

# Manningtree Town Centre Design and Development Brief: Key Development Site Guidance



Tendring District

# local development framework

Manningtree Town Centre Design  
and Development Brief:  
Key Development Site Guidance

November 2010

*Tendring*  
District Council





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## Manningtree Town Centre Design and Development Brief: Key development site guidance

The Essex Design Initiative Exemplar Programme in  
partnership with Tendring District Council

In association with: Manningtree Town Council  
Lawford Parish Council  
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November 2010

## **PREFACE**

This report sets out in detail, the analysis and resulting recommendations for the future of a number of key town centre sites in Manningtree. The findings of this document have been based on community input, stakeholder meetings and local member discussions, together with viability and context appraisal evidence based studies. In providing development options for each of the key town centre sites, this design and development brief aims to put forward a robust set of options to inform future planning decisions.

This report builds on previous studies and emerging documents that have been commissioned by Tendring District Council and will be used to help plan for the future of the area.

## **THE STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This design and development brief will provide a robust evidence base to underpin key elements of Tendring District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF); in particular the Core Strategy and the Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. (which will contain detailed, site specific policies and proposals) Until the Site Specific Allocations document is adopted, this design and development brief may be used in the determination of planning applications within the area by providing clear planning and design guidance while setting out the Council's aspirations for the area.

For members of the public, this document should be used to provide general information about the future changes the Council would like to see happen in the town. For landowners and developers, this development brief should be used as a starting point in discussions with the Council to guide their proposals.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of a study commissioned by Tendring District Council to inform the effectiveness and quality of future development of Manningtree town centre. The principal area to be covered by the development brief is indicated on page 5. It includes most of the town centre, the industrial area to the west of the town centre and the riverside area immediately adjacent to the Stour Estuary. The purpose of this design and development brief is to promote and guide the development of sites throughout the town which become surplus or are subject to changes in use. By undertaking a pro-active approach to Manningtree, this document and its options will positively inform the local authority, landowners and developers and set out clearly how the Council would like the area to change over time.
- 1.2 The main objective of the development brief is to identify ways to enhance the setting of the riverside area, improve links between the existing town centre and railway station towards the west of the town and improve the town's contribution to tourism and economic regeneration in Tendring.
- 1.3 Key objectives include:
  - Enhance the riverside setting
  - Improve pedestrian movement and civic space
  - Develop and improve the existing local economy
  - Enhance retail, trade and tourism
  - Enhance the 'gateway' into the area

### Approach

- 1.4 The adopted approach in undertaking this report was to establish a joint team in partnership with Tendring District Council, including specialist input from Highways and economic viability professionals. The project approach has been based around engagement, consultation, data collection and analysis.
- 1.5 The consultants brief highlighted key sites to be specifically reviewed and appraised. These included:
  - Manningtree riverside site, currently Jewsons
  - Market Place site on Brook Street
  - The Royal Mail sorting office, on Manningtree High Street
  - The former Railex site, now owned by Tesco, on Station Road
- 1.6 Since undertaking this design and development brief other sites have been identified as potential development opportunities; these include:
  - Back infill development opportunities along North Street
  - Essex Fire Services Fire Station site along Quay Street

### Management

- 1.7 The project management of this design and development brief was led by Peter Dawson, Essex Design Initiative Urban Designer. Tendring District Council's Planning Policy Team represents the client side of the brief; Gary Ashby (Planning Officer) being the initial point of contact. The design and development brief has been produced by the Essex Design Initiative, with specific input addressing financial viability, flooding, heritage and conservation, environmental surroundings, highways and traffic circulation.

## Development Brief Study Area



not to scale

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Part of the wider analysis of the town centre included investigating development opportunities for key sites throughout Manningtree. Each site reviewed looked at future options and opportunities for Manningtree including the potential to attract visitors, businesses, residents and tourists, whilst safeguarding local employment sites, respecting the historic character and the area's sensitive waterside setting. Options for each site explore different development scenarios which demonstrate a range of uses appropriate for the town and the impact these sites will have on the town centre.

### **2.2 Survey and data collection**

- land ownership and site boundaries
- refer to planning policies and guidance
- review design precedents
- assess existing access and servicing arrangements
- assess present parking provision for the town centre
- economic overview

### **2.3 Area and context appraisal**

- historical context
- landscape and ecology
- townscape analysis of the area considering the built form and the public realm
- analysis of existing movement and legibility
- flood risk issues
- consider constraints and opportunities
- economic appraisal

### **2.4 Development options**

- look at a series of options for improvements to traffic and pedestrian movements
- improvements to the public realm
- appropriate uses
- scale and massing of new interventions
- consultation within ECC and TDC on Highways, Landscape, Ecology and Environmental strategy
- consultation with the Environment Agency

### 3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The consultation methodology was developed to consult broadly with the community, key stakeholders, the Council's regeneration company (In-Tend) and local and district members. This was achieved by undertaking three separate sessions, each tailored to the individual audience with the appropriate material provided to enable free thought and input.
- 3.2 The first consultation was held on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February, in The Hub on Manningtree High Street, between 9am and 2pm. The consultation drop in session attracted over 70 people, posting comments, filling in questionnaires and drawing proposals.
- 3.3 The second consultation event focused on the key stakeholders and was held at the Venture Centre in Lawford on the 9<sup>th</sup> March, between 4-7pm. This event included landowners, businesses and their representatives, Town Councillors and other interested parties. The evening event included a presentation of work to date, question and answer discussions and group activities.
- 3.4 The final consultation session was in the form of a presentation, followed by a question and answer session to Tendring District Council members. This event was held on the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> March. Comments and suggestions collected at this session completed the consultation for the design and development brief; the results of which are included in the appendix of this document.

#### Summary of findings

- 3.5 Key points raised throughout the consultation sessions included some of the points below:
  - Parking - several responses raised this as an issue; traffic volume through the High Street is problematic
  - Varied suggestions for improving the High Street for pedestrians, ranging from pedestrianisation to a one-way trial, traffic calming, more frequent pedestrian crossings and better enforcement (e.g. width restriction)
  - People feel the market square is well used on Saturdays but otherwise a bit shabby, attracting some anti-social behaviour. It would benefit from some improvement
  - There has been some support for re-using the existing Post Office sorting office building instead of replacing it with new development
  - Identified need for better disabled access to the riverside by the Co-op car park and wider High Street pavements
  - Need for much better cycling provision between the town centre and station (perhaps as part of a tourist route from Harwich) and perhaps introducing cycle hire facilities for visitors
  - A desire for a community facilities within Manningtree, including cinema, museum, meeting space
  - Need to enhance the appeal of the town for younger people and families with children. Suggestion for a social centre for seniors / young people / mums 'so the community can gel more'

The full consultation report can be found in the appendix of this document.

## 4.0 POLICIES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

4.1 This development brief has taken into account the following key existing and emerging documents:

- Manningtree Town Plan and Design Statement (2003)
- Tendring District Council Local Plan (2007)
- Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy (2007), refreshed in 2009
- Tendring District Council Corporate Plan (2009)
- Tendring Regeneration Strategy (2010)
- Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area Management Plan (2010)
- Tourism Strategy (2010)
- Emerging Draft Core Strategy and Development Policies Document

### **Manningtree Town Plan and Design Statement**

4.2 This document was developed by the local community setting out how they would like to see their town develop over time. It is a useful document for both the district and county council when considering the needs and desires of the town's residents and users. The aim of the document was to encourage the future development of the town as a vibrant residential area and local business centre. A full summary of this town plan and design statement can be found in the appendix of this document.

### **Tendring District Council Local Plan**

4.3 Tendring District Council's adopted Local Plan allocates land for various land uses across the district and is used in the determination of planning applications. The Local Plan will remain in force until replaced by the Local Development Framework. Land for development in Manningtree is in short supply with proposals typically coming forward on brownfield sites. Whilst the Local Plan does not specifically allocate more land for town centre uses the town centre boundary was expanded to include the Jewson's site, should it come forward for development during the plan period.

### **Tendring Sustainable Community Strategy**

4.4 The strategy looks ahead to what the District could be like in 2016 and represents the shared aims and objectives of all the organisations involved in shaping the district's future. The Strategy is based around six strategic themes. These themes are: health, economic development, children and younger people, crime and disorder, deprivation and the environment.

4.5 In setting out how these themes will be achieved, the strategy establishes a methodology for the delivery and completion of the appropriate milestones. Each strategic theme is pertinent to the Manningtree design and development brief proposals, detailing both how they shape any future development or improve the quality of life of residents. The proposals in the design and development brief are consistent with the aims and objectives set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Tendring District Council Corporate Plan**

4.6 Tendring District Council's Corporate Strategy sets out what the Council wants to achieve between 2004 and 2011 in order to help achieve the wider aims and objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council's overarching strategic priority is to create a

strong local economy. Other priorities include creating a cleaner district, safer community, affordable housing, better public space, partner and community leader and portraying a positive public image. The proposals in the design and development brief are consistent with the Council's strategic priorities contained in its Corporate Plan.

### **Tendring Regeneration Strategy**

- 4.7 The regeneration strategy provides the framework for the social and economic regeneration of the district. The aims and objectives of the strategy focus on four corporate priorities:
- Delivering our community strategy commitments
  - Promote social and economic regeneration
  - Improving services to the customer
  - Secure decent and affordable homes for the people of Tendring

The strategy sets out specific aims for market towns such as Manningtree, encouraging diversification and job creation, the attraction of new businesses and support for village commercial activities. The design and development brief includes proposals that will help to regenerate Manningtree Town Centre and make it a better place to live, work and visit for future generations.

### **Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area Management Plan**

- 4.8 The Conservation Area Management Plan uses existing planning policies together with specific recommendations to protect and enhance the Manningtree and Mistley conservation area.
- 4.9 The effectiveness of planning measures relating to Manningtree's conservation area is dependant upon the way in which the designated areas are managed. The purpose of a management plan is to show how each can play a part in making the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area a better place to live in, to work in and to visit. One of the key requirements of the design and development brief is to protect and enhance the historic character of the area. Therefore, the specific recommendations of the management plan relating directly to the key sites and study area have helped shape the proposals in the document.

### **Tendring Tourism Strategy**

- 4.10 The adopted tourism strategy sets out the key priority areas for transforming tourism in Tendring. The five priority areas have been identified through extensive baseline research and consultation. The priority areas are:
- Priority 1 - Marketing, PR and E-tourism
  - Priority 2 - Thematic Product Development
  - Priority 3 - Visitor Economy and Experience
  - Priority 4 - Responsible Tourism
  - Priority 5 - Business Support and Community Engagement.
- 4.11 Manningtree itself is not mentioned in the strategy. The coastal belt between Harwich and Clacton is recognised as the key area for tourism. Nevertheless the principles and priorities established in the strategy should be used to improve the tourism potential and influence of the town. One of the main requirements of the design and development brief is to enhance the tourism appeal of the area.

### **The Emerging Policy Context: Core Strategy**

- 4.12 The Council's emerging Core Strategy will eventually replace the Local Plan and plan for the future of Tendring up to 2026. The main purpose of the document is to set out broadly where growth will be located in the district. The document includes a future vision for the Manningtree area accompanied by a set of strategic objectives that give some idea how the vision will be achieved and a series of 'key projects' that provide further detail about how the amount of growth required and the other strategic priorities set out in the Core Strategy will be delivered.
- 4.13 For Manningtree, the Core Strategy recognises that there is potential for the town centre to grow and expand. This design and development brief will be used to help inform how the town centre can grow and meet the other strategic objectives set out in the Core Strategy. Details on how this will be achieved will be set out in the Site Allocations Document, which will include detailed policies and proposals for the area, in accordance with the strategic policies contained in the Core Strategy.

## 5.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND APPRAISAL

### General background

- 5.1 Manningtree is a very small historic country town, located on the edge on one of the best preserved countryside landscapes in the UK. The historic town centre, like the landscape surrounding it, is relatively unspoilt but if the town is to develop into a thriving community future development opportunities need to be carefully considered.

It is clear that Manningtree has a fine selection of buildings which form a solid backbone for the town's appeal.

To thrive as a historic town with undeniable qualities, the town needs to develop into a place which can not only attract visitors but occupy them, their interest and imagination.

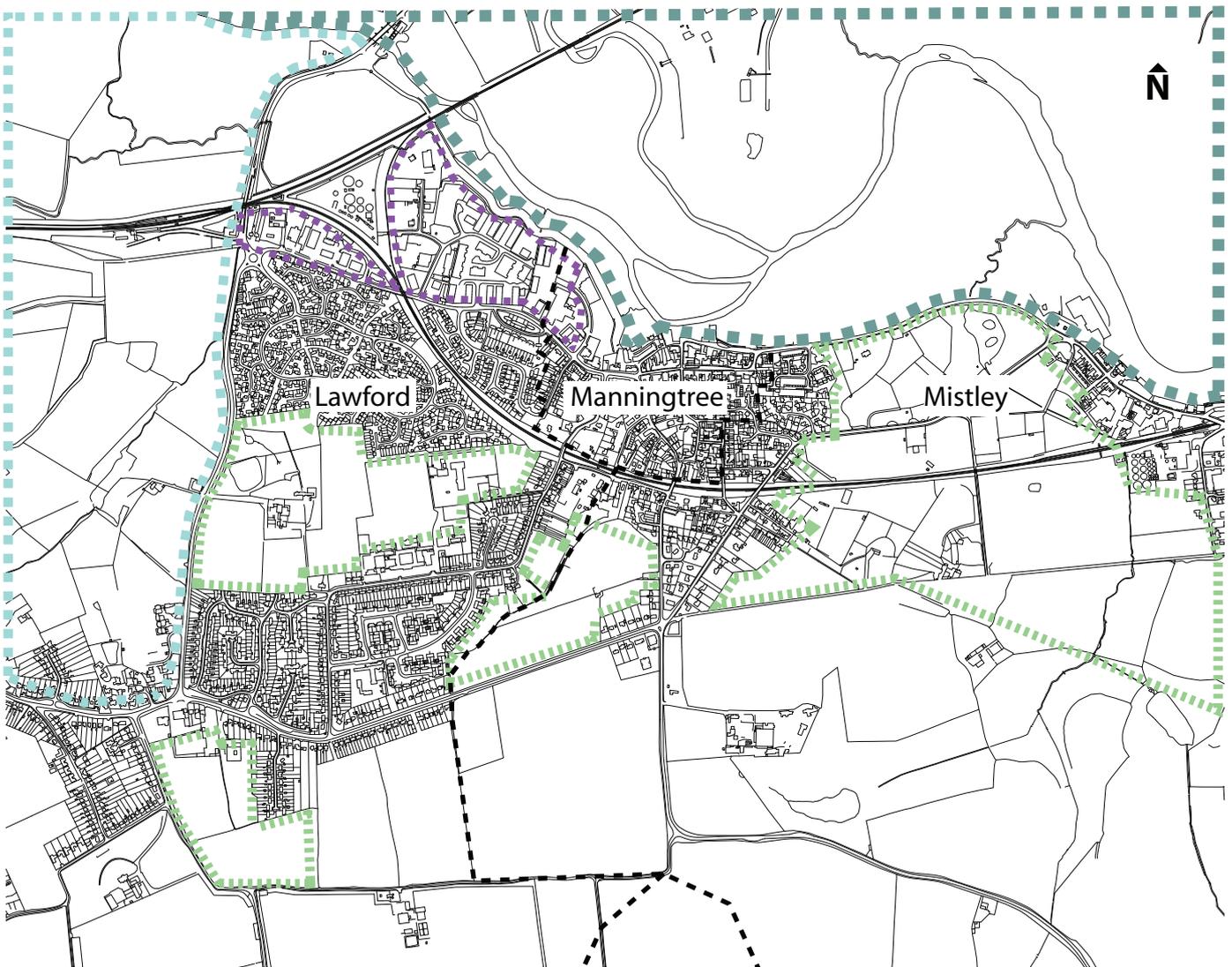
### The surrounding context

- 5.2 The surrounding context has been reviewed looking at the following key factors:
- Flooding
  - Heritage and conservation
  - Landscape and ecology
  - Transportation, movement and circulation
  - Parking
  - Public realm
  - Amenity, tourism and leisure

### 5.3 Area wide analysis

Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley are neighbouring parishes, each with contrasting characteristics. Although separate in their own right, the three parishes need to be seen as one entity or as a sub region of northern Tendring, due to the many characteristics they have in common. The principal constraints effecting the three neighbouring parishes are easily mapped and illustrated, as shown in the diagram below.

