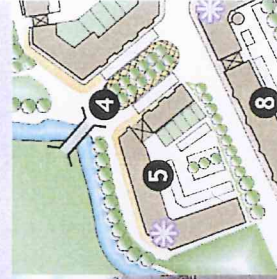
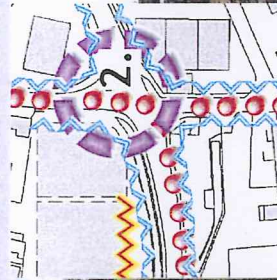
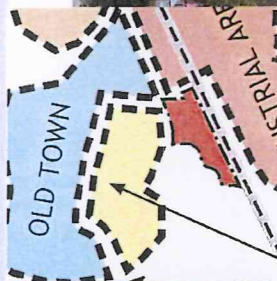


Land at Station Road South : Gillingham, Dorset



Site Development Brief : CONSULTATION DRAFT November 2001



South West of England
Regional Development Agency



Gillingham
Town
Council

Site Development Brief
November 2001

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Contents

1.	Introduction	page 4
2.	Site context and description	page 7
3.	Policy context	page 15
4.	Planning and urban design principles	page 17
5.	Development options	page 24
6.	Other considerations	page 33
7.	Appendices	page 34

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEF

- 1.1 This document sets out the requirements of North Dorset District Council, as the Local Planning Authority for the redevelopment of land at Station Road South, close to the railway station in Gillingham (see Figure 5).
- 1.2 The document is intended to fulfil a variety of functions (see Figure 1) but its three main aims are :
- to clarify Local Plan policies as they apply to the site
 - to provide a tool for development control
 - to promote the site for redevelopment
- 1.3 The guidance contained in this document generally covers the following :
- aspirations for the Station Road South area and its future redevelopment
 - appropriate land uses
 - the layout and built form that the development should take
 - the relationship of the development with adjacent uses and the town centre
 - pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement, servicing and parking
 - landscape and detailed design
- 1.4 The format of the Brief is designed to guide the reader through a description of Station Road South within the

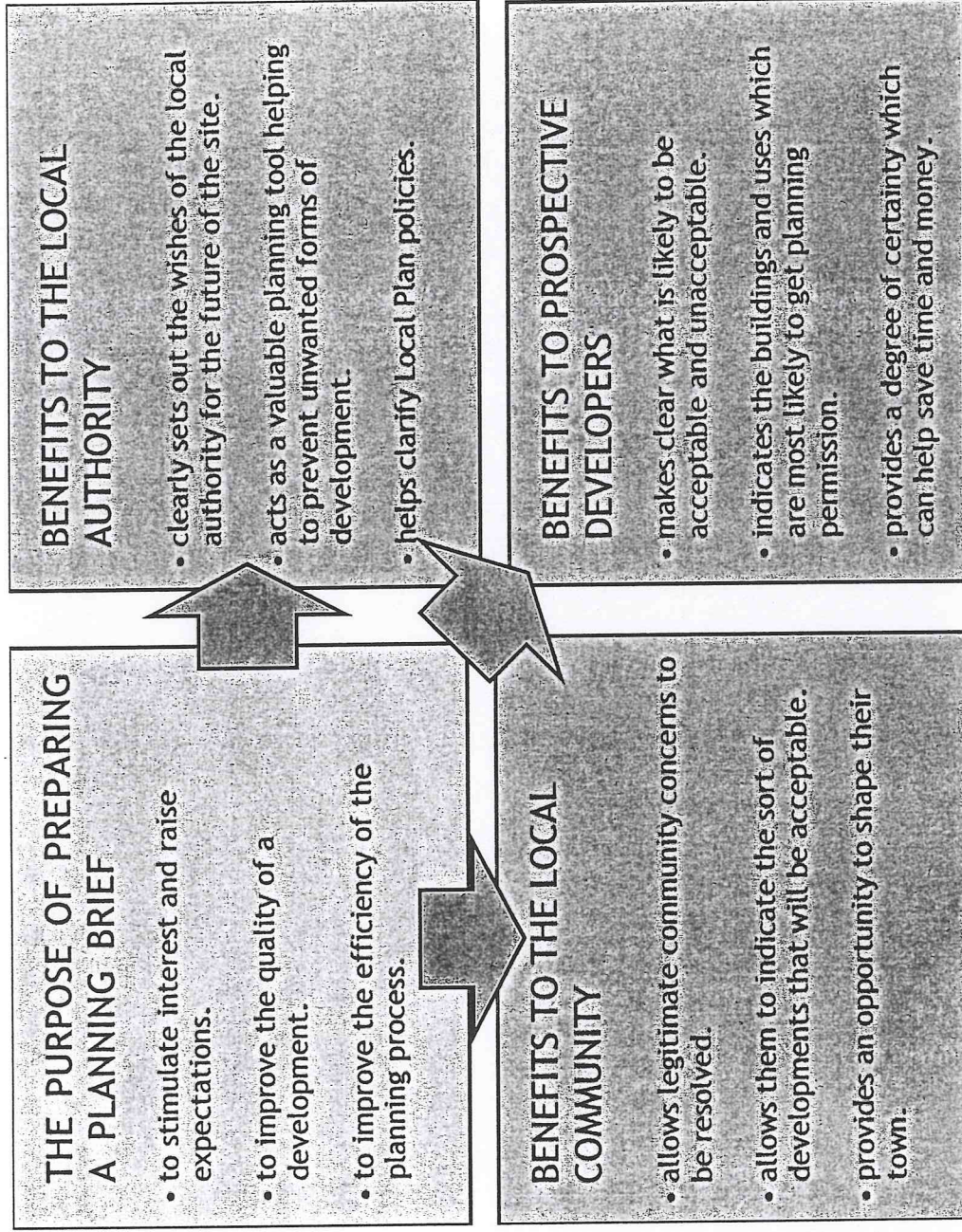


Figure 1 : Why a planning brief?

context of the town, a policy framework for the site and a series of urban design principles that should be applied to achieve an appropriate development. Early discussions are encouraged with the relevant authorities prior to the submission of a planning application. Please see Appendix One for contact details.

GUIDING OBJECTIVE

1.5 The overall objective of the Brief is to promote high standards of layout and design and to demonstrate the integration of uses in the Station Road South area and with the rest of the town. The Brief will assist in maximising the potential of the site to provide new development and, where possible, involve the re-use of existing buildings of merit, in a way that contributes positively to the surrounding neighbourhood. Redevelopment should add value in the following ways :

- add value to the building stock.
- add value to the quality of the environment.
- add value to the experience of living in, working in or visiting Gillingham.

STATUS OF THE BRIEF

1.6 Currently the Brief is in draft form for the purposes of public consultation. Once the consultation process has finished, and the District Council has considered the comments received, the Brief will be amended as appropriate and will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) by the local planning authority.

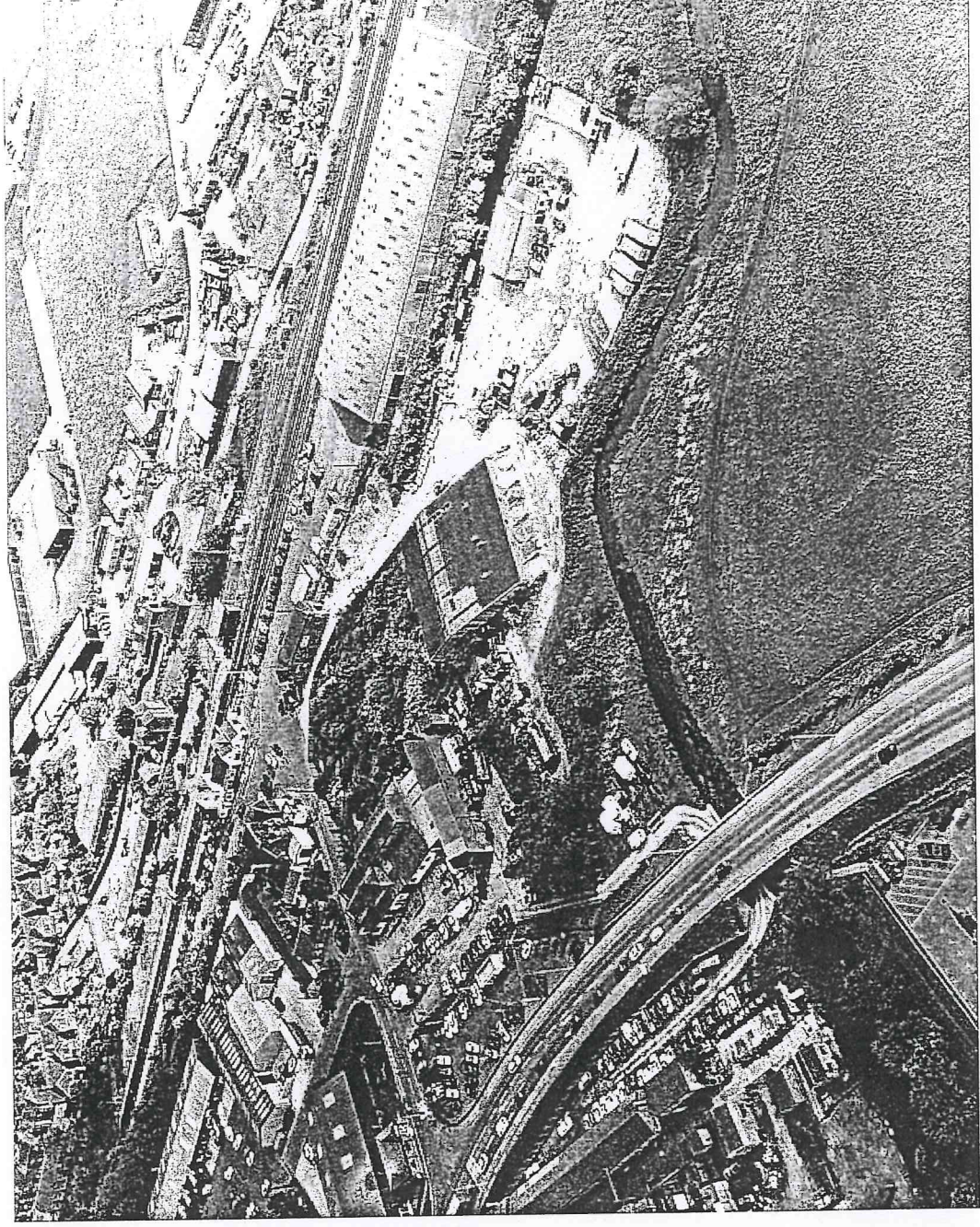


Figure 2 : An aerial photograph of the site, with Chantry Fields in the foreground

THE BRIEFING PROCESS

1.7 This Brief has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke plc on behalf of the following agencies and authorities :

- South West of England Regional Development Agency
- North Dorset District Council
- Gillingham Town Council

1.8 A companion document has been prepared by QDS Environmental Ltd. This deals with technical issues relating to the site, including geology, hydrogeology, hydrology, contamination and environmental risk assessment. It is recommended that this report is consulted prior to any detailed application being submitted. Further details about this report can be found in Appendix Two.

