

# BUXTON DESIGN & PLACE MAKING STRATEGY

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT TO THE HIGH PEAK LOCAL PLAN DECEMBER 2009



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# FOREWORD

Buxton's history extends to Roman times when the natural warm springs were discovered. Both the Georgians and Victorians had the vision to develop this valuable asset and their legacy is the wonderful townscape we see today.

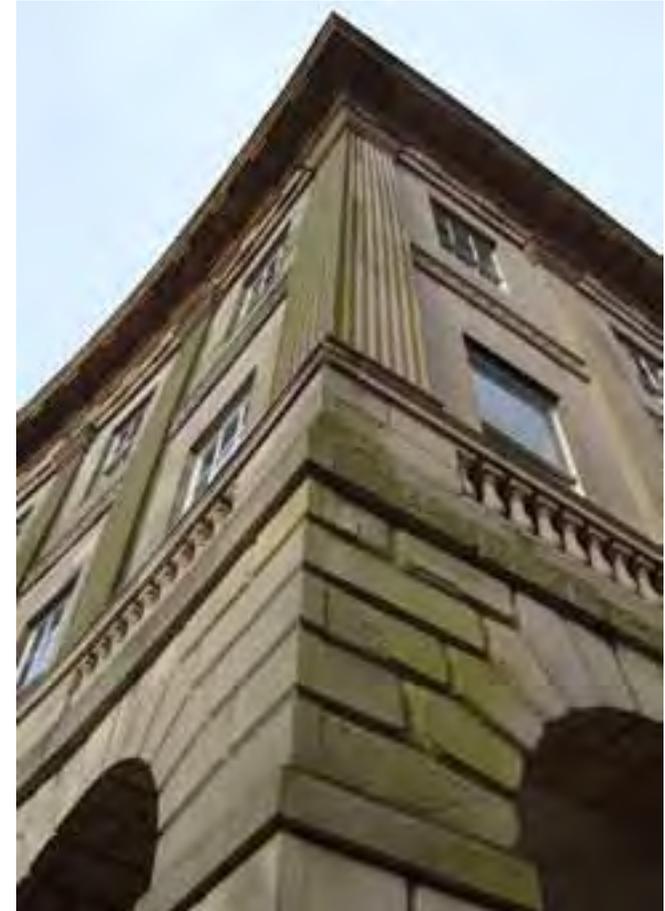
The unique setting of Buxton has led to a strong identification of ownership within the community; a proprietorial regard amongst people for the past and the historical context. This feeling extends beyond those who live in the town all year, to a wider catchment of the regular visitors who come from far and wide to indulge their passions for culture, entertainment or the simpler pleasures of a quiet walk in the Pavilion Gardens. I believe this sense of place and history is vital to the future of our town. Unless we know where we are coming from, how otherwise should we know whence we go?

However, if Buxton town centre is to become more than a fading monument to its past, our challenge is to put old buildings back into new uses and construct new buildings of quality to complement existing ones. Most of all, it means making the town centre an attractive place to live, work, shop and play through an improved environment.

High Peak Borough Council is committed to delivering a sustainable future for Buxton town centre. This Supplementary Planning Document is one of the means of achieving this objective. It sets out a vision for the town centre, recognising that it is a heritage area of outstanding value that needs to look forward if it is to have a long-term and viable future.

The key message contained within this Document is quality – quality of concept, quality of design and quality of implementation. Buxton town centre deserves nothing less.

Councillor Tony Kemp  
Executive Member for Regeneration  
High Peak Borough Council



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 0.1 INTRODUCTION

The Design and Place Making Strategy provides a clear vision for how Buxton's town centre will look as it continues to attract an increasing amount of development and regeneration activity and a set of design principles to guide and manage future changes. It promotes the highest standard of urban design and architecture and is rooted in a careful analysis of the town centre and the characteristics that make it work and make it special.

An innovative workshop-based approach was used to develop the Strategy to ensure that as many interested parties had their say in its development as possible. This engagement with the community was based on an 'enquiry by design' process that effectively brings people together to collaborate on a vision for a place.

This document is aimed at developers, landowners and their advisors in the town centre and clearly sets out what is expected with any planning application. It is also aimed at the community of Buxton and the businesses in the town centre so that they can share the vision.

## 0.2 A PORTRAIT OF BUXTON

### HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

The form and look of the town centre was firmly established by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and much of the town's architectural heritage is Georgian in origin. The most significant change of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the closure of one of the town's two rail stations.

### NATURAL AND BUILT FORM

Significant changes in level across the town centre add to its character, but also create a barrier between a number of key areas. Throughout, grand architectural statements are combined with more modest market-town scale buildings.

### LAND USE

There is a significant mix of different uses in the town centre which add to its character, from shops and businesses to hotels and leisure attractions. The concentration of retail at both Spring Gardens and Higher Buxton adds to the perception of a 'two centre town'.

### CONNECTIONS

Through traffic is a significant issue in the town centre, with a number of key routes meeting at The Quadrant junction. In addition, the location of the rail station on Station Road and most bus stops in Market Place creates two disconnected transport hubs.

### ARRIVAL

There are three main arrival points in the town centre, including Pavilion Gardens, Spring Gardens/Station and Market Place in Higher Buxton. These vary greatly in numbers of car parking spaces and also quality of facilities.

### PUBLIC REALM

The quality of the public realm (streets, squares and parks) generally does not reflect the quality of the architecture. Notable exceptions are Spring Gardens (street), Pavilion Gardens and the Slopes, but mostly elsewhere, standard materials and details are used.

### TOWNSCAPE

Buxton town centre has a strong traditional townscape, with views to many landmark buildings helping people find their way around and well defined fronts, backs and entrances to buildings. Also of significance to the townscape are the large numbers of mature trees.

### RECENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Significant work has taken place in recent years to regenerate historic buildings and parks in the town centre, including Pavilion Gardens, Opera House, Slopes and Devonshire Royal Hospital. These projects have preserved and enhanced Buxton's historic fabric and character and have set a benchmark for future change and regeneration.



### 0.3 ENGLAND'S SPA TOWN

The overall vision is for Buxton to be England's leading spa town at the heart of the Peak District, offering an experience to local people and visitors alike that is consistent with that reputation.

There are eight supporting themes that will underpin this reputation:

- Maintain and enhance the "specialness" of the town
- Attract and serve people from the local community and further away
- Combine deep respect for heritage with best contemporary standards of experience
- Provide an exceptionally pleasant environment to spend leisure time
- Establish a reputation as "England's Festival Town"
- Nurture a "Mosaic" of attractive experiences around the town
- Create a strong hub for the Peak District
- Recognise the importance of water to Buxton

### 0.4 DESIGNS ON BUXTON

Good urban design brings people together and will encourage a vibrant mix of self-supporting uses and activities within the town centre. It will help create a place which is greater than the sum of the individual parts and allow a stronger urban life and culture to evolve out of a collection of buildings and spaces.

