

Chapter 6 - Key sites and spaces: Guidance for change

Audit of opportunity sites and spaces

Tables A and B in Appendix A provide an audit of opportunity sites and spaces where interventions to bring about improvements can be considered and differentiates between sites in public and private ownership. These are indicated in Figure 21 and fall into a number of distinct categories.

For the publicly owned sites these comprise:

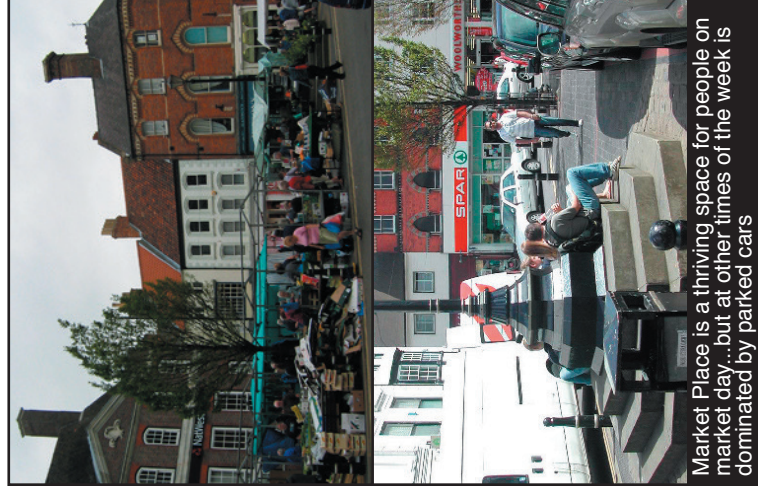
- There are four small open space gap sites (sites 1,2, 6 and 10) that are likely to have been the product of imposed County Council highway sightline standards. These tend to be fairly poorly designed landscaped spaces.
- Council-owned public car parks (sites 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12 and 13).
- The Gatherums public open space (site 4)
- The Cattle Market (site 14)

For the privately owned sites these consist of:

- Private car parks (sites A, D, E, F, L, N and Q)
- Privately owned under-used buildings and

open spaces (sites B, C, G, H, I, J, K, M, O, P, R, S and T)

The area around St James' Church has been identified as falling into mixed ownership as it requires a unified design treatment that ties together the publicly owned highways and land associated with the Church.



Market Place is a thriving space for people on market day...but at other times of the week is dominated by parked cars

Priority sites for attention

Of these sites, there are differing levels of opportunity:

1. Potential early wins

These constitute sites that are either:

- a) in District Council or County Council ownership, and as such are fully within public control and immediately available for 'early win' improvements. We would emphasise:
 - The creation of on-street parking at Uppgate, Northgate, Gospelgate, James Street and Kidgate, for instance, which would be introduced alongside streetscape improvements for these principal streets. Creating additional parking capacity upfront in the regeneration programme will help to free up the capacity for partial development of existing public car parks (see below).
 - Re-landscaping of Market Place and the Cornmarket – building on existing landscape improvements and establishing this with a high quality scheme as the heart of Louth. Market Place should become exactly that – a place for people

and a market. When the market is not functioning it should be for pedestrian use, not for parking as at present.

- Improvement works on the Kidgate open space (site 2) as a first phase for a wider programme of works for the Kidgate / Spring Gardens / Gatherums area. This could potentially comprise a combination of new development (the potential introduction of a new corner house) and landscape improvements to the public space.
- Landscaping of The Gatherums, but this must be undertaken within the context of a strategic plan that co-ordinates improvement of adjacent sites.
- initial work on the transport proposals, such as revisions to Eastgate / Northgate and Eastgate / Churchgate Street junctions.
- b) Privately owned sites where the owner is likely to be interested in pursuing an improvement scheme, including conversion of the derelict building on Northgate (site H), the corner site Church Street / Monks Dyke Head (site J) and potentially the gap site on Vickers Lane (site P), as illustrated overleaf.

2. Potential medium term priority sites

These constitute opportunity sites that are not so clear-cut and because they either have an operational use (notably public parking) or are in private ownership are not so readily developable. Because of their strategic significance to the overall urban design and regeneration strategy they are nonetheless priorities for attention, but will take longer to implement. These fall into three categories:

- a) Council-owned car parks where partial development would reinstate the street frontage, in particular we would highlight Queen Street car park (site 5 – developed in conjunction with plans for The Gatherums), Eastgate car park (site 7), and the small Northgate car park (site 9).
- b) Landscaping works around St James' Church (illustrated opposite), which could significantly enhance the setting and improve pedestrian and cyclist conditions whilst still facilitating efficient vehicular movement. New footways should be provided at street level west and east of the church, carriageway widths should be reduced. Traffic bollards should be removed. The entire area should become "Church Square" with comprehensive landscape and streetscape treatment.
- c) To undertake and implement the potentially far-reaching strategic review of traffic circulation and management changes described in Chapter 4.



