

# TAVISTOCK PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

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JANUARY 2014



LDĀDESIGN



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The town of Tavistock in West Devon lies along the River Tavy in between The Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Dartmoor National Park. The City of Plymouth is located 15 miles to the south and Exeter 33 miles to the northeast. The Tavistock Devon Town Area has a population in the region of 30,000. Tavistock is an attractive town with a rich and varied history. Tavistock forms part of the UNESCO Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS), was the site of a 10th century Benedictine Abbey, signified by Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) status, the town also played a key role as a Stannary and Market town. It is this history that makes Tavistock special and the gives the town it's special character. Tavistock's status is not only of local and regional, but International importance.

It is an exciting time for Tavistock. The Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership (TTHP), which includes West Devon Borough Council, Tavistock Town Council, Devon County Council, community organisations and local businesses was successful with its Stage 1 submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme. It is now required to submit a Stage II submission to secure funding for capital projects such as building repair and public realm improvements for a number of priority areas. It is in this context that a Public Realm Strategy and Action Plan for Tavistock has been prepared as part of the Stage 2 bid process. The aims of this study are to establish an overarching framework for the public realm and to identify key projects and priorities that can be taken forward as part of the THI projects to deliver this strategy in a co-ordinated way and to enable the town centre to be appreciated as a totality.

Tavistock's public realm comprises all the streets and spaces within the town. Tavistock's public realm is particularly important because it has long been the focus of the town's commercial and public life and forms the setting to some of the Tavistock's finest historic buildings. The town has a legible network of different streets and squares and a mix of uses within a compact, walkable core. It is evident that this public realm has played a central and lively role in the rich history of the town and continues to do so, for both local people and tourists. It holds regular farmers markets, festivals (such as music, arts and food) and the famous October 'Goose' fair dating back to 1116. Tavistock has a close-knit community that plays an active role in the governance of the town and there is a strong sense of Civic pride. The town is reputed for its wealth of independent shops, local food offer, Pannier Market and is a popular destination for tourists (located at the gateway to the WHS).

Tavistock currently faces a number of key challenges. These include a high proportion of elderly and disabled people, pockets of acute and multiple deprivation, strong competition regionally and a relatively limited economic outlook. The responsibility of World Heritage and SAM status and large number of listed and historic buildings needing urgent repair and restoration exacerbate these issues. Public realm can play a crucial role in helping the town address some of these challenges; however, there are also a number of issues relating specifically to the public realm. The character and quality of the public realm often detracts from the status and setting of the historic environment and weakens the town's identity; there is a need to strike a better balance vehicles and people (the A386 runs through the heart of the town and existing car parking detracts from the historic environment); there is a varying quality of paving and street furniture and

there are currently poor visual and physical connections with one of the town's biggest assets - the River Tavy.

This Strategy intends to address these issues and inform and guide public realm improvements within the town centre. Importantly, the strategy places particular emphasis on improving the environmental quality of the historic town centre, making the community a better place to live, work and visit thereby stimulating the local economy

## 1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this document will be to guide the design, implementation, management and maintenance of a high quality public realm in Tavistock. The Public Realm Strategy is required to set a strategic (town-wide) context for the investment of THI funds and to work up outline proposals for the treatment of priority projects within the THI area.

It comprises an overall strategy for the treatment of public spaces and streets in the town centre, including use of appropriate materials and suggested design approaches and actions, including those that may not be able to be supported through the THI scheme. It outlines options for different areas and then proposes agreed priority projects which would be eligible (or in part) for the use of THI funds and sets out the estimated costs for these projects.

## 1.3 SCOPE

Public Realm is defined as 'the space between buildings' – the streets, spaces and movement corridors which form the framework for our use and perception of a town. Public realm should accommodate the full range of human activity: as a place for socialising, children's play, exercise, shopping, eating, entertainment; a place to work and a place to relax. It should tempt people to slow down, to stop, to chat, to provoke thought, to move through easily, or simply to watch the world go by. The success of the public realm depends on a clear role for the spaces and streets so that people can use the town in comfort and safety. The quality of the public realm is determined by the arrangement of buildings, how well the spaces are overlooked and enclosed and the character, quality, design and arrangement of its paving, lighting, signage, planting and street furniture. Public realm in Tavistock therefore plays a crucial role in the economic performance of the town centre and the perception of the town's historic and natural assets.

The first part of this study will focus on the core town centre area to set the context for a number of priority projects. The priority projects were identified in the Stage 1 bid and are as follows:

- Pannier Market
- Guildhall Square
- Bank Square
- Market Street

The priority projects are all within the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative area (Refer to boundary Figure 1.1).

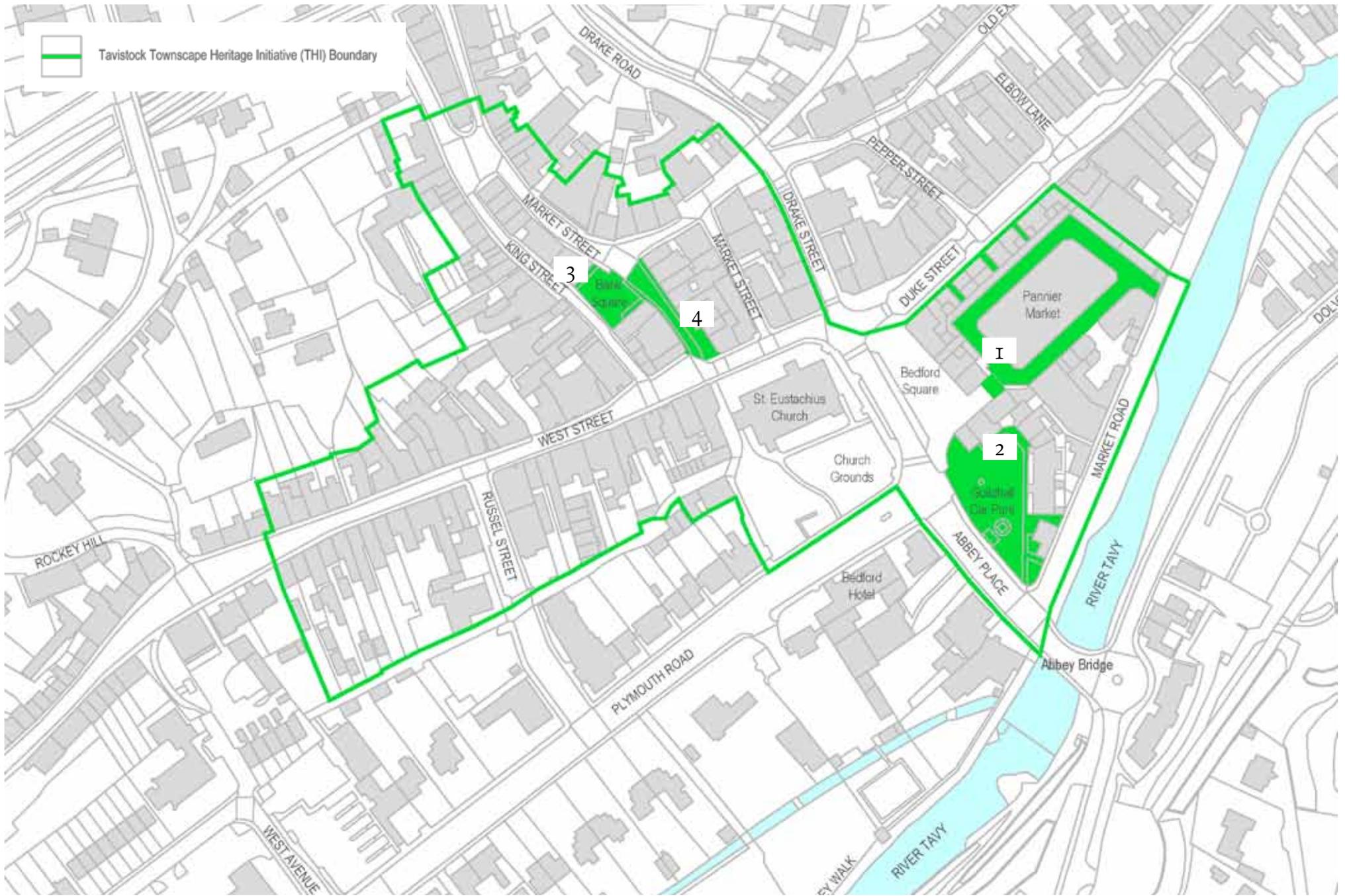


FIGURE 1.1 – LOCATION PLAN



# 2.0 CONSULTATION

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder, technical and public consultation has been integral in all stages of developing the Public Realm Strategy and Action Plan for Tavistock. This consultation builds on the consultation carried out as part of the Stage 1 Townscape Heritage Initiative bid and the previous Conservation Area Management Plan work. Great care has been taken to ensure all those with an interest are involved in all stages and share the ownership of the findings of the strategy and action plan. The strategy has been co-ordinated with the work being carried out for the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan review and submission for the HLF bid.

