



# chatham

pentagon centre

**Development Brief:** Final Consultation Draft



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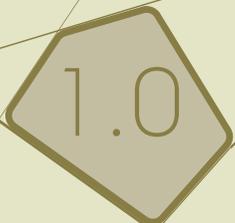
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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope and purpose

This development brief for the refurbishment and extension of the Pentagon Centre has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA), Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) and Chapman Taylor in conjunction with CB Richard Ellis on behalf of Medway Council and its partner Dunedin Property Limited. DLA have led the work and provided urban design and town planning input, ITP have provided transport advice, Chapman Taylor have given expert guidance on shopping centre design and architecture, and CB Richard Ellis have provided a property market overview.

The main objectives for the production of a development brief are to:

- \* Set parameters for extending and refurbishing the Pentagon Centre to include a mix of uses;
- \* Enable the Council and its partners to secure a viable, high quality scheme that is closely integrated with the High Street and rest of the Town Centre;
- \* Enable the Council and its partners to make informed decisions about funding sources; and
- \* Ensure a clear fit with the adopted Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, adopted Medway Local Plan and other relevant studies in Chatham and Medway.

As part of the analysis undertaken prior to the writing of the development brief an **issues report** was prepared to set out the relevant factual information about the Pentagon Centre, and its relationship to the surrounding areas and any constraints. It includes a review of market demand potential occupiers and a consideration of a mix of potential uses to be accommodated including residential. The report sets out the important issues to be considered and resolved, and formed the basis upon which the development brief has been prepared.

The draft development brief has been the subject of an initial six week period of community engagement and stakeholder consultation. An exhibition has been mounted in key venues around Chatham, including the Pentagon Centre, and the draft development brief and supporting Sustainability Appraisal were posted on the Medway Council website. Questionnaires were available at all key locations and the process has been managed in accordance with Medway Council's **Statement of Community Involvement**.

1.6 This final consultation draft of the development brief, and supporting sustainability appraisal, have been revised to take account of the results of the initial consultation period. They will now be subject to a further 4 - 6 week period of statutory consultation after which they will be adopted by Medway Council as a Supplementary Planning Documents.

2.0

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The refurbishment and extension of the pentagon Centre is one of the first major projects to come forward as part of the overall vision set out in the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework. The development framework was adopted by the Council in 2004 and has provided the basis for a wide range of projects and proposals across Chatham town centre aimed at raising the profile of the town to create a city centre for the wider Medway area. The development framework supports policies contained within the Medway Local Plan which was adopted in 2003.

### 2.1 Site location and description

The Pentagon Centre is a key asset to Chatham and is located within the main shopping area of the town centre alongside the High Street. The Pentagon Centre was constructed and opened in the 1970's and is an example of a large, multi level structure with internal, inward looking pedestrian malls and spaces. Servicing and car parking are all provided within the structure, with an additional multi-storey car park located adjoining the centre and accessed from The Brook. The Pentagon Centre underwent a refurbishment in the 1990s and currently provides around 80 retail units of various sizes arranged over two levels.



#### A marooned vessel

Although the Pentagon Centre occupies a prime location there is considerable scope to significantly enhance the integration between the centre and the surrounding town. The mega scale of the Pentagon dwarfs the surrounding context of finer grained, traditional streets. Sandwiched between The

Brook (one side of Chatham's inner ring road) and the High Street, the footprint of the Pentagon Centre occupies half of the town centre block it is situated in, with the smaller narrow retail properties providing a frontage to the High Street.

Public Realm, Manchester



As a result of the large footprint and loss of much of the fine urban grain pedestrian access and circulation within and around the centre is limited. There are four main pedestrian access points to the Pentagon Centre:

- \* a wide principle entrance from the centre of the High Street;
- \* a secondary access from Military Road under Mountbatten House;
- \* a dark, narrow access from the bus stops and taxi ranks in the northern-most corner; and
- \* direct access from The Brook multi-storey car park, adjacent to the Pentagon Centre.

An additional pedestrian access did exist under the high level service access bridge which connects the Pentagon Centre to Rope Walk, but the access was closed some years ago due to safety concerns. Despite being signed as a vehicle only route informal pedestrian access still occurs across the service bridge at some risk to pedestrian safety.

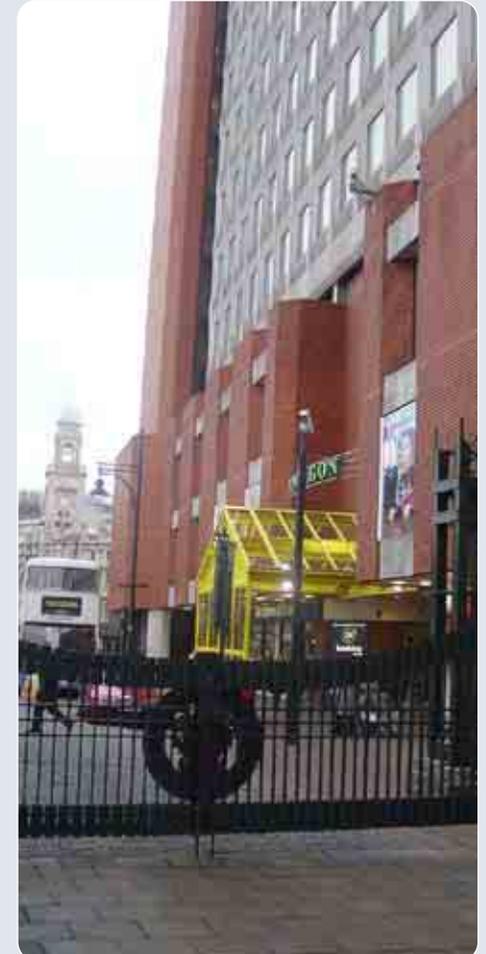
## 2.2 Policy Context

### Regional Planning Guidance

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) covers the period up until 2016. It provides the current statutory regional guidance covering the Chatham area.

**Policy RE6** notes that priority should be given to securing economic development in the Thames Gateway in accordance with the guidance and principles set out in RPG9a. The policy states that to ensure balanced and sustainable development, there is a need for inward investment to be supported by adequate transport, community infrastructure and housing provision.

Military Road





### South East Plan Consultation Draft (January 2005)

The South East Plan will eventually replace current RPG and provide the statutory regional framework for development to 2026.

**Policy €4** develops a post-2016 perspective that reconciles the scale of growth with the principles of regeneration and sustainable communities at the heart of the Thames Gateway concept.

**Policy KTG2** refers to economic growth and employment. The development of the economy in Kent Thames Gateway will be dynamic and widely based, to provide employment for the community as a whole. In order to ensure that economic growth and jobs will be created it is important that the infrastructure required to support development proposals is identified and provided. **Policy KTG4** refers to infrastructure.

All major development should be accessible by a choice of transport from a wide catchment, and employment and housing should be of a scale and location that minimises the necessity for long distance commuting. **Policy KTG6** notes that the criteria for the location of major developments are:

- \* to achieve a broad balance between housing and jobs at each urban area; and
- \* to exploit the potential for housing and business at locations served by the CTRL domestic services, especially at Chatham.

The role of retail centres is particularly important in this sub-region. **Policy KTG7** highlights that Chatham will be developed as a major town centre at which new mixed retail, leisure and service uses be concentrated.

**Policy KTG9** refers to the broad amount and distribution of housing. The preferred overall level of housing provision is around 58,000 additional homes 2001 to 2026 (47,200 between 2016 and 2026). The preferred spatial distribution is for strategic concentrations of new dwellings at towns such as Chatham.

### Medway Local Plan

Local Planning Policy background for Chatham Pentagon Centre is provided by the Medway Local Plan adopted in May 2003.

There are a number of key policies that relate to Chatham town centre. **Policy S5: Medway's 'City' Centre** states:-

*"Chatham town centre will be developed as the major, multi-use 'city' centre for Medway. Sites to cater for new retail development are allocated within the town centre, and any major comparison retail proposals should be located here. Qualitative improvements to convenience goods provision, which are well related to the core area, will be permitted".*

Medway Council actively promotes the centre of Chatham as the 'city' centre and main sub-regional shopping centre for Medway. The Council is firmly of the view that Chatham has a strong role as the principal location for comparison shopping within Medway. **Policy S5** therefore gives priority to the centre as the preferred location for new or replacement comparison retailing, including bulky goods. To facilitate this, **Policy R1** states that any development that would undermine Chatham town centre's identified role as a regional

Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester



scale centre for comparison goods, particularly the centre's vitality and viability, will be resisted. Refurbishment and replacement of key retail, parking and other facilities within the town centre are encouraged with a particular emphasis on high quality, mixed use development (**Policy R12**).

The parking strategy for Chatham town centre (**Policy T15**) is to ensure both the maximum number of short stay car parking spaces are available for shoppers and other visitors and to maximise the use of those spaces. A key part of the strategy will involve changing some long-stay spaces to short-stay spaces for the use of customers. This will reduce congestion.

### Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework

The Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework was commissioned to create a clear agenda for focused development in Chatham and its waterfront district. The document establishes a detailed Development Framework identifying where and how the town centre should develop and grow, with the aim of creating a catalyst for attracting both public and private sector involvement. The Development Framework was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in July 2004.

The Development Framework identifies specific projects and regeneration priorities for Chatham town centre. These include:

- \* expansion and refurbishment of the Pentagon Centre to increase floorspace by approximately 15,000m<sup>2</sup>.
- \* a new food store of approximately 8,000 m<sup>2</sup>.
- \* over 8,000 m<sup>2</sup> of small-scale employment space and ground floor retail and leisure uses.
- \* a range of related and complementary facilities, which could include small-scale retail, cafes and restaurants.
- \* a new public square.
- \* improvements along the High Street, including the creation of new high quality public spaces within the shopping area.
- \* enhanced and rationalised car parking, including new, high-quality well-located multi-storey car parking to serve the Centre.



In order to help deliver the projects and priorities the town centre is divided into seven 'key project areas'. The project areas are individually distinct but collectively these form the core of Chatham town centre:

- \* The Brook and Upper High Street
- \* St John's / High Street
- \* The Waterfront
- \* Shopping Heart
- \* Sir John Hawkins Way
- \* Station Gateway
- \* Best Street

The Pentagon Centre falls within the Shopping Heart project area, and the refurbishments and extension of the centre is one of the core components of the 'project area'.

The Development Framework establishes guidance for development opportunities and public realm enhancements within the Shopping Heart comprising three main elements:

A priority in the short term enhancement of the Shopping Heart is to expand and refurbish the Pentagon Centre. The aim of such refurbishment activities is to increase the Pentagon Centre's appeal in an increasingly competitive retail market in the Medway and Greater London region.

The Pentagon Centre enhancement work aims not only to improve the centre but to also improve the integration between the centre and the surrounding town centre. A key aim identified in the Development Framework was to ensure that new retail development is well integrated with existing retail in the Shopping Heart and strengthens the Centre. To achieve this objective the Pentagon Centre should aim to improve its interface with the High Street, enhance connections with the area beyond its northern entrance - Military Road and the Brook Theatre, and also improve ground floor activity as the Pentagon Centre addresses the Brook.

An additional key aim is to improve the pedestrian environment, to improve links between the Shopping Heart and the wider town centre. Pedestrian improvements should specifically focus on improving the public realm of the entrances to Pentagon Centre from the High Street, Military Road and Solomon's Road.

#### Chatham Waterfront



In addition, the Development Framework also sets out a number of design principles that must be applied to development proposals within the Shopping Heart:

- \* transform the Pentagon Centre by improving its frontage and entrances off the Brook and extend the High Street.
- \* develop a new food store to provide strong retail anchor at the eastern end of the High Street – retain buildings of townscape quality – food store development could include residential uses and courtyard spaces on upper floors – high quality multi-storey to improve parking provision.
- \* create a new high quality public realm focus to the High Street through provision of a new High Street Square – fronted by shops and

cafes, and the new expansion to the Pentagon Centre – the square will be overlooked by a mix in upper level uses and provide a new frontage development to the southern side – the square will embrace the historic Pump House building.