3. Other possible opportunities

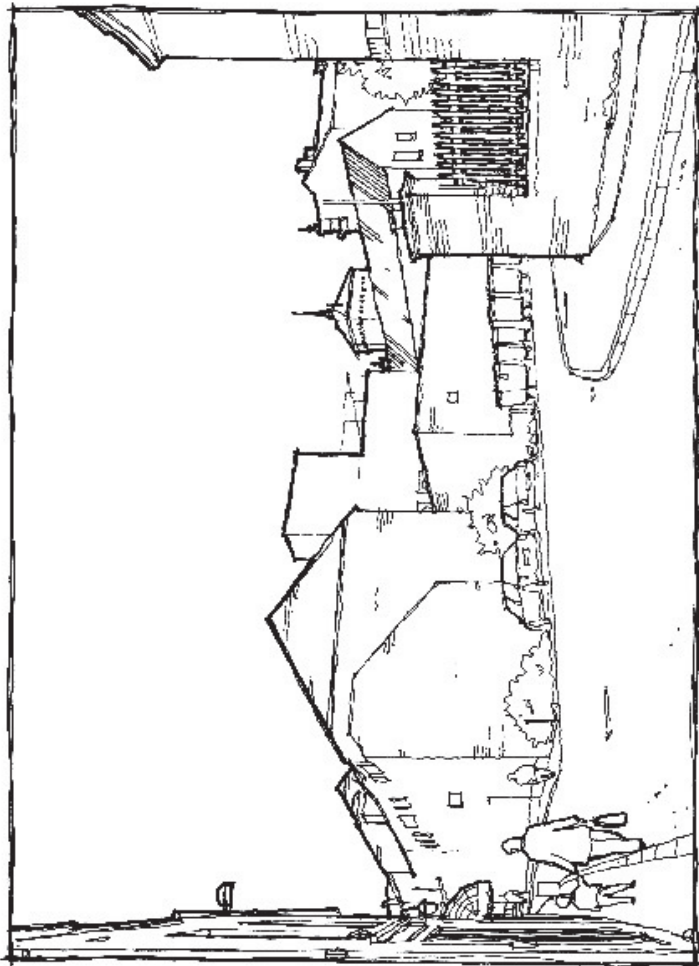
These are sites that are more speculative in nature but constitute places where the District Council should take a proactive view to guide possible future change. Three areas have been identified as offering tremendous potential. Schematic sketch proposals help to convey ideas.

- a) BT Exchange

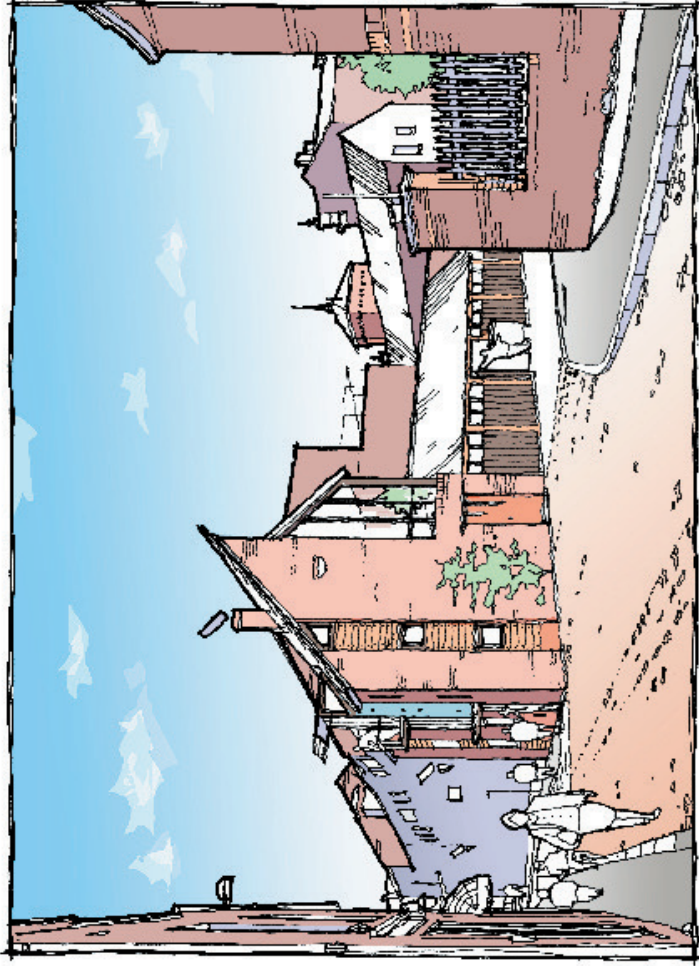
Elsewhere in the country there is evidence of outmoded telephone exchanges being replaced with modern equipment that takes up a fraction of the space. The District Council could open up an exploratory dialogue as to whether there is scope for site development. This could be informed by the sketch proposals which indicate the potential for a 'win win' scheme that could include major public benefits to the Council in the shape of a decked parking structure that helps correct the imbalance in the location of the Town Centre parking provision, together with new pedestrian routes and a river-side open space, whilst at the same time potentially comprising a modern telephone exchange building and other uses (particularly residential development) that could help cross-subsidise the scheme.