As well as a number of press releases to the Tavistock Times Gazette, specific consultation has included the following:

## 2.2 ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS AND TOWN CENTRE WALKABOUTS

A number of focused meetings and site walks were held throughout September 2013 to enable specific and technical knowledge to be shared. The purpose of the sessions was to introduce the project and then understand the specific strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities of the public realm in Tavistock in the context of the early Public Realm Strategy work. The topic areas that were covered are listed below:

- Heritage and Conservation
- Town Events and Town Centre Management
- Traffic and Safety

- Car parking
- Planning
- Landscape, Trees and Open Space
- The Local Economy

## 2.3 PUBLIC REALM WORKSHOP 01

The aim of the Public Realm Workshop was to explain the purpose of the Public Realm Strategy and how public realm projects could greatly improve the town centre environment. Attendees were encouraged to provide their views on existing issues and opportunities that relate to the public realm in Tavistock with the intention of using their observations as part of the design brief for projects.

The workshop was held on 25th September 2013 and targeted members of the local community and key stakeholders with an open invitation advertised in the local press. The session began with an update on the progress of the THI bid and presentation on how public realm influences our experience and perception of a town with specific examples from other towns provided to focus discussion. The attendees were then asked to summarise the defining characteristics of Tavistock's public realm, how it could be improved and specific strengths and weaknesses relating to priority project areas. In order to do this attendees were split into groups and undertook a site visit of the THI study area before feeding their thoughts back to the rest of the group.

The workshop was well attended and the exercise simulated discussion covering a wide range of issues for each of the spaces. The issues raised are summarised alongside the design teams own observations in section 3.0 under strengths and



weaknesses. There is a list of attendees and ‘verbatim’ record of feedback contained in the appendices.

A questionnaire was made available at this stage of the project for members of the public who were unable to attend the workshop. The key issues raised in the questionnaires are summarised in section 3 under strengths and weaknesses. The completed questionnaires are contained in the appendices for reference.

## 2.4 PUBLIC REALM WORKSHOP 02

A second workshop was held on 6th November 2013 and progressed the consultation from the first workshop, giving attendees an opportunity to review the emerging vision and emerging design work for priority projects. Invitations were sent out to attendees of the first workshop as well as an open invitation which was published in the local press.

The session began with a summary of the findings of the first workshop (as a recap and for the benefit of individuals unable to attend the first workshop), followed by a presentation of the emerging vision and design options for Guildhall car park, Bank Square, Market Street and the area around the Pannier Market. Attendees were then asked to break into groups to appraise the options and initial design work undertaken. Feedback was provided by each group’s spokesperson.

There was overall support for the vision and the aspirations of the public realm design. Specific feedback was provided on the different design options which are included as a ‘verbatim’ record in the Appendices. There was varied feedback with regard to how far the different design options should go in terms of transformation, for example with regard to removal or partial removal of car

parking. This feedback has been considered alongside feedback received via public exhibition, questionnaires, deliverability and compliance with THI funding to inform a list of preferred projects which is contained with the summary of this report.

## 2.5 PUBLIC EXHIBITION

A public exhibition was held over two days in the Pannier Market, from Friday 29th November (to co-inside with Dickensian Evening), until Saturday 30th November. The event was to present the vision for the public realm and designs for the THI priority projects. The exhibition also signified the start of a six week consultation on revisions to Tavistock’s Character Appraisal and Management Plan. The exhibition was well attended with over 150 consultees. Overall there was a positive response from the exhibition, a summary of the responses and the issues raised is provided in the appendices of this report. The feedback generated has been integral in developing the preferred options.

## 2.6 TRADERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Given the potential impact of proposals to Bank Square and Market Street a specific questionnaire was provided to businesses operating in the area ahead of any formal consideration of the options. Again, the feedback provided (as described in more detail in the appendices) has influenced the development and selection of the preferred scheme designs.



# 3.0 BASELINE

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal provides a full and detailed survey and analysis of Tavistock's built form, this appraisal has informed and provided the starting point for this Public Realm Strategy. The following section focuses on a more detailed appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses specific to the public realm in the town centre area.

This Strategy has also been prepared in the context of Devon County Council's ongoing proposals for the highways in the town centre. The proposals which have affected this work are focussed on Bedford Square and currently explore the potential for reducing the visual intrusion of the highways and junctions on the town centre environment without compromising operation or safety. Potential interventions include:

- Alterations to traditional highway materials,
- Removing unnecessary street signs,
- Simplifying and reducing the size of remaining signs, and
- Removing unnecessary white lines.



FIGURE 3.1 - TOWNSCAPE LEGIBILITY PLAN

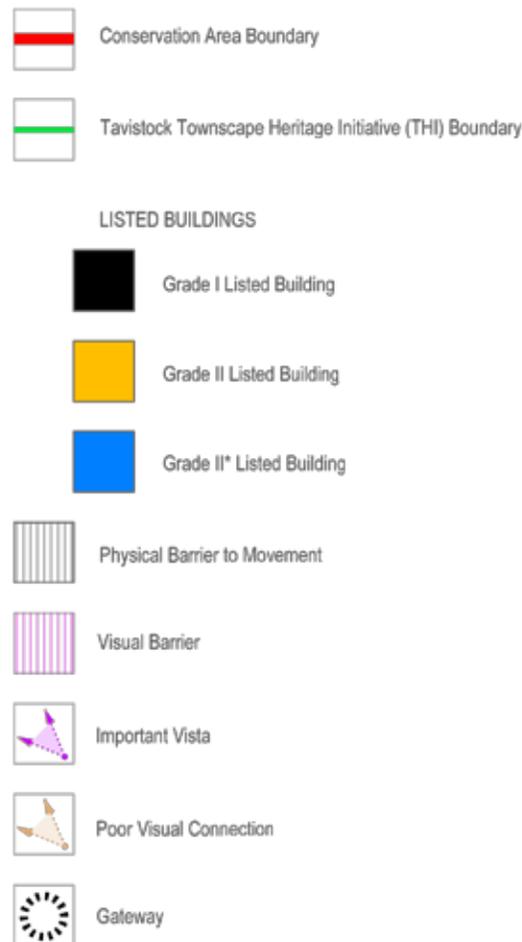
## 3.2 LEGIBILITY

Tavistock Town Centre has a distinctive and legible urban form with a street network which offers a clear, compact and easily understood structure to the town centre. The former Benedictine Abbey, which now lies beneath the town, is still evident and forms a key influence to the townscape and character of Tavistock. The principal streets within the core town centre area all converge on Abbey Place which lies at the heart of the town. The streets are well defined and enclosed by an assortment of buildings which reflect the growth of the town over time. The quality and historic character of the urban form, including the variation in architecture and the detailing in the individual buildings, offers a rich and unique setting for the town centre environment.

In such a rich built context one of the roles of the public realm should be to facilitate the enjoyment of the town's setting offering continuity in materials and avoiding any detracting features. However, there are currently a number of visual and physical barriers within Tavistock's public realm which compromises the overall character and quality of the town centre environment. The physical barriers are most commonly caused by the challenge for pedestrians to navigate around traffic and vehicles. Visual barriers include, proliferation of traffic, irregularity of materials, furniture, lighting and planting in the town centre which can detract from surrounding buildings by adding unnecessary clutter and visual distraction.

