

DINNINGTON

 DINNINGTON TOWN 

DINNINGTON HISTORY...

Design Support



Quality information

Document name	Ref	Prepared for	Prepared by	Date	Reviewed by
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Revision history

Project role	Name	Position	Action summary	Signature	Date
Qualifying Body	Dinnington St John Town Council	Neighbourhood Planning Group	Comments on Draft Report		19-02-2018
Director / QA	Ben Castell	Technical Director	Revision and approval of Report		01-03-2018
Researcher	Hans Bedey	Graduate Landscape Architect	Research, site visit, concept plan, drawings		02-02-2018
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Background and Introduction

01

1. Background and Introduction

Background

Through the Department of Communities and Local Government, Neighbourhood Planning Programme, AECOM has been commissioned to provide Design support to the Dinnington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (DNF). The support is intended to provide design assistance to the Forum's work in producing a Neighbourhood Plan and is designed to complement the plan-drafting work that is underway.

Objective

The objective of this report is to advise on how the Neighbourhood Plan can enhance Dinnington high street by providing:

- Public realm improvements; and
- Shop front design guidance.

These areas of focus being where specialist technical support could best progress neighbourhood plan-making.

Location

The town of Dinnington is located in South Yorkshire and is part of the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham. The town is almost equidistant from Sheffield and Rotherham. Dinnington is the principal settlement in the civil parish of Dinnington St John's, the most populous constituent of the St John's ward. Dinnington St John's has population of 9,077 at the 2011 census. Dinnington lies approximately 101 m above sea level.



Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this report:

- Initial meeting, site visit and
- Desktop research and policy review;
- Urban design analysis;
- Development of public realm interventions;
- Preparation of shop front guidance; and
- Preparation of this draft report, for comment by the Town Council.

Study Area

The study area focuses on a section of Laughton Road, which runs from north to south between New Street and the B6060. Laughton Road is the town's main thoroughfare and historically, its main shopping destination. It is bordered by commercial and residential properties with large areas of car parking to the west. As noted above, it is also part of the strategic road network. At its northern end, Laughton Road joins Outgang Lane and Breck Lane at a roundabout. Outgang Lane continues west to join the B6060 which provides access to the large area of parking. At its southern end, Laughton Road joins the B6060 at a junction south of St Leonard's Church.

Traffic is two way along Laughton Road, with the section between the B6060 and Leopold Street being one way and moving in the northerly direction.



Figure 1.2 Materials and street furniture at the junction with Barleycroft Lane



Figure 1.5 Shop fronts and street furniture near the junction with New Street



Figure 1.3 Typical shop fronts and on street car parking on Laughton Road



Figure 1.5 Paving materials within open space adjacent to Laughton Road



Planning Policy

02



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2. Planning Policy Review

Introduction

Planning Policy Review

The most relevant planning policy documents for this study are Rotherham Local Plan:

- Core Strategy 2013-2028 (adopted September 2014);
- Rotherham Local Plan Publication Sites and Policies (September 2015).

These have been reviewed and all the policies relevant to the sites development are summarised below.

Rotherham Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013-2028 (2014)

Policy CS 12 Managing Change in Rotherham's Retail and Service Centres

States that proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they contribute towards the strategy for Dinnington Town Centre by:

- Improving the range of retail and service provision;
- Reducing vacancies and improving townscape; and
- Landscaping.

Policy CS28 Sustainable Design

States that proposals for development should:

- Respect and enhance the distinctive features of Rotherham;
- Develop a strong sense of place with a high quality public realm;
- Comprise well designed buildings within a clear framework of routes and spaces; and
- Minimise opportunities for crime.

Rotherham Local Plan Publication Sites and Policies (September 2015)

The Council submitted its Local Plan Sites and Policies document to the Secretary of State in March 2016 for examination in public. It has since been examined and the Inspector instructed the Council on Proposed Main Modifications that he considered necessary to make the Plan sound. The Council are currently consulting on these Proposed Main Modifications.

Policy SP58 Design Principles:

States that regard will be made to the following when considering development proposals:

- The setting of the site and grain of surrounding development;
- That an assessment of local building materials, their colour and architectural detailing has been undertaken and submitted with the application;
- Local distinctiveness and the creation, reinforcement and complementation of a positive sense of place;
- The creation of safe, secure and accessible environments with a clear distinction between public and private space; and
- Design and layout of buildings that both enables sufficient sunlight and daylight penetrates into and between buildings and ensures that adjoining land or properties are protected from overshadowing.

Policy SP59 Car Parking Layout:

States that car parking should:

- Be designed to reduce the visual impact of parking on the street-scene;
- Provide designated visitor parking on-street; and
- Discourage the obstruction of foot ways by kerb parking.

Planning Guidance Review

Rotherham Local Plan Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Parking Standards Good Practice Guidance October 2014

States that applications for low or no parking provision will be acceptable if they are:

- Highly accessible by public transport;
- Have good access to local facilities by walking and cycling;
- Within a controlled parking zone; and
- Provide access to car club cars (or other such measures).



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CONSTABLE LANE



Urban Design Analysis

03

3. Urban Design Analysis

Site Characteristics

In addition to being an important route through the town, Laughton Road provides a mix of commercial uses serving the community and people passing through the area.