Chapter 4 established that further work should be undertaken to potentially create new parking capacity to enable existing car parks to be at least partially developed in order to reinstate street frontage a plug gap sites where these undermine the quality of the streetscape. Two means were suggested, either

Vickers Lane, Site P
Potential redevelopment option



Existing- looking south along Vickers Lane
from Northgate turning



Proposed

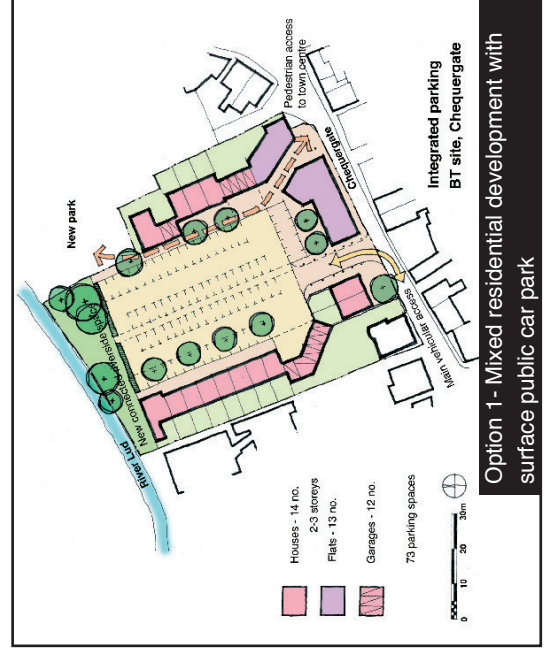
- create new car parks, or
- intensify existing ones

We would suggest that priority candidates for new car parks are firstly the BT Exchange, followed by the much smaller Upgate sites. Candidates for intensification of existing car parks with multi-storey structures are Northgate (site 8) if access difficulties can be resolved or the Co-op site (site 11). Neither of these, however, would fundamentally address the parking location imbalance issue.

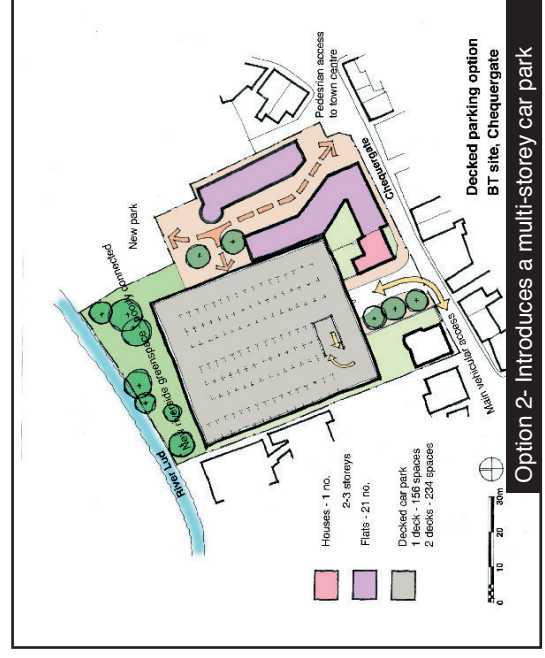
Three options are illustrated. Option 1 comprises a surface-level "parking square" faced onto by a mix of accommodation. Option 2 incorporates a multi-storey car park, though with an unsatisfactory edge to the river. Perhaps the most satisfactory design suggestion is Option 3 that in some ways provides a hybrid solution be involving undercroft parking cut into the sloping site.



