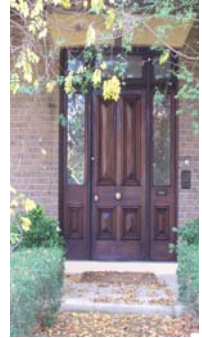


# Camden Town Centre Strategy

June 2008



# Camden Town Centre Strategy

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June 2008

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## PREFACE

Town centres are the most important resource a community can have. As a place to socialise, shop and experience life, they serve the traditional function of the town square or common. At the heart of community life, they are the reason why we come together.

There has been a global trend of transforming and restoring main streets throughout the world as a response to the bland experience offered by shopping malls. In many countries like the USA, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia there are success stories of how main streets have been revitalised to become the hub of community life. This has happened because the main street still offers many unique opportunities not afforded in contemporary town centres.

Camden Town has a main street and much more. The town itself, designed by the Macarthur Family is an entire historic precinct, being one of only a few colonial towns to be developed to a plan. It is also now positioned on the fringes of Australia's largest city - the last of the country towns within reasonable driving distance from the heart of Sydney. This strategy seeks to establish a framework for managing and guiding the revitalisation and development of the Camden Town Centre.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Camden Town Centre Strategy establishes a framework for guiding the future evaluation and development of the Camden Town Centre. The Strategy promotes an approach which facilitates growth and change while preserving the unique characteristics which make Camden special, a unique place and a unique destination.

In order to achieve this, the strategy promotes the following principles to guide the future planning of the town centre:

- P1** Maintain the unique heritage character of the town centre.
- P2** Maintain the rural setting and vistas of the town
- P3** Adopt contemporary design that is compatible with heritage values.
- P4** Permit infill developments.
- P5** Develop an improved public domain.
- P6** Improve vitality by providing spaces for civic functions.
- P7** Provide for cultural and entertainment facilities.
- P8** Provide activities and facilities for all age groups.
- P9** Build partnerships.
- P10** Increase range of activities.
- P11** Present a consistent urban design theme and identity.
- P12** Ensure ongoing economic viability of the town centre.
- P13** Encourage a range of residential and commercial development
- P14** Develop place specific development controls
- P15** Promote niche market and unique destination

A public realm plan is proposed which outlines changes and upgrades to the amenity and facilities of the town. This plan includes a range of projects and upgrades which total \$12,429,178. The plan is however, broken down into a number of discrete projects that respond to community feedback which could be implemented immediately and/or over time as funds become available. Early projects that could be implemented in the short to medium term and provide immediate improvement and benefit include:

- **Town Square (\$549,000)**  
Creation of a quality public space which defines the civic precinct and provides space for civic and cultural activities
- **Argyle Street Median Upgrade (\$411,000)**  
Undertake beautification of the central median including additional plantings and up lighting which complement the existing Jacarandas.
- **Pedestrian Information Signs (\$179,000)**  
Provision of 8 pedestrian information signs in varied locations to assist in marketing, promotion and visitor information. While the cost indicated for 8 signs, a smaller number could be installed and stage further installation as required.

The early projects outlined above total an estimated cost of \$1,139,000.

The costs provided have been prepared by a Quantity Surveyor as preliminary estimates only (as at December 2007), based on concept information.

All projects will be subject to further detailed design and costing at time of implementation.

A summary of recommendations is as follows:

### **Planning**

Planning recommendations are:

- R1** Undertake a review of zoning for the town centre;
- R2** Revise development controls;
- R3** Revise DCP 2006 to incorporate place based controls for the town centre;
- R4** Document heritage considerations and elements in the town centre;
- R5** Investigate alternative funding opportunities;
- R6** Review Signage Policy;
- R7** The Town Centre Strategy should be reviewed regularly.

### **Public Realm**

Public realm recommendations are:

- R9** Adopt a staged approach to implementing the public realm plan;
- R10** Seek partnerships to help implement the public realm plan;
- R11** Prepare detailed design;
- R12** Undertake the preparation of a detailed landscape plan;

### **Partnerships**

Partnership recommendations are:

- R14** Build partnerships with the Camden Chamber of Commerce;
- R15** Build partnerships with other local community groups and business;
- R16** Engage the community in the design of a Camden Town Centre "Motif";

# Introduction

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Camden Town Centre has had a long history and is unique in its physical and architectural qualities.

Urban places are constantly changing. With each successive wave of growth and with each new generation, towns are added to. Some places become synonymous with a particular character, identity, quality or “sense of place”. The Camden Town Centre is such a place.

Over time, all places change. Currently, the Camden Local Government Area (LGA) is experiencing rapid urbanisation. It is projected that the population, currently 52,000, will more than triple by the year 2030. This rapid growth is occurring now and is being reflected in different patterns of development, investment and land use. The changing pattern of urbanisation is, and will continue to affect the role and function of each of the existing and proposed town centres in the Camden LGA.

In recent years, the traditional role of the Camden Town Centre has changed. Once the main commercial centre, Camden has been joined by emerging town centres at Narellan, Mount Annan, larger regional shopping centres in Campbelltown, and further centres planned to be located in the South West Growth Centre. These more recently developed centres offer a more diversified shopping experience, greater retail choice and a more contemporary approach to urban design as well as offering a more attractive location for investment.

The Camden Town Centre has many unique physical and cultural values that can be built upon. It retains a unique mix of period buildings and streetscapes, which present a very defined and cohesive character. These historical values represent assets that can be used to better define, complement and enhance Camden. The town centre holds a niche position in the regional hierarchy of centres which needs to be built upon, whilst retaining its many unique qualities.

## 1.1 Why a Strategy Is Needed

As Camden continues to change, it is important to consider what the future role and function of the Camden Town Centre will be. A strategy for the development of the town centre will provide a direction and framework for management decisions and for prioritising actions.

Such a strategy is aimed at managing and maintaining the character of the town centre while making provision for modern planning and development requirements. The strategy contained in this document therefore seeks to achieve the following:

- Identifying the likely role and function of the town centre into the future;
- Identifying the character of the town centre as a set of constraints and opportunities for future planning;
- Developing strategies to manage the physical character of the town centre;
- Striking a balance between social, cultural, physical and economic considerations and determining a satisfactory physical form for the town centre;
- Identifying emerging issues affecting the vitality and functioning of the town centre;
- Identifying public domain improvements that can be undertaken in the short, medium and long term.

# Background



## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 General**

The current Camden Town Centre Master Plan was adopted by Council in 2000. Since then, the town centre and broader region has undergone significant change. It is therefore timely to review and reflect on what type of place the town centre can and should be in the future.

The Camden Town Centre Strategy seeks to provide a wider context to the planning of the town centre by providing:

- planning principles for the town centre;
- a framework for the implementation of public realm improvements including:
  - a. major “main street” improvements for Argyle Street and John Street; and
  - b. general streetscape improvements for secondary streets.

The main purpose of the strategy is to be able to develop a framework for making important decisions about the future planning of the town centre. The advantage of having an adopted strategy is that it will allow Council to determine the feasibility of potential projects, allow their prioritisation, work programming and budgeting for improvements to the town centre. It will also provide the community, developers and business with greater certainty and guidance about the future of the town centre.

### **Car Parking**

A number of studies have been undertaken in recent years on the availability of car parking in the town centre. This study focuses on urban design and public realm improvement opportunities within the town centre and does not deal in any detail with the broader issues of parking availability. Strategies have been designed and assessed to ensure minimal impact on current parking availability. Some strategies do indicate a very limited impact.

### **2.2 Camden Town - A Brief History**

The plan or layout of Camden has historical significance, reflecting the evolution of early colonial towns in NSW. Up to 1830 plans of towns in NSW were based on simplistic rectangles; examples include Windsor, Wilberforce, Richmond and Newcastle. These towns were however characterised by irregular sized and shaped allotments and irregular street widths. After 1830, regulations introduced by the Surveyor Generals Office were set down for the standardisation of street widths and block sizes which established a generally consistent approach to town planning that then prevailed throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Camden Plan was one of the first privately proposed plans in NSW. Advocated by William and James Macarthur (the sons of John Macarthur), Camden was proposed as a town for the immigrants they were planning to sponsor from Europe and emancipists that had been rewarded for their services. The town generally complied with the standards for town layouts established in 1830, but is somewhat unique in that public and civic facilities were planned for and located on specific parcels of land.

The clearing for the town site was commenced in 1835 and the first blocks of land were released for auction in 1841. The Macarthur's, unlike others at the time, envisaged a truly urban pattern of development from the outset by including sites for St John's Church overlooking the town centre as well as sites for Catholic and Presbyterian churches, a police station and post office as well as an inn, essential trades for the agricultural and building industries.

While there was some growth in the town from the 1840's, primarily in the form of residential buildings, growth was generally slow as a result of a rust infection that affected the local wheat crop during the 1860's.

From the 1880's other major elements were added to the town. The creation of Onslow Park and the opening of the Camden Tramway in 1882, linking Camden with the main southern railway, and a connection to the metropolitan water supply were events benefiting the growth of the town. During the 1890's to the 1930's there was relatively little development other than in the form of cottages. However it was during this period that the town became relatively self-contained and consolidated its identity. The central garden beds (median) in Argyle Street were established by 1926. In 1930 the Council ordered the removal of veranda posts from buildings and mandated brick construction along Argyle Street.

Thus, by the end of the 1930's the town had assumed a very distinct character reflected in a fully consolidated pattern of development and a stock of Colonial, Victorian, Federation and Interwar buildings.

The 1920's and 30's were a time when buildings in Camden were heavily influenced by Neo-Georgian architecture. The built environment within the town therefore has a strong basis in Georgian symmetry both in public and residential buildings. Lesser, but significant themes are seen in a substantial number of simple Federation and Interwar bungalows, which fringe the central core. These effectively frame and establish the setting of the town centre

## **2.3 A Balanced Approach**

What is the future of the town centre? What should it look like? How should it function? What role should it play in the life of the Camden Area? These are all valid questions and central to the future planning and management of the Camden Town Centre.

The Camden Town Centre has a unique heritage and character. The physical qualities of the place are a valued commodity that can be either lost or built upon to make a sustainable future. The underlying concern therefore is the need to maintain physical characteristics, improve commercial and retail vitality while allowing sympathetic development. The Camden Town Centre Strategy proposes an approach to the future planning and development of the town centre that attempts to strike such a balance by:

- Protecting heritage;
- Encouraging future investment;
- Providing guidelines for development;
- Maintaining the mix of services appropriate to a local centre; and
- Enhancing indirect investment from cultural tourism opportunities.

This will be achieved by addressing the following.

- Planning;
- Economic and social activities;
- Urban design principles;
- Additional works and supporting projects; and
- Implementation Framework;

## **2.4 Implementation Process**

The Town Centre Strategy will become a policy of Council. This will allow the implementation of strategy recommendations through various mechanisms over a period of time. This will include the following:

- a) Review of Council's planning controls and processes;
- b) Review and preparation of new place based development controls for the town centre;
- c) Staged implementation of the public realm plan identified in this strategy,

- d) Work programming and budgeting for the implementation of public realm and other improvements over the forthcoming financial years; and
- e) Developing partnerships and funding opportunities for the implementation of a range of supporting projects that are identified in the strategy.

There are a number of stakeholders, who have a role to play in the implementation of the “vision” for the Town Centre. The strategy provides a coordinated framework for the various ways in which all stakeholders can be involved with charting the town centre’s future.

# Analysis

### **3. ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 Issues**

At the end of 2006, Council conducted a number of community workshops on the future planning of the Camden Town Centre. These workshops were attended by people from the community who responded to Council's open invitation and advertisement. A number of key issues were identified which included:

- the perception that the Town Centre was "dying";
- that shops were closing;
- the town centre was no longer competitive;
- that access was insufficient;
- that the Town Centre had inadequate amounts of parking;
- that the public realm; that is the quality of paving, street furniture, lighting and pedestrian amenity need upgrading and improving;
- that there were personal safety issues;
- that opportunities for outdoor dining, public gatherings and entertainment opportunities needed to be improved;
- the importance of retaining the physical character and heritage values as a basis for improving and presenting the town as a desirable destination for a range of activities;
- there was lack of residential development opportunities in the town centre; and
- there are limited commercial development opportunities.

The workshops also identified a number of positive attributes which included the:

- The historic character and heritage of the town centre;
- The "country town" feel of the town centre; and
- Rural setting and context of the town.

In response to these concerns and positive feelings about the town centre, Council embarked on a planning study in 2007 to develop a strategy for the Town Centre, which could be used as a guide for future planning and development as well as a framework for considering such things as public realm improvements.

#### **3.2 New Roles, Hierarchies and Economies**

The Camden LGA has grown significantly over the last ten years and is projected to grow in population to a total of approximately 235,000 people when fully developed. With this growth, the Macarthur Region has undergone significant change in terms of the economic geography of its retailing and commercial centres.

Growth in the LGA has been reflected in a trend towards the development of new centres and the consolidation of activities in other centres more favourably located to take advantage of the major new residential release areas. This has seen a decline in Camden's role as the main commercial, retail and service centre in the LGA.

Camden, while smaller than some centres still retains significant development potential and a unique market niche. It also is a very important local centre that continues to provide services to residents and acts as a centre and focus for outlining rural communities. Some higher order services have in recent times re-located to other centres. Despite this, Camden is likely to experience further residential and commercial growth over time.

Camden should still be considered as an important local centre offering a range of shopping and other services for residential populations within its catchment in a unique environment and atmosphere for short stay visitors.

The balance of retail opportunities available in the centre is to some extent a reflection of the property market, land values, rental structures and returns to capital. While tourism opportunities definitely exist, there is nothing to suggest that current vacancies in the town centre will continue and there remains a strong growth potential within the centre. The Town Centre will continue to operate as a local centre offering a range of services and unique experiences.

The character of Camden marks a significant point of difference with other centres in the Macarthur Region. This is a valuable point of distinction with the pattern of emerging urbanisation in the region. It affords Camden the opportunity to establish a unique place in the hierarchy of local and regional centres. This can be one of a local centre catering for immediately accessible residential communities and as a unique cultural and tourism destination.

### **3.3 Activities, Amenity and Identity**

If given a choice between locations where people feel comfortable and assured and one where they are not; people will choose the former as their preferred travelling destinations. Places, which don't have a clear identity, don't offer a feeling of assurance or are visually confused, are described as not being legible. Improving legibility through a consistent approach to the design of the public realm is a major way in which a recognisable identity for the town centre can be re-established. Similarly, a lack of services or inconvenient opening hours may detract from visitation in the short term. Encouraging people to recognise Camden as a preferred travel destination for a range of activities is therefore a high priority.

Improving the circumstances of the town centres economic, social and physical environment is an important factor in planning the future development, role and function of the centre as well as its promotion. Having reasons to come to Camden is important for the centre's future viability.

#### **Activities**

The range of activities offered within the town centre has declined as a result of economic restructuring and the resulting competition of other centres. Camden's decline in services is more related to the property cycle rather than any fundamental structural flaw. The centre can revitalise itself and is possibly on the cusp of such resurgence with redevelopment of significant sites for commercial and residential activities.

Currently, the centre does not specifically cater for the needs of the full demographic range of residents within its catchment. Areas for improvement include:

- Activities for families
- Activities for children
- Improving conditions for the aged

#### **Children and Families**

The mixture of activities in the town centre does not currently cater for children. Encouraging the development of retailing that targets children could be achieved through:

- Making the public domain more attractive to children through public art projects;
- Building interactive elements into the public domain;
- Arranging entertainment;
- Establishing places within the town centre to host entertainment, civic and cultural events;
- Establishing a local cinema or an outdoor cinema.

Where children go, their parents follow. Catering for the needs of children and parents can have significant impacts on spending patterns and represents a major way in which direct and indirect investment can be encouraged in local businesses.

### **Older People**

Significant opportunities exist for improving the town centre as a place for aged residents. The population within the catchment of the town centre includes significant numbers of the aged. Camden is also the most readily accessible centre of choice for significant numbers of aged residents at the Carrington retirement facility (which is to expand significantly over the next 20 years). Opportunities exist to encourage the patronage of the aged, who are less mobile and require convenient barrier free environments. This can be achieved with the upgrading of the public realm. Improving the public realm, making walking conditions easier, improving seating, removing walking hazards and making it easier to navigate around the town will add to the town's attractiveness to older people.

### **Achieving a Balance**

The town centre can be made more robust by encouraging a range of land uses. Increased residential developments within the town centre; whether it is in the form of discrete residential precincts, medium density and mixed or shop top housing can be used to support commercial activities. All of the land within the town centre is within a 400m radius of the main street. Any residential development will therefore be within easy walking distance of local shops and facilities.

Medium density residential development could be appropriate within the town centre. Achieving a balance between residential and commercial development is therefore a way to ensuring the ongoing viability and vitality of the town centre.