- \* enhance the setting and composition of built form focusing on the Brook Theatre.
- \* establish a pedestrian friendly, safe environment with servicing to the rear of properties wherever possible – composition and form is not only concealed to frontages of the High Street but also to the rear.

Together development opportunities, public realm enhancements and design principles provide a strong framework that the development brief for the Pentagon Centre must clearly fit within.

3.0

## URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Overview

An urban design analysis was undertaken of Chatham Town Centre and the area around the Pentagon centre. The analysis highlighted three fundamental design issues affecting Chatham town centre resulting in an urban centre that is segregated, lacks vitality, viability and has lost its unique sense of place. Each issue must be addressed to re-establish the identity of Chatham and create the necessary pre-conditions for successful and beneficial change to occur.

An overview of the analysis is provided here, with further details given in Appendix 1.

#### Arriving in Chatham:

Firstly, the sense of arrival in Chatham is poor. The Inner Ring Road is heavily engineered and provides a rather negative first impression of Chatham. Traffic is quickly diverted around the town centre with nothing that actually signals arrival. The roads and streets either side of the ring road have lost contact with one another. There are places where pedestrians and cyclists can see straight into the town centre, along Railway Street for example, but are prevented from taking a direct route into the centre due to the intercepting ring road.

Outside the ring road pedestrians are secondary in every sense to the motor vehicle, their routes are diverted through hostile engineered barrier lined pavements and tunnels which are illegible, dark and have poor natural

The Brook



Sir John Hawkins Way



surveillance. Arrival by rail is equally disappointing and disorientating, the town station is disconnected from the town centre as the ring road severs Railway Street, the link route.

#### Severance of the Central Area:

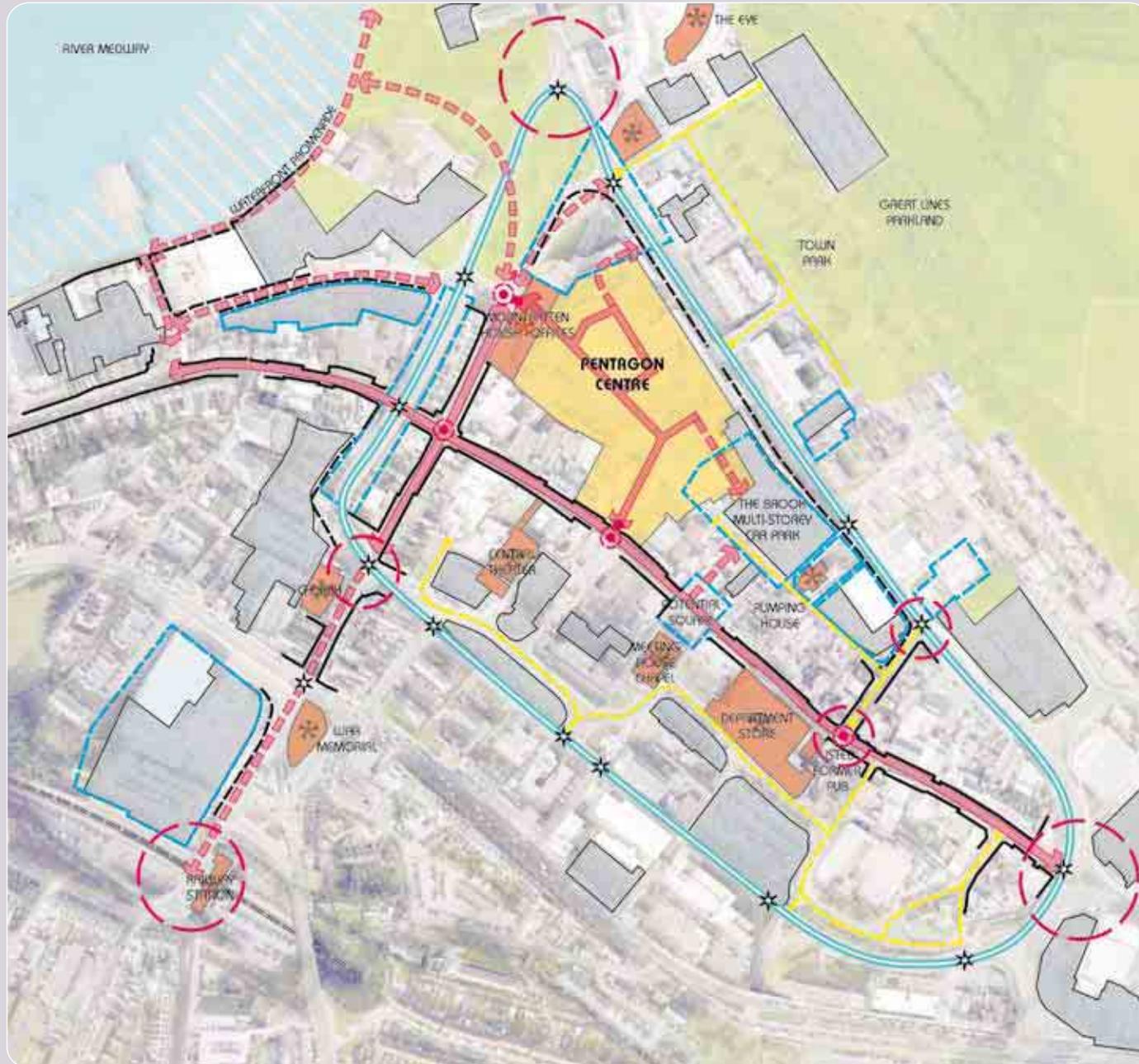
Secondly, the central area is both divided and isolated from adjoining residential areas as a result of the impermeable pedestrian environment around the town centre. Many of the routes into and around the town centre are poor and do not encourage pedestrian accessibility or 'walkability', vehicular service routes dominate. The lack of people living within the town centre also means that the times at which the town centre is active and peopled is restricted. The limited evening economy is strongly focused on a particular younger age range and the lack of diversity makes the town centre almost a 'no go' area for many.

#### Absence of Quality Public Spaces:

Finally, the lack of quality public spaces and landmarks which are clearly related to one another has resulted in a town centre that has lost a clear sense of identity and character. Although there are many fine individual buildings in the town centre, activities feel somewhat dissipated and unconnected without specific areas or districts that celebrate difference and offer choice to the visitor or resident.

Beyond the dense urban fabric of the High Street and Batchelor Street, much of the town centre layout has been disrupted by stark architecture of the 1960s and 1970s. The quality of future development should be closely monitored to encourage quality over quantity.

FIGURE 1: Urban Design Analysis



In the shorter term, incisive small scale improvements to the public realm surrounding the Pentagon Centre, specifically its entrances and the streetscape of the Brook could enhance the quality of the public space in the town centre.



4.0

## A VISION FOR CHATHAM TOWN CENTRE & THE PENTAGON CENTRE

### 4.1 Capitalising on change: delivering a new structure for Chatham

#### Chatham: the city centre for Medway

There is already a strong and positive impetus for change in Medway. Chatham has the potential to be at the centre of a riverside city with a population of around 300,000 people. Medway is positioned within a strategic growth area, with good transport links and significant investment programmes have been put in place. Important progress has already been made with the adoption of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, and further projects have already started off the back of the framework, including this development brief for the refurbishment and extension of the Pentagon Centre.

The town centre already provides a busy focus for the local community as well as visitors to Chatham. The new city centre for Medway must be designed for people first by allowing all users to move around easily, conveniently and safely without getting lost or confused. In order to achieve this the town centre must be clearly structured around easily identifiable places and landmarks such as The Waterfront, the High Street, the Pentagon Centre, and The Brook theatre, linked together by a network of memorable, high quality streets, squares and parks.

Chatham Skyline



In addition, improving the mix and range of uses including shopping, leisure, businesses and in particular housing helps to increase choice and make the town centre more vibrant and interesting at different times of the day and into the evening. It is also important to manage change, recognising that reconfiguration and consolidation of existing functions and uses may be required in order to allow for beneficial change.

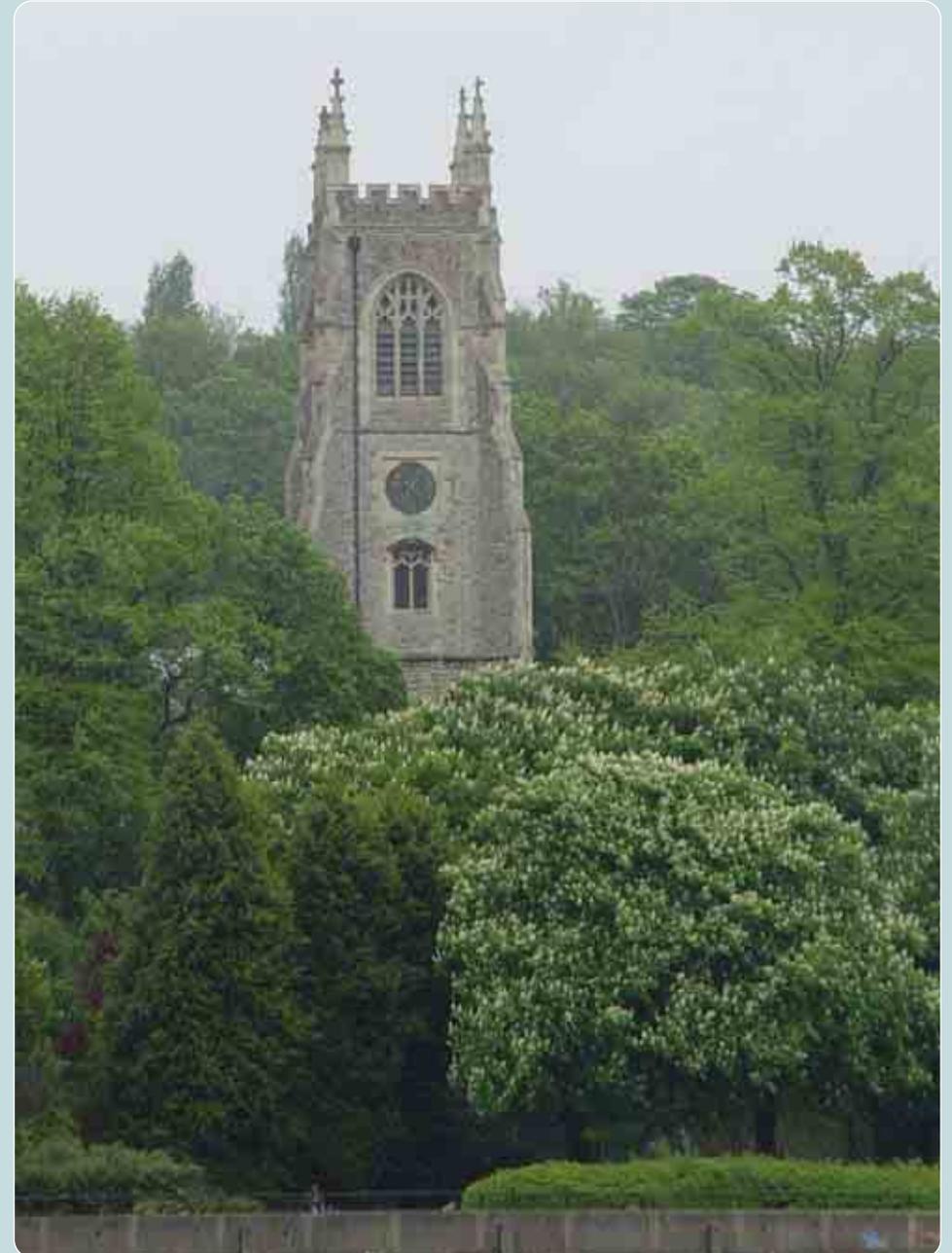
With regard to accessibility, the *Transport for Medway study* will consider a range of options for Chatham town centre. As well as pedestrian accessibility and the role of public transport, car parking must also be considered as a whole within the town centre, ensuring that the experience of visiting Chatham is positive. Proposals for the Pentagon Centre will need to be closely related to the pedestrian network, new bus interchange facilities, as a well as the wider programme of vehicle management and car parking for Chatham town centre.