1.9 Extensive consultation has been a critical part of the briefing process and several discussions have been held with a variety of stakeholder groups.

1.10 Consultation has allowed a wide variety of views and issues to be raised about the future of the site and aspirations for the town as a whole. This document attempts to draw together these ideas and present them as a viable and coherent package to guide and promote the redevelopment of the site for the benefit of the community and the town.

27th June 2001 : PRESENTATION TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

1.11 Following an initial visit to the town and the site, the general methodology to be used for the briefing process was presented to members of Gillingham Town Working Party for comment. This also allowed other issues relating to the town and the site to be raised.

3rd July 2001 : STAKEHOLDER SESSION No. 1

1.12 A more detailed discussion of issues relating to the town and the site was undertaken with those stakeholders directly involved with the site, including landowners and their agents, the occupiers and businesses located on the site.

25th July 2001 : DESIGN WORKSHOP

1.13 This event provided members of the wider Gillingham community with the opportunity to take part in a 'hands on' design exercise. The workshop required participants to think about the qualities that help make a successful place and how the site could be redeveloped for the future. Further details of this event can be found in Appendix Four.

14th August 2001 : STAKEHOLDER SESSION No. 2

1.14 The results of the design workshop were presented back to all key stakeholders. It was an opportunity to agree to the workshop findings as a fair representation of the event and to add any further comments.

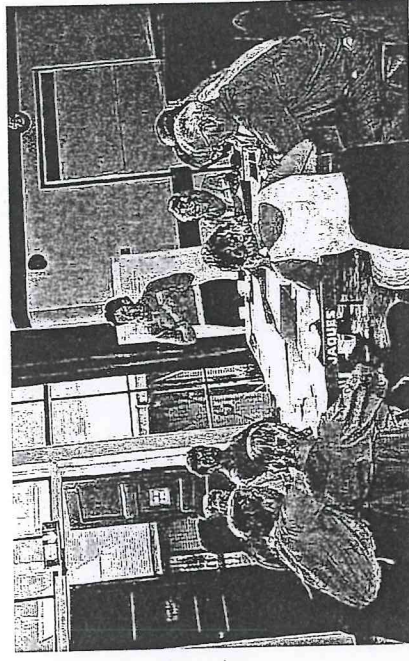


Figure 3 (top) and Figure 4 (above) : Group discussions during the design workshop (25.07.2001)

Site context and description

SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is located towards the south of Gillingham town centre. It is bounded by Le Neubourg Way to the north, the London and South Western Railway to the south and the River Stour to the west. The eastern boundary of the core area is bounded by Station Road South itself, but land uses on both sides of the road are covered by the principles included in this Brief.

2.2 The core area of the site (west of Station Road) occupies an approximate area of 3.3 hectares (8 acres) and is centred on National Grid Reference ST 808 260.

2.3 The site is generally uneven and slopes from the north-east to the south-west. There are two steep embankments on the site. One alongside the used car sales forecourt at the northern end of the site is a result of the construction of the relief road. The other running alongside the storage warehouse is a result of a land raising exercise relating to the construction of the railway. The storage warehouse sits on level ground once occupied by railway sidings.

2.4 Approximately 30% of the site area consists of concrete hard-standing, tarmac and building footprints. The remaining areas of the site are generally covered with hardcore, demolition waste, areas of vegetation and damaged tarmac and concrete.

2.5 The main areas of vegetation and green open space are alongside the banks of the River Stour, although none

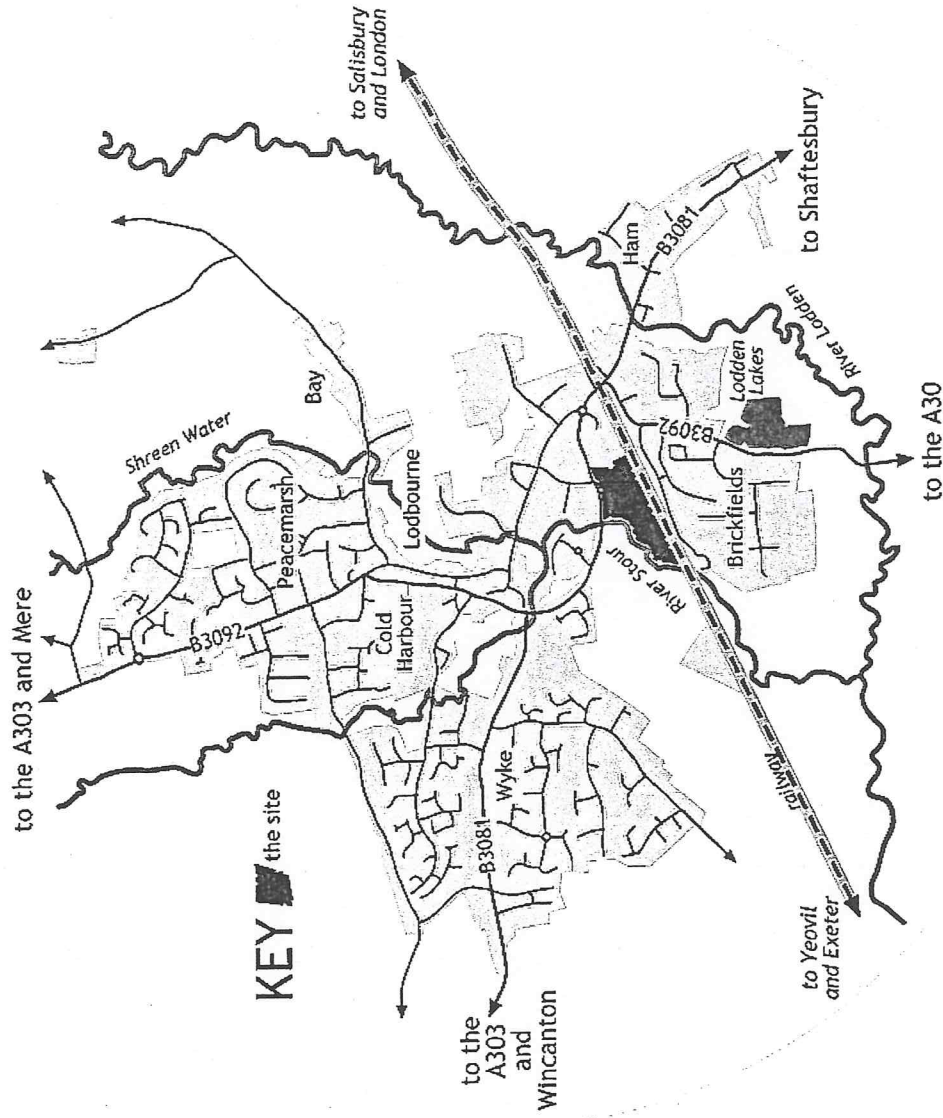


Figure 5 : Context

of the trees are particularly noteworthy. The main connections between the site and the town centre are along Station Road South and alongside the river.

GILLINGHAM TOWNSCAPE

2.6 Gillingham has been analysed in terms of its land uses, functions and townscape qualities. Several different 'character areas' have been identified (see Figure 6). The 'old town' centre lies to the north of the site and is based around the High Street and the St. Martin's Square area (see Figures 7 and 8). This part of the old town has some very attractive and successful spaces which have helped provide a basis for the urban design principles later in this Brief.

2.7 Just south of the High Street is an area with a supermarket and a building housing a library and museum (see Figure 9). This part of town is relatively recent in its development. It is dominated by vehicular access to the supermarket and the library building. Pedestrian movement appears to have been a secondary concern. The area lacks the enclosure by built form that St. Martin's and The Square areas enjoy. Analysis of both these areas has informed the urban design principles in this Brief.