A perspective view of option 1 looking north



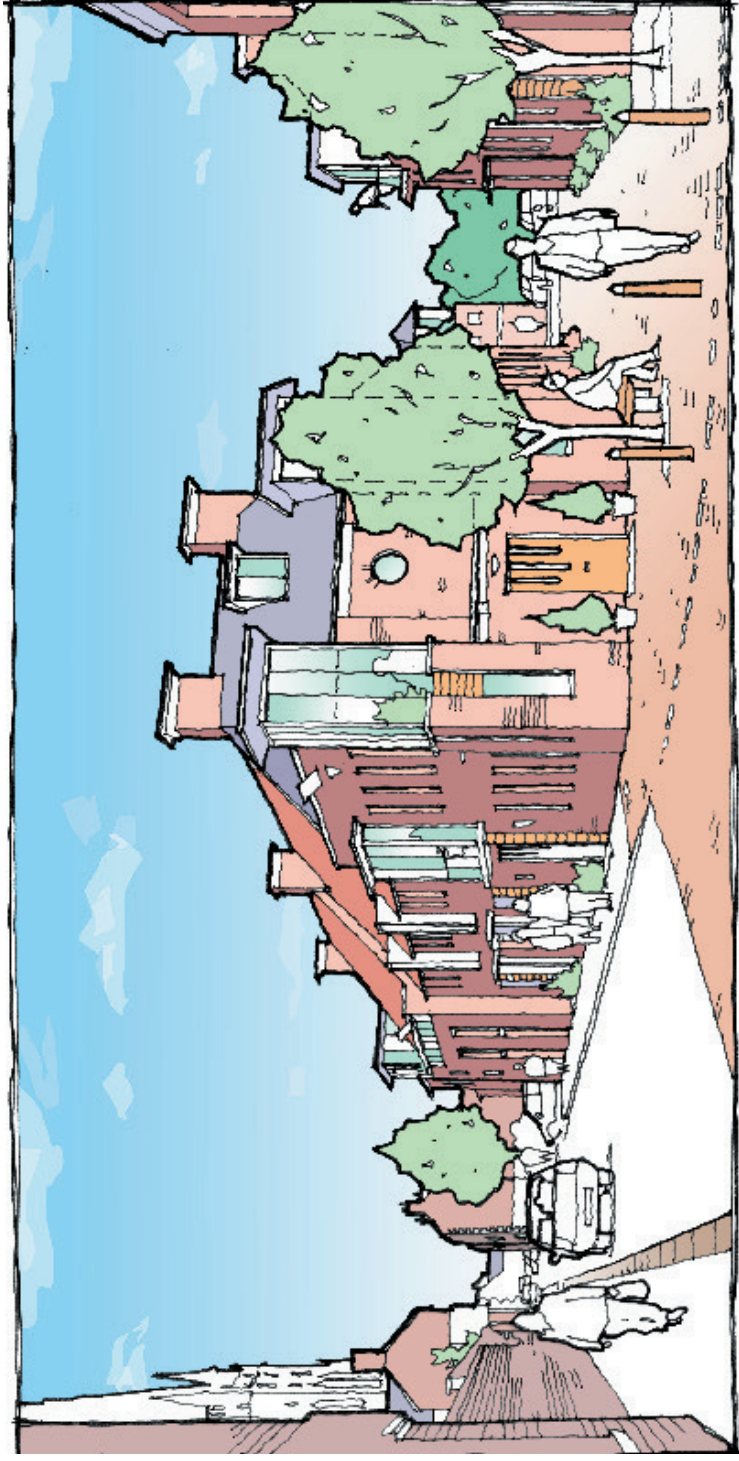
Option 1 - Mixed residential development with surface public car park



Option 2 - Introduces a multi-storey car park

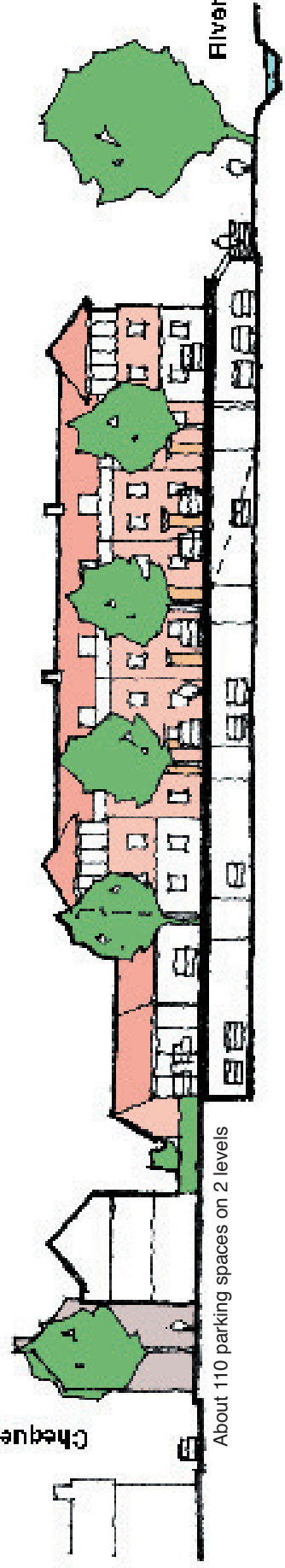


Before: the existing BT premises



Option 1 - After: looking northwest into the site from Chequergate

Chequergate



Option 3 - Mixed residential development with undercroft parking



Possible new residential development on site of former cottages with access issue to be resolved either from Kigate or from Queen Street. New buildings provide linkage and unblocking of cars.

Kigate car park site. Current residential development with well defined new building envelope with Kigate. Arrangement of building edges aligns with Queen Lane and provides pedestrian stairs down to redeveloped Horse Stairs courtyard below. Publicly accessible terrace running length of wall provides walking views across town.

