proposed square is to be fronted by the existing 4 storey former boot and shoe factory (built in the 1930's), which could be retained as part of a comprehensive development. New development is shown 'wrapping' around this to improve the existing poor frontage to Horseshoe Street.

To the south and western sides of the square a high density urban living complex is proposed, with a mix of one and two bedroom apartments arranged around a series of landscaped courtyards.



*Masterplan - Block Layout  
showing removal and redevelopment of Nos. 5-7 Mare Fair to create improved definition to corner/streetscape*

The indicative floor plans overleaf show the suggested density/coverage on the basis of:

- Approx 800 sq m (8600 sq ft) of retail/A3
- 246 'city living' apartments
- Mix of residential units ranging from:  
40 sq m (430 sq ft) to 90 sq m (970 sq ft)
- 202 secure undercroft parking spaces

This provides a balanced mix of uses, promoting activity and vibrancy, combining new and complementary retail and cafe/bar offers with high density residential development and distinctive public realm.

Adhering to these general principles, there is sufficient flexibility within the masterplan to respond to changing market conditions, with scope for some adjustment in the overall mix of uses (between residential and commercial), ensuring the long term sustainability and financial viability of the development.

The ground plan shows access to undercroft parking zones north and south of the new town square, with improved pedestrian connectivity and links back to the town centre (east) and St Peter's Green (west)



Class A5 uses (hot food takeaway) are unlikely to be acceptable in the location shown for reasons of highway safety and the free flow of traffic. Class A4 (drinking establishments) are also unlikely to be acceptable in the location shown for reasons of residential amenity.

The service area of the retail element is via a pedestrian route and would potentially be highly visible. This area will require very careful planning to avoid giving rise to pedestrian / vehicle conflict, harm to visual amenity and harm to security / safety.