2.8 Beyond the High Street, to the north and to the west, lie expanses of residential development which can be described as 'suburban' in nature. The area to the south west of the town, known as Ham, can be considered as a 'gateway' to Gillingham. This area is currently expanding

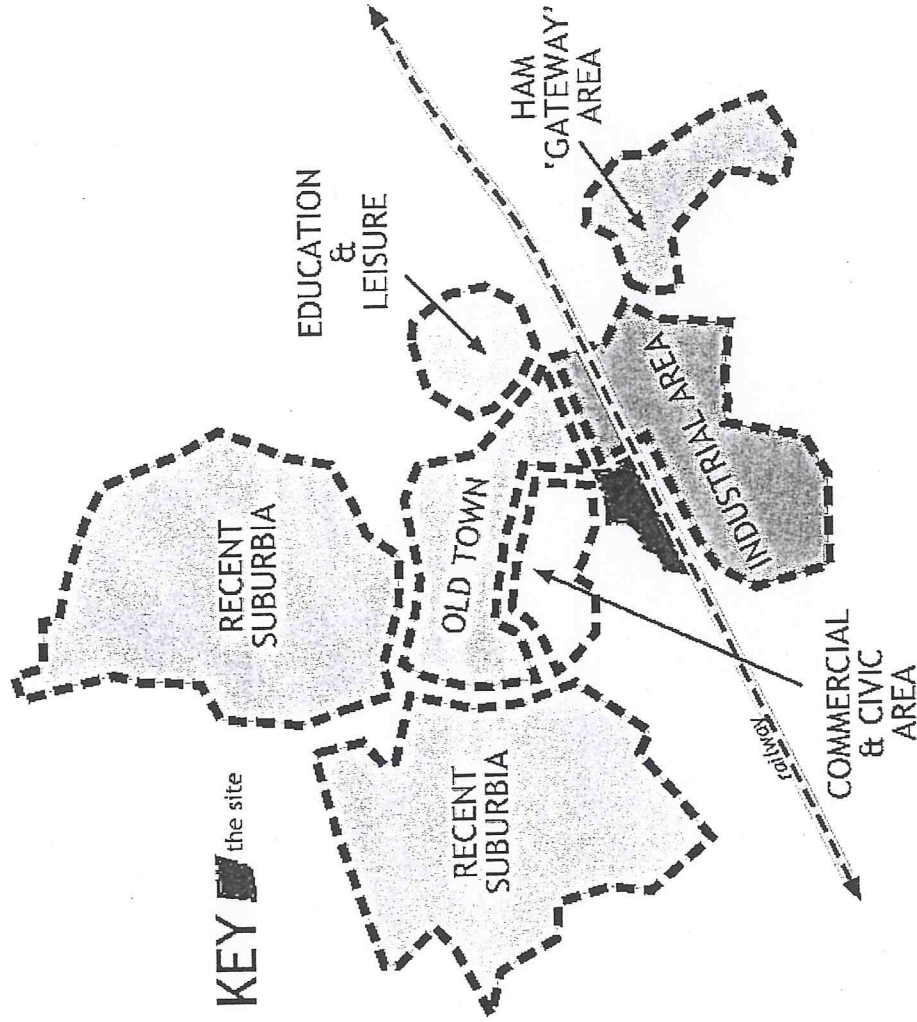


Figure 6 : Character areas

with new houses being built. South of the railway lies a predominately industrial area. The relationship of the site to these other areas of the town needs to be a primary consideration when any proposal is put forward for redevelopment. Particular regard needs to be given to the connections between the site and the High Street, especially those links via the library and museum site. Such consideration of the town as a whole is necessary, even if dealing with this single site, if Gillingham is to 'hang together' in a coherent and proper manner.

THE STREET NETWORK

2.9 While the High Street and the old town area of Gillingham is characterised by a well-connected network of streets, the recent suburban expansions to the north and west of the town tend to be characterised by cul-de-sac dominated layouts (see Figure 5). As described later in this Brief, any redevelopment of the site should reflect the well-connected network rather than the cul-de-sac model.

2.10 A major characteristic of the road network is the presence of Le Neubourg Way (B3081) a relief road which curves around the south of the town centre. This was constructed in the early 1990s to take traffic away from the High Street. Le Neubourg Way is wider than other streets and roads in Gillingham and the speed of the traffic using it is higher than elsewhere in the town. The relief road can act as a barrier to easy pedestrian movement.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

2.11 Although the services are infrequent, there are a number of bus services which pass the site. Bus stops for the various services (below) are located in Station Road :

X18	Gillingham - Poole	1 return daily.
30	Wincanton-Poole	1 return, Thursdays only.
58	Yeovil-Shaftesbury	1 every 2 hours, daily.
59	Shaftesbury - Gillingham	1 per hour, daily.
80	Gillingham - Frome	4 per day, school days and Wednesdays.
242	Gillingham - Yeovil	1 return, Saturdays only.
309	Blandford-Shaftesbury	1 per day.

2.12 Long distance coach services also stop in Station Road. Importantly, the site is located adjacent to Gillingham railway station, which has frequent services to London and the West Country. This is the only railway station in North Dorset. While there is a degree of integration between the bus and rail services, the design workshop revealed that the local community feel that such integration could be greatly improved. The provision of some sort of interchange facility to assist such integration will be explored later in this Brief.

2.13 The station is well used, particularly by commuters. The car park associated with the station is therefore an important aspect of the whole station complex. It should be recognised that all access to the railway station by car or bus is via Station Road.

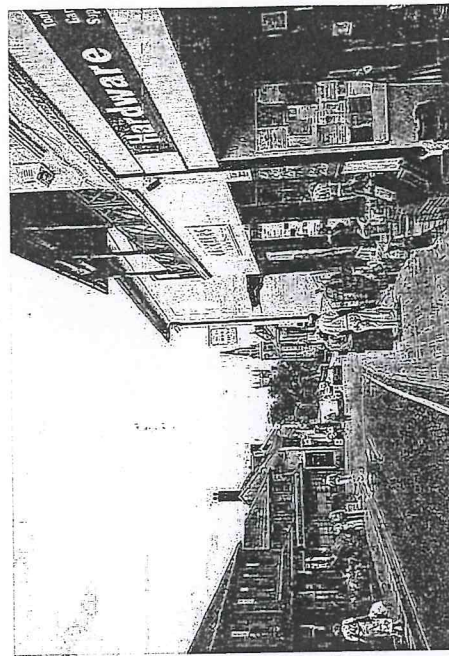


Figure 7 : The High Street

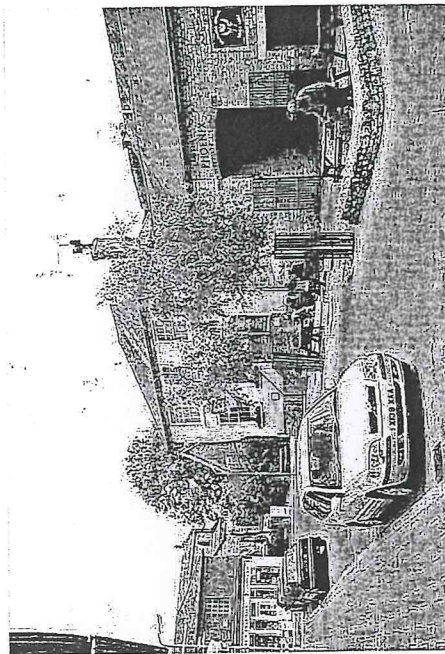


Figure 8 : St. Martin's Square, in the 'old town' character area.

ADJACENT USES

2.14 The site is located on the urban edge within an area which is characterised primarily by light industrial land uses. To the east is an industrial estate accommodating uses such as food processing. To the north of the site, beyond the relief road is the library and museum building, together with the Waitrose supermarket, a recently constructed Focus DIY store and a car dealership.

2.15 The town centre and the High Street lie beyond, with a mix of retail, commercial, residential and community uses. Important social and community facilities such as a health clinic, post office, pub and pharmacy are also located in this area (see Figure 9).

2.16 To the south of the site, beyond the railway line, lies the Brickfields Business Park which consists of various light industrial units, while to the west of the site, beyond the River Stour, is an expanse of green open land known as Chantry Fields (see Figure 10).

SITE HISTORY

2.17 The extensive development of the site began with the arrival of the railways to Gillingham in 1859. While the town had previously developed in linear fashion around the High Street, the location of the railway station to the south of the town centre led to a southwards expansion, along what was to become Station Road. From the 1880s onwards, the uses on the site were primarily concerned

