

WEST BROMWICH CIVIC QUARTER

HIGH ST, DARTMOUTH ST, LODGE ROAD,
EDWARD STREET, LOMBARD STREET WEST

ADOPTED PLANNING & DESIGN BRIEF
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT



APRIL 2011

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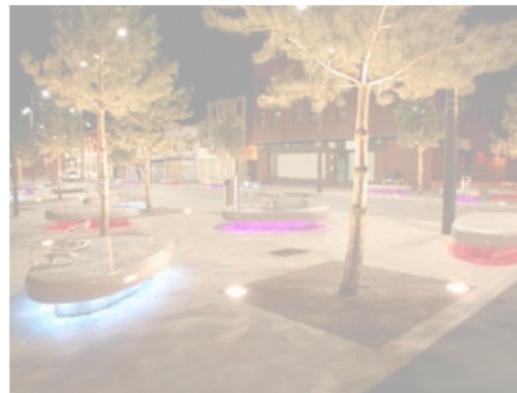
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1 INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The regeneration of West Bromwich is a key priority of the Council and its partners. A strategy for growth has been pursued over a number of years, which has proved successful in attracting significant levels of public and private sector investment. Many of the opportunities identified through this strategy, which are incorporated within the Council's Development Plan have either been developed or are now subject to detailed proposals.

Due to the potential relocation of two major landowners in the Town Centre (West Bromwich Building Society Headquarters and Sandwell College) opportunity now exists to develop a Planning and Design Brief for the comprehensive redevelopment of a significant site (Refer to Fig. 1: Site Boundary and Fig. 2: Site Boundary Aerial View) and the re-ordering of the site incorporating Central Library, West Bromwich Town Hall and the Magistrates Court. The Brief will provide the planning and delivery evidence from which detailed proposals can be developed.

1.1

Vision

The Council require a high quality office led mixed use development that will maximise the potential of existing heritage assets and make a statement for the Civic Quarter, whilst forming strong connections with planned development within the office quarter and town centre. It is anticipated that the reshaping of the Civic Quarter will bring forward real physical, social and economic benefits for West Bromwich Town Centre.

1.2

Key Objectives

The Civic Quarter is considered as a strategic proposal to assist the delivery of the regeneration aspirations for West Bromwich Town Centre. The key delivery objectives are to:

- Deliver a high quality office-led mixed use scheme.
- Achieve a design that relates to the historic and physical context, both aesthetically and practically.
- Maximise the potential for sustainable use of both listed buildings and those considered worthy of retention within the civic quarter.
- Provide high quality landmark buildings.
- Provide innovation in design and sustainability.
- Rebrand and provide a step change physically and perceptually.
- Implement comprehensive development on a phased basis.
- Provide a high quality public realm with potential for the improvement of green infrastructure.
- Provide safe and attractive pedestrian links to the High Street and wider Town Centre.
- Minimise the impact of vehicular traffic within the development and promote walking cycling and public transport.



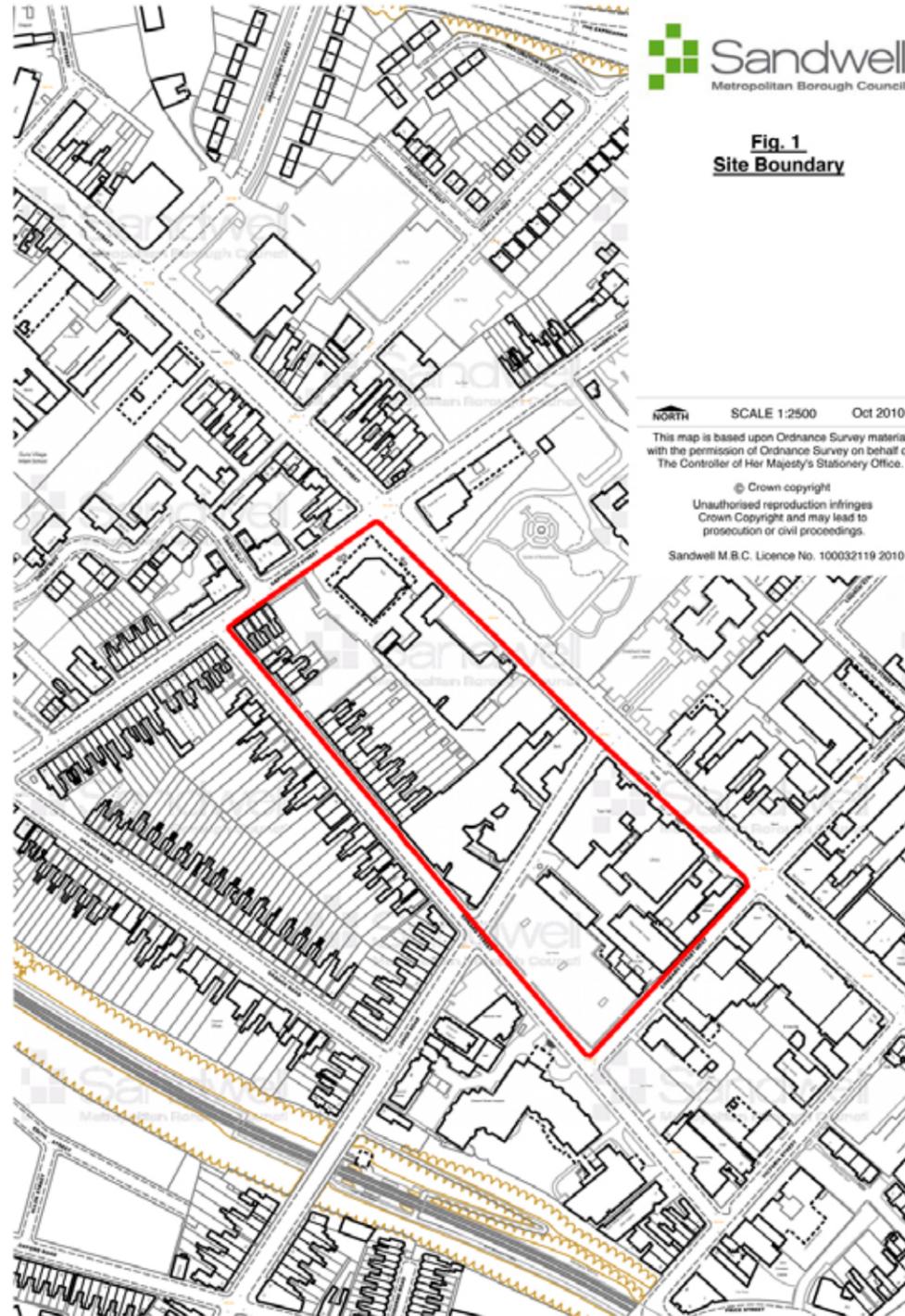
Public space at the heart of regeneration

1.3 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the Design Brief is to establish a planning and design framework, which should be acknowledged and used in the preparation of detailed proposals. Alternative options and forms of design will be considered, though the broad principles of the Brief (refer to Section 6) must not be compromised. The SPD will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

It is recognised that the successful redevelopment of this area will be essential in delivering the overall regeneration strategy for West Bromwich and will contribute significantly to the development of Sandwell's Strategic Centre and the enhancement of the Conservation Area.

This brief is a guide to the requirements of the Council and its partners in the development of the land. The normal procedures for planning consent still apply and this document is supportive to that process.



2 POLICY CONTEXT



2.1 National Policy

PPS 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

PPS1 provides the Government's guidance regarding the integration and achievement of sustainability through the planning process. PPS1 looks at sustainability in terms of:

- social cohesion and inclusion
- the environment
- natural resources
- economic development
- integrating sustainable development in development plans
- delivering sustainable development
- design
- community involvement

PPS 3 - Housing (2010)

The Government's key housing policy goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.

PPS 4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)

PPS4 provides guidance on planning for sustainable economic growth within urban centres and rural areas. The PPS provides guidance on the selection of town centre sites for suitable uses, car parking for non-residential development and the effective use of conditions for town centre uses.

PPS 5 - Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)

PPS5 contains the policies that establish the government's vision for historic environments. This includes ensuring that the historic environment and its heritage assets are conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring for future generations.

Policy HE6 states that applications for consent affecting heritage assets should provide information relating to the significance of the heritage asset. This should include appropriate information to assess the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset, which in this instance is the conservation area and the national and locally listed buildings comprised within it.

Policy HE7 sets out the principles for determining the applications, which include ensuring that the specific elements of the historic environment are identified and assessed for their significance and the subsequent impact of the relevant proposal. This includes the nature of the heritage asset for future generations, the significance for any particular community and the positive contribution that the proposal makes towards the historic environment.

Policy HE8 also highlights additional policy principles, which include recording any heritage assets. This could include recording of buildings to be demolished or archaeological investigations.

Policy HE9 highlights the need to demonstrate that loss of a heritage asset should demonstrate that it is genuinely redundant and is preventing all reasonable uses of the site in which it sits and that the proposal has a public benefit.

PPG 13 - Transport (2001)

This PPG provides guidance on transport issues including public transport, car parking, traffic management, walking and cycling and the inter-relationship with the planning process.



Design quality built to last

2.2 Local Policy

The following documents provide the local planning policy framework for development within Sandwell.

Sandwell Unitary Development Plan (2004)

The Sandwell Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 2004) provided the local land use planning framework for the Borough prior to the introduction of the Local Development Framework. The UDP (2004) has now been refined to account for the Joint Core Strategy (2011) (with which it now combines to provide the land use planning framework) in order to remove duplicated policies. These two documents will continue to provide the local planning framework until the adoption of the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, which will provide specific new land use proposals and new policies that will replace the remaining content of the UDP (2004).

The following saved policies contained within the UDP (2004) are relevant to the development site (though this is not an exhaustive list):

Policy H3: Windfalls
Policy OS5: Community Open Space
Policy OS8: Community Open Space in Association with New Housing Development
Policy WB1: The Retail Core
Policy WB2: Maintaining a Vibrant Town Centre
Policy WB3: Design Principles and Environmental Quality
Policy WB4: Public Transport, Pedestrians and Access

Black Country Joint Core Strategy (2011)

The Black Country Core Strategy (BCJCS) sets out the strategic policies and broad locations of land uses proposed for the Black Country. The site is located within West Bromwich Strategic Centre, which is a focus for investment and regeneration and Regeneration Corridor 12, which incorporates West Bromwich, Oldbury and Smethwick. The BCJCS provides further information regarding broad locations for land uses and potential capacities.

The most relevant policies in the BCJCS include (though this is not an exhaustive list):

Policy DEL2: Managing the Balance Between Employment Land and Housing
Policy CSP1: The Growth Network
Policy CSP3: Environmental Infrastructure
Policy CSP4: Place Making
Policy CSP5: Transport Strategy
Policy HOU1: Delivering Sustainable Housing Growth
Policy HOU2: Housing Density, Type and Accessibility
Policy HOU3: Delivering Affordable Housing
Policy EMP1: Providing for Economic Growth
Policy CEN1 The Importance of Black Country Centres for the Regeneration Strategy
Policy CEN2 Hierarchy of Centres
Policy CEN3: Growth in the Strategic Centres
Policy CEN6: Meeting Local Need for Shopping and Services
Policy CEN8: Car Parking in Centres

Policy TRAN1: Priorities for the Development of the Transport Network
Policy TRAN2: Managing Transport Impacts of New Development
Policy ENV 2: Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness
Policy ENV 3: Design Quality



Responding to local characteristics with contemporary design (Stratford on Avon)

West Bromwich Area Action Plan - Preferred Options (2008)

The Strategic Framework seeks to strengthen West Bromwich Town Centre as the principal centre of Sandwell and as a strategic centre for growth within the sub region. Though the site is not allocated in the UDP (2004) it is identified for office led mixed use development within the West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP): Preferred Options (2008) with potential for refurbishment or redevelopment. The WBAAP, which is under preparation, will provide the policy framework for the area when adopted, replacing existing UDP policies (to be saved) and proposals. The WBAAP: Preferred Options identifies the site within Site 3 of the Office Sector Opportunity Area for office led mixed-use development and describes the area as a;

“Key gateway location into the core of the town centre and Conservation Area. Present Building Society Headquarter provides a strong focal point from approaches to the town. The Council will support the refurbishment or redevelopment of it together with the former 1950’s college block fronting High Street for an office led mixed use scheme, with the opportunity for a greater mix of use at ground floor level fronting High Street to create an active frontage extending the normal working hours associated with office development. Within the site are a number of terraced properties that have fallen into disrepair and detract from the Conservation Area. The Council would support their refurbishment if capable of being economically refurbished, but would also support them being redeveloped subject to a comprehensive scheme coming forward on the wider site”.