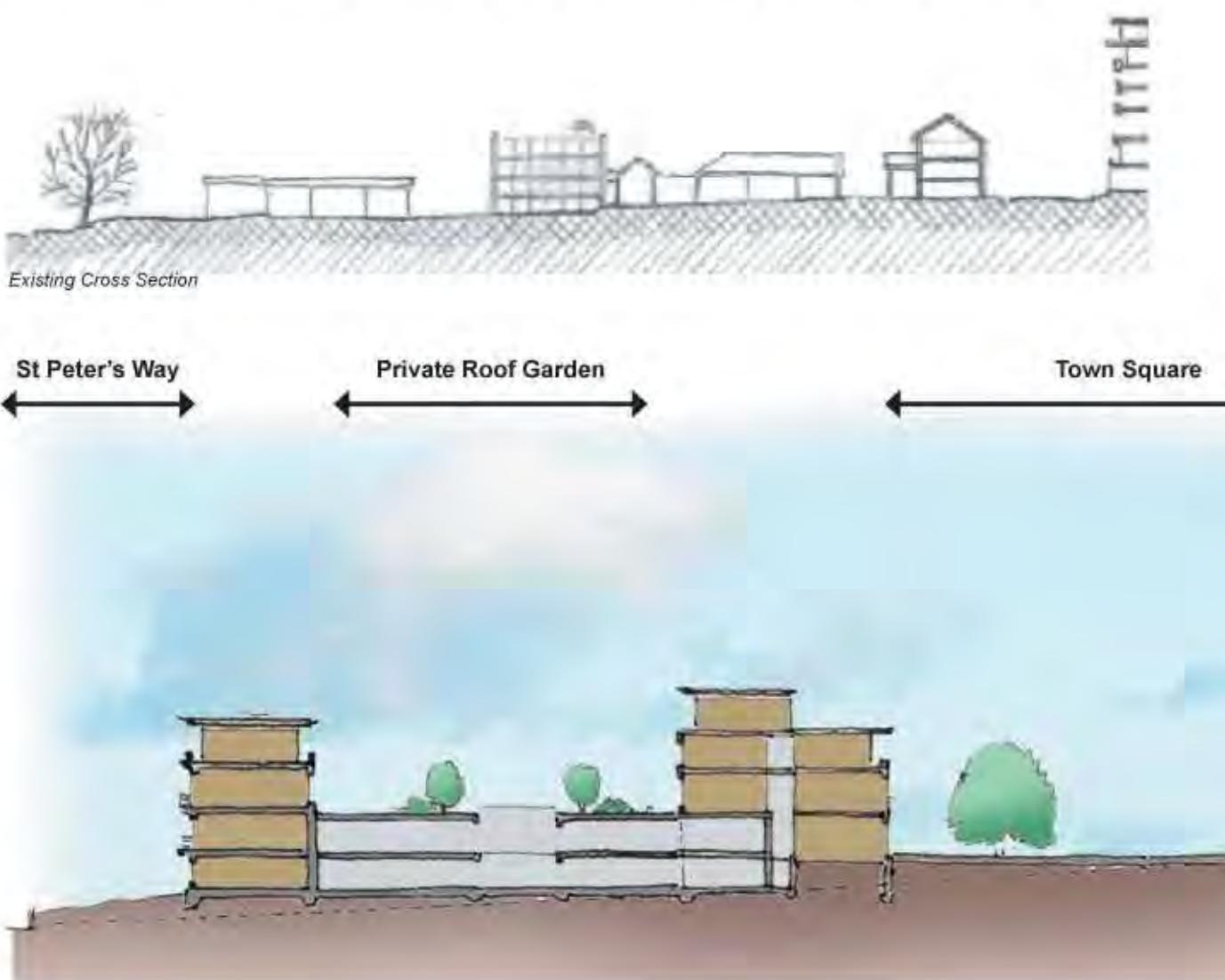


### 5.3 Building heights and massing

The existing topography is exploited to provide opportunities for sensitively designed development with undercroft parking, ensuring minimal impact on any archaeology which is likely to be present.

By following the natural lie of the land, opportunities exist to ensure that the views and outlook for the occupants of the retained terraced properties on Mare Fair are not unduly compromised by the new development. Particular care must be taken in the design of the south west corner of the site (Phase II), due its visually important / prominent location combined with the potential overall massing / height and proximity to the highway to the south (St Peter's Way) and the west (The Green). Although representing a challenge due to the sloping ground, it is imperative that the proposed development incorporates active and attractive frontages to key perimeter roads and pedestrian routes, including provision of main pedestrian entrance fronting St Peter's Way. Careful consideration will also need to be given to the relationship of this part of the development with the existing flats to the north in respect of townscape and residential amenity.

The proposed cross section illustrates how new development will frame the town square to create an attractive urban environment with strategic views in and out to key crossing points and landmarks within the town.



Opportunities exist for the use of balconies and terraces to animate building facades and the setting back of upper storeys to reduce the overall mass of development and add interest, creating opportunities for feature roof treatment and shadow modelling. Defendable private space at ground floor between habitable room windows of residential property and the public domain (particularly in the Town Square area) must be integrated into the development.