Development that is complementary to the adaptive reuse of heritage properties includes professional suites and offices. This form of development is suitably located away from the main street. The use of properties adjacent to the main street shopping precinct for professional suites and offices is considered to be an appropriate way of expanding certain types of commercial activities and supporting the role and function of Argyle Street. Retailing and 'shop top' activities should be generally retained on the main street. The use of cottages with heritage significance for "boutique" type retailing of a limited nature may however be warranted provided that the cumulative effects of such activities do not detract from the continued viability of the main street as the town's primary retailing precinct.

### **Amenity**

A well-designed and serviced centre provides a quality of experience and functionality that can be used to reinforce people's travel choices. A well-designed and accessible public realm and a range of shops are essential for the functioning of town centres and main streets. Amenity can be improved through:

- Urban design;
- Maintaining character;
- Accessibility;
- Offering extended trading;
- Offering a "boutique" shopping experience;
- Quality public spaces; and
- Entertainment and other cultural activities

### **Identity**

Through urban design, public realm improvements, supporting projects and community involvement, a new identity for Camden can be developed. What Camden can and should be in the future is central to the future prosperity and role of the town centre. The town's identity needs to become synonymous with an experience of Camden as:

- A unique place;
- Having unique experiences;
- Having unique activities;
- As a contrast to the metropolitan area;
- As living history and heritage.

Camden's identity needs to be closely tied to niche opportunities, cultural, entertainment, recreation and tourism based travel.

Building an identity through urban design, the character and history of Camden, coordinated public realm improvements and promotional activities is important for guiding the development and marketing of the town centre.

### 3.4 Public Realm Conditions

The Camden Town Centre's public realm infrastructure, by current standards is now becoming dated and requires upgrading. The amenity of the town centre aesthetically, environmentally and physically is an important factor in influencing people's shopping behaviour and attracting visitors. Key issues affecting the physical condition and amenity of the town centre requiring attention are discussed below:

#### Crossing the Street

Formal street crossings may not be ideally located in relation to desired pedestrian travel paths on Argyle Street. Limited formal crossings at either end of Argyle Street limit safe accessibility to a number of shops and prevent the activation of both sides of the street. John Street does not have formal crossings at the intersection with Argyle Street presenting both a pedestrian hazard and preventing easy movement across the street. Informal crossing on the Argyle Street median strip present a pedestrian safety hazard.



#### Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining is encouraged in the town centre. However, opportunities are currently restricted by:

- Footpath widths which at 3.6m are below the standard 4.0m width;
- Restrictions to pedestrian travel paths;
- Arrangement of barriers;
- Uneven paving;
- Inconsistent furniture.



#### Barriers to Movement

Physical and psychological barriers prevent easy movement across Argyle Street in the form of:

- Width of Argyle Street;;
- Lack of formal crossing points on John Street make crossing the street unsafe;
- Intrusions into pedestrian areas by street furniture;
- Tree planters intrude into pedestrian areas, block travel paths and do not use available space efficiently.





### Design Integrity

A lack of an overall design theme and integrity leads to a lack of visual attractions, inefficient use of footpaths and public spaces and visual clutter that detracts from a positive experience of Argyle Street. Key issues include:

- An inconsistent approach to signage;
- Mixture of light poles on the same street;
- Inappropriate scale of light poles relative to street widths and building heights;
- Mixture of street furniture types and styles;
- Inconsistently designed pedestrian and public areas.



### Paving

There are currently numerous paving styles with conflicting patterns and textures. Other issues include:

- All of Argyle Street is not paved;
- Differences in paving type and footpath levels result in trip hazards;
- Inconsistent paving treatments detract from amenity generally.



### Furniture

Different types and styles of street furniture and infrastructure impacts on the experience of the town centre through:

- Presenting an undefined identity and image of the main street as a place;
- Detracting from the understanding and interpretation of the street because of visual clutter;
- The diverse range of materials, designs and signs interferes with pedestrian navigation, "way finding" and the delineation of pedestrian travel paths.



### **Pedestrian Amenity**

Pedestrian amenity and access is another key area, which requires addressing. Currently, pedestrian travel paths and crossing across Argyle Street are not optimal from an urban design perspective. Two blocks in the main street are not connected with formal crossings, which are inconvenient and prevent adequate service levels. Dead spaces, signage clutter, and inhospitable laneways detract from pedestrian amenity.



## **3.5 Street Character**

The street character and pattern are critical in creating the unique structure and character of Camden. The town's structure is defined by a central main street with civic and residential form buildings, to the edges, encompassed in part of the flood plain.

Many streets in the town, the main street in particular, demonstrate the evolution and growth of the town between the 1840's and 1940's through the distinctive combination of built form.

The elements which contribute to this street character include:

- Generally small lot sizes
- Range of architectural styles and building materials
- Variety in roof form
- Front and side setback patterns.

These patterns within each street should be maintained and reflected in planning and development controls unless historical evidence were to prove otherwise.

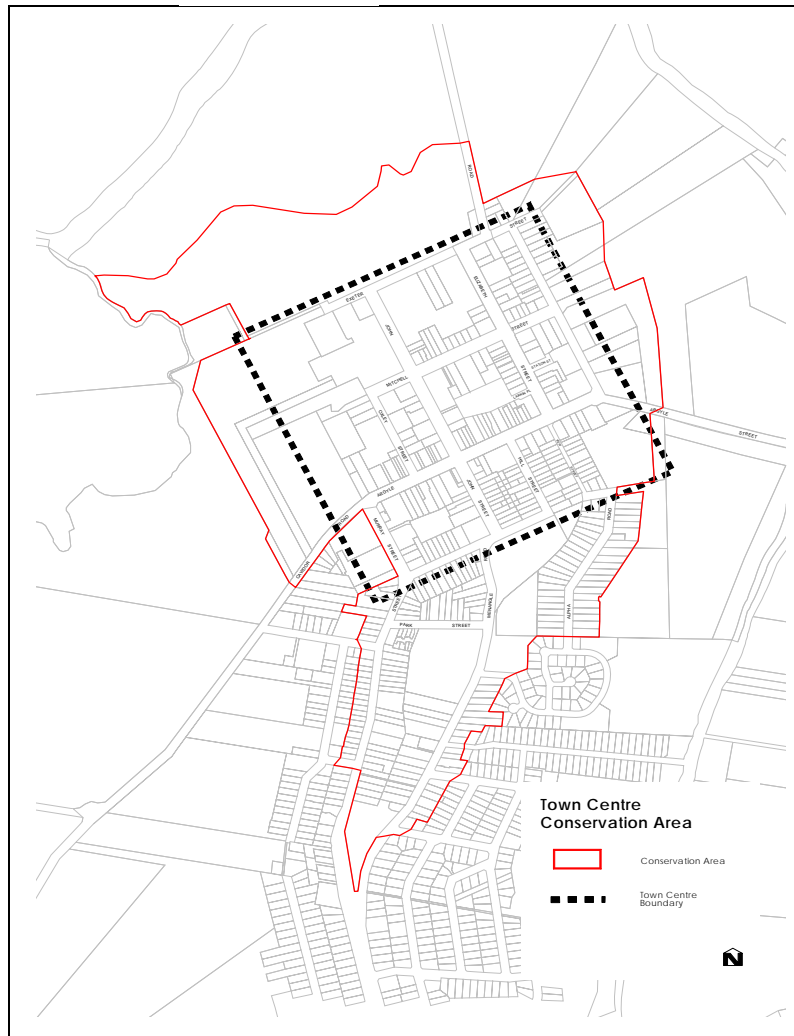
## **3.6 Planning Controls**

### **Zoning**

The town centre is currently zoned 3(e) Town Centre, 3(f) Town Centre Support and Open Space 6(a1) under LEP 45. A new draft comprehensive (LEP) designed to convert current zonings to the new planning template prescribed by the Department of Planning is currently being prepared.

A Town Centre Conservation Area has also been proposed. The Conservation Area extends the current St John's Hill Conservation Area and is aimed at protecting the unique character of Camden, whilst facilitating growth and development in a manner which retains this character. A map of the proposed conservation area is outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**



## Development Controls

Controls affecting the configuration of development sites are a critical factor in determining urban form. These controls need to ensure that development results in desired building outcomes. Within the town centre there are a range of development scenarios and opportunities.

- Main street type small lot commercial;
- General commercial;
- Medium density residential;
- Domestic scale heritage related dual occupancy and adaptive reuse
- Heritage commercial buildings with adaptive reuse opportunities;
- Mixed use development.

Each of these scenarios reflect the types of different site and lot configurations that may be encountered in the town centre.

The existing controls for the town centre are relatively generic and aimed at allowing merit based development. Because of the range of development scenarios and the sensitivity of some places within the town centre a finer grain approach to controls and guidelines to owners may be warranted.

Better relating controls to sensitive development scenarios, atypical development sites or sites constrained by flooding may achieve the following benefits:

- Provide better guidelines for design and assessment of development.
- Improve certainty of outcomes for developers and community
- Reduce complex negotiations during the DA process
- Achieve better urban design outcomes

### 3.7 Characteristics of Good Town Centres

Across the world, traditional town centres are going through a resurgence as places for economic activity and community interaction. Traditional town centres including their main streets and public domains are able to offer a unique shopping and cultural experience that contemporary centres cannot. Numerous, traditional town centres, main streets and strip centres have been refurbished throughout Australia. Examples of recent refurbishment of Church Street, Parramatta and Norton Street, Leichhardt are provided below.

#### Main Street Improvements

##### Parramatta (Church Street)



**Above:** modern elements consistent with heritage buildings



**Above:** wider footpaths allow comfortable dining & good pedestrian paths

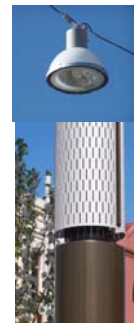


**Left & Above:** contemporary quality detailing adds to character and provides integrated design approach

##### Leichhardt (Norton Street)



Left: light poles and overhead lamps create entrance to the main street



**Above:** lower poles and lights frame Street.

The advantage of a main street is its ability to integrate a mixture of functions, services and people in a single place that offer amenity in a way that has proven successful over many years. The traditional main street already exhibits many of the planning and urban design practices that are trying to be implemented today or are currently being retrofitted to box type malls by offering:

- Interesting experiences and interaction on the street;
- A variety and diversity of shopping experiences;
- Human scale of development;
- A mixture of residential and commercial uses;
- Social and cultural interaction;
- Tradition;
- Drive through environments and ease of parking at grade;
- Access to established infrastructure;
- Physical character rather than bland or homogenous experience

Seeking a balance of land uses, design outcomes and mixture of social, cultural, recreational and economic activities in both a formal and an informal sense is seen as a key ingredient to ensuring the viability and vitality of the Camden Town Centre. Affording these opportunities through planning controls and the design of the public domain is extremely important to the town centre's future and ongoing role as a balanced local centre.

### **3.8 Development versus Conserving Character**

A town centre is made up of the combination of the physical layout of streets, public places, landscapes and building forms. The character of the town centre has been determined in part by the original plan implemented by the Macarthur family, a street grid dominated by two boulevards on John and Argyle streets. These two streets form a crucifix dividing the town east and west, north and south. The streets are wide reflecting the pattern typically found in country NSW, but being particular to colonial street layout practices and standards of the 1800's. Streets interact with a predominant pattern of one and two storey building forms dating from between 1830-1945. Thus the town centre can be interpreted as an historic urban environment in its entirety. It can also be read as the way a country town developed to maturity by the immediate post war period.

The distribution of period and historic buildings, the arrangements of street, and the public domain are all important factors in establishing a unique urban character of the town centre. The town centre also contains a number of buildings dating from the early 1950's to the present. These buildings generally fall outside the period of significant heritage buildings and are contrary to the predominant pattern of development. These buildings represent significant potential future infill development opportunities.

The challenge for the town centre is to manage new development that benefits the community while respecting the essential physical, historical and heritage values that underlie the town's character.

This can be achieved through the conservation of heritage and important period buildings. Buildings without individual heritage value may be redeveloped. However, any development is required to take account of adjoining heritage items and/or the character of the street in which the building or site is located.

Contemporary urban design and heritage conservation practices approach infill development within conservation areas with the following principles:

- Contemporary design which respects its setting and details of significant buildings which surround;
- Use the pattern of the building volumes in the street as a guide to design;
- Retain setbacks;
- Retain the pattern of building footprints as they address the street;
- Permit complementary development at the rear of properties;
- Do not use faux heritage details on new buildings.

### **3.9 A Unique Opportunity**

Within the greater Sydney Region, Camden is uniquely placed as the last town on the Cumberland Plain that is within easy driving distance of the city. Camden town has several important features that make it a desirable place to live, shop and visit.

Camden needs to fulfil all the functions of a local town centre, but because of its unique history and character it can market itself as a specialised centre both at the local, regional and metropolitan level. This might be achieved through:

- a. Providing local services;
- b. Operating as a specialist restaurant, cafe and entertainment/cultural precinct within the local government area and the Macarthur Region; and
- c. As a tourist destination

The key to achieving this specialist function is the relationship between affording improved public amenity, an acceptable physical environment, trading hours, entertainment and overnight accommodation.

# Town Centre Strategy

## 4. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

### 4.1 Key Elements

The Camden Town Centre Strategy aims to provide an integrated approach to the planning and management of the town centre.

In addressing the issues identified during the public workshops (Section 3.1 - page 8), the following key elements are addressed:

1. Urban Design and Development;
2. Heritage conservation;
3. Public realm improvements;
4. Implementation plans;

### 4.2 Principles

The strategy adopts the following principles.

- P1** Maintain the unique heritage character of the town centre.
- P2** Maintain the rural setting and vistas of the town
- P3** Adopt contemporary design that is compatible with heritage values.
- P4** Allow controlled infill developments.
- P5** Develop an improved public domain.
- P6** Improve vitality by providing spaces for civic functions.
- P7** Provide for cultural and entertainment facilities.
- P8** Provide activities and facilities for all age groups.
- P9** Build partnerships.
- P10** Increase range of activities.
- P11** Present a consistent urban design theme and identity.
- P12** Ensure ongoing economic viability of the town centre.
- P13** Encourage a range of residential and commercial development
- P14** Develop place specific development controls
- P15** Promote niche market and unique destination

### 4.3 Land Use

The town centre has significant opportunities for residential and commercial development as well as the potential to support large-scale community and cultural activities. Development opportunities exist in the form of:

- Possible long term development sites;
- Available development sites;
- Adaptable infill building sites;
- Infill sites;
- In some case rear of some heritage sites.

Land with potential future opportunity is identified in the precinct plans on pages 22 – 32.

#### Land Use Mix

Current zonings in the town centre permit a range of uses including commercial and residential uses. There are distinct areas with residential and commercial building types, Argyle Street being the main location for the latter. In order to permit a transition between zones and to allow the town centre to respond to market conditions it is proposed to encourage adaptable building forms which could be utilised for both residential or commercial uses in transitional areas and key locations.



This would have the effect of:

- Allowing owners to let buildings on a residential or commercial basis depending on market circumstances and demand;
- Encouraging mixed and or residential or commercial uses in the heart of the town centre through new place based development guidelines;
- Bringing more people into the town and thereby increasing vitality and safety;
- Appropriately reinforcing and conserving the character of key parts of the town centre.

### **Flooding**

The character of Camden is defined by the floodplain which surrounds the town on three sides. The floodplain has in the past, protected the town from encroaching development and forms a unique backdrop, reinforcing its rural nature.

The role and function of the floodplain, together with the amenity it provides should be preserved. It does however, on certain sites, act as a significant constraint to development

The potential extent of such flooding is documented in the Camden Flood Risk Management Policy and can be viewed on Council's website [www.camden.nsw.gov.au/development/flood](http://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/development/flood) information.

## **4.4 Urban Form**

Maintaining the underlying structure and urban form of Camden is critical for maintaining the physical character and heritage significance of the town centre. A structure plan which outlines current conditions is presented in Figure 10.

The Department of Planning, under the new zoning template, requires a more generic approach to land use zoning. The urban structure and form of the town centre could therefore be negatively influenced without the support of more specific and tailored "place based" development controls. Currently, place based controls and guidelines do not extend to the entire town centre with only the View Street area subject to them at this point of time.

### **Place Based Development Controls**

The benefits of more specific placed based development controls and guidelines include:

- Residential and commercial development is guided and encouraged in appropriate locations;
- Supporting the role of the main street as the main commercial area;
- Supporting greater residential development opportunities and therefore the local centre generally;
- Greater guidance for the development of heritage sites;
- Providing greater certainty in terms of desired built form outcomes;
- Protects the character of the town centre;
- Providing a cohesive approach to the development of sub precincts and;
- Reducing uncertainty and providing clarity to the development process.