Buildings along Laughton Road are largely Victorian or Edwardian, two storey terracing, typically built of red brick with buff sandstone detailing to the windows. Paving within the public realm typically comprises concrete slabs with smaller areas of polychrome brick. Hazard paving is concrete of a light grey or red colour. Bollards are a prominent feature of the street and are green painted cast iron and of many differing sizes and types. Benches are steel framed with unpainted wood. These are in poor repair. Street lamps are of a style that reflects the age of the buildings nearby and painted grey, with street signage on posts of a similar colour. Bins are coloured black with gold details, with occasional older green painted bins. Several CCTV masts are notable along Laughton Road. Road surfacing on Laughton Road is mainly tarmac with dark grey brick in a herringbone pattern that is in poor condition between Leopold Street and Barleycroft Lane.

Dinnington Interchange and several car parks are located on Constable Lane to the west of Laughton Road. These are connected to Laughton Road by pedestrian walkways alongside the Lyric Theatre and through the market adjacent to the interchange. Another pedestrian route way is available during day time hours to the north of the Aldi supermarket at the southern end of the street. A Tesco Superstore is located west of Constable Lane behind Dinnington Methodist Church. Both supermarkets have adjoining car parks.

Issues

Whilst Laughton Road serves an important and valued role, consideration of the site assets and characteristics has identified several elements that detract from the area's function as the historic and retail core of the town. These principally relate to:

- The quality of the public realm;
- Parking;
- A lack of way finding and poor legibility; and
- The quality of shop frontages along Laughton Road.

The surfacing is in poor condition and in combination with street furniture used as part of the streetscape, detracts from the historic quality of buildings. While the streetscape is relatively uncluttered, the type of elements and their placement within a relatively narrow street means that the street does not develop into a unified space.

Similarly, the change from two way to one way introduces signs that clutter the street while large numbers of bollards further complicate the space. Issues with delivery vehicles and car parking also contribute to the clutter that detracts from the potential attractiveness of the street.

Parking is available off Constable Lane, but a lack of signage and consideration of the town's legibility is evident in this area. As the town has no landmarks to assist in legibility, the provision of signage and the presence of gateways is important. A lack of visual connection and active frontage along Constable Lane contributes to this illegibility. Significant changes in level disconnects the Tesco site from Laughton Road. The market obscures the pedestrian walkway connecting it to Laughton Road. The Aldi site also obscures views of Laughton Road. In combination these elements discourage movement between the supermarkets, the large areas of parking around them and Laughton Road. On street parking and narrow footpaths impedes pedestrian movement in some locations.



Figure 3.1 Materials detract from the gateway between Constable Lane and Laughton Road



Figure 3.2 The market gateway to Laughton Road is unappealing



Figure 3.3 Narrow pavements and on street parking detracts from the pedestrian experience



Figure 3.4 Level change prevents visual connection between Tesco and Constable Lane



Figure 3.5 Impeded visual connection at the Aldi site



Figure 3.6 Signage in disrepair on Laughton Road



- Supermarket
- Passive Retail Frontages Local
- Shop
- Post Office
- PO
- Pharmacy
- Restaurant /Coffee Shop
- Park / Public Green Space Market
- Community Facilities
- Church
- Car Parking - on street
- Car Parking - car parks
- Bus Station
- Bus Stop
- Bench
- Bin
- Bicycle Rack
- Bollard
- Sign to Town Centre

Figure 3.7 Town Centre Assets

Buildings along Laughton Road are predominantly Victorian or Edwardian, with many original architectural features to the upper floors. These have modern additions such as uPVC windows, skylights punctuating the roofs, wiring, alarm boxes and satellite dishes. At ground level, historic architectural features have been replaced or obscured by modern shop fascia with low quality modern materials in a range of styles and proportions. High levels of glazing are compromised by the high usage of roller shuttering, exacerbated by a high proportion of fast food outlets on the street, with shutters down during the daytime. At Laughton Road's northern end there are a number of projecting signs above retail outlets.

Aims

Overarching aims have been developed in response to the urban design analysis. These are:

- Improving the public realm, with particular consideration given to legibility and signage; and
- Improving shop fronts.

A better-quality pedestrian environment would be achieved by considering the reduction of street furniture to de clutter the space, increasing pavement widths, developing a palette of materials and colours to unify elements of the space and focusing on designing high quality space for pedestrians. This potentially also provides more space for community activities, such as temporary street stalls, which can enhance the mix of uses and provide a more dynamic street environment.

On street parking which encourages passing trade is judged to be an important element of Laughton Road. As such, there is a need to address parking in and around Laughton Street. This would be addressed by consideration of alternative layouts such as angled parking to increase amounts of on street parking where road width allows.

To connect Laughton Road and the car parking to the west, enhancement of the gateways beside the Lyric Theatre and from the market is necessary. This would take the form of general public realm improvements and the creation of or enhancement of existing gateway features. In combination with improved way finding signage this is envisaged as improving the legibility within the town.

Well designed and well maintained shop frontages on Laughton Road would promote a healthy local economy by improving the visual appeal of the area. Shop frontages that are poorly designed and/or badly maintained detract from this visual appeal. Consequently, they make a significant contribution to the quality of the public realm and the identity of the area.