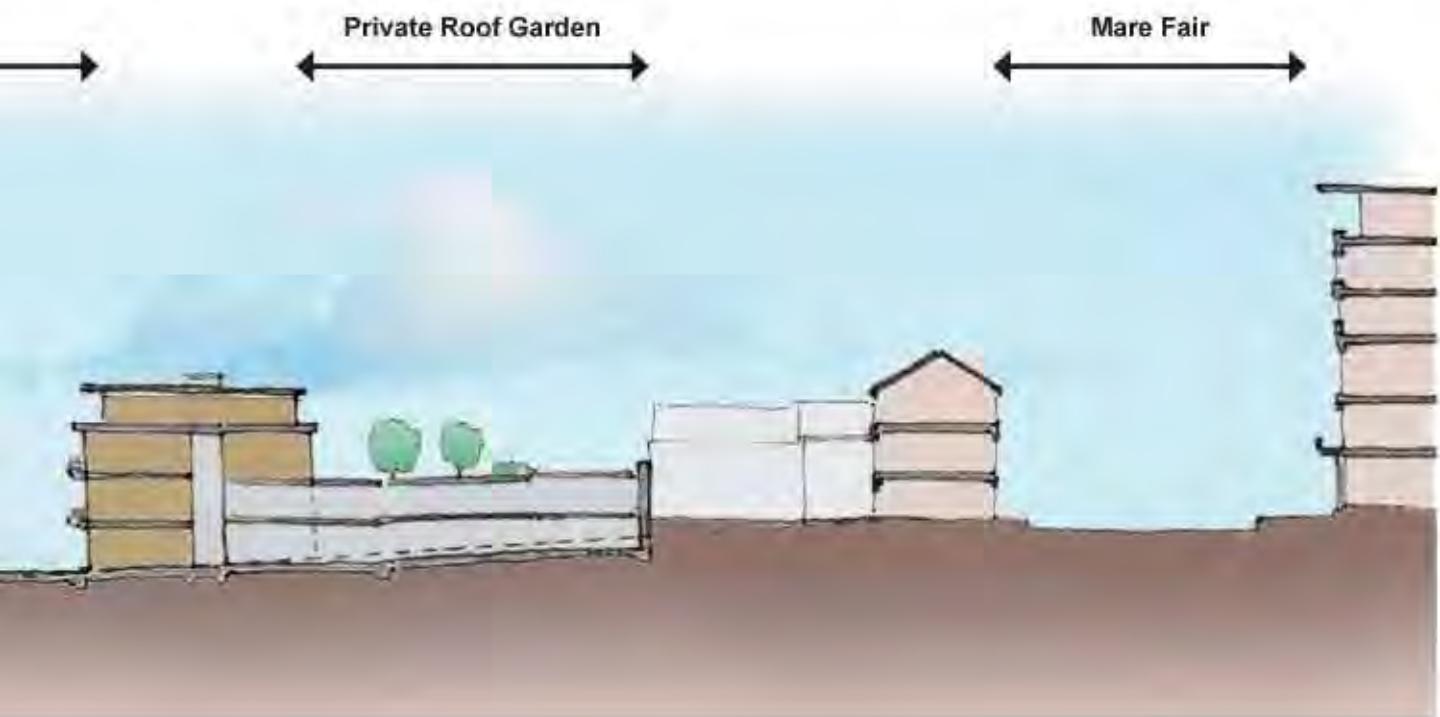
Storey heights are indicated overleaf, in response to the context, with taller buildings fronting wide primary traffic routes and lower storey heights where development fronts secondary roads, eg. Freeschool Street and the new square.

Taller elements up to 6 storeys in height are suggested on prominent parts of the site. This will enable landmark features to be created, eg at the junction of Mare Fair and Horseshoe Street, as well as providing opportunities to signal the presence of the new town square.

The indicative elevations show how the relationship to the dominant Sol Central complex north of Mare Fair may be markedly improved, through the provision of new development and a 'tower' element on the north eastern corner of the site. This will ensure that new development is prominent when viewed from Gold Street and approaches from the town centre and Ring Road.

Development at the southernmost end of the site is shown set back from the primary traffic route (St Peter's Way) with a new pedestrian footway at high level. This is deliberately sited away from the road, set within a high quality landscaped zone, featuring native planting and street trees. This zone brings opportunities to lessen the visual impact of the sub-station through imaginative screen planting (if it cannot be relocated as part of the planned services diversions).

This landscaped margin will also provide a potential zone for mains services to be relocated, in conjunction with the proposed diversion works associated with closing Court Road, subject to technical feasibility.





*Indicative Elevation - Horseshoe Street/Ring Road*



*Indicative storey heights*



## 5.4 Character and Materials

A contemporary approach to building design is suggested, providing opportunities for a high quality, locally distinctive development, which is responsive to the local character of the area. A simple palette of materials is preferred, including references to predominant local building materials and their distinctive characteristics, colour and texture, eg northamptonshire stone and local red brick.

Careful consideration should be given to any areas where new development adjoins or directly interfaces with existing historic buildings, eg where new development is proposed to replace Nos. 5-7 Mare Fair. Sensitive detail design solutions will ensure that the new and the old can be successfully integrated, whilst ensuring that fresh and exciting landmark features and 'punctuation marks' can be provided to enhance the overall value of the local townscape.

Attempts to create pastiche development should be avoided.

*Boundary wall - St Peter's Church*



*Hazelrigg House*





Indicative Elevation - Mare Fair



View south along Horseshoe Street to Mare Fair - Existing  
(Sol Central in the foreground)-

The proposed feature building provides a counterpoint to the imposing Sol Central, drawing the eye down Horseshoe Street towards the pedestrian entrance to the proposed town square.

The new building also serves to enliven the street by providing an active and attractive frontage, where the existing building currently presents a blank facade (gable end) to the street. The transition from the proposed development at the corner of Marefair and Horseshoe Street to the existing terraced buildings is highly sensitive and needs to be very carefully considered if an abrupt and discordant townscape is to be avoided.