### **Prescriptive Development Controls**

How development controls operate together affect development outcomes. The balance of controls needs to be considered. Development controls should be reviewed in terms of typical development scenarios affecting:

- Commercial buildings
- Residential buildings and residential sub precincts
- Heritage sites

Matters recommended for review include:

- Height limits for different development scenarios and sites;

- Site coverage controls;
- Floor space controls for retail uses in residential areas;
- Urban design principles which deliver on a desired outcome.

New development controls would be based on the precinct plan outlined in figure 11 and precinct guidelines contained in Sections 4.6.

### **Review of Building Heights**

In some parts of the town centre, there is the possibility for considering moderate increases in permissible building height. In some locations 3 storeys with suitable roof forms and siting could be successfully incorporated into the existing streetscape and would not detract from the overall character and design principles of the town centre. For sites affected by the 1 in 100 year flood, appropriately designed buildings with additional height to facilitate the raising of habitable rooms above flood levels would be one way of utilising this land provided safe access to flood free land can be facilitated. Taller buildings could allow increased residential development without impacting on character of more sensitive 1 and 2 storey residential areas. Opportunities to introduce taller landmark elements on prominent sites should be investigated in more detail as part of a future revision of planning controls affecting the town centre.

## **4.5 Precinct Plans**

The strategy presents nine (9) precincts as the basis for future planning as outlined in Figure 11. The plans provide principles for site design, public realm improvements and indicative building heights.

### **Precinct 1 - Main Street (Figure 12)**

Argyle Street is the main commercial precinct within the town centre. The precinct is the subject of proposed Public Realm improvements in the town centre. The intention is to reinforce the role of the main street. A range of infill opportunities exist and pedestrian connections should be reinforced.

### **Precinct 2 - Civic (Figure 13)**

The Civic Precinct offers an opportunity to provide a Town Square, which can be reconfigured for a range of uses. Key elements involve the establishment of formal and informal public spaces, which can be reconfigured on a temporary basis to provide for a range of community, entertainment and civic activities. The main proposals for the precinct are:

- The provision of a formal presentation area in front of the “Macaria”;
- Widening footpath in front of “Macaria” building to provide for a small Town Square;
- Formalised pedestrian crossing between the “Macaria” building and the Camden Library connecting to adjoining Council car parks;
- Installation of removable bollards in John Street to temporarily close the street for public events and outdoor cinema;
- Installation of facilities for temporary shade structures in association with the Town Square treatment.

### **Precinct 3 - Camden High School (Figure14)**

The Camden High School Precinct offers significant development opportunity in a key location within the context of the town centre. The plan identifies urban design opportunities for a connection between St Johns Church, the proposed Town Square, the Camden Town Farm and the Nepean River and other development principles.

### **Precinct 4 - Camden Pool and Public School (Figure15)**

Camden Public School Precinct identifies potential regeneration opportunity on the site of the Camden Pool. The plan also identifies the importance of pedestrian connections and reinforces the role of this precinct in forming part of the visual connection from the Town Farm to St John’s Church.

### **Precinct 5 – Entrance (Figure 16)**

The Entrance Precinct has an important role in defining the town. There are a range of opportunities to redevelop and revitalise this significant entrance to the town.

**Precinct 6 - Mixed Uses** (Figure 17)

The precinct is currently a mixture of uses marking a transition between more formally designed precincts. Current uses should be reinforced with development sensitive to residential street frontages opposite.

**Precinct 7 –Arts and Culture (Mixed Use)** (Figure 18)

The precinct can be considered as a location for the development of cultural activities combined with a modest residential component. As the land is flood prone the range of uses may be significantly restricted. Existing houses might be adapted for community arts facilities and or as private studios.

- Complementary activities to the adjoining town farm;
- Introduction of town entry treatment on Macquarie Grove Road;
- Possible through block pedestrian access with redevelopment.

**Precinct 8 – Hill Street** (Figure 19)

The precinct has some limited development potential through the adaptive reuse of buildings and or non-intrusive development at the rear of properties. Principles should encourage development at the rear of properties while retaining streetscape character and significant views, including those from outside town.

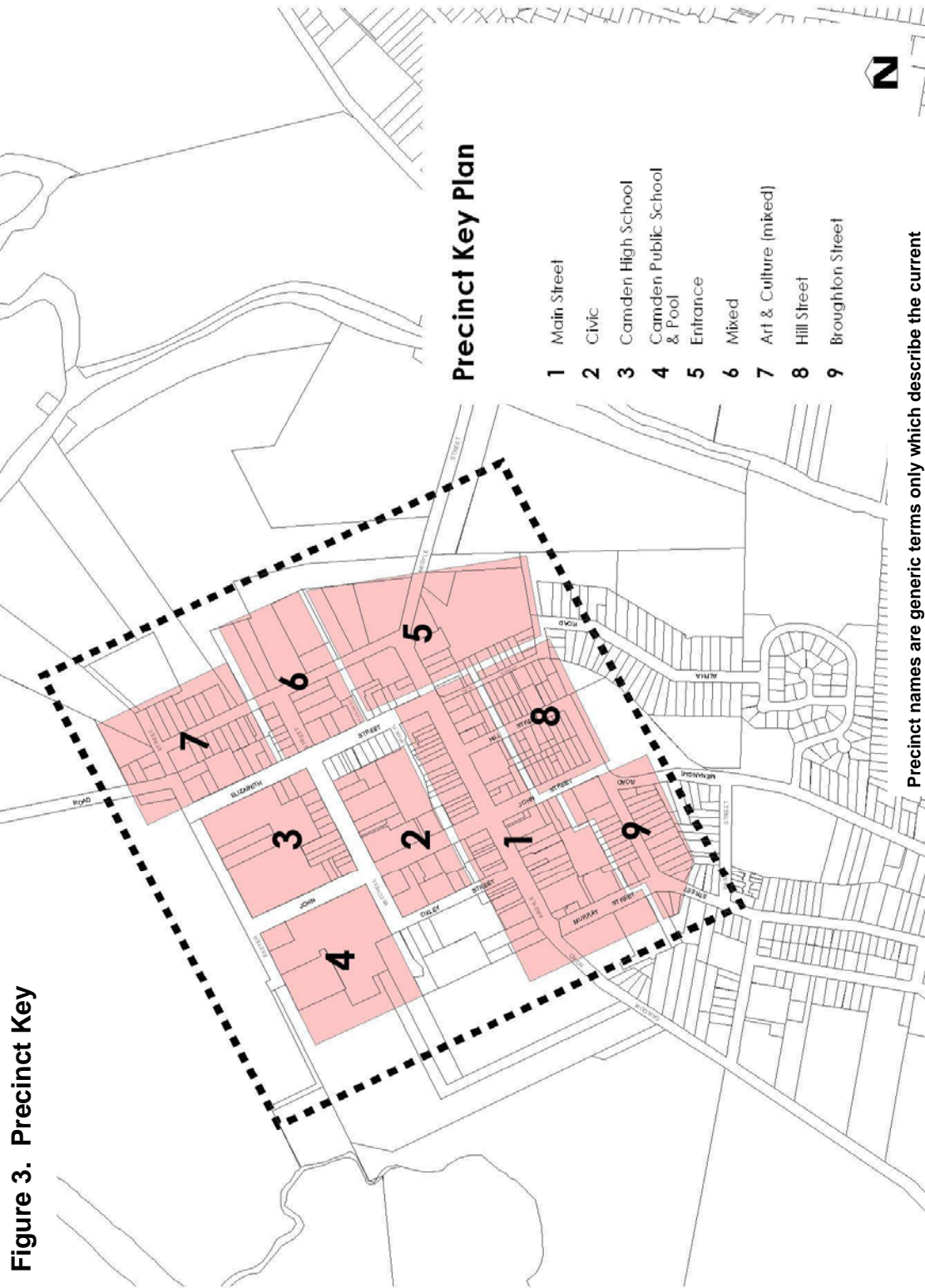
The figure indicates the current car park configuration only and therefore, development opportunity exists at the rear of the properties fronting Hill and John Streets.

**Precinct 9 – Broughton Street** (Figure 20)

The precinct has some limited development potential through the adaptive reuse of buildings and or non-intrusive development at the rear of properties. Development potential at the rear of properties adjoining the Council Car Park. Development may address the car park giving the lots a dual frontage provided it does not compromise the ultimate development potential of the car park.



Figure 2. Structure Plan



Precinct names are generic terms only which describe the current predominant land use. The terms are in no way intended to impact on future development opportunities of individual properties. The relevant LEP and DCP outline the permissible land use and associated development control.