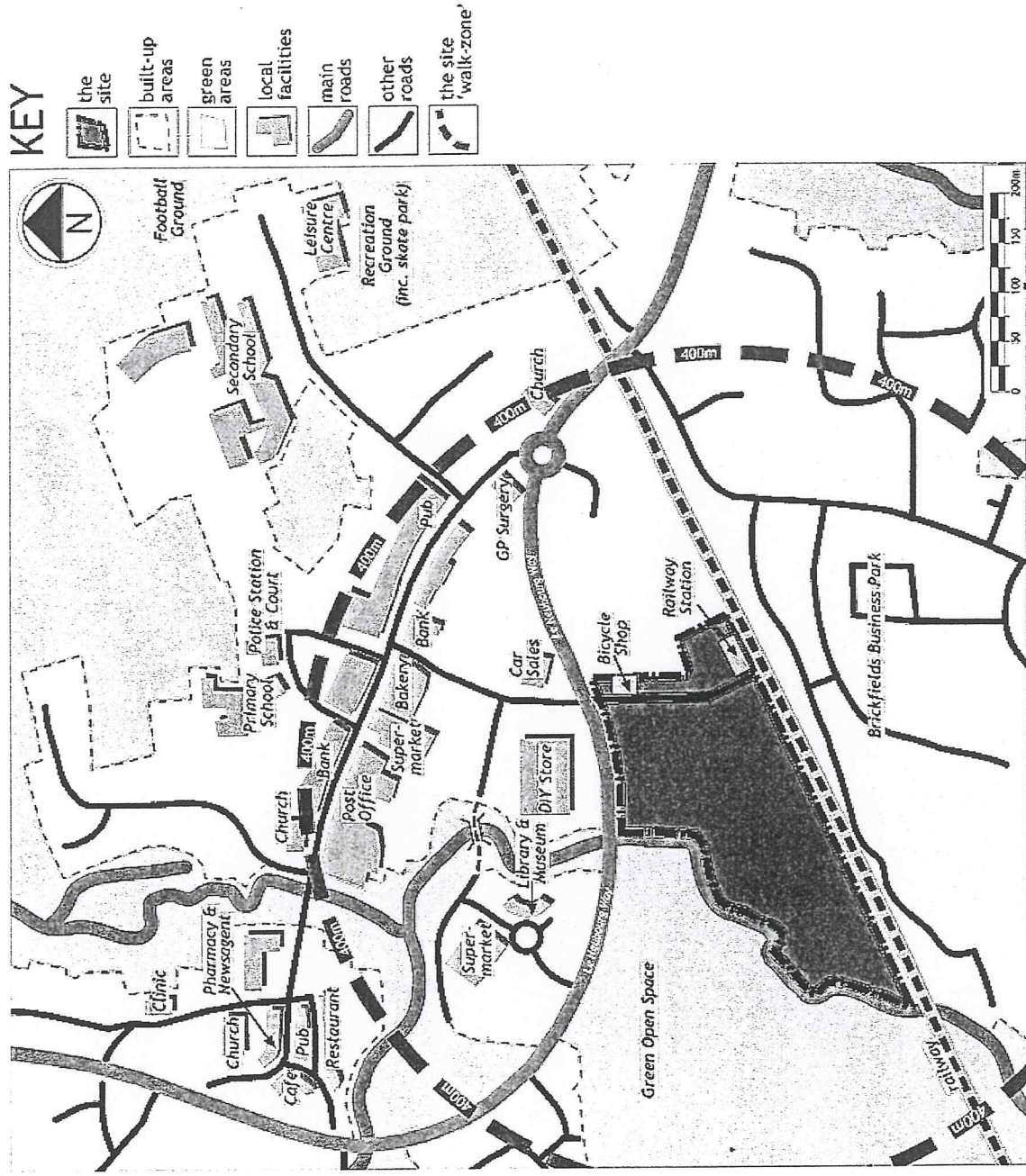


Figure 9 : Local facilities

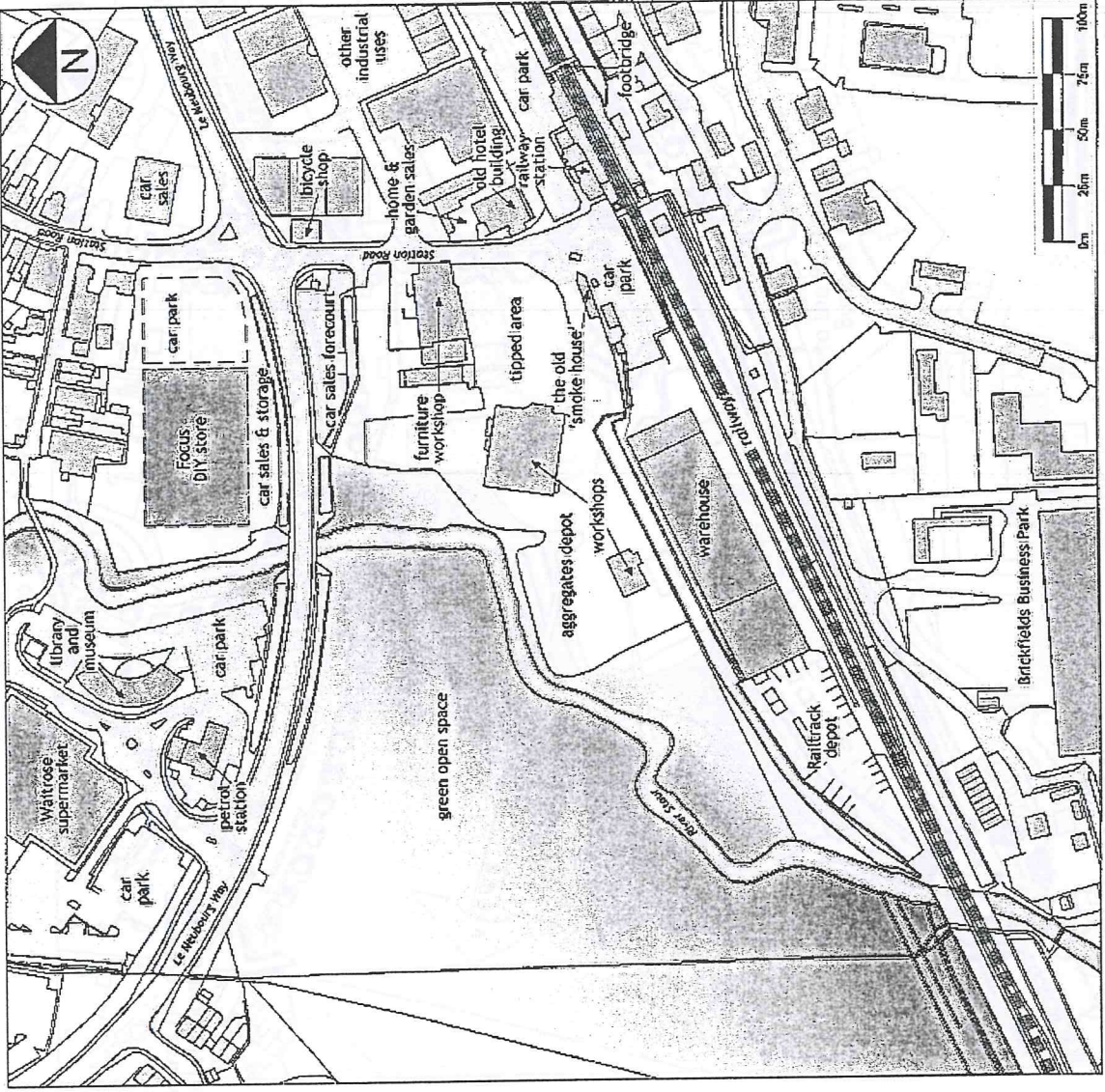


Figure 10 : Site features


with food processing. On the northern part of the site, the Gillingham Dairy Farm was located, being used as a cheese and egg packing station in later years. By 1886, the central part of the site was occupied by a bacon factory which remained operational until 1985. Most of the buildings associated with the bacon factory have been demolished although the old 'smoke house' is now used as an office by one of the current site occupiers.

2.18 The southern part of the site consisted of a goods shed and associated railway sidings. By 1982 this had been replaced by a large warehouse. A depot, once used to store coal for the railway and now operated by Railtrack, is in the south western corner of the site. There are two telecommunications masts on the site, one adjacent to the car sales area in the north of the site and one to the west of the warehouse.

CURRENT USES AND OCCUPIERS

2.19 The area to the west of Station Road South is currently occupied by a used car sales area, a vehicle workshop and parking area, a furniture workshop, a builders yard with associated lorry servicing area, a fuelling facility, a furniture removals and storage warehouse and a Railtrack depot. (see Figure 17).

2.20 The eastern edge of Station Road South is occupied by a home and garden wares shop and a bicycle shop while further east are other light industrial uses. The southern section of Station Road is effectively a cul-de-sac, carrying



should be orientated to maximise the use of solar energy. Government guidance on energy efficient housing can be found in *Planning for passive solar design* (DETR / DTI 1998).

4.44 It is expected that construction methods used during the implementation of any approved scheme should reflect sustainable techniques, such as using recyclable and renewable building materials. Further details about sustainable construction can be found in *Future Foundations - building a better south west, a sustainable construction charter for the region* (SWRDA, 2001).

4.45 Buildings should be designed to consider the needs of people with mobility problems, including the elderly, and ensure flexible dimensions and layouts. Guidance can be found under Part M of the Building Regulations and within *Building for successive generations* by the Access Committee for England (1992).

There follows a series of diagrams, plans and illustrations showing how the planning and urban design principles can be realised on the ground. Included are two possible development options, both of which are based on the principles.

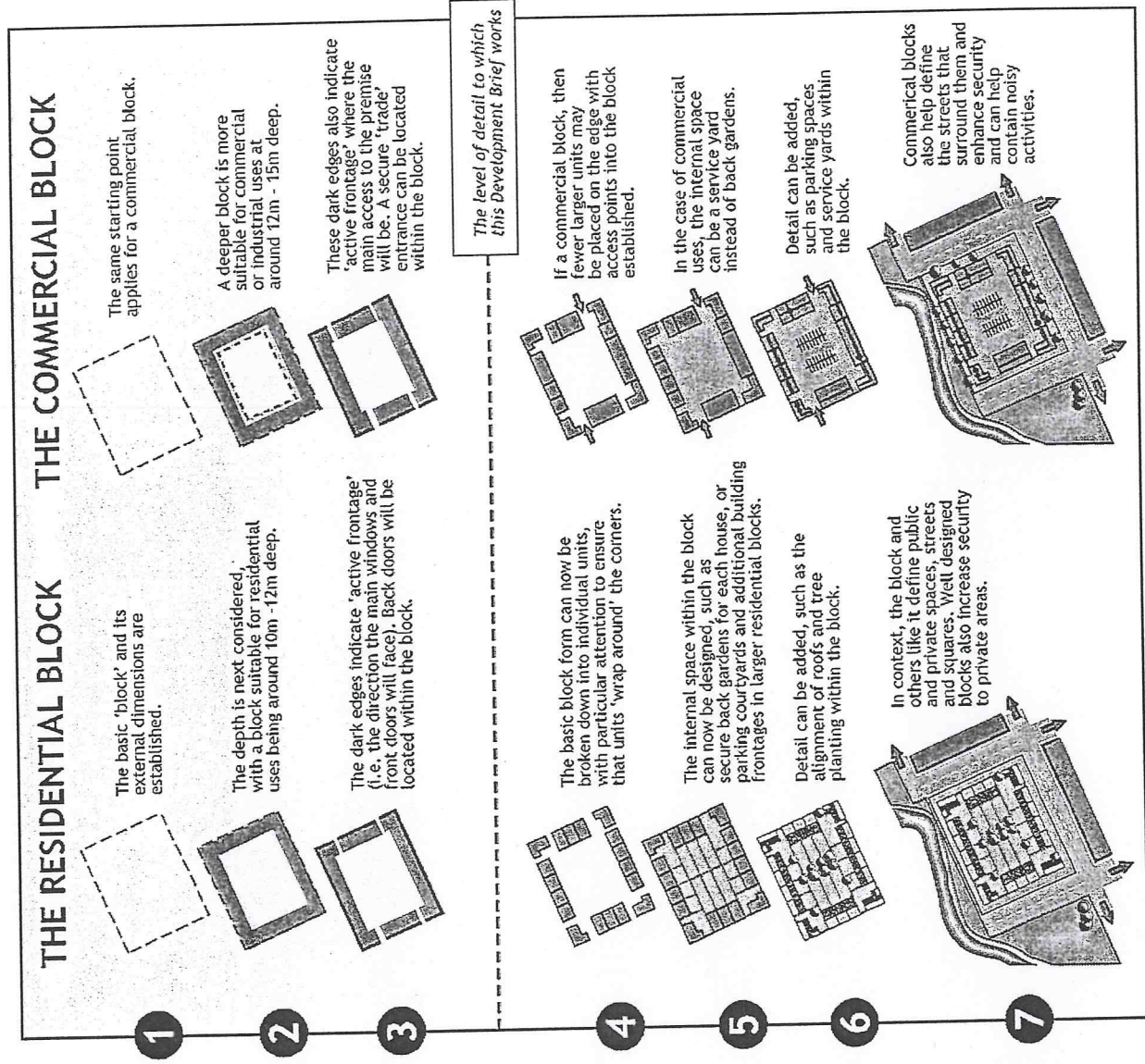
Development options

PERIMETER BLOCKS

(Figure 26)

5.1 This diagram outlines a sequential approach to urban form which helps meet the redevelopment objectives for this site. A layout based on the principle of 'perimeter blocks' will do the following :

- **Creating Places** : the blocks place buildings together to enclose spaces in a positive way, helping to create a sense of place.
- **Local Identity and Character** : the blocks allow for architectural variety, which can add to the character of Gillingham, rather than detract from it.
- **Integration** : the blocks allow for a well-connected network of streets, linking the development with its surroundings and making it easy to walk through.
- **A Safe and Secure Place** : the blocks make a clear definition between public and private spaces and ensure that back gardens or service yards are secure.
- **Adaptability and Resource Efficiency** : the blocks are efficient in their use of land, thereby maximising the potential of this important site.