### Market conditions

At present, although the town centre is busy and enjoys reasonably low vacancy rates, Chatham has a relatively poor quality retail offer, particularly in terms of its higher end/fashion offer. Although Chatham dominates the retailing hierarchy of the Medway towns, with a much stronger offer than Rochester, Gillingham and Strood, it suffers significant competition from a number of strong, competing locations – in particular, Maidstone, Canterbury and Bluewater. Both of the two former centres are currently experiencing a major improvement of their offer, with modern shopping centre schemes anchored by high quality department store tenants.

This scale of competing provision – together with the proximity of Hempstead Valley shopping centre, which in many respects 'replicates' much of Chatham's own offer – means that the town has a constrained catchment, particularly given the location of the River Medway to the north. These constraints are demonstrated by the relatively low levels of higher quality retailer demand for Chatham, at the present time.



However, it must be remembered that many retailers have relatively limited time horizons, and are therefore judging Chatham on its current status, without necessarily understanding important factors such as the likely expansion of Medway's population particularly given its strategic importance within the Thames Gateway area (it is already the largest conurbation in the South East, outside London), the Council's ongoing strategy of promoting Chatham as the 'city centre' for Medway, and proposals which will lead to a significant improvement of Chatham town centre's environment, such as the proposed lowering of Sir John Hawkins Way.

It is therefore considered vital for prospective retailers – and, most importantly, for prospective anchor tenants – to have a clear understanding of these improvements, if they are to consider positively the opportunities which will be afforded by a proposed expansion of the Pentagon Centre.

### **A master plan led approach**

Development within Chatham cannot take place in isolation. It must be considered as part of a wider package of measures to improve and raise the status of Chatham town centre. The Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework provides a strong foundation from which to progress beneficial change, identifying a series of interventions and projects across the town. Development proposals, such as

the extension and refurbishment of the Pentagon Centre, play an important part in the overall regeneration of Chatham but that contribution must be assessed within the wider framework.

Medway Council have an important role in the delivery of a raft of measures that will facilitate and secure many of the changes proposed within the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, particularly major public realm works, essential infrastructure, and transport and access, having regard to the proactive management and positive planning for town centres advocated within Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (HMSO 2005).

It is expected that Medway Council will use a range of measures to secure change. These are outlined in the delivery chapter of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Brief and include the creation of a town centre development fund through the use of section 106 planning contributions, proactively using its role as a major town centre land owner, or through the use of compulsory purchase powers where necessary. In this way a co-ordinated and holistic overview can be taken within which a variety of projects can be run concurrently to secure a better future for Chatham town centre.

Artists Impression of the Pentagon Centre and Chatham Town Centre



The paddock



#### Four varied quarters

In terms of considering the structure of Chatham town centre, in particular the retail heart, can be divided into four interrelated quarters defined by The Brook and the existing ring road, The High Street, and a new north/south pedestrian route that links The Brook to the High Street and Meeting House Lane proposed within the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework. Within each quarter identified major projects can come forward linked together by major enhancements to the public realm.

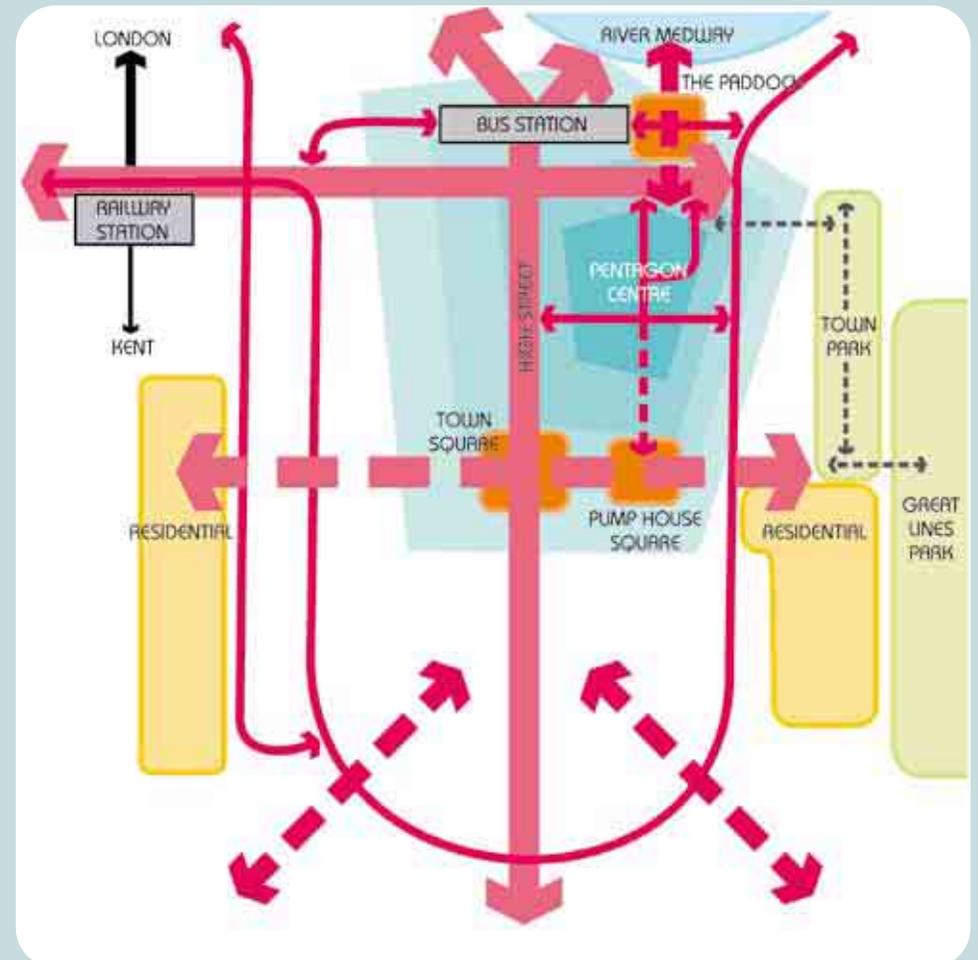
The quarters are closely linked to adjoining parts of the town centre, in particular Chatham Waterfront, the High Street west of Military Road and east of Union Street, the railway station and Railway Street, Town Park and Great

Lines, and the residential areas to the south and east, both existing and as proposed within the Development Framework. The quality of the links will help establish the character of the town centre and must be strongly pedestrian focused, framed by development of the highest quality.

#### The Pentagon Centre: at the centre of the shopping heart

The Pentagon Centre is a key asset within the town centre and substantially occupies one of the four quarters. The refurbishment and extension of the centre will increase its attraction to retailers and enhance its competitiveness. Clearly, ensuring the commercial success of the Pentagon Centre will be a major component in bringing forward the regeneration of the wider town centre.

FIGURE 2: Town Centre Structure





## 4.2 The importance of good design

Good design must be properly considered as an integral part of the development process. A number of overarching design principles have therefore been identified in order to ensure that the role and profile of Chatham town centre is enhanced through development of the highest quality. There must be a strong commitment to **first class urban design**, exemplified by many of the proposals put forward within the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, and carried forward in this development brief.

Creating a top quality built environment within the town centre, that draws upon the considerable history and identity of Chatham, is crucial. This means ensuring that all new development that takes place is of exceptional quality. It also means that new development must conserve and enhance the existing character and townscape qualities of the town centre, carefully repairing and stitching together those areas that have become fragmented by previous large scale re-development. New development must also positively contribute to the quality of the public realm within the town centre, including revitalising existing and creating new open spaces, and recognise the importance of the unique setting of the town centre.

Buildings within Chatham town centre must frame a connected pattern of streets and open spaces, punctuated by landmarks in key locations, thereby allowing people to easily navigate their way around. Provision of a sensitively articulated built form that complements the established character and identity of the town centre, together with the use of distinctive building materials, will help re-enforce a strong sense of place and avoid development that is unremarkable, anonymous and has little relationship to its surroundings.

Five basic design and development principles have been identified that together must help shape and inform the design and layout of proposals that come forward as part of the Development Brief. They are integral to the development components described in section five of this brief.



Exchange Square Detail

## Inclusive Design

Inclusive design breaks down barriers and exclusion, focusing on the needs of the diverse number of people who use the town centre. Compliance with the Disability Rights Commission guidance on Inclusive Design will ensure that new development complies with the statutory requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995. The guidance states that an inclusive environment will be:

- \* Easily used by as many people as possible without undue effort, special treatment or separation;
- \* Able to offer people the freedom to choose how they access and use it and allow them to participate equally in all activities it may host;
- \* Able to embrace diversity and difference;
- \* Safe, legible and predictable; and
- \* High quality.

## Public realm of the highest quality

The public realm comprises the streets, footpaths and open spaces of Chatham town centre, as well as the built form that helps to define and contain them. The relationship between buildings and the public realm is a critical part of the design of new development, ensuring that streets and open spaces are naturally surveilled by surrounding buildings to form pleasant, safe 'places'. Development should be designed to maximise opportunities for buildings to front onto streets, with the urban design principle of 'active streets and safe streets' being a key objective.

## High Quality Detailing



A public realm of the highest quality will create long term value and underpin investment in Chatham town centre. The atmosphere created in the public realm will also play a large part in the "branding" of the area. Chatham town centre must have a distinctive, people centred environment focused on a series of high quality public spaces. It should also have a fine grain and permeable movement structure of connected streets, using existing routes but with additional linkages across proposed development areas.

## Deansgate, Manchester



## A connected pattern of lively streets and spaces

Movement through and around Chatham town centre should ensure that the relationship between vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists maximises accessibility for all users.

A network of connected streets should be established which are appropriate in scale and design to a town centre environment. This means tree lined streets with wide pavements and a carriageway for both vehicular traffic and public transport. It also means that there should be places that are either solely for pedestrians or places where vehicular traffic is significantly calmed. The town centre must be designed to ensure that people can walk easily and conveniently to where they need to be without being obliged to detour in order to cross busy, traffic dominated roads so increasing the 'walkability' of the town centre.

Midsummer Place, Central Milton Keynes



The quality of the streets and spaces is, in part, related to whether buildings are able to address them in a positive way. Blank elevations create monotonous and hostile environments, “no go” places that can feel unsafe. By establishing a network of building frontages which are animated and active, the character of the street or space is enhanced.

### Built form that is strong and distinctive

The nature and spatial quality of the public realm is largely determined by the buildings and activities that front onto it ensuring that associated streets, footpaths and open spaces are well defined. Good quality development is therefore critical in establishing the character and nature of the town centre area.

In addition, the skyline and roofscape of Chatham town centre is an important feature, defined by bold forms such as the Brook Theatre and Mountbatten House for example. These features are local landmarks which are useful as they can help people to navigate around a place, or identify with a particular location, through providing a unique or locally distinctive element within the landscape or townscape. Particular attention should therefore be paid to creating a lively and dynamic roofscape for new development within the town centre area.

Adaptable buildings and layouts will provide opportunities for changes of use to occur over the longer term, increasing flexibility and choice. This means that, should the need arise, the use of an office building could be changed to residential, for example, instead of demolishing and rebuilding.