The illustrations show how the clearance and redevelopment of Nos. 5-7 Mare Fair can provide a landmark feature with retail/A3 accommodation at ground floor level and residential units on the upper floors.

A vertical glazed facade is indicated to form a transition zone between the 19th century terraces and the tower element of the new development.

Street trees are also indicated on Horseshoe Street in order to soften its impact and lessen the 'barrier effect' for pedestrians crossing the road.



Horseshoe Street /Mare Fair- Proposed

## 5.5 Landscape & Public Realm

The proposed development site is at a prominent gateway location bounded by the Ring Road/ St Peter's Way, Horseshoe Street and Mare Fair. The masterplan maximises opportunities to integrate and reinforce the existing urban grain, whilst enhancing the street scene with landmark buildings and creating increased permeability through the site.

The new landscape, both public and private will create animated robust spaces for use day and night addressing 'Secured by Design' principles (ref: Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG).

The proposed mixed development of residential, retail and A3 use, being on existing transport nodes and some five minutes from the train station, will comply with sustainability goals and local policy GS3. Valuable open green space lies adjacent to this development (St Peter's Green) and could be linked and enhanced as part of this project. An improved route to the Riverside Walk should also be explored.

Views both in and out of the site have been carefully considered in creating the preferred masterplan options. Views from within the site to All Saints Church (Cupola) that signify the town centre will be celebrated, providing an orientation point. The design of key elements of the landscape/public realm should include references to past uses of the site and respect the historical development of the area - in terms of layout, street furniture, low key public art and the sensitive use of materials.

Due to the topography of the site, undercroft parking can be utilised to release valuable private open space for residents in the form of raised gardens at first floor level and a public open space at ground level. These areas will be suitably landscaped to offer a degree of seclusion, whilst creating an attractive visual appearance when viewed from the surrounding apartments. The residents will also enjoy a southerly aspect with views towards the Nene River valley.

The focus of the development will be the central town square. The historic route of Gregory Street will form the perimeter of the square delineated by natural stone settts. The square should be suitably landscaped and 'greened' to provide a multi-functional space linking the proposed development with the existing urban grain. A prominent corner landmark building containing a cafe/restuarant will add a focus to both the square and Horseshoe Street further animating the public realm.



*Shared surfacing - public square*



*Roof garden over undercroft parking*



*Considered provision of car parking and landscaped open space.*



*Sensitive use of materials will designate historical routes*

## 5.6 Public Art

'Public Art is not an art form; it just uses the arts to assist those involved in enhancing the quality of the environment'

(*Public Art Forum 2001*)

The use of public art can play a fundamental role in enhancing both the new and existing public realm. Public art is envisaged at gateways to the site and in key areas of public space. Existing features of interest, such as the medieval line of Gregory Street, should be imaginatively incorporated as visual features in new development proposals.

The regeneration of this area should celebrate the rich history of this part of Northampton to create individuality and a 'sense of place'. Research has shown that community and public art programmes provide a catalyst for the regeneration of cities, towns and villages (*Making Places 2001*).

A key objective is that public art should be relevant - designed for a particular space to give or strengthen identity whilst addressing historical and geographical references. Contemporary art is no longer confined to sculpture and the gallery, but now influences urban design elements such as paving, lighting, street furniture, gateways, signage and the host of elements needed to provide a distinctive public realm. New technologies and materials including digital and multi-media have changed contemporary art beyond all recognition.

### Why art is good for business

Through the commissioning of art and the sponsorship of events, a company sends out a message of vitality, prosperity and innovation. It also reflects a sense of social responsibility and concern for the environment beyond purely commercial terms. There can also be a real and perceived community benefit based on being seen to 'put something back' contributing to civic pride, helping in the creation of a community's sense of shared endeavour and meaning.

Since the early 1990's the Arts Council of England (ACE) has promoted 'percent for art' - a concept that advocates devoting a proportion of the building costs of a capital project to the commissioning of art works for building projects.



Northampton Borough Council will seek high quality, innovative and distinctive public art as an integrated part of the overall development proposals for Freeschool Street.