These environmental designations have effected the way in which this areas has developed and will continue to do so in the future. In understanding these constraints new development proposals need to embrace the surrounding natural environment both as part of new development allocations in the emerging LDF and within opportunity or infill development sites, as reviewed and explored throughout this document. Manningtree's future growth is limited to infill development opportunities and into the current industrial/commercial area, to the west of the town centre.



#### Key

- Manningtree, Mistley and Lawford parishes
- ..... Industrial/commercial zone
- ■ ■ SSSI estuary
- ■ ■ Dedham Vale AONB
- ..... Green gaps

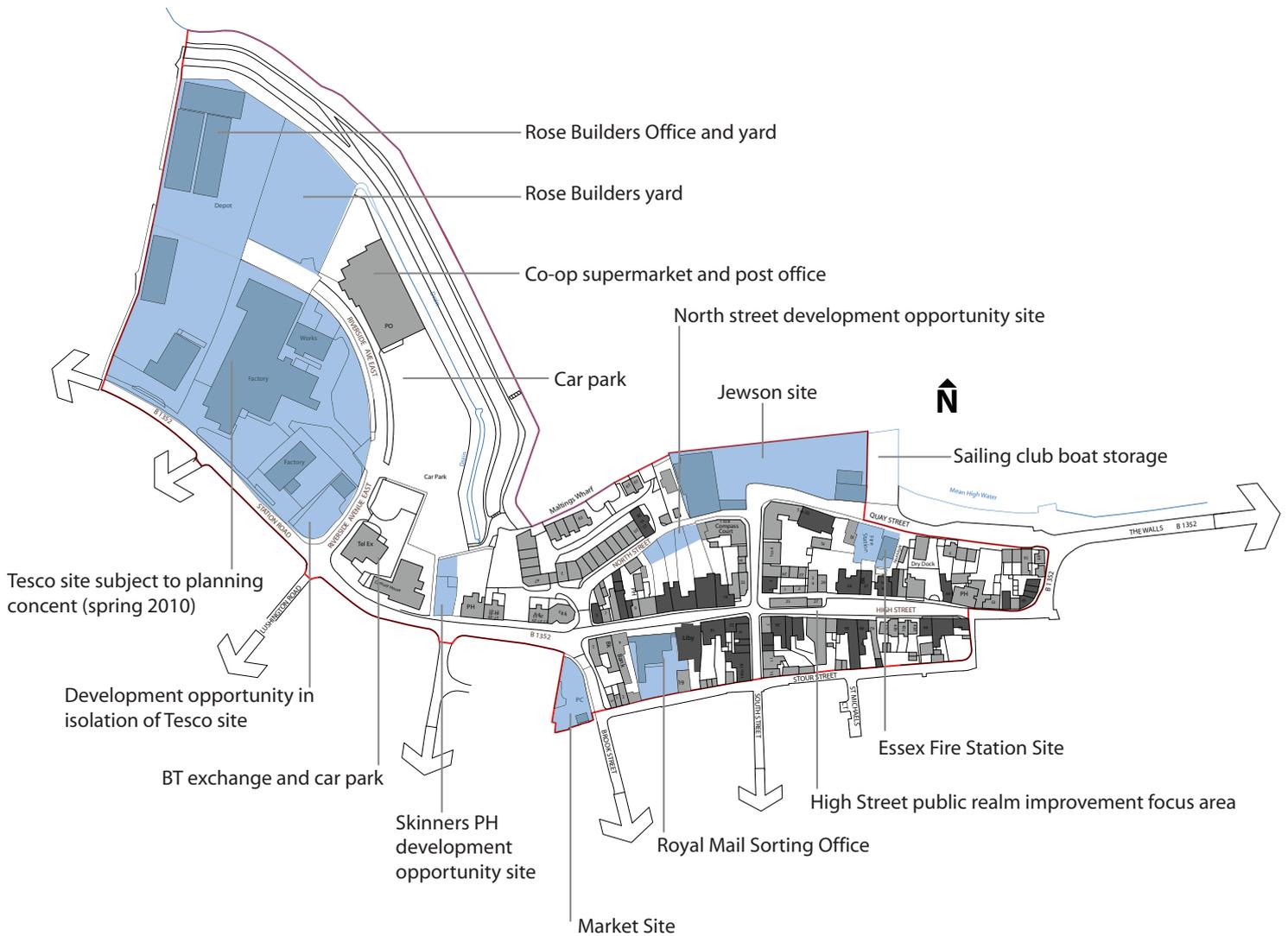
**Manningtree Context**

	2.
1.	
3.	4.
5.	6.

**1)** Manningtree High Street **2)** Historic buildings along South Street **3)** The surrounding landscape and Stour Estuary **4)** Recent development on the edge of town lacks quality and character **5)** Manningtree from the footpath link to Dedham **6)** The converted Maltings along the waterside.



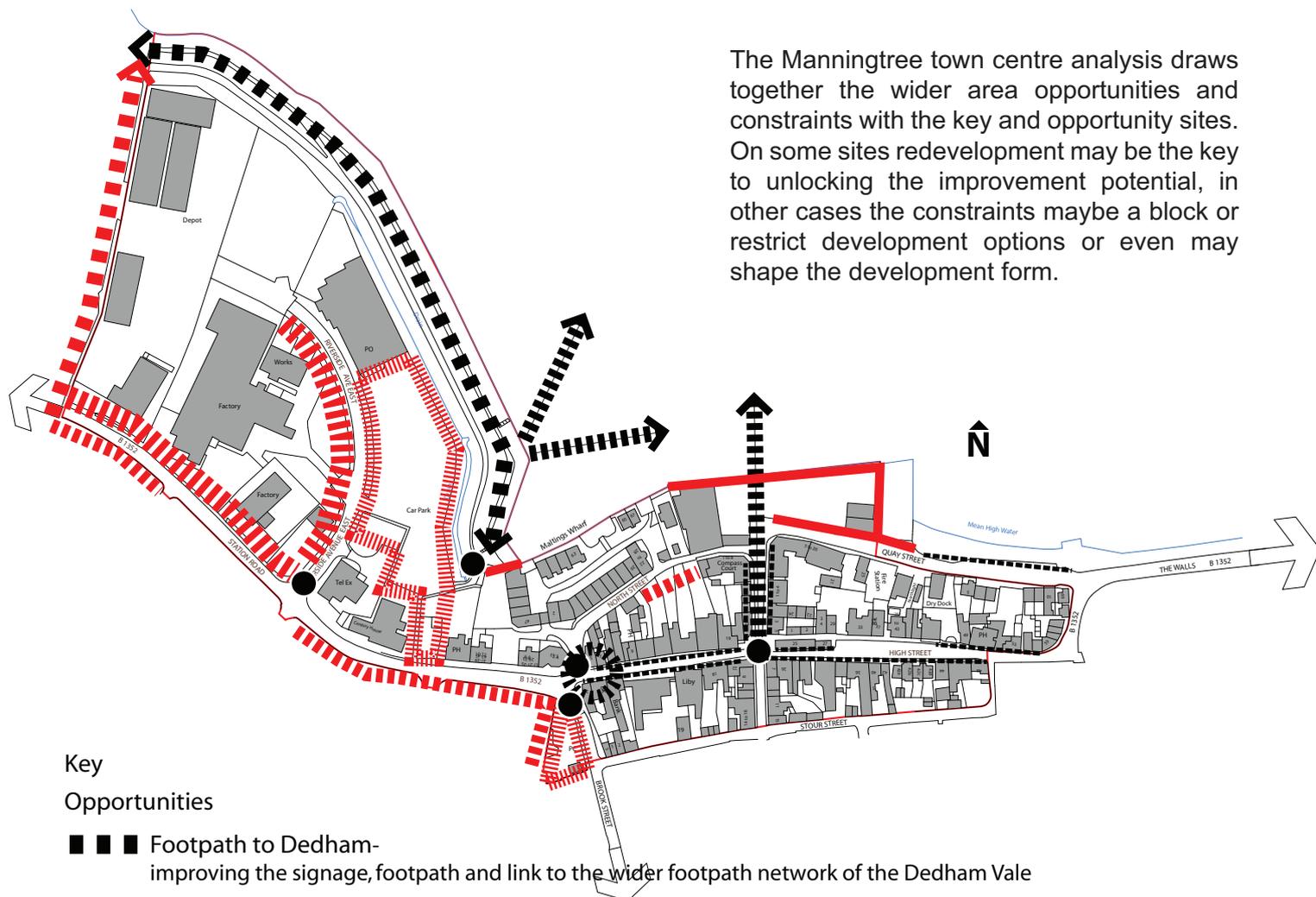
## Site location



### Location Plan



## Manningtree Urban Design Analysis



The Manningtree town centre analysis draws together the wider area opportunities and constraints with the key and opportunity sites. On some sites redevelopment may be the key to unlocking the improvement potential, in other cases the constraints maybe a block or restrict development options or even may shape the development form.

### Key

#### Opportunities

- ■ ■ Footpath to Dedham-  
improving the signage, footpath and link to the wider footpath network of the Dedham Vale
- ||||| Views across the River Stour-  
Making the most of the view across the Stour Estuary, especially along South Street
- Public realm improvement opportunities-  
specifically looking at upgrading the footways in the conservation area
- Key junction improvement opportunities-  
narrowing junctions, conservation materials and priority pedestrian crossings
- ⊙ Gateway into town centre-  
opportunities to enhance the appearance and function of the entrance into the High Street

#### Constraints

- Poor quality/uninviting footpath-  
this popular and well used link could be improved as part of a circular town walk
- ||||| Negative street frontage-  
the old industrial units and factory has a detrimental effect on the entrance to the town
- Poor street frontage-  
visually poor housing or open spaces which have a negative effect on the streetscape
- ||||| Visually poor quality spaces-  
these areas are poor and could be easily improved
- Restrictions to movement-  
barriers, walls and fences which create deadends and block opportunity

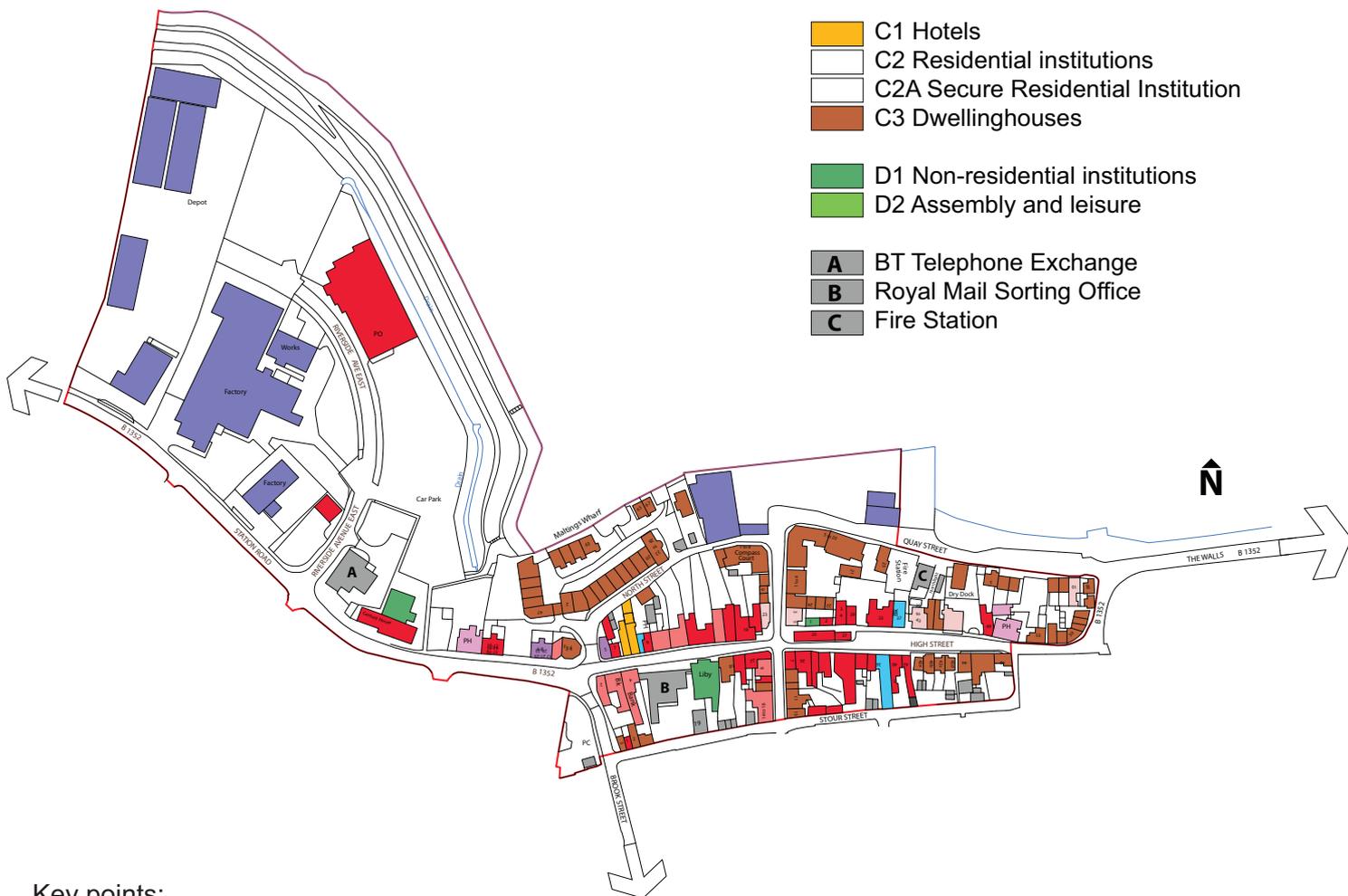
### Manningtree Landuse

The landuse analysis was carried out as part of a review of the existing town, which in turn has informed the shape, form and scale of any new proposed development.

The landuse plan specifically concentrates on the ground floor uses only. Any mixed use building will be mapped by the use fronting the street.