CHARACTER AREAS

5.2 A series of 'character areas' are proposed across the site (see Figure 27). Character is a combination of urban form, building type, uses, activities and detailing.

5.3 Rather than the entire site being of a single character, different parts should be allowed to develop distinct identities, while remaining appropriate to both the immediate context and to Gillingham as a whole.

5.4 The following 'character areas' have been identified as being suitable for the site :

- **Station Road** : a mixed-use area, with commercial and other active uses at ground floor level with offices or residential uses on the upper floors.
- **Riverside Residential** : consisting of flats and town houses with a river aspect, this part of the site is suitable for residential use.
- **Station Square** : new development will help enclose the square although buildings should be no more than three storeys to respect the height of the old hotel and station building.

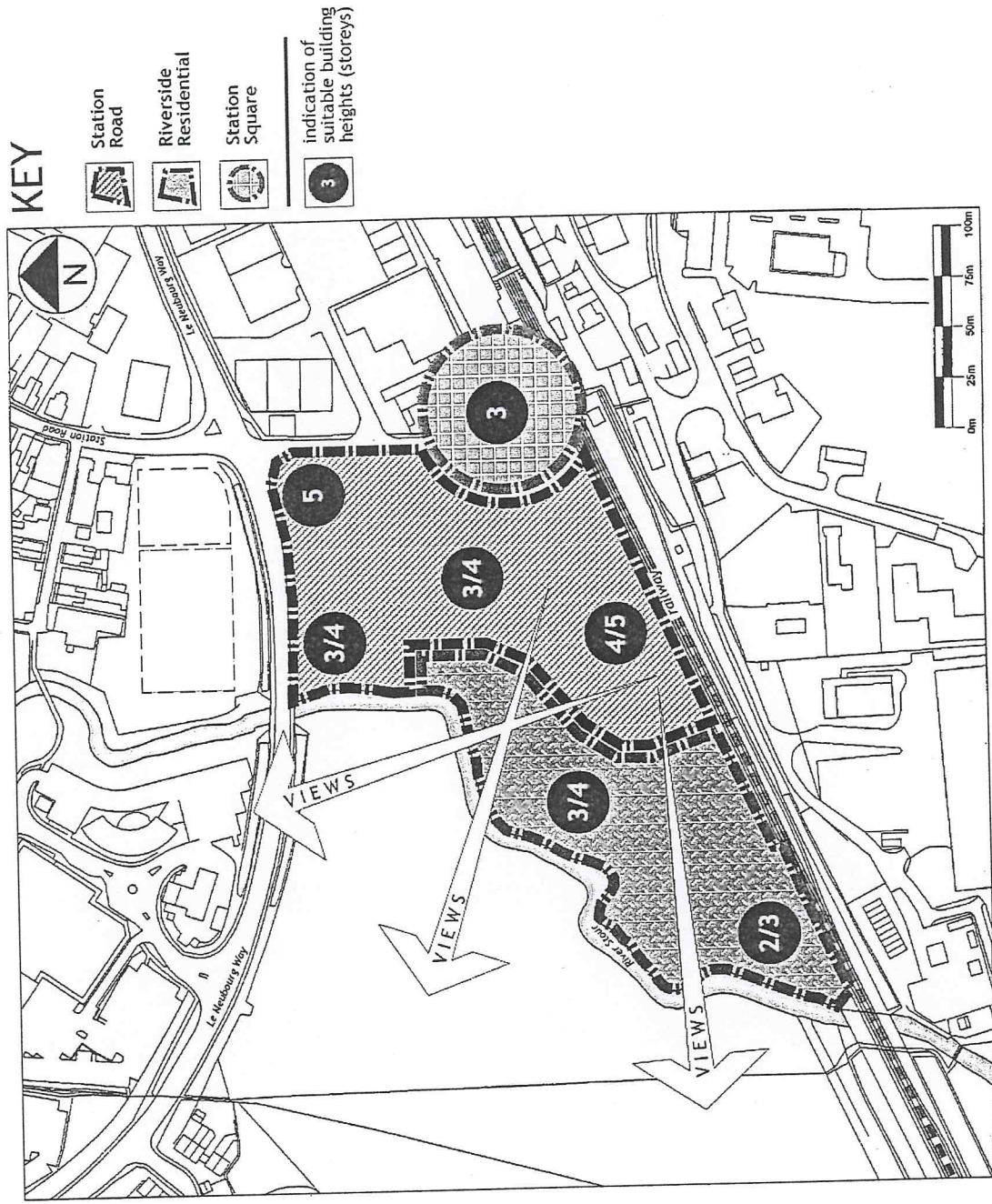


Figure 27 : Proposed character areas

OPTION ONE : LAYOUT

1. **Commercial block :** Frontage development along the relief road will help define this 'gateway' to the site. Opportunity for a landmark building of up to five storeys on the corner.
2. **Open space :** Located on area of floodplain. Recreational uses close to the river but denser, thicker tree planting further inland to enclose the commercial development block.
3. **Mixed-use block :** Large enough for courtyard parking and servicing. Commercial uses on the northern edge and the Station Road edge, with offices or flats above. Town houses on the western edge with rear gardens. A landmark building on the corner to be seen from 'Station Square'.
4. **Civic square :** Fronted by town houses on either side and able to accommodate car parking under the trees. Leading directly to the new footbridge crossing.
5. **Residential block :** With town houses on the eastern edge of the block and three to four storey flats overlooking the green space and the river.
6. **Green open space :** Located on area of floodplain.
7. **Corner block :** Flats with secure courtyard parking. Opportunity for a landmark design on this prominent corner, the first part of the town to be seen on arrival by train from the west.
8. **Flats :** With secure courtyard parking to the rear, accessed under an archway. Four to five storeys to allow views over the site.
9. **Civic block :** Potential for new community hall, with rear courtyard parking to the rear. New building immediately adjacent to the 'smoke house' building, retained for community uses and fronting the new 'arrival space' in a positive manner. Opportunity for further car parking for the community use within the station car park.
10. **Station Square :** Fronted by the old hotel building and the railway station and new development to the west. Potential for new footbridge leading directly to the Brickfields Business Park.
11. **New community Hall :** The District Council's preferred site.

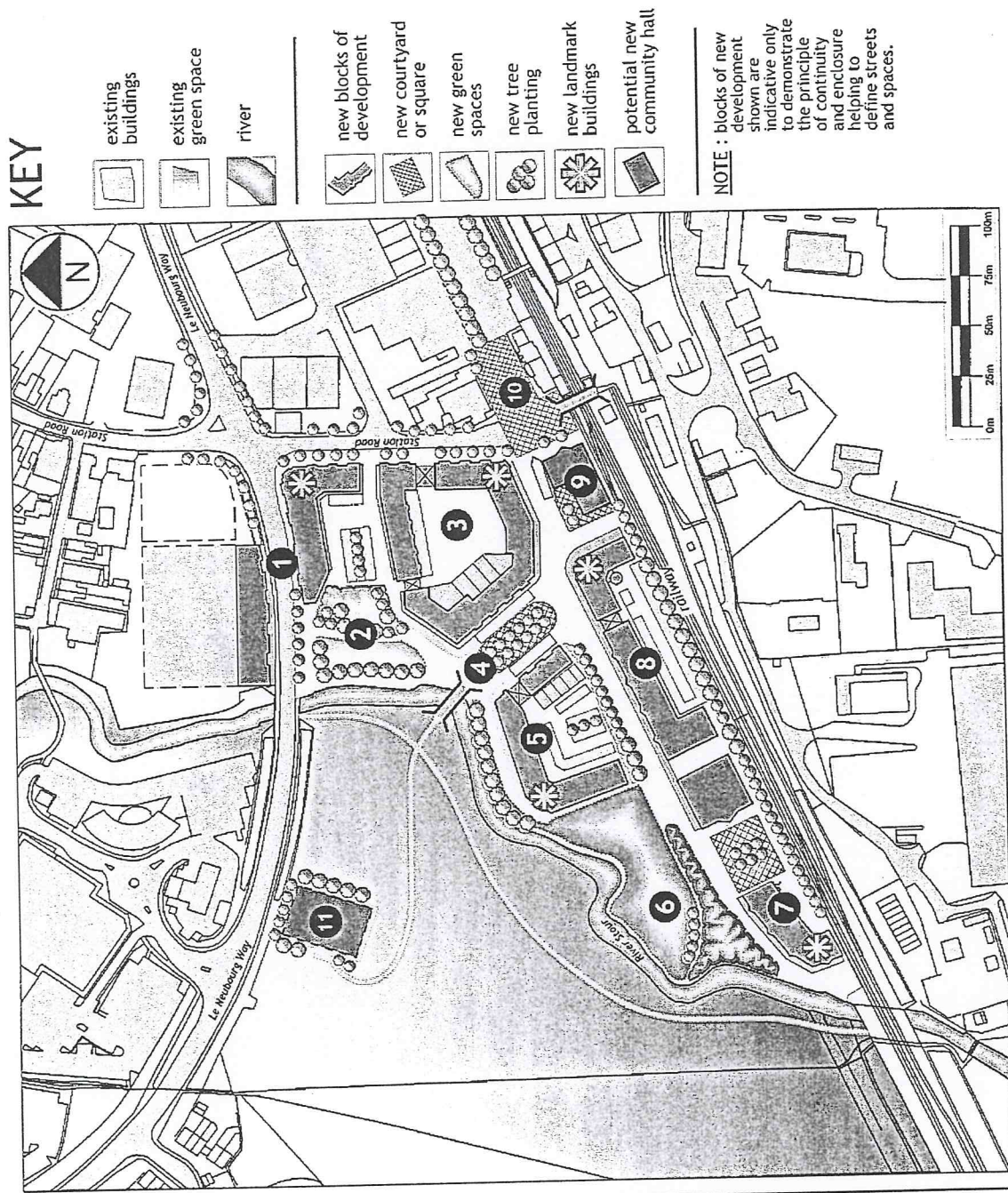


Figure 28 : Layout (option one)