## 5.7 Sustainability

Northampton Borough Council is committed to adherence to best practice in achieving the sustainable re-development of this key town centre site:



Consideration should be given to the following:

### Design

- Ensure efficient use of land
- Resource efficient buildings, designed to ensure flexibility in use
- Mixed-use in accordance with indicative block layout
- Balconies and terraced decks to provide private external space and create interest and detail to building frontages
- Maximise energy efficiency (developers are expected to adhere to the BREEAM method)
- Optimum plan form and layout to maximise solar gain, natural light and ventilation
- Consider issues of sound insulation from internal and external sources avoiding potential conflicts of use
- Innovation in housing - design to accommodate changes in lifestyle and circumstances - provide maximum flexibility in number and type of rooms - eg rooms which can be used as bedroom, office, guest accommodation, etc.
- Introduce variety of housing tenures to ensure true community mix and broader social profile
- Develop site wide sustainable urban drainage solutions

### Construction

- Maximise use of local labour and locally produced materials in order to minimise transport costs
- Use building and construction materials which are from renewable sources and with low embodied energy
- Minimise the use of non-sustainable and primary materials
- Maximise recycling opportunities during construction
- Implement comprehensive water conservation and recycling measures
- Minimal energy loss through building fabric. Target Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 100 or above
- Minimise pollution, including noise during the construction process
- Minimise future maintenance costs through consideration of 'whole life' cost of buildings
- Installation and regular maintenance of efficient service equipment to minimise emissions and waste



## 6.0

# Implementation of the Masterplan

### 6.1 Requirements for Planning

Prospective developers are actively encouraged to hold early discussions with the Borough Council in advance of making formal planning applications.

#### Information required

For guidance, Northampton Borough Council will require comprehensive information in support of a planning application, including details of the following:

- \* Layout design showing siting and means of access
- \* Detailed architectural design, showing massing, building heights and elevational treatment
- + Cross-sections and levels (existing & proposed)
- \* Landscape details
- \* Materials and finishes
- \* Comprehensive Design and Access Statement

#### Flood Risk Assessment.

At some stage (perhaps as post-decision compliance with conditions) the following requirements would need to be met:

- a) A desktop study carried out which should include the identification of previous site uses, potential contaminants that might reasonably be expected given those uses and other relevant information. Using this information a diagrammatical/tabulated representation (Conceptual Model) for the site of all potential contaminant sources, pathways and receptors should be produced and explained.

- b) A site investigation designed for the site using the information obtained from the desktop study and any diagrammatical/tabulated representations. (Conceptual Model). This should be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the LPA prior to that investigation being carried out on the site. The investigation must be comprehensive enough to enable:
  - A risk assessment to be undertaken relating to groundwater and surface waters associated on and off the site that may be affected
  - Refinement of the Conceptual Model
  - The development of a Method Statement detailing the remediation requirements.
- c) The site investigation should be undertaken in accordance with details approved by the LPA and a risk assessment then undertaken.
- d) A Method Statement detailing the remediation requirements, including measures to minimise the impact on ground and surface waters, using the information obtained from the Site Investigation should be submitted to the LPA. This should be approved in writing by the LPA prior to that remediation being carried out on the site.
- e) All such solutions should preferably include measures that improve water quality in addition to reducing flood risk.
- f) Site wide sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) should be used.
- g) All applications will require the submission of the drainage scheme for Anglian Waters approval

In addition, the following studies/reports will be required in support of a planning application:

- \* Transport/Traffic Assessment
- \* Noise and Air Quality Statement
- \* Ground Condition Assessment
- \* Ecological Assessment.
- \* Travel Plan
- \* Sustainability Appraisal
- \* Archaeological Impact Assessment (ref 6.2)

Development proposals should demonstrate a clear understanding of, and response to the urban context and accord with the spirit and development principles of the masterplan.

#### **Section 106 requirements:**

- 35% on-site affordable housing in line with adopted NBC policy;
- Contribution to education facilities in line with adopted NCC policy;
- Delivery of the public areas promoted in the Supplementary Planning Document (including the Town Square) to a specified standard and in a time bound manner; the retention of this space for public use and certainty that it will be maintained indefinitely to a specified standard. Each developer must have equal responsibility in any s106(s) for the delivery of the obligations associated with the public areas. It is anticipated that dividing responsibility for delivering these obligations should be a matter dealt with by the developers under a separate private agreement(s) rather than via any s106 agreement;
- CCTV cameras and associated infrastructure and management/ maintenance costs. This will be particularly necessary to monitor the proposed Class A uses and discourage anti-social behaviour in and around the proposed Town Square;
- Pedestrian crossings (at least one is likely to cross Horseshoe Street to coincide with proposed pedestrian link from the south east corner of the Town Square);
- Provision of a public art feature in the Town Square; and
- Contribution to the provision / maintenance of off-site amenity space / facilities (e.g. The Green to the west of the site and the Council's Waterside project).