Improvements to shop frontages along Laughton Road could be achieved by developing a coherent appearance of shop frontages along the street, promoting active shop fronts with clearly visible display areas, developing a dialogue with the street and expression of the architectural elements of the shop fronts. Shop front guidance is contained within Chapter 5.

Consideration should be given to a Neighbourhood Development Order which could address shop frontages, encouraging people to restore or include designs in line with Supplementary Planning Guidance.



Figure 3.8 Car parking and narrow pavements



Figure 3.9 Lack of maintenance and poor quality materials



Figure 3.10 Some shop fronts detract from the pedestrian experience of the street



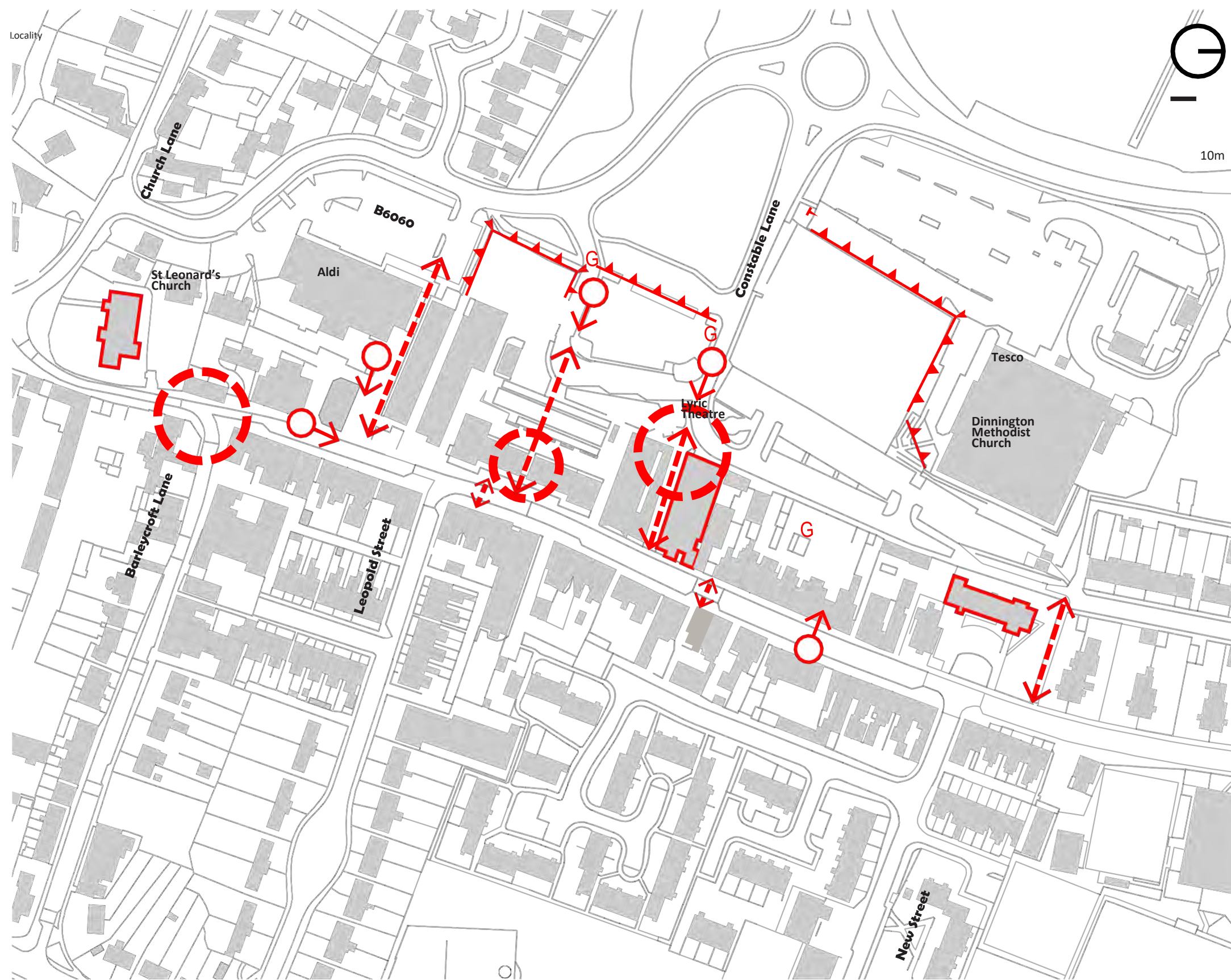
Figure 3.11 Projecting signage adds visual clutter and detracts from buildings



Figure 3.11 Narrow pavements by the shops with bollards obstructing pedestrian



Figure 3.12 Modern shop fronts detract from the character of buildings on Laughton Road



- Node Glimpse
- Viewpoint
- Spatial barrier
- Key pedestrian links
- Landmark

Laughton Road provides a focus within the town of Dinnington St John's. Relatively broad, with good connectivity to larger roads connecting the town to the surrounding area, vehicular traffic is accommodated well. For pedestrians, accessing Laughton Road from the car parks to the west, the pattern of built form, density and massing of buildings serve to impede movement

Crucial points for pedestrians lie at the nodes, where movement is unimpeded and open space is increased. These areas serve as entry points with glimpses into them making a visual connection to Laughton Road and increasing legibility of the area. Servicing areas are combined with public access at the market.

