APPENDIX 1: OPPORTUNITY AREA AND PUBLIC REALM GUIDANCE

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Overview

This document sets out guidance and illustrative drawings for the key opportunity areas and public realm priorities which should be read in conjunction with the full spectrum of policies and illustrative drawings in chapter 5 of the AAP.

Policy HTC1 requires development proposals to have due regard for this guidance and the Council will treat this as a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. There is provision for the preparation of more detailed design guidance through subsequent development briefs as part of the ongoing implementation of the AAP.

Structure of the guidance

The adjacent key plan highlights eight opportunity areas. Public realm priority areas are illustrated on Figure 11.

Opportunity areas:

North
Opportunity Area 1 - Sainsbury’s
Opportunity Area 2 - Wych Elm
Opportunity Area 3 - Town Centre North

Central and south
Opportunity Area 4 - Bus Station
Opportunity Area 5 - Harvey Centre
Opportunity Area 6 - Water Gardens
Opportunity Area 7 - Crowngate
Opportunity Area 8 - College and Leisure Zone
Figure 1 Opportunity area key plan Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627
Overview

This section sets out guidance for specific opportunity areas. The northern and southern parts of the plan are examined in more specific detail on subsequent pages.
Figure 2 Indicative Town Centre framework plan. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627.
NORTH

The Northern area include the following opportunity areas:

1 - Sainsbury’s
2 - Wych Elm
3 - Town Centre North

Principles

1. Consider the long-term options for Sainsbury’s - the store could be retained or part of a reconfiguration of the wider site including the existing surface car park.

2. Provision of a multi-storey car park for a retained or redeveloped supermarket.

3. Explore the opportunity for a possible theatre or civic use, with ground floor entrances onto both Fourth Avenue and the north. A replacement foodstore might also be appropriate in this prominent location in relation to point 1, above.

4. Establish a new residential-led neighbourhood to north of Fourth Avenue.

5. Transition to a boulevard character with a flexible surface connecting to green space and possible roundabout removal.

6. Extend green finger from Rectory Wood in the north to the town centre to establish a stronger relationship between the town centre and its surrounding green spaces.

7. Opportunity for new development fronting Fourth Avenue and retention of mature trees and open space, replacing surface car park.

8. Explore potential for a new office quarter along Fourth Avenue.


10. Encourage mixed-use development fronting onto Velizy Avenue, with boulevard character created.

11. Open east-west pedestrian route with new residential development above active ground floors.

12. Potential for a taller marker building as part of a more attractive gateway to the town centre.
CENTRAL AND SOUTH

The Central and South areas includes the following opportunity areas:

- 4 - Bus Station
- 5 - Harvey Centre
- 6 - Water Gardens
- 7 - Crowngate
- 8 - College and Leisure Zone

Principles

1. Opportunity for new high quality new mixed-use developments.

2. Improve the setting for St Paul’s Church.

3. Establish green connections to the Water Gardens.

4. Explore potential to redevelop BHS to create an improved frontage to Cross Street and open up views of St. Paul’s Church to improve its setting.

5. Opportunity for new education and ancillary buildings, fronting onto Velizy Avenue with an improved area of public realm.

6. Potential for a new civic quarter fronting onto Velizy Avenue, with a boulevard character created.

7. Creation of a new pedestrian route, with new mixed-use buildings either side.

8. Explore possibility of an under-croft servicing access, with podium gardens above, for residential.

9. Long-term opportunity to enhance the Water Gardens area (likely to be beyond the plan period). This could include upgrades to the parking structure and public realm.

Opportunities to introduce new flexible typologies (retail at ground with residential, commercial or leisure above) which create a stronger relationship to Haydens Road could also be considered. Proposals should seek to enhance the setting and identity of Gibberd’s original Water Gardens concept and the view south to Rye Hill.

Overview

This section sets out the priority projects for the public realm and public art in Harlow Town Centre. Harlow’s New Town legacy and modernist aesthetic defines Harlow’s character and design language. As Harlow looks to the future the public realm should be improved but with consideration given to the modernist character: clear, legible forms with strong, repeating geometric patterns. The façades of buildings such as St. Paul’s Church or Clock house stand as strong design precedents.