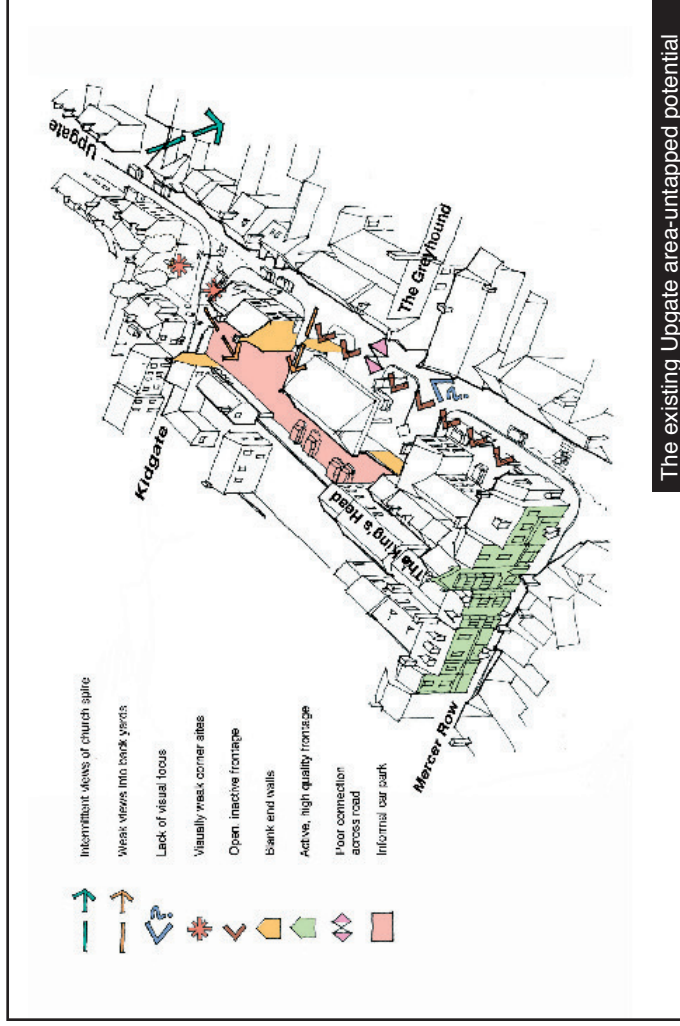
The Galleries. Although currently not used in situ, to be upgraded as a high quality linear greenspace and small urban square. Potential to open up existing outwashed stream could be reinstated.

Potential for small urban square at junction of streets to be exploited. Includes adjacent car park site possibly as parking units with parking in public urban space. Source of water could be increased as an existing focus to this area.

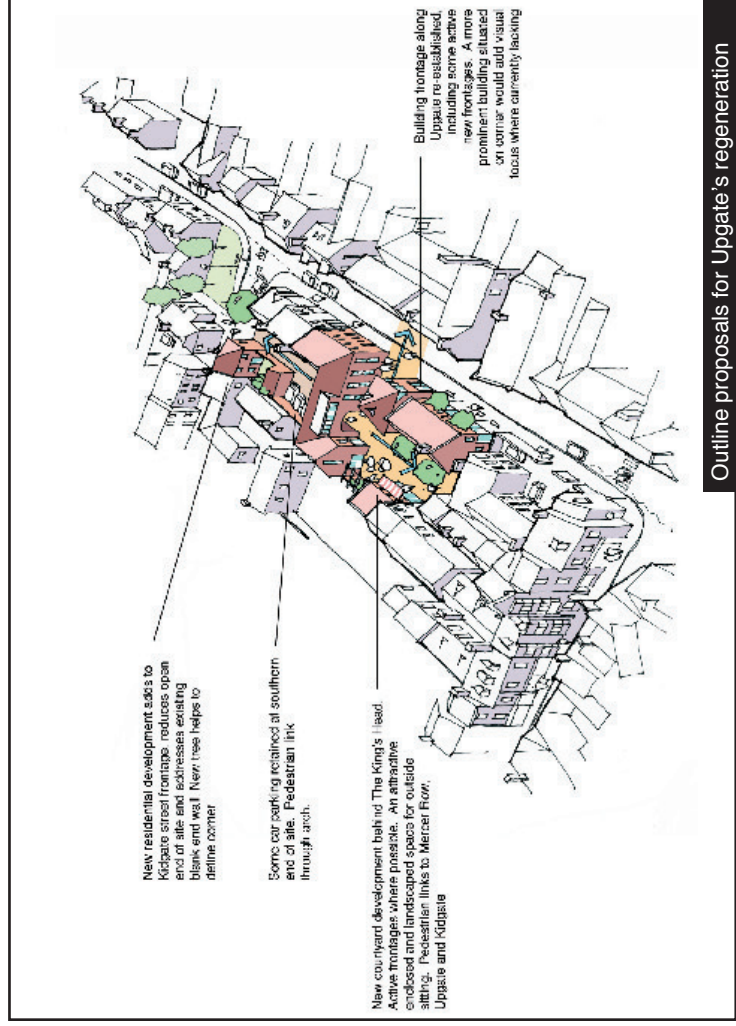
Potential to redevelop existing Queen Street car park and adjacent site. Redefine street envelope and re-site car park building. Create new realised access street connecting to The Galleries.

Entrance to the steps and the Galleries from Aswell Street to be clearly defined and signposted (As well as other entrances elsewhere).

Rebar mixes uses in Walkmate substantially as existing, but with potential for additional The Galleries and Horse Stairs defined by new residential buildings. Any new buildings.