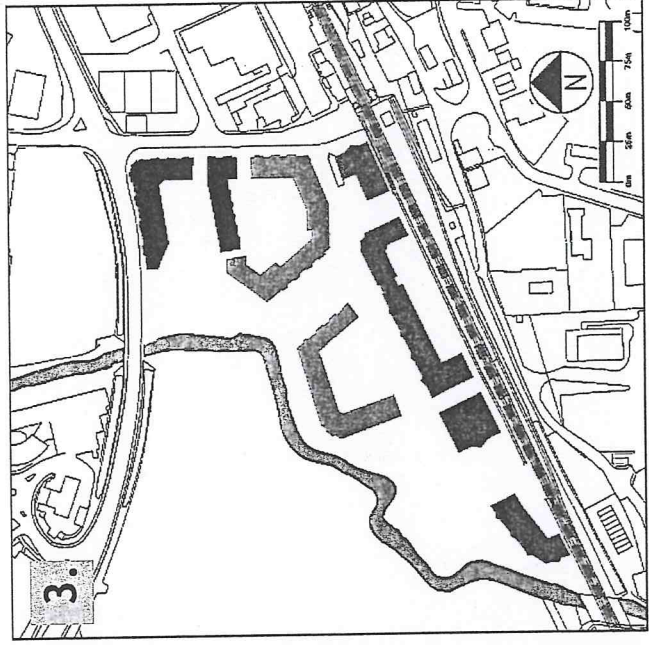
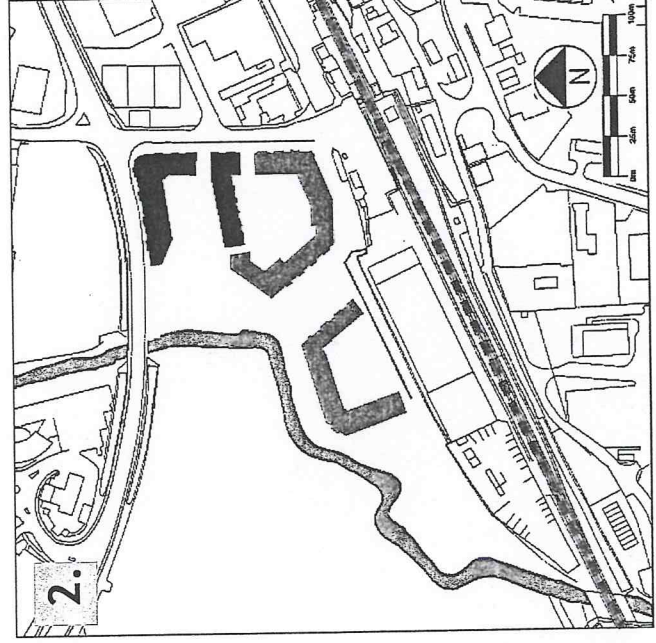
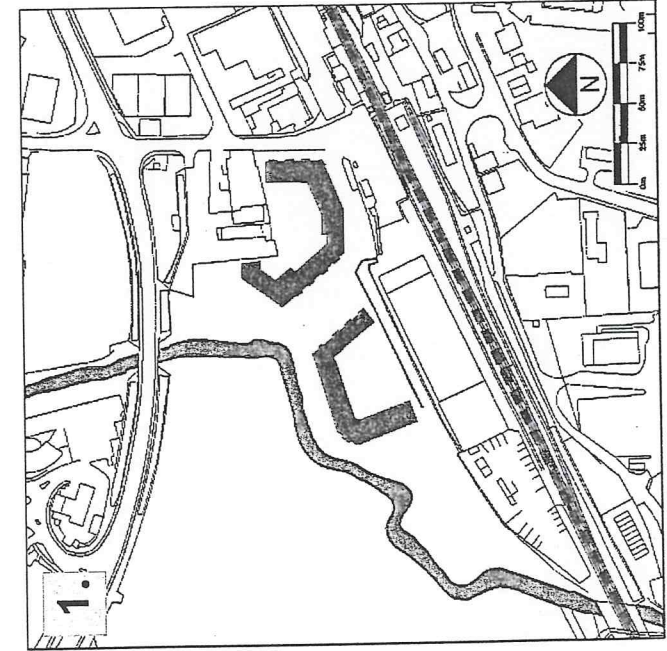
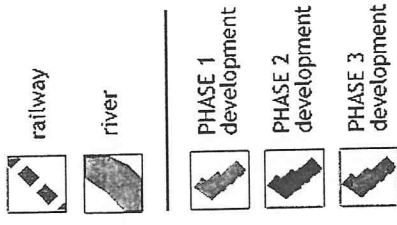
OPTION ONE : PHASING

(Figure 29)










5.5 This sequence of diagrams shows how the comprehensive scheme for the site as shown in the first layout option (see Figure 28) can be developed over time. In the initial phase of redevelopment (1.) the warehouse and the car sales area remain in operation, in the second phase land fronting Le Neubourg Way is redeveloped while the final phase (3.) brings forward the railway land.

5.6 Each of the three phases shown here works with the land ownership issues (ref : Figure 17).

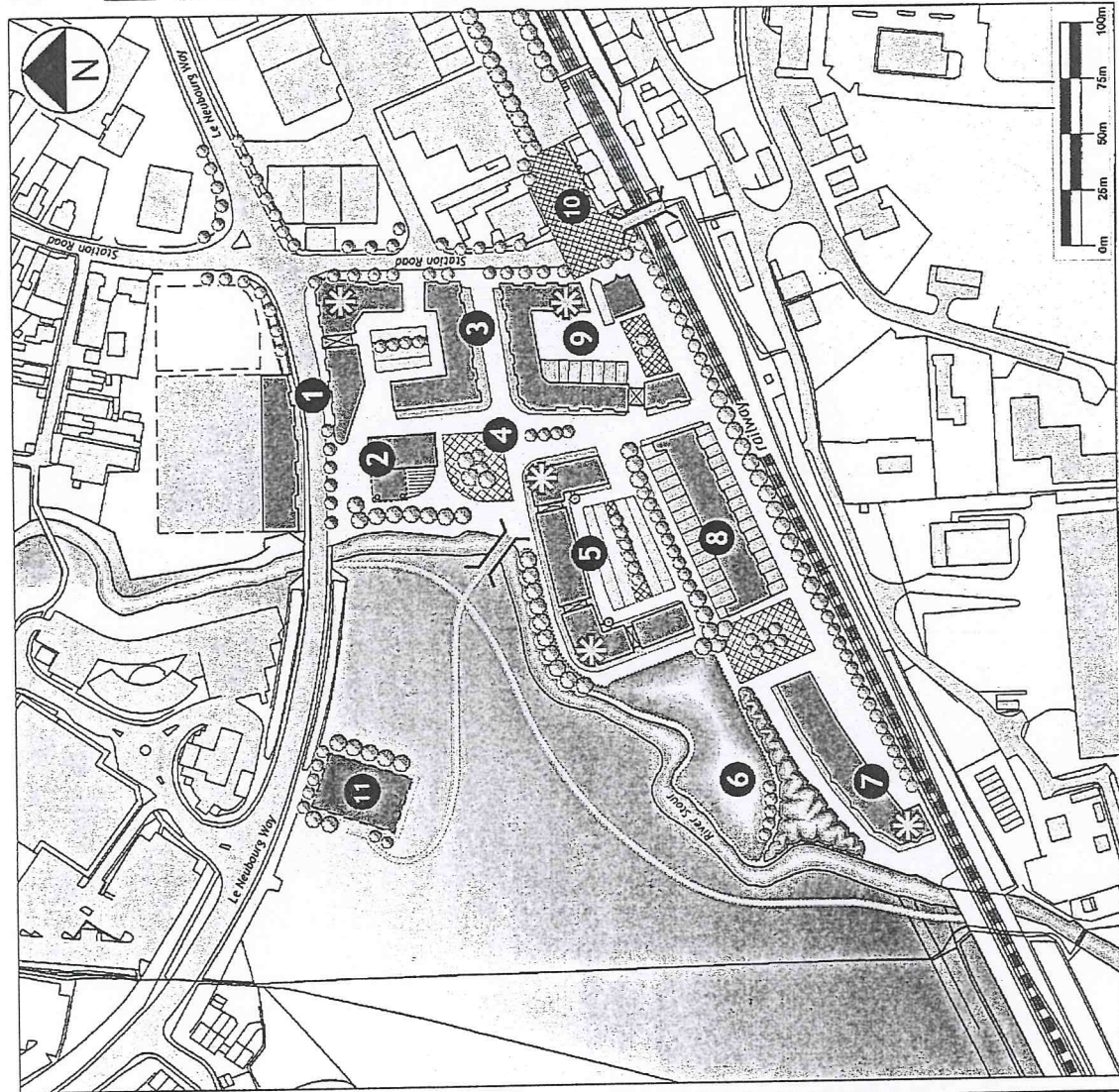
KEY



KEY

-  existing buildings
-  existing green space
-  river
-  new blocks of development
-  new courtyard or square
-  new green spaces
-  new tree planting
-  new landmark buildings
-  potential new community hall

NOTE : blocks of new development shown are indicative only to demonstrate the principle of continuity of continuity and enclosure helping to define streets and spaces.