The Townscape Legibility Plan (Figure – 3.1) picks up some of the key opportunities in appreciating and understanding the structure of the town including:

- Gateways – At key arrival points to the town, these areas are crucial in setting visitors first impressions of Tavistock. One of Tavistock's real assets is that the urban form and quality of the buildings in these areas is remarkable. Unfortunately these areas also coincide with the 'poor visual connections' which mean that the enjoyment is limited by visual distraction in the public realm.
- Important vistas – these identify lines of sight which are important in understanding the structure of the town e.g. being able to see up and down key retail streets and ensuring key features remain clearly visible such as the viaduct, church and civic buildings.
- Listed buildings – The Conservation Area Appraisal provides a full analysis of these buildings, they are highlighted here to show the interface of public realm which forms the setting of these key buildings



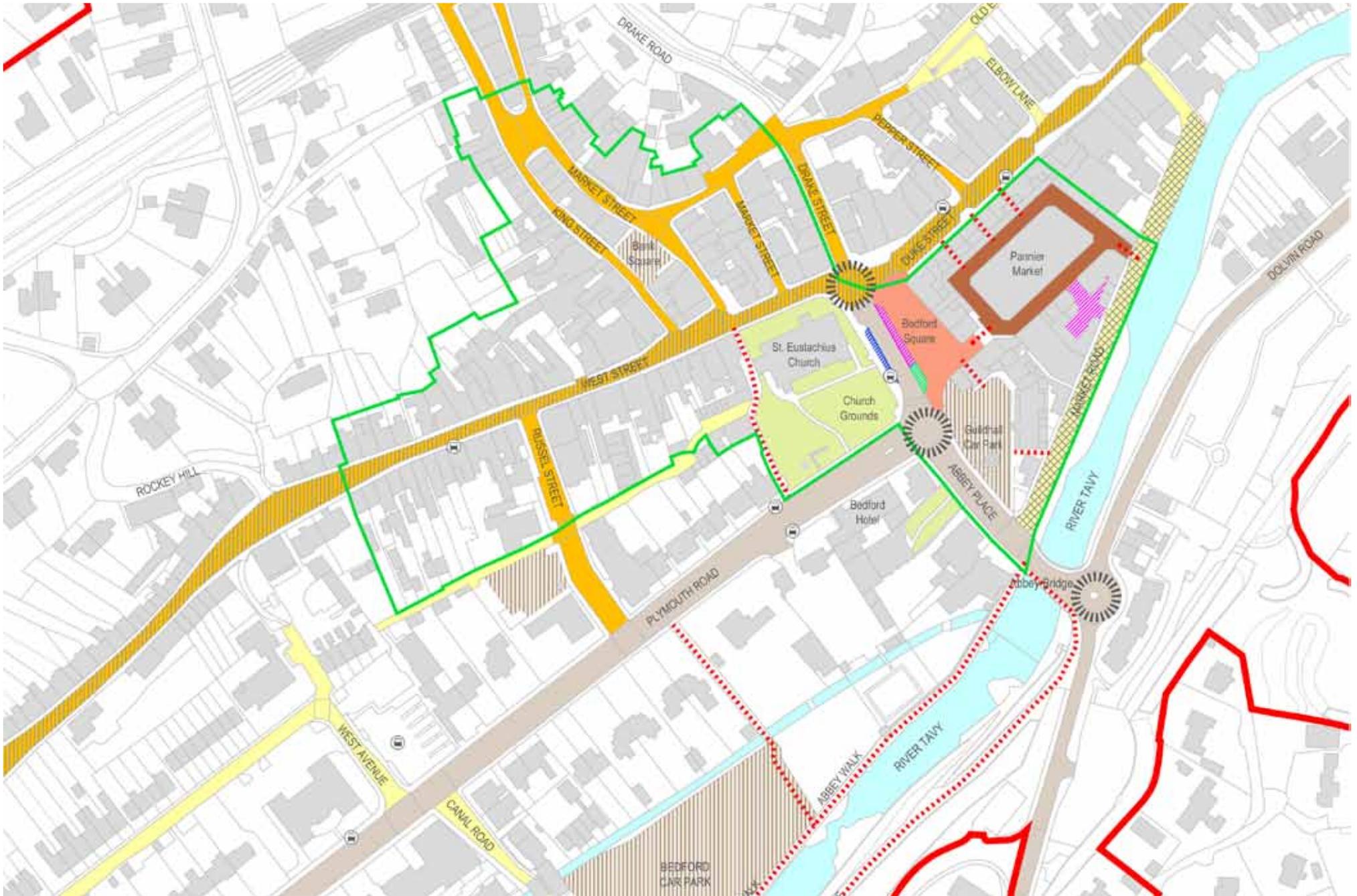
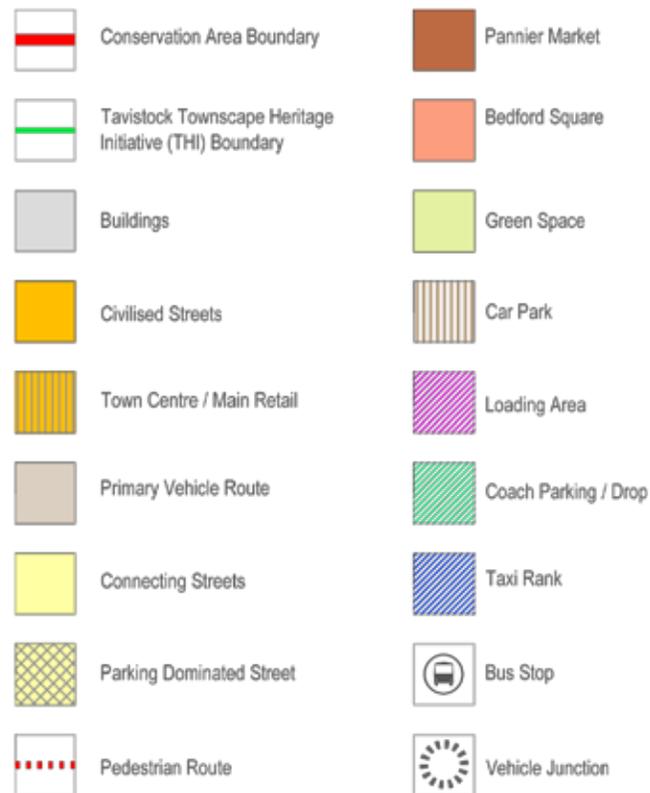


FIGURE 3.2 - PUBLIC REALM USE PLAN

### 3.3 USE

Tavistock is blessed with a strong urban structure which establishes a good range of public spaces which are well enclosed by high quality buildings. The spaces vary in size, character and context and therefore offer sufficient opportunities and flexibility to host a full range of events within the town. The market town status is a historically significant aspect of the town and Tavistock maintains regular and successful market days.



The Public Realm Use Plan (Figure – 3.2) categorises all the streets and spaces in the town centre area by their current role and use.

- **Pannier Market:** The area around the Pannier Market offers circulation space, additional space for markets and alfresco dining. The area is completely enclosed and capable of being managed to ensure pedestrians take priority on market days.
- **Bedford Square:** A large hard paved space which provides an appropriate setting to the Town Hall. It offers tremendous flexibility in its ability to host market days or a range of large or small scale events. Well located at the heart of the town surrounded by civic buildings.
- **Church Grounds:** These play an important role in the impressive structure and setting of this part of the town centre. The grounds offer a green space which would otherwise be lacking in the core town centre area (with the other green space - Meadowlands Park located a short walk from the town centre)
- **Primary Vehicle routes:** These are streets where traffic takes priority over pedestrians in order to support their strategic transport role. Pedestrian crossings are required to help pedestrians navigate these streets safely and with ease.
- **Civilised Streets:** These streets have a common role in accommodating both transport routes and the town centre's commercial activity. The layout of these streets must balance the needs of both vehicles and pedestrians in order to perform both of these roles effectively. These are streets where pedestrians are more likely to spend time and meander.
- **Connecting Streets:** Streets which link and lead to the town centre, pedestrian activity along these streets will be less intensive and function predominantly as through routes rather than streets to linger and meander, which distinguish them from Civilised Streets.
- **Parking Dominated Streets:** Streets where parking provision limits or prohibits the safe or convenient use by pedestrians. Market Road for example is depicted as the dominance of parking restricts pedestrian access along the river.
- **Car Park:** The plan shows a large and well-connected car park along the River Tavy - 'Bedford Car Park'. There are also a number of smaller car parking areas located in the centre of town most notably at Bank Square, in front of the Guildhall and on streets throughout the town. These provide useful, extremely accessible spaces which offer additional support to local businesses. However, they are generally located in extremely sensitive sites which often compromise the setting of the historic environment.