The West Bromwich AAP is scheduled for consultation on the changes to the Preferred Options (January 2011), publication (August 2011) and Submission (October 2011).

Site Allocation and Delivery Development Plan Document

The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (SADDPD) will effectively replace the policies and proposals contained within the UDP (2004), by providing a new policy framework for the Borough. Sites within each of the AAP areas will be consolidated in the final Proposals Map.

3 HISTORIC CONTEXT





3.1 Site History

West Bromwich was entirely agricultural until about 1685 being a self-supporting and self-contained community. (West Bromwich Handbook [sixth addition] 1948). The chief settlement in the parish until the 19th century was Lyndon to the south of All Saints Church (Baugh and Grenslade and Johnson 1987). Following the enclosure of the Heath in 1804, the centre of West Bromwich shifted from Lyndon to the High Street stretch of the Birmingham-Wolverhampton Road. In 1816 new streets had been laid out on the north-east side of the road namely Lombard, New and Bratt Streets. Christ Church between High Street and Bratt Street was begun in 1821.

The remainder of the development along the High Street remained piecemeal until 1834 when the High Street had many well stocked shops. The 19th Century Lodge estate lay to the west of the High Street with its main entrance opposite Christ Church. In 1849 the present day High Street was the Turnpike Road, Christ Church, now the Job Centre site was present. Other streets present included Dartmouth Street, Victoria Street, St Michael Street and New Street.

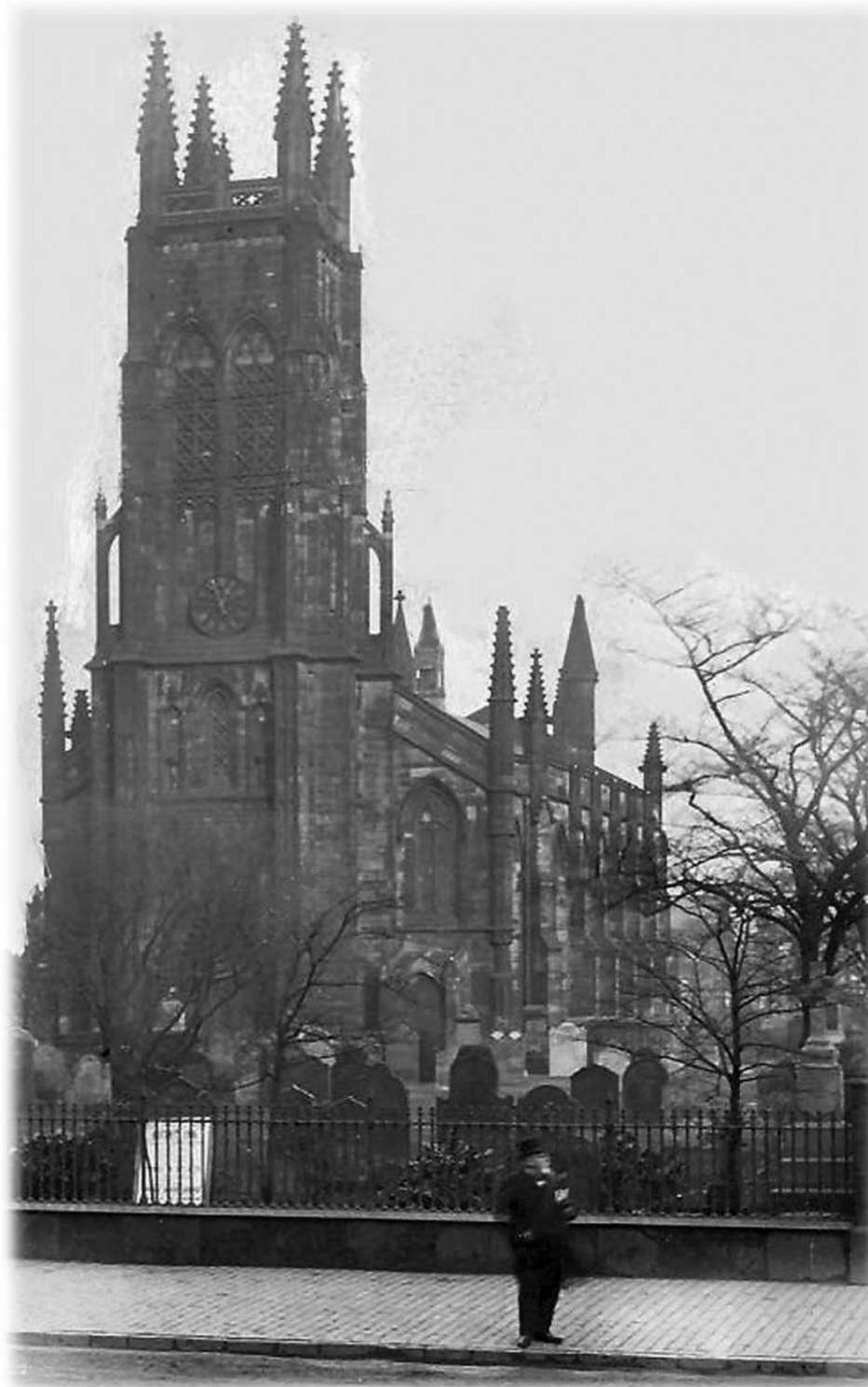


West Bromwich High Street looking towards St. Michael and the Holy Angels Church

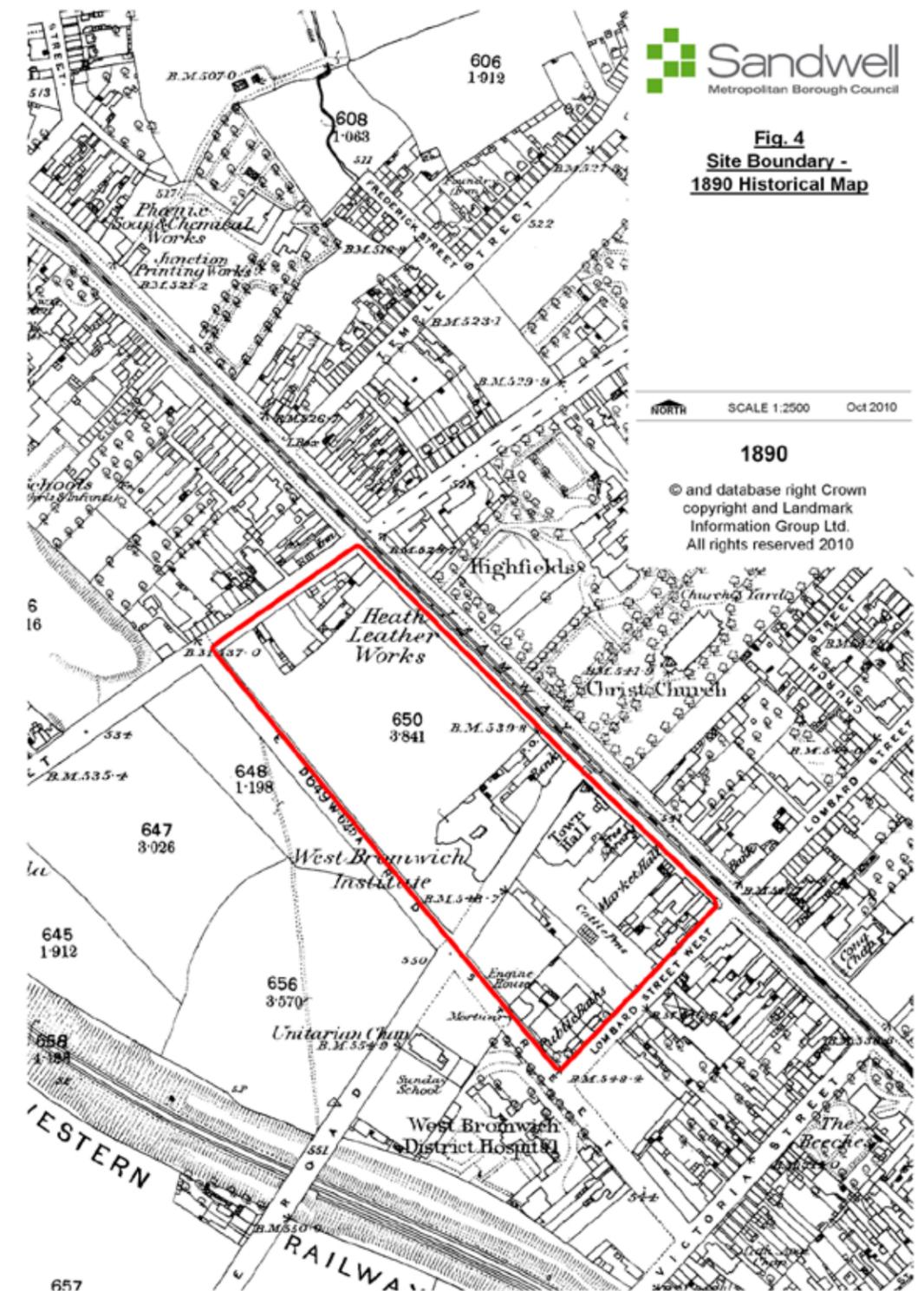
HISTORIC CONTEXT

In 1856 the High Street was built up on both sides from Dartmouth Street Square to Carters Green. The area between New and Bull Street had also been developed, but on the other side of High Street opposite Christ Church, the area of the Lodge estate, was developed only after 1867 when the estate was sold. In 1868 the High Street was a busy thoroughfare, broad, straight, well paved, and flanked by stuccoed buildings. Markets appeared in the High Street as early as 1840 and in 1874 a Market Hall was laid out with a cattle market behind. The Town Hall opened in 1875 and sat alongside the Market Hall within the Lodge Estate establishing West Bromwich as a new centre.

A substantial amount of development is evident in the late nineteenth century (Refer to Fig. 4: 1890 Historical Map). The Lodge has been demolished and Edward Street and Lombard Street West have been laid out. The Heath Leather Works inhabited the present site of the West Bromwich Building Society and Heath Terrace to the north west of Dartmouth Street was built. The Town Hall and Market Hall (now the public library), West Bromwich Institute and District Hospital, now defined the major civic core of the High Street and to the north of Bratt Street Summerfield House was constructed.



Christ Church (situated on the site of what is now the Job Centre), High Street, West Bromwich.



HISTORIC CONTEXT

By 1904, the residential development of Dartmouth Street, Grange Road, Edward Street and Lodge Road had been established.