Figure 4 Precinct 1 – Main Street

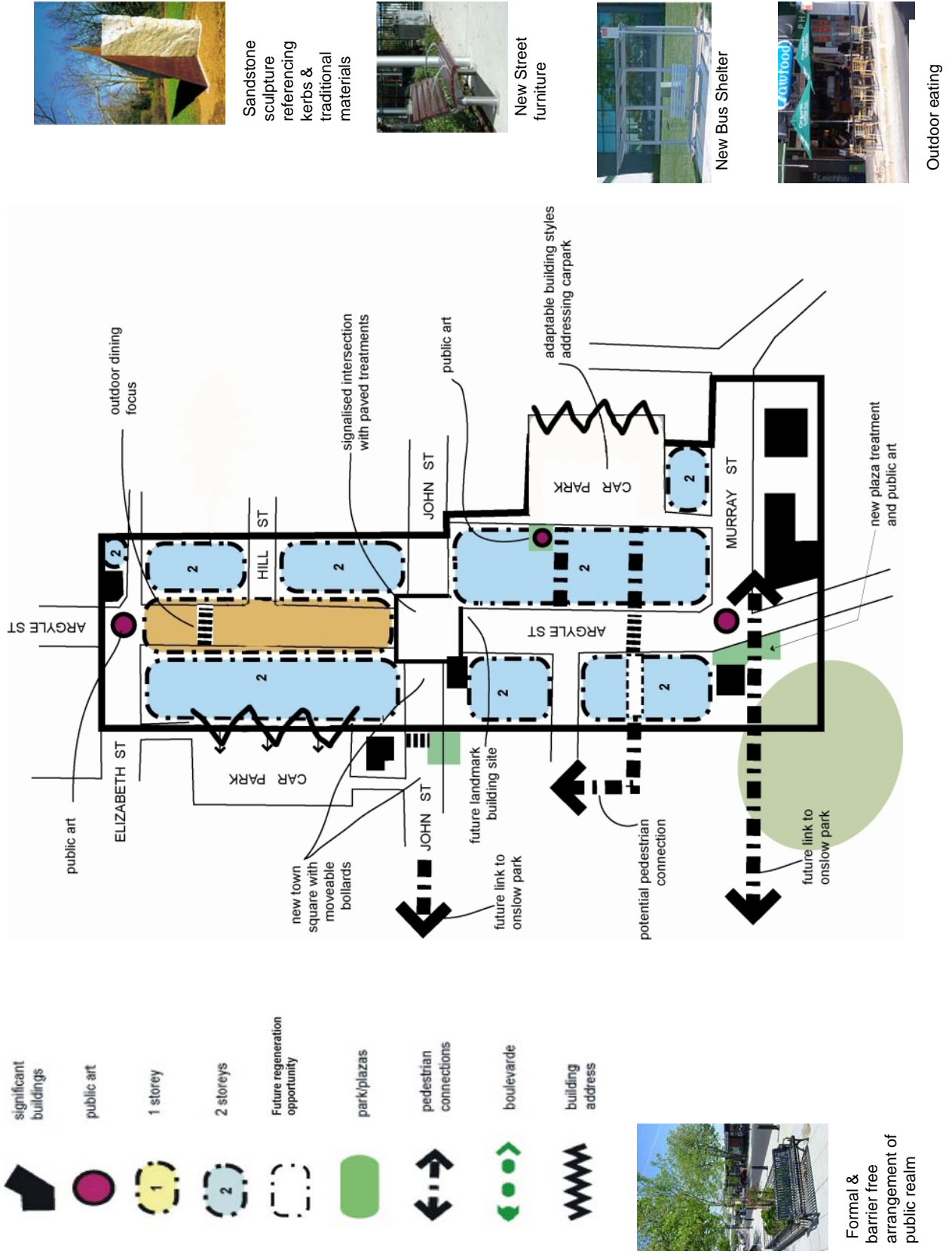


Figure 5: Precinct 2 - Civic

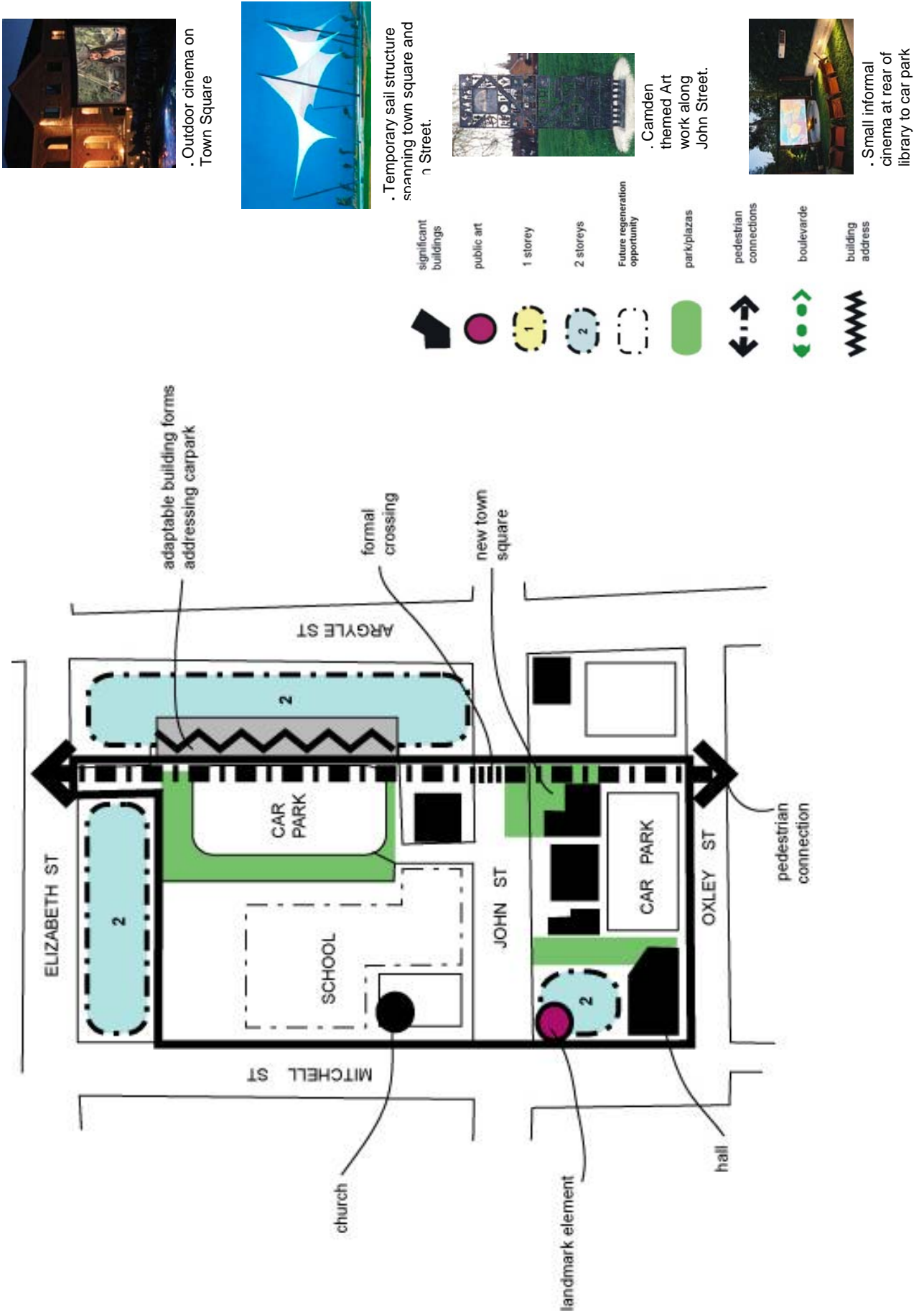


Figure 6: Precinct 3 - Camden High School

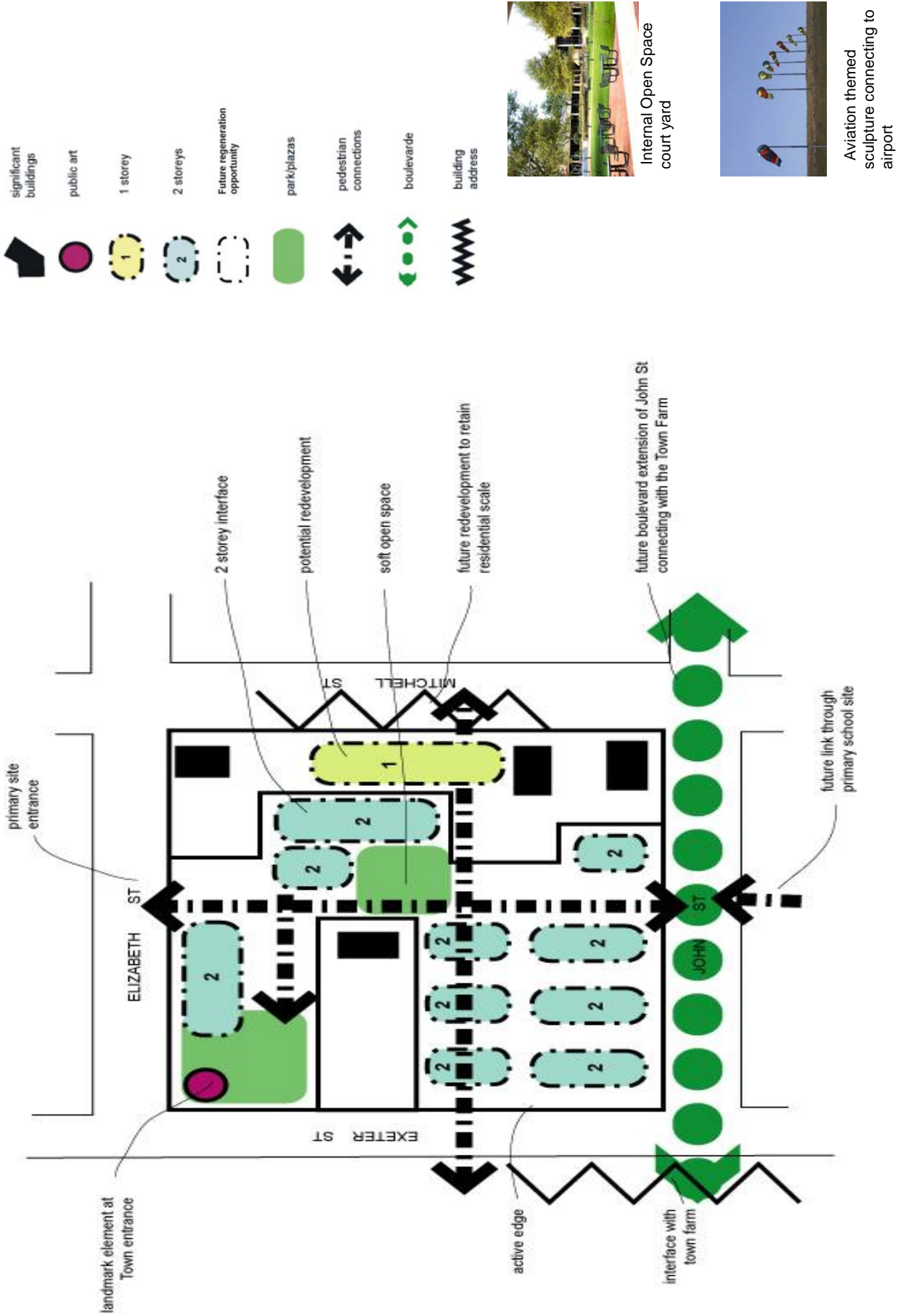




Figure 7: Precinct 4 – Camden Public School and Pool

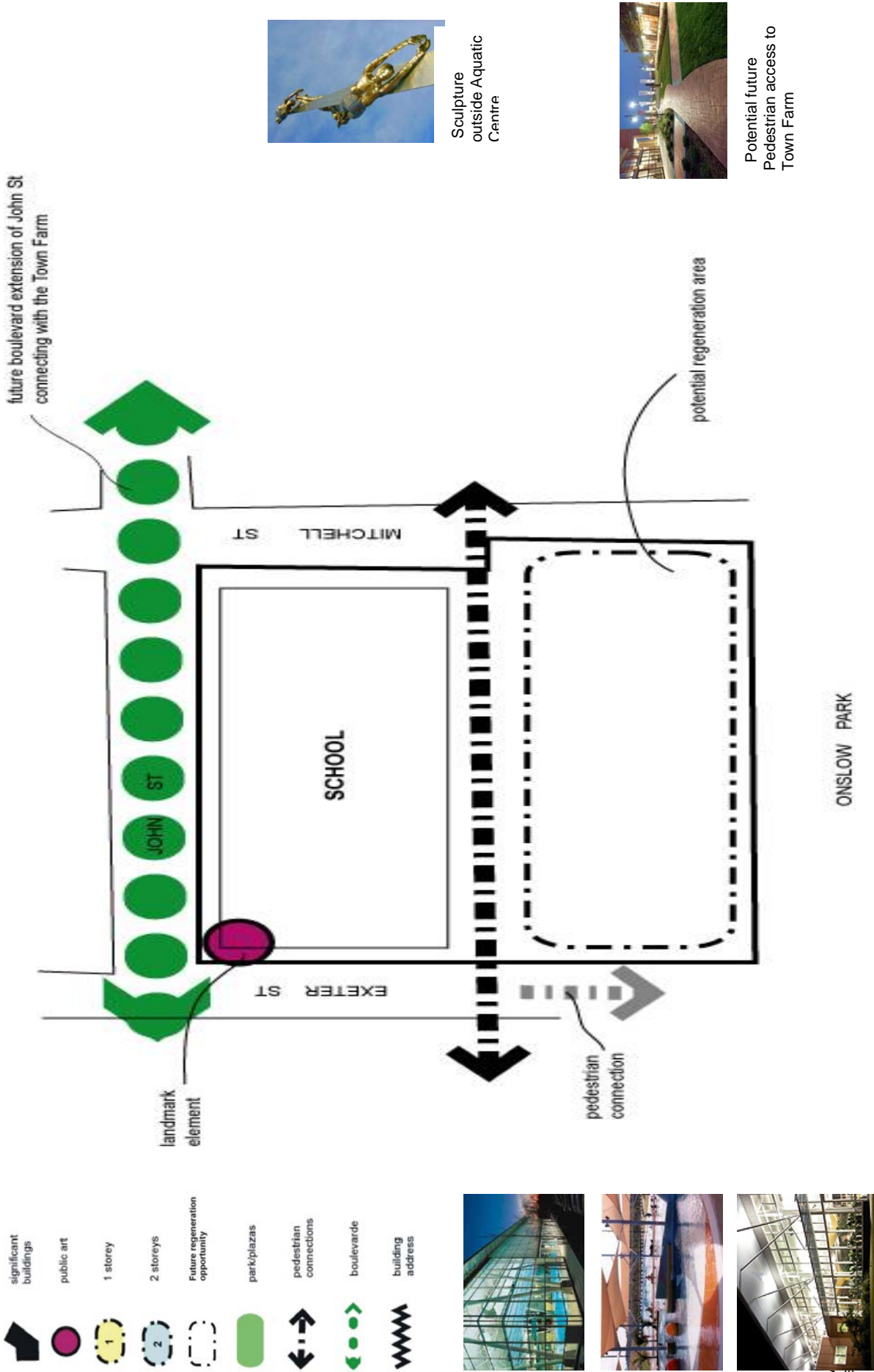
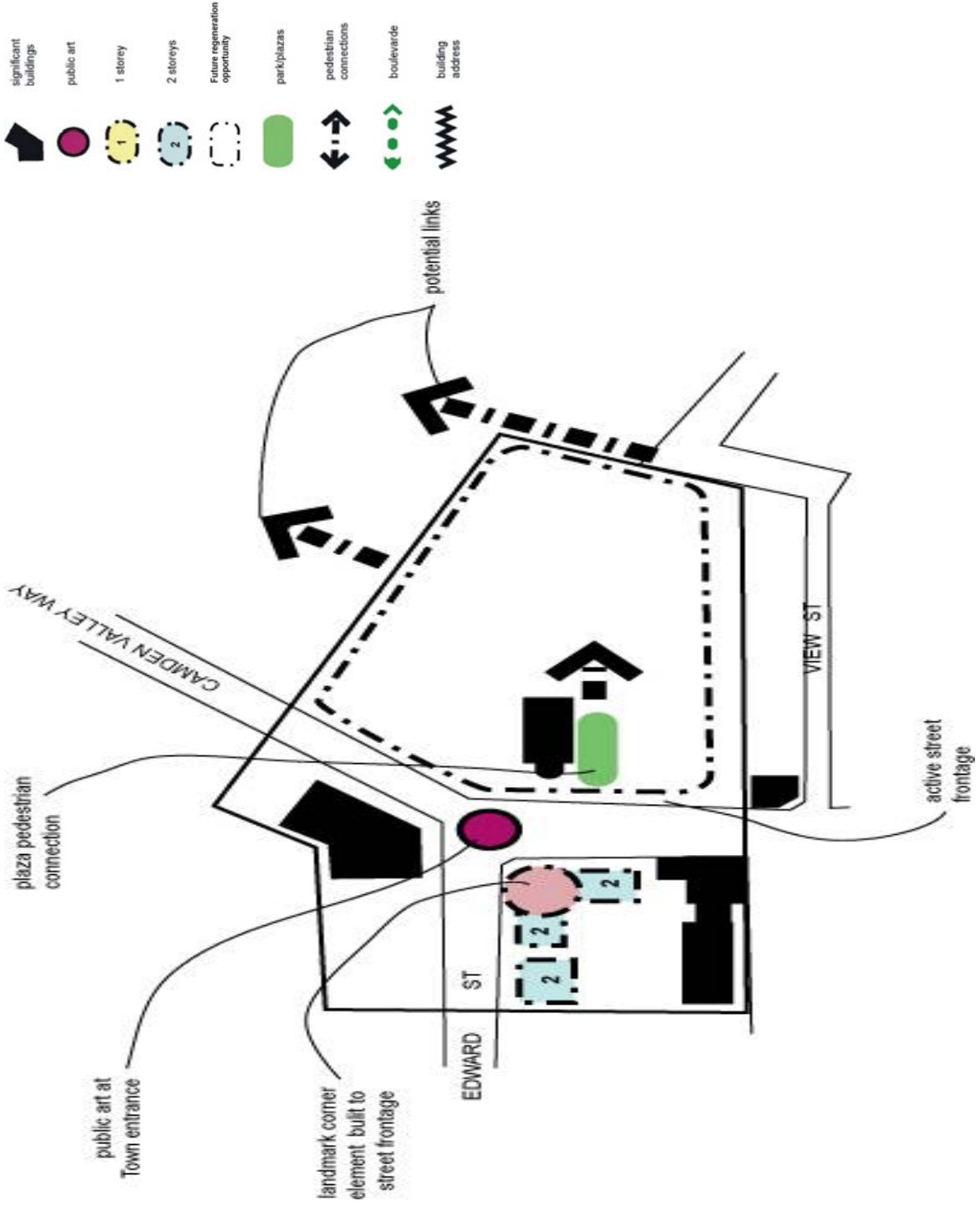


Figure 8: Precinct 5 - Entrance



. Entrance sculpture on roundabout



. Camden Themed Sculpture

Figure 9: Precinct 6 - Mixed

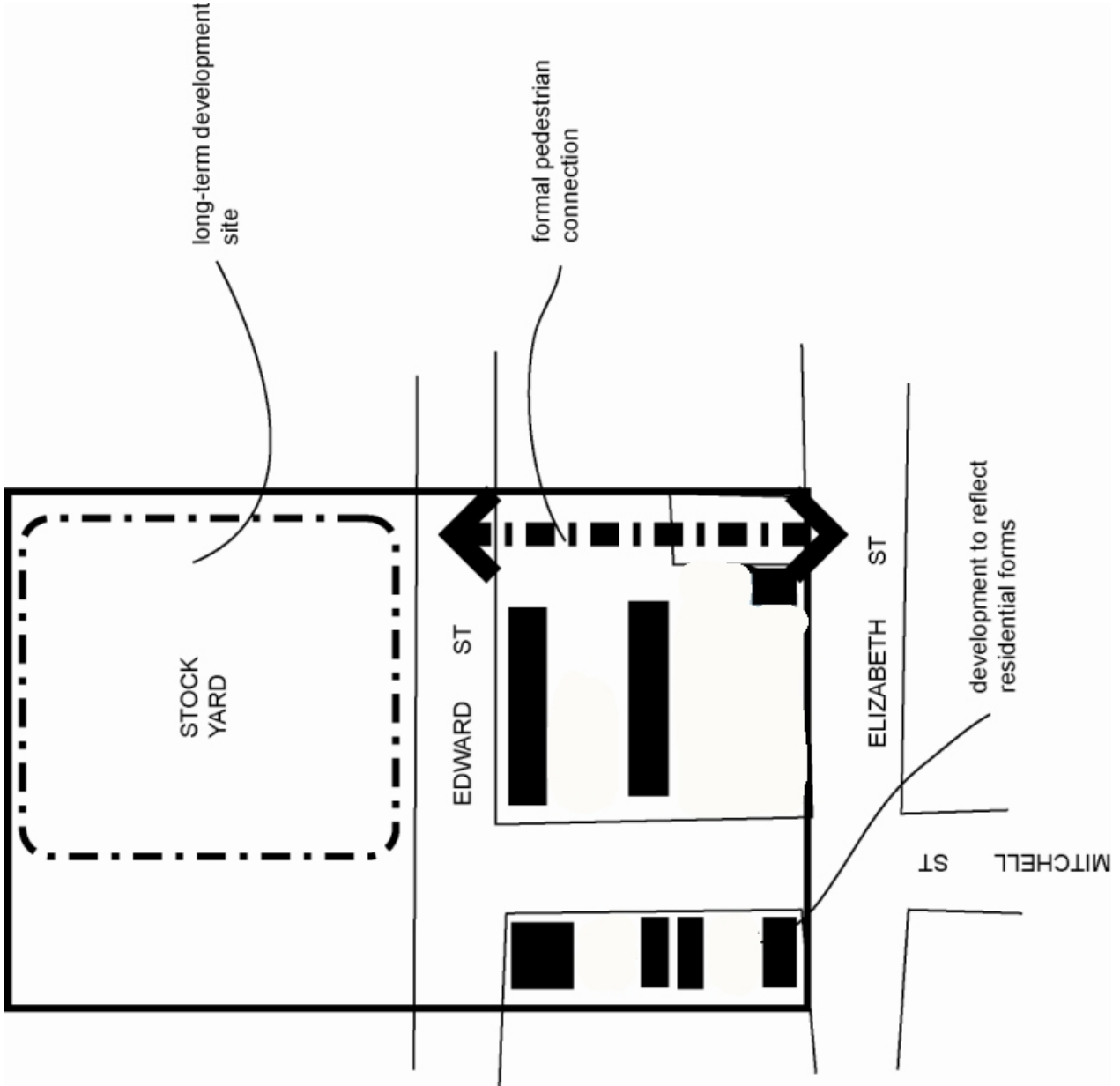
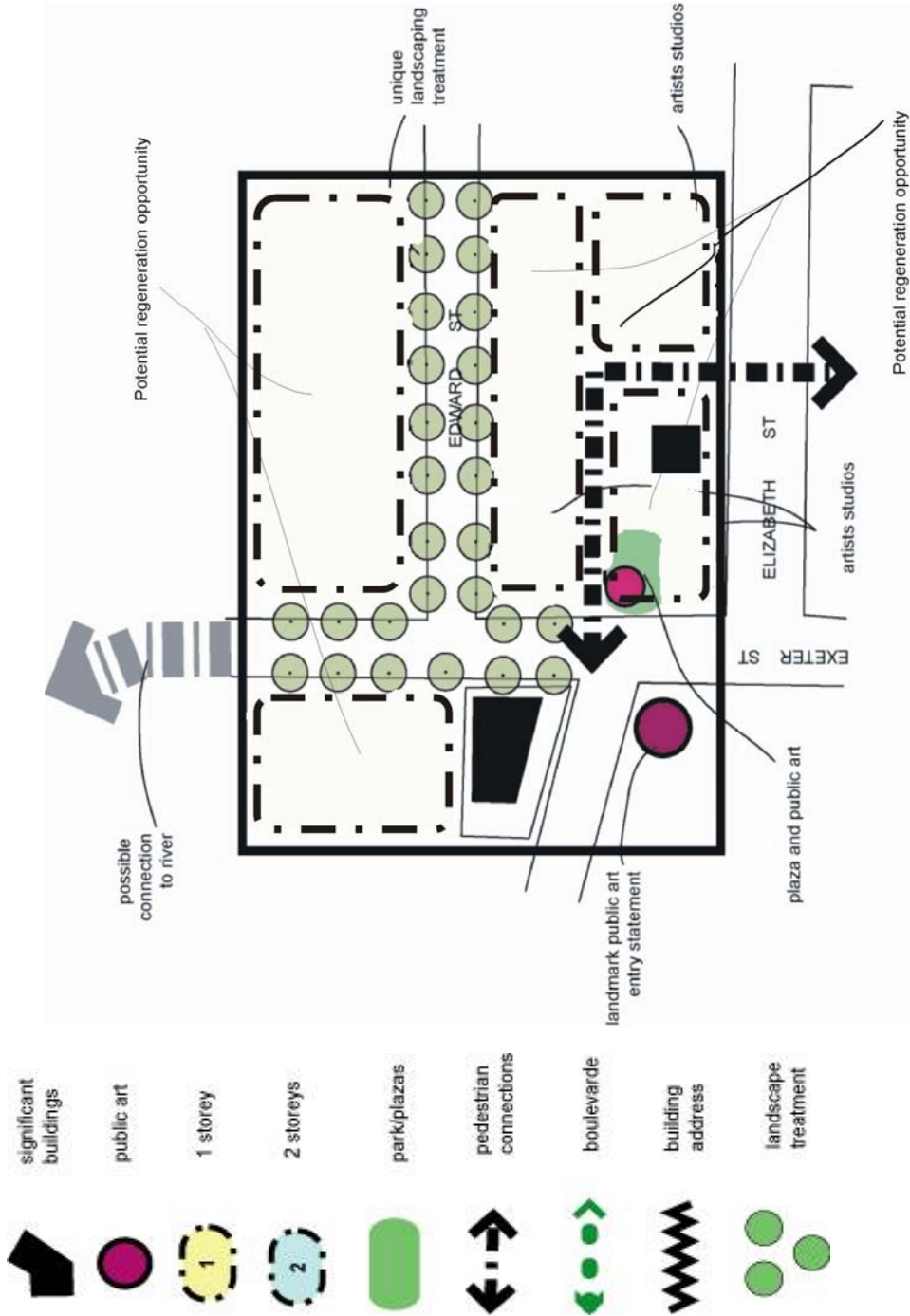