Successful streets, spaces, neighbourhoods and cities tend to have characteristics in common and these form the basis of Buxton Town Centre's Urban Design Principles. These eight principles will be used to guide future development in the town centre:

#### **CHARACTER – A SENSE OF PLACE AND HISTORY**

Reinforce the distinct character of Buxton town centre

#### **CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE – DEFINITION OF SPACE**

Reinforce and create town centre streets and spaces that are attractively defined

#### **QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM – SPACES AND ROUTES**

Create town centre spaces that are safe, comfortable, well maintained, welcoming and accessible to everyone

#### **EASE OF MOVEMENT – CONNECTIVITY**

Make the town centre easy to get to and move around in, particularly for pedestrians

#### **LEGIBILITY – EASE OF UNDERSTANDING**

Create a town centre that both residents and visitors can understand and find their way around in

#### **ADAPTABILITY – EASE OF CHANGE**

Create a town centre that can adapt to change over time

#### **DIVERSITY – EASE OF CHOICE**

Create a town centre with variety and choice

#### **SUSTAINABILITY – SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE**

Create a social, economic and environmentally sustainable town centre



## 0.5 THE BUXTON MOSAIC

Buxton has a number of different areas that have a distinctive character, reflected in the townscape, land use and types of businesses that are present. Some of these are more established than others, but they are all distinctive and this distinctiveness needs to be nurtured and reinforced to support the overall vision for Buxton.

Buxton's mosaic is composed of the following areas:

### HIGHER BUXTON

An independent 'village' within the town centre with a diverse and interesting range of businesses including shops, galleries, cafés, bars and restaurants

### SPRING GARDENS

A 'smart high street' area that contains a number of national multiples, as well as local retailers, to serve Buxton and its hinterland

### THE STATION

A 'green gateway' to the town centre, both in terms of landscape and sustainable transport, where change has the potential to create a high quality new piece of town

### THE QUADRANT

A 'cosmopolitan' area with an interesting high quality mix of businesses including independent and branded shops, restaurants and bars

### THE CRESCENT

A 'premium' area at the heart of the town centre focused on the Crescent and new spa, with links to both the University and Palace Hotel

### PAVILION GARDENS

A 'green' leisure and cultural area focused on the Pavilion and the Opera House within an historic park setting

## 0.6 MAKING IT HAPPEN

### LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

To ensure the urban design principles outlined above are implemented across the town centre in each of the character areas identified, a simple three tier graded approach has been adopted to guide future change. These three levels or degrees of intervention determine the extent of development or conservation required to support the overall vision for the town centre:

#### ■ REINVENTION AND RECONFIGURATION

Areas lacking distinctive character or with fundamental issues in terms of urban design in need of most change

#### ■ REPAIR AND RECOVERY

Areas with elements of distinct character and quality, but require 'repair'

#### ■ CONSERVATION

Areas of reasonably intact and robust urban form which must retain their overall historic character

### PLACE MAKING ACTION PLAN

Although many of the key elements of a great urban environment and destination already exist in Buxton, further work is required to connect these elements together. In particular, it is important to create a town centre that is legible, accessible and easy to navigate through a coherent design approach. The action plan focuses on seven areas:

- Approaches
- Gateways
- Arrival
- Signage
- Information
- Trails
- Key Routes

### IMPLEMENTATION

This Supplementary Planning Document has been subject of consultation with interested parties and members of the community before being adopted by the Council. It should be read in conjunction with existing policy documents and further development guidance for specific sites which may be produced in the future.

All planning applications, both full and outline, will be expected to demonstrate that the proposals accord with the design principles outlined in the Strategy. These principles will be equally relevant irrespective of scale or location within the town centre boundary as defined in the Local Plan.

All of the Council's departments will work together to assist in the successful implementation of the vision and design principles. This will involve the production of the Core Strategy and other documents which will form part of the Local Development Framework, the implementation of regeneration and conservation projects, the preparation of development briefs for Council owned land for sale, the control of development through the planning system and the maintenance and improvement of Council owned buildings and public spaces.

In addition, High Peak Borough Council will work with Derbyshire County Council to see that highway works, including the design and construction of new roads or highway improvements, implementation of traffic management schemes and routine maintenance, reflect the Strategy as far as possible. This will be key to raising the quality of the public realm in the town centre.





# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 WHAT IS A DESIGN & PLACE MAKING STRATEGY?

A programme of heritage-led regeneration has been underway in Buxton for a number of years. The town has invested in its historic parks and gardens and has found new uses for a number of its many important historic buildings, including the opening of the University in the former Devonshire Royal Hospital. It is continuing to work towards the reopening of a thermal natural mineral water spa and hotel in the Crescent and adjoining baths building.

As Buxton starts to attract an increasing amount of development and regeneration activity, it is important that a strategy is put into place to guide and manage future change to ensure the essential character of the town centre is protected and enhanced. It is recognised that this is an issue that the public – both residents and visitors – feel very strongly about.

The Design and Place Making Strategy provides a clear vision for how Buxton's town centre will look as it continues to change and a set of design principles to guide and manage future changes. It promotes the highest standard of urban design and architecture and is rooted in a careful analysis of the town centre and the characteristics that make it work and make it special. The Strategy is intended to demonstrate the potential of the place and promote good design, so that our generation can leave a positive mark on the town centre as previous generations have.

## 1.2 ENQUIRY BY DESIGN

An innovative workshop-based approach was used to develop the Strategy to ensure that as many interested parties had their say in its development as possible. This engagement with the community was based on an 'enquiry by design' process that effectively brings people together to collaborate on a vision for a place.

The enquiry by design process was workshop based, where ideas were tested and debated and referred back to attendees for discussion. Members of the community were therefore actively engaged in the development of the Strategy and at every step of the process, the emerging Strategy was presented and the feedback gained used to develop it further. An exhibition of the outline Strategy was held towards the end of the process to gauge wider community opinion via a questionnaire, followed by a final workshop.

Throughout the enquiry by design process, there was much enthusiasm for the historic fabric of Buxton town centre shown and an overwhelmingly strong desire that it must be conserved and enhanced. There was also good support for nurturing and reinforcing a number of distinct areas within the town centre. The most debate from both the workshops and exhibition was over modern design and what may or may not reflect the essential character of Buxton town centre.

Further details of the enquiry by design process undertaken can be found in the separate supporting Community Consultation Report.

## 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Following this introduction, the Design and Place Making Strategy is set out in five sections. Section 2 paints a portrait of Buxton town centre today and provides a valuable background to the Strategy and future change. Section 3 sets out a vision for the town centre with eight supporting themes. Design principles to guide future change in the town centre are established in Section 4. An approach to place making in the town centre is set out in Section 5 and a strategy for implementation is outlined in Section 6.