Viewpoints are few due to topography and built form with a prominent view along Laughton Road from the south, allowed by a slight incline. A lesser view is afforded by open space near the Aldi building.

Spatial barriers, in combination with these glimpses and views channel pedestrians to Laughton Street from the car parks through the pedestrian only nodes west of the road, making key pedestrian links.

The most prominent pedestrian link is located next to the Lyric Theatre, a prominent landmark on Laughton Road. The churches at either end of Laughton Road define the limits of the shopping area and serve as landmarks for car drivers (St Leonard's Church) and pedestrians approaching from the north (Dinnington Methodist Church).

Figure 3.1 Town Centre Analysis



Possible Interventions

04

4. Possible Interventions

Opportunities

Laughton Road has preserved much of its historic character, but incremental alterations to the buildings and shops have eroded the character of the road. This section of the report proposes a set of general design principles that should help to promote development that will respond well and add to the character of Laughton Road.

Future development and interventions should where possible, reinforce the traditional character of the area and enhance its assets and heritage. Contemporary design should be encouraged but must always sit comfortably within this context. The existing public realm is vehicle orientated, with on street parking along the two and one way sections of the road. A shift towards a more pedestrian-friendly and higher quality public realm is required in order to provide a more welcoming high street. This will re-connect local residents to Laughton Road and New Street and its facilities, becoming part of their everyday life and strengthening the sense of community. Our analysis of Laughton Road suggests that, where possible, parking spaces on the pavement in front of shops should be reviewed to consider where pavements can be widened and where parking could be maximised by the implementation of angled parking. Time restrictions on parking would also provide more potential for passing trade with the opportunity to increase parking by increasing the one way road layout to New Street.

It is proposed that the public realm should be simplified and the quality of its elements improved, with the aim being to allow for vehicular movement while creating a pedestrian orientated environment. Way finding and legibility could be improved by the reduction of visual clutter and unnecessary signage that would also allow for different activities such as local markets or/and shop stands, that contribute towards a better and more dynamic street life.

In addition, the use of materials that denote a different type of space - blocks, setts and bricks, rather than tarmac throughout - is another key component of this approach, as is the way in which kerbs are used to delineate pedestrian and vehicular spaces. Dedicated cycle parking should also be increased.

To create and maintain a visually appealing, uncluttered public realm the placement of constituent elements such as street furniture should be considered. Seating in poor repair can be unusable and detracts from the visual appeal of an area. Using similar designs and colours throughout the area assists in developing visual coherence. Seating should be placed where views of activity are available. Popular locations offer prospect and refuge: views from a place that feels secure. Typical popular locations are near popular pedestrian routes, on the edge of spaces, where spaces or areas meet and near sheltering elements such as buildings or substantial street furniture.

Using similar designs and colours of bin throughout an area can assist in creating visual coherence making for a more pleasing street scene. Bins should be located near sources of rubbish such as bus stops, benches, shop entrances and other areas where people are likely to congregate. Ease of servicing with adequate room around the bin for emptying should be considered. Placement near to other items of street furniture will reduce the total area taken up by street furniture collectively and reduce the obstruction these elements present to pedestrian.

Due to their large presence, signage has a considerable impact on the visual quality of a street scene. Excessive amounts and poorly maintained, damaged, redundant or poorly sited signage is a prominent contributor to low visual quality. Using similar designs and using the same colours and materials throughout an area can assist in creating visual coherence making for a more pleasing street scene. Signage also impedes the flow of pedestrian movement further detracting from the pedestrian experience of public space. Placement on existing structures and/or street furniture helps to integrate signage into the streetscape.