Figure 10: Precinct 7 – Arts and Culture



Urban Scale entrance artwork or



Arts & craft activities, informal spaces



Artists & Artisans studios with residences above & sacrificial ground

Figure 11: Precinct 8 – Hill Street

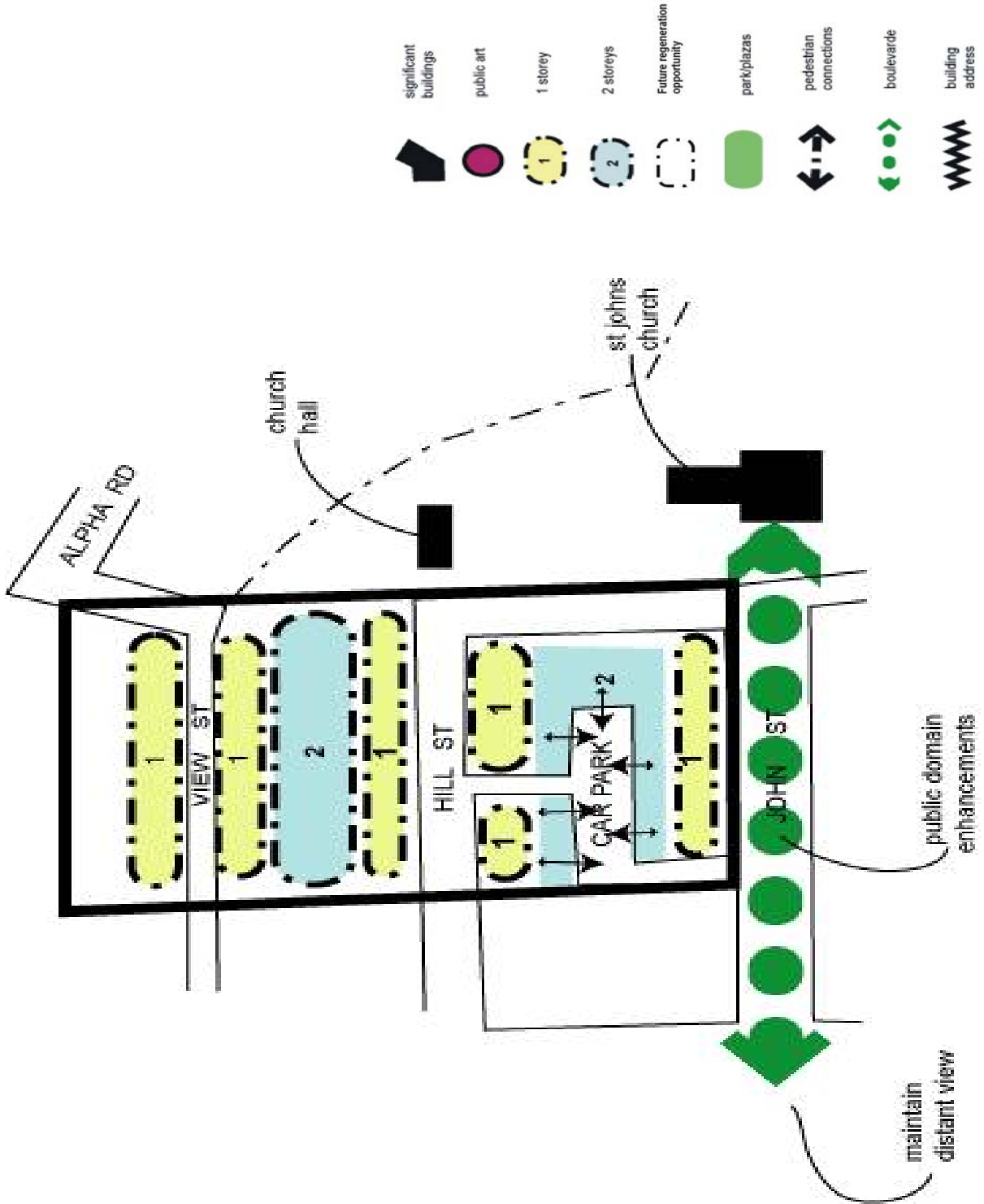
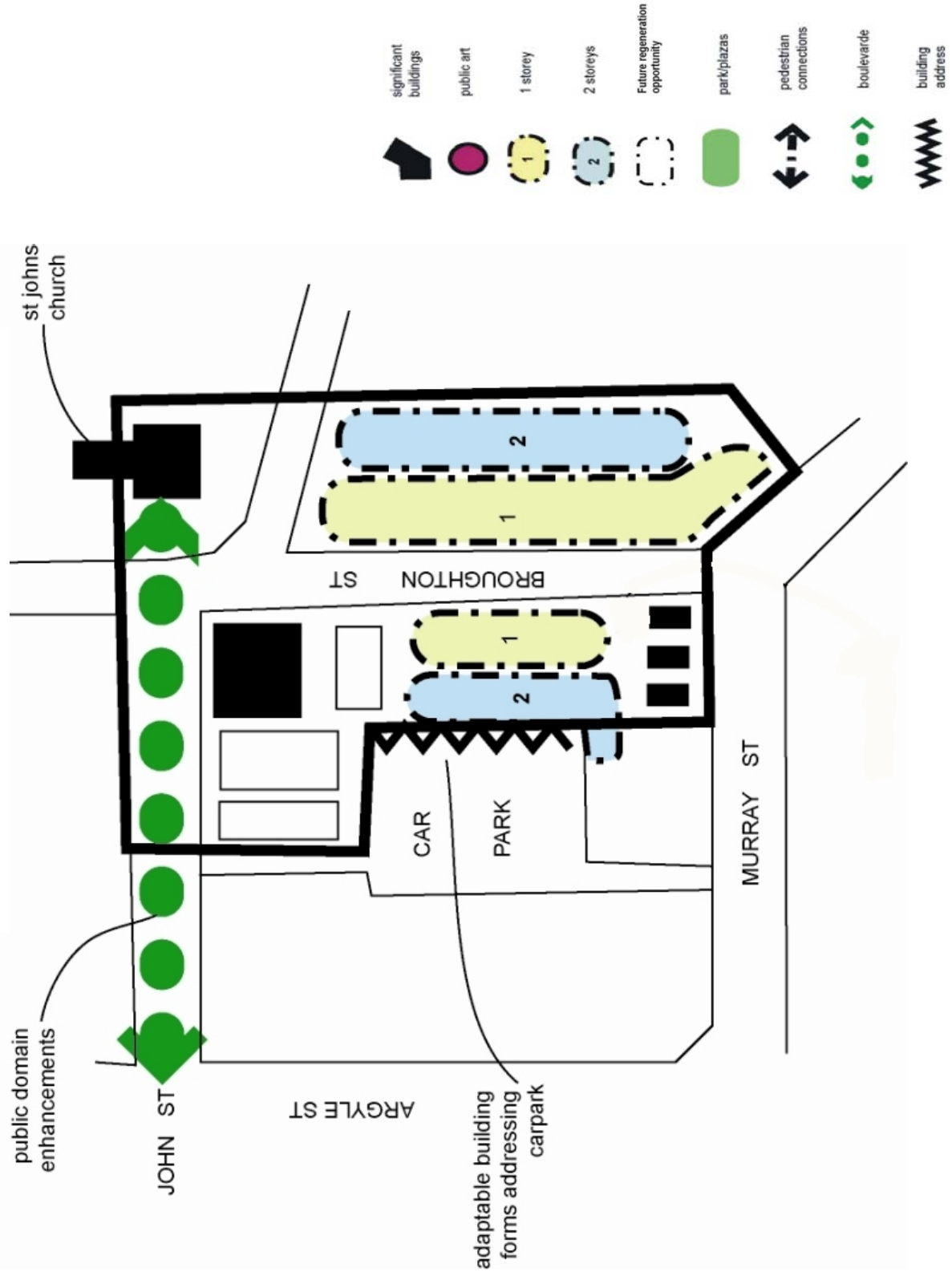


Figure 12: Precinct 9 – Broughton Street



# Public Realm Plan

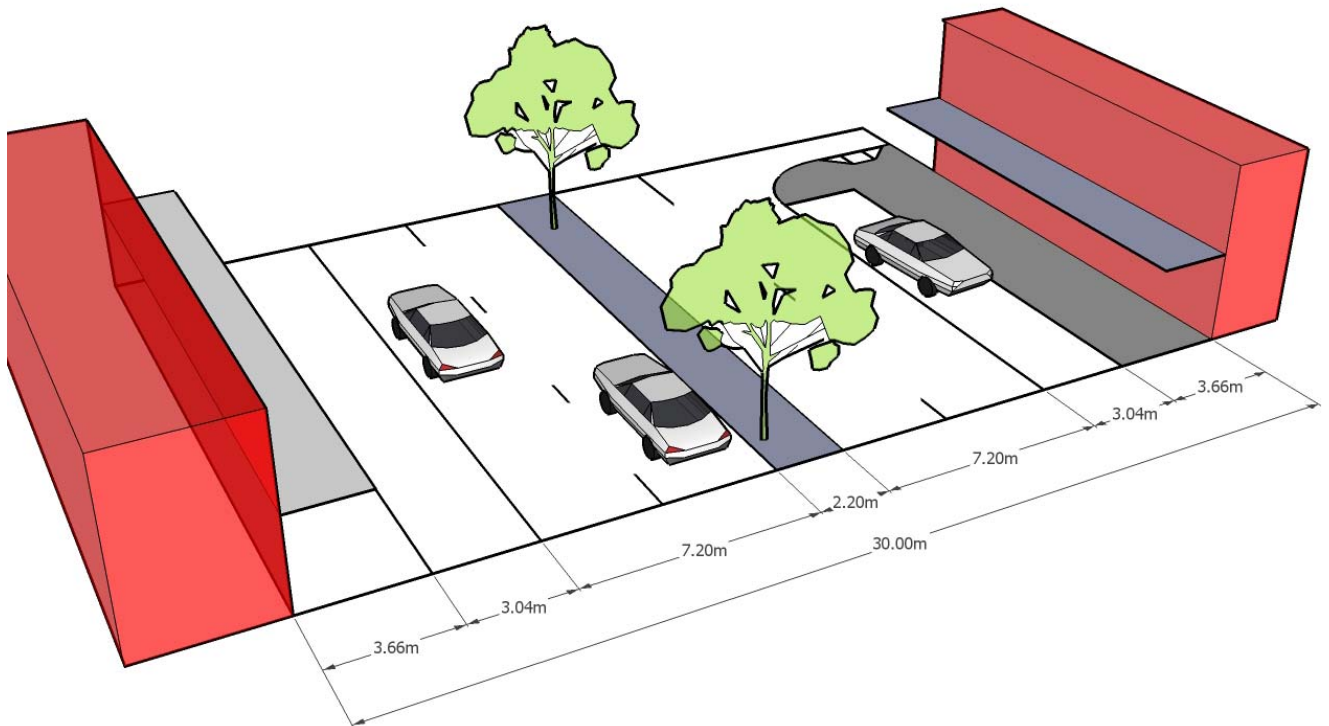
## 5. PUBLIC REALM PLAN

A major component of the Town Centre Strategy is a public realm plan designed to provide staged long-term enhancements to the town's physical environment. Three options with different street configurations for Argyle Street were feasibility tested which included a traffic assessment. The findings of the testing program have been used to create a preferred public realm plan for staged implementation.

### Argyle Street

Argyle Street is the primary street within the town centre and the focus of significant proposed "main street" public realm improvements. The street is 30m wide and its current configuration is shown below in Figure 13. The current configuration of Argyle Street provides sufficient space for the consideration of a range of public realm options and future street configurations for Argyle Street.

Figure 13: Argyle Street - Existing Conditions





## 5.1 Testing of Options

In order to develop a feasible public realm plan, three public realm options were developed for the proposed main street improvements on Argyle and John Streets. The three options represented minimal, moderate and major changes to the existing configuration of Argyle Street. The options tested were as follows:

**Option 1** - Public domain upgrade including two additional street crossings. Key elements include:

- Removal of informal crossings;
- Two additional formal crossings;

**Option 2** - Public domain upgrade with 1 - 3 intersections signalised. Key elements include:

- One to three signalised intersections;
- Retention of median;
- Two additional formal crossings;

**Option 3** - Public domain upgrade, three signalised intersections and lane reductions. Key elements include:

- Three signalised intersections;
- Removal of median;
- Removal of informal crossings;
- Reduction to two lanes in each direction;  
(either 2 travel and no parking or 1 travel and 1 parking in each direction)
- Reduced parking on Argyle Street;
- Widened footpaths by 3.0m.

The three options are presented in **Appendix B** and are compared and contrasted with an alternate proposed option which provides for accommodation of the elements proposed in the 3 options in Table 4 below.

**Table 1: Comparison of Main Street Options**

Element	Option 1 1 parking lane 2 travel lanes	Option 2 1 parking lane 2 travel lanes	Option 3 2 travel and no parking or 1 travel and 1 parking in each direction	Proposed Alternate Option 1 parking lane 2 travel lanes
Streetscape	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Median	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bicycle racks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Existing Pedestrian Crossings	Yes	No	No	No
New Pedestrian Crossings	No	Yes (2)	No	Yes (2) relocated mid block
Traffic lights	No	Yes (1-3)	Yes (3)	Yes (1)
Pedestrian traffic	Not improved	Improved	Improved	Improved
Footpath widening	No	Yes(600mm)	Yes (1 lane/3.0m)	Yes (600mm)
Reduction in lanes	No	No	Yes	No
Reduction in parking	No	No	Yes	NO

## 5.2 Traffic Assessment

Transport and Urban Planning Pty Ltd were commissioned to undertake a traffic assessment of each of the three public realm schemes for the main street and to help assess and finalise a preferred scheme for implementation. Transport and Urban Planning Pty Ltd advised:

*An assessment of the three options proposed indicates that Option 1, whilst affording short term benefits at the detriment of existing and future traffic options, is unlikely to be a longer term viable option when traffic delay and pedestrian safety factors are considered and costed.*

*Option 3 offers improved pedestrian amenity on the footpaths at the expense of kerbside parking. Removal of the central median is not supported with retention of marked foot crossings (MFCs) in Argyle Street for reasons of safety. Widening of the footway and removal of the kerbside parking (39 spaces) is only supported if parking is readily available elsewhere.*

*Therefore Option 2 is favoured, particularly signals at John Street over the longer term with improved safety and service levels for pedestrians and minimal impacts on traffic operations / on street car parking.*

*A combination of Option 2 and 3 indicated in table 1 as a proposed alternate option, would also be supported, subject to a road safety audit of the proposal. Option 2 (or part thereof) is in the longer term likely to offer safer pedestrian controls and improved traffic management while not compromising existing parking provisions in Argyle Street*

## Key Findings

The assessment of the three main street options highlighted the following:

- Current mid block crossings are potentially hazardous and will become more dangerous as traffic volumes increase;
- The retention of the central median is recommended for pedestrian safety reasons;
- Signalisation of the John and Argyle Street intersection was recommended.
- Signalisation of other intersections at Murray and Elizabeth may be warranted in the long term;
- At least 2 travel lanes in each direction are required on Argyle Street. One travel lane and 1 parking lane would not be feasible;
- If the footpaths were widened to include all of the existing parking lanes it could only be justified if the 39 car spaces that would be lost could be found elsewhere in the town centre.
- Removal of existing mid block crossings are recommended in conjunction with signalisation and the provision of 2 additional relocated pedestrian crossings.
- Pedestrian crossing demand west of John Street may warrant a higher order of traffic controls – signals or mid block pedestrian signals in the long term.

