



URBAN DESIGN framework

gillespies : arup : jon rowland urban design : bdor :
alder king : dle: cat

for

south west regional development agency
wiltshire county council
west wiltshire district council
trowbridge town council

executive summary

November 2003

foreword

Trowbridge does not enjoy the profile that a county town deserves. A rare opportunity presented itself when over 20 acres in the town centre became available for development at the same time. The County, District and Town Councils saw this as a chance to move away from piecemeal, uncoordinated development and investigate the potential to comprehensively regenerate Trowbridge. The Vision for Trowbridge was born. The South West of England Regional Development Agency was very keen to support this initiative because towns that develop such plans give themselves a competitive advantage.

The consultants, Gillespies, have developed some innovative and ambitious ideas, all grounded in considerable community consultation. Residents, students, landowners, developers and businesses have shaped ideas about developing new public spaces, making the most of the hidden gems such as the river and effectively linking shopping, leisure and living spaces.

The Vision has been an impressive example of the three local authorities working together and in partnership with the business community. The challenge now is for us all to translate the vision into Action for Trowbridge.

Philip Watkins MBE

Head of Operations, Wiltshire and Swindon
South West of England Regional Development Agency



bringing about change



This report represents an **executive summary** for an Urban Design Framework covering a study area within the town centre of Trowbridge, Wiltshire. It has been produced by a team of consultants, led by international Urban designers **Gillespies**, for a client group comprised of:

The South West Regional Development Agency
Wiltshire County Council
West Wiltshire District Council
Trowbridge Town Council

The original brief, prepared by the client group, outlined a series of overarching objectives in order to build upon the existing Local Plan policies and the Trowbridge Vision work to provide all the information required to deliver Supplementary Planning Guidance.

In order to fulfil the objectives and a number of client outputs which included:

- ◆ Integration of bus, coach and rail transport
- ◆ a diversified economic base, particularly capturing a greater share of the growing knowledge economy
- ◆ a cinema complex, possibly linked to other commercial leisure facilities
- ◆ development of heritage, cultural and civic facilities within the county town
- ◆ the provision of housing, office, retail, leisure and other development in accordance with local plan policies
- ◆ high quality public realm including parks, open spaces, bridges, public art and regular market/civic assembly space
- ◆ development of a town centre location for a public sector administrative centre to include WWDC, primary care trust offices and job centre plus

The main objectives were:

- To identify and maintain a strong sense of place and local distinctiveness in all new development
- To identify how to co-ordinate new developments and public spaces to create a distinctive whole integrated with the existing fabric of the town developing Trowbridge as a centre of excellence living up to the County Town status
- To identify suitable development that is sustainable, mixed use, distinctive, high quality, attractive and reduces the need to travel, with a particular emphasis on retail as an integral part of town centre regeneration
- To identify how to create safe, attractive public realm for all with an enhanced environment for the pedestrian and cyclist
- To enhance the role of the River Biss, improving links within the town centre and identify new green corridors
- To ensure SWRDA's enterprise and skills objectives are incorporated in all thinking in the development of the outputs of the study in this work

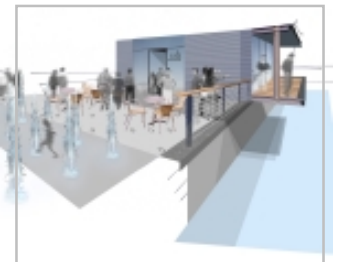
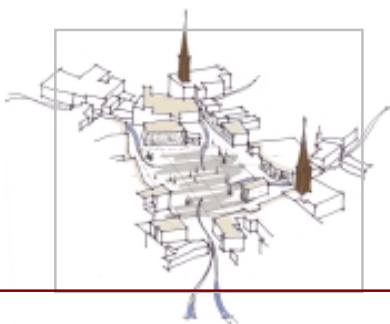
the team embarked on a 4 stage process of work that involved a strong sense of aspirational but deliverable design, coupled with an emphasis on public and stakeholder consultation. Throughout the process in producing the Urban Design Framework, ideas were tested against key stakeholders at a number of meetings. Invitees included Council members and officers, local landowners and people associated with local interest groups.

Once the preferred framework and many of the ideas it represented had passed the critique offered by the wider public at the West Wiltshire Show exhibition and the second stakeholder event, the final report was produced.