This document sets out a vision for Buxton town centre and will guide future improvement and development. It should not be read as a fixed masterplan or blueprint. The vision outlined in this Supplementary Planning Document supports existing policies and will be used primarily as a development control tool when considering applications within the town centre as defined in the Local Plan. It would therefore be helpful for designers to use the contents of the Strategy to structure Design and Access Statements submitted with planning applications.

This document is aimed at developers, landowners and their advisors in the town centre and clearly sets out what is expected with any planning application. It is also aimed at the community of Buxton and the businesses in the town centre so that they can share the vision. All of these groups were involved in the development of the Strategy and it draws heavily on their input.





Palace Hotel

Midland Station

DEVONSHIRE HOSPITAL

St. John's Ch.

THE TERRACE

The Pavilion

BUXTON GARDENS

BUXTON 1897

418  
178-431

PARK ROAD

STATION ROAD

Macclesfield L.L.  
Leak 72  
576

The Square

Crown Hotel

Band Stand 6-597

Bowling Green

Fish Pond

Town Hall

Tennis Court

Waterfall

Fish Pond

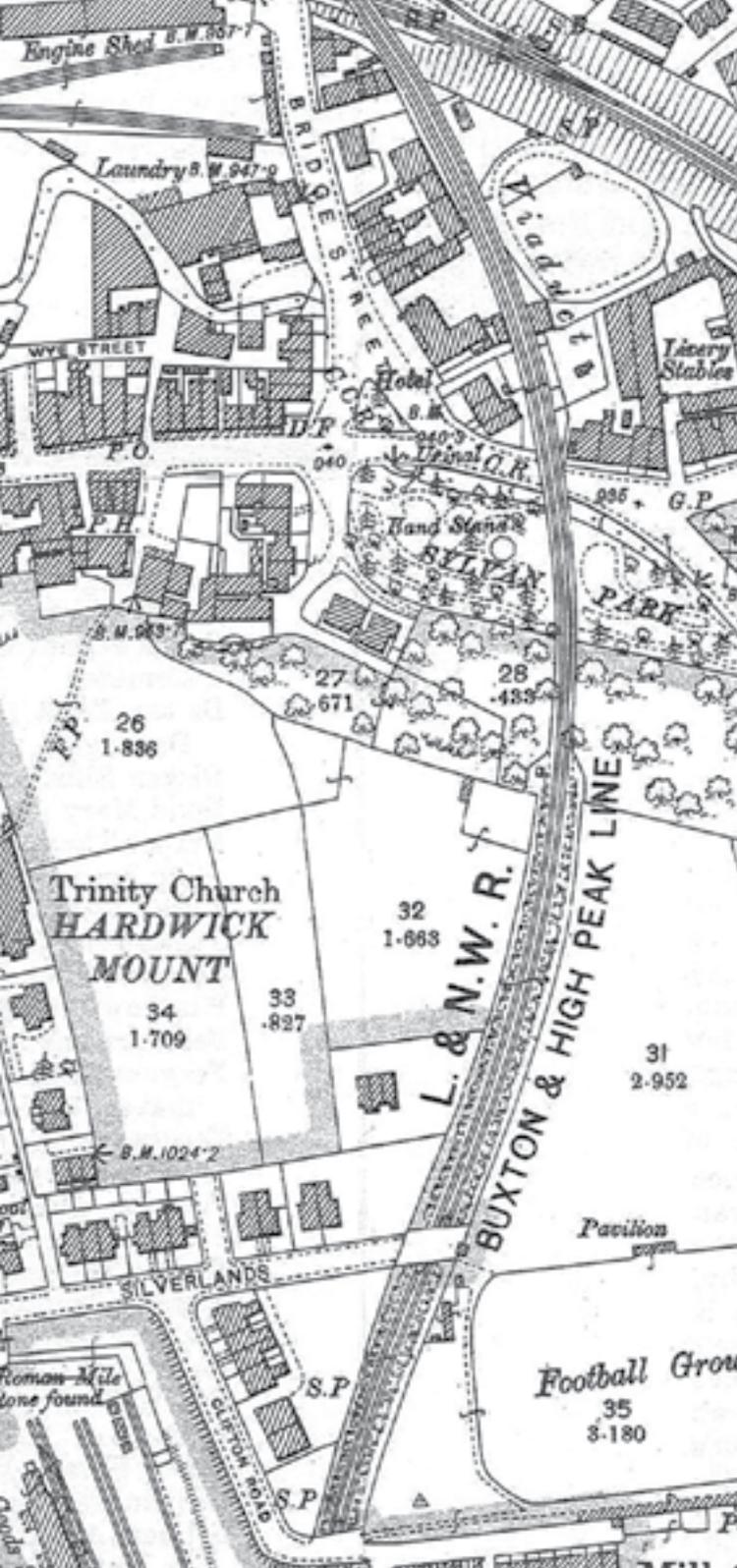
MARKET PLACE

Tennis Court

Waterfall

HARDWICK SQUARE SOUTH

Life Hotel 25  
311-103



## 2.0 A PORTRAIT OF BUXTON

### 2.1 THE TOWN CENTRE TODAY

It is important that any proposals for change in Buxton town centre are based on a thorough understanding of the place and its context. This gives proposals credibility and ensures that whatever results evolves from the place and is not an arbitrary imposed solution. Although fortunately limited, the consequences of previous insensitive intervention can be seen today in a number of areas and these detract from the overall character of the town centre and will be costly to correct.

All future changes need to build on the assets of the town centre in a positive way and must be based on sound principles. This does not mean however that the result cannot be bold and imaginative. With no single architectural style, the town centre is very robust and often dramatic in form, and there is no reason why any new development cannot be given its own identity. However, it must be recognised there are common elements, such as the use of local stone or building lines, which help create a coherent townscape and must be respected.

This section provides a background from which future proposals for change in the town centre should be developed. The town centre boundary as shown on the following plans is that defined in the Local Plan. However, the Strategy has considered areas beyond this boundary, particularly in terms of approaches, to establish the context and character of the town centre.

Further detailed information on the history and character of the town centre can be found in the Buxton Conservation Areas Character Appraisal, April 2007.