Corner Detail, Manchester



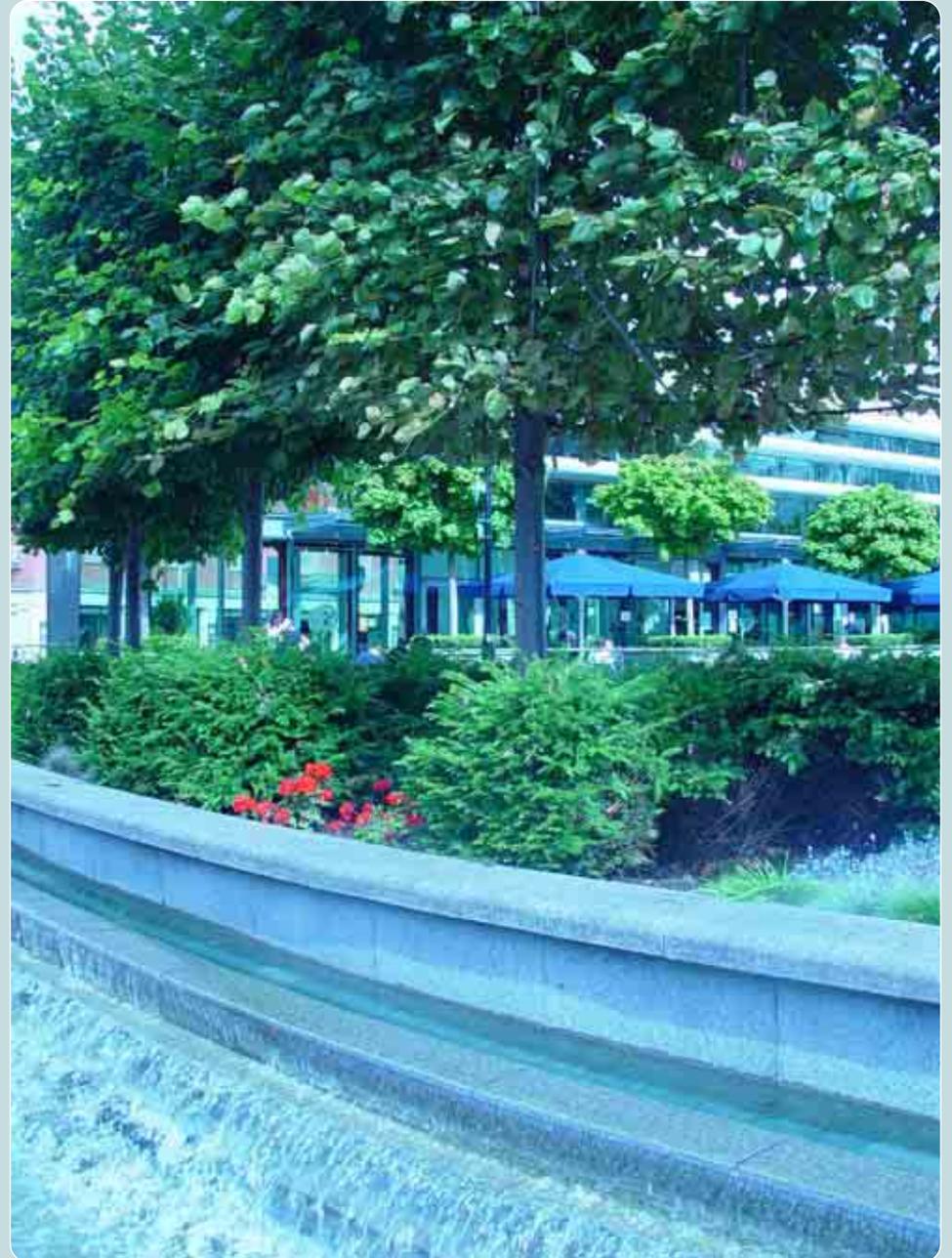
### Designing for a mix of uses

Design of new development within the town centre must be able to accommodate a mix of uses. This is important to re-enforce and support the existing range of functions within the town centre area, and to encourage and support new uses at every level from district to street to individual buildings. It also helps to make the town centre resilient to change over time, better able to flexibly accommodate a broad range of different functions should the need arise. Consideration must be given to broadening the mix of uses when new development proposals come forward in the town centre.

Artists' Impression of The Pentagon Centre



Great Northern Square, Manchester



5.0

## PRINCIPAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

Given the prominence of the refurbishment and extension of the Pentagon Centre to Chatham town centre, and the necessity to ensure a scheme of the highest quality, a number of design components have been identified. They form the basis of the guidance contained within the development brief and should be considered as part of the overall design process. These will help to shape the character and identity of the building and also ensure that it is carefully integrated into its wider surroundings and streetscape.

There are three main opportunities that together make up a comprehensive scheme for the extension and refurbishment of the Pentagon Centre.

The *first* is the refurbishment of the existing centre itself. The relocation of the bus station provides an opportunity to review and consolidate the floorspace of the centre within the existing building framework. There is also an opportunity to reorganise many of the existing retail units, especially within the upper mall, to make them more commercially attractive. Finally, reviewing the existing entrance points, malls and internal spaces, including Pentagon Court, will help improve pedestrian circulation through the centre.

Broard Street, Birmingham



The *second* development component is the major extension of the centre into the area around Solomon's Road. This is a significant opportunity and encompasses the demolition of the existing Brook car park as well as the potential to redevelop a number of existing units that front the High Street to create a major expansion of the town centre retail circuit. The extension will be retail led to provide a number of modern, double height retail units trading from a single ground floor mall level. In addition there will be provision for high quality car parking above to serve the Pentagon Centre and wider town centre. There is also an opportunity to provide an element of single aspect residential development that 'sleeves' the car parking and overlooks the old pumping station and 'Pump House Square'.

Greenwich Millennium Community



The *third* development component is an extension of the centre fronting The Paddock. Here an opportunity exists to redevelop the area currently used by buses accessing the centre, reclaiming highway land to provide a fresh and attractive development frontage addressing an important open space and the Medway riverside beyond. The extension will be mixed use, with ground and first floor café, bar and restaurant uses looking over The Paddock, with first floor uses that may include other leisure or retail units, potentially accessed from within the Pentagon Centre. A tower of apartments located above the extension would offer spectacular views across the river.

In addition, there are a number of wider public realm proposals connected with the extension and refurbishment of the centre which are part of the key proposals put forward as part of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework. It is assumed that these will come forward as part of

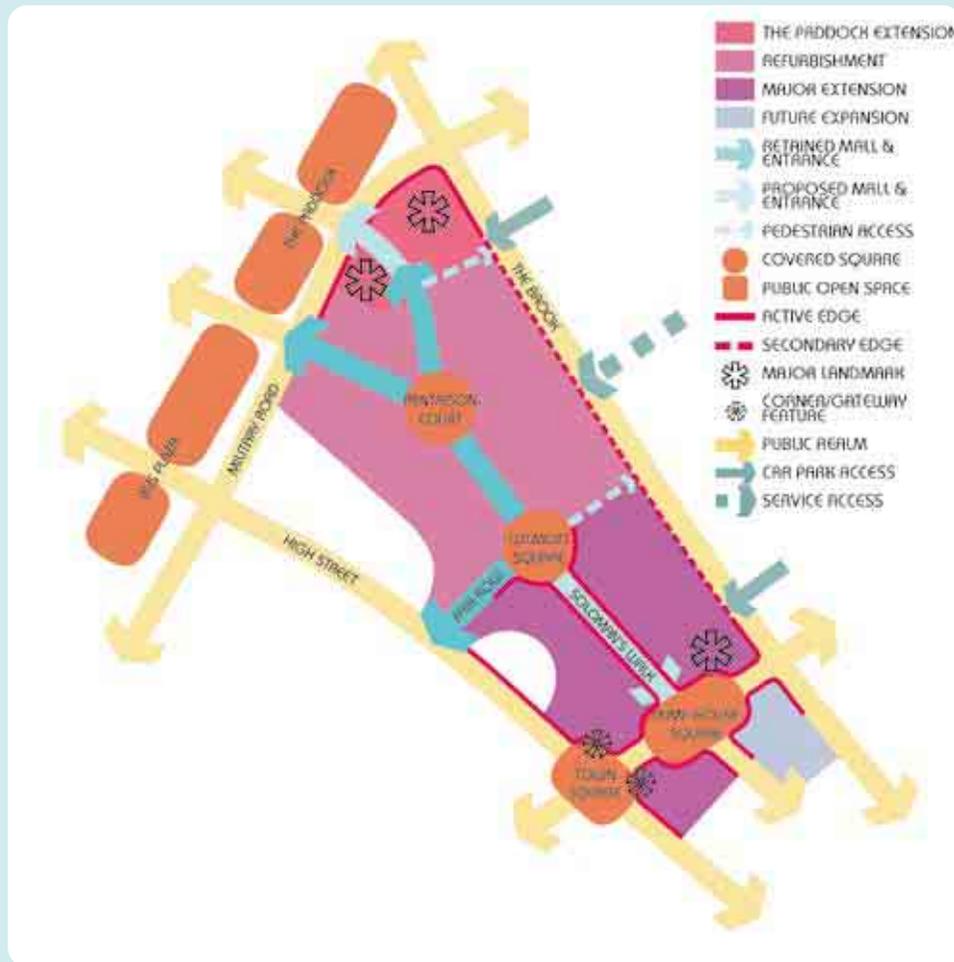


FIGURE 3: Development Components

### Brindley Place, Birmingham



### Using The Public Realm



the wider implementation of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework. The key proposals are:

- \* Relocation of the bus station from the Pentagon Centre to the area currently occupied by Sir John Hawkins Way to create a modern public transport interchange;
- \* Introduction of two way traffic onto The Brook to create a high quality boulevard;
- \* Creation of a new Town Square in the High Street and a new pedestrianised route from The Brook, past the old pumping station (Pump House Square), and through to Meeting House Lane.

Together these elements have shaped and informed the guidance contained within this development brief. It is expected that development proposals for the extension and refurbishment of the Pentagon Centre will demonstrate how each of the development components described have been addressed in order to:

- \* ensure that the overall objectives of the development brief have been met;
- \* facilitate the prompt and efficient determination of proposals through the development and planning process; and
- \* allow the Pentagon Centre to continue to play a significant and expanded role in securing the wider commercial success of Chatham town centre.

Each of the components are outlined in more detail on the following pages.

Quality Pedestrian Environment - Milton Keynes



Glazed Entrance - The Bullring



Midsummer Place, Central Milton Keynes



## 5.1 Pedestrian movement and links to the wider town centre

### Creating a 'walkable' town centre

Successful town centres are generally characterised by a convenient and accessible network of good quality pedestrian routes. These take the form of fully pedestrianised areas or traditional streets that accommodate both cars and pedestrians in a way that the latter is not made subservient to the former. This can be achieved through wide, well surfaced pavements, the use of street trees, conveniently placed crossings that follow logical desire lines, and animated frontage development, such as shop windows, entrances, balconies, cafes and restaurants, which help make the route both interesting and safe.

Having regard to the network of public spaces and pedestrian links identified within the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, and analysis undertaken as part of the preparation of this development brief, the pedestrian routes around Chatham fall into three principal categories: *approaches* into the town centre, *links* from one area to another, and *circuits* within and around the town centre.

It is essential that development proposals for the Pentagon Centre should facilitate pedestrian accessibility by clearly keying into approaches to the town centre, addressing linkages, and optimising circuits within the town centre. This will not only contribute towards the overall attractiveness of the town centre but also improve the competitiveness of the Pentagon Centre through increased footfall – leading people in because it is part of an attractive, clearly defined network. Development proposals for the Pentagon Centre will therefore need to:

- \* Key into the wider network of routes across the town centre at Military Road (railway station), Chatham Waterfront and The Paddock, the new bus station (Bus Plaza), The Brook, revitalised to make it a more attractive two way street and giving access to new development opportunities, and The High Street (Town Square).

- \* Create new entrances to the Pentagon Centre that access The Paddock and Military Road, The Brook, and the Solomon's Road area between the old pumping station and the proposed Town Square. These entrance points will increase the permeability of the centre offering a greater choice of pedestrian routes allowing for growth and expansion in different parts of the town centre e.g. Chatham Riverside, Cultural Quarter, and residential development along The Brook.



Glazed Frontages - Manchester



Great Northern Square - Manchester Northern



Public Square - The Bullring



## 5.2 Frontages and entrances

The edges of the Pentagon Centre, both through refurbishment and extension, should play an important role, enhancing the public realm by animating the surrounding streets and encouraging on-street activity. This can be achieved through the careful positioning of entrance points and windows around much of the ground floor of the building. Café/restaurant, retail and office uses help ensure that the street is overlooked and safe at different times of the day. At the upper levels of the building the use of roof terraces and balconies could also increase the number of people overlooking the public realm, enlivening upper levels of the development. Development proposals should:

- \* Introduce active frontages onto The Paddock, Pump House Square and the new north/south route, and The High Street at Town Square; and

- \* Enliven the frontage along The Brook by introducing window displays and enhancing the environment of the taxi rank by infilling the colonnaded area to create additional retail floorspace and retaining taxi parking along The Brook accessed via pedestrian links through the Pentagon Centre. Maintaining the taxi rank and introducing on-street parking along The Brook has the potential to increase pedestrian footfall.