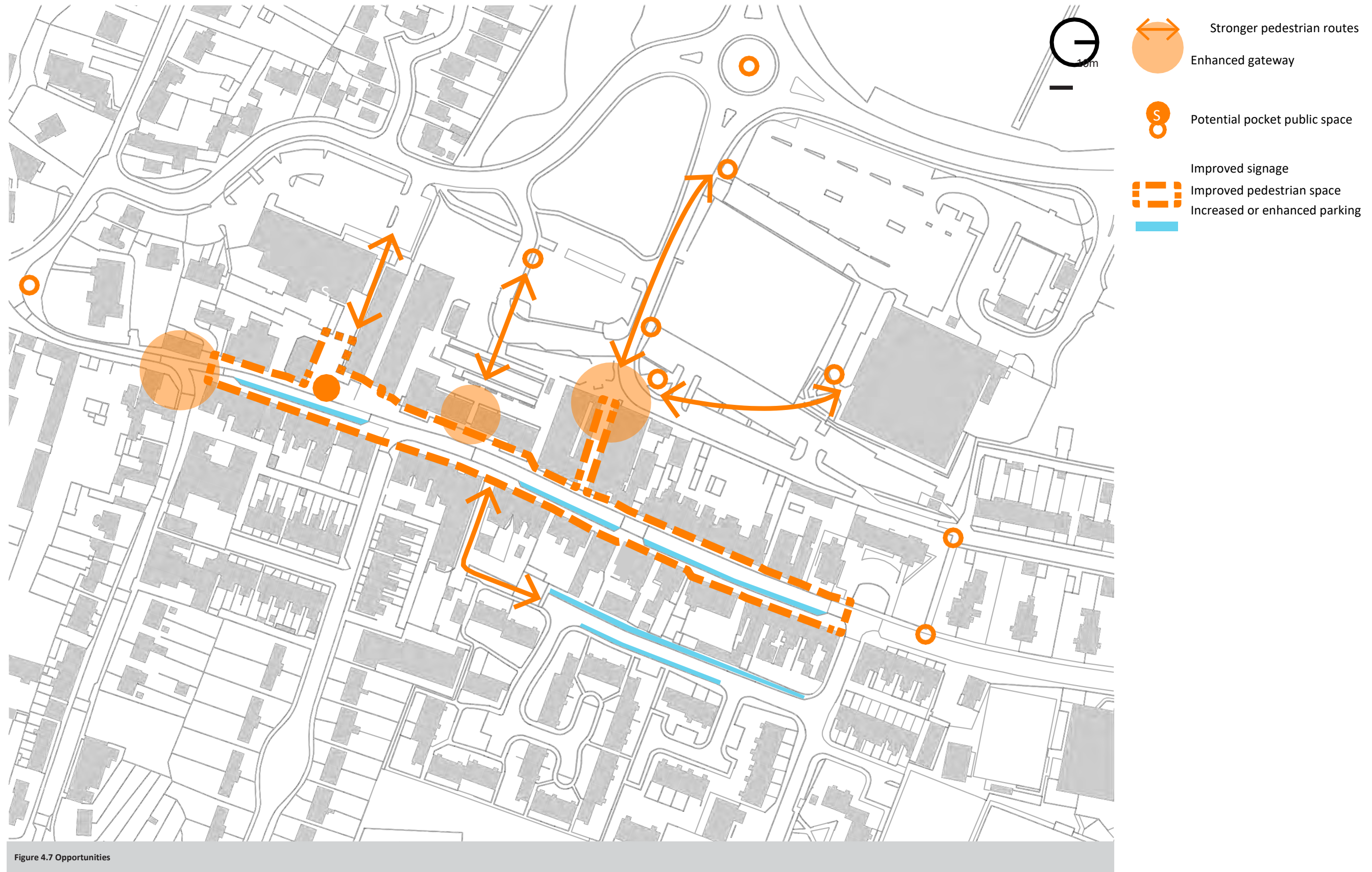
Figure 4.1 Example - Sidcup High Street before design principle were applied



Figure 4.3 Example - Shop front implementing design principles, Sidcup High Street



Figure 4.6 Example - Signage and street furniture at Douglas, Isle of Man



The use of trees, on-street parking and other elements, arranged in such a way as to separate vehicles and pedestrians is suggested, although it should be noted that a Neighbourhood Plan has limited powers with regards to traffic and policies can only relate to development and land use planning. Allowing cars to dominate an area shared with pedestrians serves to reduce safety, clutter the space and detract from the shopping and leisure use it provides. Extending one way traffic to New Street would alleviate this while potentially improving passing trade. Associated signage, bollards and road markings contribute to visual and spatial clutter that detracts from the scene, reducing its appeal to pedestrians.

Car parking is a key issue for the Dinnington community. Much of the existing car parking surface, including market area, is in very poor condition. On street parking in front of shops is seen as vital by shopkeepers desiring passing trade. However, parking in front of shops clutters the space, detracts from the visual appeal of the area and in turn, detracts from the quality of the environment. More efficient use of existing parking areas and leftover spaces just off the main thoroughfare would allow a reduction in roadside parking in front of shops.

More efficient use of space on Laughton Road should be considered, and alternative layouts for parking should be reviewed. Better utilisation of the Constable Lane car park is recommended and should be strongly encouraged. Similarly, parking in streets adjacent to Laughton Road should be considered in order to provide a more vibrant and pedestrian friendly environment, where this does not detract from residential amenity.

The legibility of a place is defined by how its parts combine to make it understandable and navigable by a visitor.

The relationship between elements of the landscape, their form and the function they perform as aids to navigation should be considered in the development of a place to improve its legibility. Where places have a considered form with appropriate signage, they are relatively easy to understand and pleasant to visit. Consideration of landscape elements should include:

- Gateways
- Nodes and focal points
- Landmarks
- Key Views and Vistas
- Edges/boundaries
- Key Corners
- Transitions
- Street Furniture/signage
- Materials/surfacing



Figure 4.8 Active shop frontages complement the streetscape and promote activity



Figure 4.9 The market area does not offer a visual link between the car parks and Laughton Road

Figure 4.10 Visual and spatial connection from Constable Lane to Laughton Road is poor



These elements constitute the framework of the urban image for the visitor helping them orientate themselves both within the site and from outside. A gateway can be formed by an arrangement of buildings creating a pinch point or an open space with a sense of arrival and usually signifies a gathering place within an area.

Nodes are formed by the convergence of activity or movement within the urban fabric: They can be formed by the convergence of roads or paths, at a central space, or the confluence of several adjoining spaces. Distinctive elements of the landscape make landmarks, including buildings, public art, and street furniture that provide reference points allowing viewers to orientate themselves. New landmarks function best at natural focal points where they can be seen in longer views: where streets converge and in open public spaces.