### 3.4 PAVING

The character and quality of paving materials in the town centre is varied resulting in a lack of overall continuity. There is a noticeable variation in the types of material used which include tarmac pavements, cobble setts, concrete slabs, concrete setts and both historical and modern granite slabs which vary in colour, size and finish. This coupled with an incoherent pattern of materials and untidy patch repairs detracts visually; it does not provide an appropriate setting for the surrounding buildings. The haphazard use of materials does not reinforce the character areas of the town centre and therefore fails to contribute to improving understanding and legibility of the urban structure of the town. Market Street, King Street and Bank Square in particular have a proliferation of different paving materials which are in a poor state of repair

Stretches of 19th century paving still remain in the town centre, evident on West Street, Duke Street, Abbey Place and Russell Street. It should be noted that the quality of the public realm in these areas is considerably higher partly due to the large granite slabs which have survived in these streets. The slabs are large, particularly where they form corner stones at junctions, such as King Street / West Street and typically continue to the edge of the pavement without a kerb. These areas of historic paving are a distinctive feature of the town. Recent additions of granite paving have been used in Bedford Square using imported granite which is coloured grey and has a rough texture which fails to complement the hand tooled brown and orange of the Dartmoor granite slabs which are generally larger and much more varied in size. The newer granite slabs also suffer from vehicle damage often due to roadside parking. (Despite poor application on busy streets, the newer granite slabs have been used effectively on pedestrian routes such as Church Lane). There are also examples of 19th century cobbled surfaces using washed river cobbles such as Canal Road and fronting Bedford Hotel and at the entrance to the Pannier Market.

There are many examples of existing historic ironware visible in Tavistock's public realm. Cast iron drains, pavement gulleys and manholes all hint at the history of the town as the majority bear the name of local foundries which produced ironware for local industry, street furniture and domestic use. These are an important feature that adds to the richness of the town.



INCONSISTENCY IN PAVING

### 3.5 STREET FURNITURE:

Street furniture includes seating, bollards, lighting columns, signage, litter bins, cycle racks, tree grilles, bus shelters and railings. There is considerable variation in the type and quality of street furniture in Tavistock. There is predominantly a style of imitation ‘heritage’ furniture, however this does not translate into a harmonious appearance due to varying interpretations of the theme and the range of materials used. The effect is an assortment of different types of litter bins, cycle stands light columns and benches, and this inconsistency does little to reinforce a distinctive identity for Tavistock. To compound this, most of the seating is damaged and of poor quality.

In certain areas street furniture seems excessive and is inappropriately located resulting in obstructions to footways. This adds visual clutter which detracts from the quality of the surrounding townscape. This is compounded by the presence of regulatory signage and traffic controls associated with the A road which runs through the town.



STREET FURNITURE DETRACTING FROM KEY BUILDINGS

INCONSISTENCY IN FURNITURE ITEMS



FIGURE 3.3 - EXISTING TOWN CENTRE PLANTING



TREE PLANTING ALONG THE RIVER TAVY, ABBEY WALK

### 3.6 PLANTING

Tavistock has a reasonable amount of planting for a town of its type. The most significant tree groups are located either side of the River Tavy where they provide an essential green corridor and a useful link between Meadowlands Park to Abbey Place. The river corridor conveys a green and natural character to the town centre. Large mature trees enclose the river and mostly shade the riverside walks of Abbey Walk and St. Johns Avenue.

Plymouth Road, Market Road and junctions at Abbey Bridge all contain street trees. Plymouth Road in particular contains a number of mature trees, however, the variety in size and species and irregular distribution does not reinforce a consistent character for the street. Continuing down Plymouth Road, the Meadows and adjoining Bensons Meadow provide an attractive green space.

Due to size restrictions, many of the streets in Tavistock are inappropriate to accommodate tree planting, resulting in most of the town's planting being located along the river corridor or in private gardens. West Street and Duke Street are noticeably absent of vegetation, this is partly due to the narrow street sections. A small number of shops have adopted planting pots and hanging baskets which helps soften the appearance of the dominating hard surfacing and adds colour to the townscape. Similar hanging baskets, as well as large concrete planting containers, can be found lining the pavement at Bedford square and Guildhall car park however are located in areas which contain a significant amount of other street furniture and highways signage and therefore appear to add to the streetscape clutter. Permanent ornamental planting is limited to relatively few places within the town centre, such as the War Memorial in Guildhall car park and in St. Eustachius Churchyard where they frame the church.

Inevitably there are obstacles to improving the structure and impact of planting in the town in such a historically significant location, specifically around issues such as conflicts between planting and historical buildings, the potential for underground archaeology space restrictions and the need to maintain key views. Opportunities for maximising the amount of permanent rather than temporary ornamental planting should be explored to ensure that it is well integrated into the public realm.

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Boundary
-  Tree Canopy
-  Tree Preservation Orders
-  Hedgerow
-  Lawn
-  Hanging Baskets
-  Concrete Planters
-  Green Corridor

### 3.7 SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

1. Outstanding built heritage fronting important areas of public realm
2. Range of public spaces supporting day to day activities, as well as occasional events & markets
3. High quality and distinctive historic paving
4. Naturalistic river corridor setting
5. There is a range of types of spaces in Tavistock
6. Vibrant town centre with varied retail
7. The public realm is generally flat and on the whole very accessible
8. Varied choice of town centre car parking
9. Distinctive townscape of planned streets
10. Good legibility generally





### 3.8 SUMMARY OF WEAKNESSES

1. Historic buildings are undermined by visual clutter in the public realm
2. Important linkages are undermined by visual clutter in the public realm
3. Busy transport corridors result in circulation barriers for pedestrians
4. Key town centre areas turn their back on the River Tavy
5. Poor quality, mismatched street furniture
6. Lack of provision of certain types of street furniture
7. Car parking dominates & detracts from heritage
8. Car parking prohibits pedestrians & doesn't comply with standards
9. Poor quality lighting
10. Range of materials fails to unify public realm or add to sense of place
11. Contemporary paving detracts from historic paving and is varied in quality
12. Sensitive maintenance of the paving is a problem
13. Incongruous or poorly located incidental seating spaces
14. Visual detractors
15. Lack of planting in town centre spaces

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II



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# 4.0 VISION

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Tavistock is already a unique and beautiful town. It has an incredible and dramatic natural setting and rich history which have combined to shape the distinctive townscape visible today. It is loved by its visitors and residents alike for its history, setting, physical fabric, community events and retail offer.

The vision for the public realm has been developed and refined in collaboration with stakeholders and the local community. They set the overarching standards by which any planned interventions in the public realm should be judged.

Fundamentally the vision for the public realm is to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of Tavistock's best assets. It is anticipated that this can be best achieved through public realm enhancements which seek to improve the setting of and complement the surrounding built form and to make interventions to the use or arrangement of key spaces to create a comfortable and user friendly town centre environment in which people will want to spend more time. Importantly any interventions must also support the local economy in Tavistock.

The vision for Tavistock's public realm is as follows:

- PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY SETTING FOR TAVISTOCK'S IMPRESSIVE HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT
- CREATE STREETS AND SPACES THAT BALANCE THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS & VEHICLES
- SIMPLIFY THE RANGE OF PAVING MATERIALS & FURNITURE TO REFLECT THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF TAVISTOCK
- REMOVE UN-NECESSARY STREET CLUTTER & REDUCE VISUAL INTRUSION OF REMAINING FURNITURE
- USE HIGH QUALITY, ROBUST & TIMELESS MATERIALS
- ESTABLISH/REINFORCE THE ROLE AND IDENTITY OF KEY TOWN CENTRE STREETS AND SPACES
- IMPROVE THE IMPRESSION OF TAVISTOCK AT TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS
- ENSURE STREETS & SPACES ARE FLEXIBLE; CAPABLE OF HOSTING MARKETS & LARGE EVENTS AS WELL AS EVERYDAY USE
- ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT THROUGH LIGHTING
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW TREES AND PLANTING



# 5.0 STRATEGY

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## 5.1 TOWN WIDE PROJECTS

The following section outlines a number of long term town wide projects which have been identified to address specific issues and opportunities raised through site survey and consultation work. The projects have also been defined to help achieve aspects of the vision.