The first impression of the Town Centre is the overall lack of trees and greenery. Other New Town’s such as Rotterdam’s Lijnban invested in significant numbers of new trees and robust under-storey planting to great effect. Public realm improvements should focus on the transformation of the three dimensional character of the streets and spaces through new tree planting. Tree planting is essential to a wider green infrastructure strategy to reduce impermeable paved surfaces, introduce sustainable drainage practices, and reduce urban heat island effect.

The following should be cross referenced with policies set out within chapter 5 including:

• HTC2: Sustainable movement in the town centre,
• HTC3: Active travel - walking and cycling,
• HTC9: Public realm, art and sculpture

Figure 5 Modernist details found within the Town Centre
Figure 6: Lijnbaan, Rotterdam: Example of how the simple investment in planting and paving dramatically improves the New Town aesthetic.

Figure 7: Lincoln Centre, New York City: Example of how contemporary interventions by Diller Scofidio + Renfro respect and thus comfortably integrate within the modern context by Philip Johnson and Dan Kiley.

Figure 8: Sergels Torg, Stockholm: Example of how a strong modernist vernacular can become the identity of a place and be embedded in popular culture.
PUBLIC ART

Harlow is home to a sculpture collection of national importance, with artworks by celebrated sculptors such as Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth located within the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Through redevelopment opportunities and national funding sources, the AAP presents an opportunity to guide investment to maintain and expand the town’s collection. This could be through the creation of new pieces, the refurbishment of existing pieces, or the relocation of existing pieces. Current sculpture locations are shown in the plan on the facing page and suggested new locations are identified based on the AAP framework plan. These locations are not intended to be prescriptive.

Many of the existing artworks reflect the trades and everyday life of historic residents of the area. The pieces sit within their surroundings rather than separate from them, and in many cases are designed to be tactile and interactive. This ethos should inform the creation of new artworks for the town centre.

Harlow Arts Trust manages the current collection, commissioning new pieces, purchasing art works and funding restoration work as funding allows. The Arts Trust has a thorough understanding of sculpture’s role and ethos in Harlow, and should be involved in the commissioning or development of new pieces for the collection.

Figure 9 Sculptures in the town centre: 3 & 6 - many of Harlow’s sculptures reflect trades and the lives of residents over time. 1 & 5 - sculptures are integrated into their surroundings and are often incidental. 2 & 4 - positive examples exist of more recent additions to Harlow’s sculptures collection. 2 & 5 - examples of tactile and interactive sculptures which could inspire future playful installations
Figure 10 Indicative existing public art and opportunities for new locations. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627.
PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

Overview
Public realm improvements have been set out as two types of project - catalytic projects which are independent of development and longer term projects which are associated with development led transformations.

Catalytic projects
Catalytic projects such as Broad Walk or Market Square where investment in the public realm can improve the quality of the existing space independent of new development. The forward investment and improvements will re-define the narrative of the town centre and raise the expectations for future developments to respond.

1. Boulevard streets
2. Broad Walk
3. Market Square
4. East Gate and West Gate
5. St. Paul’s Square

Longer term projects
Longer term projects are those such as Post Office Gardens or Rectory Park which require redevelopment to establish the context for a new intervention.

1. Post Office Gardens
2. Rectory Park
3. The Interchange
4. West Square
5. South Gate
Figure 11: Indicative public realm framework plan. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No. 100019627.
1. Boulevard streets
Currently the roads surrounding the Town Centre form a ring which favours free vehicular movement to the detriment of pedestrian connectivity. The streetscape transformation should consider each street independently with consideration given to the existing and future contexts.

The current Avenues have generous right-of-ways in excess of 30 metres. Ample space exists to rationalise the cross section and junction designs while retaining unique features such as central reservations and tree planting. While opportunity exists to narrow lanes, the majority of improvements come from transforming the roads from grade-separated and free flowing streets with junctions and ample crossings.

