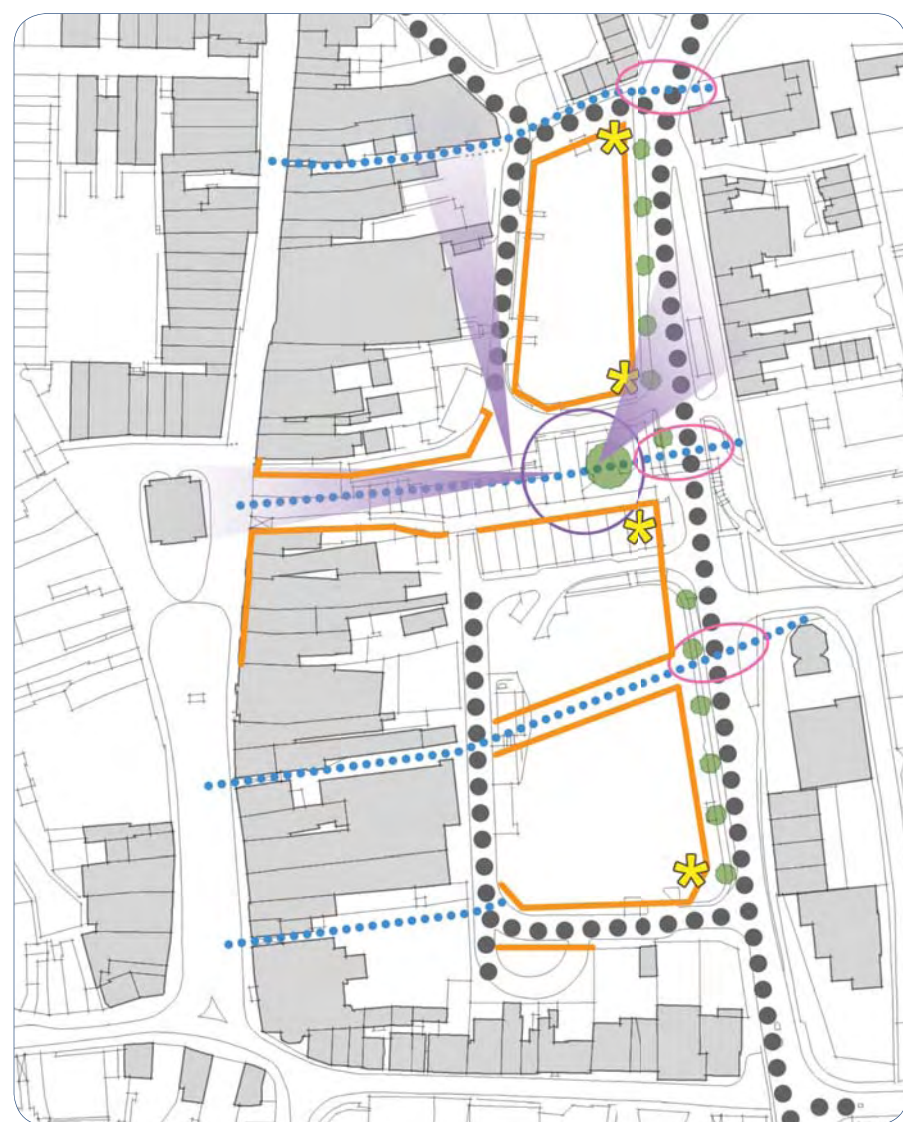




Urban design concepts

The urban design concept is based on a number of key elements.



-  Frontage development
-  Landmark element
-  Proposed vehicular routes
-  Proposed pedestrian connections
-  Proposed pedestrian / cycle crossings
-  Proposed / retained landscape features
-  New focal public space
-  Enhanced views

Streets and spaces

The overall urban design concept is to re-introduce a series of streets and spaces back into the town centre which will strengthen the existing character of the town centre. These will provide a flexible framework for the future of the site.