### **Preserve and enhance areas of existing historic paving:**

Ensure on-going maintenance of historic paving is done in a planned and sensitive manner. A detailed audit of all historic paving should be undertaken and strategy for suitable on-going maintenance and possibly identification of more urgent interventions should be developed with specialist advice. An important part of this strategy is to ensure that areas of new or replacement paving are selected to complement both the surrounding buildings and the historic granite paving. This may involve using granite in a way which clearly distinguishes between the historic and the modern paving in a sensitive way (as outlined below).

### **Improve areas of poor quality paving:**

Paved surfaces should be simple, robust, easy to clean and complement adjoining historic architecture. Over the years there has been a piecemeal approach to materials, evident in the existing array of different materials. Tavistock has a rich diversity in architecture and styles. Therefore, we propose a really simple approach to materials using a restrained palette of paving material throughout town to unify the streets and provide an appropriate backdrop that does not compete or clash with the architecture. This backdrop however will have a richness and use material variations carefully to either demarcate a change in use or in response to a local change in the character of the townscape.

A comprehensive study needs to be undertaken to research the options for a specification for new paving that considers the aesthetic relationship of new and historic paving, engineering considerations, buildability, health and safety, maintenance and cost (both capital and whole life). New paving in key historic areas should complement the existing historic paving and if possible be of a local (West Devon) provenance. The origin of the stone however should not be considered as more important than the aesthetic, given the contribution this paving makes to the historic environment.

It is suggested that the best way of developing this is through an on-site trial panel which could be undertaken during the implementation of the first public realm projects to assess the options including the origin of stone, type of finish (e.g. hand-picked, riven, fine cut etc.), plan and depth size of unit (within British standards dependent on end-use, e.g. trafficked or non-trafficked), jointing and appropriate laying methodology (rigid construction using concrete and proprietary mortar or flexible, laid on sand for example). This is a detailed research study that should be seen as the benchmark and quality standard for subsequent paving projects. The materials identified during this exercise should be applied to subsequent projects in order to achieve a consistent finish and appearance to the paving in Tavistock and prevent an ongoing proliferation of materials types which is emerging.

For public realm areas of such high profile the quality of the materials being used should be matched by the detail and the quality of the workmanship. The following principles should also be applied to the detailed pavement design to ensure a consistent high quality finish to the town centre streets and spaces:

- The material should be well suited to provide easily accessible surfaces for all users
- Material finish, colour or size should be used to vary the appearance of carriageway, loading/parking bays and footpaths to clearly define trafficked parts of the street
- Changes in paving colour and texture should be restricted and meaningless patterns in the floorscape avoided
- Opportunities for using recessed infill service covers throughout the town centre area should be explored. Where used the material within the covers should match the surrounding paving in terms of material, finish, size and laying pattern.
- Service covers, whether recessed or not should be lifted and re-aligned to run parallel to the coursing of the surrounding paving wherever possible.
- Consideration should be given to the use of drainage channels which minimise visual intrusion, for example using slot drains and recessed infill covers to channels.
- The lines and levels of finished surfaces should be smooth and even with gradual falls to prevent ponding and trip hazards.
- Details of any cutting and laying around furniture items, building thresholds and radii should be provided as part of a fully detailed design package
- Prior to a final construction, control samples should be used to gain approval of materials on site and to ensure continuity with other areas of paving
- The use of a pavement protection treatment should be considered to all paving to offer additional protection from graffiti and dirt. The selected product shall be UV stable and not a sacrificial coating. The selected pavement protection product should not change the colour or tone of the materials or diminish the inherent anti-slip properties of the surface finish.
- The document ‘Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces’ published by the Department for Transport in 2007 should be referred to for details of the appropriate use and layout of tactile paving. Part of this guidance covers materials and colours for tactile paving and states that in conservation areas and in proximity to listed buildings, relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable. Detailed design should therefore explore the opportunity for using matching material for the tactile paving or steel or brass studs, subject to further consultation with local groups representing visually impaired, rehabilitation and mobility impaired user groups.

During the preparation of outline designs for the priority projects the following

paving materials were discussed as a potentially suitable palette for Tavistock:

- Granite: Chosen for its versatility and durability and to tie in with historic areas of granite paving. It is a high quality material which has been selected to raise the quality of the public realm to the surrounding built form. Specified in neutral colours granite will not detract from or clash with the surrounding built form, it will tie together the variety of architecture. Granite offers tremendous versatility in application, available in a range of finishes, sizes and subtle variations in colour can be specified to define distinct areas of the public realm. As mentioned above, the first implementation project should allow for a detailed study on the specification and sourcing of stone to ensure new paving complements historic areas of paving and is implemented to a high standard.
- Bound gravel: Bound gravel is available in a range of colours and can therefore be carefully selected and specified to complement surrounding paving and highlight colours in the surrounding buildings. Bound gravel typically use natural aggregates so it is possible to incorporate a level of variation and interest in the colour of the surface while still maintaining a neutral backdrop for the surrounding buildings. If specified correctly, bound gravel can be used to pedestrian and trafficked parts of these streets.
- Mastertint: Essentially a coloured asphalt, proposed as an alternative to bound gravel for the carriageways areas. Mastertint uses specially formulated pigment with a complementary aggregate to give the asphalt its final colour. This ensures that the colour is retained throughout the aggregate and not just on the surface. As with bound gravel this will provide a neutral backdrop for the surrounding buildings and activity of the town centre.

#### **Retain historic ironware:**

There are many examples of existing historic ironware visible in Tavistock’s public realm. Cast iron drains, pavement gulleys and manholes all hint at the history of the town as the majority bear the name of local foundries which produced ironware for local industry, street furniture and domestic use. Implementation of any public realm scheme should ensure appropriate provision for the ongoing protection of these items. For example this may include the use of recessed paving covers incorporating paving to match surrounding areas; this would help to draw attention to the historic ironware worth retaining.



GRANITE



BOUND GRAVEL



MASTERTINT



EXAMPLE OF A RECESSED INFILL SERVICE COVERS



EXAMPLE OF A SLOT DRAIN



TACTILE PAVING IN MATCHING/COMPLEMENTARY MATERIALS



EXAMPLE OF AN INFILL CHANNEL DETAIL

### **Improve the consistency and quality of street furniture:**

Street furniture includes seating, bollards, lighting columns, signage, litter bins, cycle racks, bollards and barriers, drainage covers, tree grilles and protection, bus shelters and railings. A consistent approach should be taken to the provision and upkeep of street furniture regardless of the authority responsible for maintenance.

A simple palette of street furniture should be applied across Tavistock to give unity to the image of the town centre. This should comprise a restrained palette of one style of litter bins, bollards, benches, lighting columns and so on. In special instances there will be opportunities to deviate from this standard palette and use bespoke furniture to address a particular design challenge or in implementing public art.

Site appraisal and consultation work have emphasised the importance of the historic character of Tavistock. Selection, design and positioning of street furniture must respect the unique qualities and identity of the town. The built form of Tavistock dates from a wide range of time periods, it is therefore suggested that the street furniture should be timeless rather than attempting to mimic a style from a particular period. Richness in detailing and quality of materials is also important in surrounding built form and should be reflected in street furniture.

Street furniture should be used which is elegant and timeless, in practice this will mean materials with a more traditional appearance used in a functional way avoiding overtly contemporary finishes and either over simplified or elaborate detailing.

Street furniture specification and selection should be informed by Product Environmental Profile and Life Cycle Analysis. For example using timber in lieu of metal alternatives where possible can have lower embodied energy and produce fewer harmful waste materials during manufacture.

Materials which achieve a matt finish in a consistent dark grey or black colour should be considered to ensure that furniture recedes and does not detract or clash with surrounding architecture but does contrast with surrounding surfaces and is therefore clearly visible. Highly polished finishes or brightly coloured materials which create a distinctly contemporary feel should be avoided.