## Signalisation

The Traffic study indicates that the performance of Argyle Street will deteriorate in the medium term with negative consequences for traffic queuing between John and Murray Street and pedestrian safety. This will occur as traffic volumes grow and because 80% of existing morning peak traffic and 87% of afternoon peak traffic has a genuine need to use Argyle Street. The traffic study indicated that the John and Argyle Street intersection during the afternoon peak period was at capacity and that any incidents would cause excessive delays. It was further indicated that pedestrian movements during the afternoon peak also caused extensive queuing and delays and that there were, as a result pedestrian safety issues.

The study indicated that the signalisation of the Argyle Street and John Street intersections offered the maximum benefit in terms of pedestrian safety and managing traffic flows. It was also noted that signalisation of the Murray Street and Elizabeth Street intersections may also be required in the very long term depending on demand. However it is possible that the signalisation of John and Argyle Street will provide an acceptable level of service well into the future. One set of signals would suffice until such time as demand warranted further intervention which is expected to be not sooner than 20 years time.

## **Alternate Routes**

The traffic study made an assessment of possible alternate routes for through traffic in the town centre as a way of managing future traffic volumes on Argyle Street. The study concluded that either an opening of the intersection at Argyle Street and Oxley Street or diverting traffic through the Camden Show Ground Site would not offer any appreciable benefit to traffic management in the town centre. Using the show ground for any additional traffic had other negative aspects (impacts on pedestrian (safety and amenity) that outweighed any benefit. Alternative routes to the south of Argyle Street, on Hill and Broughton Streets and Menangle Road have limited capacity and are through residential areas. These three options, on the advice of the traffic consultant were consequently not considered as viable traffic management solutions and were not developed further in the public realm plan.

## **5.3 Evaluation**

### **General Evaluation**

Considerations generally affecting the urban design opportunities for Argyle Street and John Street are discussed below.

#### **Pedestrians, Traffic and Signals**

The traffic assessment indicated that significant queuing would continue in Argyle Street and would become worse over time. This will lead to continued traffic and pedestrian conflicts, which are already significant, and at their worst between 3.00pm and 6.00 pm.

While, current arrangements are satisfactory in terms of volumes, they are not optimal in relation to pedestrian connections, travel paths and amenity. The effectiveness of a main street depends on managing the pedestrian environment satisfactorily. It is therefore expected that queuing and pedestrian conflict will increase significantly over time.

The optimal treatment for alleviating this is the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of John and Argyle Streets which provide for safe pedestrian movement.

#### **Bus Stop Locations**

Current bus stop arrangements on the corner of Argyle Street and John Street may not be in the most suitable location. Relocating the bus stop on John Street would free up congested public space and would make better use of it by improving public amenity. It is proposed that bus stop locations be investigated further and be subject to more detailed design studies as part of the detailed design of the public realm and as part of updating precinct planning controls.

#### **Footpath Levels**

Significant benefit can be achieved by improving pedestrian amenity by even footpaths. Footpaths in the main street are not level and in a many cases represent trip hazards. As part of any paving treatment for the main street levelling the footpaths must be undertaken, this represents a significant cost but is an essential work that must be undertaken prior to the installation of new paving and street furniture

### **Services**

The main street's footpaths are dominated by numerous servicing pits and other servicing infrastructure. These pits may be able to be consolidated or removed and should be attempted in order to reduce disruption to new paving and produce good quality pedestrian areas. The myriad of services provided under the footpaths adds significantly to the cost of footpath reconstruction.

### **Street Lighting**

Light poles should be relocated to avoid interference with awnings and heritage facades where possible. This may only be possible with:

- Widening of footpaths;
- Incorporation in landscape blisters;
- The adoption of alternate pole designs, which might include lights being suspended across the street.

As a result there may be additional benefits to be achieved by widening the current footpaths by up to another 600mm on each side of the street.

### **Footpath Widening**

Practical footpath widening on Argyle Street with the retention of the central median considered being necessary or pedestrian safety is limited to three options. The footpath can be widened by:

- 600mm on each side of the street by reducing existing parking lane width to the minimum RTA standard;
- 800mm on each side of the street by reducing the width of all lanes to the RTA standard width;
- The width of a lane (3.66m) on each side of the street under Option 3 by removing the existing parking lane but this would not allow parking on Argyle Street where the footpath was widened

The widening of the footpath by the width of one lane would have significant impact on parking in the main street, it essentially being excluded from wherever the footpath widening was to occur. Such an arrangement would require two travel lanes in each direction. A single parking lane and single traffic lane, on the advice of the traffic consultant was not feasible.

### **John Street Pedestrian Crossings**

There are no formal crossings on John Street and this represents a significant pedestrian hazard and barrier to movement.

### **Safety**

Safety is expected to be improved through the introduction of safer design principles in all future developments. Increases in the number of residents within the town centre and increased activity are expected to provide better natural surveillance.

### **Signs**

The visual amenity of the main street is compromised by public signage clutter. A revised approach to signage design and control is considered appropriate.

### **Pedestrian Safety**

The Argyle Street median strip offers a pedestrian refuge that benefits safety. It is recommended that the landscaped median strip be retained and also better resolve pedestrian crossing arrangements to maintain safety.

### **Barrier Free Environment**

Barriers to movement affect the amenity of Argyle Street. The locations of crossings are not easily found or are inconvenient, as they require a substantial deviation from the desired line of travel.

### **John and Argyle Street Intersection**

The current intersection configuration is a major constraint on the future development and enhancement of the town centre. The traffic assessment has identified the intersection as the most important one in the town centre and that it will become increasingly inefficient without signalisation. The signalisation of this intersection is recommended as it would also benefit pedestrian access, travel paths, connection across Argyle Street and improve pedestrian safety and increased public space.

### **Evaluation of Options**

Each of the three public realm options for the main street that were tested was feasible, but none offered the best combination of benefits versus cost.

There are minimal benefits to be achieved by Option 1. Option 1 improves amenity only, but full benefits in terms of additional public space will not be achieved. Option 1 offers no improvement in terms of the traffic and pedestrian performance and it will only be a matter of time before the signalisation of the John and Argyle Street intersection will be necessary.

The traffic assessment indicated that Option 2 offers the best short-term proposal or as an alternative a combination of Option 2 and 3 might be considered. Option 3 would require the loss of all parking on Argyle Street in order to retain two travel lanes in each direction. A single lane in each direction and parking even with an alternative traffic through route was not considered feasible.

**The best option for the main street public realm plan is considered to be the combination of Options 2 and Options 3 (the proposed alternate option) with a single signalised intersection at the corner of Argyle and John Streets. This Option or preferred plan is also supported by the traffic consultant.**

### **Town Square**

The preferred urban design scheme also proposes the construction of a small Town Square between the “Macaria” building and the Camden Library in John Street in the “Civic Precinct”. The Town Square would reinforce the quality of the existing civic precinct, offer quality open space and provide opportunity for a range of community and cultural events. This will involve the loss of 12 angled car parking spaces on John Street in the immediate vicinity of the “Macaria” building.

The design of the Town Square must be sensitive to its heritage setting and the importance of the buildings to the character of John Street and Camden.

The loss of these spaces is considered to have limited impact on the overall amount of parking opportunities in the Town Centre. The return benefit is expected to be substantial, while parking impacts can be offset through the adjustment of parking times on John Street to increase the availability of short-term parking.

## **5.4 Public Realm Plan**

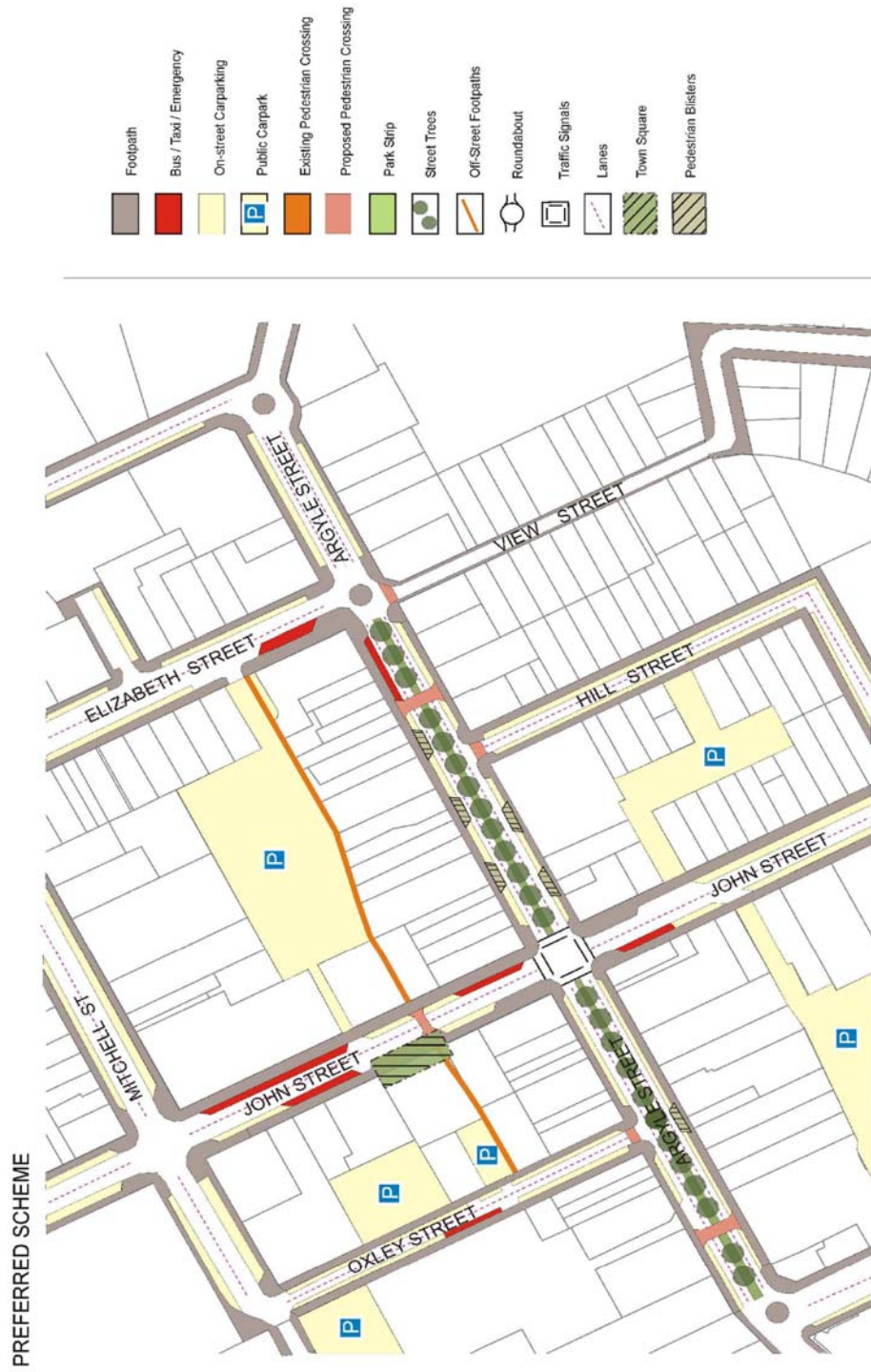
A main street public realm plan has been developed from the testing, evaluation and refinement of three main street public realm options and the traffic assessment of those options. The proposed Main Street Public Realm Plan is presented In Figures 22 to 25.

The main street plan implements:

- Introduction of new town square arrangement on John Street as depicted in Precinct Plan 2, to allow staging of outdoor cinema, community events and ceremonies and the provision of quality open space within the town centre;
- Single set of traffic lights at the intersection of John and Argyle Street requiring the removal of roundabout and revised intersection design and relocation of existing pedestrian crossings to improve mid block crossing conditions.

- Retention of current lane arrangements;
- Levelling and widening of footpaths by between 600mm and 800mm;
- Retention and planting of central median to continue to provide safe refuge for pedestrians but in a more limited locations than the current situation.
- Removal of informal pedestrian crossings and replacement with thresholds (intersections of Argyle with Elizabeth, Oxley and Hill Streets);
- Provision of a formal crossing between the “Macaria” building and Camden Library as part of the Town Square;
- Provision of footpath blisters in appropriate locations (approximately 5) for the purposes of outdoor dining opportunities. This will result in the loss of 2 car parking spaces per blister.
- Installation of pedestrian information signs.

Figure 14: Public Realm Plan



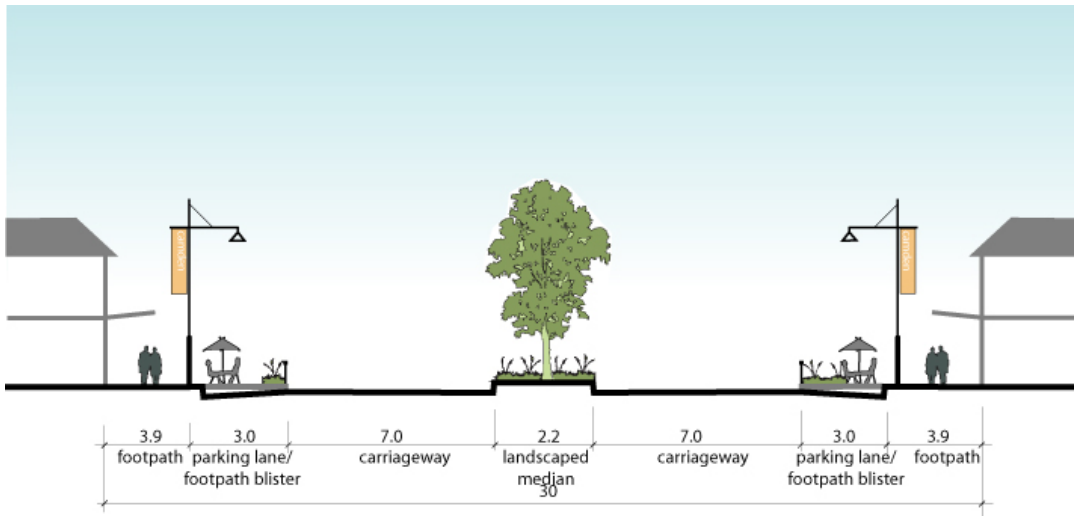


Figure 15: Argyle Street - Section

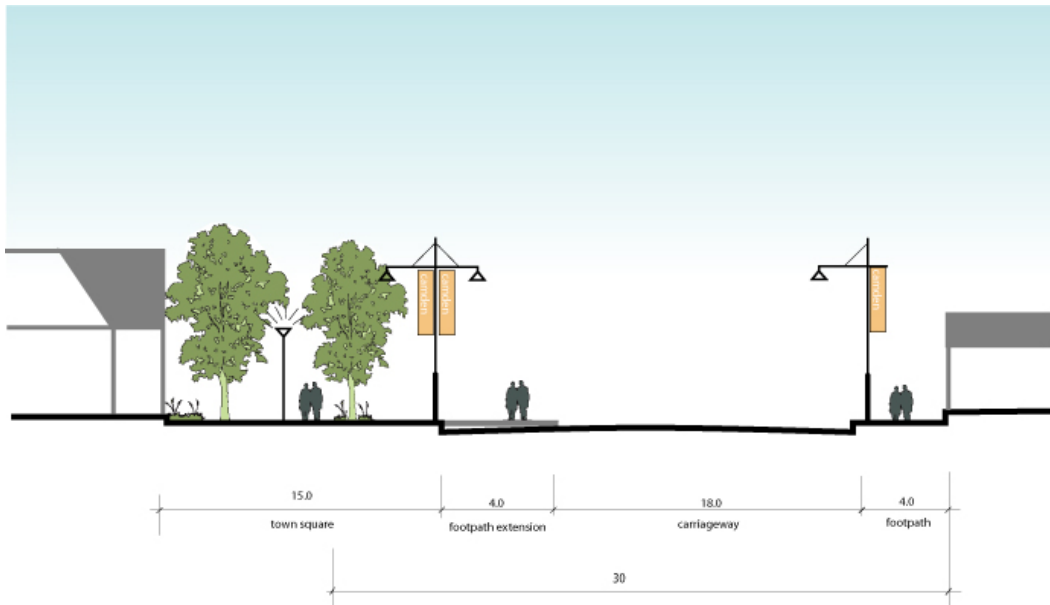


Figure 16: Town Square, John Street – Section



Figure 17: John Street – Section



## 5.5 Public Domain Palette

A contemporary approach to the selection of a desirable range of paving, street furniture colour scheme and landscaping has been adopted for the town centre.