## **6.2 Archaeology**

Much of the Freeschool Street Master Plan area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with a small proportion in the south quadrant without formal designation.

Archaeological assessment as part of the master planning exercise has revealed that some areas within the Scheduled Ancient Monument have been heavily eroded by cellars constructed in the 19th century, by services and by archaeological excavation in the 1970s. The resulting patchwork of archaeological survival, whilst identified in broad terms, cannot at this stage be mapped with significant accuracy.

The depth at which the archaeology survives below ground is generally indicated at 1m beneath building rubble and accumulated hardcore and in some areas stratigraphy has been found to be over 2m deep.

Both English Heritage and Northamptonshire County Council have indicated their willingness to consider development within the scheduled area subject to the appropriate safeguards for the archaeology.

In all areas of the Scheduled Monument development will require a phased programme of archaeological impact assessment and evaluation as part of a Scheduled Monument Consent application to the Secretary of State at the Department of Culture Media and Sport. The form of the impact assessment may vary marginally from site to site but will be expected to follow the pattern established under both Scheduled Monument legislation (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 Archaeology and Development (PPG 16).

At the completion of the assessment and evaluation and forming part of the SMC application a mitigation strategy, either by design or through preservation by record (excavation), will be required to form part of the development proposals. The latter will also certainly form a condition on a planning consent and part of a Scheduled Monument consent.

## 6.3 Highways and Transport

The masterplan is based on the assumption that Gregory Street will be closed to through traffic and Court Road will no longer exist, the latter enabling new development to form a definite frontage to St Peter's Way and Horseshoe Street. New vehicular access points will be provided to serve the development, directly off Freeschool Street. It is also proposed that the existing access off St Peter's Way via The Green is retained as described below.

### Highways

At the outset of the study, it was agreed with Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council that Court Road and Gregory Street could be closed to traffic. Court Road currently has no clear function, and the masterplan is based on the assumption that this road will be stopped up as a public highway. This would require a statutory order, and diversion of statutory utility apparatus.

The principal vehicular access to the site is currently from St. Peter's Way via the priority junction with the Green. There is secondary access available for vehicles from Mare Fair via Freeschool Street to the north. These access points can be retained, although the existing road configuration of The Green does potentially constrain the development opportunities in the south-west area of the site as highlighted through the options studies (refer to 4.3).

Consideration was given to amending the road layout in this area to form a new junction with St Peters Way (refer to Option 1, Page 43). However, cost estimates for undertaking such work, in addition to archaeological issues that could contribute toward sub-structural work needed for any new road alignment, have led to the retention of The Green as the preferred option.

This decision has negated the need for a technical feasibility study to determine the extent of any excavation. Such works would have been beyond the scope of the Masterplan, which served as the source information for this Supplementary Planning Document.

Despite the aforementioned constraints precluding the diversion of The Green, it will still be possible to develop the southwestern section of the site, based on the current road alignment.

The retention of the existing road configuration and The Green/St Peters Way junction is shown below.



*Option showing retention of The Green*

### Parking

Northampton Borough Council has confirmed that they have no specific requirement for public parking to be re-allocated as part of the redevelopment of the area. Therefore the parking provided within the indicative proposal is solely to serve the new uses within the study area. Secure undercroft parking is proposed, based on less than 1 car space per unit, in recognition of the site's town centre location and close proximity to local and regional transport links.

### Public Transport

The masterplan provides for access to public transport, principally by improving pedestrian connections to the bus stops along Mare Fair and Horseshoe Street. The site is in close proximity to the town's railway station, within five minutes walking time.