#### Key

- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial and professional services
- A3 Restaurants and cafés
- A4 Drinking establishments
- A5 Hot food takeaways
  
- B1 Business
- B2 General industrial
- B8 Storage or distribution
  
- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential institutions
- C2A Secure Residential Institution
- C3 Dwellinghouses
  
- D1 Non-residential institutions
- D2 Assembly and leisure
  
- A BT Telephone Exchange
- B Royal Mail Sorting Office
- C Fire Station



#### Key points:

The areas highlighted as industrial use are subject to change. On sites still operating as employment use, alternative local sites need to be found prior to redevelopment. These areas are currently clustered to the west and north.

Residential areas are predominantly found around the waterside and northern areas of the town centre. Some residential use is above small pockets of retail, predominantly along South Street.

The fine urban grain of the townscape provides opportunities for a wide range of small retail uses along the High Street and there is opportunity to expand this further, particularly site B, the sorting office site.

The townscape becomes fragmented along Station Road- there are opportunities for infill development.

Parking remains one of the predominant landuses within the study area boundary.

## **Flooding**

- 5.4 The flood zone map for Manningtree shows that areas of the town are located within flood zone 2 and flood zone 3. Flood zone 2 being a 1 in 1000 year flood event and flood zone 3 a 1 in 100 year fluvial flood event.
- 5.5 In accordance with Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 25, the national policy on Development and Flood Risk, any application in these zones will need to pass the Sequential Test, the Exception Test where applicable, and be supported by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 5.6 **Sequential Test**  
PPS25 requires decision-makers to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding by applying a flood risk 'Sequential Test'. The Sequential Test should be carried out at an early stage of the planning application determination process. Failure to apply the test at an early stage in the determination process can result in a waste of resources for all parties in the completion and assessment of Flood Risk Assessments, for development that is later refused planning permission on Sequential Test grounds. It should also be demonstrated that the Sequential Approach has been applied on the site itself. Wherever possible, areas of highest flood risk should be used for the least vulnerable uses.
- 5.7 **Exception Test**  
Each type of development is assigned a level of vulnerability and depending on how vulnerable the development, an exception test may need to be passed. If an exception test is required, three criteria must be met for the exception test to be passed. The evidence for each criteria should be demonstrated in the Flood Risk Assessment.
- 5.8 **Flood Risk Assessment**  
The flood risk assessment should consider the breach and overtopping analysis and safety, specifically addressing people and buildings and access, egress and rescue as a minimum to establish the flood risk affecting the site. This information will inform what type of development is appropriate on the site.
- 5.9 Flood issues represent a real threat to large areas of Manningtree; these need to be considered within the appropriate balance of priorities and risk. In establishing a flood risk protocol for Manningtree, as the Harwich peninsula model, development can be achieved by way of an agreed and adopted planning mechanism.
- Any protocol should be based on developments providing:
- Flood risk assessment
  - Good building design
  - A safe access and egress plan
  - Flood evacuation plan
- 5.10 **SuDS**  
Sustainable urban drainage systems, (SuDS) reduce the impact of rainwater runoff and flooding. Wherever possible, SuDS should be incorporated into any new development. Guidance on the appropriate systems, application and design are available from the Council.

## Heritage and Conservation

5.11 The built heritage of Manningtree is one of the unique characteristics and attractions of the town. To ensure any future development proposals respect and enhance the existing town centre consideration needs to be given to the following:

- materials
- surrounding buildings
- scale
- adhere to the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area Management Plan

5.12 The following recommendations from the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area Management Plan most relevant to this design and development brief are:

### Recommendation 25:

Design guidance and leaflets should be prepared to address issues where specific local guidance will make a significant difference to local public understanding. They include:

- The implications of the Article 4 Direction
- New buildings in historic areas – siting, design and materials
- Traditional doors and windows – maintaining, repairing and replacing as well as energy efficiency and sustainability
- Boundary walls and parking within gardens – retaining historical detail, planting, landscaping
- Trees and hedges – maintenance, species, legal requirements

5.13 Opportunities for enhancement

A number of improvements, some public and some private, would make a welcome difference to the appearance of the conservation area.

- Development of the Jewson site on Quay Street providing public access to the riverfront and maintaining the view down South Street to the estuary. A Planning Brief for this site will seek to maximise the public benefits.
- Any planning application for the Tesco site (former tannery) should set out details of how the proposals improve the surrounding public realm. These specific public realm enhancements should include a focus for landscaping along Station Road, footway upgrades along Station Road towards the High Street and the car park link footway between the Skinners Public House and Boots Pharmacy. The public realm proposals should include improvements to paving and street furniture along Station Road and High Street in the direction of the town centre. These proposals should also include an element of public art which could be in the form of signage or integrated into the hard landscaping.
- The main gateway into Manningtree on arrival at the station needs to be improved; the start of the High Street marks the gateway into the town.
- There is no desire to create additional gateway features other than at these specific points.

5.14 The action plan- relevant recommendations

Recommendation 9: Encourage the redevelopment of buildings which have a negative affect on the character or appearance of the conservation area as and when they become ready for renewal.

Recommendation 11: Appropriate enhancements should be sought for all significant open spaces.

Recommendation 14: A detailed audit of the public realm should be carried out in order to establish the condition of and need for components, such as street furniture, signage, lighting and paving.

Recommendation 15: A streetscape manual for the area should be adopted in association with the Essex County Council Conservation Team. This could be developed for all the conservation areas in Tendring.

### **Landscape and ecology**

5.15 As recognised by the majority of residents and visitors to the town, it is the quality of the natural environment offered by the Stour Estuary and Dedham Vale that is the main attraction/key asset to the area. The surrounding countryside provides for a number of activities and uses including sailing, bird watching, fishing, walking and cycling.

5.16 Any expansion into and around the estuary needs to be carefully considered, meeting a number of criteria stipulated by Natural England while demonstrating that the proposals will not have a detrimental effect on the flora and fauna of the estuary habitat. The form and scale of any development proposal abutting the River Stour would have to be carefully considered for any detrimental visual effects it may have upon both banks of the river. The estuary itself is a protected site of special scientific interest, (SSSI) at UK and European levels, as well as at a local level with safeguarding policies listed in the Local Plan. The Dedham Vale is protected as an area of outstanding natural beauty, (AONB).

5.17 Landscape and ecology within the urban areas of Manningtree is limited to areas of waste or redundant brownfield land and verges. The town itself has very few trees and limited planting areas. There is opportunity to establish a wider planting programme in some key locations, (the gateway to Manningtree at railway station and along the Tesco site) but the narrow streets and historic buildings are not ideal locations for tree planting. The Tesco site should explore the use of landscaping to help create a screening bund from Station Road and the inclusion of ecological features and planting. There is scope to improve the market site with robust planting, developing the space into a more formal pocket park.

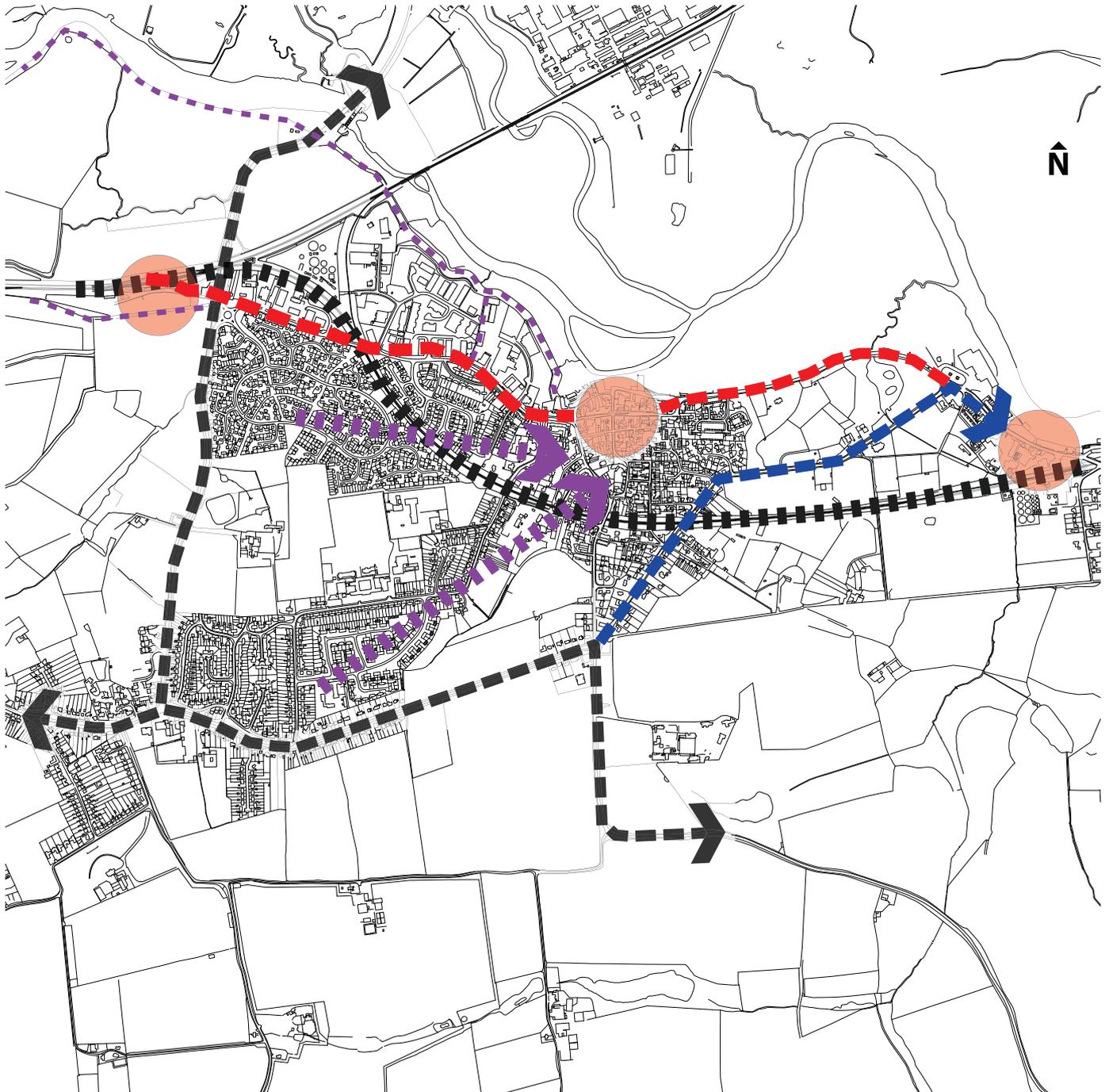
### **Area wide transportation, movement and circulation**

5.18 The area wide movement plan on page 20 highlights the principal links and connection points within the immediate Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley area. This diagram draws attention to the need for a review of the vehicular transport network, establishing ways to reduce unnecessary traffic through Manningtree and Mistley, while also highlighting the need to establishing direct pedestrian and cycle links to Manningtree from the large residential areas of Lawford.

5.19 The plan refers to the three specific destinations points of Manningtree Station, Manningtree town centre and Mistley Station. The majority of local traffic and movement is focused on these three points. There is also a clear distinction between the primary traffic routes and the local/tourist routes.

5.20 The railway bridge and underpass on the A137 is recognised as the pinch point in the local traffic network. At peak times the pressure on this road and rail crossing can mean substantial traffic congestion and queuing along station road.

### Area wide movement analysis plan



- Key
- Railway link from Manningtree to Mistley
  - Primary vehicle route
  - Secondary vehicular route
  - Local traffic and tourist route
  - Footpaths to Dedham
  - Key routes for cyclists and pedestrians
  - Primary destination points

## **Town centre transportation, movement and circulation**

- 5.21 Manningtree town centre is made up of narrow roads and footways as generally expected in a historic town. These factors enhance the image and historic nature of the town but equally challenge the day to day accessibility, traffic circulation creating movement conflict. The balance between preserving the scale of the highway to relate to the historic town and insuring that the town is accessible to all, can offer and support transport alternatives to the car and is safe, is a fine balance.
- 5.22 On close review of the current traffic and transport circulation through Manningtree town centre, it becomes immediately clear that the existing arrangements work and operate as well as can be expected within the parameters of a historic town centre. The current through traffic flows have to negotiate a priority to oncoming traffic arrangement which plays its part in reducing traffic speeds but adds to the congestion within the town centre.
- 5.23 As, and when, key opportunity sites begin to be developed; pressure will further mount on the circulation throughout the town. In response to this, various options have been explored looking at how best to manage the current and future traffic issues in and around the town centre. The options have been broken down into minimum, intermediate and comprehensive interventions.
- 5.24 **Minimum Intervention**  
The minimum intervention is based around the existing arrangement, recommending improvements to pedestrian areas and junctions and developing a signage strategy.
- 5.25 The capacity of the historic town centre roads is extremely limited event though it currently only caters for local traffic and buses. With the potential future development of the Railex/Tesco and Jewson sites, vehicle movements will undoubtedly increase. Pedestrian activity would also increase adding to potential conflicts.
- 5.26 A minimum intervention would provide wider pavement widths and improved pedestrian crossing points at junctions. The current traffic routes and road layout would remain unchanged.
- 5.27 A review of the vehicle and traffic signage from A137/B1352 roundabout and B1352/B1035 junction and explore the use of tourist route signs to reduce through traffic through the town centre while sign posting through traffic away from the town centre, including heavy vehicles.  
Even as a result of sites, like both the Jewson and Railex/Tesco development sites becoming available, the current traffic arrangement may still be the best solution.
- 5.28 **Intermediate Intervention**  
The intermediate option highlights improvements to pedestrian footway widths, remodelled priority to oncoming vehicles system, parking control, crossing tables and area wide signage strategy.
- 5.29 Improvements around the existing road network could be expanded to improve pedestrian safety, slow down traffic and reduce through traffic. By remodelling the priority to oncoming traffic by widening the pavements either side of the road would improve conditions for pedestrians while reducing the carriageway to the minimum width allowed.
- 5.30 A review of the current car parking restrictions around the town could reveal opportunities for change and improvements as well as looking for new car parking options. Car parking is

a real concern for the town but it needs to be carefully reviewed to ensure the historic nature of the town is not visually compromised.

5.31 Comprehensive Intervention

The comprehensive intervention would develop a one way circulation, North Street- Quay Street, East and High Street West.

5.32 The comprehensive intervention relies on a number of factors, currently out of the hands of the local planning authority and county highways. Nevertheless, this option would improve traffic flow capacity, pedestrian movement and provide additional town centre, short stay parking.

5.33 The key generator in this option is the redevelopment of the Jewson site. In redeveloping, current traffic priorities and routes can change, allowing the option for a one-way system.

The route would take west bound traffic along North Street and Quay Street, with east bound traffic following the current line of the High Street. The routes would merge at the North Street, High Street junction and High Street, Quay Street junction.

5.34 The benefits of a one way system is the extra space created for footways and dedicated on street parking, along the High Street between the junctions of South Street and Brook Street. North Street would need widening and would absorb a section of the south-west corner of the Jewson site.

Note: Each of these interventions will require a separate traffic assessment, carried out by ECC Highways and using traffic count data and future traffic volume modelling.

### Public realm

5.35 The quality of the public realm is an important factor in the economic regeneration of Manningtree town centre. A programme of renewal and maintenance that supports the historic character of the conservation area is essential. Some areas of Manningtree have been improved with a traditional range of materials, other areas require improvements, widening and restoring back to a traditional approach. (See page 24) The Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area Management Plan sets out some key recommendations regarding specific location and area improvements. Two approaches are set out below, each addressing the public realm both inside and outside the town centre conservation area.