Linear elements that define distinct areas in terms of space, character or use, function as edges. As such, they are important for the viewer's understanding of the area and how to navigate through it. Edge treatments vary according to the adjoining space, but consideration of edges and their treatment should be undertaken to improve legibility. Corners provide a link between two or more adjoining spaces. They can be landmarks can function as points of orientation. Due to their geometry, corners can also provide visual interest, developing local distinctiveness and enhancing the streetscape.

Considering the structure of a place is vital both to a visitors understanding of the place and for the locating of way finding. Locating way finding signage at or within these areas promotes legibility. The pedestrian walkway from Constable Lane functions as gateway to Laughton Road and provision of signage to the road, and enhancement of the entry to the pedestrian walkway would improve this function.

View 1: Laughton Road between Barleycroft Lane and Leopold Street

This area consists of the one way section of Laughton Road, and open area leading to the Aldi supermarket, pavement currently enclosed by bollards and on street parking to the east side of the road. The opportunities below illustrate how the shopping / leisure experience could be improved.

1. Opportunity to widen narrow footway to improve walking conditions and pedestrian flow;
2. Opportunity to extend parking with extension of one way road to New Street, and implementation of diagonal parking and / or restrictions on parking times;
3. Opportunity for resurfacing with high-quality materials to emphasise Laughton Road's function as the towns' central retail and gathering space;
4. Opportunity to introduce planting with raised edges or adjoining seating to prevent vehicle overrun and trees; and
5. Opportunity for provision of street furniture with consistent design and colour to develop a unified sense of place.



Figure 4.11 Laughton Road



Figure 4.12 Example - Simplified public realm and high quality street furniture, Croydon High Street

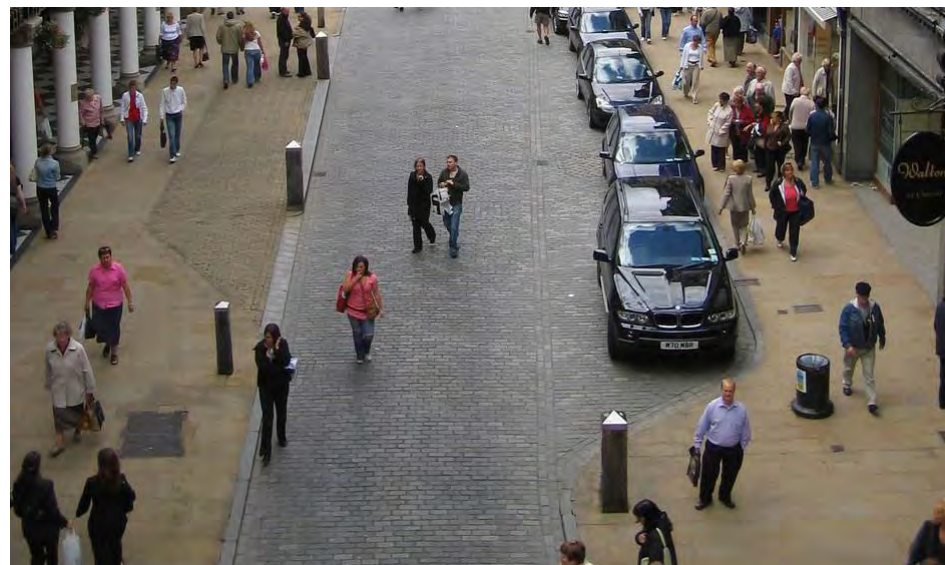


Figure 4.13 Example - Pedestrian friendly public realm, Eastgate Street, Chester



Figure 4.14 Example - Improved shop fronts and shared surface, Humber Street, Hull

View 2: Constable Lane

Constable Lane is the main pedestrian link between the area containing the bus station, car parks and supermarkets with Laughton Road. The lane provides a visual link that should encourage passage through to the high street. The adjoining Lyric Theatre is a potential landmark building contributes to the weakness of the pedestrian walkway function as a gateway to Laughton Road. The opportunities below illustrate how this gateway function could be improved.

1. Opportunity to de-clutter gateway to improve legibility and increase footfall to Laughton Road;
2. Opportunity for interpretation / signage / gateway feature at the bus station end of the lane to enhance gateway function and raise local distinctiveness with reference to Dinnington's mining heritage;
3. Opportunities for public art or mural on blank wall, replacing a blank wall with something of local cultural relevance;
4. Opportunity to enhance blank wall by replacement of roller shutters to create more active space;
5. Possible opening up or enhancement of existing gateway feature on Laughton Road to widen constricted access and improve visual and spatial connection between Laughton Road and Constable Lane; and
6. Opportunity for gateway feature at the bus station end of the lane between buildings to enhance gateway function and increase legibility.



Figure 4.15 Constable Lane gateway

View 3: Potential public space at Laughton Road

This area provides another pedestrian link between the area containing the bus station, car parks and supermarkets with Laughton Road. Additionally, there is potential for this area, in combination with the area to the front of Limelands Florists and Dinnington Indoor Market, to provide public space that is currently not provided along the high street. The opportunities below illustrate how this space could be developed.