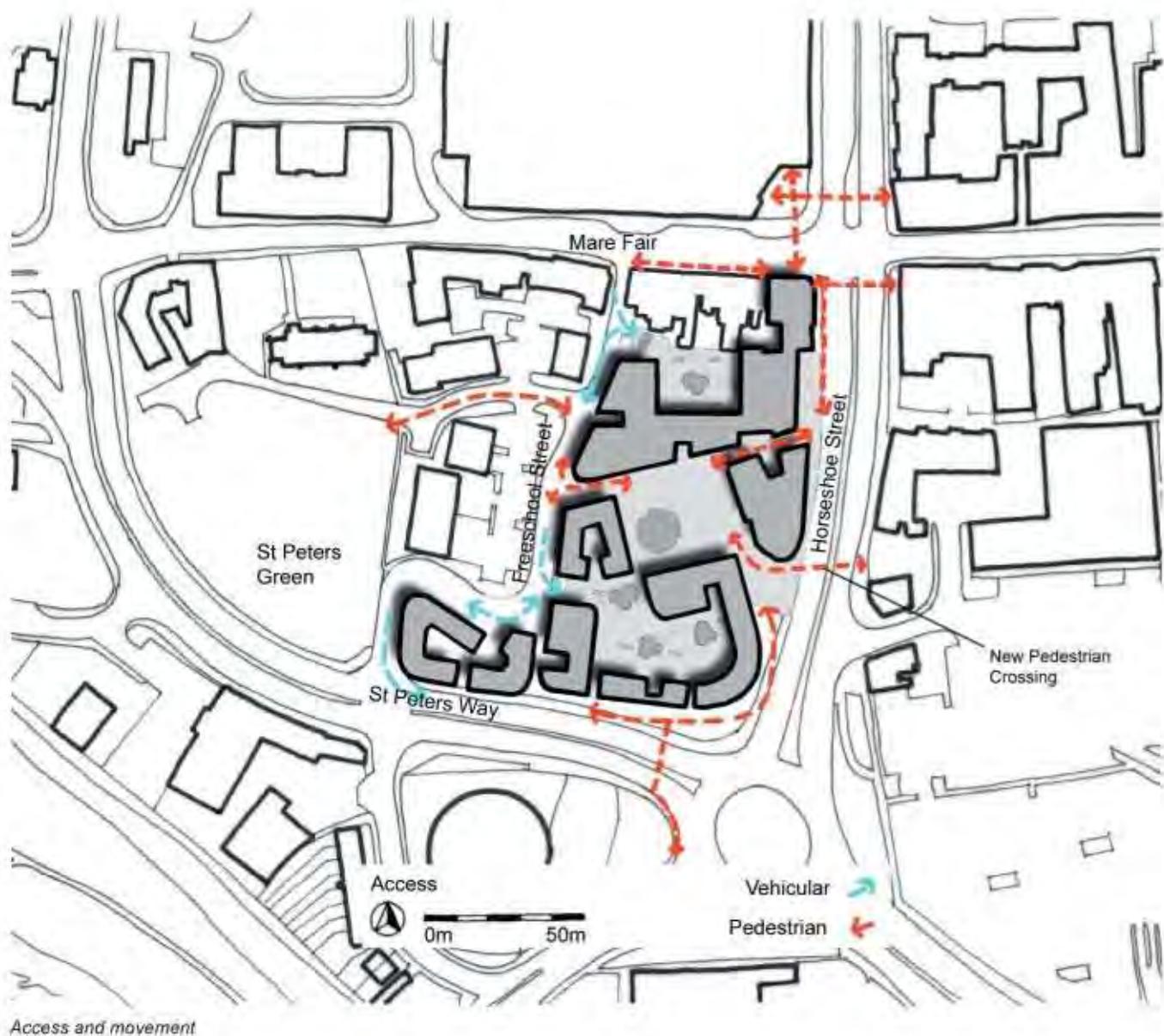
The northern edge of the site fronts Mare Fair which is the primary west to east route between the railway station and the main part of the town centre. Improvements to bus-based access to the town centre are being brought forward by Northampton County Council through the Local Transport Plan.

In addition, access to and from the rail station is addressed by improving pedestrian links.

## Pedestrians and Cyclists

The masterplan seeks to improve the pedestrian connections around the site, and provide for a high level of permeability and connectivity with the established businesses and the retail and leisure core in the town centre. There is an opportunity to provide a new traffic signal pedestrian crossing on Horseshoe Street connecting to the St Peter's Way retail park to the east.

The masterplan responds to and strengthens the links to the north, Mare Fair and the wider town centre beyond. Overall, the masterplan serves to relax the physical barriers that sever the town centre.



## 6.4 Utilities

At the outset of the study, the consultancy team issued C2 enquiries under the New Roads and Streetworks Act (NRSwA, 1991) to the list of statutory utilities companies provided by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).