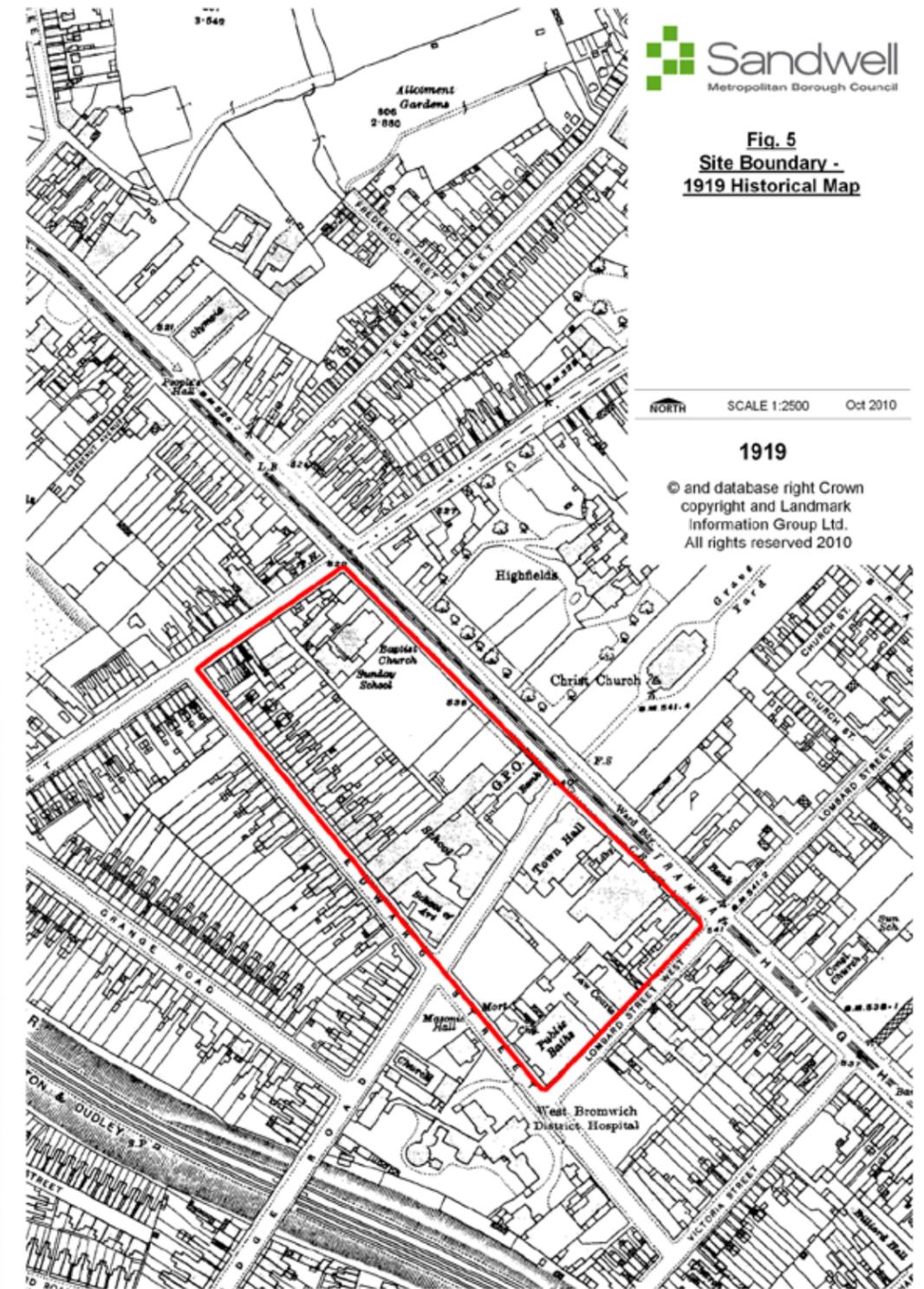
By the time of the 1919 map (Refer to Fig. 5: 1919 Historical Map) the West Bromwich Institute had been extended and areas of infill occurred to the north west side of Dartmouth Street, the north east side of Bratt Street, south west sides of Grange Road and Edward Street, which now establishes much of the present day development.



Library and Town Hall buildings, High Street, West Bromwich, circa 1930.



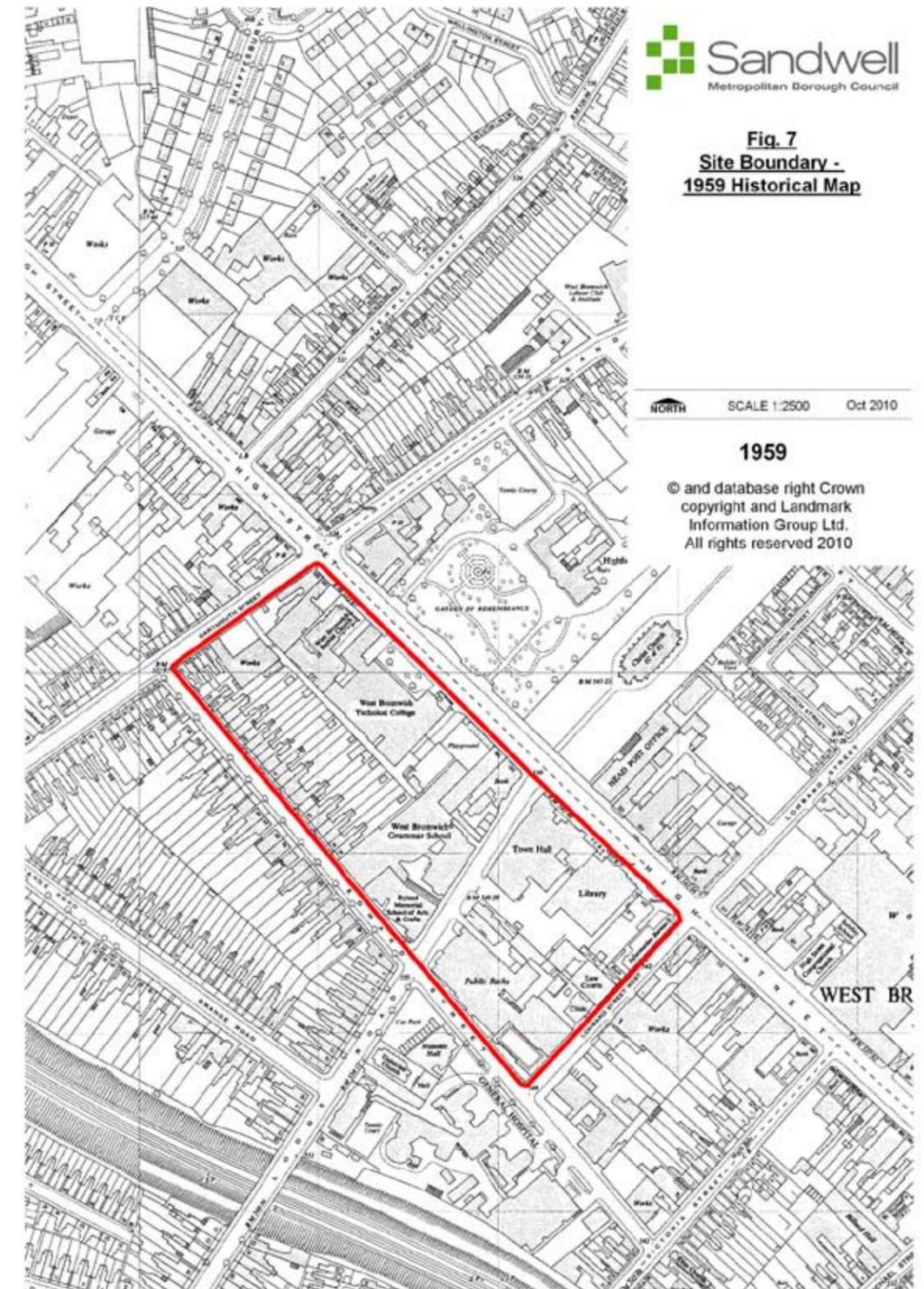
Library, Town Hall, Bank and Post Office, High Street, West Bromwich, circa 1920.



HISTORIC CONTEXT

The 1938 map (Refer to Fig. 6: 1938 Historical Map) clearly shows the library, the Kenrick Technical College on the High Street and the irregular building line to the east of Lodge Road created by the extension and alteration of the Gala Baths.

By 1959 (Refer to Fig. 7: 1959 Historical Map) the Technical College had expanded and was now known as West Bromwich Technical College. The curtilage of the West Bromwich Grammar School (formerly West Bromwich Institute) had expanded again and the West Bromwich Baptist Church and adjacent buildings remained in situ. Works commenced in 1980s for the construction of the West Bromwich Building Society with remaining structures on junction of Dartmouth Street and the High Street being demolished.



HISTORIC CONTEXT

The High Street, West Bromwich Conservation Area was designated in 1997 (Fig 3). A Review was undertaken by Donald Install Associates Ltd in April 2007, which made recommendations to modify the boundaries of the Conservation Area, though these modifications have yet to be implemented.

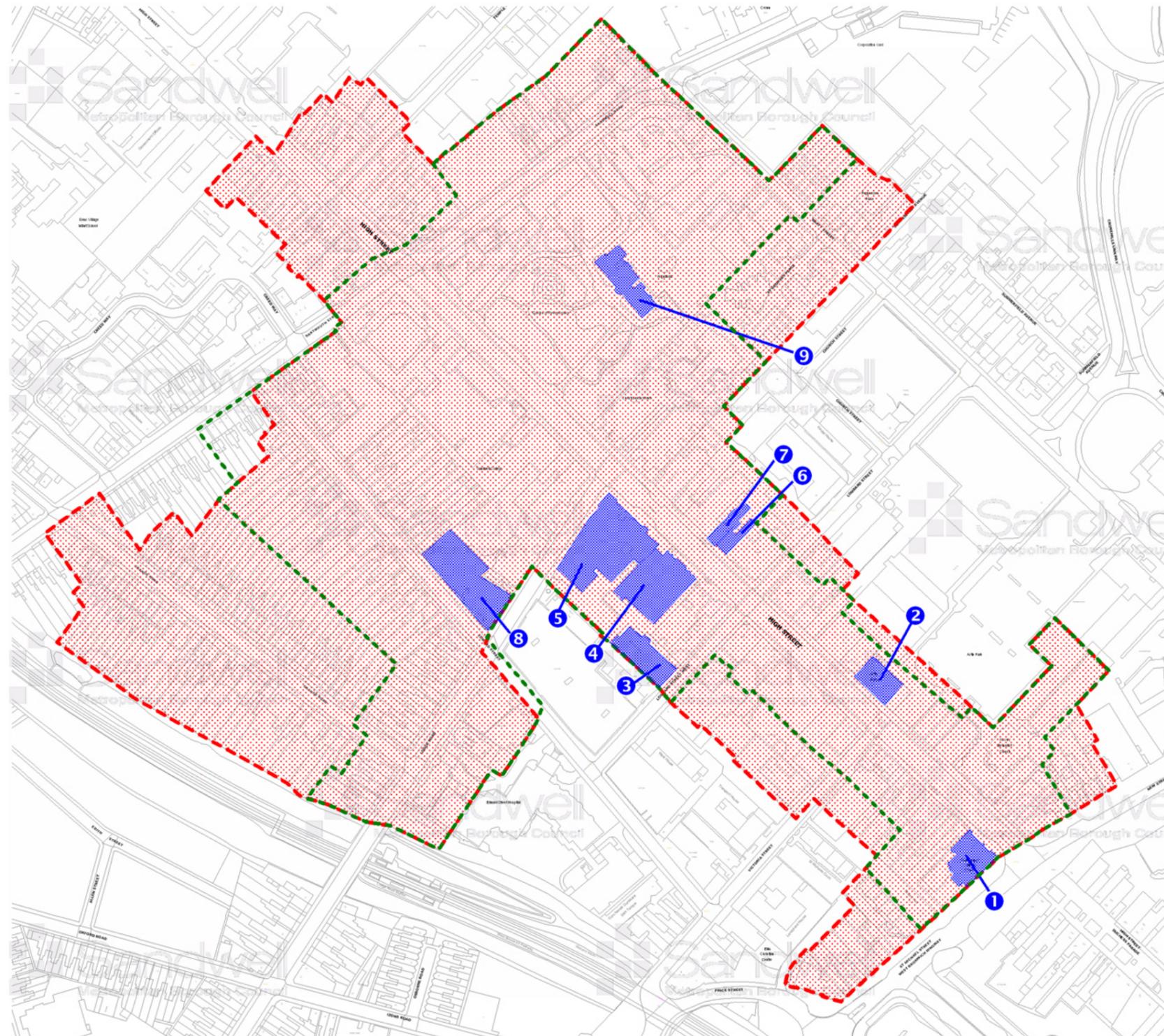


Fig. 3
High Street, West Bromwich
Conservation Area Boundary Plan

-  Location of Conservation Area
-  Location of Listed Buildings
-  Suggested revised area to Conservation Area - April 2007

1. Church of St Michaels & the Holy Angels (Grade II)
2. Kenrick & Jefferson Offices (Grade II)
3. West Bromwich Magistrates Court (Grade II)
4. Central Public Library (Grade II)
5. West Bromwich Town Hall (Grade II)
6. Millichips (Grade II)
7. Harford Kingham & Co (Grade II)
8. Ryland Memorial School of Art (Grade II)
9. Highfields (Grade II)

NORTH

Oct 2010

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

3.2 Planning History

DC/08/50361 - West Bromwich Magistrates Court, Lombard Street West, West Bromwich - Proposed new handrails to internal stairs, new external handrails and improvements and new digital locks. Grant Listed Building Consent 19.01.2009

DC/08/50349 - West Bromwich Magistrates Court, Lombard Street West, West Bromwich - Proposed new handrails to internal stairs, new external handrails and improvements and new digital locks. Grant Permission 19.01.2009

DC/07/48162 - Gala Leisure Centre, Edward Street, West Bromwich - Proposed temporary car park for five years. Granted Temporary Permission 22.08.2007

DC/05/45494 - West Bromwich Magistrates Court, Lombard Street West, West Bromwich - Extension of existing dock for security. Grant Listed Building Consent 12.01.2006

DC/05/45020 - Town Hall, Lodge Road, West Bromwich - Erection of gates to main entrance at High Street. Grant Listed Building Consent 28.09.2005

DC/05/45019 - Town Hall, Lodge Road, West Bromwich - Erection of gates to main entrance at High Street. Grant Permission 28.09.2005

DC/99/35858 - Rear Gardens of Nos 111,113,115 Edward Street, West Bromwich - demolition of rear garden walls - Conservation Area Consent 08.11.1999

DC/99/35857 - Rear Gardens of Nos 111,113,115 Edward Street, West Bromwich - Formation of new car park. Blocking up of existing vehicular access from Edward Street forming link between new & existing car parks. Erection of perimeter wall & railings & electrically operated gates with floodlighting. Grant Permission 08.11.1999

DC/99/35291 - Former Albany Snooker Club 8 Dartmouth Street, West Bromwich - Demolition of existing building to form new car park for use by West Bromwich Building Society. Grant Permission 14.05.1999

DC/99/35292 - Former Albany Snooker Club 8 Dartmouth Street West Bromwich - Demolition of existing snooker club building and formation of new car park to serve West Bromwich Building Society. Conservation Area Consent 14.05.1999

DC/97/33851 - West Bromwich Building Society - Ground floor extension of offices, reception and entrance. Grant Permission 09.01.1998

DC/97/33850 - Sandwell College, West Bromwich Campus, High Street, West Bromwich - New entrance lobby to provide disabled access. Grant Permission 09.01.1998.