5.36 Materials to be used within the conservation area boundary

Materials used within the conservation area need to reflect the historic nature of the town and relate to the existing heritage materials still surviving today. These include granite kerbs, yorkstone paving (laid in a random length and width pattern), and blue glazed block channel.

5.37 Materials to be used outside the conservation area boundary

Paving materials used and specified outside the conservation area are not required to be the same materials as specified within the conservation area. It is however important to relate to the laying pattern, material appearance and size, of the conservation materials palette. Kerbs should match wherever possible, as should signs, columns and lighting.

5.38 Street furniture including street lights, signs, benches and litter bins all need to reflect the historic nature of the town centre conservation area. Signs and lamp columns need to be painted black and kept to a minimum, wherever possible signs should be mounted on existing columns. A wider sign review would help establish redundant signs and where new, smaller and less obtrusive signs could be used instead. White and yellow lines in the carriageway should be used sparingly, with the narrower 50mm primrose yellow lines.

New street furniture should be specified in partnership with the Town Council.

5.39 Footpath links between Dedham and Mistley exist and are well used. There is a direct riverside path from Flatford to Manningtree Station which has the advantage of avoiding the walk along the B1070/A137 from Cattawade.

To encourage people to walk and cycle to Manningtree from the surrounding areas of Lawford and Mistley, a review of the existing footpaths and cycle routes may present opportunities for upgrading or extending the network of routes.

5.40 The following short, medium and long term public realm interventions establish a priority based list of objectives for the Manningtree town centre area.

#### Short term programme

- Widening of key town centre footways
- Pedestrian priority junction improvements
- Street furniture renewal programme
- Pedestrian crossing points and improvements

(All proposed interventions in the highway need to be assessed for the impact they may have on traffic flows.)

#### Medium term programme

- Manningtree gateway project incorporating Lawford in a partnership project
- Gateway approach and improvement initiatives (within Highways boundary)
- Upgrading the footpath link to sea wall
- Sea wall footpath link to Station Road and High Street adjacent to Skinners Public House

#### Long term programme

- Development on land adjacent to Skinners Public House- reinforcing key access to the town centre
- Redevelopment of corner plot on the entrance to Riverside Avenue East

### Town Centre Public Realm Analysis

The appearance, quality and character of the streets and spaces in Manningtree town centre is vital to the continuing appeal and attraction of the historic town.

Many areas throughout the town could be improved and upgraded around the principals set out in the Conservation Area Management Plan. The priority streets for improvement are the High Street and South Street.



Traditional glazed blue sets

The priority road traffic system needs careful remodelling

Street clutter: unnecessary signs and boards



'A' boards need to be carefully controlled

South Street could be improved using better materials

Short stay car parking utilises the extra width of the town centre High Street

Road width could be narrowed further



Yorkstone paving and granite kerbs are the preferred conservation material

Footways need widening using yorkstone

## **Parking**

- 5.41 Parking and parking capacity within Manningtree has steadily become one of the main problems throughout the town. (Car parking was one of the main issues raised at the public consultation.) The historic buildings and street layout, combined with the uses and limited surrounding space means that demand for parking is high, but opportunities for new spaces low.

There is a high local demand for the need of more short stay car parking for shoppers using the town. Local businesses believe this to be a critical element in the survival of the local economy.

Solutions to creating further parking spaces are limited to sites beyond the town centre boundary; the existing Kiln Lane car park and Tendring District Councils car park adjacent to the CO-OP on Riverside Avenue East serve this very purpose.

A detailed car parking review of on street restrictions and is the short term solution of increasing the parking capacity, using the market site for short stay parking is another. Longer term solutions will require one of the key town centre development sites to include public parking.

- 5.42 Car parking is a current problem which needs to be addressed but we need to be focused on reducing the need for parking spaces by insuring people use alternative means of transport. Walking and cycling needs to be promoted further with the introduction of safer routes for people to get to the town, adequate and safe cycle storage points and reliable public transport service. Manningtree has an excellent community bus but these initiatives need to reach far more of the local community.

## **Amenity tourism and leisure**

- 5.43 Whilst being often referred to as the smallest town in Britain, Manningtree is strategically placed on the main railway line between Norwich and London and is located near to Harwich International Port. Manningtree has the potential to be easily accessed by a large number of visitors, but will never be able to attract the number of tourists expected to visit Clacton or Harwich.

Manningtree's unique selling point is its historic character and heritage alongside the attractive riverside setting. The town sits on the edge of one of the finest preserved countryside's in the UK and enjoys outstanding views across the River Stour and 'Constable Country'; it is these qualities which attract tourists to the area.

- 5.44 Improvements need to be made to the entrance and gateway to the town from the west which is currently poor and unattractive. Other measures needed to be explored to cater for an increased visitor numbers include accommodation for weekend tourists, the quality and number of appropriate shops and cafes and the expansion of leisure activities, including sailing, fishing, walking and cycling.

Capacity issues and demand for membership have lead to the sailing club seeking options for future expansion. These options include additional winter boat storage, seasonal mooring pontoons, new sailing club house and community facilities (on the fire station site) and expansion into the Jewson site. (See development proposals)

- 5.45 Sailing in Manningtree is popular and this is reflected in the numbers of members and waiting list for boat storage. Boats and yachts provide a great backdrop and interest to

coastal areas and it is this benefit which could develop the riverside area into a lively and attractive destination.

### **General summary**

5.46 The recommendations drawn out of area analysis directly influence the form, pattern and type of development outlined in section 6.

- A site specific flood risk assessment needs to be carried out for sites adjoining the riverside. SuDS and other flood adverse design solutions should be incorporated. A Manningtree flood protocol should be produced to address any flooding concerns facing the town and neighbouring parishes.
- Any development needs to demonstrate how it improves the town through careful choice of materials, scale, a regard for the surrounding buildings and built heritage; these considerations are a prerequisite for development in the conservation area.
- The landscape and biodiversity of the Stour Estuary is the areas most important asset and as such needs to be considered and protected.
- Vehicular movement throughout the town needs to be modelled and assessed for a number of alternative options for through traffic, principally looking into an alternative one-way system. Any development within the study area needs to assess traffic and its potential negative effect it will have on the town.
- A car parking review needs to be commissioned for the town centre area, recording and up dating the current parking arrangements throughout the town, while looking for opportunities to update and reduce restrictions where required.
- Improve the gateway to Manningtree through an intervention programme involving landscaping, public realm and signage incorporating public art, funded through a mix of public and private sector investment.
- Produce a bespoke public realm guidance document, tailored to the specific requirements of Manningtree town centre. This document should be concise but detailed enough to steer developers, ECC Highways and planners around the specific aspirations required throughout the town's public realm.
- Stipulate specific development uses through planning guidance and development control which attract and serve the tourist and leisure sector. Encourage development options which include provision for expanding the sailing club while introduces a range of uses mixes and appropriate to local character of Manningtree.

## **6.0 DETAILED SITE ANALYSIS AND INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

The following pages set out how the findings from the detailed site analysis, town centre appraisals and public consultation have been used to develop indicative proposals for each of the sites.

The site analysis and indicative proposal pages are set out in two sections:

### **Site analysis summary**

- Introduction explaining the current site and use
- Key site summary looking at basic figures including site area, use and parking arrangements
- SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) specific to each individual site
- Site photo with key points highlighted

### **Indicative proposals**

- Indicative proposal (1, 2 or 3 options)
- Accommodation schedule figures for use, unit type, parking spaces and open space
- Development viability

Conclusions and recommendations for each site are explained in section 8.

## 6.1 Jewson Site

The Jewson site dominates the waterside nearest to the town centre. Traditionally a timber yard, the site has a long and established role within the history of Manningtree. The site is currently occupied by a large storage shed and a few smaller out buildings. This industrial built form could provide a precedent for any proposals, linking into the industrial heritage while respecting the surrounding listed maltings and residential buildings. A small part of the site could be used to widen the end of North Street. This would allow for the exploration of an alternative transport route through the town.

Area: 0.4096ha (1.012 acres)

Current use: commercial building material suppliers

Current parking: on site and along Quay Street



Building line terminates directly onto North Street



The scale of the existing industrial buildings could provide a precedent for future proposals

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Riverside location with views over the River Stour and nature reserve
- Town centre location
- Employment site with a unique use that attracts people into the town
- Large, open site within the historic town centre

### Weaknesses

- Flood constraints
- Sea wall minimises views from the south-east
- Underground drainage pipe work through eastern half of the site
- Vehicle access to the site can be difficult
- The site sits on reclaimed land and may require extensive remedial work

### Opportunities

- Public access along river frontage
- Mixed use development opportunity helping to increase the town's economy
- Creating views through the site to the river
- Enhance and increase the sailing club capacity
- Opportunities for much needed public space
- Potential new location of the market site/ street market
- Include an element of public car parking

### Threats

- Jewson have no current requirement to relocate so the site is currently unavailable for development
- The current property and land market makes the site potentially unviable for development
- Flood risks prevent the regeneration of the site
- The site is poorly developed which may have a negative effect on the town
- Condition of site may make any development unviable
- The underground drainage pipes running through the site render a large portion of the site unusable for future development unless replaced

Glimpses of views across the estuary



Informal parking along Quay Street

## 6.2 Fire Station Site

A replacement site for the fire station is allocated in the Tendring Local Plan but unlikely to be implemented in the plan period. The current site has operating constraints, namely the narrow roads, town centre congestion and surrounding parking. There is no current desire from Essex Fire Service to relocate to new premises, but the site has development potential which could make a move financially viable.

The site offers opportunities for infill development, possible incorporating sailing club facilities, restaurant or residential options. Flooding is a key issue to consider in unlocking the sites potential.

**Area:** 0.0557ha (1.376 acres)

**Current use:** fire station

**Current parking:** on site



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Key river frontage site
- Infill site with a large street frontage
- Proximity to sailing club
- Views across the River Stour
- Space for on-plot parking
- Within residential area of Manningtree
- Desirable site and location
- Rare development opportunity

### Weaknesses

- Congested parking along Quay Street
- Within flood zone area
- Proximity to Jewson and the surrounding security boundary treatment
- Traffic generated by Jewson deliveries

### Opportunities

- Potentially a high value residential development site
- Positive change of use for site
- Potential sailing club expansion area

### Threats

- Flood risk makes the site difficult to develop
- Essex Fire has no plan to relocate so site remains unavailable.
- Alternative permises will need to be identified in ther LDF process.

Neighbouring development provides design precedent for materials and scale

Views from the backs of the adjacent buildings need to be considered

The adjacent buildings blank end wall opens up opportunities for building line



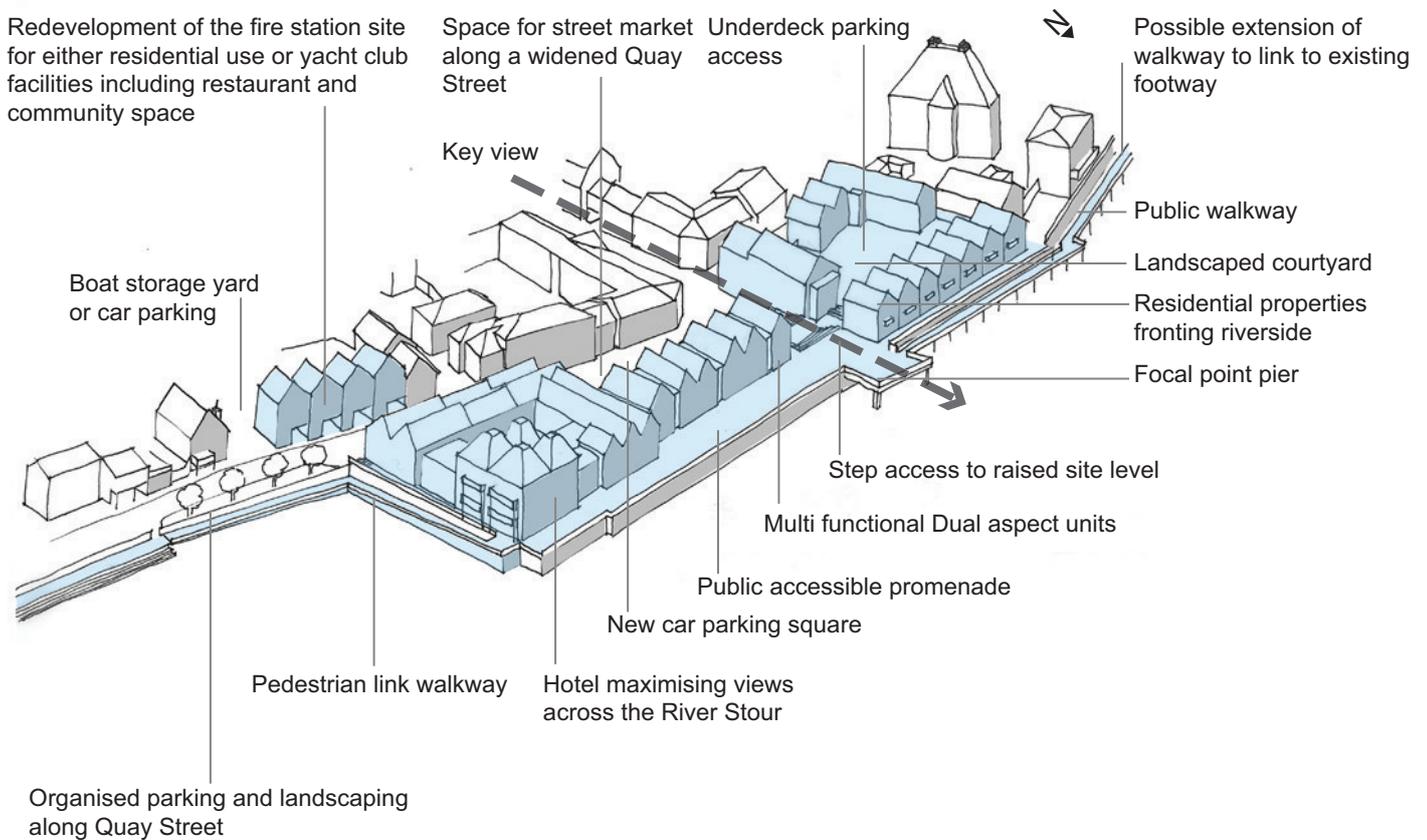
On plot parking is vital to free Quay Street from over parking

Levels provide opportunity for undercroft parking

Opportunities for improving pavements

### 6.3 Jewson site incorporating Fire Station: indicative proposal option 1

Hotel and residential mixed use



#### Accommodation breakdown

- 30 bed hotel and restaurant
- 10 multi functional retail/commercial units, total 927sq m
- 7 town houses
- 18 apartments (2/1bed, 8/2bed, 8/3bed)
- Shared communal garden for some residential or balconies
- 108 underdeck parking spaces (48 residential, 50 hotel, 10 commercial)
- Market space for 12 pitches (if road closed)