The existing Upgate area-untapped potential



Outline proposals for Upgate's regeneration

- b) Spring Gardens
As illustrated opposite, a wider strategy should be developed encompassing Spring Gardens / Horse Stairs (site H) and potential development of the Kidgate car park (site 3) together with upgrading of The Gatherums (site 4) and Queen Street car park (site 5) as well as the Eastgate clinic (site 1)
- c) Upgate
An integrated strategy for the collection of contiguous sites on Upgate could also be prepared – drawing in sites A, B and C together with potential re-landscaping of the Upgate / Kidgate open space (site 1) and would follow the streetscape improvements introduced on Upgate itself
- d) Charles Street
The collection of private sites (site ref. R) beyond the conservation area boundary but nonetheless comprising existing buildings of real quality and riverside frontage. The suggestion of a DIY shed at this location should be strongly resisted in favour of a much more sensitive mixed use scheme.

Chapter 7 – Next steps

<p>This Urban Design Study has been prepared to accompany the Stage 2 bid for Townscape Heritage Initiative funding, which is to be submitted in October 2004 to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Study sets out a range of suggested proposals for improving the overall environmental quality and liveability of Louth. If followed through, economic development gains could also be expected. Proposals range in scale and complexity from small-scale actions that are relatively easy to implement to those requiring more strategic change. The Urban Design Study articulates a clear set of principles and strategy elements for taking these actions forward.</p> <p>Although there is much to be developed in terms of detail, considerable encouragement and in-principle support has been provided by Council Members, Officers and others who have been involved in this document's preparation and the</p>	<p>associated meetings and workshops. Building on these positive foundations, 10 next steps are recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate a programme of community and stakeholder engagement and consultation to widen awareness, build support and further develop the programme of actions. This is to be initiated with the preparation of a leaflet and exhibition summarising proposals and requesting feedback. 2. Embed proposals in the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan review process. 3. Formally adopt the Urban Design Study as District and County Council highways policy following consultation and refinement. This will establish a firm basis for policy development, funding interventions, 	<p>development control and local highway agency initiatives. A two-stage process is advocated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the District Council and County Council adopt the document as an Interim Planning Statement in the short term to confirm its status as a “material consideration” in the determination of planning applications. ii. To adopt the document in the medium term as a Supplementary Planning Document or Action Area Plan following the introduction of changes to the planning system. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Operationalise the urban design principles and strategy elements as the basis for design review and development control of planning applications. This will require briefing / 	<p>training sessions for Development Control officers to guarantee effectiveness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. take direct action by taking forward early win projects – particularly on opportunity sites in public ownership. A design competition could be considered as a means of raising awareness and encouraging creative responses. 6. take indirect action, particularly should THI funding be secured by, for instance, providing grant aid for employing skilled designers. 7. use the visionary proposals contained in this document (eg. Relating to the Kidgate / Gatherums area) as the basis for making proactive advances to landowners (eg. The BT Exchange) – in order to set the agenda for change, rather than just react to
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- development proposals prepared by others.
- high level officer (Chief Executive) and political support.
- The project brief requests that strategic costings are provided for:
- Car parking proposals;
 - Streetscape improvements and traffic circulation; and
 - Improvements for walking within the town.
- These are outlined in Appendix B. Also provided are indicative costs for lighting and signage. Should the THI funding bid be successful, these costs should be worked up in further detail and tied into a detailed action plan for taking the Urban Design Study proposals forward.
8. Incentivise and celebrate best practice by, for instance, investing in an award or 'kitemark' programme. This could be taken forward in conjunction with the Civic Trust, for example.
 9. Prepare a more detailed Design Code of Streetscape Manual, comprising detailed design codes for public realm works that specify the proposed palette of materials and furniture to ensure a consistent and complementary approach is applied.
 10. Establish more effective delivery mechanisms for co-ordinating the actions of the range of Council departments and other stakeholders involved. This should seek to ensure that each key player is focused on achieving the same outcomes. Achieving this will require