Timber should be used as far as possible in all furniture. Timber will be an

important natural material which if specified correctly will add warmth to the public realm which can add richness over time requiring minimal maintenance. For seating timber is also one of the most appropriate materials in terms of comfort. Furniture should be constructed from FSC approved Hardwood that can be left untreated and withstand the wet climate found in Tavistock.

These materials should be applied consistently even if the form of the furniture varies, a common approach to the specification of materials will ensure continuity in the public realm. Street furniture should not need painting for maintenance and sustainability reasons. Therefore, cast iron should be avoided. The suggested palette of street furniture materials is selected to be robust enough to withstand life in the public realm, easily maintained and replaced.

As detailed design work is undertaken on highways and public realm projects in Tavistock a full audit of existing lines, signs and street furniture should be undertaken to remove where possible and reduce the impact of those which need to remain through reducing size, located sensitively altering the colour and /or style.

Good practice guidance for street furniture:

- It should be placed with care and restraint in order to respect civic character and avoid excessive clutter.
- All fixings should be vandal resistant
- It must be robust which means long lasting and vandal resistant.
- It should infer minimal maintenance.
- Individual items should be arranged in simple lines and organised to reduce clutter.
- It must be user friendly – for example, a seat must be comfortable, inviting and warm, a litter bin must be easily emptied, have sufficient capacity and hold litter without it being blown around.
- It should be carefully placed so that conflicts with pedestrian desire lines are minimised. There must be adequate movement zones around and between items of furniture for both pedestrians and wheelchair users.
- The placing of street furniture must respect Highway Authority requirements such as minimum distances from carriageway kerbs, avoiding obscuring sight lines etc.



EXAMPLE OF SUITABLE MATERIALS AND STYLE OF STREET FURNITURE



**Planting Strategy:**

The aspiration to improve town centre planting was expressed a number of times in consultation events. Given the constrained urban form of the town centre and the need to maintain flexibility of open spaces to accommodate events, opportunities for tree planting will be limited. However, where tree planting is possible and desirable, use of larger and long lived native tree species which can provide seasonal interest and biodiversity value is encouraged. Trees must be of an appropriate scale to the context of the site and not screen views of important town centre buildings. Proposals for tree planting will need to fully consider any potential physical impacts surrounding buildings and on buried archaeology particularly in and around Abbey Place in the vicinity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

It is essential that any trees planted in an urban context are accompanied by an appropriate tree pit design to prevent conflict between roots of proposed new tree planting and underground services, paving areas or surrounding buildings and to ensure the healthy establishment of the tree. Suitable preventative methods such as root barriers and root deflectors should be used to encourage roots to grow down, away from the surface therefore avoiding pavement heave. Tree Pits should be excavated either in trench or square form and provide a sufficient growing medium for the species of tree.

Consideration should be given to the use of a modular rooting system. There are a number of proprietary systems available which are commonly specified to tree pits, particularly in urban areas. A modular rooting system can be used to allow the rooting zone to extend beneath footpaths, potentially providing a substantially larger volume of soil for the trees to encourage healthy growth. All trees are to be underground guyed if appropriate. Adequate and natural irrigation and drainage should be incorporated within the design of tree pits. Future root growth should be accounted for by identifying suitable locations for planting.

Additional town centre planting must be well integrated into the street scene and planned to complement the surrounding uses and built heritage. Isolated elements of planting (e.g. free standing planters, hanging baskets etc.) may inadvertently add to the visual noise which currently detracts from the quality of the surrounding buildings.

**Lighting strategy:**

The outstanding built heritage of the town offers a great opportunity to create a unique town centre setting through architectural and feature lighting which celebrates the best assets of the town in otherwise quieter times of the year and day. This would require a comprehensive town wide lighting strategy focusing on architectural assets of the town, statues, monuments and significant trees. This may include a common approach to lighting key buildings which improves the appearance and interpretation of the town in the evening and could in itself attract additional visitors.



EXAMPLE OF LIGHTING WHICH MAKES THE BEST OF ARCHITURE IN THE EVENING

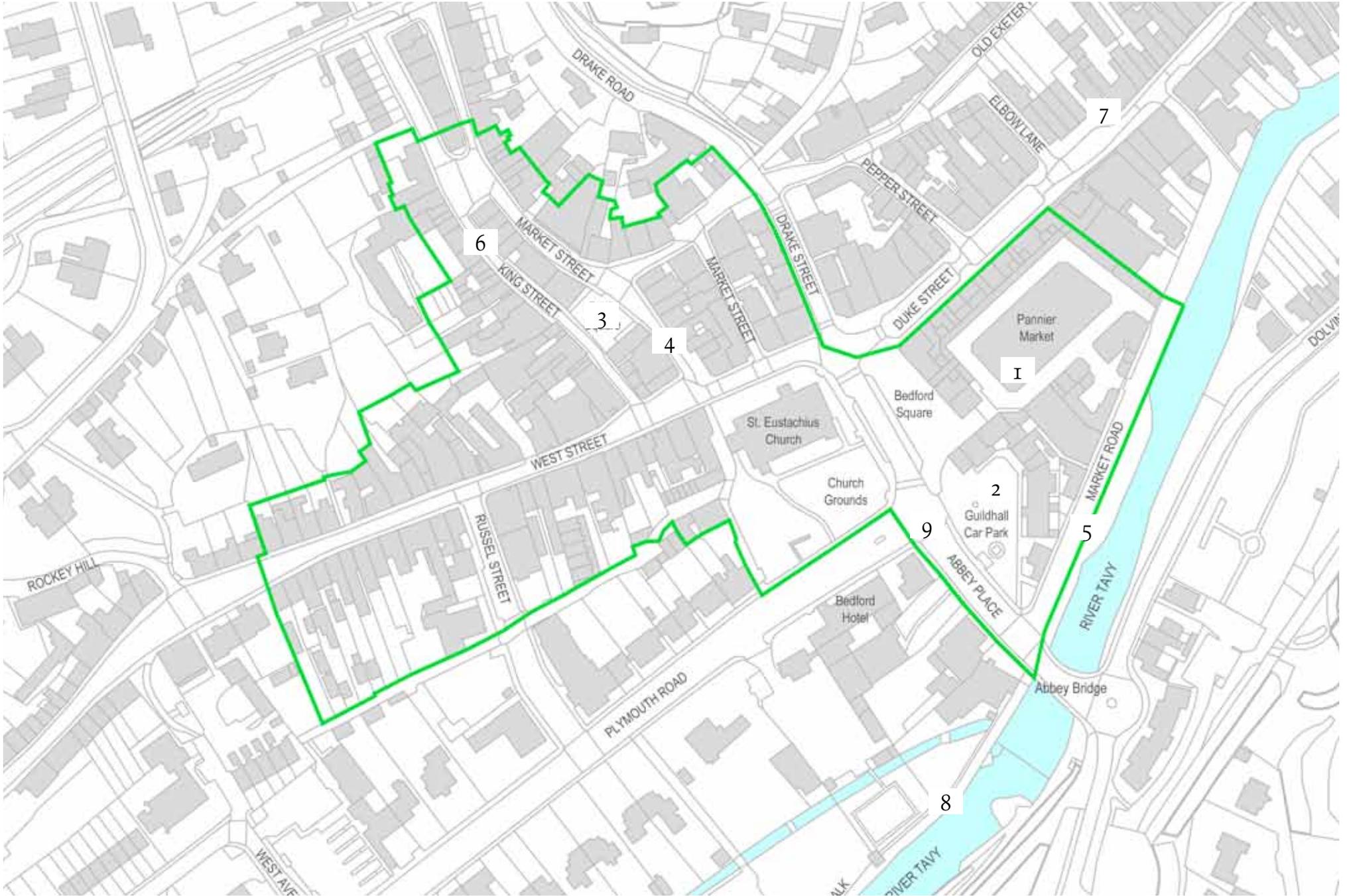


FIGURE 5.1 - PROJECT LOCATION PLAN

## 5.2 PLACE SPECIFIC PROJECTS

A number of place specific projects have been identified to help deliver the vision and address specific issues and opportunities raised through site survey and consultation work. Projects that may be eligible for the THI funding such as Pannier Market, Guildhall car park, Bank Square and Market Street are covered in more detail in section 6 but are summarised here for completeness.