Entrance points to the development should be clearly defined and address the principal streets around the centre. The entrances should form one of the structuring elements of the overall design, drawing people clearly into the development and 'signposting' the pedestrian access points into the Pentagon Centre. Development proposals should:

- \* Enhance and refurbish existing entrance points into the centre at The Brook and taxi rank (a major priority), Military Road, and the High Street; and
- \* Introduce new entrances that key into important approaches and areas of public realm in the town at The Paddock (linking clearly to the new bus station), Pump House Square (linking into the new north/south route and Town Square), and The Brook (linking into the taxi rank and on-street parking).

The corners of the development at The Brook and The Paddock, at The High Street and Town Square, and at The Brook and Pump House Square, should address both street frontages in order to provide continuation and assist in creating an active and lively public realm. Ground floor retail or café/restaurant uses should have glazed frontages that address both sides of the corner. Design detailing or lighting for should be employed to create a welcoming, interesting environment.

## 5.3 Built form, elevations and landmarks

### General principles

The character and identity of Chatham town centre is, in part, determined by the quality and appearance of the buildings that frame and define the wider network of streets and open spaces (public realm). Many areas of the town centre have a good townscape quality, parts of the High Street for example and much of Military Road. Elsewhere, the character has been eroded through large scale redevelopment and insensitive interventions such as Sir John Hawkins Way, Mountbatten House, and The Pentagon Centre itself.

It will be critical for new proposals to repair damage caused from previous re-development schemes, carefully stitching the urban fabric back together through new frontage development, and by identifying and reclaiming land that has been 'left over after planning' or been subject to highway interventions, at The Paddock for example. Development proposals must ensure that:

- \* Development is of the highest quality, designed to complement the best of the built heritage and form within the town centre but clearly identifiable as contemporary;
- \* Elevations are carefully detailed and articulated to reduce the overall bulk and massing of the existing Pentagon Centre and ensure that extensions respond sensitively to the wider context; and

\* Designs have a clearly defined base, middle and top to create a well mannered building instead of a strident mega-structure: addressing the marooned vessel approach to design.

Each of the elevations around The Pentagon Centre are identified and the key development components described.

### The Brook

The Brook is currently an important through route for traffic and servicing vehicles accessing Chatham town centre. However, its form is that of a traffic choked canyon defined by brutal, harshly detailed buildings to either side. The Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework proposes creating a 'boulevard' along The Brook with tree lining, the reintroduction of two way traffic, and significant enhancements to the pedestrian environment whilst retaining the roads important function within the wider town centre movement network.

Development proposals for the Pentagon Centre will have a key impact on defining the future character of The Brook given the significant elevation that fronts it. The relocation of the bus station and the proposed demolition of the multi storey car park will mean that the elevation can be substantially remodelled to include:

- \* infilling of the open concrete lattice of bus station and taxi rank accommodating new retail floorspace inside the centre, and providing a modern, light and attractive elevation to The Brook.

The major extension to the centre must set a new design standard carefully integrating the functional parking, servicing and accommodation requirements of a modern shopping centre with the need to address the street in a visually interesting way. Every opportunity to create windows and entrances onto The Brook must be explored: a blank, lifeless elevation will not be acceptable.

With regard to the servicing bridge that crosses The Brook, there are opportunities to significantly enhance the visual appearance of the structure through re-cladding to match the elevational treatment of the main Pentagon Centre. In addition, as part of the wider implementation of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, there may be an opportunity for a new pedestrian footbridge to be provided across The Brook, giving direct access from The Rope Walk into the first floor of the Pentagon Centre. This could be a freestanding structure or cantilevered off the existing servicing bridge. It would provide an element of drama within the built environment as well as a practical link into the centre from the car parking and open spaces accessible from The Rope Walk.

Car Parking - The Bullring



Pedestrian Bridge - The Bullring



Mile End, London



### The Paddock and Military Road

The elevation addressing The Paddock and Military Road is one of the key development components of the Pentagon Centre. Not only will it front onto one of the principal open spaces in the town centre but it also faces the Medway waterfront and the civic, cultural and residential development proposed there. Development in this location is clearly visible when approaching the town centre from Chatham Maritime and St Mary's Island meaning that there is an opportunity to create a new town centre landmark that draws visitors towards the centre.

In addition, the new state of the art bus station is proposed at the area to be vacated by the Sir John Hawkins Way flyover close by. Creating a high quality, visible and accessible extension in this location is therefore a key development opportunity.

The Eye, Chatham



There should be three principal elements to the design of the extension, designed to provide a cohesive single identity:

- \* Corner landmark adjoining The Brook and The Paddock containing ground and first/second floor food and drink/leisure and retail uses, potentially with residential development above. The landmark could be substantially glazed to maximise outlook across The Paddock and beyond.
- \* Podium development across the front of the Pentagon Centre accommodating a mix of food and drink/leisure uses with the potential for retail and residential above. Again a lightweight, modern building would maximise opportunities to overlook The Paddock. The podium should also include a new entrance point into the Pentagon Centre.

- \* Residential tower adjoining Mountbatten House. This would create an eye catching new landmark on the Chatham skyline, providing an elegant counterbalance to the slab sided and somewhat dated design of Mountbatten House and contributing to a cluster of landmarks in this location (including The Brook Theatre). The elevations of the tower should be enlivened with balconies maximising views across The Paddock and towards Chatham riverside. The height of the tower could exceed that of Mountbatten House, having regard to information contained in emerging design guidance on tall buildings which is being produced by Medway Council. The tower must be of the highest architectural quality as it will be visible from a many vantage points around the town and from River Medway.

Corner Detail, Hull



Proposals for the extension must also have particular regard to the guidance contained in sections on *Entrances and frontages, Materials and detailing and Associated public realm.*

A Place to Relax, Canary Wharf



Canary Wharf, London



### The High Street

The manner in which development proposals for the Pentagon Centre address the High Street will provide a key visual and physical link between two of the most important structuring elements of Chatham town centre. The principal opportunity arises through the major eastern extension of the Pentagon Centre and the introduction of a significant new elevation and through route onto the High Street at Town Hall Square.

The extension should take the form of a double height retail floor with car parking above. The main elevations to the High Street and the new north/south through route between The Brook and Meeting House Lane must be detailed to ensure they reflect the scale of the predominantly three and four storey buildings fronting the High Street. In addition, the corners of new buildings defining the through route should be detailed to provide a clear gateway contributing to the definition of the public realm.

### Pump House Square

The area around the old pumping station is an important public realm element within the proposed re-structuring of the town centre, and is part of the north south through route proposed within the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework linking the Meeting House Lane and the High Street to The Brook.

Elevations addressing pump house square should provide continuity from the High Street, with double height retail units of a scale of between three and four stories, accommodating car parking above. There is potential to include a more substantial, single aspect residential tower adjoining The Brook and overlooking the old pumping station.

Brindley Place, Birmingham



Landmark, Central Milton Keynes



When two way traffic is re-established along The Brook this would create a distinctive landmark for the corner of the new Pentagon Centre extension when approached from east, and also signpost the location of the new Pump House Square and cross town centre pedestrian route.

Furthermore, should the opportunity arise, the relocation of the existing Halfords store on The Brook would create an important re-development parcel, consolidating the proposed mix of uses around Pump House Square and introducing a finer urban quality to this part of the town. The Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework proposes a mixed use block with ground floor commercial uses and residential development above.

## 5.4 Mix of uses

### Quality and variety

It is important that in order to maximise the attractiveness, vitality and viability of Chatham town centre a greater mix of uses should be sought. This includes the provision of a range of commercially attractive retail units that will suit the needs of current retailers thereby improving the overall retail offer of Chatham. Development proposals must therefore ensure that:

- \* The extension to the Pentagon Centre includes a range of large and medium size retail units, in addition to café/bar/restaurant uses as appropriate; and
- \* Refurbishment of the existing centre maximises opportunities to improve the retail offer and consolidate smaller units and internal spaces to provide commercially attractive floorspace.

Unit sizes will be in the range of 500 to 15,000 square feet in order to accommodate a broad range of retailer requirements. This figure is not prescriptive, and larger units may be accommodated through amalgamation in order to allow flexibility and ensure that the form of the centre remains responsive to change over time.

Bars, restaurants, cafes and other leisure uses will form an important part of any proposals coming forward, with particular emphasis on introducing these uses alongside The Paddock and around Pump House Square.

In addition, a greater resident population within the town centre will help to support a wider mix of uses such as convenience stores, bars, cafes and restaurants, especially during the evening when the main retail units close. This extends the time when the town centre is in active use, and also provides for passive surveillance of the town centre, so called 'eyes on the street', which can contribute to making the centre of Chatham feel safer and more secure. Development proposals must therefore include:

- \* A substantial element of residential development, focused primarily on the area adjoining The Paddock, but also exploring opportunities in the area adjoining the old pumping station.

Residential development should take the form of apartment towers providing a high standard of accommodation within the town centre. The recently completed 'Eye' development to the rear of The Brook theatre should provide a benchmark against which development can be assessed. Affordable housing provision will be balanced against the need to provide high quality apartments and broaden the appeal of the town centre as a place for people to live. Development adjoining the old pumping station should be single aspect to provide an attractive and lively development frontage of the proposed car parking behind.

Further details on the form of development are given in the sections on *Elevations and landmarks and Entrances and frontages*.

Quality Frontage, Hull



Abode, Harlow



Pentagon Court



Selfridges, Bullring



Selfridges, Bullring



Bullring, Birmingham



### Malls and squares

The malls and internal squares of the Pentagon Centre are an important asset, part of the wider public realm of the town centre. They contribute to the public face of the centre in as great a way as the external elevations and detailing. In a commercial sense the malls and squares have to work hard, drawing people into welcoming surroundings, connecting into a logical pedestrian circuit, and balancing a lively animated environment with simple, well detailed space.

The refurbishment and extension of the Pentagon Centre offers a significant opportunity to appraise the existing malls and squares as well as introduce new covered spaces within the town centre. Development proposals should address the following key elements:

\* Pentagon Court: this large, open, double height space is a significant asset. There is scope at the upper mall level to extend the retail floorspace of the centre, particularly around Valenciennes Square, and introduce a balcony into part of the atrium space. However, as a basic principal, the overall double height quality of the court should be retained.

\* Solomon's Walk: this new mall should connect with Fair Row to extend the internal circuit of the shopping centre. It should trade from the ground floor only with double height retail units and a glazed roof offering a light and attractive environment for shoppers. The Mall entrance into the Pump House Square area should be a fully glazed, double height feature welcoming people into the centre and setting a design standard for the refurbished areas.

## 5.5 Associated public realm

### General principles

The public realm comprises the streets, footpaths and open spaces of Chatham town centre which are contained by buildings and other structures. The design, quality and appearance of the public realm is an important component in defining the character of a place. It also influences and shapes people's perceptions of place: well designed and cared for places are always more attractive than tired, run-down areas.

The public realm also has an important role to play in linking together the town centre both visually and physically, helping to make it easy for pedestrians to move around and visually distinguishing the wider town centre as well as more specific districts through the use of surface materials, street furniture and tree planting.

#### Cabot Square, Canary Wharf



In order that redevelopment and extension proposals around the Pentagon Centre contribute to giving Chatham town centre a public realm of the highest quality five objectives will underpin the design approach to development proposals:

\* *Restore street character:* The character of a town's streets plays a large part in people's understanding of and identification with a particular place. Where streets have become downgraded through insensitive development and poor surface materials, or broken apart with left over land and interrupted frontages then a negative impression is given. It is therefore important to restore street character with good quality frontage development and hard and soft landscape treatments.