Details of types and quantities for each improvement are provided in the Public Realm Plan and Palette included as **Appendix C**. Examples of the new streetscape elements proposed for the main street public domain are presented below in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: New Public Domain Elements**

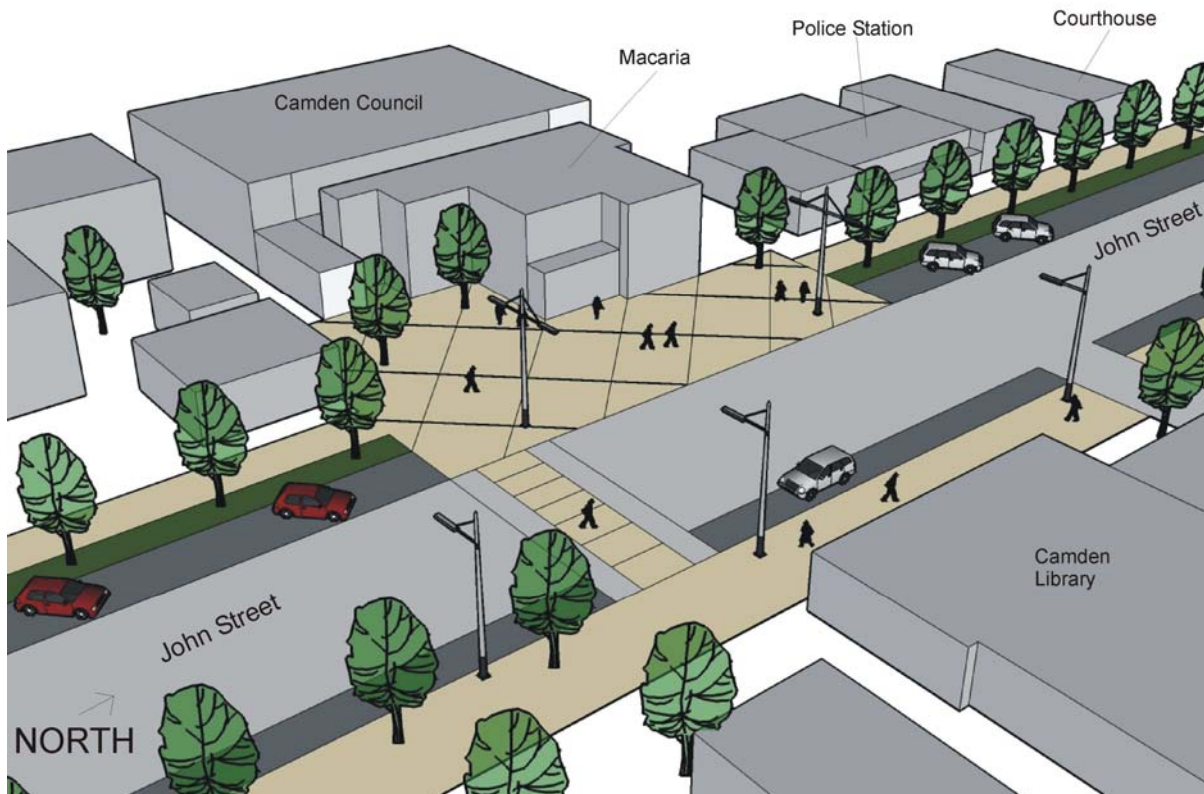


## 5.6 Key Projects

A number of projects have been identified for the implementation of the public domain plan. Two key projects have been identified as being important for the future sustainability of the town centre. These projects are:

- Camden Town Square (Figure 19); and
- John and Argyle Street Intersection upgrade (Figure 20);

**Figure 19: Key Project - Camden Town Square**



### Camden Town Square

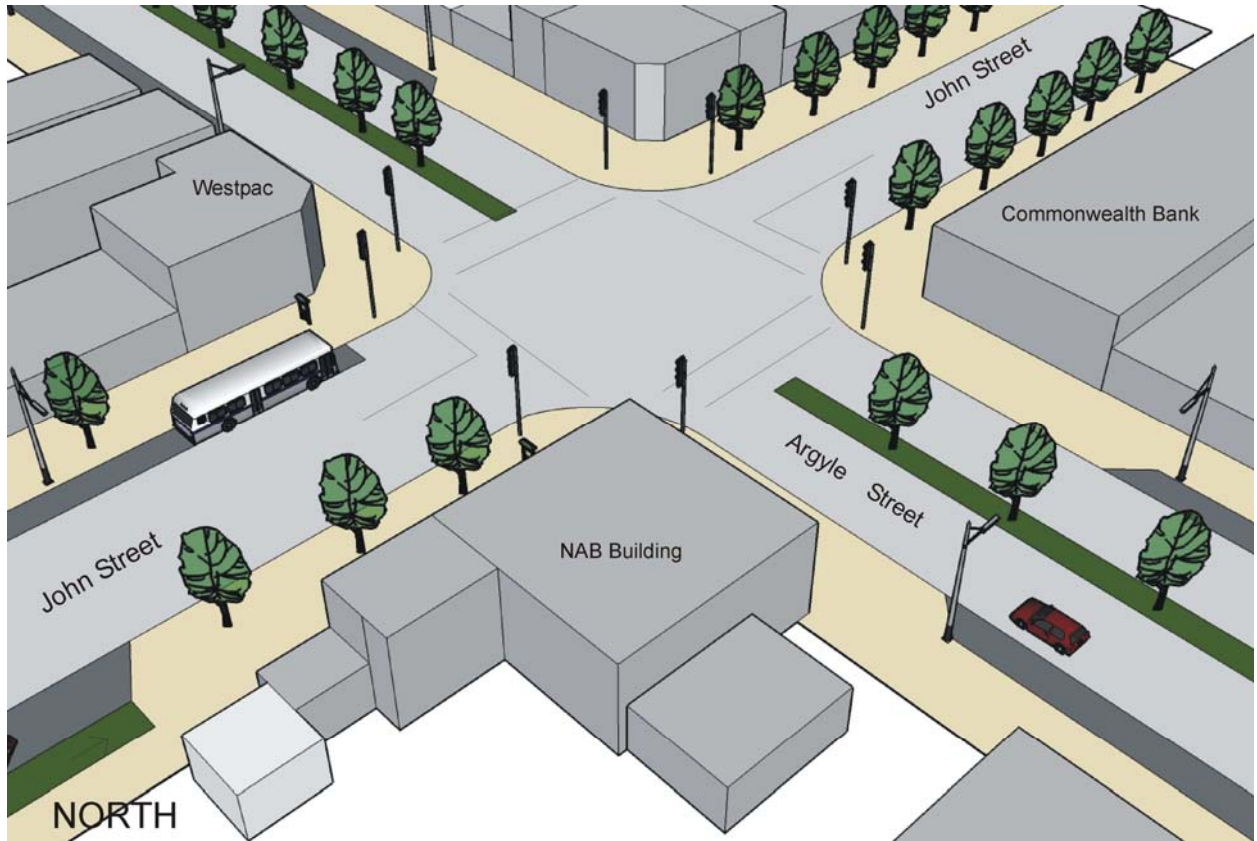
#### Key Elements

- Relocate council signs;
- Relocate monument and wagon;
- Temporary bollards to close street as required
- New paving design
- New Paving
- New bus shelters
- New seats and furniture
- Remove 12 car spaces
- Alter short term parking
- Possible future shade structure

#### Advantages

- Builds on and increases existing public space
- Achieves desired square & new pedestrian crossing;
- Creates civic precinct with library and museum
- Allows space for civic ceremonies & other cultural events
- Provides flexible public space
- Creates connection between St. Johns Church

**Figure 20: Key Project - John and Argyle Street Intersection Upgrade**



**John St Intersection Upgrade**

**Key Elements**

- Relocate council signs;
- Relocate monument and wagon;
- New paving design;
- New furniture and landscaping;
- Removal of 12 car spaces
- Bollards to temporarily close street for civic events
- Relocation of existing pedestrian crossings.

**Advantages**

- Creates focal point to town centre
- First stage of wider upgrade to Argyle st
- Improved pedestrian crossing
- Activates both sides of Argyle St
- Optimal pedestrian travel paths
- Manages traffic
- Reduces traffic queuing
- Safer pedestrian environment

## 5.7 Costs and Staging

The costs for the public realm improvements have been prepared by quantity surveyors on the basis of the concepts prepared. All projects will require detailed design and costing at time of implementation.

The total cost for the implementation of all projects is substantial and estimated to be \$11,396,930. The total works have been broken down into smaller discrete projects that can be implemented over time as funds become available, and designed to have immediate impact and benefit to the town. A breakdown of projects and associated costs is outlined below.

<b>PUBLIC REALM PLAN: PROJECTS &amp; COSTINGS</b>			
<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>COST</b>	<b>Planning, Design &amp; Approvals (10%), Contingencies (15%)</b>	<b>TOTAL COST</b>
<b>Town Square</b> Demolition, pavement evening & widening, pedestrian crossing, landscaping, lighting and bollards (costing does not include the provision of sound and entertainment equipment or shade structure)	\$411,750	\$137,250	\$549,000
<b>John / Argyle Street Intersection</b> Footpath evening, widening & paving, street furniture, street lights, relocate crossing, pedestrian lights, remove roundabout and install signalisation.	\$1,569,752	\$348,834	\$1,918,586
<b>Argyle Street General Upgrade</b> Footpath evening, widening and paving, street furniture, street lights, pedestrian barriers, café barriers & footpath extension.	\$2,311,200	\$513,600	\$2,824,800
<b>John Street (Upper)</b> Footpath evening and repaving, street lights & street furniture.	\$729,028	\$162,006	\$891,034
<b>John Street (Lower)</b> Footpath evening and repaving, street lights & street furniture.	\$588,161	\$130,703	\$718,864
<b>Murray Street</b> Footpath evening, widening and repaving, street lights & street furniture.	\$539,972	\$119,994	\$659,966
<b>Argyle Street Median</b> Remove grass, replant beds & install irrigation and uplighting.	\$308,250	\$102,750	\$411,000
<b>Argyle Street Pedestrian Barrier</b> Installation of a pedestrian barrier in the Argyle Street median should concerns exist regarding pedestrian safety	\$292,500	\$65,000	\$357,500
<b>Pedestrian Information Signs (x8)</b> (the 8 signs could be staged as required)	\$134,250	\$44,750	\$179,000
<b>Temporary Footpath Blisters &amp; Street Furniture (x5)</b>	\$237,656	\$52,813	\$290,469
<b>Raised Thresholds (x4) - Minor Streets</b>	\$213,750	\$47,500	\$261,250
<b>Raised Thresholds (x3) - Argyle Street</b> (at the entrance to minor streets)	\$163,125	\$36,250	\$199,375
<b>Road Drainage Network Works</b>	\$1,680,840	\$373,520	\$2,054,360
<b>Pedestrian Crossing Lighting Upgrade (x2) - Argylye Street</b> (\$39, 685 is available for this purpose from the capital works reserve)	\$67,500	\$15,000	\$82,500
<b>TOTAL COST OF ALL PROJECTS</b>	<b>\$9,247,734</b>	<b>\$2,149,969</b>	<b>\$11,396,930</b>
<b>NOTE:</b>			
1. Costs have been prepared by a Quantity Surveyor as preliminary estimates only as at December 2007 and are supported by detailed assumptions.			
2. All Projects include an allowance of 12.5% for contractors overheads, preliminaries			
3. The Planning, Design & Approvals and Contingency (25%) has been added to the baseline costs of the works (ie prior to the allowance of 12.5% as discussed in Note 2).			
4. All projects will be subject to further detailed design and costing at time of implementation.			

Early Key projects that could be implemented in the short to medium term and provide immediate benefit include:

- **Town Square (\$549,000)**  
Creation of a quality public space which defines the civic precinct and provides space for civic and cultural activities
- **Argyle Street Median Upgrade (\$411,000)**  
Undertake beautification of the central median including additional plantings and up lighting which complement the existing Jacarandas.
- **Pedestrian Information Signs (\$179,000)**  
Provision of 8 pedestrian information signs in varied locations to assist in marketing, promotion and visitor information. While the cost indicated for 8 signs, a smaller number could be installed and stage further installation as required.

The early projects outlined above total an estimated cost of \$1,139,000.

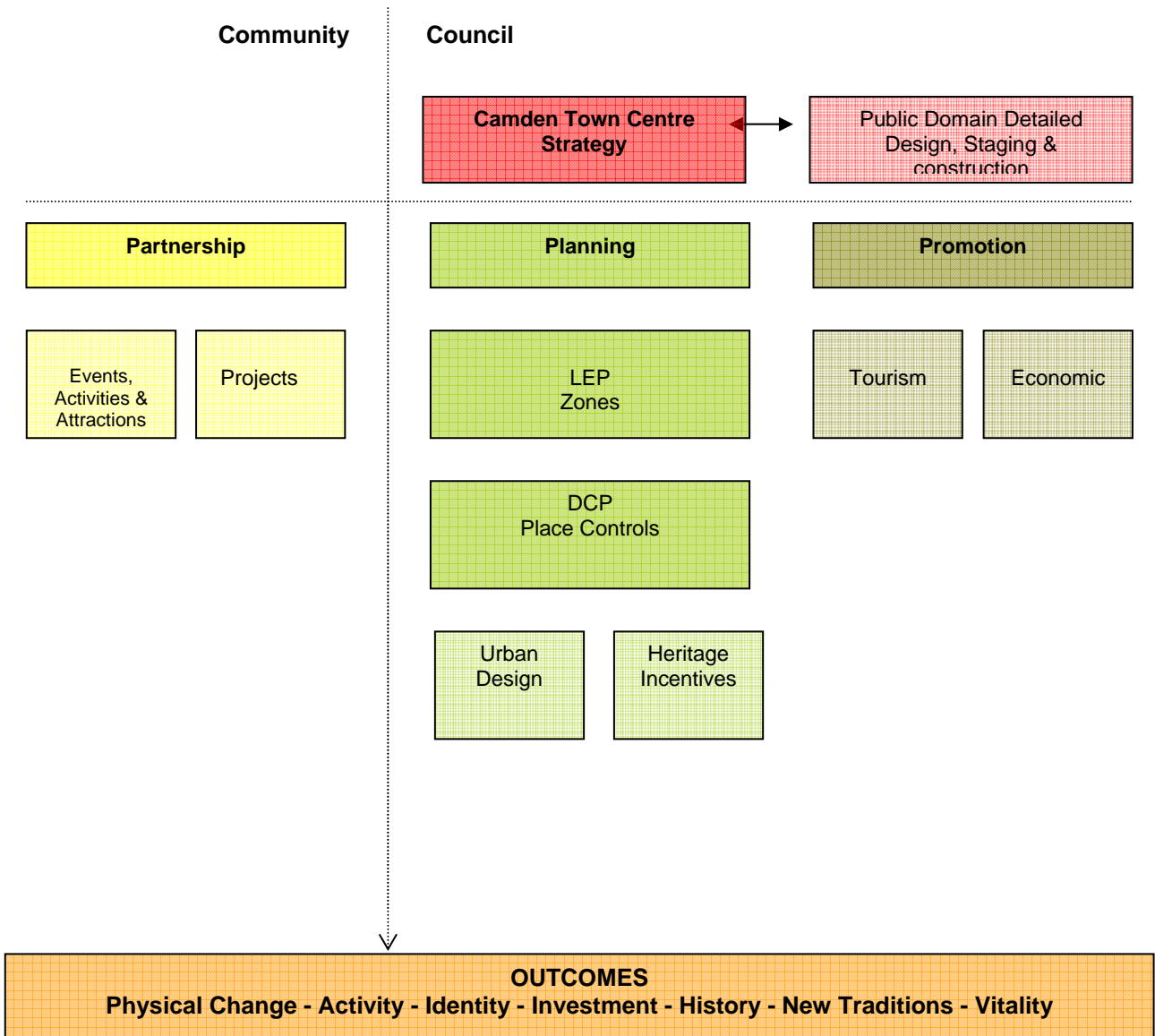
# Implementation

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Implementation Framework

The Camden Town Centre Strategy should be adopted as the overarching policy for the future management of the town centre. Three implementation pathways, Partnership, Planning and Promotion are suggested in the proposed Implementation Framework presented in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Implementation Framework



The above policy framework presents the town centre strategy as the overriding policy that could be used to implement change in the town centre. This is further broken into three implementation pathways, two involving Council (planning and promotion) and one involving the engagement of the community (partnerships). A range of supporting projects will also need to be undertaken to support public realm improvements. These projects offer the opportunity for significant community involvement.