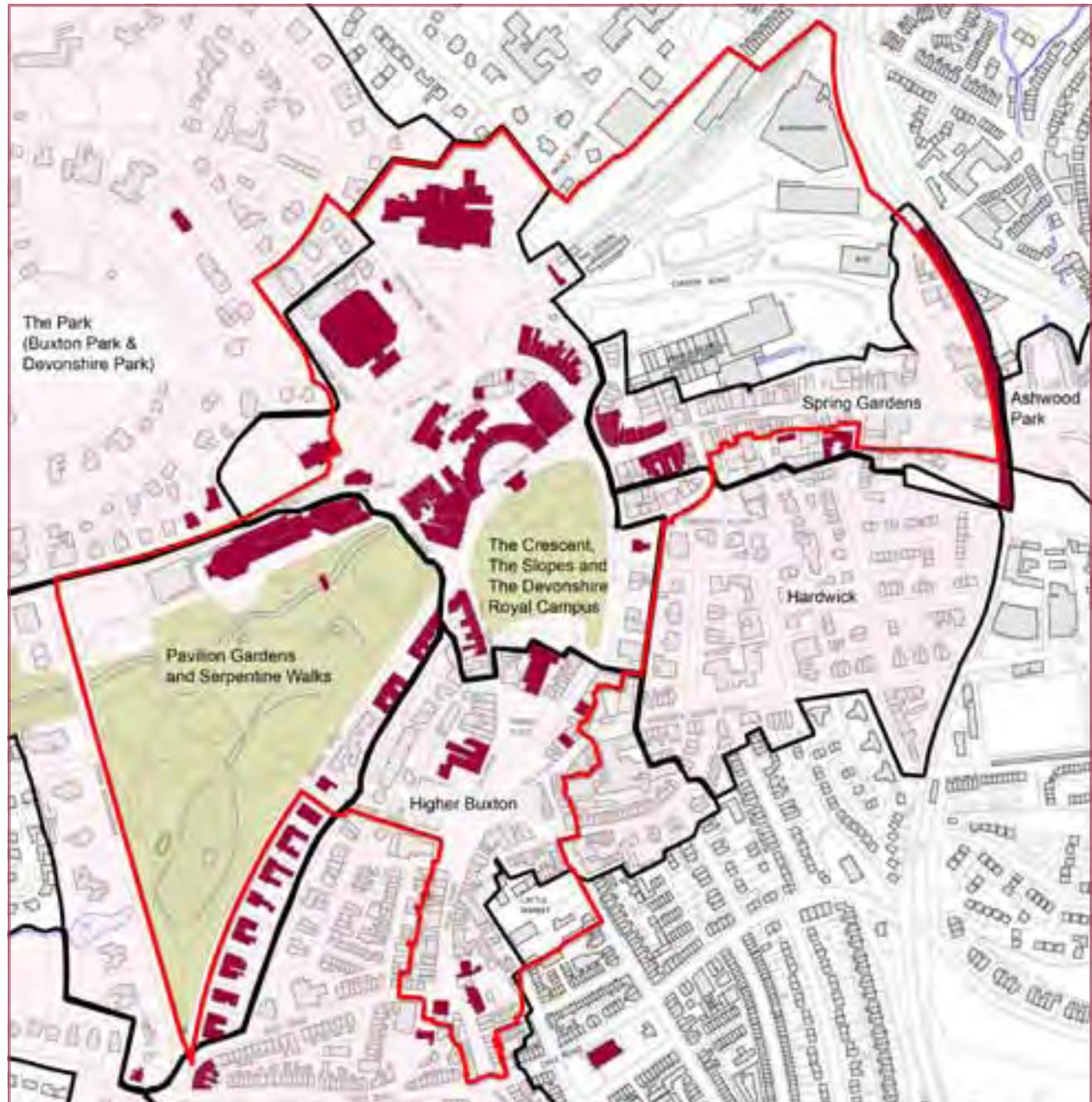


## 2.2 HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

Buxton's water has featured throughout the town's history which began in Roman times. Known as Aqua Arnemetiae, it was an important settlement, being one of only two sets of warm springs substantially developed by the Romans, the other at Bath. Although it declined after the departure of the Romans, it served as a medieval place of pilgrimage due to the thermal springs. However, it was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century the settlement was developed as a fashionable spa town and its biggest expansion coincided with the arrival of the railways in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

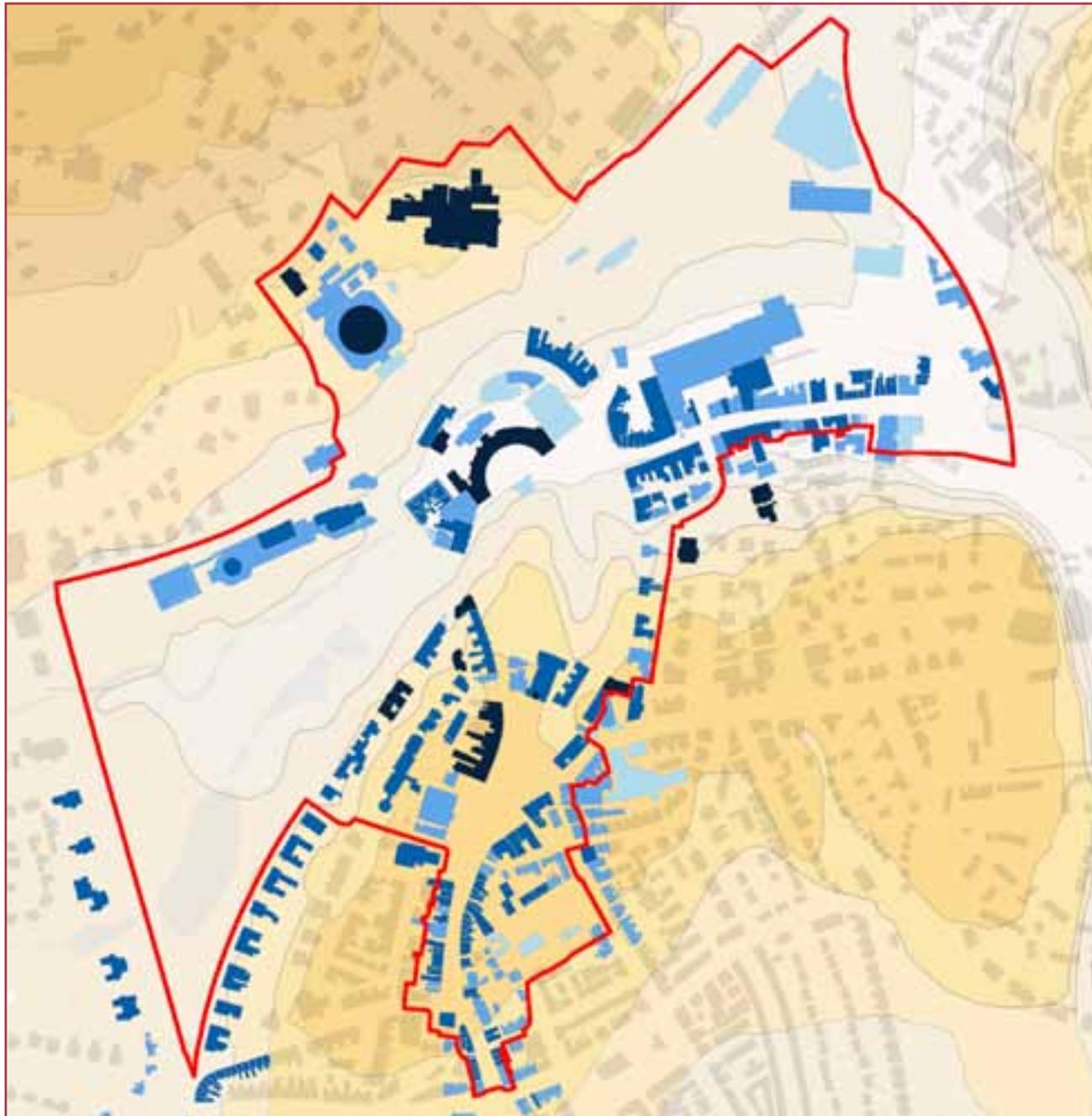
The form and look of the town centre was therefore firmly established by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and much of the town's architectural heritage is Georgian and Victorian in origin. The most significant change of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the closure of one of the town's two rail stations, the setting out of Station Road and the development of the Spring Gardens Shopping Centre.