The boulevard streetscape projects should be designed to consider the needs of pedestrians including facilitating at-grade pedestrian crossings, and creating safe cycle routes. They should aim to improve the environmental quality of the street within the right-of-way through increased tree planting, improved habitat, and the introduction of active sustainable drainage measures.

Principles
1. Fifth Avenue and Hammarskjold Road: replace the current round-about with a T-junction.
2. Transform round-about into a four-way junction with cycle lanes
3. Fourth Avenue: create a street rather than boulevard by narrowing the right-of-way along to 21 metres.
4. Velizy Avenue: transformed through the introduction of improved crossings, reduced lane widths, simplified junctions, cycle lanes and new planting.
5. Haydens Road: introduce simplified junctions and traffic flow with new cycle lanes and crossings.
6. T-junction at Third Avenue
7. Three-way junction creating tighter building to building condition
Figure 14 Section showing Fourth Avenue

Figure 15 Section showing Velizy Avenue
2. Broad Walk

Broad Walk today consists of three disparate experiences in the north, middle, and south. Public realm improvements should seek to transform the character of the entirety of Broad Walk. Proposals should create a sequence of spaces, seating areas, and event spaces which will draw visitors along its full length. Increasing tree planting and understorey planting will transform the three-dimensional envelope. Improving the paving will create a unique identity for the street.

Principles

1. Create a continuous public realm intervention connecting from East Gate south through Cross Street Square to the Water Gardens. Increase tree planting and ground level planting. Introduce seating areas, new sculpture, and areas for market stalls.

2. Improve E Walk connection to bus station with tree planting and improved lighting around overhead walkway.


4. Improve pedestrian and cycle connections along Cross Street leading to Velizy avenue. Create a new pedestrian crossing improving connection and access to Harlow College.

5. Improve the connection between Broad Walk and Water Gardens. Remove walls and ramps which block views into the Water Gardens. Replace eastern planting beds which are incongruous to the original Water Gardens design and are separating the two spaces.
3. Market Square
The current arrangement of Market Square is designed to be a multifunctional events space, as such it sits relatively empty most days of the week. The future of Market Square should be reconsidered and the space re-imagined. The singular expanse of space should be subdivided in favour of multiple, purposeful, atmospheric spaces created through tree planting.

Principles
1. Create an active northern edge beneath a canopy of large London Plane trees with seating and small children’s play moment.

2. Introduce grove of trees such as Cherry (Prunus avium) in centre of square which provide seasonal interest. Space trees approximately 8 metres on-centre to accommodate seasonal markets while maintaining canopy coverage.

3. Improve condition of Bird Cage Walk and link to underpass.

4. Improve condition of Post Office Walk and link to underpass.

Figure 18 Section showing Market Square looking east

Figure 19 Summary plan of principles for Market Square Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

Figure 20 Central Wharf Plaza, Boston
4. East Gate and West Gate

The proposal to create a public transport and cycle route linking East and West Gates is the opportunity to deliver significant public realm improvements as the first step in revitalising the north west quarter of the Town Centre. The intention should be to create a clear, unobstructed, shared surface east-west connection for all users.

Principles

1. Shared surface bus and cycle route with upgraded paving, street furniture, and street trees.

2. Improved junction anticipating improved streetscape and cycle routes along Velizy Avenue.

3. Redesign West Square as first phase of Parkway North street park which will link to Rectory Wood via Wych Elm Park. Mixed species trees should have a looser arrangement in contrast with the avenues along the pedestrian streets.

4. New entrance plaza to The Harvey Centre which welcomes visitors and anticipates new development to the north.

5. Avenue street tree planting at East Gate to animate blank back-of-house façades.
5. St. Paul’s Square
The Grade II listed St. Paul’s Church is one of the Town Centre’s greatest assets. The public realm should celebrate the church and improve the community function of the space surrounding.