#### Fire station site

4 town houses with gardens and 8 parking spaces

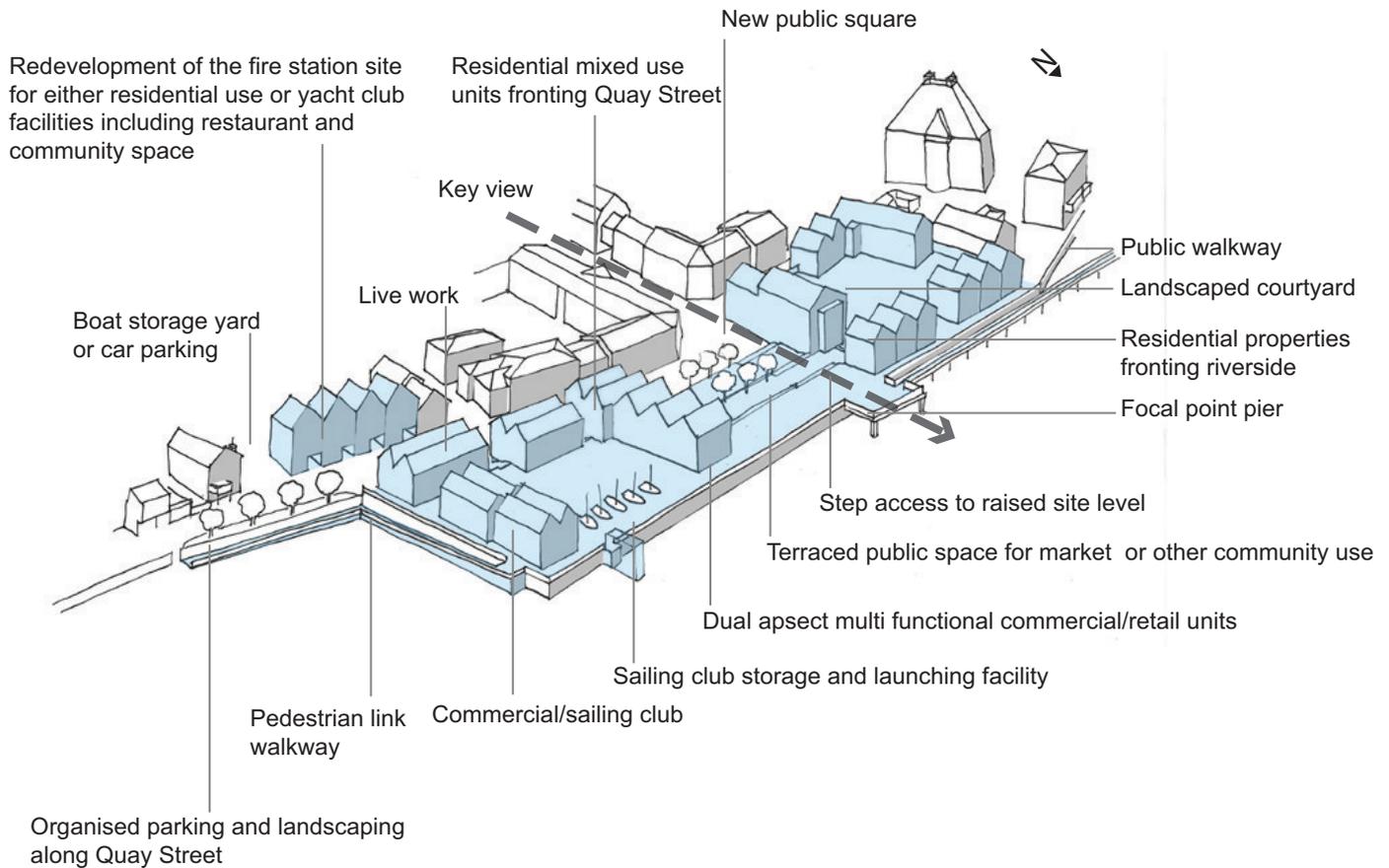
#### Development Viability

The development viability of the Jewson site will depend on a number of key variables; the site value, the perceived value, planning consent for change of site use and overcoming site constraints. (flooding and ground conditions)

This development option is based around a 30 bed 3-4 star boutique hotel, restaurant with multi-functional residential and commercial uses taking up the remaining site area. See page 41 for viability analysis.

## 6.4 Jewson site incorporating Fire Station: indicative proposal option 2

Residential mixed use with community space



### Accommodation breakdown

- Commercial space 946sq m
- 6 town houses
- 28 apartments (8/3bed, 17/2bed, 3/1bed)
- Shared communal garden for some residential or balconies
- 100 underdeck parking spaces (65 residential, 35 commercial)
- Terraced market space for 12 pitches
- 537 sq m boat storage on quay (winter only)
- 543 sq m underdeck boat storage for dinghies & access to existing slipway

### Fire station site

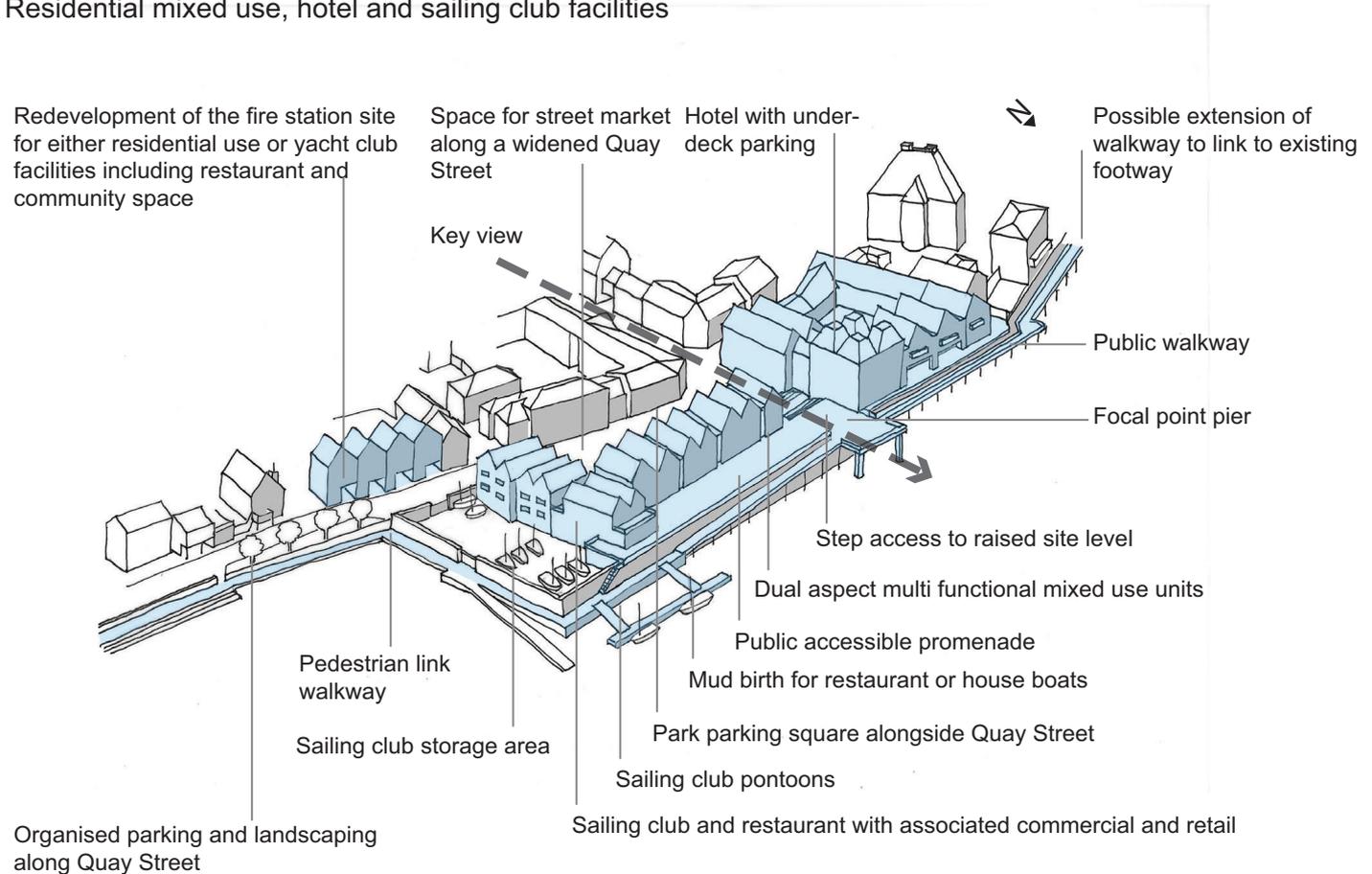
4 town houses with gardens and 8 parking spaces

### Development Viability

The development viability of the Jewson site will depend on a number of key variables; the site value, the perceived value, planning permission and overcoming site constraints. (flooding and ground conditions) This development option is based around a residential and multi functional commercial/retail development with community space shared with the sailing club in the remaining site area. See page 41 for viability analysis.

### 6.5 Jewson site incorporating Fire Station: indicative proposal option 3

Residential mixed use, hotel and sailing club facilities



#### Accommodation breakdown

- Commercial space 1043sq m (up to 9no. units)
- 30 bed hotel and restaurant
- 11 apartments (1/1bed, 8/3bed, 2/4bed)
- 70 underdeck parking spaces
- Sailing club 410sq m storage
- Slipway and pontoons

#### Fire station site

4 town houses (134sq m) with gardens (60sq m) and 8 parking

#### Development Viability

The development viability of the Jewson site will depend on a number of key variables; the site value, the perceived value, planning permission and overcoming site constraints. (flooding and ground conditions) This development option is based around a 30 bed hotel and restaurant with residential and multi function units taking up the remaining site area. See page 42 for viability analysis.

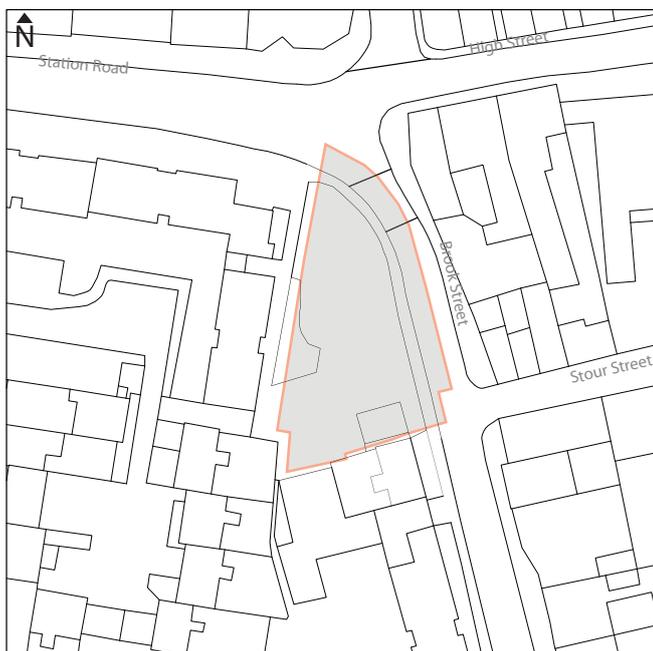
## 6.6 Market Site

The market site has always been an open space of some form or another. The current space created as a result of the demolition and rebuilding of residential dwellings to the west and north of the site. The current use of the space is a twice weekly market and home to the public toilets. The site has a great potential to improve the entrance into town.

**Area:** 0.0728ha (0.179 acres)

**Current use:** open space and market (twice weekly)

**Current parking:** along Brook Street



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Gateway location into the historic town centre
- Public open space in a town that lacks public space
- The site is used for a popular twice weekly market
- Location for the existing public toilets

### Weaknesses

- Surrounding development is visually poor
- The site is vacant for five days a week
- The market is on the periphery of the town centre
- Poorly defined space and a missed opportunity to provide a gateway into the town
- Limited space for potential market expansion

### Opportunities

- Relocate the market to a developed Jewson site
- Relocate market to South Street for a street market
- Develop the site to create a gateway development
- Improve appearance to the entrance of Manningtree
- Opportunities for retail and town centre residential
- Small short stay parking for town centre shoppers
- Provision of a 'pocket park' with trees and seating
- Public space for children

### Threats

- Historical covenant safeguarding market
- Future options depend on the provision of the market being housed within new development proposals
- Lack of local desire to relocate the market
- Highway/residents objection to road closures for a temporary street market on South Street
- Surrounding properties may object to a change of use and design of the space
- Ownership and ongoing maintenance of the space if enhanced/improved

Parking on Brook Street

Public toilets

Water fountain

Overlooking surrounding properties

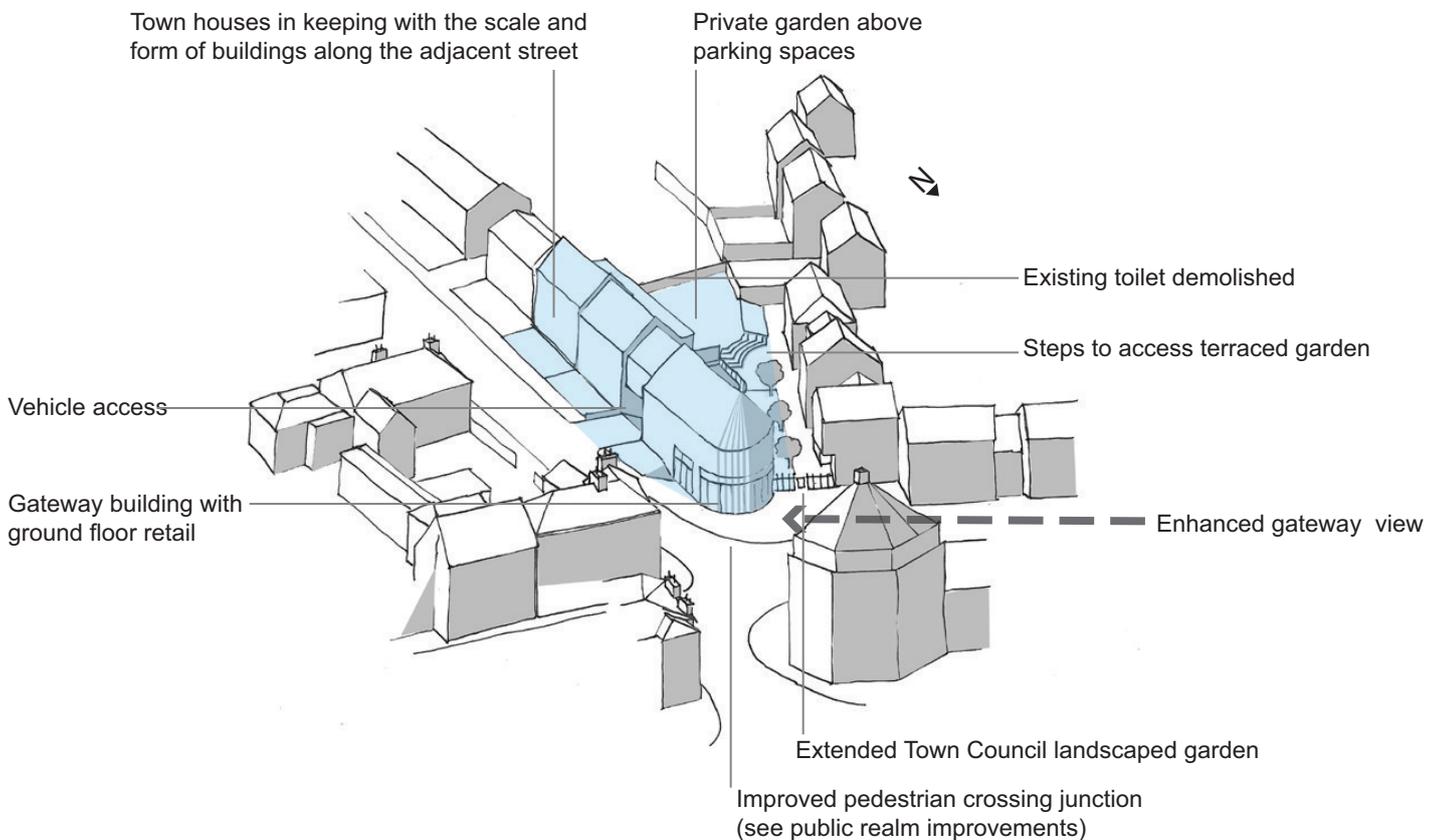


Crossing point fails to pick up pedestrian desire lines across the wide junction

The site slopes towards the High Street

Town Council public space

### 6.7 Market Site: indicative proposal option 1 Comprehensive residential mixed use development



#### Accommodation breakdown

- Retail/commercial 79 sq m
- 2 town houses 128 sq m with terraced gardens
- 2/ 2bed apartments
- 10 underdeck parking spaces
- Shared communal garden