- LISTED BUILDINGS
- HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS
- CONSERVATION AREA/SUB AREAS
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)



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### 2.3 NATURAL AND BUILT FORM

Changes in level across the town centre are significant (up to 20m) which adds to its character, but also creates a barrier between a number of key areas (Spring Gardens and Higher Buxton in particular). These level changes create interesting views and vistas and also emphasise key landmark buildings such as the Town Hall.

The town centre also has a unique skyline and roofscape that combines grand architectural statements on one hand, with more modest, market-town scale buildings on the other. Domes, spires and cupolas feature prominently and a varied roofscape is created as buildings are traditionally stepped in response to changes in level. Overall, most buildings are between 2 and 3 storeys and generally only feature buildings and key landmarks exceed this height.

- 1-1.5 STOREY BUILDING
- 2-2.5 STOREY BUILDING
- 3-3.5 STOREY BUILDING
- 4+ STOREY BUILDING
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)



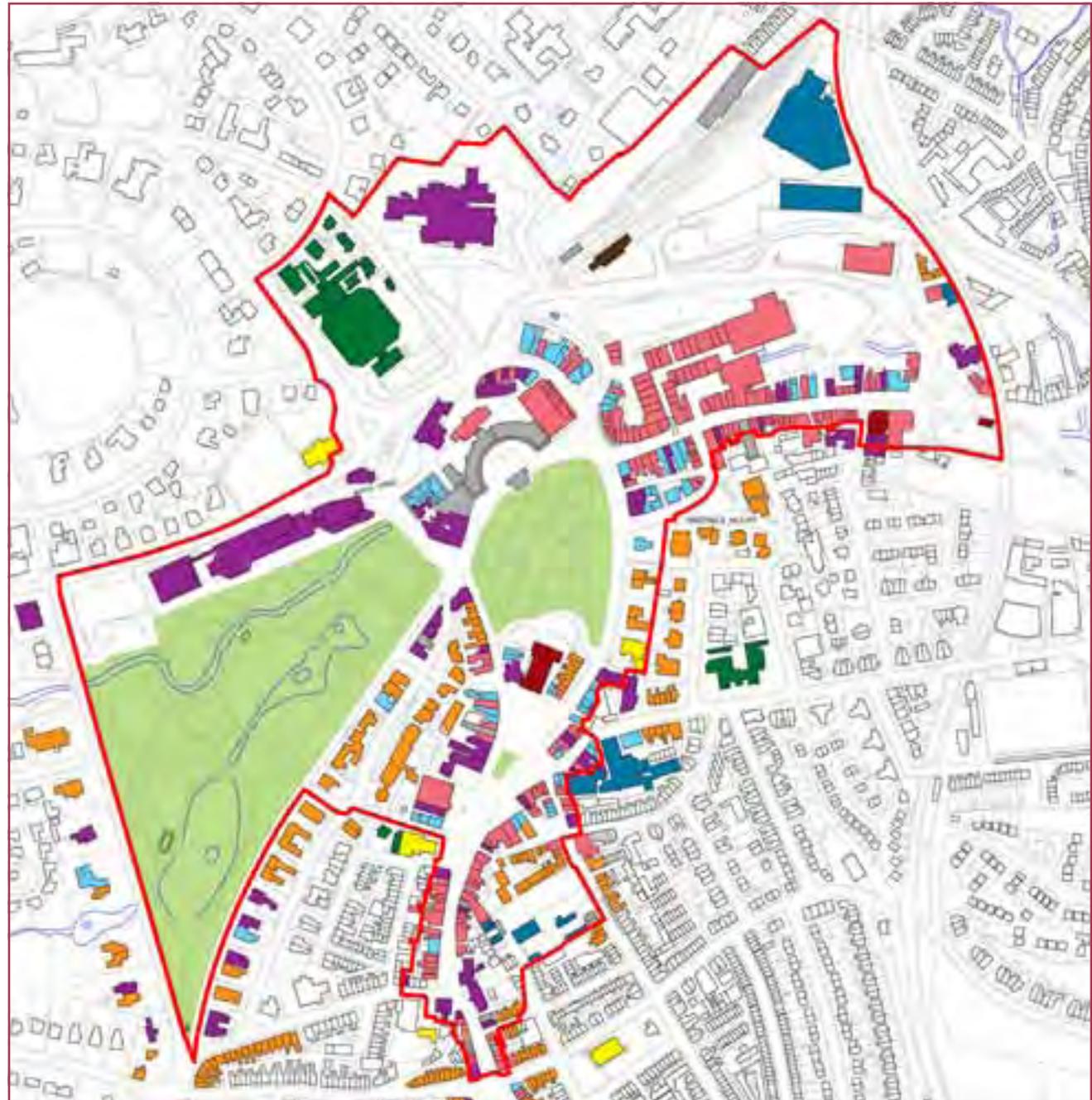


## 2.4 LAND USE

There is a significant mix of different uses in the town centre which add to its character, from shops and businesses to hotels and leisure attractions. The concentration of retail at both Spring Gardens and Higher Buxton adds to the perception of a 'two centre town'. Major public open spaces at Pavilion Gardens and the Slopes with significant tree cover help create a green town centre.