Site reference	Site name	Site area (m ²)	Ownership	Existing use	Constraints	Potential opportunities
1	Upgate / Kidgate open space	132.5	East Lindsey DC	Public open space	Windows of adjacent end gables	Either improved landscaped open space or small sensitive development (eg. residential or community use)
2	Aswell Street / Kidgate open space	252.5	East Lindsey DC	Public open space	Windows of adjacent end gables	Either improved landscaped open space or small sensitive development (eg. residential or community use)
3	Kidgate car park	1514.1	East Lindsey DC	Public car park	Level change	Although potential development site, probably best left as car park
4	The Gatherums	3365.3	East Lindsey DC	Public open space	Level change and access difficulties	Improved landscaped open space. The introduction of sensitively placed cottages could enhance natural surveillance and create a positive edge
5	Queen Street car park	2559.5	East Lindsey DC	Public car park	None	Potential development site and improved pedestrian thoroughfare to The Gatherums
6	Church Street / Kidgate open space	521.7	East Lindsey DC	Public open space	Access difficulties	Although potential development site, probably best left as public open space, with improved landscaping
7	Eastgate car park	1390.7	East Lindsey DC	Public car park	None	Potential development site
8	Large Upgate car park	4497.3	East Lindsey DC	Public car park	Some access difficulties	Potential decked parking (multi-storey) or conceivably development site
9	Small Upgate car park	661.8	East Lindsey DC	Public car park	None	Potential development site – for residential or mixed commercial / residential uses
10	Eve Street / Northgate open space	64.8	East Lindsey DC	Public open space	Small size constrains development potential	Potential development site (single unit) or improved landscaped open space
11	Kiln Lane car park	3365.3	East Lindsey DC	Car park for shared general Co-op and general public use	At least partially required to support the adjacent Co-op store None	Although potential development site, probably best left as public car park. Potential to introduce decked parking structure
12	Cannon Street Car Park	743.2	East Lindsey DC	Public car park	None	Potential development site suitable for a variety of community / commercial uses with flats above
13	Market Place	308.1	East Lindsey DC	Public car park on non-market days. Market stalls on market days. Cattle Market	None	Potential to re-landscape as the symbolic focal space of Louth's Town Centre
14	Louth Cattle Market	22486	East Lindsey DC		Existing cattle market in operation	Potential development site for a variety of uses should an alternative appropriate site be identified for the cattle market

Appendix A - Opportunity sites and spaces table:private

Site reference	Site name	Site area (m ²)	Ownership	Existing use	Constraints	Potential opportunities
A	The King's Head car park	757	Private (The King's Head Hotel)	Private parking	At least partially used at present for private parking	Mixed-use development
B	Vacant premises, Upgate	418.7	Private	Vacant	Fairly modern building in good structural order	Potentially absorbed into larger mixed-use development site
C	Former garage, Upgate	604.4	Private	Vacant	Existing planning permission for car spare parts sales	Potentially absorbed into larger mixed-use development site
D	Private car park, Kidgate	346.7	Private	Private parking	Existing private parking	Potential mixed use development site
E	Private car park, Kidgate	590.9	Private	Private parking	Existing private parking	Potential mixed use development site
F	Mercer Row backland	513.9	Private	Private parking	Existing private parking	Potential mixed use development site, alongside pedestrian cut-through from Mercer Row
G	East Coast Carpets, Queen Street / Aswell Street	138.2	Private	Retail premises	Existing retail premises in operation	Potential to replace existing low-grade building with a higher quality structure befitting its Town Centre corner location
H	Spring Gardens	1110	Private	Part rear servicing, part derelict	Significant level change. Continuing need to facilitate rear servicing and pedestrian cut-through	Potential mixed use development site and enhanced pedestrian cut-through
I	Queen Street Clinic	1184.2	Clinic	Clinic	Existing clinic in operation	Potential mixed use development site
J	Vacant site, Church Street / Monks Dyke Head	500.6	Private	Part vacant. One existing residential dwelling	Existing residential dwelling. County highways sightlines standards	Potential residential development site
K	Development site, Church Street	1057.2	Private	Misc	Existing structures	Potential mixed use development site
L	Private car park, Queen Street	431.5	Private	Private car park	Existing private car park in operation	Potential mixed use development site
M	Car showroom, Queen Street	529	Private	Car showroom	Existing car showroom in operation	Potential mixed use development site
N	Private car park, Eastgate	1280.9	Private	Private car park	Existing private car park in operation	Potential mixed use development site
O	Vacant building, Northgate	516	Private	Vacant building	Existing building of architectural quality	Potential conversion
P	Private car park, Vickers Lane	87.5	Private	Private car park	Existing private car park in operation	Potential mixed use development site
Q	Co-op supermarket, Northgate	8713.4	Lane occupied by supermarket building privately owned by Co-op. Adjacent car park owned by E Lindsey DC	Co-op supermarket and associated car parking	Existing Co-op supermarket in operation	Potential mixed use development site to make more efficient use of land and relate positively to river (possibly in conjunction with adjacent potential development sites)
R	Development site, Charles Street	7273.1	Private	Various – partially derelict. Part existing residential use	Existing buildings facing onto Charles Street and the river have real architectural character and are worthy of conservation. Access constraints off Charles St – partic. for HGVs	Potential mixed-use development site. This would need to be sensitively handled to ensure that character is retained.
S	BT Exchange, Chequergate	59249	Private (BT)	BT Exchange	Existing BT Exchange in operation	Potential mixed-use development site should there be scope to rationalise exchange equipment.
T	Builders Yard / offices, Bridge Street backlands	1559.8	Private	Builders Yard / offices	Existing accommodation in use	Potential mixed-use development site if considered in conjunction with adjacent BT Exchange
U	Former Jam Factory	274	Private	Vacant	Existing structures and chimney	Potential residential development