This summary outlines the conceptualising and eventual formulation of the design elements that make up the Urban Design Framework. This includes strategies on ensuring new urban spaces, the encouragement of new town character areas, sustainability proposals and a hierarchy of new connections and links.

The Urban Design Framework is supported by a set of design guidelines or codes that aim to ensure designers are given the opportunity to be creative. The illustrations at the back are one possible interpretation of the guidelines that will create a 21st century County Town

objectives



innovative approach



The key issues affecting Trowbridge as a place and functional town elicited a number of responses in order to solve many of the problems it faces.

In part this meant establishing a clear set of conceptual solutions and design principles that formed the basis of the Urban Design Framework.

The **Urban Design Concept** for Trowbridge is not just a single approach, but more a collection of concepts drawn together to produce a coherent group. This collection is based on themes, ideas and celebrations of what Trowbridge has the potential to be.

Within the overall design concept are a number of **design principles**. These set out in more detail the aspirations of the concept, outlining those common opportunities that need to exist to make Trowbridge a better place.

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

- create more quality public spaces and reduce car dominance within those that exist
- create better points of arrival into Trowbridge and town gateways
- establish pedestrian priority streets and spaces, particularly between important destinations
- consolidate and rationalise the majority of parking to the periphery of the town centre
- retain an historical dialogue with possible building conversions
- realise and enhance visual and physical connections to key landmarks and destinations
- create a greenspace network and natural grid and encourage sustainable forms of energy and design
- create new town character areas with a mix of new uses and development opportunities to enliven and add vitality at different times of the day
- realise the potential of River Biss as one of the towns main assets and attractions



MOVEMENT
The concept is to ease movement to and across the Centre, through new and improved routes.



WATER
This concept focuses on the opportunities that the River Biss provides



CHARACTER
Potential new character areas that seek to provide a new mix of uses combined with the predominant uses that already exist.



ACCESS
Finding ways to reduce and manage vehicular intrusion inc. new parking opportunities at the town centre periphery