Connections to the High Street

One key aspect of the masterplanning of the George Yard and Black Swan Yard will be how they connect to the High Street and eastern side of the town. The proposed urban design concept seeks to enhance the existing pedestrian connections with enhancements to their size, quality, lighting, active uses, legibility and visibility.



Key link to the Guildhall and Chantry Centre

One of the key connections to the High Street from the site is proposed via an enhanced link to the Guildhall. This link would replace Union Street and the existing development in this area, including a number of properties which would need to be redeveloped. This enhanced connection would link the Guildhall and hence the Chantry Centre (as the Guildhall adjoins its entrance) to a new

public space within the site and then across Eastern Avenue to the east side of the town.

This connection would also assist in re-establishing the Chantry Centre as a retail centre either in its current form, with upgrading or redeveloped.

Key link to the rear of the Danebury Hotel

The other principal link proposed will be between a new multi level car park at the southern end of the site and the High Street. This is currently a well used route but provides a poor quality environment for its users, as shown in the photograph (below). In addition this route is privately owned and is closed at night. The urban design concept envisages this route being enhanced with new public realm, lighting and active uses supported by the public house and potential new uses within the existing pub car park to provide a more secure and vibrant connection. The photograph (inset left) shows a similar scheme in Southampton where the rear of the Dolphin Hotel has been transformed and provides a key pedestrian link to a public car park.



Urban design concepts

Circular pedestrian routes

By upgrading the existing pedestrian connections and with the enhancement of the Guildhall and Danebury Hotel links this will provide a series of logical circular routes for people visiting / using the town centre which should assist in their use and appreciation of the town centre. It also enhances the ability for people utilising the short stay parking to gain access to the High Street.

Pedestrian connections to the east across Eastern Avenue

The urban design concept envisages the removal of the existing subway under Eastern Avenue and its replacement with an “at grade” crossing. This will connect the eastern side of the town to the new public square and into the High Street.



Encouraging cyclists

The new public square will provide a high level of secure and covered cycle storage to encourage cyclists to use the town centre. In addition the existing cycleway along Eastern Avenue will be upgraded as part of a comprehensive traffic calming solution.

Traffic calming of Eastern Avenue

In order to reduce the speed of cars and encourage pedestrian activity along and across Eastern Avenue, a comprehensive traffic calming solution will be delivered. This may include the narrowing of carriageways, public realm improvements, dedicated cycle routes, pavement widening and enhanced landscape, lighting and street furniture.



Important views

The masterplan allows for the retention of existing views and seeks to highlight the view to the church from the new public space by reducing the building height in part of the development. Furthermore a new view will be created to the Guildhall from the new public space / Eastern Avenue which will assist in providing legibility to the town centre.

The photograph (above) shows a scheme in Exeter where a similar approach has been taken to retain views to the cathedral.

Retained and enhanced landscape features

The urban design concept seeks to retain the principal landscape features including:

- The existing row of trees along Eastern Avenue which would provide part of a new avenue of trees. In addition an avenue of similar character will be created along the eastern boundary of Black Swan Yard to enhance Eastern Avenue.
- The existing tree in the centre of the site adjacent to the subway will be retained and form part of the new public space.

Landmark buildings on Eastern Avenue

A new continuous frontage of development will be provided along Eastern Avenue to provide a sense of enclosure and activity to the route. This will include a number of landmark elements which will assist in its legibility. These will include landmarks which highlight the new public square and the entrances to the site from the north and south.

Focal open space

As part of the urban design concept a new public space has been created in the centre of the site. This will be surrounded by active uses at ground floor including retail, A3 Food and Drink and restaurants with residential over. This mix of uses will provide activity and passive surveillance throughout the day.

It is intended that the space will provide the opportunity for buildings to spill out with dining and seating areas to animate the edges of buildings. It is also the intention to create a space which is flexible to accommodate a range of uses including market stalls, kiosks, performances and gatherings.

The photograph of Covent Garden (below) shows a mix use space with active uses spilling out into the space.