DC/97/33330 - Sites in Lodge Road and Dartmouth Street, West Bromwich - Installation of telecommunication cabinets and cables. Prior Approval not required 09.06.1997.

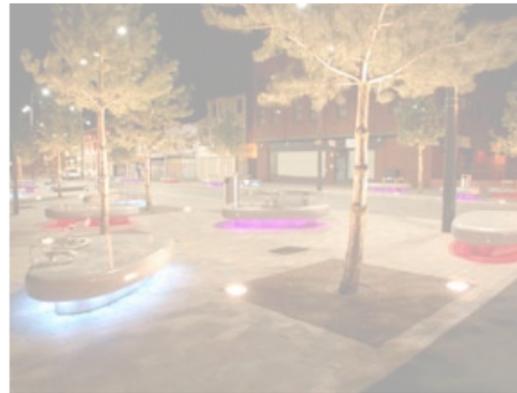


Ryland Memorial School of Art



West Bromwich Magistrates Court

4 SITE CONTEXT



SITE CONTEXT

4.1 Town Centre Context

West Bromwich is well positioned to benefit from regeneration. The area benefits from excellent road links to the Strategic Highway Network via the M5 motorway and the A41 Expressway / Black Country New Road. The area is also served by an excellent public transport system with the presence of the Metro light rail and a number of bus routes, which connect the town with other towns / cities in the sub region. Sandwell and Dudley Rail Station, located within a mile of the Town Centre, provides an hourly service to London and four per hour to Birmingham.

More importantly significant progress has been made over recent years in attracting both public and private sector investment. Modifications to the Ringway and the development of the new bus station were key elements of the transportation strategy for the town, which have now been delivered. Astle Park Outlet retail park, the Public (Town Centre Arts Centre), the Lyng Health Centre and the new town square have also been developed.



Tesco Retail Expansion

A site of 16 hectares (Ha) to the north of the town has been granted planning approval for a retail scheme by Tesco. This scheme will provide an extension to the town, which will address an over representation of convenience retail and a lack of high street names, which currently results in the centre under performing. This will include a Tesco Extra store, additional retail units, cafes/restaurants, leisure units, new public realm, pedestrian and cycle paths, car parking and a petrol filling station. The delivery of this scheme will also result in the provision of new infrastructure and re-provision of a new school and police station. In addition, there are plans to create a link with the existing Tesco store in the Queens Square Shopping Centre, which links the High Street with the proposed new Town Centre extension. It is anticipated that the first phase of the Tesco development will be completed and open during Winter 2012.



Providence Place

The former Sandwell Homes Depot site to the west of the planned retail expansion will be the location of the Providence Place office development, which will provide up to 220,000 sq ft of new office space, acting as the catalyst for change in the area and stimulating the local office market. Construction of the 75,000 sq ft office building, pre-let to BT Liberata commenced September 2010. This development will also include a multi-storey car park.



SITE CONTEXT

Lyng

Immediately to the south of the Town Centre, a phased redevelopment of the Lyng housing area is now well under way. Barratt Homes now have planning permission for the construction of approximately 360 new homes, with 114 affordable units to be owned and managed by the Lyng Community Association (LCA). Construction of the first phases of this new housing development has commenced. In addition, there are dwellings already on site with the inclusion of 86 units for the LCA and 44 Frail and Elderly units. There are also 15 units that are Council owned located on Lyttleton Street.



College

The south-east edge of the Town Centre will be transformed with the development of the new Sandwell College. Work has commenced on site and it is anticipated that the college will be open for the 2011/12 academic year. When completed, the existing campus sites in West Bromwich, Smethwick and Oldbury will all locate to the new building. The building will be of contemporary, high quality design and at nearly 40m in height will introduce a new landmark on the skyline of West Bromwich. The scheme will incorporate a new landscaped car park connecting the building to the Metro Stop, the Bus Station and the rest of the Town Centre. Existing green infrastructure will be complemented with the proposed green roof.



Transport

Work has also commenced on the underpass at the A41/All Saints Junction. This is a £25 million scheme, which will aim to be opened by the end of 2011, prior to the opening of the new Tesco Development in the Town, and is designed to relieve congestion on the Expressway connecting Junction One of the M5 with Carter's Green and the Black Country New Road.



SITE CONTEXT

Dartmouth Park

Work has now started on a project to restore Dartmouth Park, West Bromwich. The Grade II Listed Park has been granted funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund / Big Lottery as part of the Parks for People initiative. The project will include improvements to existing infrastructure such as the boundary walls, entrances, main avenues and lakes. New features will also be introduced into the park such as a new Community Pavilion, which will include an events room, café and a viewing platform, a new Performance Area, Skateboard Park and upgrading the Children's Play Area. Construction work is expected to be completed by Summer 2012.



Police Station

Land bounded by Oak Road / Moor Street West Bromwich is the new location for an £11 million new 3 storey West Midlands Police Operational Command Unit (OCU). The new OCU will be situated within close proximity to the Lyng Housing Estate and the recently developed Lyng Health Centre. Work started on site in June 2010 and is expected to be completed by Autumn 2011.



The Public

A unique building managed by Sandwell Arts Trust, since September 2009, opened in June 2008 as one of Britain's biggest and most ambitious cultural building projects. It is a key driver for the regeneration of West Bromwich Town Centre, attracting 126,000 visitors during 2010. The building is a gallery, music venue, theatre, learning centre, meeting place, community centre and work space that is open to everyone.



SITE CONTEXT

Oak House

Oak House Museum is a Grade II Listed Yeoman's house dating back to the 16th century and is situated in picturesque grounds close to West Bromwich Town Centre. A £1.6 million restoration programme will see the historic barns transformed and provide new facilities for visitors, schools and the local community. The project will see the introduction of a shop, cafe and classroom, as well as a new community meeting room that will be available all year round.

The scheme will also involve the servants quarters of Oak House being opened up to visitors for the first time, and the restoration of the 17th century timber framed stable block. Restoration work is set to get underway in Spring 2011 and scheduled to be completed by Spring 2012. The restored Oak House Museum will;

- Improve a popular tourist attraction close to West Bromwich Town Centre,
- Enhance the visit offer,
- Create new community and school facilities and
- Restore a Grade II listed building to its former glory.



West Bromwich Leisure Centre

A Sports Facilities Strategic Analysis was undertaken in 2008 for Sandwell, looking at both the current and future demand for leisure facilities in the Borough and how this fitted with the current provision.

The report highlighted the need for a swimming pool in West Bromwich which is currently absent from the town, as well as looking at the poor quality of facilities in Tipton. The Analysis also indicated that there is an increasing demand for fitness suites and sports halls which were underprovided to meet future demand.

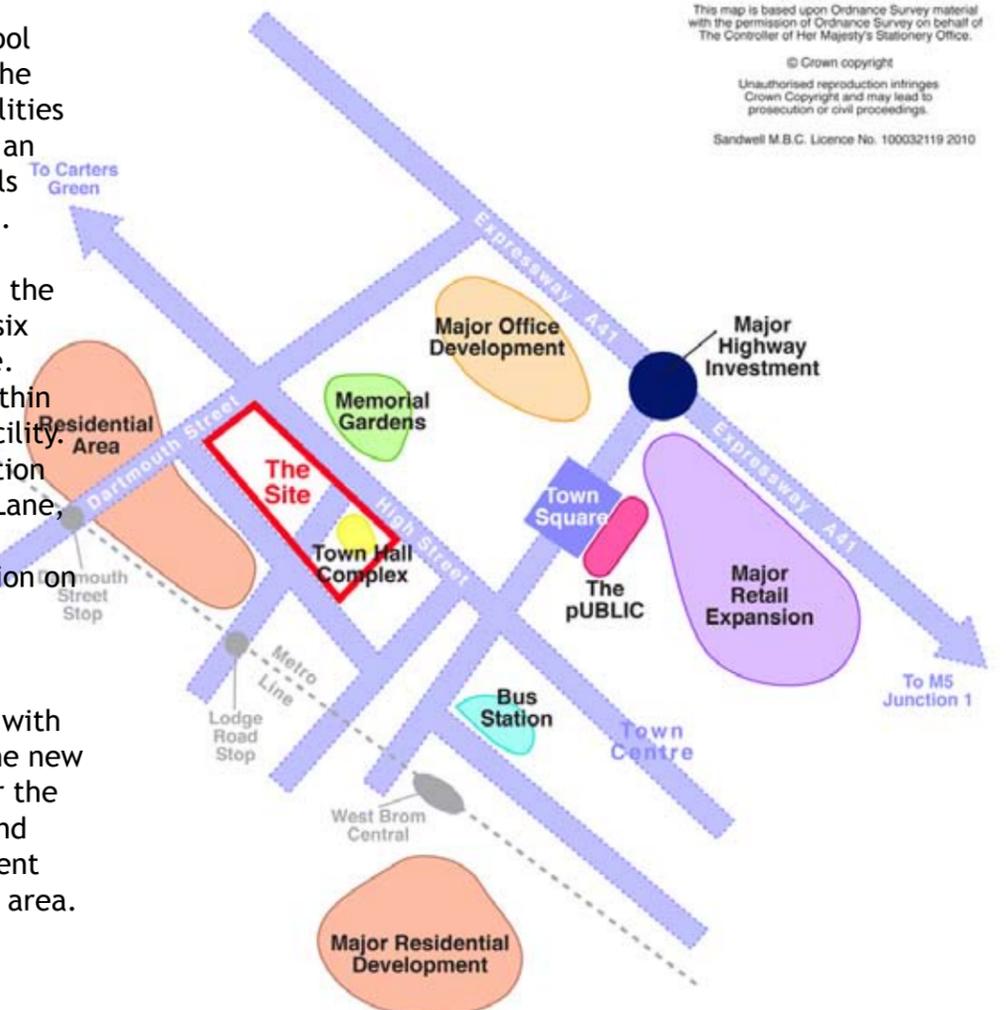
A decision was made to find an appropriate site in the West Bromwich area which could accommodate a six lane swimming pool and a 100 station fitness suite. An exercise was undertaken to identify any site within the town which matched the criteria for such a facility. Many sites were discounted due to their size, location or other constraints. However, a site at Bromford Lane, just outside the core of the town, was considered appropriate for further examination and consultation on its suitability for a swimming pool.

The site in Bromford Lane had been allocated for residential use in the Preferred Options document with an estimated capacity for at least 70 dwellings. The new allocation will assist in providing a suitable site for the leisure facility which is close to the town centre and public transport services, and which will complement the range of other redevelopments going on in the area.



Fig. 8
Planning Context Plan

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SITE CONTEXT

4.2 Site Context

The study site is located within the existing Conservation Area boundary and proposed revision boundary, in close proximity to the A41 with access to the Strategic Highway Network and wider Motorway Network. The wider local context is office based employment with sections of retail use further to the north located within the Carter's Green District Centre.