1. Opportunity to enhance underutilised public space and create clutter free public space with high quality materials;
2. Opportunity for provision of planting to edge of space to promote Laughton Road as a gathering space; and
3. Opportunity for planting with raised edges or adjoining seating and trees to prevent vehicle entry into the space.



Figure 4.19 Laughton Road potential pocket public space



Figure 4.20 Example - Pocket public space, Eastgate Street, Sidcup



Figure 4.21 Example - Unified shop fronts and high quality materials, Eastgate Street, Sidcup



Figure 4.21 Example - Shared surface and high quality materials, New Road, Brighton



Shopfront Guidance

05

5. Shopfront Guidance

Introduction

This shopfront design guidance is intended to provide advice on the design of businesses and shopfronts within the Dinnington St Johns. Although the guidance applies throughout the whole of the Dinnington, it has a particular focus on Loughton Road where most commercial properties are to be found. The variable quality of shopfronts, and the impact this has on the wider 'feel' of the area, has been identified as an area of concern.

The purpose of this section is to encourage high standards of design and the use of appropriate and sympathetic materials in both new shopfronts and renovation of existing. Good design can make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the commercial streets, helping to create an attractive shopping environment.

The key objectives in relation to business and shop front design and signage in Dinnington are as follows:

1. To provide guidance on the retention, refurbishment or replacement of existing shop fronts including signs and fascias;
2. To support the transformation of shopfronts in older buildings where the original design has been destroyed or otherwise compromised and the applicant is wishing to reincorporate a traditional retail frontage into the building or a modern interpretation of it;
3. To inform and encourage a diversity of approach to shopfronts, while promoting good design;
4. To ensure appropriate provision is made to meet the access requirements of all shopkeepers;
5. To improve the front shop perceptions within the whole of Dinnington St John's Parish although the guidelines are intended primarily for shops of Loughton Road; and
6. To ensure only good quality shuttering and advertisements that reflect the design aspirations of the area are provided in places where they are suitable.



Figure 5.2 Examples of good shop front design

General principles of shop design

The most welcoming of shopfronts are inviting and attractive in themselves; they add to the shopper's experience and lend an area an air of quality and vitality. Usually, they have an entrance door set back from the back edge of the pavement; they will have a stall riser, one or two vertical mullions, and a transom rail at head of door level with clerestory or transom lights over.

However, new construction methods and materials have led to a diffusion of the "standard" modern shop front within shopping streets. This type of shop front is usually characterised by aluminium or plastic framework, with a large area of plate glass, often incorporating a doorway. If this is applied to a historic building, it gives a visually non-cohesive appearance.

In Dinnington, the majority of shop fronts are modern with very few traditional examples. It is of heightened importance that new shops should incorporate traditional features, where these are present locally, and thus, avoid large areas of plate glass, or using aluminium and plastic as materials.

If the existing shopfront is to be replaced, the key principle is that the new shopfront should carefully take account of the building context and history as well as commercial concerns, being consistent with the whole architectural composition of the building.

The design should take into account the period and style of the building above and of buildings in the immediate vicinity.

If the premises are in a more modern development, there is potential to explore more innovative and attractive approach to a shopfront. Even though, this may involve the use of non-traditional materials, high quality design should always be guaranteed: shopfront design in this instance should be imaginative and appropriate to the style of the building, utilising high quality materials. An example of a modern interpretation of the traditional configuration of shopfronts.

The design or redesign of a shop front in the Neighbourhood Area should take into account the age and architectural detail of the building as a whole and special attention should be paid to the elements described below.



Figure 5.4 General principles of shop design



Figure 5.5 Traditional Shopfront Design



Figure 5.6 Modern reinterpretation of traditional shopfront design

Windows

It is highly recommended that the design of the windows is in keeping and should reflect and enhance the architectural style of the remainder of the building. The use of glazing panels, with mullions and transoms is preferred to the usually out of context large areas of glass. Shopfronts should ensure that their windows are used to effectively display products or maintain a visual link between the street and interior of the shop. In turn, shop fronts should avoid advertising displays, such as plastic film, that fully obscures the interior of the shop from the eyes of the pedestrian. Ground floor windows should ensure active street frontages. However, it is also important to consider the first floor which may be used for another use such as residential.

Stall Riser

Traditional shopfronts are inviting and attractive in themselves; they add to the shopper's experience and lend a town centre an air of quality and vitality. Usually, they have an entrance door set back from the back edge of the pavement; they will have a stall riser, one or two vertical mullions, and a transom rail at head of door level with clerestory or transom lights over.

Materials

Materials should be selected in accordance with the building character and image. As a general guidance, the number and type of materials should be kept to a minimum, and always be based on the local architectural style of the street.

Signs and Advertising

Though diversity is encouraged between different shopfronts, signage should be consistent across an individual façade. There is some degree of flexibility in signage design, but as a general set of principles, the following branding is appropriate in the Dinnington area:

- Encourage font that is the same across all external signage;
- Maintain a consistent foreground and background colour;
- Ensure that the colour palette used is reflective of the colour palette present across the whole façade, including the area above the shopfront;
- If there is a hanging sign that extends out in front of the building, this should be in keeping with the rest of shopfront, and not have an overbearing impact on the general street scene; and,
- Advertising external to retail premises (e.g. A-frames and blackboards) should be discouraged where they impede walkways or harm local character.