#### Pavement Detail, Hull



\* *Simplify layout and eliminate street clutter:* A clutter of signs, bollards, servicing boxes, lampposts and pedestrian barriers not only undermines the quality and attractiveness of the public realm but can also act as a confusing barrier to people wishing to access the town centre. The removal of unnecessary street clutter and the co-ordination of signage and street furniture is therefore an important aim. This must include a strategy of signposting and waymarking across the town centre to include pedestrian and cycle routes, key public transport stops, car parks, and important facilities and destinations. The specification of street furniture components such as lamp stands, bus shelters, litter bins and seating, must add to the overall identity, quality and character of the town centre area. In addition, overly complex design and layout of spaces can also lead to clutter and confusion. Simplicity must therefore be allowed to dominate.

\* *Pedestrian crossing points that reflect pedestrian desire lines:* all too often pedestrians are forced to cross streets and public spaces via the least direct route. A basic principle in the design and layout of all crossings and public spaces should be following the lines that people want to take, not forcing alternatives that then have to be guarded using ugly safety barriers which also contribute to street clutter.

\* *New tree planting:* Tree planting can be used to help emphasise the identity of different parts of the town centre. Fine horse chestnuts (*aesculus hippocastanum*) planted at the turn of the 20th Century make a strong contribution to The Paddock, and honey locust (*gleditsia triacanthos*) have been planted along the High Street. Other species could be used to identify other parts of the town centre, along The Brook for example.

\* *High quality natural materials with simple detailing:* robust, low maintenance and timeless design must be a key component of any public realm works in Chatham town centre. A co-ordinated but limited palette of natural surface materials such as stone, brick and bound gravel will provide a strong setting for development. It will also help to give image and identity to the whole town centre area unifying its appearance and character. If a particular location needs to be differentiated, such as The Paddock or the High Street, then variations on the overall palette could be specified.

## Quality Streetscape, Edinburgh



## Tree Planting, Salford Quays



With regard to specific elements of the public realm around the Pentagon Centre, the following key areas should be considered having regard to the public realm objectives:

- \* *The Brook:* rationalisation of the carriageway through introducing two way traffic should yield space to increase the size of pavements, allow on-street short stay shoppers and disabled parking, retain the taxi rank, and introduce street trees. If the location of services in the road restricts the provision of root pits then substantial planters could be introduced for trees.
- \* *The Paddock and Military Road:* this is a key area, with The Paddock offering a mature, treed oasis within the busy town centre environment. Public realm works must focus on providing clear and unambiguous pedestrian linkages from the Pentagon Centre, via Military Road and the Paddock, to the new 'bus plaza' and Chatham Waterfront.

## Paving Detail, Malmo



- \* *The High Street and Town Square:* public realm enhancements introduced within the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Brief focus on the a 'string of beads' along the High Street. Key locations, outside the existing Pentagon Centre entrance and at Town Square, should be emphasised through paving details, seating, waymarking, lighting etc.
- \* *Pump House Square:* a new space, focused on the old pump house, and part of a wider pedestrian network within the town centre.

As each of these areas relate closely to for the Pentagon Centre, focused on new entrances or adjoining key elevations, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the objectives and guidance have been addressed.

Quality, Contemporary Materials



Granite Setts, Central Milton Keynes



Granite Paving Detail, Manchester



Deansgate, Manchester



## 5.6 Materials and detailing

### Achieving a robust, high quality finish

A palette of high quality materials would help to firmly establish the character and identity of Chatham town centre, in terms of both the public realm of streets and opens spaces and the built form of buildings and structures.

Construction materials, decorative detailing such as towers or balconies, and even basic features such as windows and doorways help reinforce the image of place. They also assist in making a place legible i.e. a place that people can easily find their way around because there are identifiable local landmarks and places that are familiar and distinctive.

As a result particular attention should be paid to these areas. High quality materials that are appropriate to a particular location within the town centre or emphasis a particular use should be utilised. Detailing around doorways and windows, and the use of specific design features within key locations should also be incorporated. This not only helps build upon the considerable character of Chatham town centre but it also introduces colour and texture enriching perception and appreciation of place.

Ground surface materials add variety and visual interest through texture, tone and pattern. A high quality standard must be set with the proposed areas around the Pentagon Centre, including The Paddock, The Brook, and the High Street. This should provide the benchmark for development across the town centre and is particularly important given the roll of the Pentagon Centre within the town as a whole and the fact that it represents the first major project to come forward within the context of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework. Other features, such as boundary walls, railings, and entrance gateways, also provide containment to development and can contribute towards establishing identity and a sense of place.

## 5.7 Car parking

Car parking is a key asset within any town centre. The first impression that many people have of a place will be determined by their experience as a car driver or passenger arriving at a car park, and subsequently as a pedestrian leaving the car park. If the overall experience is poor, through the inconvenience of the design and layout, lack of quality and maintenance, or perceived lack of personal safety, then the remainder of the visit will be tainted and the overall attractiveness of the town centre reduced.

High quality, safe, and convenient car parking provision must therefore be a principal element of development proposals for the Pentagon Centre and will include:

- \* Retention of the existing spaces within the centre, refurbished to include improved lighting and signage. Access to these spaces should be maintained from the current entrance, or via the existing bus station entrance ramp from The Brook. This will need to be very carefully re-designed to minimise its visual impact on The Brook and ensure that the viability of an extension addressing The Paddock is not jeopardised.

- \* New car parking provision to replace The Brook car park. This will be accommodated at roof top level as part of the major eastern extension to the Pentagon Centre. Access to car parking will be subject to technical appraisal to ensure that traffic can gain adequate access and egress into the centre without causing excessive queuing at peak times. Decked parking should be accommodated across a large part of the proposed extension in order to keep overall height to a minimum. Allowance must also be made to allow natural daylight into the mall level below.
- \* Attractive, safe and convenient pedestrian entrances at key central locations within the existing centre and proposed extension. Good quality lighting and signage will be required as well as generous circulation and lobby space within lift and stair towers.

In terms of car parking numbers, the spaces accommodated within the existing Brook car park should be replaced as part of the development proposals. An additional 500 spaces should be provided to support the extension, in accordance with the requirements of the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Framework, and having regard to the criteria referred to above. Overall parking levels within the town centre will be determined in accordance with a wider parking strategy being developed as part of the *Transport for Medway* study.

## 5.8 Accessibility and provision for the disabled

In terms of parking provision for disabled people accessing the town centre, the Solomon's Road area currently provides a number of parking spaces. The car park gives level access to the town centre and the Pentagon Centre, although the environmental quality of the car park and linking routes is poor. There is an un-coordinated mixture of low quality surface materials and minimal surveillance from adjoining businesses which mainly back onto the space with bin stores and service yards. Furthermore, the rear entrance into the Pentagon Centre is narrow and does little to advertise or promote the centre.

The proposed extension to the centre will mean that the parking spaces on Solomon's Road will be displaced,

and the opportunity therefore exists to replace the current facility with higher quality provision elsewhere within the town centre. Several on-street spaces should be retained on the part of Solomon's Road not subject to redevelopment (the area currently to the rear of Halfords). This will provide good, level accessibility into the expanded Pentagon Centre and High Street. In addition, within the new car park above the proposed Pentagon Centre extension, priority spaces for disabled people should be provided adjoining lifts giving direct access to the malls below.

All proposals for disabled parking will be considered within the wider context provided by the Chatham Town Centre Development Framework movement strategy and the ongoing *Transport for Medway* study.

Car Park, Central Milton Keynes



The Paddock, Chatham



## 5.9 Skyline and roofscape

Chatham town centre is situated on low ground running to the River Medway. The Town Park and the parkland of Great Lines occupy higher ground to the north of the town centre. To the south of the town centre the topography also rises steeply with trees and an area of open space close to the college. The topography provides an outstanding backdrop and setting for the town centre, and the number of available view points serve to emphasise how important the roofscape and skyline of the town centre are.

Particular attention should be given to the design of any tall elements of the proposed refurbishment and extension of the Pentagon Centre and Medway Council will expect a visual impact assessment to be undertaken particularly for any multi level parking proposed or residential towers. The proposed tall built elements of the centre refurbishment and extension are discussed in the section of Built form, elevations, and landmarks.

In terms of service towers and plant, development proposals will be expected to minimise the potential visual impact of these elements through careful inclusion into the overall built form of the building.

The Brook Theatre & Mountbatten House



Townscape, Chatham



## 5.10 Service access

Servicing access into the existing Pentagon Centre will be maintained in its current location. There are a number of retail units fronting the High Street that are serviced from the centre and this position will need to be retained. Servicing of the major eastern extension of the Pentagon Centre is likely to a combination of the existing Pentagon service deck, at ground floor level from The Brook, or from the proposed upper parking levels. It will be important to ensure that servicing is designed to be as unobtrusive as practicably possible in order to allow integration into the public realm and townscape surrounding the centre, particularly along The Brook.

Solar Panels, Milton Keynes



## 5.11 Building in sustainability

Sustainable development should be at the heart of the regeneration and development the Pentagon Centre in Chatham town centre. Ultimately sustainable development is good design, development founded on sound principles which ensure the most efficient use of land, considerate construction with regard to existing context and surroundings. The revitalisation of the Pentagon Centre is a flagship project which should aspire to be standard bearer for the highest quality of sustainable development. Successful redevelopment will act as positive example of sustainability at the heart of the town for future schemes to emulate.

The Medway Local Plan provides guidance relating to standards for sustainable development in the area, with the sustainability targets inherent within the policies regarded as minimum for new development to achieve. The local sustainability strategies address the main themes of the UK Sustainability Strategy: social progress which recognises the needs of all; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources and economic well being.

The draft development brief has been assessed against a broad range of sustainability objectives and indicators that have been devised by Medway Council in consultation with environmental stakeholders. The process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required as part of the preparation of supplementary planning documents. The aim of the appraisal is to ensure that the proposals detailed in the draft brief contribute towards attaining high standards of sustainable development across Medway.

The redevelopment of the Pentagon Centre benefits from some key ingredients for sustainable development, particularly its town centre location. The concentration of facilities in close proximity in the town centre, particularly within the Pentagon Centre, reduces the need to travel, a central arm of the sustainability agenda.

The proposals for the Pentagon Centre are closely integrated with transportation improvements across the town centre area with the aim of encouraging local and energy efficient patterns of travel. By enhancing accessibility and improving the pedestrian environment the climate for walking is greatly improved, encouraging movement on foot and cycle. By enhancing bus facilities and accessibility, particularly with regard to improving onward connections to the town railway station, public transport becomes a more viable and attractive transport option.

Improving the mix of uses in the Pentagon Centre and the wider town centre will increase vitality and viability, extending the use of the town centre. Increasing residential accommodation in the town centre provides the opportunity to more closely integrate living, working and leisure, further reducing the need to travel.

The Brook Theatre, Chatham



By maximising the potential of the existing structure of the Pentagon Centre, improving its performance and usability, redevelopment proposals reduce the need for new construction and the transportation, materials and wasteful demolition comprehensive new development would entail.

The new sections of the Pentagon Centre should be built to modern standards, aiming for the highest standards of energy efficient architecture, aspiring to the highest standards outlined in sustainability regulations. Accompanying residential development such as the proposed landmark residential Tower opposite the Paddock should aspire to at least a standard of 'very good' as outlined in the Eco Homes documentation.

Flexibility will be built into the redevelopment scheme, future proofing the Pentagon Centre by constructing units which have the potential change use easily as markets demand – particularly by providing larger ground floor units, which have greater floor space for modern commercial activity. Maximising the variety and layout of accommodation provided can ensure that the built fabric is capable of adapting to changes of use over time. This prolongs the lifespan of the building making the development more sustainable.

The SA process shows that the draft brief is likely to have a generally positive impact when tested against Medway Council's sustainability appraisal objectives and indicators. The impacts of the draft brief are more positive than the 'do nothing' scenario and the development arising from the draft brief is therefore unlikely to generate significant sustainability effects.

### 5.13 Delivery

#### Planning Application Process

The purpose of the guidance in this Development Brief is to share information known about the Pentagon Centre site and its context, and to advise potential applicants of the issues to be considered in drawing up their proposals for development.