This site is made up of two separate grid blocks situated along West Bromwich High Street, in close proximity to Carters' Green District Centre bounded by Dartmouth Street, High Street, Lodge Road, Lombard Street and Edward Street.

Located in block one is West Bromwich Town Hall (Grade II), Central Library (Grade II), West Bromwich Magistrates Courts (Grade II), Temporary Council Car Park and 1950s Sandwell Council Offices (Sandwell Adult Services and Health). The Town Hall dominates the High Street owing to its strong red brick, Victorian architecture and its tall high tower that announces its prominence and importance at the junction with Lodge Road. The buildings which surround the Town Hall are predominantly of red brick also dating from the Victorian era and provide a clear historic and civic identity within this area of the Conservation Area.

Located within block two are the West Bromwich Building Society (situated on a prominent corner at the junction with High Street and Dartmouth Street) Headquarters and Sandwell College (both fronting High Street), the Ryland School (Grade II) and the West Bromwich Institute (locally listed and considered worthy of national listing) both utilised by Sandwell College and the southern residential frontage of Edward Street. Also within this block are the HSBC bank and a private office building, which is currently to let.

There are also a number of listed buildings together with buildings of local interest that surround the site and make a positive contribution towards the conservation area and the wider town centre. These include; Highfields Registry Office and Memorial Gardens (which provide the main green space within the centre of West Bromwich and valuable linkages) and Millichips Solicitors (Grade II), the Old Post Office, Barclays Bank and Lloyds Bank to the east of the High Street. To the west of the High Street beyond the Town Hall is the Masonic Hall, Shiloh Apostles Church and Old Hospital (Lodge Road).



Highfields - Grade II Listed, West Bromwich



Aerial High Street Frontage

5 URBAN DESIGN APPRAISAL



5.1 Planning Context

The value of good design is recognised as being essential to the development and to the sustainable regeneration of West Bromwich. A poor quality environment is both economically and socially unacceptable and poor design is now proven to be costly.

The vision for the Civic Quarter is based on creating a high quality, town centre office-led mixed use development. It will be expected to enhance the Conservation Area and provide a sustainable urban environment that will demarcate the western section of the High Street as the Town Centre's business core within a renewed sense of place, namely the Civic Quarter.

The aim should be to regenerate the site and immediate context. Through achieving a design concept based on creating a new landmark gateway and strong High Street frontage and development that compliments and enhances historic built form. The creation and improvement of public spaces including the provision of a new central activity hub in the Town Hall complex, together with enhancing the public realm and the Memorial Gardens.

Placing good quality public space at the heart of the Civic Quarter together with high quality well designed office-led, mixed use development and residential supporting uses that knit together existing residential streets to successfully regenerate this important part of the town and improve place perception and sense of place.

The development of the site will be assessed against a variety of planning and design performance criteria to support the aspirations aimed to improve and regenerate the wider town centre environment. The most relevant include;

1. New offices will be designed to meet CABI's guidance on 'better public buildings' and achieve BREEAM excellent standard.
2. Reference should be made to AWM's Built Environment and Sustainability Standards and the West Midlands Checklist.
3. The recommendations of the Tibbalds Streetscape Strategy in relation to High Street.
4. CABI and the Historic Environment (written in conjunction with English Heritage).
5. CABI The Right Approach - Buildings in Context New Development in Historic Areas.
6. West Bromwich Arts, Cultural & Heritage Centre - A feasibility study on behalf of Sandwell MBC February 2000, Nick Joyce Conservation Architect & McConaghy BGP Architects & MDA Group UK.
7. Housing assessed using CABI's Building for Life criteria, achieving a minimum of Silver Standard.
8. Residential development should comply with the Council's adopted Supplementary Guidance on Residential Development including space standards.
9. New homes will be expected to meet Level 4 Code for Sustainable Homes.

5.2 Context Appraisal

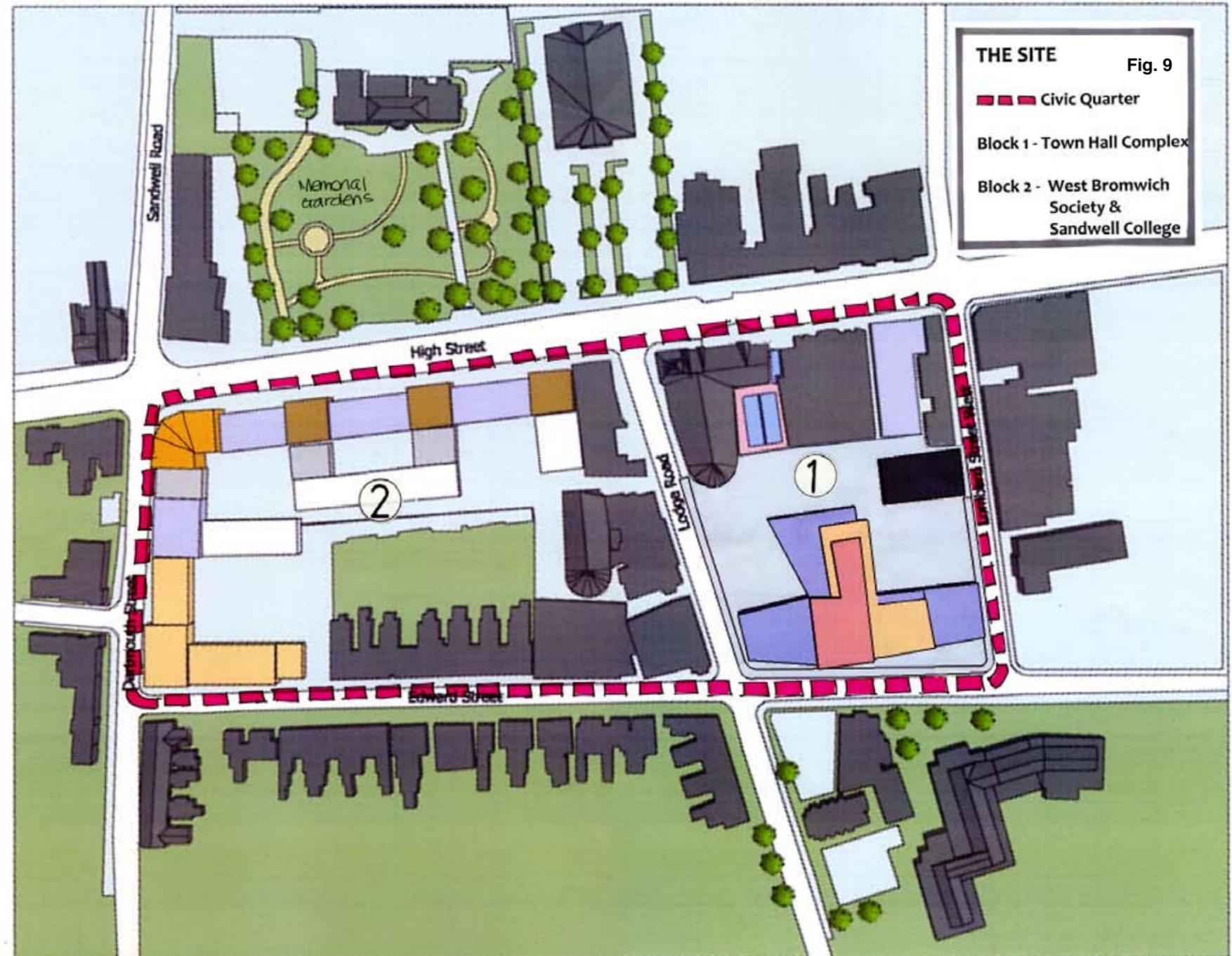
(Refer to Fig. 9 and Fig. 10)

The site is made up of two perimeter blocks that lie at the heart of the Civic Quarter in the western section of West Bromwich High Street. The area is also included in the West Bromwich Conservation Area and includes a number of historic buildings that have listed status. New development proposals will be expected to integrate with these buildings and respect their setting as historic components of the Civic Quarter. The site has a high profile frontage along the High Street as well as a landmark presence at the junctions with Lodge Road and Dartmouth Street, namely the Town Hall and West Bromwich Building Society Headquarters. High Street is a wide linear route linking Junction 1/ M5 and town centre to the east and Carters Green to the west. The site also directly overlooks the Memorial Gardens, which is a mature landscaped walled garden that provides the setting for Highfields which is Grade II Listed.

URBAN DESIGN APPRAISAL

Perimeter Block 1 contains West Bromwich Town Hall and Library as well as the Magistrates Court, all of which are Grade II Listed Buildings. The other building considered worthy of retention in the block is 320 High Street located on the corner of Lombard Street West. The site also contains Council Offices and temporary car parking which are expected to be cleared. Shared access and servicing currently takes place through the centre of the block. This area forms the heart of the civic quarter benefiting from a range of listed buildings and other buildings, which contribute to its historic character; however the rear of the site currently includes a temporary graded car park. This site offers potential for redevelopment that can enhance the setting of the Listed Buildings. This site offers potential for redevelopment that can enhance the setting of the Listed Buildings and re-introduce historic street patterns, such as the former cattle market and the irregular shape of the buildings to the east of Lodge Road through the delivery of new public realm and buildings. Any proposed alterations to listed buildings should demonstrate that they are appropriate to the historic evolution of the building and contribute positively to their significance.

Perimeter Block 2 contains the headquarters of West Bromwich Building Society and Sandwell College which are due to be vacated. Also included are the Ryland School which is a Grade II Listed Building and the West Bromwich Institute, which is locally listed. Other buildings considered worthy of retention because of their contribution to the historic street scene is the HSBC Bank located on the corner of High Street and Lodge Road and 77 to 101 (odds) Edward Street, which are residential properties located at the rear of the block. These properties make an important contribution to the Conservation Area and knit together neighbouring residential streets. Virtually the whole perimeter block shares a vehicle right of way, through the centre of the block structure.



URBAN DESIGN APPRAISAL

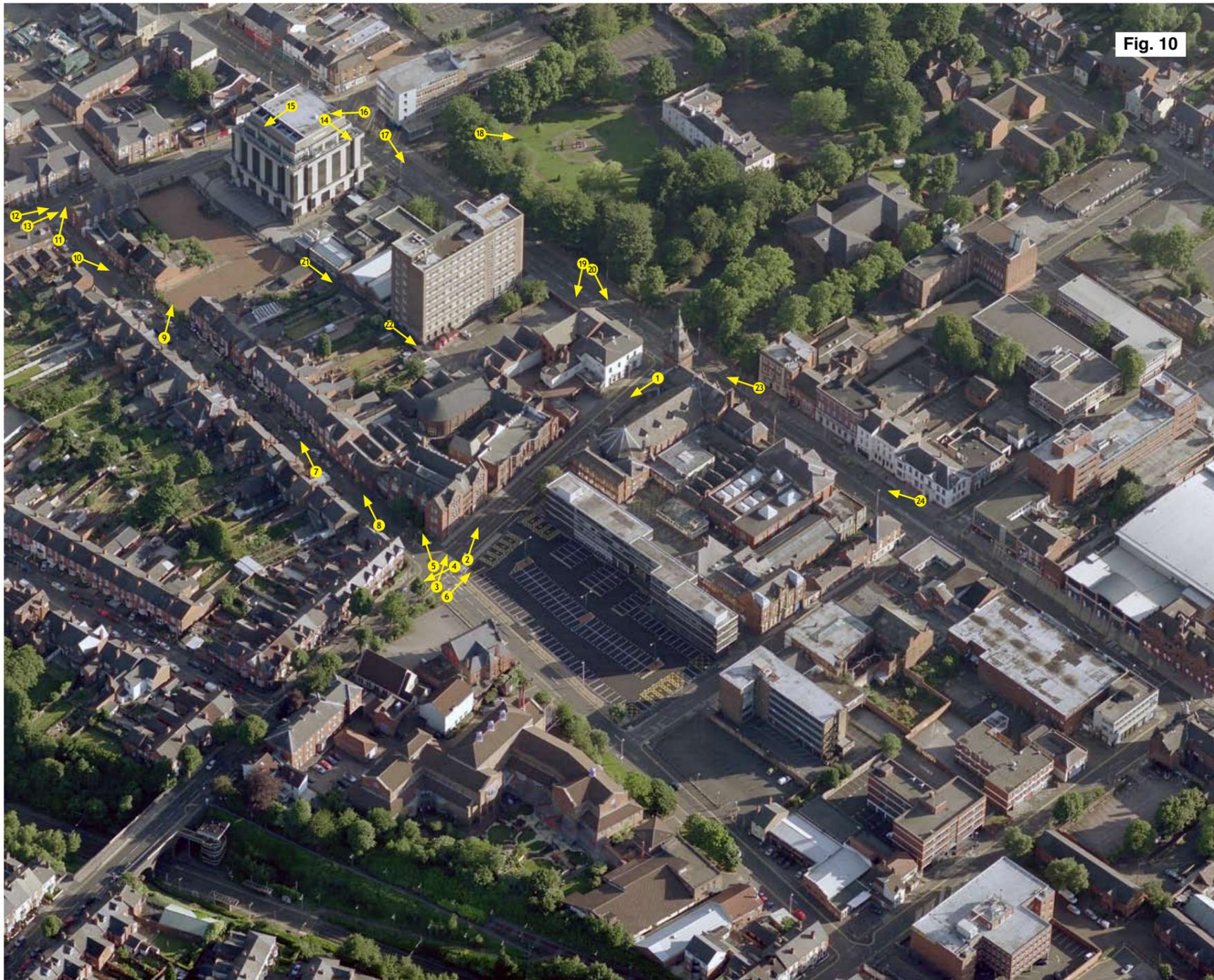


Fig. 10

Photographic appraisal of West Bromwich Civic Quarter 2010



5.3 Opportunities and Constraints

(Refer to Fig. 11)

The site is subject to a number of constraints which will either limit the developable area or require mitigating action.