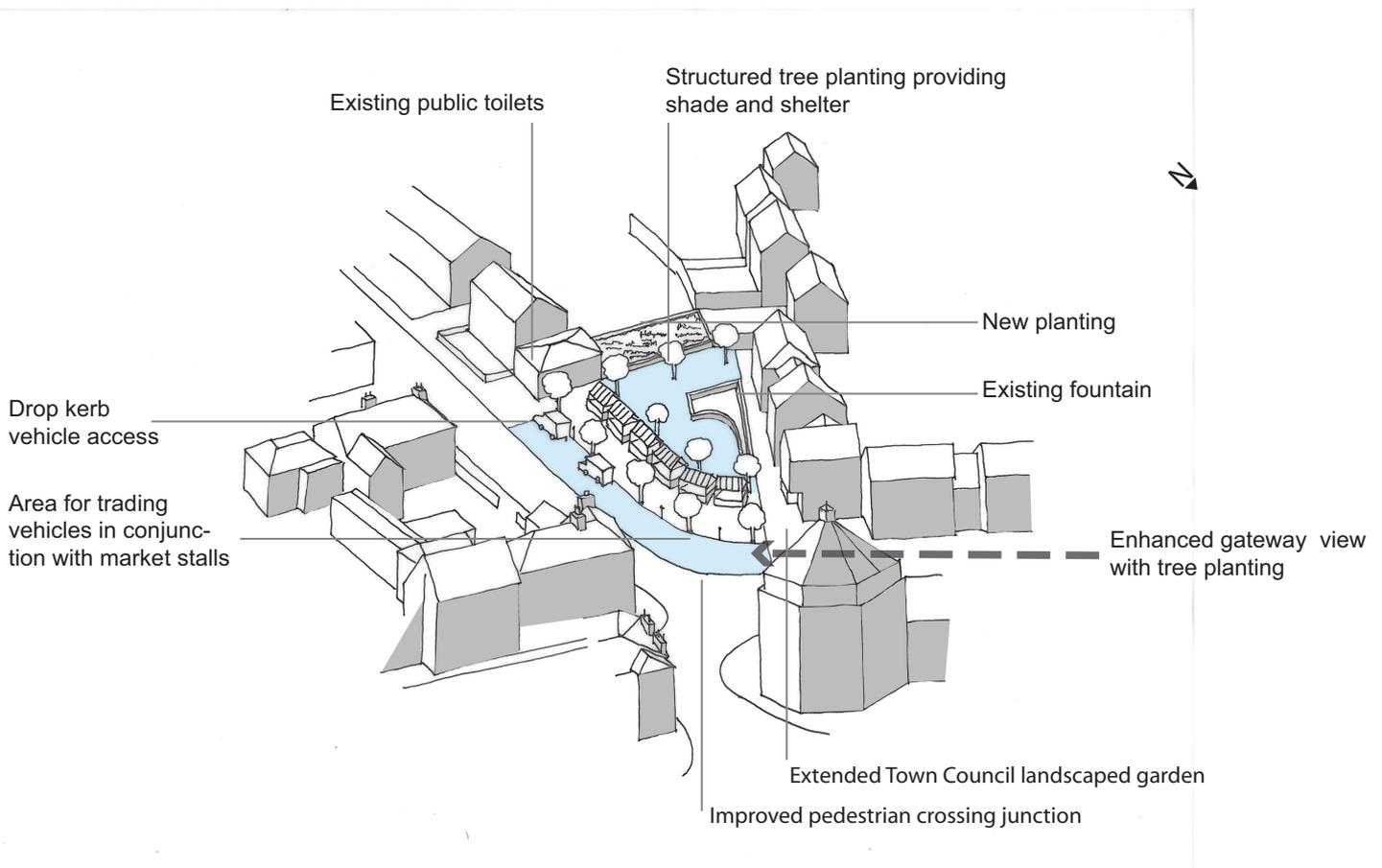
#### Development Viability

The development viability of the market site will depend on a number of key variables; the site value, the perceived value, planning permission and overcoming local constraints/opinion.

This development option is based around a residential and retail mixed use proposal, with on plot parking. See page 42 for viability analysis.

## 6.8 Market Site: indicative proposal option 2

Minimal intervention- market site and landscaped space



### Accommodation breakdown

- 6 temporary market stalls
- 8 vehicle based market stalls

### Development Viability

The development viability of the market site will depend on a number of key variables, mainly based around funding.

This development option is based around the provision of a robust pocket park, designed to accommodate the local market.

See page 42 for viability analysis.

## 6.9 Royal Mail Sorting Office

The sorting office site occupies a large site within the historical town centre. The site has a great potential for redevelopment, as well as conversion into a range of new uses including community focused uses.

Any redevelopment would need to satisfy a number of key criteria whilst demonstrating how the development improves the area.

Area: 0.1241ha (0.306 acres)

Current use: Royal mail sorting office

Current parking: on site



Listed library building



The sorting office is set back from the building line



Apart from windows and fixings Barclays remains the same

— = sorting site (old and new)

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Town centre location
- Existing building recognised as a fine example of Neo-Georgian building
- Large building and site fronting two roads
- Not a listed building
- Outside flood zone

### Weaknesses

- Building is set back from the road and building line creating a gap in the townscape
- Difficult building to convert without changing the current character and qualities
- Stour Street to the rear is narrow

### Opportunities

- Could be reused for community use
- The building could be demolished and replaced with a mixed use scheme
- The site could have the potential to be a town centre hotel
- Access from Stour Street
- Restoration of the original building forms that occupied the site pre sorting office (see image below)

### Threats

- Post Office sale site without consideration of alternative uses or development brief.
- Local opinion of anti demolition regardless of proposals
- Viability of the site and community uses

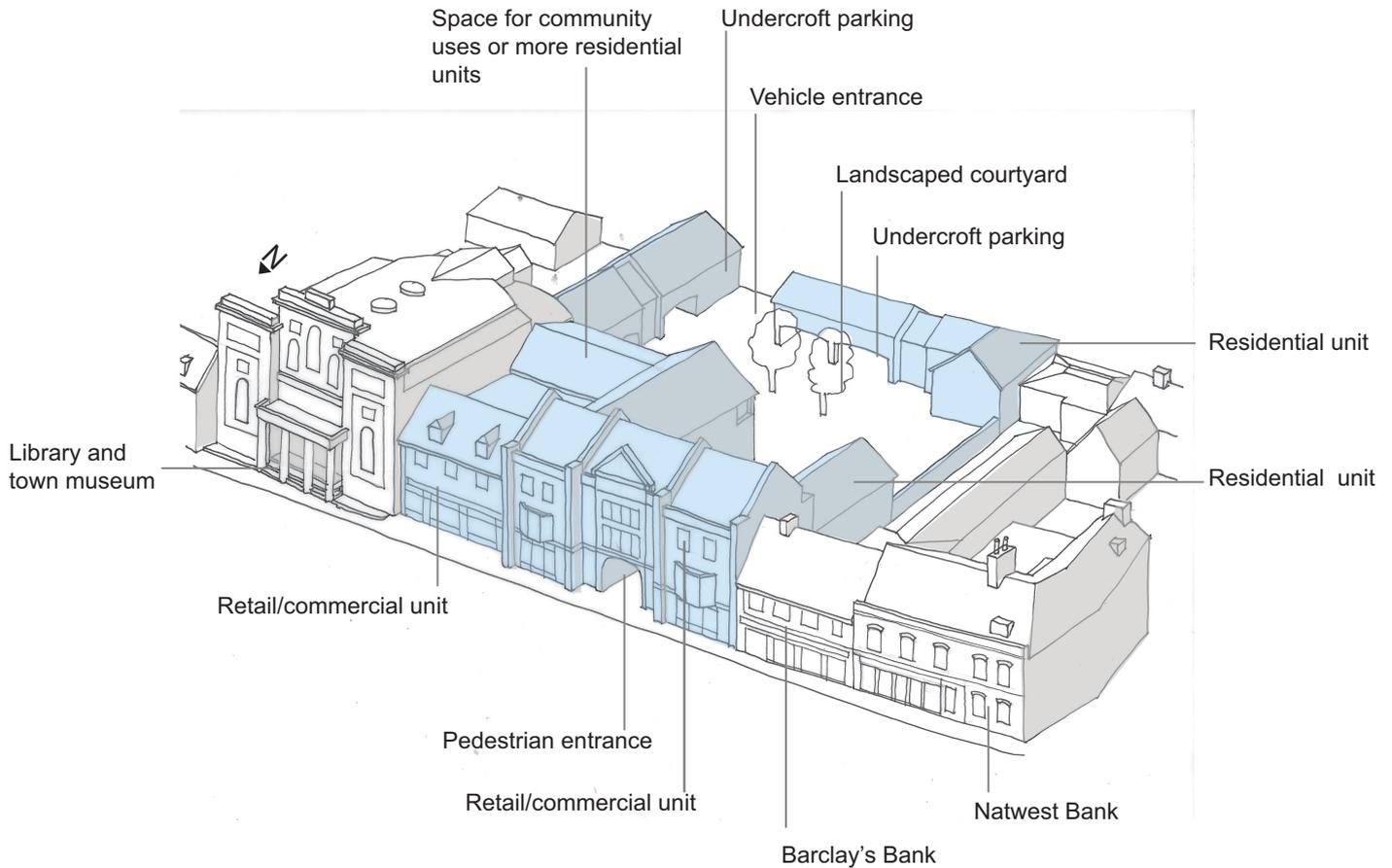
### Images

Below left: The sorting office today

Below right: The impressive frontage of Alston's brewery, Barclay's Bank and the grocery shop of Cecil Gipson Wright seen many years before the brewery gave way in 1936 to the new post office.

## 6.10 Royal mail Sorting Office: indicative proposal option 1

Retail and residential mixed use with community space



### Accommodation breakdown

- Retail/commercial 131sq m
- Community use 514sq m on 2 floors
- 11 apartments (4/1bed, 3/2bed, 4/3bed) with balconies or roof terrace
- 23 surface and undercroft parking spaces (18 residents, 5 community)

### Development Viability

The development viability of the sorting office site will depend on a number of key variables; the site value, the perceived value, planning permission and demolition consent.

This development option is based around a mix of retail/commercial and residential uses.

See page 43 for viability analysis.

### 6.11 North Street

Land to the rear of properties along North Street could be packaged as infill development. The benefits of this are widespread in improving the townscape of a small street while increasing town centre residential provision.

Area: 0.0557ha (0.137 acres)  
 Current use: mainly parking  
 Current parking: on site



### SWOT analysis

#### Strengths

- Infill development opportunity
- Within residential area of Manningtree
- The adjacent Compass Court development sets a local precedent for development proposals

#### Weaknesses

- Limited capacity for on plot car parking
- Narrow and limited width of road and a one-way system
- Numerous current landowners may make development difficult to achieve
- Rear access issues connecting to the rear of the High Street facing properties

#### Opportunities

- Improving townscape within the conservation area
- Opportunity for residential development with parking
- Improving the run-down appearance of the street
- Increasing the amount of town centre residential development

#### Threats

- Flood risk makes the site unviable and impossible to develop
- Up to five different landowners agreeing to change and development vision
- Option for a remodelled transport network increasing the flow of traffic along North Street

Backs of High Street fronting retail and residential properties

Listed buildings

New residential development provides a positive character to the area

Converted maltings

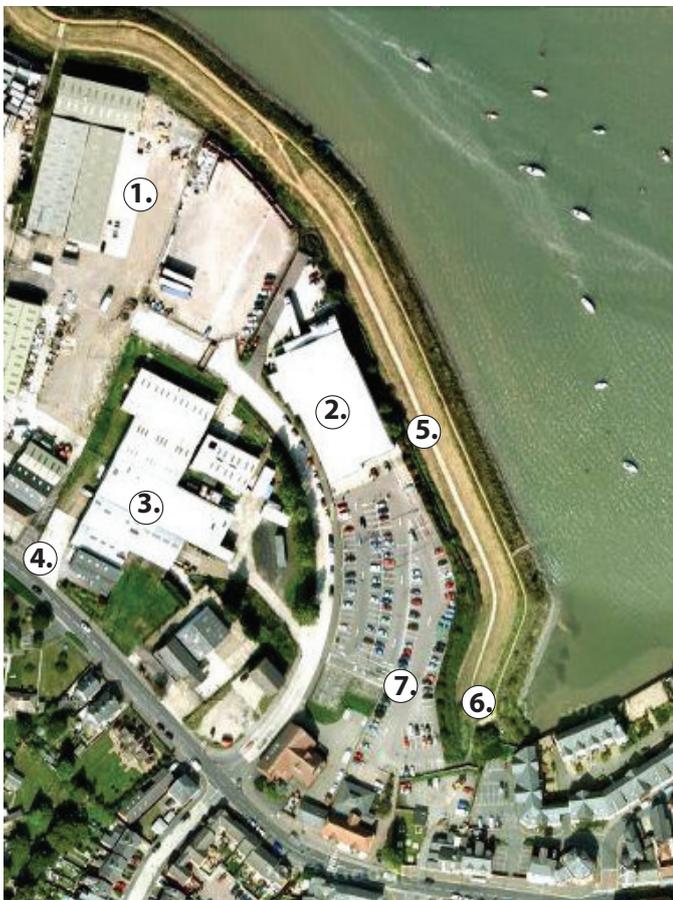


Adhoc parking litters North Street

Poorly maintained boundaries and access thresholds

## 6.12 Area to the west of Manningtree

The area west of Manningtree is subject a large scale changes and redevelopment. There are a number of sensitivities surrounding the site, from a SSSI estuary to the existing employment sites; any development needs to carefully consider these issues.



## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Large site adjacent to the historic town centre
- Vacant site with no current use on site
- Links and views across the River Stour
- Outside the existing conservation area boundary

### Weaknesses

- Within the flood zone
- Sea wall restricts views from ground level
- Surrounding land uses may conflict with development proposals
- Economic importance in retaining the existing employment sites could limit options if alternative local sites cannot be found
- Surrounding built form context

### Opportunities

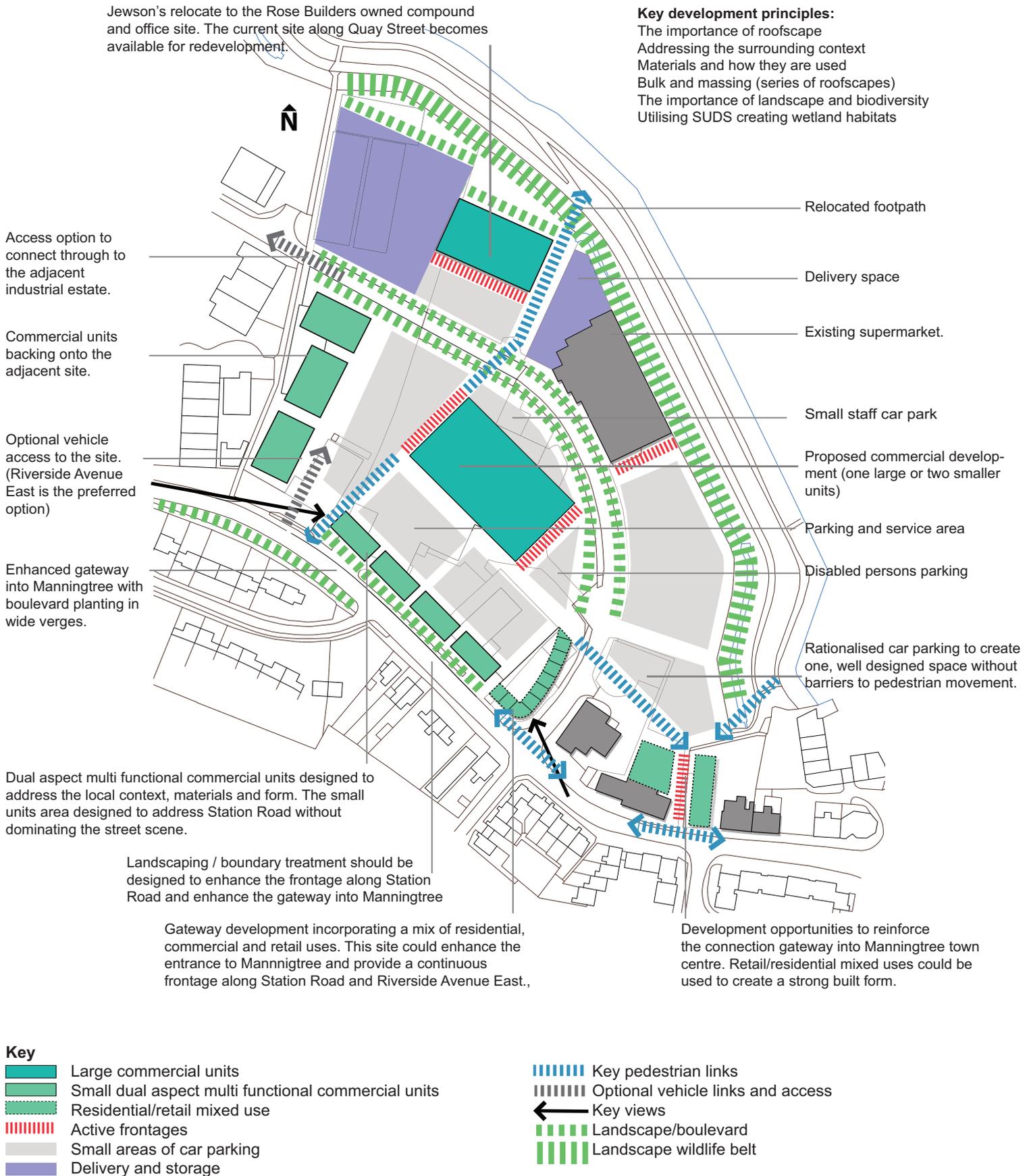
- Improve the appearance of the gateway to Manningtree
- Expand the town centre boundary to the west
- Car parking on the fringe of the town
- Play space and public open space
- Improve the access links to the existing network of footpaths
- Positive change of use for a redundant site
- The site may offer an alternative location for Jewson, freeing up the town centre riverside site for development.

### Threats

- Redevelopment fails to address Station Road
- The brownfield site remains undeveloped
- The site is developed in isolation of the town
- Car parking dominates the site and immediate area
- Traffic and increased vehicle numbers create congestion
- Development has a negative effect on the Stour Estuary

- 1) The site of Rose Builders. Any future proposals on this site need to consider a long term, local relocation site for this large local employer. The site owners have no current intention to vacate the site.
- 2) The CO-OP currently operates on the site, providing car parking and post office.
- 3) Redundant factory site owned by Tesco intend to be redevelop the site for a new supermarket.
- 4) Footpath link to flood defence and walks to Manningtree and Dedham.
- 5) Footpath
- 6) Footpath access point from town centre and carpark

### 6.13 Land to the west of Manningtree- development and design objectives



## 7.0 VIABILITY ANALYSIS

### **Jewson site: indicative proposal option 1 (hotel and residential mixed use)**

- 7.1 The decisions taken in producing this development option are focused on creating a sustainable economy, part of which would involve ways in which Manningtree could attract and sustain more visitors. The appeal of Manningtree is the surrounding landscape (Dedham Vale and Stour Estuary) as well as the direct links to London by rail and Harwich Port.
- 7.2 This option is based around a 30 bed 'boutique' hotel (positioned towards an upper 3 to 4 star standard) and restaurant with residential based mixed uses making up the rest of the development. A residential focused option gives the site value from a development point of view. The mix and type of accommodation needs to offer and provide for the correct market, in such a location the majority of units will be aimed at the higher end of the housing market, town houses and loft apartments being the most likely building types.
- 7.3 The economics surrounding a hotel will rely on a number of key factors, most of which would be carefully scrutinised by the potential investor. Demand, capacity and revenue return projections and construction costs being the primary deciding factors. Cars are accommodated through a range of surface level, on-plot and under deck parking solutions. This is made possible through raising the site levels in accordance with the flooding requirements. Flood mitigation will be a large element of this sites viability, with remedial site works and construction engineering pushing up costs, which intern effects the development mix, density and proposed use. Without a better understanding of this, it is difficult to forecast an accurate development costs, but the effects of the ground conditions would undoubtedly have a negative effect on land value.
- 7.4 The balance between residential, hotel and other uses would need to be flexible enough to allow for changes associated with viability but robust enough to ensure the correct mix will be developed and delivered for the best of Manningtree.

### **Jewson site: indicative proposal option 2 (residential mixed use with community space)**

- 7.5 This development model draws the focus towards the office and mixed business uses 'smart workshops'. Manningtree is a commuter location with good quality of life and this creates opportunities to get commuters establishing business where they live. The mix of uses still includes retail but this is limited suiting the demand for commuter locations. Once again residential is the predominant mix with town houses and loft apartments positioned to enjoy the best of the views across the River Stour.
- 7.6 The balance of commercial and retail will be driven by the viability assessment of the scheme. Space is provided for the expansion of the Sailing Club, with more boat storage, workspace and club house facilities; the viability of this element is a difficult to draw down. The development proposals assume the land asset of the existing sailing club, so as part of the development arrangement, it would be assumed that the club would extract value from the land sale to reinvest in the new facilities.
- The community element in this option is, in broad terms, a robust public space- able to function as a variety of uses and events. The market site could be relocated here to provide better space, environment and facilities for the traders. The activity this would create could feed into the new retail and commercial elements of the proposals and the wider town centre.

- 7.7 Cars are accommodated through a range of surface level, on-plot and under deck parking solutions. This is made possible through raising the site levels in accordance with the flooding requirements. Again, flood mitigation will be a large element of this sites viability, with remedial site works and construction engineering pushing up costs, which intern effects the development mix, density and proposed use. Without a better understanding of this, it is difficult to forecast an accurate development costs, but the effects of the ground conditions would undoubtedly have a negative effect on land value.

**Jewson site: indicative proposal option 3 (residential mixed use, hotel and sailing club)**

- 7.8 Option three is based on the same mix of uses as option one but with the proposals for the hotel switched to the western end of the site. A 30 bed 'boutique' hotel (positioned towards an upper 3 to 4 star standard) and restaurant with residential based mixed uses make up the rest of the development. A residential lead option creates the development value. The wider mix and accommodation needs in such a location will be aimed at the higher end of the housing market, town houses and loft apartments being the preferred building typology. A 30 bedroom hotel in this location would be able to occupy the entire western end of the site, making site operation and access easier to control. Parking for the hotel would be all under deck, using the space created by raising the ground level to overcome the flood concerns. The parking arrangement would be the biggest factor in determining the schemes viability.

- 7.9 The community and sailing club elements provide community benefit. This option keeps the sailing club site in its current location on the eastern end of the site. The clubs facilities are shown to be expanded by means of temporary/seasonal moorings or pontoon located within the navigable channel. The expansion of the sailing club aims to meet the growing needs and membership of a popular community facility. The additional benefits of this include creating a vibrant and active waterfront which in turn will attract tourists and visitors. It is commonly accepted that the Stour Estuary is the unique selling point of the town. Sailing club facilities within the new development could come in the form of developer contributions through planning gain.

The old fire station site provides opportunity for sailing club facilities or the more viable option of residential housing, if the flooding issues can be overcome through the use of smart design.

**Market site: indicative proposal option 1 (comprehensive residential mixed use development)**

- 7.10 Developing the Tendring District Council owned market site is a sensitive issue. The site hosts a popular twice weekly market and is home to the public toilets, however the site is under used and a seemingly wasted opportunity. Located on the gateway to the town the site has the opportunity to provide a mixed use gateway development. The site is small but a viable development could be produced to reinforce the townscape on the entrance to the town, while providing retail and residential uses. The gentle slope of the site provides the opportunity to locate parking underneath the buildings. With two town houses, two apartments and a retail unit the development would be small, the viability of which would be operating at a smaller profit margin. Any issues with the ground conditions that would add to the development costs would have a significant effect on the success of the development.

**Market site: indicative proposal option 2 (minimal intervention market site and pocket park)**

- 7.11 The alternative market development or minimal intervention is a redesign of the space to create a 'pocket park'. The space could operate as a robust space that could still contain a

market and other uses. Tree planting and landscaping would improve the visual appearance of the space, especially in such a prominent location.

Viability and funding to achieve this is potentially difficult. Public sector funding could be an answer, as could town council funding sources, but in a time of cut backs and cost saving these funding streams may not provide the required funds.

Enabling development maybe an alternative, building two town houses to fund the remaining spaces, but this would be seen locally as undesirable.

#### **Fire station site: development option appraisal**

- 7.12 The fire station site has been market for relocation for a number of years. The site and location suits residential use but could accommodate a restaurant within the development mix. It is quite likely that this development site will come forward before the adjacent sites, so incorporating and element of mixed use would be encouraged.

The proposed development would more than likely take the form of 4 town houses or number of 3 bed apartments. Car parking would take the form of under deck parking to the rear of the development with a terraced garden above.

Once again flooding issues will need to be considered as the one of the key determining factors of this development.

#### **Royal mail sorting office site: indicative proposal 1 (conversion community use)**

- 7.13 There is a local aspiration to purchase the building and site and convert it into community use; the lack of local community buildings and facilities being the main reason. The viability of the use, purchase and eventual running cost will be difficult to forecast, especially taking into account conversion costs and the associated business operation.

A community cinema, indoor market, meeting space and council room are the main aspiration for the town. The balance between aspiration and economic viability, in this case, are weighed against the sole community use conversion. A building conversion that consists of part community part residential/retail could be achievable and viable. This option would represent the most likely alternative in achieving community use within the existing Royal Mail building. It remains unclear to what form or extent any conversion would take, but the space to the rear of the site and elements of the main building could be easily cleared to incorporate new buildings.

#### **Royal mail sorting office site: indicative proposal 2 (building demolition)**

- 7.14 It is more often the case that a conversion and fit out becomes as expensive as a demolition and rebuild. Saying that, there are numerous example of where change of use conversions lead to desirable places to live, work and run business. The option considers the scenario of total demolition and rebuild, taking into account the adjacent context, the surrounding listed buildings, conservation area and a mix of uses which will compliment Manningtree.

Demolition is often seen as the last resort as one cannot be sure that the building demolished will be replaced with an equally adequate structure. In the case of the existing sorting office building, it was also the end result of the demolition of the sites previous use.

As part of this option the range of proposed uses includes retail along the ground floor fronting the High Street, office space and/or residential above and residential units at the rear of the site, accessed from Stour Street. There is also an element of community use space, provided through developer contribution.

Parking and vehicle access is via Stour Street, pedestrian access is from the High Street entrance.

The viability of the scheme is achieved through the number of residential units on site. The major constraint being car parking with spaces needed to be achieved on site.

**Other sites (North Street, land to the west of Skinners Public House)**

- 7.15 These additional sites have the potential to have some for of development, which, in both cases would help reinforce the townscape, appearance and legibility of the town. These sites have the potential to be developed and should be considered as additional opportunity sites.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 This report has been produced to support and provide additional information for the local development framework (LDF) process, specifically to key development sites in Manningtree.

Each development scenario describes alternative options for the redevelopment of some key sites throughout Manningtree. The proposals have raised a number of issues and key points surrounding the future of the town including understanding the local desire and economic viability of the schemes.

The collective analysis throughout this document has led to the production of a range of development options; balancing the aspirations of the local community, the surrounding context and the viability of the eventual development. The recommendations of this analysis are based around the viability of the sites and the future vision of the town at both local and regional levels, is addressed and considered.

8.2 The Jewson site remains the primary development site in Manningtree, a site that has the potential to be successfully developed, while providing the opportunity to improve the town, the town's appeal and economy. The key to unlocking the site and its potential is the successful relocation of its current business use. Planning policy can help facilitate this but the market conditions need to improve. Development option 3, (residential mixed use, hotel and sailing club facilities) creates the most appropriate development mix for the town and site. This option has the widest support from the three parishes (Manningtree, Mistley and Lawford) as well as a development mix which would appeal to the wider population of the surrounding areas. Again this development scenario would achieve the wider goals of the regional tourism and economic strategies.

8.3 The fire station site has been earmarked for relocation for a number of years (an alternative site for the fire station is highlighted in the local plan) but the site still remains in its present use. The current economic market may mean that the site remains unchanged for at least the short term. It remains clear that the site will eventually become available and its new allocation should reflect a development mix which can react to the market. If correctly reallocated, it is conceivable that the site may be developed a lot quicker than any of the other sites within this report, however the site remains an important opportunity for the quayside and waterfront.

8.4 The sorting office site offers great opportunity for new development in two distinct forms, either a building conversion or demolition and new build. Both options could provide similar end uses but the cost of a conversion is often greater than a new build. Any demolition or conversion will have to be put through the correct planning procedure, but whichever eventually the focus needs to be on context, quality and community. A conversion scheme may require some enabling development to make the scheme viable, which if sensitively done, could achieve the desired outcome.