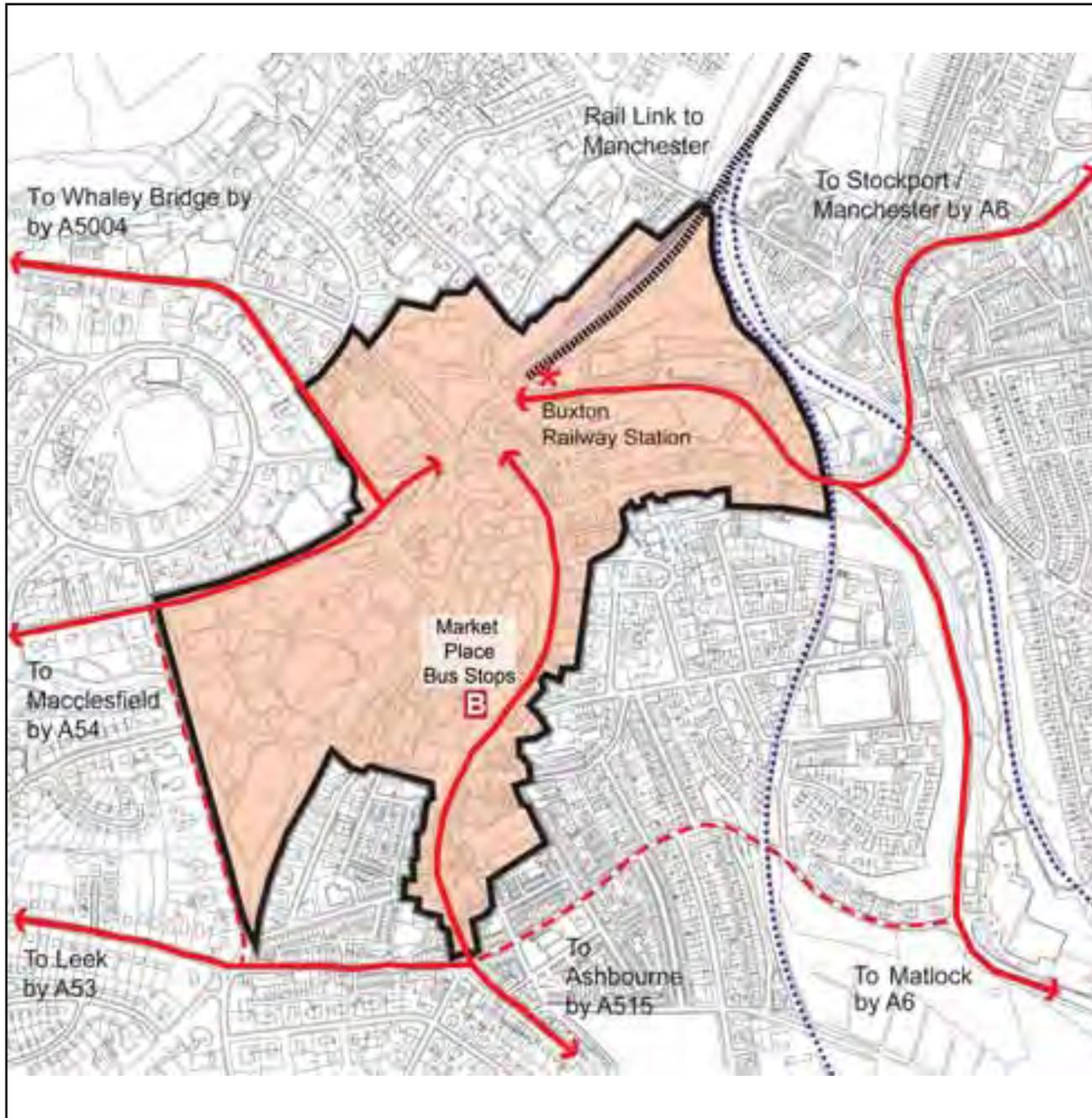
There is also a good level of residential accommodation in the town centre, as well as educational uses with the recent development of the university. Unlike other town centres solely focussed on retail, both these uses, in addition to hotels and leisure attractions, ensure that there are people in the centre when most businesses close in the evening. However, there is an issue with vacant upper floors in some areas, particularly above shops, where separate means of access have not traditionally been provided.

-  PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
-  RELIGIOUS
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL OFFICE
-  RETAIL
-  LEISURE/ HOTEL/ RESTAURANT
-  CIVIC/ COMMUNITY
-  EDUCATION
-  WORKS/ STORAGE
-  VACANT
-  TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)



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### 2.5 CONNECTIONS

Despite the A6 essentially by-passing the town centre, through traffic is clearly an issue, particularly on Station Road, with a number of key routes meeting at The Quadrant junction, as well as congestion on Fairfield Road approaching the town centre. In addition, the location of the rail station behind Spring Gardens and most bus stops in Market Place creates two separate and disconnected transport hubs.

Although Buxton is relatively well connected to the Manchester area by both road and rail, routes in other directions are not as good. It is unlikely that either a road by-pass(es), nor a rail connection to the south, will be feasible, even in the long term, to relieve through traffic. However, it may be possible to develop park and ride facilities on entry to the town to reduce the impact of private vehicles accessing the town centre, even only at peak times of the year.

-  BUXTON RAILWAY STATION
-  RAIL (PASSENGER)
-  KEY ROAD LINKS
-  RAIL (FREIGHT ONLY)
-  TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)
-  MAIN BUS STOPS