The key utilities that are present within the study area include gas, electricity, telecoms, water and drainage. Responses have been received from all individual utility companies and, based on their records and information, the positions of buried services are indicated below:



### Location of known Statutory Utilities

The information provided on this drawing has been prepared from details provided by third parties and may not be complete or indicate all utility services. Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure the information provided is correct and accurate, we cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions made.

Following the preparation of the initial masterplan options, the consultant team issued C3 enquiries under the NRSwA to the affected statutory utility companies, to request budget costs for the diversion and protection of apparatus associated with the masterplan options (ie. for the relocation of services to enable the closure and re-development of Court Road and The Green). Key findings were as follows:

**Anglian Water** - The Waste Water Dept have confirmed that they will not be affected by the masterplan proposals, provided Gregory Street is to be retained in its existing form (a sewer runs down the centre of it). Confirmation is still awaited from the Clean Water Dept as to whether or not they will be affected.

**BT** - Discussions with BT have confirmed that existing cables on the site will become redundant when the site is cleared, which will not have any cost implications for landowners/developers. Secondly there is a major trunk cable running in the northern footway of St Peters Way. However, BT have confirmed that it is at a depth of 1.5m and therefore is unlikely to be affected by the re-development proposals.

**Central Networks** - have provided a C3 estimate of £40,700 incl. VAT for diverting services (high and low voltage cables) in accordance with the masterplan proposals.

**Transco** - have provided a C3 estimate of £105,000 + VAT.  
(A full summary is presented overleaf)

Freeschool Street - Northampton			Last Updated: Wednesday, May 25, 2005								
	Request for C2 information	Response to confirm Utility not affected	Statutory Utility affected - C2 information received	Request for C3 information	Response received to confirm C3 estimate is being dealt with	Utility Company chased for C3 estimate	C3 estimate received	Cost (£)	Timescale for Statutory Company to make necessary diversion/protection	Notes	
Anglian Water	21-Jan		17-Mar	23-Mar	NO	YES	NO			Chased on several occasions, but no response to date	
British Pipeline Agency	21-Jan	24-Jan									
British Waterways	21-Jan	No response received to date		-							
BT	24-Jan		26-Jan	25-Feb	NO	YES	Not Required ??			BT state that they are unaffected by the proposed works as existing services on site will be disconnected when site is cleared. However, there appears to be a discrepancy between the C2 and C3 information - clarification is awaited from BT	
Cable & Wireless	21-Jan		04-Feb	-							
COLT Telecom	24-Jan	28-Jan									
Connect	24-Jan	27-Jan									
Central Networks (East)	24-Jan		03-Feb	16-Feb	04-Mar	YES	YES	£40,700	Upon receipt of acceptance letter and payment, CN will commence work within the following 12 weeks. Work schedule thereafter is confirmed by liaising with Project Delivery Manager and his/her team.	inc VAT	
Environment Agency	24-Jan	03-Feb									
Fibrenet UK	24-Jan	09-Feb									
Fujitsu Telecommunications	24-Jan	26-Jan									
Kingston Communications	24-Jan	28-Jan									
Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue	24-Jan		04-Feb	-							
NTL	24-Jan		04-Mar	-							
Network Rail	24-Jan	02-Feb									
Redstone Communications	24-Jan	28-Jan									
Transco East of England Network	24-Jan		03-Feb	25-Feb	16-Mar	Not Required	Yes	£ 123,375	Work will commence within 15 weeks of acceptance letter and payment. Work is expected to take 4-5 weeks	inc VAT	

## 6.5 Broad Phasing

The indicative phasing plan below shows 3 broad phases - these may be split into sub phases. It will be important to ensure that public realm works associated with the new square are completed as early as possible, to help create the climate of change and stimulate developer confidence in the area.

The ultimate phased programme of work will be subject to agreement between landowners and stakeholders, with Phase 3 being dependent upon the necessary services diversions and infrastructure works.

A separate Delivery Plan has been prepared, containing further information in relation to implementation, with specific reference to: land assembly, funding opportunities, potential delivery options and indicative timescales.



## 6.6 Closing Statement

Freeschool Street has the potential to become a highly desirable and successful residential location, and local destination. The comprehensive redevelopment of this key site represents a significant opportunity for Northampton to enhance its town centre through truly sustainable regeneration.

This Masterplan/Supplementary Planning Document provides a clear vision to enable the potential of this gateway site to be fully realised, enhancing land values and bringing far reaching benefits for the local community.