Early Wins Land in Council ownership

Item	Indicative specification	Approx quantity	Unit cost (£)	Cost (£)
1 Car Parking Proposals Creation of on-street parking with streetscape improvements Northgate Uppgate Coopelgate James Street Kidgate	Stone kerbs Stone pavements Quality street furniture Street trees Coloured resin surfaced carriageway Clay pavest parking bays			171,715 217,913 85,857 120,200 180,300
2 Streetscape improvements Re-landscape Market and Cornmarket	High quality landscape and carriageway treatment Stone finish to carriageway Quality street furniture	3000 sq.m	94.36	283,317
2 Removal/flowering of remaining expanding kerbs in Town Centre		120 lin.m 5 modules	41.62 2,168.58	4,994 10,833
2 Streetscape improvements Junction of Church Street and Eastgate Junction of Eastgate & Northgate Church Street zebra crossing Create 20mph zone in Town Centre	Convert mini-roundabout to signal controlled junction Remove Church Street zebra crossing Re-align carriageways and footways at approaches. Viden footways. Possible signal control Realign crossing at Monks Dyle Head Create 'gateways' to zone Rumble strips Signs Rumble strips' Signage	1 No. 1 No. 50 sq.m 1 No. 1 No. 450 sq.m 50 No. 50 No. 50 No.	30,000 /Pe sum 3,000 /Pe sum 94.36 71 808	30,000 /Pe sum 3,000 /Pe sum 4,719 20,000 /Pe sum 4,045 32,015 48,330
3 Improvements for walking (and open space) Re-landscaping of part of Kidgate open space - site 2 (potential corner house on site of site)	Quality hard landscape (stone) Soft landscape Quality street furniture	75 sq.m 75 sq.m 2 modules	94.36 48.98 2168.58	7,079 3,627 4,333
3 Landscaping of the Bathrooms within context of strategic plan	Quality hard landscape (stone) Soft landscape Quality street furniture Sculpture Possibly open up stream	700 sq.m 2000 sq.m 2 modules 1 No.say	94.36 48.98 2,168.58	66,073 98,720 4,333 10,000 /Pe sum 50,000 /Pe sum
4 Lighting & signage	Lighting and signage in key Town Centre locations such as Market Place and Cornmarket Signs Lighting columns (enslbg elec. supply)	20 No. say 20 No. say	808 1,200	16,120 24,000

TOTAL
1,499,375

Appendix B - Strategic costings of highway-related proposals

Notes:

- 1 Indicative costs are based on tender price index of 357 (1976 = 100)
- 2 Preliminaries @ 11% are included
- 3 Indicative costs are intended to provide general guidance only.
- 4 Professional fees are not included
- 5 Vale Added Tax is not included
- 6 No contingency is included to allow for the unforeseen
- 7 No allowance has been made for re-locating or replacing existing utilities.
- 8 Incidental items, labour, overheads and profits are included
- 9 For the purpose of indicative costing street furniture is priced in modules of benchx1, binsx2 and bollardsx6.
- 10 Street trees are semi-mature deciduous
- 11 Approximate costs are sourced from Spoons Architects Price Book 2004 Edition.

Medium Term Sites

Item	Indicative specification	Approx quantity	Unit cost (€)	Cost (€)
1	Car Parking proposals Queen Street car park improvements (Site 5)	Re-paving and re-arrangement. Edge treatment including paving with quality materials	71	106,500
		Tree planting	1,104	22,080
	Eastgate car park (Site 9)	Street furniture	2,198.58	10,832.90
		Re-paving and re-arrangement. Edge treatment including paving with quality materials	71	42,600
	Tree planting	1,104	80,832	
	Street furniture	2,198.58	4,333.16	
2	Strategic review of traffic circulation			300,000 Per sum
3	Improvements for walking (and open space)			
		Landscape around St James' Church		12,000 Per sum
		Reduce carriageways and re-arrange junctions and traffic control	94.39	94,902
		Quality paved roads and pedestrian surfaces (stone setts)	48.36	70,605
		Soft landscape	2,198.58	17,332
		Street furniture		
3	Mendian Walk			250,000 Per sum
		Signposts		
		Public Art		
		Local enhancements		
3	Other improvements for walking			
		Extend walkway to east and west of steps		
		Quality Paving	94.39	84,951
		Soft landscape	48.36	18,926
		Public art	10,000	10,000 Per sum
		Possibly open up stream		
		New steps from Kildgate car park to New stone paved square below		
		Open up head of stream	280 sq m	28,420
		Re-surfacing/hard landscape		
		Planting	60.0 sq m	56,634
		Extension of lighting and signage strategy throughout Town centre	250 sq m	12,090
4	Lighting and signage			150,000 Per sum
Other car park improvements				
				700,000 Per sum

Notes:

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- 5 Value Added Tax is not included
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- 7 No allowance has been made for re-locating or replacing existing utilities.
- 8 Incidental items, labour, overheads and profits are included
- 9 For the purpose of indicative costing street furniture is priced in modules of benchx1, binsx2 and bollardsx6.
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TOTAL 3,747,911