Principles
1. New setting worthy of St. Paul’s Church including new planting, seating, and public art.
2. Transform the redundant College Square drop-off and car parking into a small neighbourhood park improving the Church’s setting and serving as important amenity space for Dads Wood housing.
3. Redesign the service access to improve connection to Cross Street.
4. Improve well used pedestrian link from Cross Street to Water Gardens. Remove excessive walls and ramps around Water Gardens.
5. Plan for future development to better set St. Paul’s Church.

Figure 24 Summary plan of principles for St. Paul’s Square Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

Figure 25 Section showing St. Paul’s Church

Figure 26 Tree Canopy - Novartis Campus, Basel
LONGER TERM PROJECTS

1. Post Office Gardens

The post office car park is the location of the largest grove of mature trees in the Town Centre. The opportunity exists to create a new public space beneath the canopy of the trees which features as a northern counter-point to the water gardens. The space should open to the north, incorporating Fourth Avenue and encouraging a safe pedestrian crossing.

**Principles**

1. Create a new garden square under the mature plane trees in Post Office Car Park. Designs should be multipurpose but incorporating large areas of soft planting and lawn.
2. High quality natural stone finish to Fourth Avenue encouraging easy crossing north to Wych Elm.
3. Improve the streets and spaces around new developments with an emphasis on sustainable drainage and playable streets.
4. Extend the West Square Parkway North linking to Wych Elm Park.
5. New pedestrian focused space at Kitson Way

![Figure 27 Summary plan of principles for Fourth Street Gardens](image)

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![Figure 28 Section showing Market Square](image)

![Figure 29 David H. Koch Plaza at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York](image)

![Figure 30 Jardin René et Madeleine Caille, Lyon](image)
2. Rectory Park

Rectory Park is a new public space offering amenity space and play areas north of Fourth Avenue. The space is a link to Rectory Woods and features as the foreground to the new school. The public realm surrounding should incorporate sustainable drainage features as part of their defining character.

Principles

1. Wych Elm neighbourhood park is the link between the Town Centre and Rectory Wood buffering between new residential development and a new primary school. The park should provide equipped play space as well as amenity lawn areas.
2. Stormwater attenuation and infiltration basin
3. At-grade pedestrian crossing across Fourth Avenue
4. New street parks integrated with Fourth Avenue Gardens developments to include doorstep play and sustainable drainage conveyance.
5. Forecourt plaza outside new building as a northern extension of Post Office gardens.
3. The Interchange and West Square

The Interchange is the re-imagination of the bus station and its supporting public realm. Improvements around the bus station should improve the overall setting, visibility, security, and permeability for pedestrians. West Square is a new pedestrian focused gateway to Harlow College. The current car park is replaced with a public space which opens out to Velizy Avenue and encourages grade crossing connections back to the Town Centre. The new space can incorporate cycle parking and sustainable drainage.

Principles

1. Redesign of bus station to improve the overall condition of the bus station. Significant pavement space should be provided along the future development of the car park to allow for ground floor active uses. Connections through to Velizy Avenue should be encouraged and crossings introduced to the bus stand arrangement.

2. Consolidate the access and circulation around the interchange to favour pedestrian crossings, pavements, and signalised junctions on Velizy Avenue.

3. Upgrade Broad Walk and adjacent links with the redevelopment of 37-39 Broad Walk and the library buildings.

4. Further improvement of pedestrian and cycle link to Harlow College.

5. Plaza linking University Centre Harlow and Building C including rainwater garden, cycle parking, around new development parcel.
5. South Gate

South Gate is a new public space creating a link to Netteswell Plantation. The linear street park should be composed of mixed species trees in a loose arrangement in contrast with the avenues along the pedestrian streets. The space should provide new cycle connections deep into the town centre. The character of the space should favour planting and sustainable drainage. Opportunities exist for doorstep play and neighbourhood seating areas.

Principles
1. Linear street park connecting to Netteswell Plantation
2. At grade crossing of Third Avenue
3. New service access street to Water Gardens

Figure 38 Summary plan of principles for Parkway South. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

Figure 39 North West Cambridge Development masterplan, AECOM
Tree Planting

Planting trees has the ability to transform the three dimensional expression of a place. The investment is in the ambient qualities of light, dappled shade, and the expression of the changing seasons. Trees come in a variety of shapes and sizes from cones to spheres, vase to umbrella. When tree form and leaf character is used deliberately, trees can redefine the character of a space or even of a neighbourhood. Tree planting in the Town Centre should be bold and contrasting. Each street or footway can have its own unique character defined by the trees used.