### **1. Pannier Market:**

Support the existing role of the area around the Pannier Market as a bustling, pedestrian dominated environment that supports local businesses. Recent alterations to the management of the area around the Pannier Market as a predominantly pedestrian space with additional market space have proven to be very successful. The amendment to traffic management has made more space for additional market stalls and avoided any potential conflicts between pedestrians and traffic making the area a more pleasant place to spend time offering support to the array of traders in this area. However, the existing area still retains many highways oriented materials and signage which detract from the surrounding buildings and sends the wrong message to pedestrians. Public realm improvements in this area can therefore aim to encourage even greater use of the space by pedestrians.

### **2. Guildhall car park**

Review the town-wide role of Guildhall car park and how interventions in the appearance and the use of Guildhall car park can ensure it best serves the needs of the town while complementing the outstanding buildings which surround it. Interventions should contribute to the beautiful, unique and memorable town centre gateway which is established by the built form in this part of town.

### **3. Bank Square:**

Consider how environmental improvements to Bank Square can improve the perception of one of the most historically significant parts of the town centre and help draw people up Market Street and King Street to support the vitality of this area of town.

### **4. Market Street**

Explore opportunities to improve pedestrian movement between key town centre areas, reduce visual clutter and improve footpath surfaces along this street to address the current mismatch of poor quality surfaces in such a historically significant part of town.

### **5. Market Road:**

Improve pedestrian connectivity across and along Market Road to improve links between the town centre and the river's edge. This may include reconfiguration of parking to allow space for footpaths. Proposals for Market Road should be considered in the context of potential improvements to Butcher's Hall which could provide an extension to the indoor market area and link between the Pannier Market and Market Road. Longer term aspirations may also open up and connect the river's edge with Guildhall car park.

### **6. King Street:**

Improve footpath surfaces along this street to address the current mismatch of poor quality surfaces in such a historically significant part of town.

### **7. Duke Street**

Consider environmental improvements to the incidental seating space to the northern side of Duke Street to provide an attractive and useful resting point along a busy retail street.

### **8. Abbey Walk:**

Encourage use of Abbey walk as a link between the town centre and one of the principle town car parks and the Meadows Park. This improvement is intended to provide a more attractive safe route for pedestrians and remove existing traffic/pedestrian conflicts at the roundabout with Abbey Place and Plymouth Road. Improvements may include improved lighting, signage, resurfacing and new physical connections through the existing wall from the car park to Abbey Walk. There is also an opportunity to reconfigure the junction of Abbey Place and Market Road to remove a large area of redundant road (currently hatched to restrict vehicular movements) and provide a new pedestrian crossing to improve this key connection and encourage this riverside route. These improvements should also be seen as an opportunity to improve connections between the town and the river.

### **9. Abbey Place:**

Improvements to roundabouts and pedestrian crossings along with reducing and minimising street clutter and highways signage along Abbey Place to improve the visual setting of surrounding buildings and spaces and provide improved pedestrian connectivity in the town centre. This, in part, is currently being considered by proposals being prepared by Devon County Council.

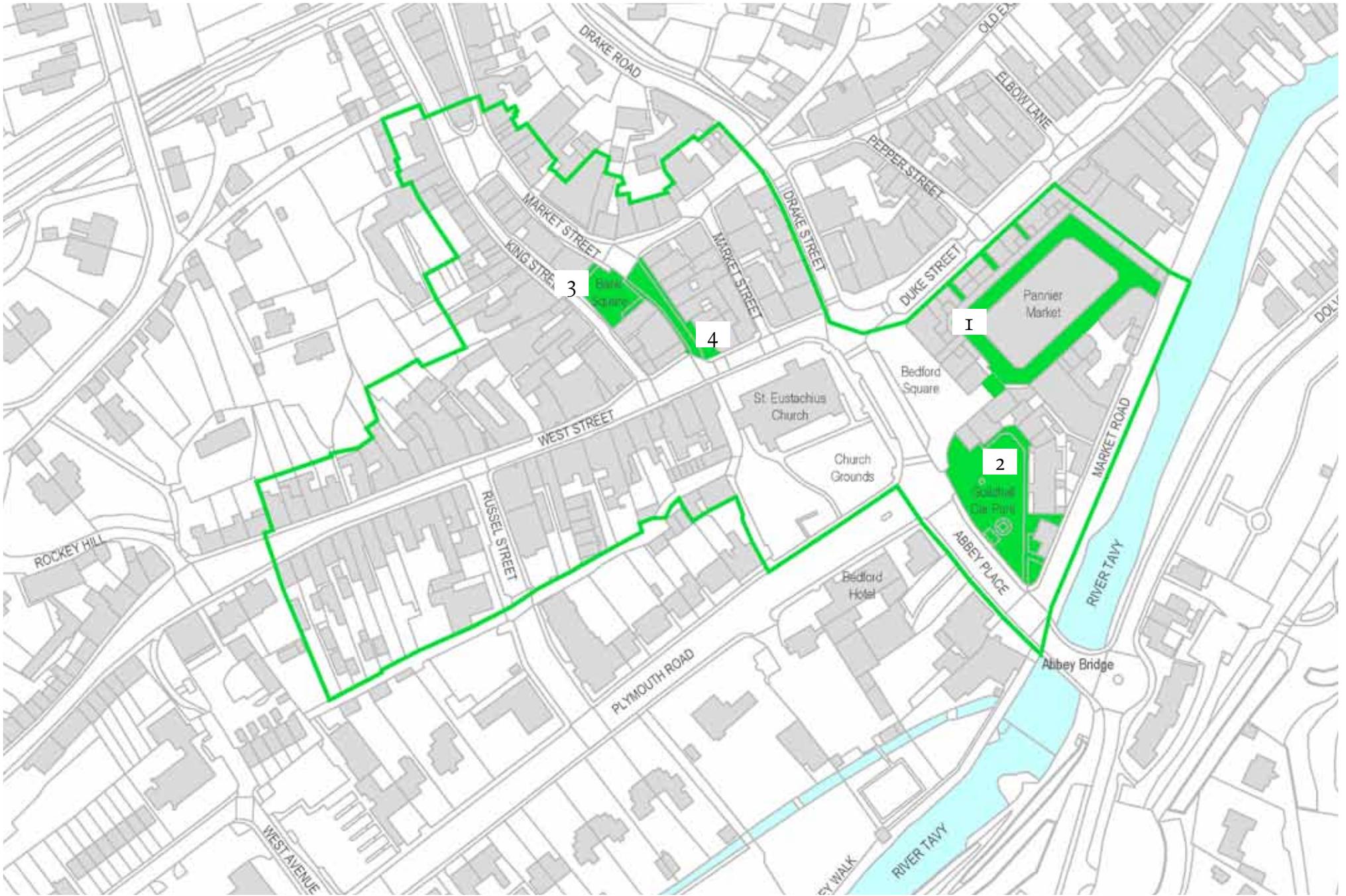


FIGURE 5.2 - PROJECT LOCATION PLAN

# 6.0 PRIORITY PROJECTS

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The following areas were identified in the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative Stage 1 Bid as being the focus of public realm improvements:

1. The areas around the Pannier Market
2. The area in front of the Guildhall (also referred to as Guildhall car park)
3. Bank Square
4. Market Street

The work undertaken in preparing this Public Realm Strategy has reinforced the priority of these spaces, each area is critical in terms of achieving the public realm vision due to:

- Their visual and physical relationship with the most historically and architecturally significant buildings in Tavistock
- Their location; at the heart of the town centre
- The role they play in creating an overall positive identity for Tavistock
- How they are used in the context of the rest of the streets and spaces in Tavistock

As priority spaces, these areas have been analysed in more detail through site survey work and consultation with the local community. Based on this understanding, a number of proposals have been prepared for each of the spaces to address their failings and capitalise on what makes them special. A number of options have been developed to assess the ability of the project areas to deliver the vision and meet the needs of the community. The full range of options explored are described below, section 7 contains a recommendation for preferred options and projects to be developed further.

The purpose of the priority projects is to:

- Support the aspirations of the public realm vision.
- Coordinate improvements to the town centre's existing streets and spaces in accordance with a clear strategy.
- Provide a clear brief to inform detailed design process.
- Provide a basis to cost and coordinate potential sources of funding.