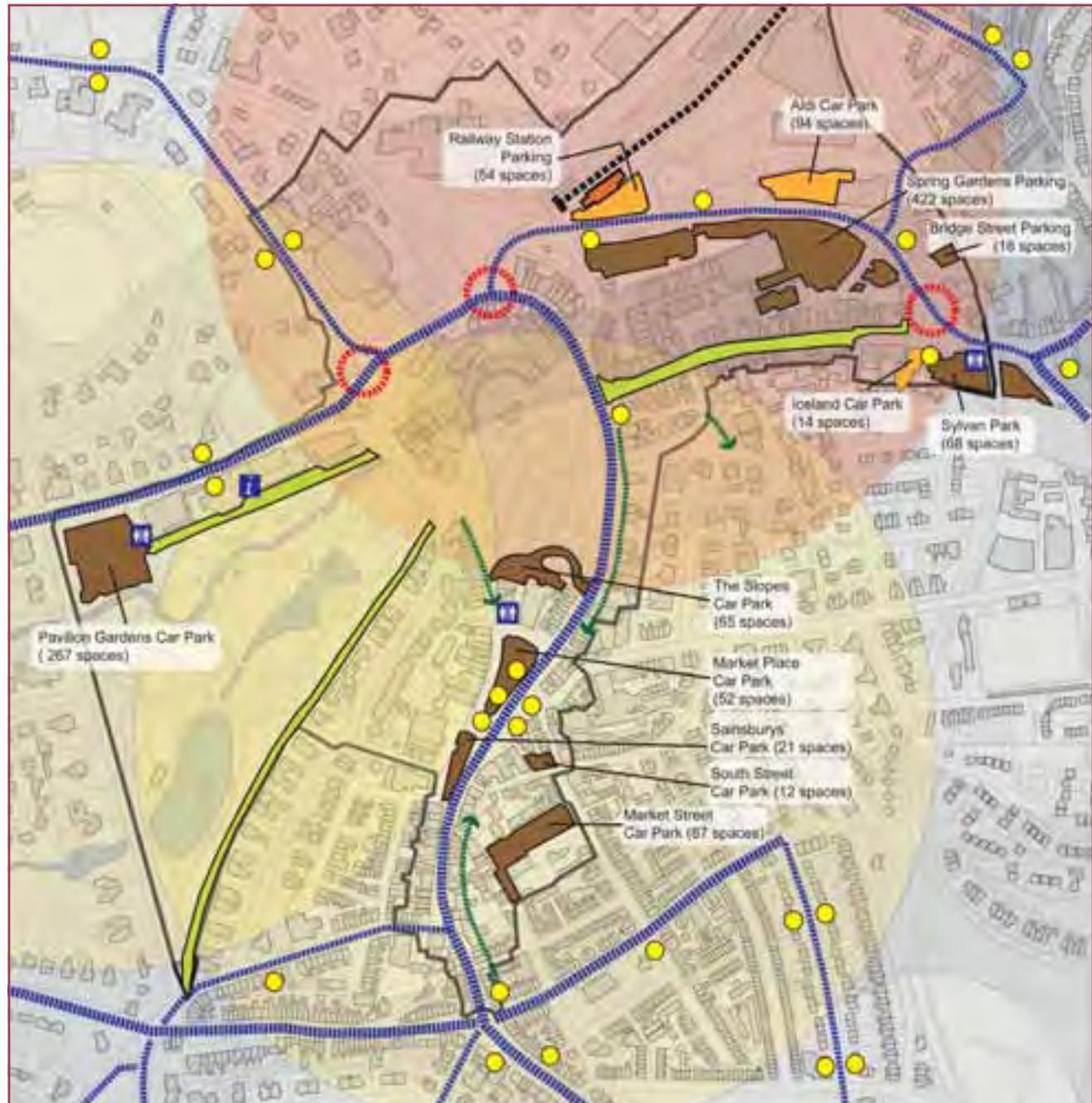


## 2.6 ARRIVAL

There are three main arrival points in the town centre, including Pavilion Gardens, Spring Gardens/Station and Market Place in Higher Buxton. These vary greatly in numbers of car parking spaces and also quality of facilities available, such as toilets and information. There are also a number of other smaller car parks, plus on-street parking throughout the town centre. Although much of the town centre is within an easy walking distance of these arrival points, a number of difficult pedestrian crossings points and the natural topography reduce accessibility.

Approaches to the town centre also vary in terms of quality. Poorly maintained buildings and public realm on key approaches, particularly on Fairfield Road and London Road, create a poor first impression for visitors, regardless of what they will find upon arrival.

-  TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)
-  RAILWAY STATION
-  PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY ROUTE
-  BUS ROUTES
-  BUS STOPS
-  COUNCIL CAR PARK
-  PRIVATE CAR PARK
-  5 MINUTE WALK FROM KEY CAR PARKS
-  5 MINUTE WALK FROM RAILWAY STATION
-  DIFFICULT PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
-  STEEP CLIMB/ MOVEMENT BARRIER
-  TOURIST INFORMATION
-  PUBLIC TOILETS



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### 2.7 PUBLIC REALM

The quality of the public realm (streets, squares and open space) generally does not reflect the quality of the architectural heritage of Buxton town centre. Notable exceptions are Spring Gardens (street), Pavilion Gardens and the Slopes, but mostly elsewhere, standard materials and details are used. In particular, public realm associated with the University (former Devonshire Royal Hospital) and the Crescent does not reflect or support either the quality of the architecture or importance as landmarks in the town centre. Similarly, the public realm associated with the rail station does not currently reflect its importance as a gateway to the town centre.

Traditional active ground floor frontage is present in most key town centre streets, adding to the character of the place and creating a sense of vitality. However, a number of areas lack active frontage, most notably Station Road, creating a 'dead' street which deters pedestrian activity.

- HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM
- ABOVE STANDARD PUBLIC REALM
- STANDARD QUALITY PUBLIC REALM
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGE
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)