Trees should be planted in response to how they perform throughout the year. Microclimate and planting conditions are important and require careful considerations. The investment in the tree pit and underground infrastructure should be carefully designed and budgeted for to ensure healthy growth.
Street Furniture
The public realm furnishing should be bold but contextual. Furniture selection should consider how it can contribute to the transformation of the function of the spaces. The furnishings palette should be high-quality, coherent and rationalised to minimise street clutter. Street furniture should be coordinated, with a consistent palette that compliments Harlow’s modernist character.

Micro play elements welcome and entertain children when visiting the town centre. Improvements will help to make all streets accessible and will compliment high quality materials proposed for the city centre.

Principles
1. Minimise duplication of street furniture by rationalising and combining elements.
2. Make the colour and finish of all street furniture consistent.
3. Use street furniture that is high quality.
4. Integrate street furniture with components that can be easily maintained, repaired or replaced.
5. Improve and maintain historic elements in the public realm such as the sculpture benches.
Lighting
The night time economy is significant in the Town Centre, year round. Lighting has the ability to transform character both day and night.

Principles
1. Low energy ‘smart’ lighting
2. The spacing and mounting height of lighting should respond the hierarchy of different streets.
3. Lighting columns should either be located 100mm from buildings or 750mm from the kerb edge to maximise the clear footway width.
4. To avoid duplication of posts and reduce street clutter, lighting columns should generally be used for signage.
5. Light columns adjacent to key junctions or pedestrian crossings should be a higher specification - to allow mounting of banners, signage, or traffic signals.
6. Parallel sided light columns with flush access panels are preferred to enable easy attachment of signage.
7. Consider simple lighting effects such as pattern or catenary in key spaces

Figure 57 Simple lighting effect at Solbjerg Plads
Figure 58 Neue Meile Böblingen pedestrian zone - simple lighting in a key space
Figure 59 Lighting at Joyces Court
**Surfaces**

The modern aesthetic of the Town Centre should establish the design precedent for the design of bold geometric paving patterns which help establish a public realm identity. Paving patterns should be repeating and geometric using materials of high contrast. Small features should be introduced to create memorable moments. Material selection should favour natural stone or high-quality reconstituted stone paving.

High quality materials need to be laid well with skill and care and will rely on construction expertise. Training and skills development may be required as part of the roll out of the strategy.

**Principles**

1. Sustainable drainage can be funding source (Thames Water: Twenty 4 Twenty programme)
2. Simple, clean, geometric paving patterns which relate to the modernist legacy
3. Small, memorable details
4. Material type, thickness, jointing and material sub-base should be considered where vehicle overrun is anticipated to avoid damage to paving materials. For footways, strengthened paving slabs are preferable to protective bollards, which can create streetscape clutter.
5. Where possible, parking and loading bays should be integrated to increase the perceived footway width.
Underpasses
Underpasses in the town centre can feel unsafe and unpleasant and discourage active travel. Whilst some underpasses do work, the AAP supports the provision of at-grade crossings in the long-term as the preferred option.

In the short term, creative and low cost solutions exist to enhance Harlow’s underpass environments. Better lighting, public art and playable elements can help to improve the walking and cycling experience to/from the Town Centre.

This page sets out examples of where this has been done successfully elsewhere.
Figure 71: Lighting improvements to a bridge in Southwark which could be applied to the underpasses either side of Wandle Car Park.

Figure 72: Existing Croydon Flyover undercroft with the beer garden of the Royal Standard.

Figure 73: Lantern lighting at an underpass in Birmingham, UK.

Figure 74: Bouldering at an underpass in Schiedam, Netherlands.

Figure 75: Bouldering at an underpass in Schiedam, Netherlands.

Figure 76: Burnley bouldering wall, Melbourne.