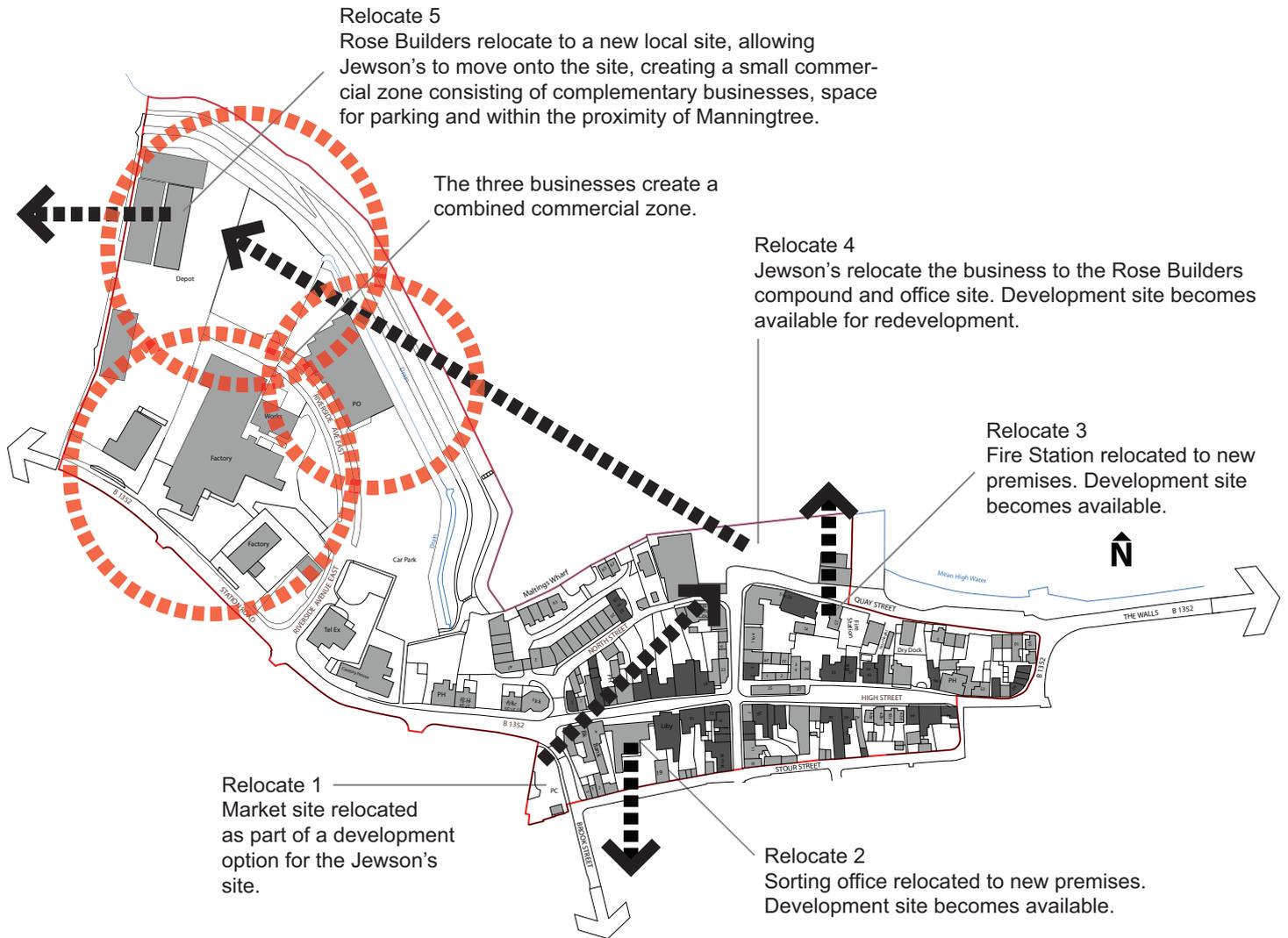
8.5 The market site options follow a similar line to the sorting office; improving the existing provision is preferable to large scale change. There is great scope to improving the existing site and create a multifunctional public town space. Funding could be achieved by developing some of the site for residential uses; this would however reduce the area of the space and inevitably opportunities for expansion. Without enabling development funding could be difficult, it could take time to raise enough funding to positively change and improve the space.

8.6 The Tesco owned site, to the west of the town centre has been involved in a number of discussions for its future, the latest being an application for a supermarket. The site is designated employment land and is within the flood risk area, making residential

development extremely difficult to achieve. The land use allocation is unlikely to change with commercial uses still being the preferred development option. Other uses like car parking, public open space and nature reserves which have been suggested through consultation are unlikely to meet the development aspirations of the landowners. On deciding the outcome for this key site, Tendring District Council planners need to be sure that any development proposals are for the best of the town, complement the existing town centre retail while creating a development which is quality, in context and improves the existing surroundings. Other than a high quality built form, the main opportunity rests with the application of landscaping to integrate the site with the surrounding sites and landscape, while mitigating the impact of large car parking areas.

## 9.0 APPENDIX

### The development jigsaw



## Gateway analysis



1) On exiting the railway station the route leads you towards the main connecting road. 2) The roundabout is large and difficult to cross for cyclists and pedestrians; it is not clear where to head. 3) At the start of Station Road there is a lack of arrival, lots of signage and clutter but no useful navigation or information for cyclists and pedestrians. 4) Industrial estates to the left, together with narrow footways and fast traffic make this route unattractive to users. 5) Narrow footway with no cycle route; the railway arch is the first 'gateway point' into Manningtree. 6) Residential areas to the right and industrial to the left provide a lack of location and sense of place. 7) Extremely wide junctions to the industrial estate make pedestrians feel vulnerable crossing. 8) The arrival/welcome sign into Manningtree is tired and worn giving a poor impression of the area. 9) Industrial buildings, some redundant- are due to be redeveloped. Any proposals need to address Station Road and improve the visual appearance of the approach to Manningtree. 10) Tree planting, cycle lanes and better footways would improve the link into Manningtree. (Where space is available.) 11) On approach to the town centre junctions could be improved for pedestrian crossing. 12) The 'gateway' into Manningtree town centre is marked by the corner buildings fronting the High Street.



### Manningtree 1970's vision

The 1970 vision for Manningtree, produced by the then Essex County Planning Department.

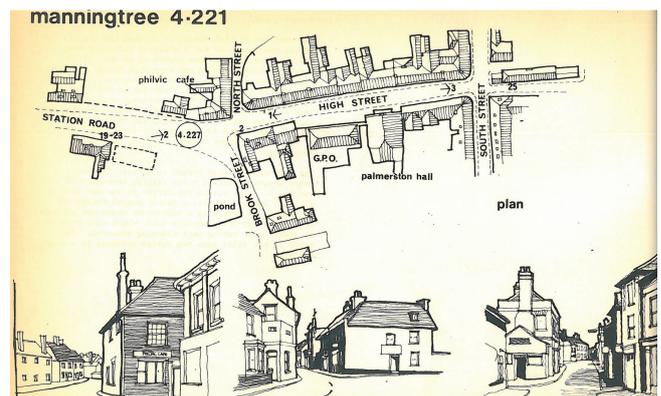
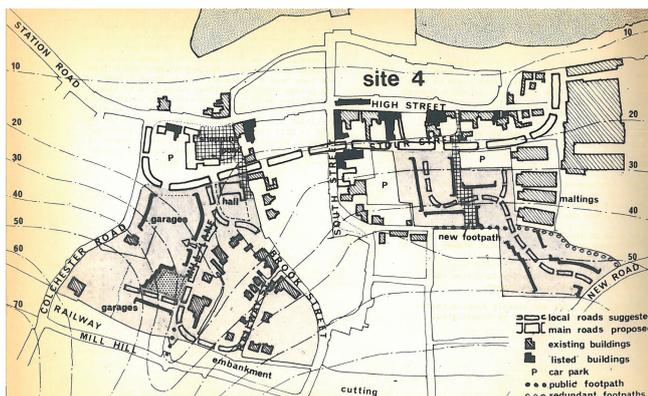
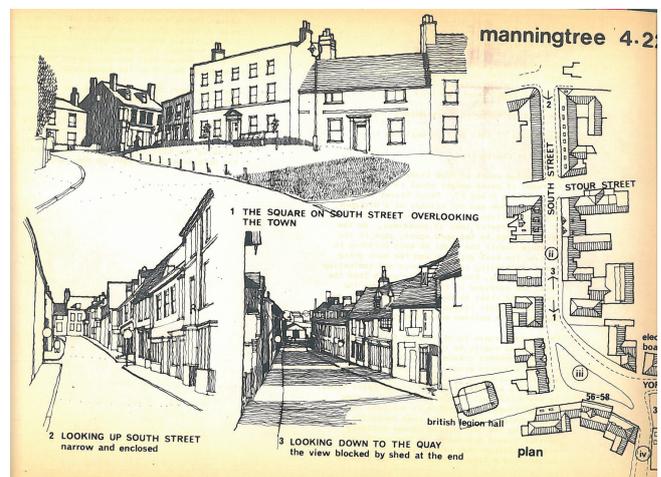
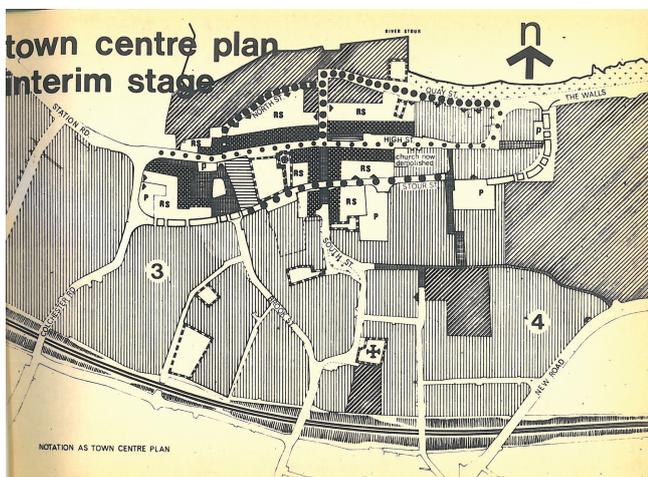
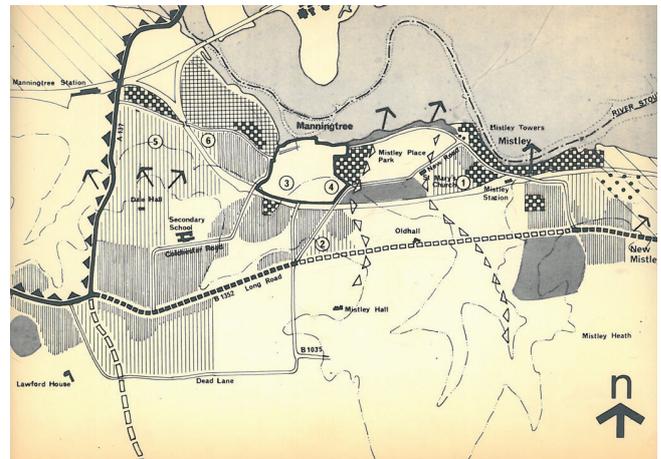
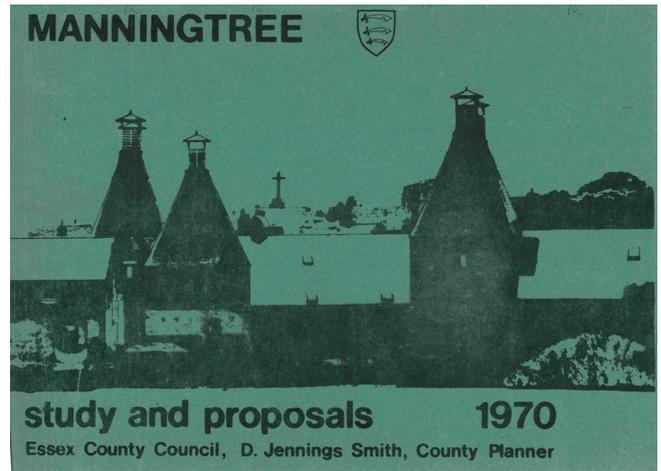
The document attempted to address some of the very same issues we are looking at again today. The documents principal aims were to:

1) to find a way fo dealing with the town centre traffic that will ensure the narrow streets and good individual buildings and groups of buildings that give Manningtree its essential character are far as possible retained.

2) to encourage good modern development on the derelict waste land, in scale and character with the existing buildings, so that the quality of the town is enhanced and the centre re-vitalised.

Some of the documents suggestions were followed through and constructed, others, like bypassing the town centre via Stour Street were not. (Bottom left)

In essence, many of the same issues that effected the town in 1970, have not gone away. Even though the development potential of the town is far less than it was in the 1970s, the delicate balance between conservation, development progress and transportation remain.



**Design and development precedents**

	4.
1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	

**1)** Site specific street furniture, Portsmouth **2)** Street life / cafe culture, Bury St. Edmunds **3)** New, mixed use town centre development within historic Bury St. Edmunds **4)** Urban 'pocket park', Zutphen, Holland **5)&6)** Modern approach to traditional housing, BO01, Malmo, Sweden.



## **Public and stakeholder engagement: report**

### **Scope and themes covered**

The engagement exercise focussed on the main issues to be considered by the Design and Development Brief, as reflected in a consultation questionnaire, the display boards at a 'drop-in' engagement event and the focus group activities at a stakeholder workshop. The main themes of the consultation discussions were:

#### **Movement**

Parking / traffic management / pedestrian and cycle access / riverside access and maritime activities

#### **Public realm (enjoyment of streets and spaces)**

High Street / public open spaces / riverside access / route enhancements between the station and the town centre

#### **Land use and potential development of key sites**

Sorting office / Jewsons yard / Railex (Tesco) site / other sites

### **Methodology**

The purpose and intention was to meet and hear from as many people as possible as the brief was being prepared, to gauge the range of local priorities and to inform the brief as it developed. An enthusiastic and detailed response was received from a small number of people that returned a consultation questionnaire and / or submitted written notes or annotated plans of the study area. A wider interest in the study was evidenced by good attendance at a 'drop-in' style public engagement event. The main elements of the exercise were:

#### Communications:

- A letter explaining the purpose of the brief and the opportunities to contribute to the consultation was sent to 248 residents and 132 businesses in the study area, providing EDI contact details
- The public 'drop-in' event was advertised in the local newspaper
- A web page was created on the EDI website [www.the-edi.co.uk](http://www.the-edi.co.uk)

#### Consultation questionnaire:

- Available at events, at two local shops and from the EDI website
- Freepost address provided for return of questionnaires and plans
- 27 questionnaires received with additional comments and annotated plans

#### Public engagement 'drop-in' event:

- Held in a town centre venue ('The Hub') on a busy Saturday morning
- Advertised beforehand in the local newspaper and during the event via a poster board clearly visible on the library steps (closed for refurbishment)
- Maximum capacity was reached with 70 people attending over three hours

#### Key stakeholder workshop:

- 130 'key stakeholders' were invited including local community group representatives, relevant statutory bodies, and those who had attended the 'drop-in' event (or could not attend) and had expressed an interest
- 21 attendees with facilitation by EDI and Tendring District Council
- Presentation, questions, group discussion, workshop activity and feedback
- In addition, in depth conversations were held with individual stakeholders

#### Feedback and analysis:

- All questionnaire responses entered onto an Access database with summaries of results for individual questions available in a PDF file
- Database of responses and contact details available for future use