New Life for Old Spaces

Public spaces in Winchester in need of treatment

This paper gives examples of public spaces in central Winchester that are in need of revival and where there is potential for bringing new life to them.. In some cases it would be easy to do this, in other cases more difficult. Hopefully, compelling visions of how these public spaces might be revived will create widespread determination to bring about change, however difficult it may initially seem. Once there is an appetite for and understanding of a living Winchester, the practical means necessary can become a focus for campaigns.

There are 21 examples in this paper. They include a range of different types of public space, all with their distinct issues. Unfortunately there are many other spaces that require treatment if they too are not to atrophy, and any demonstrations of what might be achieved throughout Winchester will be useful.



1 City Bridge and Bridge Street 1



2 City Bridge and Bridge Street 2

Currently used almost exclusively as a transport funnel, this site has potential as a promenade, a place to enjoy the view of the river, meeting place, exercise space, a place for refreshment and shopping, with safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists.



3 Broadway facing east



4 Broadway facing west

Currently used as a bus terminus and car park, this site has potential for a large civic square, a market space, an activity area, a place to hold big events, a meeting place, exposed waterways, blue and green landscaping, a celebratory entrance point to the town, safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

In Delft in the Netherlands they have replaced the former car park in front of their town hall with a lively public square lied with cafés.







5 Colebrook Street Car Park

Currently used as a space for people to park their cars, especially those who do not like to walk far to the shops. This site has potential as a space for viewing the cathedral and other historic buildings surrounding it, a place, especially for tourists, to take refreshments, blue and green landscaping, a gathering space.

In Amersfoort, the square by the cathedral has become a vibrant social centre.





6 St George's Street

Currently a bus loading point and bypass for High Street, a pedestrian route between other parts of the town, and some shops struggling to make their presence known. Potentially it could be a space that resolves more completely the competing activities and more of a place to linger, and a place that reflects the meeting of different pedestrian and cycling routes.



7 Remains of St Peter in the Fleshambles (950?)

Currently used as a rubbish dump and dominated by traffic on St George's Street. Potentially it could be re-presented as a quiet square for reflection, refreshment, that celebrates more explicitly its long history, enhancing the adjacent (possibly) oldest building on High Street.



8 Little Minster Street / King's Head Yard

Currently used for deliveries, and a drop off point. Potentially it could be a quiet square, a resting and meeting point, with seating and planting, and refreshment facilities, with routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

In Amersfoort, maximum use is made even of small spaces.