Following public consultation this document (will be) has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the adopted Medway Local Plan. Applicants will be expected to take clear cognisance of the advice contained in this Brief and to respond positively to requirements set out.

Applicants will be expected to submit proposals in the form of a planning application, supported by necessary documentation as set out below. Applications should include the entire Pentagon Centre Extension site area and include proposals for the management of open space. If applicants are unable to submit proposals for the whole site, a master plan for the full site area should be submitted with clear support from all landowners.

Proposals for development in accordance with the guidance in this Brief are likely to fall within the scope of Schedule of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999 and may therefore be subject to the need for EIA. Applicants are advised to seek clarification on this matter at the earliest opportunity and should consider whether a Screening Request should be made to the Council under the terms of Part II of the Regulations. Where an EIA is required, a Scoping Request should be made under the terms of Part IV of the Regulations.

## Planning Application

Planning applications should be accompanied by supporting information to allow appropriate consideration of proposals. Applicants are therefore expected to submit the following information as part of their application:

- \* where required, an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended addressing all relevant environmental issues;
- \* where no EIA is required, applicants should submit assessments relating to archaeological, geotechnical, ecological, air quality and noise issues;

- \* where taller buildings or structures form part of the development a visual impact assessment will be required;
- \* an assessment of the sustainability of the proposed development setting out how sustainable design measures will be implemented. The scope of the assessment should be agreed in advance with Medway Council;
- \* a full flood risk assessment to comply with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 or subsequent equivalent government guidance;

- \* a transport assessment identifying: the impacts of development on the local (and where appropriate strategic) highway network; the provision of new public transport services; and off-site highway works necessary to mitigate the impacts of development;
- \* a landscape, open space and nature conservation strategy as detailed in this Brief covering matters agreed in advance with Medway Council;
- \* a detailed access and design statement;
- \* draft Heads of Terms in accordance with the requirements of this Brief to inform Section 106 negotiations.

## Phasing / Planning Obligations

No requirements are set out in this Brief in relation to the expected phasing of development. Applicants will be expected to consider phasing as part of their application and include consideration of access, infrastructure, landscape and ecology issues. An illustrative phasing programme covering these aspects should accompany all applications.

Where certain works and/or facilities are pre-requisites for development, or require delivery at specific times or stages of development, these requirements will be established by planning conditions attached to any outline grant of planning permission and will be secured by Section 106 legal agreement.

A section 106 legal agreement will be negotiated between Medway Council and applicants prior to the granting of outline planning permission to ensure appropriate delivery of supporting infrastructure and facilities, and to ensure long-term management of key environmental assets. Items expected to be covered by legal agreement include, but are not limited to, the following:

- \* Provision of affordable housing in accordance with an Affordable Housing Plan (including quantum, tenure and location) agreed with the Council;
- \* off-site transportation works as deemed necessary by the Council;

- \* provision or contribution to provision of an enhanced public transport service together with appropriate ongoing revenue support;
- \* implementation of a sustainable travel plan;
- \* appropriate highway and services agreements;
- \* provision for and maintenance of flood defence works;
- \* provision of appropriate community facilities and future contributions to maintenance;
- \* provision or contribution to healthcare provision on- or off-site to meet the needs of the new development (the nature and scale of provision to be agreed with the Primary Care Trust);

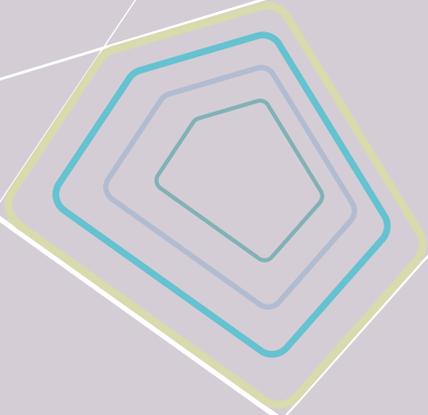
- \* contribution to the improvement and management of public open space in accordance with a landscape, open space and natural conservation strategy to be prepared by the applicant;

The Section 106 legal agreement is likely to include provision for the ongoing management and maintenance of items including community facilities, open space, play space and paths/ cycleways by an organisation or by organisations identified by legal agreement. Under these circumstances, commuted sums will be sought to ensure appropriate continued levels of management and maintenance.

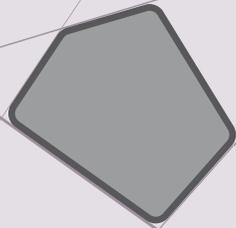
### Building Regulations Approvals

Buildings constructed on site will require approval under the Building Regulations and will have to comply with the provisions of those Regulations in respect of such matters as structural stability, insulation and ventilation. Developers are strongly encouraged to contact Medway Council's Building Control Service in respect of these matters. Initial approaches should be made to the Building Control Manager.





appendix  
one



## URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

### Understanding the town centre

#### Form and Structure

The urban design analysis of the Pentagon Centre and its surrounding environs reveals a mixed picture typical of many town centres. Chatham town centre has a strong, linear structure focused around the historic High Street which runs north west to south east. Routes which dissect the High Street, are much weaker, with the exception of Railway Street and Military Road. Poor quality back-land areas stranded between the back of the High Street and the ring road exist within the block, particularly addressing the Brook and Best Street.

The town centre includes some high quality buildings and townscape marred not only by later redevelopments, notably the ring road, Pentagon Centre, Brook car park, and Mountbatten House, but also the severance caused by a segregated movement network.

The Pentagon Centre is the largest of a number of late twentieth century developments which have disrupted the traditional fine grained pattern of the historic town centre. The Pentagon Centre, Brook car park, and Mountbatten House are large scale buildings which have wide building footprints, significant height and over-bearing massing. These mega scale developments have reduced permeability across the town centre which reduces the ease at which visitors can move across the town centre, and increasing motorist's dependence upon the ring road.

The rigid, regular footprints of the large buildings do not sit harmoniously in their finer grained town centre positions, and as a result a lot of excess, unresolved space is created. These irregularly shaped left over spaces create unattractive elements of public realm.

#### Land Use

Retail activity is the dominant land use in the town centre, especially along the High Street, Military Road and within the Pentagon Centre, a retail cluster which is referred to as the 'Shopping Heart'. The Pentagon Centre is a primary land use with a strong retail focus. The retail offer consists of a mix of multiples, value sector and independent retailers and generally low vacancy rates. A limited number of restaurants, cafes and other A3 uses are located towards the southern end of the High Street.

The vertical mixture of uses within buildings is very limited. The upper levels of most retail units are used for additional retail floor space, storage or are vacant. The vertical mix of use could be improved, the upper levels are currently an underutilised land resource.

There is a small quantity of residential property in the town centre, a few first floor flats above shops and the recent addition of the residential apartment block 'the Eye', located behind the Brook Theatre on the northern edge of the town centre.

Due to the limited quantity and spread of non retail activity, pedestrian presence in the town centre is limited to the opening hours of the shops. The lack of non retail activities does not support the evening economy and the result is a deserted town centre after 6pm, which can create a feeling of insecurity, especially in the dark winter months.

Land is also underutilised within the block, particularly behind the High Street and the Pentagon Centre. At the back of the High Street, along Solomon's Road the land use pattern becomes disjointed with areas of vacancy and surface parking, including an important area of disabled parking, and servicing yards. Similarly the southern area of the High Street adjoining the ring road is also used for surface parking and servicing.

To the rear of the Pentagon Centre along The Brook, there is a mixture of public service buildings including Medway Magistrates Court and the Police Station. Towards the rear of these buildings is a mixture of servicing space and on-street car parking with the Town Park and Great Lines Park beyond.

Pentagon Taxi Rank



## Movement and Connections

Key issues relating to movement around the Pentagon Centre and connectivity with the rest of the town centre are explained below in terms of the urban design analysis.

## Segregation and the ring road

Access and movement in the urban environment surrounding the Pentagon Centre is highly segregated. Chatham has a divisive street structure, which segregates pedestrians, vehicles and service traffic, creating single mode streets which prioritise access for one mode of transport above all others.

This is exacerbated by the town centre ring road, a one-way system which streamlines traffic around the pedestrianised shopping core and comprises The Brook, Best Street, Sir John Hawkins Way and Globe Lane. The ring road creates a barrier which is difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross, to enter or exit the town centre.

The High Street



## Pedestrianised Shopping Core

Pedestrians have priority in the Shopping Core, a busy heart of activity, which excludes vehicles, except for service vehicles in off peak hours and the buses and taxis located on the northern fringe of the Pentagon Centre. The lack of vehicular movement creates streets void of activity when the shops and offices have closed.

The Pentagon Centre has an internal movement system for pedestrian shoppers, which is only accessible in trading hours. Improvements can be made to enhance the connection between the Pentagon Centre and the surrounding urban environment, specifically by improving the entry points into the shopping centre.

## Pedestrian Circuit

The focus for much of the pedestrian activity in the town centre is around the Pentagon Centre and upper High Street. The primary routes of pedestrian movement, the High Street, Military Road and the internal circuit of the Pentagon Centre form a looped pedestrian circuit. The pedestrian circuit in the town centre generates the highest level of activity, the destinations of the Pentagon Centre and the High Street / Military Road crossroads provide attractions between which the highest levels of pedestrian footfall occur.

### **Central High Street entrance to the Pentagon Centre**

The southern entrance, located in the centre of the High Street. The concentration of town centre attractions - lead chain retail stores, Central Theatre, and the Pentagon Centre in this area generate high visitor numbers. The street widens slightly at this point which assists the management of high pedestrian footfall.

### **Difficult transition**

Transition between the segregated types of routes is difficult for all modes – cars unable to access the pedestrianised Shopping Core, whilst pedestrians and cyclists have difficulty crossing the vehicular ring road which encircles the town centre.

### **Extremes of activity**

The segregation of modes and routes results in extremes of activity, at different times of the day. The Shopping Core is a busy pedestrian environment in the daytime but becomes a public realm void of activity in the evenings (after 6pm)

### **Marginalised alternative modes of transport**

Pedestrian and car movement flows dominate the shopping core, in separate zones of activity, whilst alternative modes of transport are marginalised. Bus services are confined to the northern edge of the Shopping Core, bus stops running from Military Road into the undercroft of the Pentagon Centre, parallel to The Brook. The central taxi rank is located in the undercroft of the Pentagon Centre, with direct access onto the Brook. Chatham railway station,

located south of the town centre is disconnected from the Shopping Core as the direct connection route, Railway Street, is severed by the town centre ring road. Cycling is extremely marginalised in Chatham Shopping Core; prohibited on the pedestrianised High Street, unsafe on the surrounding ring road network, and there are no continuous dedicated cycle routes. The low provision of leisure routes for walking and cycling is a wasted opportunity, given the River Medway waterfront which is located within walking distance of the town centre.

### **Future movement in the town centre**

Long term solutions to movement issues in the town centre must take into account the transport for the wider Medway region, and the part which Chatham plays in this. Internal re-modelling in the town centre should seek to resolve existing conflict between cars, service vehicles and pedestrians.

Recognition of the sequencing of works is important, especially in longer term visions such as the relocation of the bus station, to ensure that the centre has a relationship with the relocated bus station. In the medium to short term, reclaiming road space to create more pedestrian friendly streets is both desirable and achievable. Throughout the phases, development must ensure that adequate disabled car parking is provided with good accessibility in recognition of the high usage of the existing facility.

Fair Row



## Spaces

### The public realm in Chatham

Chatham has a good variety of public realm in its Shopping Heart, a mixture of hard and soft landscaping, with public space of a more discrete size and form in the town centre, progressing to larger, more spacious areas on the surrounding fringe of the town centre. However, it is of variable quality, which is largely dependent upon its usage and the level of maintenance it receives. Contrasts exist - the public realm of the High Street and surrounding the Pentagon Centre is tired, in part due to the heavy footfall it received, whilst the larger public spaces on the perimeter of the town centre, such as the Town Park, have a very good standard of maintenance.