OPTION TWO : LAYOUT

1. **Commercial block :** Frontage development along the relief road will help define this 'gateway' to the site. Opportunity for a landmark building of up to five storeys on the corner.
2. **Potential community hall :** With a decked area located above the area of floodplain.
3. **Entrance Street :** Leading directly through to the civic square and fronted on both sides by commercial or business uses.
4. **Public square :** Fronted by flats to the south, mixed-use block to the east and the new community hall to the north. Large enough to accommodate car parking. Also leading directly to the new footbridge crossing.
5. **Residential block :** With three to four storey flats overlooking the green space and the river and secure courtyard parking.
6. **Green open space :** Located on area of floodplain.
7. **Corner block :** Flats with secure courtyard parking. Opportunity for a landmark design on this prominent corner, the first part of the town to be seen on arrival by train from the west.
8. **Town houses :** With front and rear gardens and fronting the main access road, adjacent to the railway line. Tree planting between the road and the railway.
9. **Mixed-use block :** The 'smoke house' building is retained for community use and incorporated into the block, fronting the new 'arrival space' in a positive manner. Town houses on the western edge of the block with rear gardens. Another potential location for new community hall, with courtyard parking to the rear and opportunity for further car parking for community use in the station car park.
10. **Station Square :** Fronted by the old hotel building and the railway station and new development to the west. Potential for new footbridge leading directly to the Brickfields Business Park.
11. **New community Hall :** The District Council's preferred site.

Figure 30 : Layout (option two)

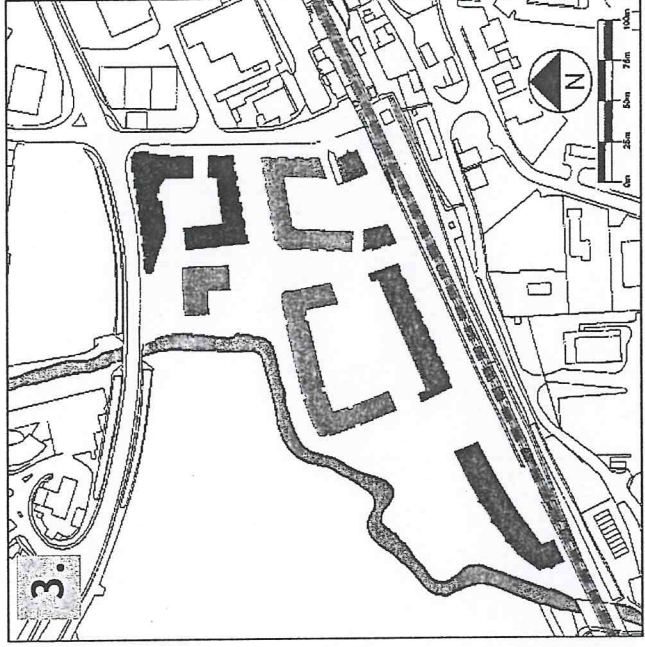
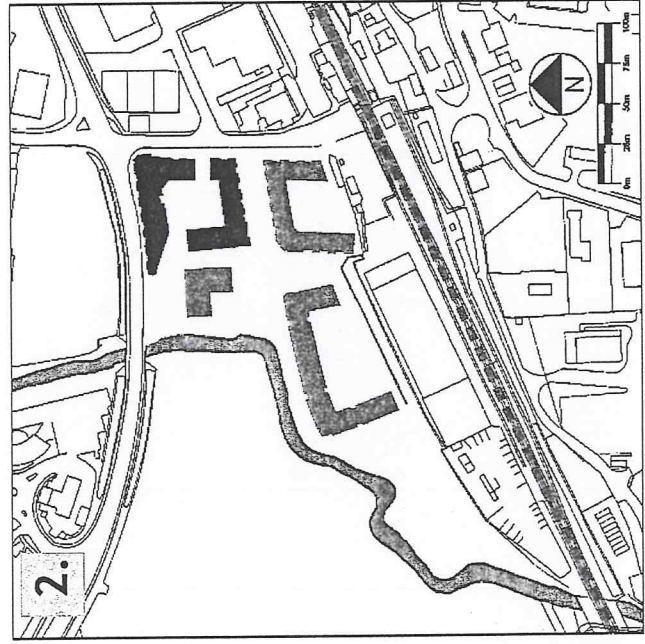
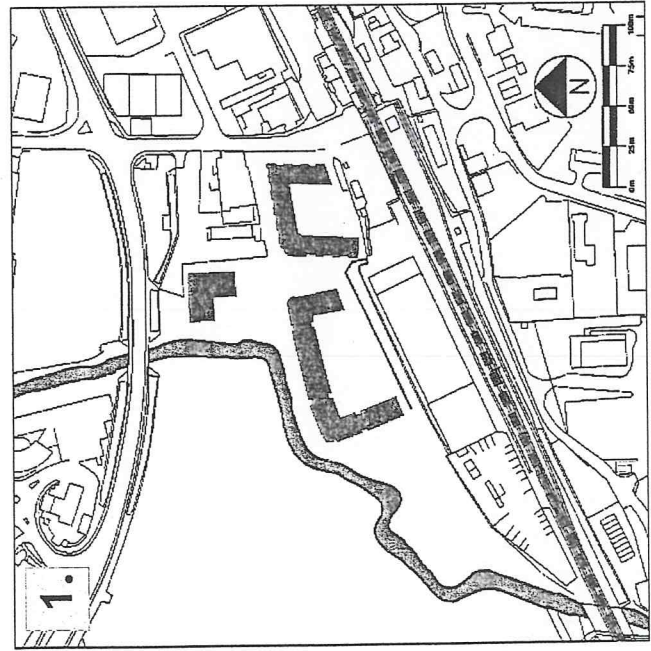
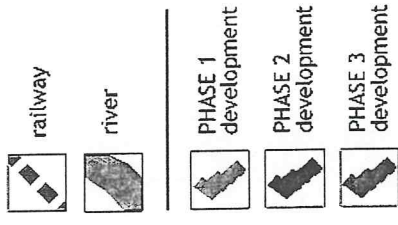
OPTION TWO : PHASING

(Figure 31)

5.7 This sequence of diagrams shows how the comprehensive scheme for the site as shown in the second layout option (see Figure 30) can be developed over time. In the initial phase of redevelopment (1.) the warehouse and the car sales area remain in operation while in the second phase land near Le Neubourg Way is redeveloped. The final phase (3.) brings forward the railway land.

5.8 Once again, each of the three phases shown here works with the land ownership issues (ref : Figure 17).

KEY



MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

5.9 These two diagrams (see Figure 32 and Figure 33) shows that the two possible schemes for the site (see Figure 28 and Figure 30) are accessible and based on natural patterns of movement. In each case, the block structure allows for a well-connected network of streets, linking the development with its surroundings and making it easy to walk through. In both cases :

- **Vehicular movement :** The main access to the site is from Station Road. The primary access into the site is from a 'main street' which leads to the south-western corner of the site. Access to the station car park is maintained.
- **Pedestrian movement :** All streets and spaces are 'pedestrian friendly' with very slow vehicle speeds.
- **Access beyond the river :** Access to both river banks is possible, with the far bank and Chantry Fields reached via the new footbridge link. This will lead to the District Council's preferred location for the new community hall.
- **Courtyards :** Access to rear courtyards is controlled and secure. In the case of residential blocks, only residents will have access to the parking courtyards. In the case of commercial blocks, access will be limited to employees, deliveries or visitors.

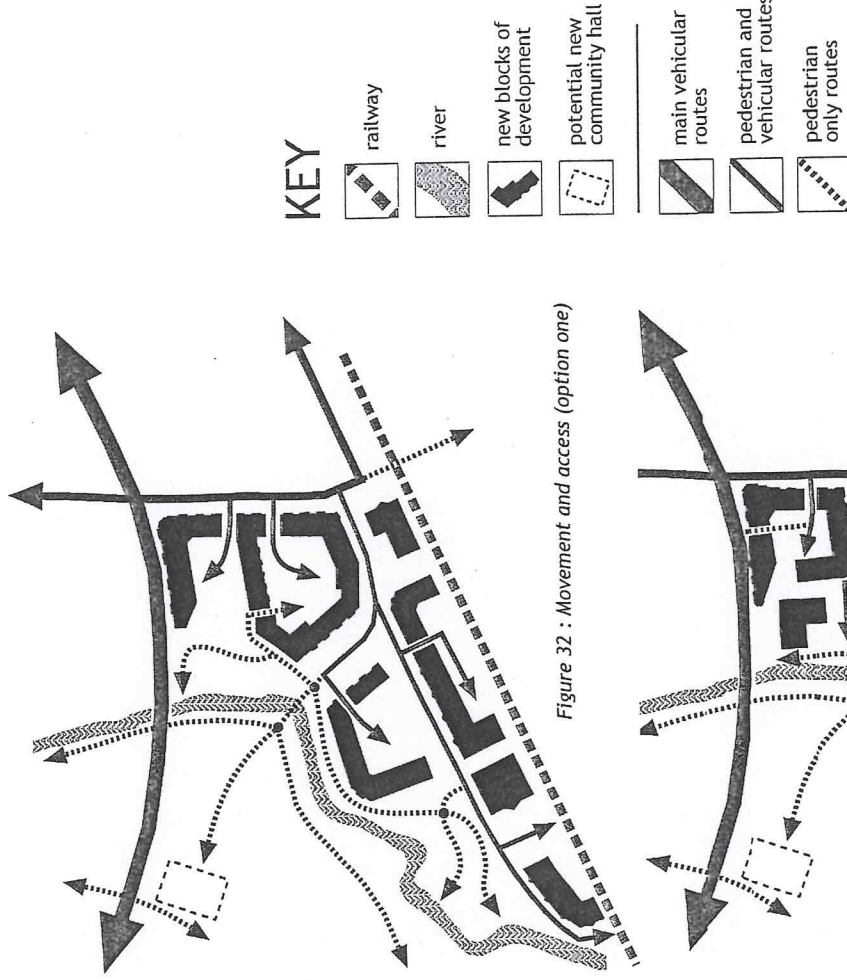


Figure 32 : Movement and access (option one)

Figure 33 : Movement and access (option two)

PERSPECTIVE : STATION SQUARE

The creation of a welcoming gateway to Gillingham :

- the space between the station and the old hotel building is improved to form a civic square.
- the railway station car park is retained and accessed through the square.
- new development to the west of Station Road provides a positive sense of enclosure and forms the 'third side' of the square. The 'smoke house' is retained and incorporated.
- an interactive travel information point is located in the centre of the square.
- potential for a cycle hire outlet next door to a tourist information centre, located in the old hotel building.
- opportunity for the station cafe to 'spill-out' into the square.
- a new bus turn-around and taxi rank.
- new surfaces and quality lighting.