Security

Addressing security is a key issue for both shopkeepers and community. The use of solid roller shutter blinds, which lead to a very unattractive environment when closed, should be discouraged. The use of open roller grills, removable grills or internal grilles and meshes are preferred since the shop display can still be seen, enhancing the perception of the street outside working hours. It is recommended that roller shutters and grills are integrated into the design of the shop and not additional items, non-contributing to the building appearance.

Awnings, Canopies and Blinds

If integrated into the shopfront design, awnings, canopies and blinds could be a very attractive addition to the street environment. Straight canvas canopies with particular retractable rollers design would be preferred and recommended instead of the use of unappropriated plastic coated blinds.



Figure 5.7 Good window design and proportions



Figure 5.10 Bad window design and proportions



Figure 5.8 Grill type shutters create active shop fronts



Figure 5.11 Roller shutter detract from the streetscape

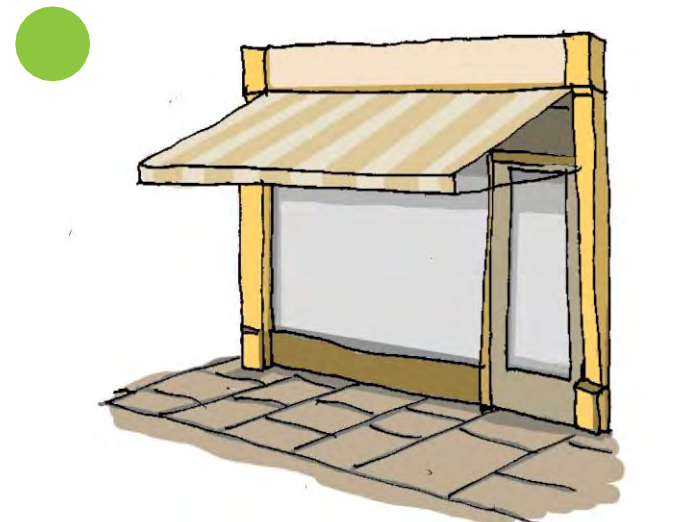


Figure 5.9 Example - Awnings

Next Steps

06

6. Next Steps

This report builds on the work already done by the Dinnington St John's Town Council to offer advice on how the area's built environment can be improved as development takes place. The recommendations are rooted in the engagement work that the Forum has undertaken, combined with the specialist skills of AECOM's planners and urban designers.

Summary of Key Proposals

- Widen narrow foot way to improve walking conditions and pedestrian flow;
- Extend one way traffic to New Street to extend on street parking;
- Implement restrictions on parking times to encourage passing trade;
- Resurface paving with high-quality materials to emphasise Laughton Road's function as the towns' central retail and gathering space;
- Provide planting with raised edges or adjoining seating to prevent vehicle overrun and trees;
- De-clutter the Constable Lane gateway at the pedestrian walkway beside the Lyric Theatre to improve legibility and increase footfall to Laughton Road;
- Provide interpretation / signage / gateway feature at the bus station end of the Constable Lane pedestrian walkway to enhance gateway function and raise local distinctiveness with reference to Dinnington's mining heritage;
- Provide public art or mural on blank wall to the Lyric Theatre, replacing a blank wall with something of local cultural relevance;
- Enhance the blank wall on the Lyric Theatre with replacement of roller shutters to create more active space;
- Open up or enhance the existing gateway feature on Laughton Road to widen constricted access and improve visual and spatial connection between Laughton Road and Constable Lane;
- Opportunity to enhance underutilised public space at Laughton Road and create clutter free pocket public space with high quality materials; and
- Opportunity for increased high quality seating and provision of planting and trees to edge of space to prevent vehicle entry into the space and promote Laughton Road as a gathering space.

Purpose

The recommended next steps for how to use the outcomes of this design options study are to:

- Embed the report's content in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan;
- Engage with the Council to develop policies supporting the proposals;
- Engage with traders and landlords to begin to implement shopfront improvements;
- Identify public realm improvements to kick start the regeneration of Laughton Road, using the sketches in Chapter 4 as inspiration; and
- Work with those local organisations that can help to implement the recommendations, for example by reusing some of the landmark vacant buildings on Laughton Road.

Integration in the Neighbourhood Plan

- Neighbourhood Plan policy needs must relate to land use planning: Things that must be subject to planning permission. It is not always clear how transport and public realm proposals fit into this category, unless they form part of a site (re)development, which is not the case here.
- Frome Neighbourhood Plan, which is now 'made', shows a way. It includes a policy on Town Centre Remodelling that is very much in the spirit of the recommendations in this report and could be used as an inspiration.

The basic sample policy below can be used at the starting point for drafting a

Dinnington-specific one regarding shopfronts.

Shopfront Quality Design

Proposals will be required to be of a high quality, contributing to an overall improvement in terms of urban design and architecture.

Proposals will:

- Use an appropriate choice of materials and colour;
- Be visually attractive from all angles;
- Enhance streets and spaces through quality design and architecture;
- Promoting visual links between the interior of the shop and the street; and
- Be suitable in terms of crime prevention, community safety and security.