- Levels fall from the south towards the High Street up to approximately 3 to 4 metres.
- Underground site constraints - ground conditions
- Sewers
- MEB Sub Stations
- Underground Cables
- Potential Stand off Zones
- Potential Mineshafts
- Potential Covenants
- Restricted Access
- Shared Rights of Way

This list is not exhaustive and detailed site analysis work will be required.

Development Opportunities

- High Impact major development opportunity linked to West Bromwich Town Centre.
- Opportunity for new Landmark Building.
- Office led development but scope for a variety of uses to promote activity.
- Civic Quarter Branding opportunity.
- Place Creation linked to Historic Fabric.
- Conservation Area Status.
- Regeneration of Grade II Listed Buildings.
- The provision and improvement of Public Realm quality.
- Outlook onto Memorial Gardens.
- Excellent linkages to bus, rail and metro network.
- Excellent location with potential to link to wider ongoing regeneration.
- Strengthen and support mixed uses including primarily office, but also residential, (leisure) and limited retail uses.
- Exploit linkages to the road network (A41 and M5).
- Ability to implement green links with Memorial Gardens.
- To reduce vehicular traffic in and around the site.
- Improve the public realm and street scene.
- Prioritise pedestrian movement within the site and to the external context.

Development Constraints

- Viability to enhance and re-use Listed Buildings in the site.
- Viability to enhance the Conservation Area and further develop distinct character area.
- The relationship and quality of new build alongside and adjacent to Listed Buildings.
- Building Heights.
- Car parking demand.
- Restricted vehicle access.
- Shared rights of way and servicing issues.
- Relationship of new build and retained residential properties.
- Traffic and parking congestion linked to High Street and surrounding street network particularly Lodge Road.
- Demolition costs.
- Lack of support to fund land acquisitions.

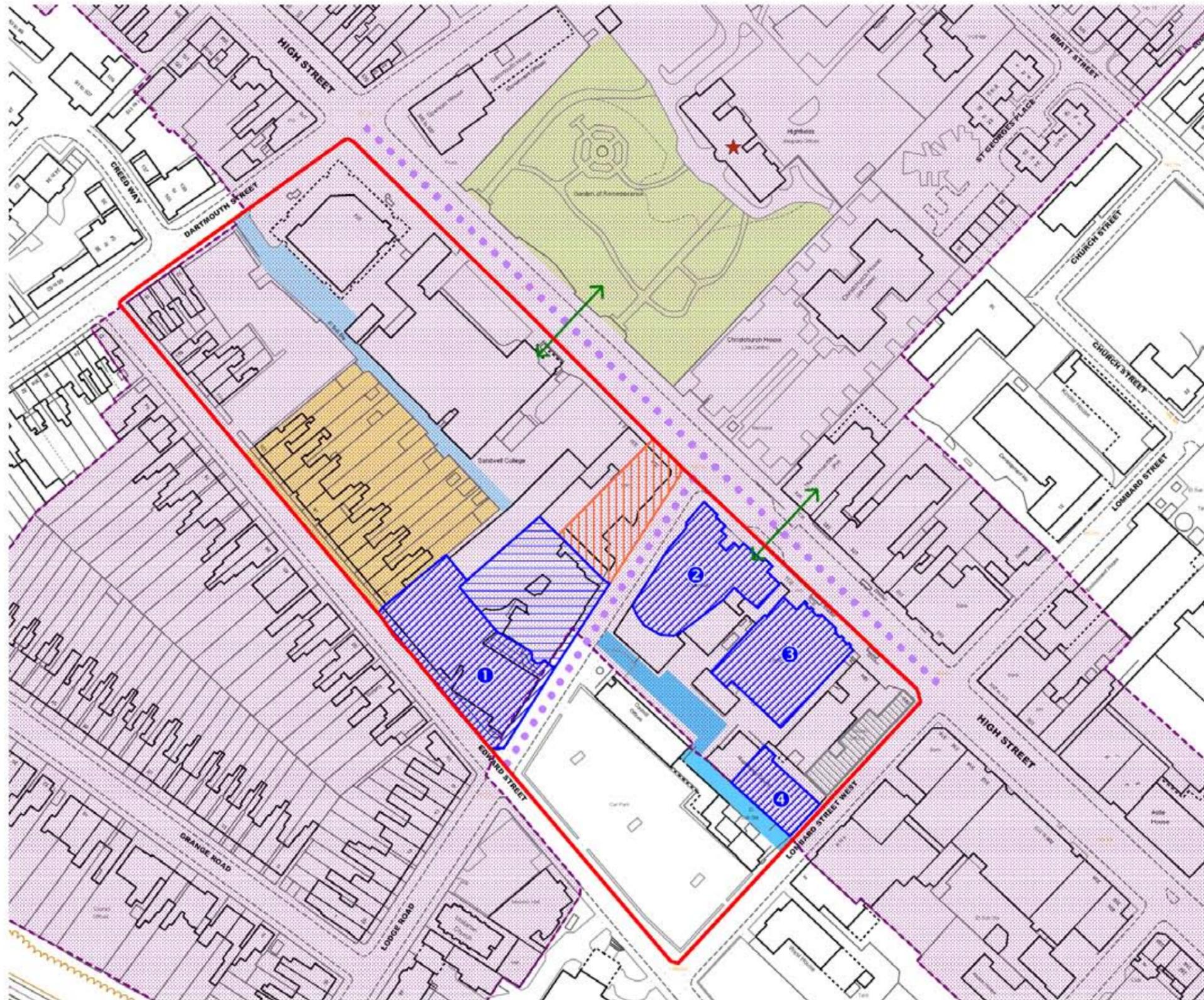


Fig. 11
Opportunities & Constraints

- Site Boundary
- Grade II Listed Buildings :
 1. Ryland School
 2. Town Hall
 3. Library
 4. Magistrates Court
- West Brom Institute Locally - Listed & 2010 Application for Listing
- HSBC Bank
- 320 High Street
- 77-101 Edward Street West Bromwich
- Highfields & Memorial Gardens Grade II Listed
- West Bromwich Conservation Area Boundary
- Vehicle Right of Way :
West Brom Building Society
Sandwell College
77-101 (odds) Edward Street
- Vehicle Right of Way :
Town Hall
Library
Magistrates Court
Council Offices
- Garden of Remembrance (Memorial Garden)
- Highway Improvements
- Pedestrian Linkage Improvements

NORTH SCALE 1:1250 Oct 2010
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5.4 Access and Movement

(Refer to Fig. 12)

There is excellent potential to capitalise on the sites location. It lies in the western section of the High Street within the Civic Quarter of the Town Centre. It has a primary frontage onto High Street and easy pedestrian connections to the wider context are available.

Convenient public transport links are also accessible to rail and bus. The High Street together with the Ringway and Expressway are the focus for town centre vehicle movement. Direct site access is available from High Street and the associated side streets albeit that one way traffic movement operates along Edward Street. Strategically the site has direct access to J1/M5.

High Street is a wide road that dominates the landscape and acts as a barrier to the Memorial Gardens, which is a unique green public space on the opposite side of the road to the site. There are heavy traffic flows, which slows vehicle speeds at busy periods but even so pedestrian crossing and movement is inhibited.

With direct access to the J1/M5 West Bromwich there is also excellent potential to capitalise on the sites location. The town centre's highway movement is focussed around the High Street, Ringway and Expressway.

The West Bromwich Area Action Plan: Preferred Options (2008) confirms the intention of reducing speed within the town centre to 20 mph and implementation of a public realm strategy. This will assist in improving the townscape value and creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

Particular attention will need to be paid to how new development will compliment these changes in the section of High Street between Dartmouth Street, Lodge Road and Lombard Street West, as well as the section of Lodge Road between High Street and Edward Street. Public realm improvements will not only assist in improving townscape value but improve the setting of the Memorial Buildings and Listed Buildings with primary frontages onto Lodge Road, including the Ryland Building and Town Hall Complex.

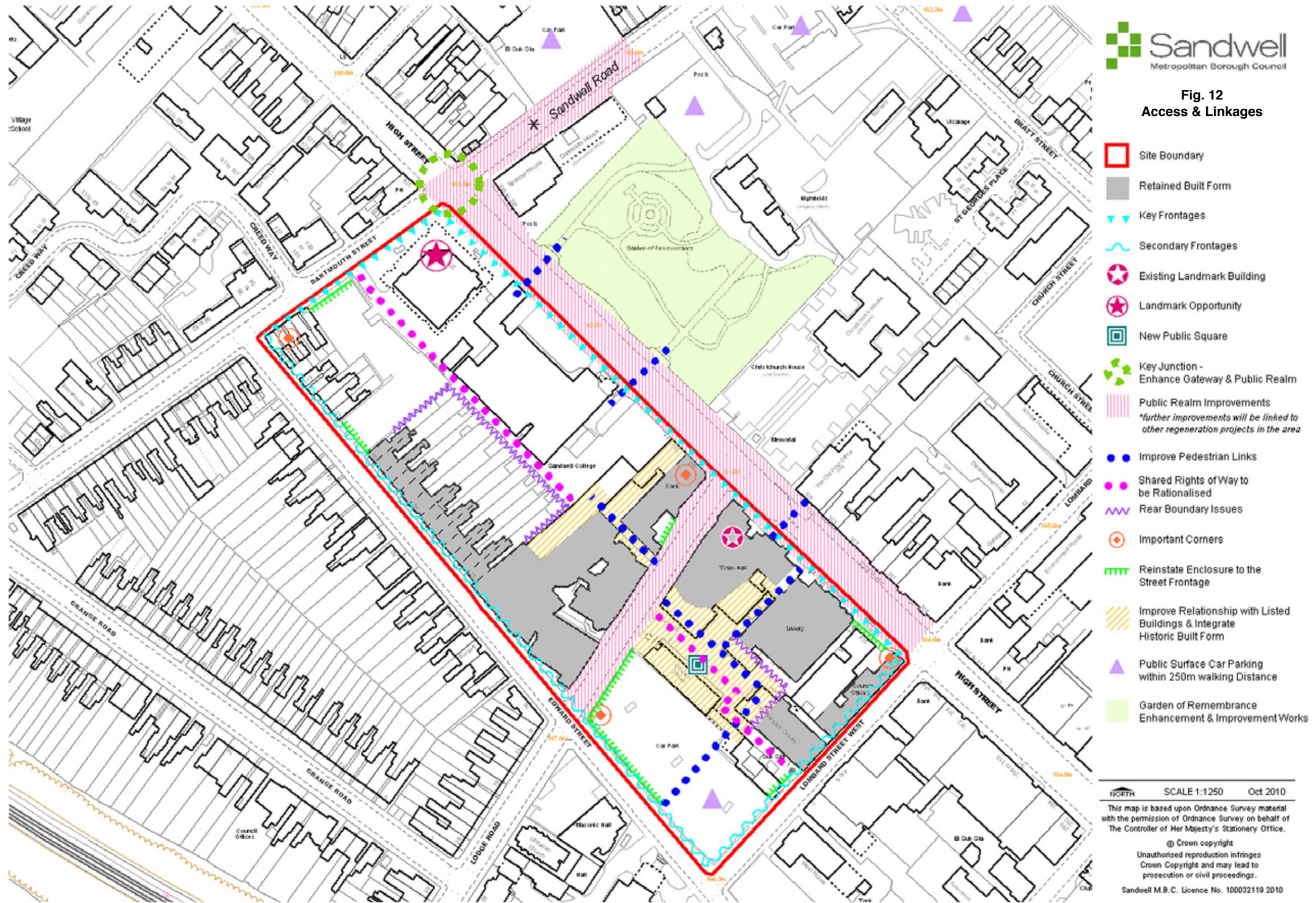
Another priority will be to ensure that improvements to streetscape and public realm quality will enhance the Conservation Area setting, the design of which should build on the distinct character for this part of the town centre.