SPATIAL
This concept sees improved place-making at critical locations

concept



a visionary approach



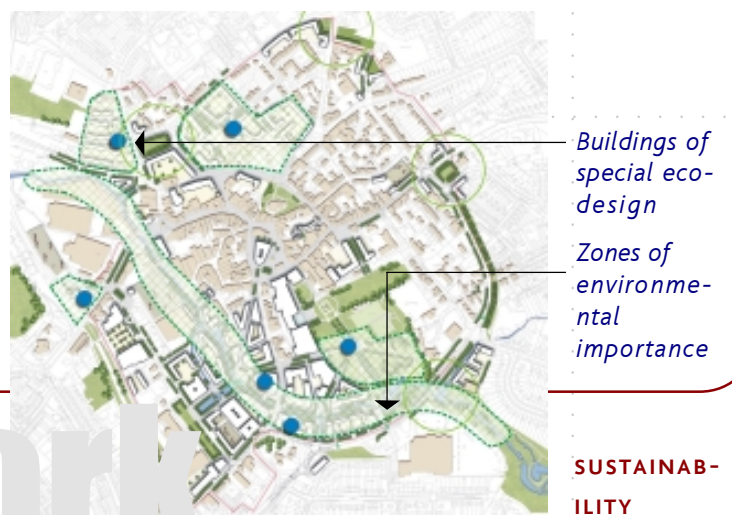
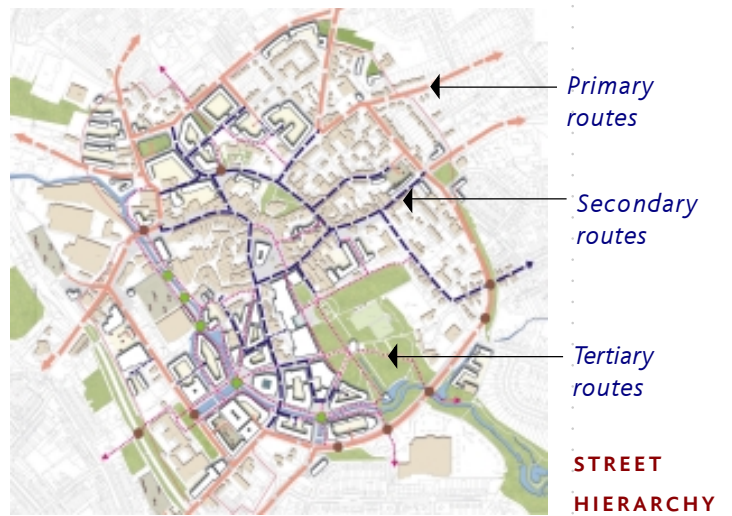
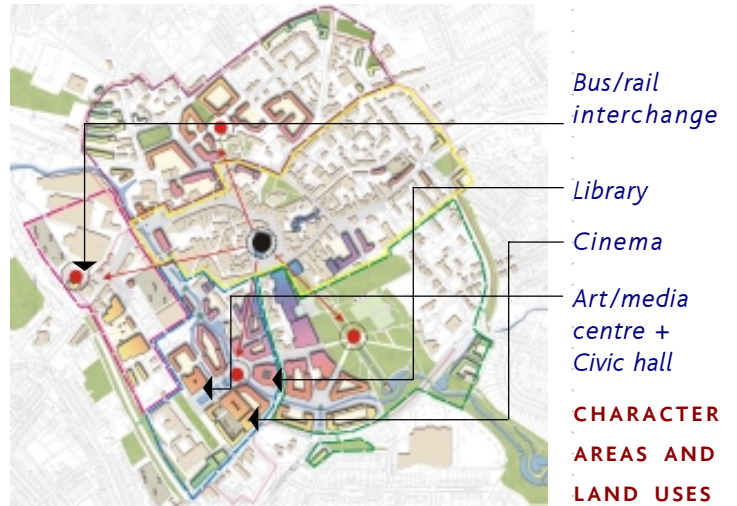
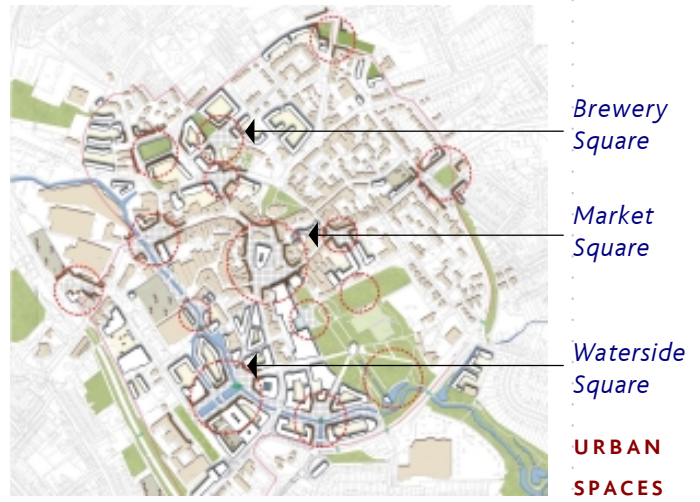
The ideas explored in the previous section help form the basis of the Urban Design Framework. This is the essence of the study and comprises a series of plans that collectively offer a guide to the way Trowbridge should be developed.

The conceptual stage also set the foundation upon which the visionary framework has emerged. This means that ideas of new spaces, connections and development blocks now become tangible elements that can be seen, interpreted and applied by developers and designers in implementing proposals for planning applications.



SUMMARY OF URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

- URBAN SPACES AND FOCAL PLACES
- BUILT FORM
- SCALE AND MASSING
- STREET HIERARCHY AND CONNECTIONS
- CHARACTER AREAS AND USES
- SUSTAINABILITY AND LANDSCAPE
- PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND BUSES
- CIRCULATION AND PARKING



framework



the future of Trowbridge



This final part of the Urban Design framework is about ensuring the aims and objectives of the framework are encapsulated within a set of **design guidelines**. The aim is to ensure the quality of the proposals are met and the framework is given a three dimensional and illustrative form.

This was split into two sections. The first concentrates on **general design codes**. These are a set of design elements that aim to give developers and designers a basis for understanding the aspirations of the framework proposals.

The second section concentrates more on **specific areas** within the framework proposals. Primarily, it concentrates on building codes. The codes give guidance on where active frontages should be, where specific views or public access should be retained and how the proposals should be serviced. It also alludes, in general terms, to the materials that could be used within specific areas and parking arrangements. It also suggests land uses which are the preferred land use for that particular area or block, although the nature of the framework and the potential changes in the market over the next 10-15 years means there are alternative uses which the blocks could support. This section also addresses public realm guidance concentrating on key areas, such as the Market Square and Waterside Square. The illustrations provide one possible outcome or interpretation of how Trowbridge could look if the codes are applied.