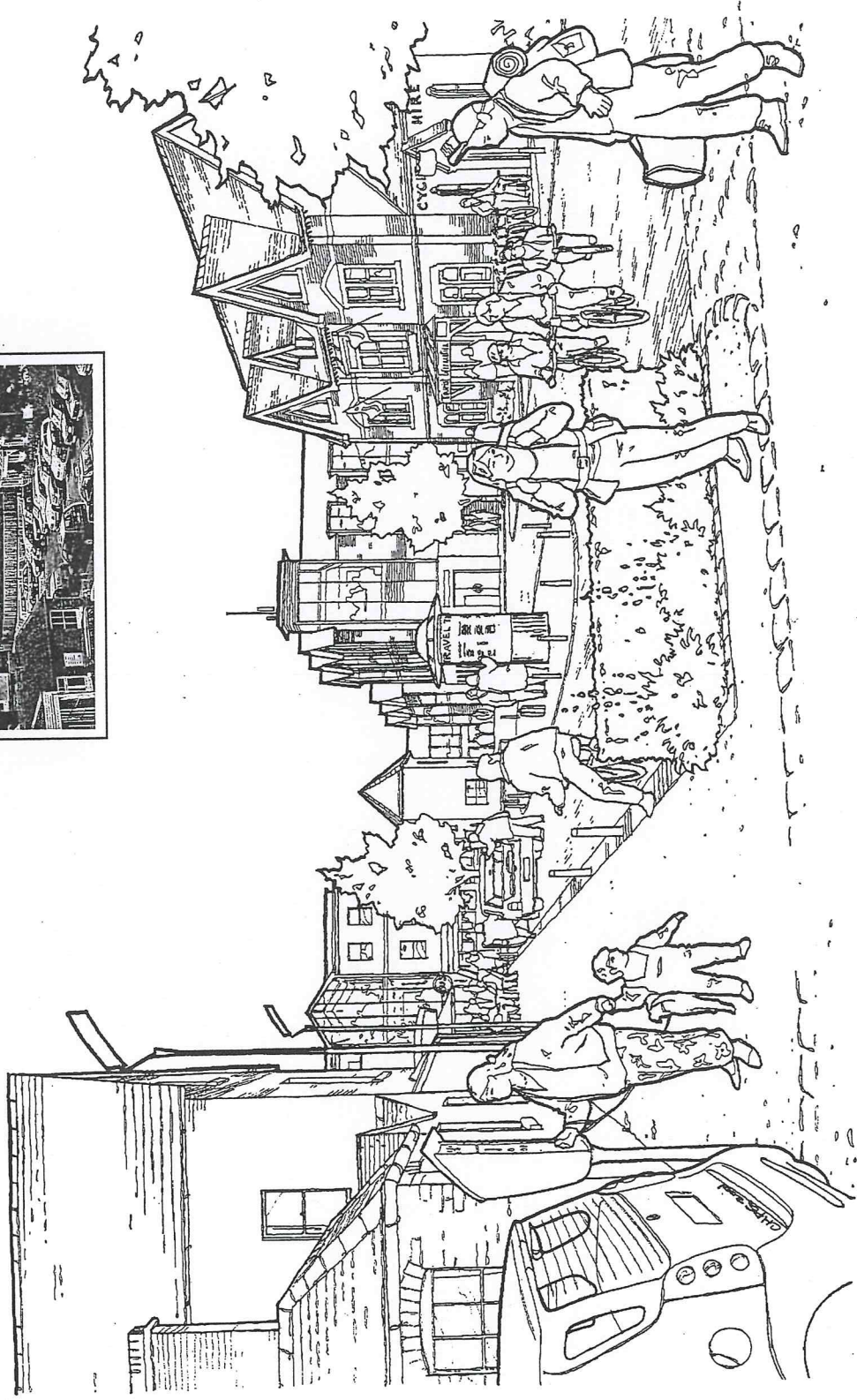
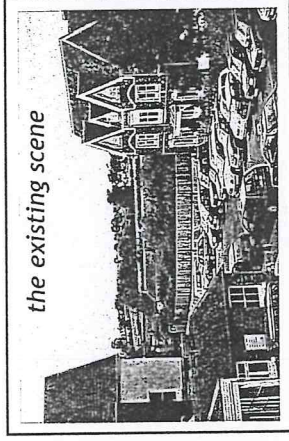


Figure 34 : Station Square (perspective)

PERSPECTIVE : STATION ROAD SOUTH

The view along Station Road, looking towards Le Neubourg Way and the town centre :

- new development provides a positive sense of enclosure by having an 'active' frontage.
- business uses are at ground floor, with residential or office space above.
- balconies and active use of the upper floors allow the street to be 'overlooked' providing a sense of safety and security.
- the red brick gable ends of the existing furniture workshop are retained and replicated elsewhere on the frontage as a design feature.
- opportunity for a four (or even five) storey 'landmark' building on the corner of Station Road and Le Neubourg Way.
- new street trees to emphasise the importance of this route between the station and the town centre.
- new surfaces and quality street lighting.

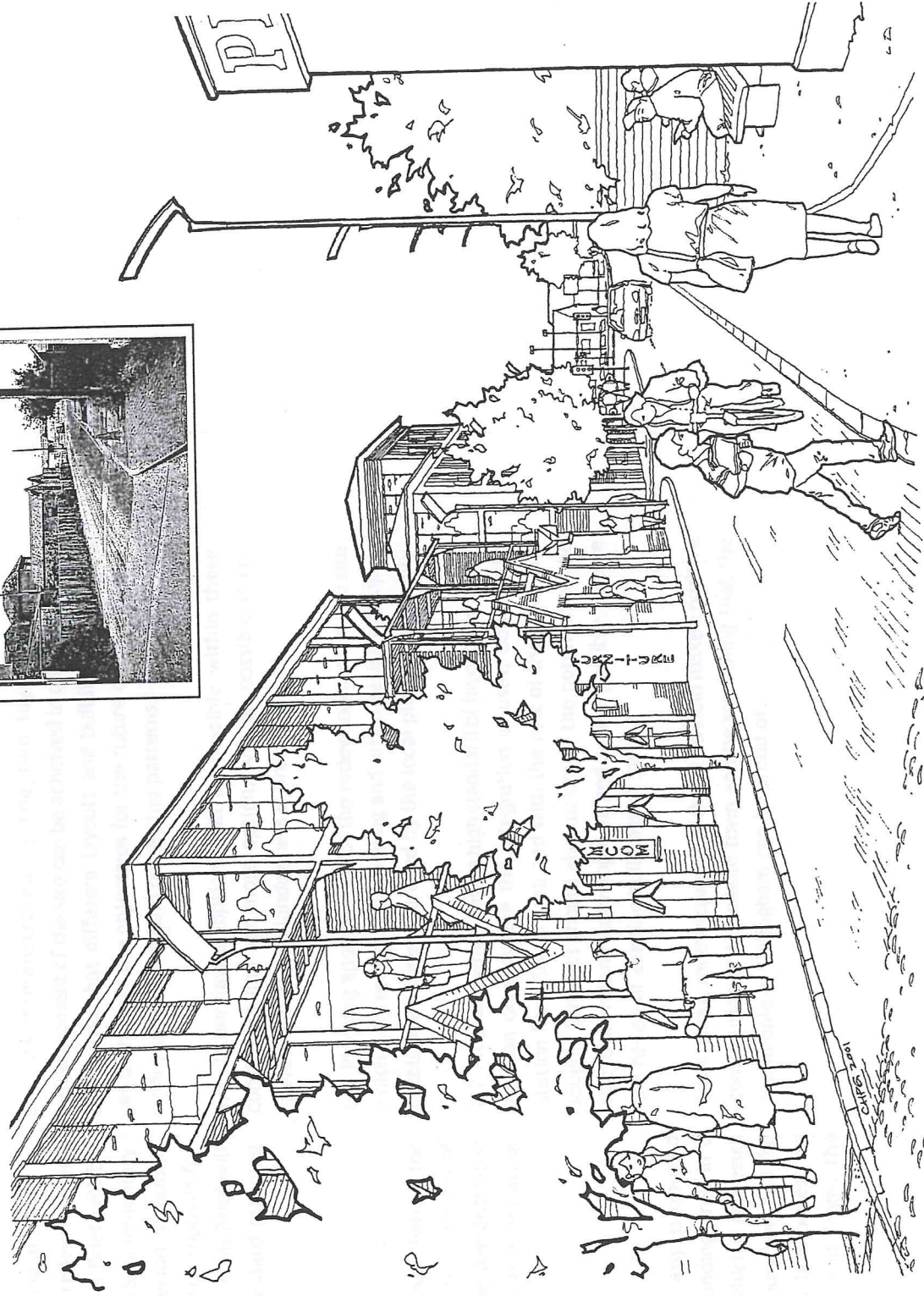
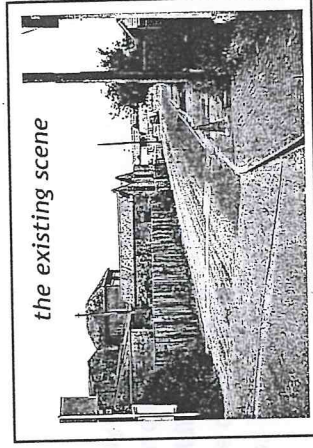


Figure 35 : Station Road South (perspective)