Early discussions with Sandwell Highway Engineers, Conservation Officer and Urban Design Team are advised.

Direct access to public transport links is excellent. Three metro stops (West Bromwich Central, Lodge Road and Dartmouth Street) are within walking distance of the site (Birmingham/Wolverhampton Line). Buses run frequently along the High Street and West Bromwich Bus Station is also within walking distance. Routes and linkages will need to be improved to encourage greater use of public transport, to make them safer, more attractive and improve negative perceptions. Existing and proposed cycle routes will be better considered including demarcations as part of a transport and public realm strategy. Clearly encouraging more sustainable modes of travel will be an important consideration and there will be a need to balance public and private travel patterns in order to maximise the development potential of the site.

Extensive traffic regulation orders are imposed on the surrounding street networks and on-street car parking availability is restricted. Time limited parking currently exists along sections of the High Street and Lodge Road and resident's car parking schemes exist in Edward Street and Dartmouth Street to prevent overspill parking. There are five busy public car parks within a 250 metre walking distance of the site that serve this part of the town centre.

Major constraints will be rear servicing and dealing with the development's car parking demands without resorting to large areas of surface car parking. It is recognised that a significant proportion of the site's parking requirement will be met by off-site public provision through appropriate financial contributions as set out in the West Bromwich Area Action Plan: Preferred Options.



5.5 Existing Design Character

(Refer to Fig. 13 and Fig. 14)

The Urban Block Structure

The High Street forms the basis of a strong urban framework in the town centre. The wide, long linear alignment stretching from J1/M5 to Carters Green is often referred to as the 'Golden Mile'. For the most part the High Street provides a framework of identifiable urban blocks that have active frontages and hard edges with servicing and access gained from the sides and rear. The main focus of activity is therefore concentrated on the High Street frontage generally where there is a variety of architectural styles and detailing, albeit that due to the relationship of Listed Buildings at the entrance of Lodge Road a greater degree of consideration has been given to the quality of the historic streetscape, in terms of scale and architectural detailing along this secondary route. Similarly Lombard Street West has a number of retained historic buildings including the Magistrates Court which is Listed. However there are a number of post war building styles.

Dartmouth Street and Edward Street by contrast are secondary routes that run parallel and perpendicular to the High Street. The streets complete the block structure of the site and are generally characterised by period, domestic scale, residential properties and new infill residential development accessed off the opposite side of Dartmouth Street.



Street Frontages

Along the High Street frontage the Town Hall and Library are prominent buildings that overlook the street and influence the skyline. Larger monolithic building forms include West Bromwich Building Society Headquarters and Sandwell College, which are post war interventions that pay little respect to established enclosure of street frontage or building line. Both buildings will be vacated in the near future. The secondary street frontages that complete the development block also have a rigid built form edge with properties either set back behind shallow walled gardens or directly abutting the back edge of pavement.

Spaces and Voids

There are some 'void' spaces along the section of High Street adjacent to the Library and along the secondary routes that are considered detrimental to the quality of the streetscape. These spaces have eroded the quality of the streetscene over time mainly to accommodate car parking or rear servicing arrangements to the internal block structures. Opportunities to reunite the streetscene should be exploited in the design of new development to redefine public and private space, ensure safety and security and maximise the development potential of both block structures.

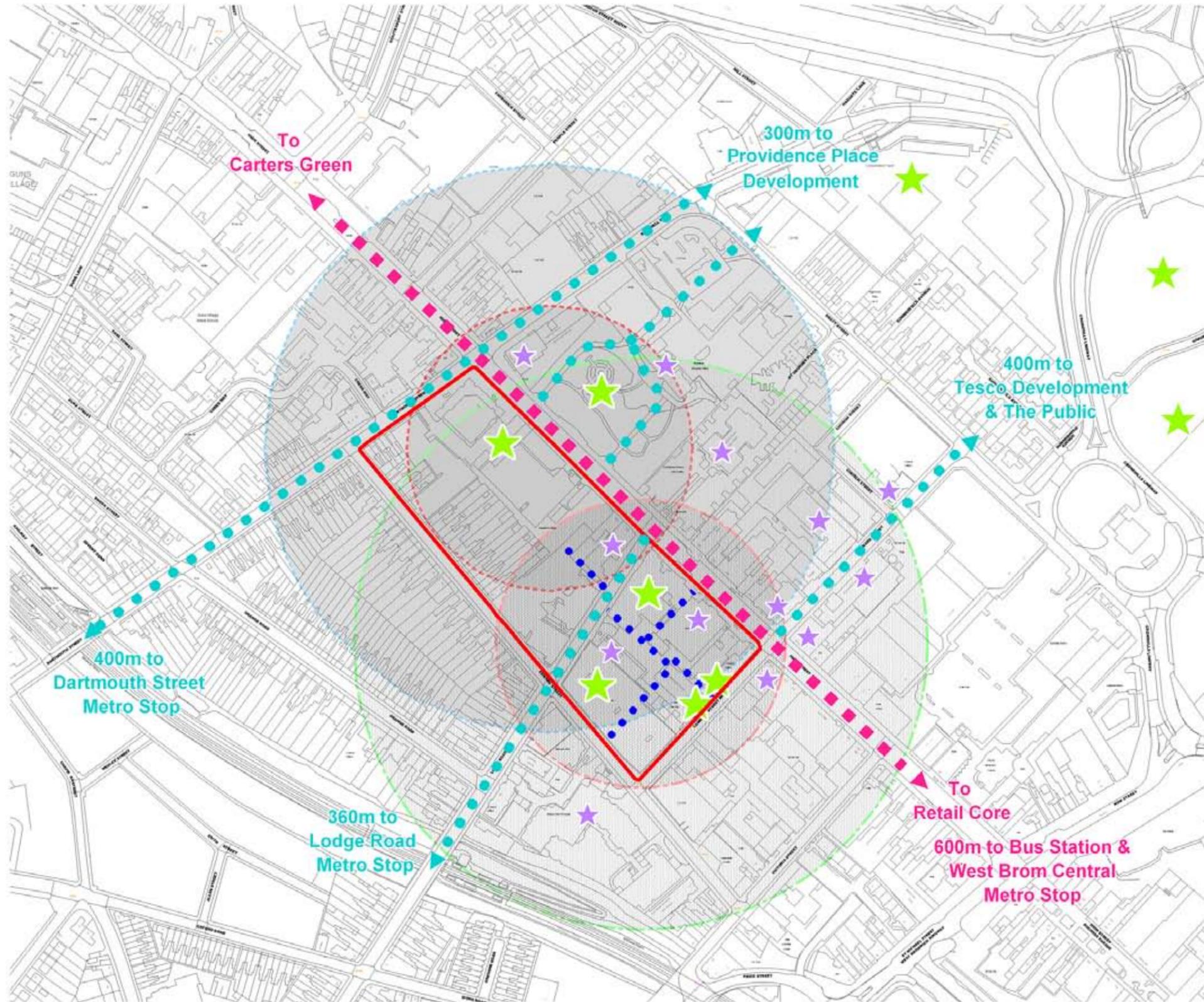


Fig. 13
Pedestrian Movement

- Site Boundary
- Primary Pedestrian Movement
- Secondary Pedestrian Movement
- Potential to improve Pedestrian connections
- ★ Existing Activity Generators
- ★ Potential Activity Generators
- 100m Walking Distance from front of College Site
- 100m Walking Distance from Town Hall Complex
- 200m Walking Distance from front of College Site
- 200m Walking Distance from Town Hall Complex

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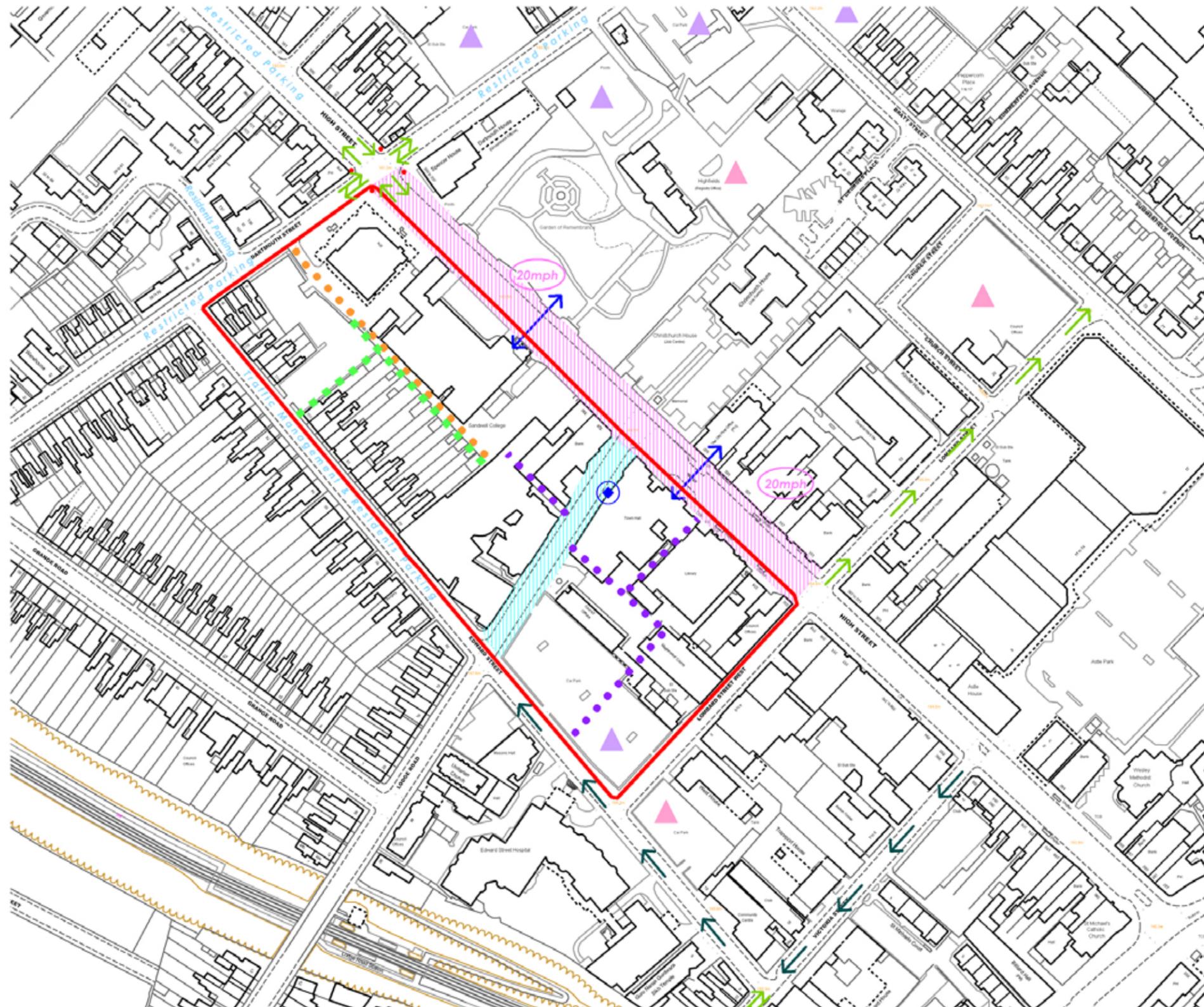
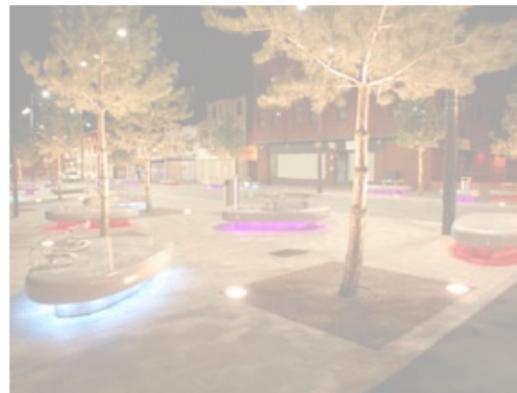