### Coherent pattern

Chatham Shopping Heart generally has a coherent pattern of public spaces; an incremental series of smaller spaces along the High Street extending into larger spaces beyond the shopping heart as detailed below:

### The pedestrian circuit

The pedestrian circuit in Chatham's shopping heart is a loop of pedestrianised routes which circulate along the High Street, through the internal circuit of Pentagon Centre connecting to the public transport on the edge of the Pentagon Centre.

### The High Street

The pedestrianised High Street is the key element of public realm in the town centre. The brick paved street enables efficient pedestrian movement but is too narrow to provide time and space to stop and linger. Street furniture includes some street trees, (although many empty tree cages reveal a lack of maintenance) and other decorative features including public art installed as part of a previous refurbishment programme, focused on the High Street, Military Road, and Railway Street.

An informal public space has evolved in the centre of the high street where a building has been removed at the junction of the High Street and Meeting House Lane. This space has been identified as a site for a potential new town square.

The Brook Theatre



### Mountbatten House forecourt

The forecourt to Mountbatten House is an actively used space by pedestrians accessing the Pentagon Centre from the northern entrance and for passengers using the buses. It is a transition zone between the Pentagon Centre, the High Street and the waterfront, via Military Road and the Paddock open space.

### The public realm of the Pentagon Centre

The Pentagon Centre has an internal pedestrian circuit which runs from the High Street entrance to the centre, through the Pentagon, connecting to the Military Road entrance. The route forms the spine to the shopping centre, onto which the shop units front. A sequence of three enclosed public spaces runs along the pedestrian circuit in the Pentagon Centre; Pentagon Court and Willmott Square on the ground floor and Valenciennes Square on the first floor.

The High Street



### The High Street / Military Road Crossroads

The intersection of the two primary pedestrianised streets generates much activity. The crossroads handles activity from the movement flow of the two streets – the shoppers moving east-west along the High Street and visitors moving between the car parks, railway stations and the Pentagon Centre, north-south along Military Road. The banks located on the corners of the crossroads generate additional activity.

### Military Road entrance to the Pentagon Centre

The combination of entrances to Mountbatten House, the Pentagon Centre, bus stops, and onward access to the High Street, the Brook Theatre and the waterfront, make this space a well connected node which experiences high footfall.

### Solomon's Road access to the Brook / Pentagon Centre car park

The Brook car park and its adjacent entrance to the Pentagon Centre generates much activity. These activities are connected to the High Street via a discrete, but well used 'cut-through' route, which arrives opposite the open space on Meeting House Lane.

### Potential improvements for accessibility

Scope for further linkages to improve accessibility and pedestrian activity include reintegration of the Brook as part of a wider pedestrian circuit, could improve movement across the town centre. The main entrances into the Pentagon Centre are currently well used nodes of activity, future public realm enhancements are likely to improve existing popularity. Creation of a new, relocated town centre bus station will form a hub of activity connected to the High Street, the Pentagon Centre and the waterfront.

Military Road



## Green spaces

Connections between the public realm of Shopping Heart and the public open spaces beyond the town centre (as detailed below) need to be improved, with designated routes and strategically placed pedestrian crossing points.

The Town Park, the public park for Chatham town centre is a well maintained rectilinear space, with a good variety of trees located on the hillside above The Brook. The park offers excellent views across Chatham, but is difficult to reach due to its height and poor connections from the town centre.

Great Lines, War Memorial Park is an excellent landscape resource, a vast, green open parkland, located in is locally protected open space. The location on high ground above the town centre limits accessibility, but improvements between the town centre and the Town Park would improve accessibility.

The Paddock is located opposite Military Road and the main entrance to the Pentagon Centre under Mountbatten House. Access is curtailed by the surrounding roads but the site is an important link between development adjoining the Pentagon Centre, wider town centre improvements and development overlooking the waterfront, as recognised in the Chatham Centre and Medway Waterfront Development Framework.

View to Greatlines



River Medway waterfront offers open space with excellent views along the river and across to neighbouring settlements of Rochester and Strood. Access to the waterfront from the town centre is currently limited, Military Road and Sir John Hawkins Way (ring road) act as severance to permeability.

## Townscape

Cumulatively, landmark buildings, vistas and strong building frontages contribute to legible and memorable townscape. All new development and regeneration initiatives should aspire to good quality design that addresses the street and public spaces, particularly at ground floor level, and positively contributes to the character and identity of Chatham through scale, form, massing, and use of materials. These factors combined can enhance the attraction of place to visitors and shoppers and can ultimately improve trade and turnover.

## Landmarks

Landmark buildings can provide strong destinations and visual pointers, reference should be made to the Council's emerging guidance on tall buildings. Landmark buildings in the town centre include tall buildings and discrete gems;

Tall building landmarks include: Mountbatten House, 10 storey office block above the Pentagon Centre, visible throughout Chatham, and the Medway region, 'signposting' the location of the Pentagon Centre. The dated 1970's architectural style could be addressed with decorative cladding, banners and/or lighting; The Eye: 2004 apartment block has distinctive modern design and materials, providing a strong termination to the vista from the station along Railway Street and Military Road; High

View towards Rochester



Street Department Store: 1980's former Allders at the east end of the High Street is a prominent building in a prominent location in the heart of the High Street.

Discrete architectural gems include; The Old Pumping Station, a small, beautifully detailed, Victorian gem set in stark modernist surroundings – the Brook car park and Solomons Road, could be the centre-piece to a new public space adjacent to the redevelopment of the Pentagon Centre. Meeting House Chapel: is a distinctive building which could become a prominent landmark if a town square is created between the High Street and Meeting House Lane. The Brook Theatre: formally the town hall, a distinctive, ornate, Victorian building with a striking tower and copper dome, which forms a strong juxtaposition to the modern Pentagon Centre set around the open space of the Paddock.

The Eye



Military Road



## Views

Two powerful views can be experienced from the town centre; facing east from the northern frontage of the Pentagon Centre, a wide view of the River Medway waterfront. Another strong view faces north east towards the Town Park and Great Lines parkland beyond, the steep topography providing a dramatic, green backdrop to the town centre.

## Vistas

Railway Road - Military Road is an important north/south vista guiding people who arrive at Chatham by rail into the town centre. The Eye is a strong landmark terminating the northern end of the vista, with Mountbatten House and the Brook Theatre providing a series of landmarks. New Road bridge provides a distinct gateway into the town centre. The Brook is a low channel sandwiched between the high ground of the parkland to the east and the vast mass of the Pentagon Centre and the multi-storey car park to the west. The hard roadscape of the Brook vista is fronted by 1960s and 1970s pavilion buildings, creating a 'Concrete Canyon' environment. The High Street channels views through the tight enclosure of the buildings which front it.

The Brook



## Setting and topography

Backdrop to the town: Chatham town centre is situated on low ground feeding immediately off the River Medway. It is surrounded by higher ground on its north and south edges. The higher ground to the north of the town centre is predominately green open space, the Town Park and the vast parkland of Great Lines. This provides an outstanding backdrop for the town centre of steep landscaped parkland.

The topography which contains Chatham has acted as constraint to the development and expansion of the town centre. The resulting development pattern is a dense urban fabric in on the low ground, with progressively sparse and lower density development as the relief rises. Topography must therefore be a key design consideration in the enhancement and regeneration of Chatham town centre, particularly how development in the town centre relates to its surrounding higher plains.

Chatham Skyline



### Areas of positive townscape value

The following locations in the town centre have positive townscape qualities which contribute significantly to the character of Chatham. They share common characteristics of fine development grain, quality materials, and articulation of elevations, and establish a benchmark against which the quality of new development should be assessed.

High Street / Military Road crossroads have bold corners defined by strong architecture of banks and former bank buildings. The upper section of the High Street has variety in style, height, material and colour. The Marks and Spencer building has an elegant, wide frontage. The east side of Batchelor Street has a strong frontage of tall, narrow terraced buildings including the former 'Weights and Measures' building.

Listed buildings of distinguished individual character include; the Brook Theatre – former town hall on The Brook; former Bank, now bookmakers, on the High Street, opposite Batchelor Street; the bank on the corner of the High Street / Railway Street; and St John's Church on Railway Street.

Magistrates Court



### Areas of weak townscape value

The weaker areas of townscape provide a stark contrast against the elegant listed buildings within the town centre. The weak townscape is often associated with large scale redevelopment schemes from the 1960's and 1970's, especially on the Brook.

The Pentagon Centre has a lack of ground level activity and interaction with the street. Blank concrete and brick facades address the public realm with very few windows and doors. Over-bearing height creates harsh shadows and darkness in the public realm of the Brook. The vast Brutalist architecture is oppressive and makes for an unwelcoming environment. Monotone concrete material and colour, lacks variety and visual interest.

A number of sites on The Brook; The Brook multi-storey car park casts deep shadows over The Brook, the concrete facades are harsh, there is and little activity at ground floor level. Police Station, Magistrates Court, Social Security offices: this group of pavilion buildings provide a poor frontage presence onto The Brook, and yield a large quantity of S.L.O.A.P. The former petrol filling station on The Brook is a large footprint building plot, currently used as a car cleaning business, is an inefficient, unsightly, use of a prime plot. Sections of the High Street contain concentrations of poor buildings, specifically the low quality retail units opposite Meeting House Lane and Culver Street.

## Service Access



## Opportunity sites

A selection of 'opportunity sites' have been identified in Chatham town centre. These sites provide the opportunity to improve the existing environment by enhancing the public realm, creating better connections, integration and reducing traffic dominance. Some sites have the potential to accommodate new development. These opportunities include;

In the centre of the High Street the open space at the foot of Meeting House Lane provides great potential to create a centrally located town square for Chatham Town Centre. The current open space could be widened to create a 'square' by demolishing the buildings of poor structural quality in the centre of the high street. This will reopen routes which flow north-south and enhance connections between the High Street and the Pentagon Centre.

Improvements to the public realm surrounding the entrances to the Pentagon Centre from Military Road and the High Street, with the adoption of a consistent language of architecture and public realm design could improve connections and integration between the Pentagon Centre and the surrounding town centre. Street surfacing, street furniture and integration of street trees are all measures which could enhance these public spaces.

The public realm of the Brook, in particular its relationship with the Pentagon Centre has great scope for improvement. The dominance of the car over all other modes of transport can be reduced by using a selection of measures including; increasing footpath widths, integrating cycle routes and cycle racks, creating a raised table junction between the Brook Theatre and the Pentagon Centre, removal of flyover roads and pedestrian subways to reduce

segregation, relocation of the bus stops will create more space and greening of the streets with street trees to provide a softer, more attractive environment.

Solomons Road, currently used as service access to the High Street and the Pentagon Centre, with provision of some adjacent car parking, is currently underutilised land located in the heart of the town centre. Proximity to the Pentagon Centre, makes the land a prime site for the shopping centre to extend onto.

The Halfords site at the south eastern end of Solomons Road / The Brook could be a prime site for mixed use development (possibly residential upper level apartments with retail/leisure ground floor) when the current use expires in the medium to long term. Development would have to be sensitive to the fine terrace opposite on Batchelor Street.

Large open sites along the Brook, including surface car parks, the former petrol station and SLOAP sites, are underutilising a valuable land supply, along a major route, adjacent to the town centre. Tighter knit development, with frontages onto the Brook would improve enclosure and surveillance along The Brook with active edges enlivening the street.

The service access bridge to the Pentagon Centre which spans the Brook is currently an unattractive, segregated eyesore, which could be improved with short term enhancements such as re-cladding in softer materials, creation of lighting strategy to improve its appearance and streetscape. In the longer term removal of the bridge may be a consideration.

Meeting House Lane



## Town centre analysis conclusions

The key issues to be addressed in Chatham town centre comprise:

- \* Structuring the Town Centre – four quarters to the shopping heart
- \* Addressing severance and enhancing accessibility
- \* Public realm of the highest quality comprising linked streets, squares and parks
- \* Improving surveillance and ground floor activity
- \* Capitalising on landmarks
- \* Increasing the mix of uses and extending the evening economy
- \* Making the most of approaches, gateways and entrances
- \* Ensuring that new development is of the highest design and architectural quality
- \* Creating safe, secure, attractive places in the town centre