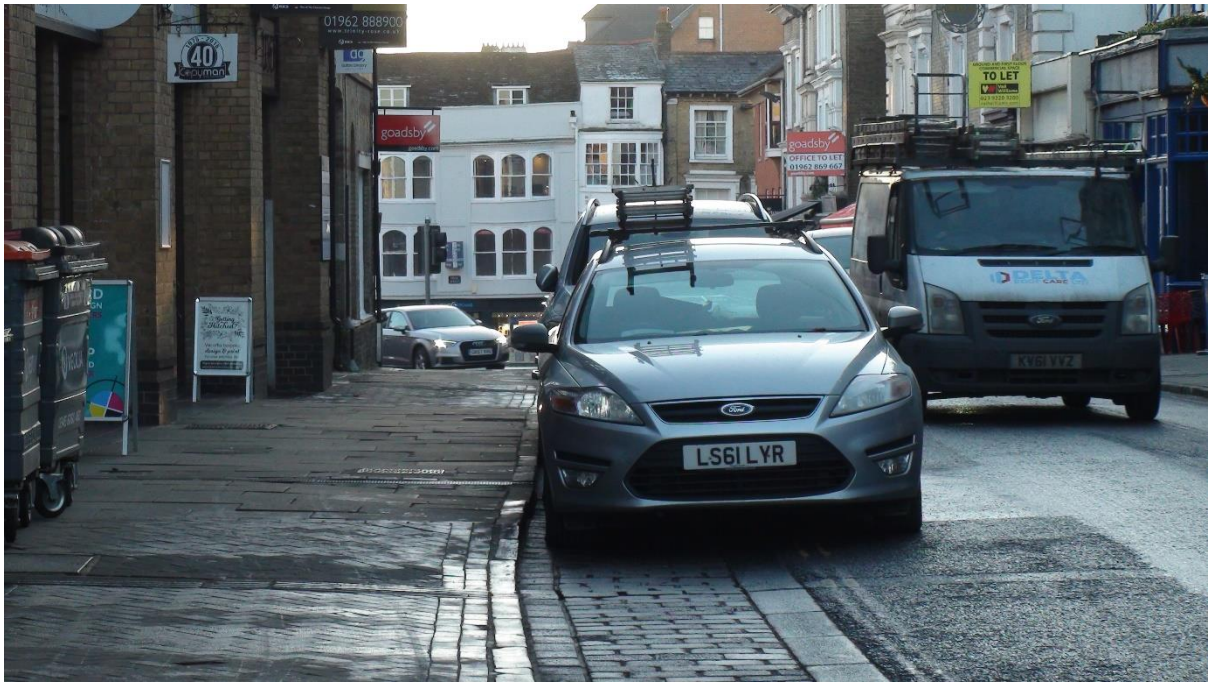




9 St Thomas Street

Currently used for residents' parking and delivery, and a quiet pedestrian and cycling alternative to Southgate Street. There is potential to enhance the

enclosed space, remove parking clutter, provide a better setting for the houses and shops, emphasise the link with High Street and make it easier for cyclists and pedestrians to pass through.



10 Jewry St / St George's St / High Street Junction

Currently part of the central one-way system and used for unloading. Potentially it could become the heart of the town, a quiet central square and meeting place, somewhere for musicians, a summertime place to dine with an easy passage across for pedestrians and cyclists. Heavy planting could lessen the dominance of the Barclay's building on the left out of sight.

Could it be turned into something like this small square in Delft?





11 The Upper Part of High Street

Currently a busy one-way street. There is potential to visualise a better setting for the Westgate, better access to the shops, and a high quality pedestrian and cycling route via Westgate from the railway station to the city centre.



12 The Crown Court Forecourt

Unlike other sites in the centre this is a very large space sadly underused and usually deserted. There is potential to bring new life here, and to the large underused spaces to the west in front of the Great Hall. The area could be animated by opening up the access, disentombing the remains of Winchester Castle from the massive brutalist concrete bunker on the right, reanimating the shops to the right of the picture, and providing other reasons for people to come here, and cross the area.



13 The Square in front of Westgate

Currently filled with a rambling multiple traffic intersections. The old city walls have been cut through beside the Westgate and a pub demolished to relieve traffic congestion. There is an opportunity to fill the gap in the city walls and provide a more appropriate setting for the Westgate. A large public space could offer a range of facilities and the cycling and pedestrian route from the railway station to the city centre could be taken through the Westgate arch.



14 Station Hill 1



15 Station Hill 2

Currently used as a wide bleak vehicle approach to the railway station, with an area for parking beneath the avenue of trees to the south. There is an opportunity to introduce a wider range of activities in a large public square that welcomes visitors to Winchester and marks their departure, and introduce complementary activities that make full use of the avenue of trees.



16 Gladstone Street Car Park

Currently a car park next to the station. There is potential to use the site for a public transport interchange providing good connections between all Winchester bus routes, and between bus services and train services, designed to ensure any time spent waiting will be an enjoyable experience, and transfers as effortless as possible.

In Amersfoort, Netherlands, extensive interchange facilities have been built next to refreshment and bike parking facilities in front of the station, with enough platforms for all bus routes to interchange with each other at the same time. The station is the red building in the centre.





17 City Road

Currently an incoherent street used as a traffic corridor. There is potential to transform the road so that people would choose deliberately to spend time there.



18 St Swithun Street

Currently a residential street dominated by residents' car parking. Potential to replace parking space with planting, provide a better setting for the 9th century palace walls on the left and the cathedral gateway, and provide safer and better facilities for cycling and walking, with sufficient width for mobility scooters and cargo bikes.

In Amersfoort removal of parked cars from residential streets has made space for plants and bikes.





19 College Street 1



20 College Street 2

Currently used as a free short-term car park for those who know about it. It is part of the very popular inner city circular walk from the Broadway, through the cathedral closes, and along the river. There is potential to remove the parking clutter, redesign the road as a cycling and walking route, and highlight the buildings. Mobility scooters could be better served.

In Cambridge a walk passing through streets and parkland, cleared of parked cars, has become extremely popular.





21 Kingsgate Street

Currently a popular pedestrian and cycling route from the south into the city. Potential to focus the road on the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, and extend street activity in Kingsgate Village close to the people standing in the road.

In Oxford, streets like this are primarily for bikes and pedestrians only.



Map Index