Fig. 14
Traffic Design

- Site Boundary
- ▨ Public Realm and Highway Improvements to reduce vehicle speeds and manage car parking
- ▨ Public Realm and Highway Improvements. Limit vehicle access, reduce on street car parking provision and prioritise pedestrian movement
- ⋯ Potential Residential Access (Private)
- Potential to improve pedestrian connections
- General Site Access (Private)
- ⋯ Signalised Junction
- Traffic Movement
- One Way Vehicle Flows
- ⊙ Servicing Point for Town Hall
- ▲ Public Surface Car Parking within 250m walking Distance
- ▲ Private Car Parks

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6 URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES



URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

6.1 Key Design Considerations

(Refer to Fig's. 15, 16 and 17)

- Place making that provides a strong identity for the West Bromwich Civic Quarter.
- By identifying new build opportunities that are designed to integrate with, compliment and regenerate historic built form and sequence of spaces which, when linked together provide a distinct character for the area.
- Create a new central publicly accessible hub which provides recreation opportunities, improves permeability, and encourage new uses that link to the historic form of the area, enhance the cluster of Listed Buildings and new build opportunities linked to the Town Hall Complex;
- Regenerate the High Street frontage with new landmark and supporting buildings to enclose the street frontage that generate activity during the day and evening.
- Reinforce and develop a varied skyline that adds character, defines and adds visual interest and natural surveillance to the quarter.
- Enhance and develop the potential of Memorial Gardens as a central, attractive and accessible green public open space that;
- Frames the Civic Quarter and provides usable outdoor space surrounded by high quality office accommodation and other mixed uses.

- Create focal points and enhance character.
 - Maximise the benefits of existing and new open space opportunities to enhance the setting of new and existing buildings and accessibility of the quarter.
 - Marry new with existing built form to enhance the High Street streetscape and Town Hall Complex
 - Revitalise the Civic Quarter by breathing in new life and activity.
 - Revive and reinforce the Conservation Area with sympathetic new development that respects and enhances the historic environment.
- Develop links and connections.
 - Invest in the public realm and promote pedestrian links that are safe and attractive to use.
 - Encourage the use of public transport.
 - Anchor the Civic Quarter to the High Street and establish the importance of the new public realm opportunities and Memorial Gardens at its heart.
 - Rationalise car parking demand and vehicle movement.
- Enhance existing buildings and the public realm.
 - Reinforce the character of the Conservation Area will provide context and opportunities for the area, and promote the revitalisation and re use of Listed Buildings.
 - Develop an urban framework to provide the basis for positive intervention.



Activating edges, promoting ownership of public spaces and blending new with old (Oxford)

- Promote high quality sustainable development.
 - Ensure the future sustainability, growth and enhancement of the quarter through a phased and planned approach.
 - Through design excellence, best practice and quality standards.
 - Create confidence and economic growth in the area so that it is attractive to a range of occupiers and activities.

6.2 Design Rationale

The key objective is to achieve high quality creative design and the regeneration of the West Bromwich Civic Quarter. Key gateway opportunities exist to develop new high quality landmark buildings, which provide a backdrop to the Town Hall Complex and Memorial Gardens. New built form, public space and public realm improvement should respectfully integrate with Listed Buildings, those other buildings considered worthy of retention and the Conservation Area context, in order to physically upgrade and rebrand the area.

The concentration of Listed Buildings already provides an established character for the quarter. These include the Ryland Building, the Town Hall and Library as well as the Magistrates Court which are all Grade II Listed Buildings. Other retained buildings include the Sandwell Institute building, 328 (HSBC Bank) and 320 High Street because of their contribution to the Conservation Area. For this reason also residential properties Nos. 77 to 101 (odds) in Edward Street will also be retained. In identifying the buildings to be retained a careful balance has been struck between needing to safeguard the future viability and vitality of the historic streetscape and the need to intervene to open the wider site up for redevelopment to meet the objectives of the brief for enhancing, revitalising and regenerating the Civic Quarter.

It is also envisaged that there is scope to carry out sensitive alterations to the historic built form including Listed Buildings, in particular the removal of more recent extensions so that their original architectural merit is revealed to help secure their future viability as well as the enhancement of external spaces and the re-establishment of new public space. Early discussions with the Local Planning Authority and English Heritage will be necessary.

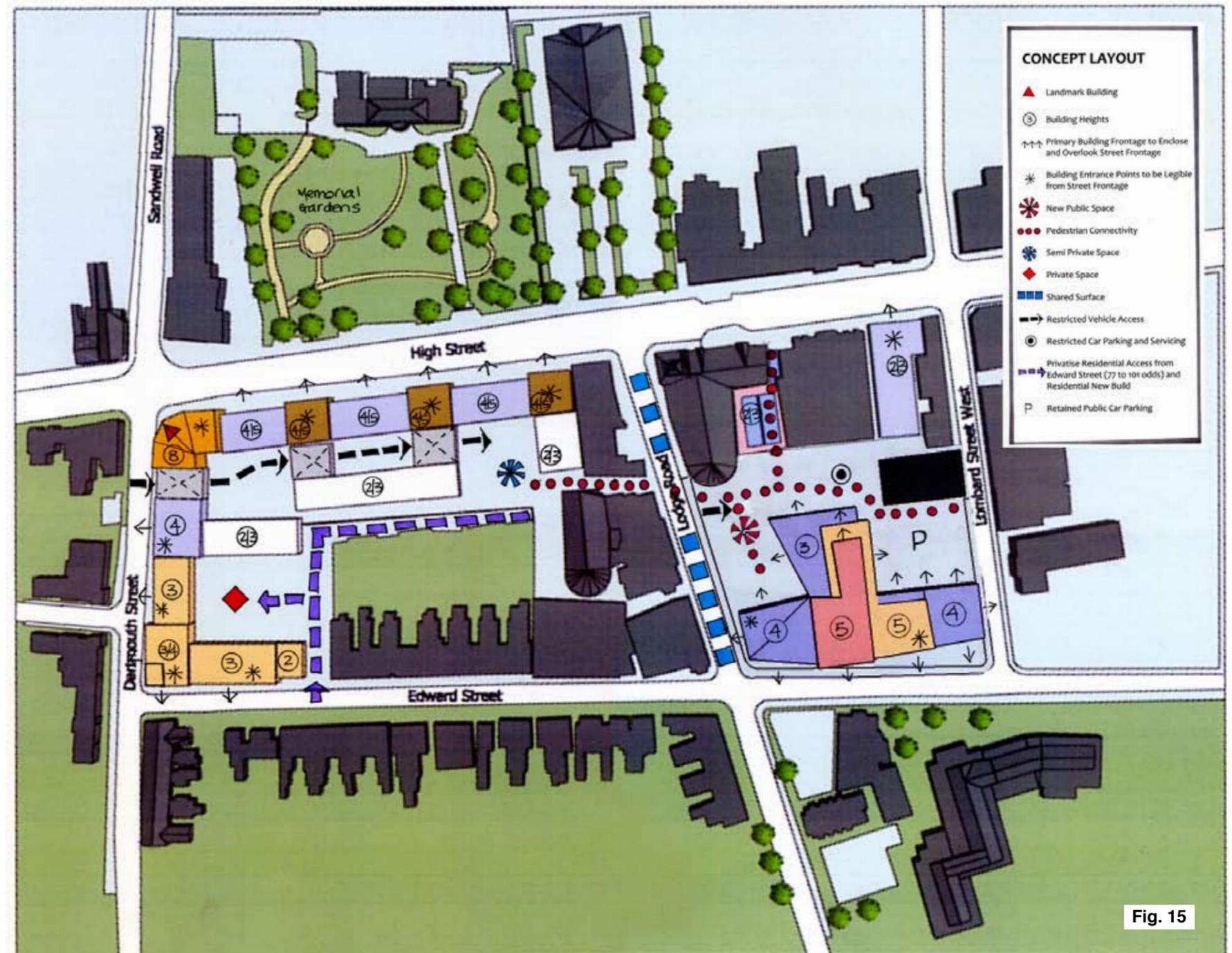


Fig. 15

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Block 1: Town Hall Complex

The Town Hall Complex and associated spaces offer the opportunity to create a new central public space at the heart of the block structure. The creation of space that will link back to the historic layout of the block structure, and also open up views onto the Ryland Memorial School of Art. It is envisaged that the rejuvenation of the space will be achieved by activating the secondary facades of important Listed Buildings that currently back onto the space and by introducing new built form containing mixed uses, to frame the edges of High Street, Lombard Street West and Edward Street.

The Town Hall spire provides a distinguished local landmark along the High Street and on the local skyline, which is viewed on the approach into the town particularly from the north. New development within the block structure should be designed to respect the feature and ensure that important visual links are not diminished. There is however flexibility to look at increased building heights for new built form linked to the listed group and new central space, but fronting Edward Street and Lodge Road. This will depend on finished levels and the architectural design, siting and massing of built form as well as how sensitively materials are used. Infill development opportunities adjacent to the Library and Magistrates Court however should be designed to fit in with their scale and immediate context. A major development opportunity exists on the Edward Street frontage where it is envisaged that increased massing and scale can be achieved. Anticipated new uses include office, recreation and residential.

Block 2: West Bromwich Building Society and Sandwell College

The site of the West Bromwich Building Society and Sandwell College also offer scope for primary frontage development that will deliver change and promote increased activity along the High Street. The large linear site stretches between the junctions of Lodge Road and extends into Dartmouth Street. The site enjoys open views overlooking the Memorial Gardens.

It is envisaged that new development will consist of primarily office accommodation but that opportunities will exist for mixed uses also including leisure and ancillary retail. Scope also exists for residential development primarily to knit residential streets together along Edward and Dartmouth Street either in single or multiple plot structures. The incorporation of horizontal mixed uses that demonstrate compatibility with primary uses will not be discounted along the High Street frontage.

Generally the majority of existing built form along the High Street is continuous consisting of three and four storey buildings subdivided into a variety of plot sizes. The rhythm of the street is also a mixture of vertical and horizontal divisions. There are also individual larger and taller stand alone buildings developed post wars. It will be important to respect variety and rhythm in new building design and avoid cluster designs or over wide plots that do not blend into the established streetscape qualities.

Public Realm

It is also considered appropriate to deliver substantial changes to the High Street public realm in order to improve the quality of visual and physical linkage. The rationalisation of space and prioritising pedestrian movement by reducing traffic speeds and improving vehicle parking is highly desirable. Additionally, improvements should be extended to Lodge Road between the junctions of High Street and Edward Street where priority will be given to pedestrian movement. This may be achieved through a variety of appropriate surface treatment and to limit vehicle access and manage car parking (as advocated in the Manual for Streets, 2007), to enhance the setting of historic buildings and physically integrate the Town Hall Complex with the West Bromwich Building Society and College sites.

As the Memorial Gardens provide such a valuable and unique mature green public space along the High Street frontage that will compliment the Civic Quarter, enhancement works will be required. Furthermore, integrating the space more fully with the Quarter and beyond will promote the usability and add vitality to this valuable green space asset.



Public Realm Investment, West Bromwich

6.3 Specific Site Design Requirements

The Town Hall Complex includes the Town Hall, Central Library and Magistrates Court, which together with No.320 frame the High Street frontage and part of Lombard Street West. The remainder of the site is made up of a temporary car park and Council Offices, which it is the intention to clear. In view of the historic built fabric and links to the area as a market place, linking selective remodelling of the internal space to new build opportunities offers the potential for place creation and civic regeneration linked to development opportunities further along the High Street frontage.

The site of West Bromwich Building Society and Sandwell College linked together with domestic scale properties in Dartmouth Street (10 to 16 evens) and Edward Street 111 to 121 odds) occupy a prime site that offers redevelopment/reuse potential in a phased approach to achieve design integration in accordance with the key design considerations established in the Planning Context section.



Fig. 16