At this stage each of the options are initial design concepts only, they have been prepared to convey the potential look and feel of the environmental improvements proposed. Proposals shown are subject to further testing and more detailed design development.

# 6.1 PANNIER MARKET

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The public realm project in this area should support the existing role of the area around the Pannier Market as a bustling, pedestrian dominated environment that facilitates the market. Recent alterations to the management of the area have restricted vehicular access to loading times only, making more space for additional market stalls. This mitigates potential conflicts between pedestrians and traffic making the area a more pleasant place to spend time and supporting traders in this area. As a consequence of this change the area still retains many redundant highways oriented materials and signage which detract from the surrounding buildings and sends the wrong message to pedestrians. Public realm improvements in this area can therefore aim to encourage even greater use of the space by pedestrians and support local businesses.

The following issues and opportunities were raised during consultation events specific to the area around the Pannier Market:

- Highways oriented materials (principally tarmac), lining and signing create the wrong impression for the area
- Areas around key building entrances should be made more of a feature
- Passageways between Pannier Market and Duke Street can be a little dark and uninviting and need greater prominence
- Maintain the stalls around the perimeter of the market
- Consider the route through “Butchers Hall” leading to Market Road
- Too many types of street furniture, new seating is incongruous with surrounding architecture
- Visual intrusion of unsightly features such as litter bins, commercial bin storage and service areas.



PANNIER MARKET: EXISTING

# PANNIER MARKET

## DESIGN RESPONSE

The design response for the area around the Pannier Market was presented in stages of transformation during consultation (as shown in the images opposite) to ascertain the level of change which was felt appropriate in this area.

1. Remove the white and yellow lines which currently serve as a visual distraction from the quality of the built surroundings and create the perception of a vehicular dominated environment.
2. Replace the white lines which denote key points of access into the Pannier Market with granite setts capable of withstanding occasional traffic over run.
3. Resurface the remaining areas of tarmac with a bonded gravel surface to include a mix of aggregates which complement the colour and texture of the surrounding historic buildings and reinforce the impression that this is a pedestrian not traffic orientated space.

Other design elements common to all options:

- Improve the lighting in the pedestrian passageways between Pannier Market and Duke Street.
- Provide a single type of seating and litter bins to reinforce a unified and coherent identity for the space.



DESIGN RESPONSE: 1



DESIGN RESPONSE: 2



DESIGN RESPONSE: 3

## 6.2 GUILDHALL CAR PARK

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Consider whether the town-wide role, function and appearance of Guildhall car park currently best serves the needs of the town and matches the architectural quality and historic significance of the outstanding buildings which surround it. Any proposed interventions should contribute to the beautiful, unique and memorable town centre gateway which is established by the built form in this part of town.

The following issues and opportunities were raised during consultation events specific to the Guildhall car park:

- Parking has a major negative impact on the setting of buildings, the war memorial and Duke of Bedford statue
- Poor character and quality of materials in the space which are mainly oriented to vehicles rather than pedestrians detract from the quality of the surrounding buildings
- Pedestrian routes are insufficient and obstructed by vehicle movement and parking which is considered to be unsafe
- The number of parking spaces and their arrangement compromises the space available for pedestrians
- Car parking provides a useful resource which is important in supporting the vitality of the Pannier Market; in particular for disabled people.
- There is insufficient space for safe entry to the Guildhall building
- There is an opportunity to review the character and role of planting in the area
- The location of the space at the gateway to the town and beside the river along with the enclosure provided by surrounding buildings provides an opportunity for a remarkable public space which is capable of influencing

- peoples initial impressions of Tavistock
- Continuous building elevations, the statue and war memorial provide the opportunity for feature lighting
- The role of the space is difficult to ascertain with an uncertain end-use of the currently vacant Guildhall buildings
- There are few opportunities to stop and sit within the area and current seating un-attractive and in-appropriately sited facing the road
- There is a poor setting to the war memorial, offering little opportunity for public gathering and events
- The existing conifer trees provide a visual screen to the historic architecture and their character is incongruous with Tavistock generally
- Currently provides 34 parking spaces although a number of these are not compliant with current best practice for safe manoeuvring of vehicles



GUILDHALL CAR PARK: EXISTING

LISTED BUILDINGS

- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Grade II\* Listed Building

DUKE OF BEDFORD STATUE

WAR MEMORIAL



GUILDHALL CAR PARK: EXISTING

# GUILDHALL CAR PARK -OPTION 1

## DESIGN RESPONSE OPTION 1A,B & C (RETAIN PARKING)

Reduce the visual impact of car parking on surrounding buildings by reorganising the parking layout. Position parking bays to create unobstructed pedestrian desire lines and improving visual access of Guildhall from Plymouth Road and Abbey Place.

- Car parking will be removed from the area around the war memorial altogether to improve its setting and allow more space for pedestrians to gather
- Replace areas of tarmac with a bonded aggregate surface using colours and textures which complement historic building materials providing a unified surface which forms a neutral platform to complement and focus attention on the Guildhall
- Remove the highways oriented white and yellow lining as far as possible and consider using granite setts to delineate parking bay edges instead
- Wider pedestrian circulation routes which pick up key desire lines will be provided which will be separate from trafficked areas of the space.
- More space will be provided to key building entrances by positioning parking further away from elevations to allow flexibility in future use of the buildings
- Remove the incongruous trees adjacent to the war memorial to improve the visibility of the river corridor, surrounding buildings and the war memorial itself.
- Consider the inclusion of additional hedge type planting to the boundary of the space to improve the visual association with the river corridor, provide a unified edge to the space and partially screen the cars.
- Larger pedestrian areas will be created and provide opportunities to relocate the Duke of Bedford statue within the space to improve its setting
- Existing seating will be removed from inappropriate locations, reconfigured

and positioned adjacent to the Guildhall building providing a sheltered south facing place to sit and look into the space without obstructing pedestrian movement or limiting the flexibility of the space.

- Unnecessary street furniture removed from the edge of space to provide unobstructed views of historical buildings and more flexible space for the operation of markets and events.
- Provision of feature lighting provided to key buildings focal points and within the public realm (e.g. uplighting to trees) to reinforce the historic identity of Tavistock and the importance of Guildhall on the approach to the town centre.

A number of variations of this option were developed to ensure the number of spaces retained was maximised while still achieving the desired improvements to pedestrian amenity and the safe vehicle manoeuvring around the parking spaces



GUILDHALL CAR PARK: OPTION 1A (RETAIN PARKING - 19 SPACES)



GUILDHALL CAR PARK: OPTION 1A (RETAIN PARKING)



GUILDHALL CAR PARK: OPTION 1B (RETAIN PARKING PARKING - 21 SPACES VARIANT)



GUILDHALL CAR PARK: OPTION 1C (RETAIN PARKING AND STATUE LOCATION - 21 SPACES)

# GUILDHALL CAR PARK - OPTION 2

## DESIGN RESPONSE OPTION 2 (FLEXIBLE HARD SPACE - NO PARKING)

- Car parking removed entirely from the space to improve the setting to the historic buildings and allow space for pedestrians to gather, move freely, and appreciate the surroundings. The space will also be available for hosting large and small scale events at anytime
- Removal of parking and all highways oriented signage and lining will improve the visual setting of the surrounding buildings, statue and the war memorial by minimising visual detractors.
- Replace areas of tarmac with a bonded aggregate surface using colours and textures which complement historic building materials providing a unified surface which forms a neutral platform to complement and focus attention on Guildhall
- More space will be available to key building entrances to allow flexibility in future use of the buildings
- Remove the incongruous trees adjacent to the war memorial to improve the visibility of the river corridor, surrounding buildings and the war memorial itself.
- Existing seating removed from inappropriate locations and reconfigured and positioned adjacent to Guildhall providing a sheltered place to sit and look into the space without obstructing pedestrian movement or limiting the flexibility of the space.
- Unnecessary street furniture removed from the edge of space to provide unobstructed views of historical buildings and more flexible space for the operation of markets and event.
- Provision of feature lighting provided to key buildings focal points and within the public realm (e.g. uplighting to trees) to reinforce the historic identity of

Tavistock and the importance of Guildhall on the approach to the town centre.