The design codes aim to provide coherent guidance on implementing the proposals within the framework; they are not intended as prescriptive rules that cannot be flexible and alter with market changes.



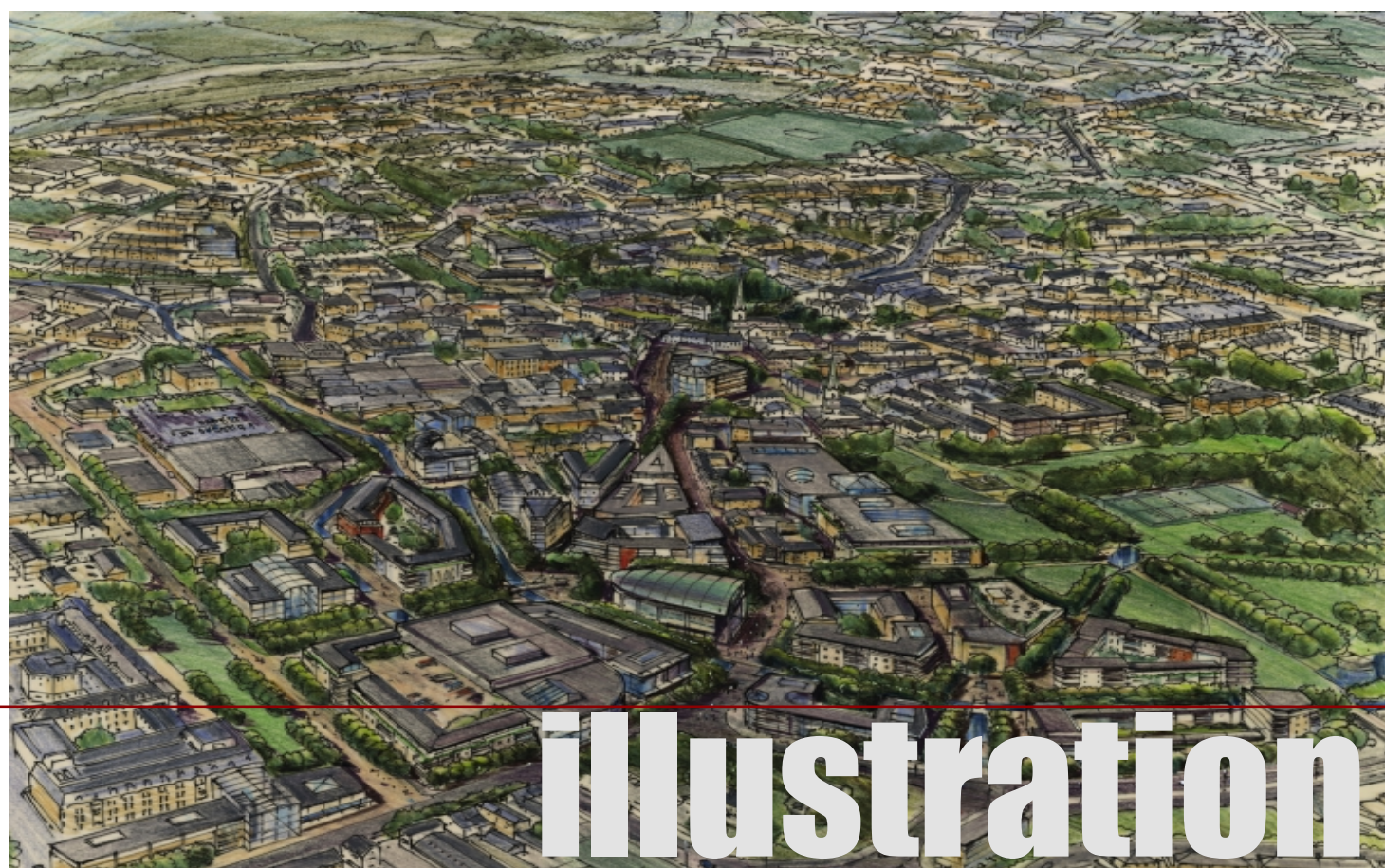
MARKET SQUARE



WATERSIDE SQUARE



BREWERY SQUARE



illustration