## 6.2 Partnerships

The provision of infrastructure, public realm improvements and review of planning controls will not by themselves improve the operation of the town centre or the main street shopping precinct.

### Local Business

Adjusting activity patterns within the town centre can only be achieved through the cooperation of local business and the Chamber of Commerce. If the town centre is to establish a niche as a unique, quality destination for shopping, entertainment and tourism it has to find previously untapped avenues to compete within the local market place.

### Opening Hours

Ensuring that shops are open during normal trading hours, and on the weekend is essential in building the reputation of the town centre as a place for convenient shopping and as a reliable destination for day tourists. The town centre's niche may be in offering an alternate to other shopping options in the region. This might be achieved through:

- Ensuring that shops are open for full trading hours on the weekend;
- Establishing regular cultural and entertainment events;
- Promoting late night shopping on other days of the week to Thursdays;
- Promotion of market days and other activities in conjunction with the Town Farm.

### Signage and Security

Signage clutter is generally a negative impact on shopping environments and particularly so in the case of heritage areas.

From an urban design perspective cluttered windows detract from active shopfronts. The ability to see into shops and from shops is important for extending ground floor uses into the public realm and to support of outdoor dining activity. Ideally people need to be able to see into and out of shops. Uncluttered windows and limited signage also improves security through natural surveillance.

In a similar fashion, security devices such as roller shutters on window and doors, intrusive security grills and alarms also impact negatively on the public realm and indirectly affect amenity.

## Community

The Camden Town Centre, because of its unique character, tradition, and proposed Town Square improvements and direct connection with the Town Farm can play a continued and significant role in community life.

### Cultural Spaces and Art

The town centre can be conceived as a series of cultural spaces, which can become the location or venue for community events. The development of a Town Square will allow a number of community events to be held. Other spaces such as the Town Farm and the Camden Library and Museum also offer an opportunity to activate Camden as the premier location in the region for cultural activities, community events, festivals and performance art.

Public art and artwork in general can make a significant contribution to the character and quality of the Camden experience. Art is central to embellishing the experience of the Camden town centre. Key locations can be developed as sites for urban scale art works developed by the local community. Locations and guidelines would be included in future precinct development control.

### Engaging the Community

Building community support for change in the town centre will be the key to implementing the public realm plan and other supporting projects.



## 6.3 Planning

The Camden Town Centre Strategy is the first part of an ongoing process to ensure the town centre is effectively managed to enhance activities, vitality and viability. This will in part be achieved through a review of planning controls and social planning initiatives. Planning for the town centre will involve:

- Review of the draft Camden Comprehensive LEP 2008;
- Review of the development controls in Camden DCP 2006 as they apply to the town centre;
- Development of place based development controls attuned to conserving character and promoting sympathetic development for inclusion in Camden DCP 2006;

## 6.4 Promotion

The effective marketing of the town centre is something that requires a coordinated approach and partnership between council, local business and community.

### Themes

Key themes for promotion include:

- Culture and art;
- Unique Entertainment;
- Town as a place for community and cultural events;
- Outdoor Cinema;
- Town Farm;
- The town as a living interactive museum;
- Camden Show;
- Aircraft heritage;
- Country at the doorstep of the city;
- Rural ambience with a cosmopolitan attitude.

## 6.5 Supporting Projects

A number of supporting projects could be implemented to facilitate the revitalisation of the town centre. Many relate to making physical changes to improve the town amenity, others relate to the way the town centre is perceived and used. A list of suggested projects is contained in Table 2 below.

These projects would not be undertaken by Council alone but require partnership arrangements or could be lead by a range of stakeholders such as community groups, local business, individual property owners etc.

**Table 2: Town Centre Supporting Projects**

Project Name	Objective
<b>Camden Design Motif</b>	To create a motif to be incorporated in the design of street furniture, banners and advertising
<b>Camden Lights</b>	To light key heritage and other buildings, trees and public domain to enhance amenity and spectacle at night
<b>Heritage Facades</b>	To restore facades on Argyle Street
<b>Camden Signs</b>	To remove extraneous signage clutter and assist owners with the design and placement of signs
<b>Camden Arts</b>	To engage the community in ownership of the vision of Camden and to site urban scale artworks aimed at promoting cultural tourism
<b>Camden Riverside</b>	To activate access to the Nepean River through the town farm site. Could include the development of picnic facilities, formal riverside treatment and other activities like fishing and kayaking.
<b>Camden Colour Schemes</b>	To define colour schemes palette for heritage and town centre buildings to assist owners
<b>Camden Way Finding Project</b>	To develop a directional signage plan, new street and public signage design to facilitate walking, navigating and location

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Objective</b>
	public facilities
<b>Outdoor Cinema</b>	To promote Camden summer film festival
<b>Outdoor Eating</b>	To establish administration of an outdoor eating scheme with applicants being licensed by Council to use Council approved furniture and barricades
<b>Ground Floor and First Floor Uses</b>	To design guidelines for the configuration of ground floor uses, shop fronts and first floor balconies for outdoor eating. Aimed at facilitating active street frontages and improved security through natural surveillance

The projects identified above are consistent with the overall strategy prepared for the town centre. These projects are a list of ideas and possible strategies to achieve greater vibrancy and vitality in the town centre.

There could be a range of other projects equally appropriate which could be added over time.

# Conclusions & Recommendations

## **7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Conclusions**

#### **A Positive Future**

The Camden Town Centre has many unique qualities that place it in a good position to flourish, as a local centre serving community needs and as a significant destination for tourism and other cultural activities. Currently, challenges exist with respect to competition from other local centres in the region, which are offering a wider range of services. These short-term difficulties are likely to be caused by changes in the retailing sector and property market resulting from a changing economic geography across the Macarthur Region as substantial urban development occurs.

Any town centre will go through patterns of change and redevelopment. It is however important to recognise that many things can be done to moderate change and that change itself, does not necessarily result in negative outcomes. It is important to ensure that the Camden Town Centre is well placed to take advantage of emerging opportunities. This can be achieved through partnerships, planning and promotion.

The strategy is aimed at achieving a well-balanced local centre through achieving a balance of physical, social and cultural opportunities that will directly and indirectly benefit all the people of Camden.

#### **Principles**

The following principles are appropriate for the future planning of the town centre.

- P1** Maintain the unique heritage character of the town centre.
- P2** Maintain the rural setting and vistas of the town
- P3** Adopt contemporary design that is compatible with heritage values.
- P4** Allow controlled infill developments.
- P5** Develop an improved public domain.
- P6** Improve vitality by providing spaces for civic functions.
- P7** Provide for cultural and entertainment facilities.
- P8** Provide activities and facilities for all age groups.
- P9** Build partnerships.
- P10** Increase range of activities.
- P11** Present a consistent urban design theme and identity.
- P12** Ensure ongoing economic viability of the town centre.
- P13** Encourage a range of residential and commercial development
- P14** Develop place specific development controls
- P15** Promote niche market and unique destination

#### **The Public Realm Plan**

The Public Realm Plan is a key component for ensuring that the town centre will retain its unique character and identity, offer better amenity, and remain competitive with other local centres.

#### **Staging**

The staging of public realm improvements will be required over a significant period of time due to the high capital cost involved. The proposed public realm improvements are also designed and presented in such a way that they can be implemented incrementally overtime but still achieve immediate impact.

Early projects which would be undertaken in the short to medium term include:

- **Town Square (\$549,000)**  
Creation of a quality public space which defines the civic precinct and provides space for civic and cultural activities
- **Argyle Street Median Upgrade (\$411,000)**  
Undertake beautification of the central median including additional plantings and up lighting which complement the existing Jacarandas.
- **Pedestrian Information Signs (\$179,000)**  
Provision of 8 pedestrian information signs in varied locations to assist in marketing, promotion and visitor information. While the cost indicated for 8 signs, a smaller number could be installed and stage further installation as required.

The early projects outlined above total an estimated cost of \$1,139,000.

## Community Feedback

In reflection on the issues raised by the community as part of workshops held during December 2006, the Strategy addresses these issues in a variety of ways.

Issues relating to outdoor dining, public realm improvements, street lighting and pedestrian safety have been specifically addressed in the proposed public realm plan and associated improvements.

The town's ongoing attractiveness has been a long standing concern. The Strategy proposed a range of projects aimed at increasing the activity and vibrancy of the town centre. The Town Square is an example of such a proposal. The need for space to undertake civic and cultural activities has been raised by the community on a regular basis. The Town Square offers such a space.

The importance of retaining the unique character of the town is critical to its ongoing success and is raised by the community regularly in a range of forums. The need to retain character is expressed throughout the Strategy as a critical element in the town's future. However, this should be managed together with facilitating ongoing growth, development and change. The principles espoused in the Strategy attempt to achieve this important balance.

The Strategy will be subject to regular review and update in response to ongoing community feedback.

## Camden's Unique Advantages

Camden retains many of the characteristics of a country town as well as a unique history central to the development of NSW and Australia. Conserving the town's character while allowing sensitive development will be critical to the town's future vitality and prosperity.

Camden's advantages are many. Its location, history, character and identity can and will be built upon in a way that demonstrates its proud past and bright future.

## 7.2 Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the Camden Town Centre Strategy are.

### Planning

Planning recommendations are:

- R1 Undertake a review of zoning for the town centre;
- R2 Revise development controls;
- R3 Revise DCP 2006 to incorporate place based controls for the town centre;
- R4 Document heritage considerations and elements in the town centre;
- R5 Investigate alternative funding opportunities;
- R6 Review Signage Policy;
- R7 The Town Centre Strategy should be reviewed regularly.

### Public Realm

Public realm recommendations are:

- R9 Adopt a staged approach to implementing the public realm plan;
- R10 Seek partnerships to help implement the public realm plan;
- R11 Prepare detailed design;
- R12 Undertake the preparation of a detailed landscape plan;

### Partnerships

Partnership recommendations are:

- R14 Build partnerships with the Camden Chamber of Commerce;
- R15 Build partnerships with other local community groups and business;
- R16 Engage the community in the design of a Camden Town Centre “Motif”;

# Appendices

# Appendix A

## Public Realm Plan Options



### Main Street (Argyle St) Options Tested

**Option 1**



-  Footpath
-  Bus / Taxi / Emergency
-  On-street Carparking
-  Public Carpark
-  Existing Pedestrian Crossing
-  Proposed Pedestrian Crossing
-  Park Strip
-  Street Trees
-  Off-Street Footpaths
-  Roundabout
-  Traffic Signals
-  Lanes
-  Town Square
-  Pedestrian Blisters

**Option 2**



**Option 3**



**PREFERRED SCHEME**



# Appendix B

## Public Realm Palette

## **1. Using the Palette**

This materials and furniture palette should be read in conjunction with the Camden Town Centre Strategy. The strategy sets the broad direction for the Camden Town Centre. The following palette was designed to compliment the strategy and public realm plan.

## **2. Design Approach**

The images of a modern approach included in the palette were provided as an alternative to the current style that could be considered. Given the level of feedback expressing concern about this modern approach it is recommended that further consideration be given. This will be carried out as a separate project including community consultation, display and exhibition. Once a palette has been determined, the strategy will then be amended to include the different approach.

## **3. Architecture**

Given the variety of architectural styles found in the Camden Town Centre streetscape, a more place focussed, site specific approach might also be appropriate. The forecourt of the Camden Library is a recent example of a different approach to the public domain which responds to and reflects its particular location.

The Cultural Plan will also provide some guidance in this area.

Outcome 2, objective 1 of the Cultural Plan identifies the need for - “increased visibility of Camden’s cultural identity” and proposes the following action – “undertake urban art projects that reflect and strengthen the cultural identity of the community and enhance community ownership of the public realm”.

Cultural opportunities should therefore be considered as part of the design and implementation of the public realm.

## 2. Palette

ELEMENTS	SUGGESTED SUPPLIER	SIZE/STANDARD/MAKE	COLOUR/FINISH
<b>Paved Areas</b>	Streetscape Stonevue	800 x 400 mm	Grey / Honed
<b>Kerb &amp; Gutter</b>		Standard Concrete kerb & gutter	
<b>Pram Ramps w/ tactile indicators</b>		1.2m wide with contrasting tactile indicators of AS 1428	Light / Contrasting
<b>Raised pedestrian crossings</b>		Stonevue paver thresholds with asphalt top and concrete ramps	
<b>Raised Thresholds</b>		Stonevue paver top and concrete ramps	
<b>Litter Bins</b>	Botton & Gardenier	Mobile Garbage Bin Housing MGBHAL	Polished Aluminium
<b>Recycle Bins</b>	Botton & Gardenier	Mobile Garbage Bin Housing MGBHHAL REC	Polished Aluminium
<b>Seats</b>	Botton & Gardenier	Urban Seat US1aP	Stainless Steel & Jarrah
<b>Bike Racks</b>	Street Furniture Australia	Semi Hoop BST03	Stainless Steel
<b>Bollards</b>	Foundry Australia	Bollard	Case Aluminum
<b>Drinking Fountains</b>	Commercial Systems Australia	CSA DF5001 Plaza Drinking Fountain	Steel
<b>Pedestrian Barriers</b>	Public art opportunity	Custom designed and made	Galvanized construction
<b>Café Barriers</b>	Public art opportunity	Custom designed and made	Galvanized construction
<b>Signalised Intersection w/ tactile pram ramps</b>			Steel
<b>Light poles</b>	Vicpole Promenade	7.5m	Steel
<b>Pedestrian Lighting</b>	Bega 8081	5.0m	Steel
<b>Pedestrian Information Signs</b>		1.8 m	
<b>Bus Shelters</b>	Adshel	Evo Mk II	Aluminium
<b>Planting</b>		Landmark planting at pedestrian crossings. Planting to separate roadway from dining areas	Species to be determined

### 3. Palette Details

#### Paving



Streetscape “Stonevue” 800x400 in grey with honed finish

#### Pram Ramps



Standard 1.2m Concrete with contrasting tactile indicators to AS1428

#### Kerb & Gutter



Standard Concrete kerb & gutter

### **Raised Pedestrian Crossings**



**Stonevue** paver thresholds with asphalt top and concrete ramps

### **Raised Thresholds**



**Stonevue** paver top and concrete ramps

### ***Litter Bins***



**Botton & Gardenier** mobile garbage bin housing in polished Aluminium finish

### ***Recycle Bins***



**Botton & Gardenier** mobile recycling garbage bin housing in polished Aluminium finish

## Seats



**Botton & Gardenier** Urban Seat in stainless steel and Jarrah finish

## Bike Racks



**Street Furniture Australia** Semi Hoop in stainless steel finish

## Bollards



**Foundry** bollards in steel finish

## Drinking Fountains



**Commercial Systems Australia** accessible plaza drinking fountain in steel finish



## **Pedestrian and Cafe Barriers**



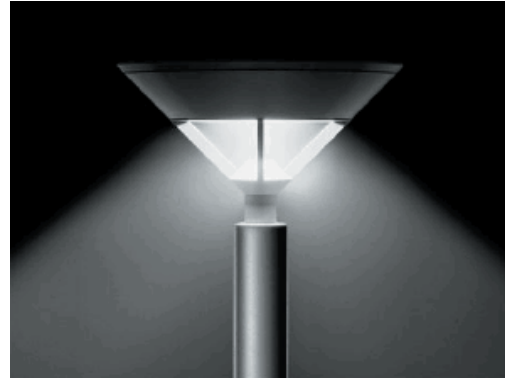
Ruth Downes designed pedestrian barrier Café barriers in Church Street, Parramatta

## ***Street Lighting***



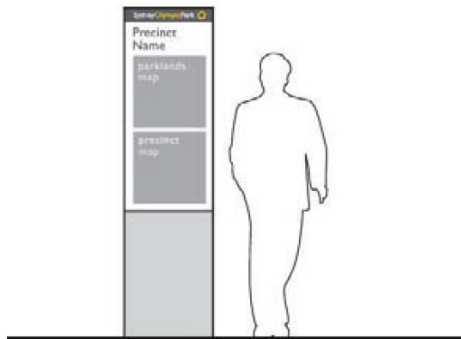
Vicpole Promenade street lighting in steel finish

## Pedestrian Lighting



**Bega 8081** in Steel finish

## Pedestrian Information Signs



## *Bus Shelters*



**Adshel** bus shelter in Aluminium finish

### Trees Surrounds



Square **Street Furniture** in steel finish

### Tree Guards



**Street Furniture** tree guard in steel finish

### Planting



Landmark planting at pedestrian crossings



Planting to separate roadway from dining areas

The range of species to be determined