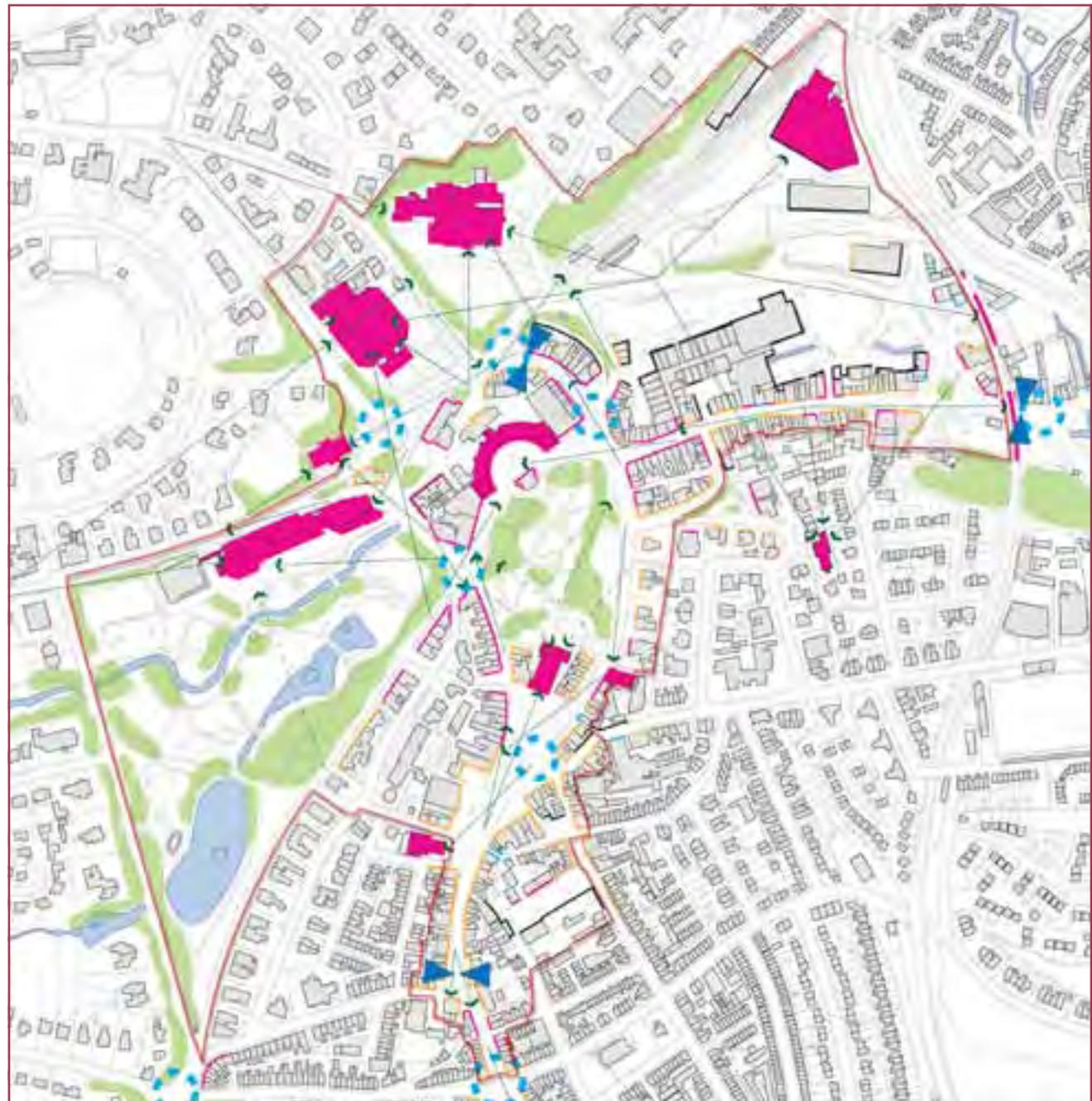


## 2.8 TOWNSCAPE

Buxton town centre has a strong traditional townscape with views to many landmark buildings helping people find their way around. Well defined fronts, backs and entrances to buildings reinforce this traditional townscape, although this does break down in the Station Road area. A key gateway to the town centre from the A6 is created by the rail viaduct.

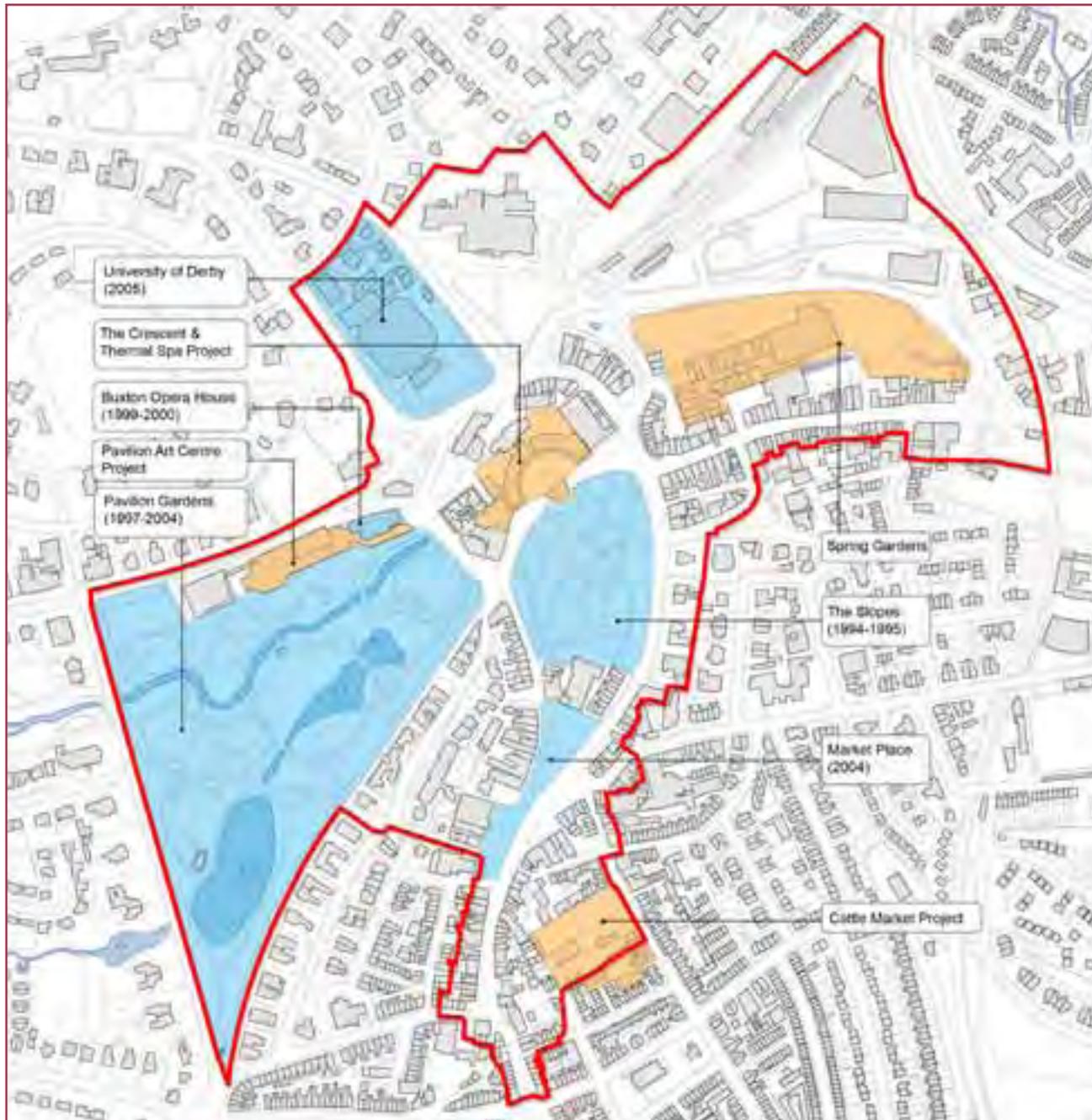
Also of significance to the townscape are the large numbers of mature trees in the town centre. These create a green character over much of the town centre (in contrast to some of the surrounding countryside) and reinforce a good level of enclosure on many key routes. These trees also have a number of key benefits in terms of sustainability and will become more important as the climate changes.

-  STRONG/ QUALITY FRONTAGE
-  NEUTRAL FRONTAGE
-  WEAK FRONTAGE
-  EXPOSED BACK/ BLANK
-  SIGNIFICANT TREE GROUP
-  LANDMARK BUILDING
-  VIEW
-  GATEWAY
-  NODE
-  TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)



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### 2.9 RECENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Significant work has taken place in recent years to regenerate historic buildings and parks in the town centre, including Pavilion Gardens, Opera House, Slopes and Devonshire Royal Hospital. These projects have preserved and enhanced Buxton's historic fabric and character and have set a benchmark for future change and regeneration.

The work to regenerate the town centre will continue with further refurbishments, including the reopening of a thermal natural mineral water spa and hotel in the Crescent and adjoining baths, in addition to new development opportunities arising such as at the cattle market. It will be important that these and other projects continue to reinforce the character of the town centre.

- RECENT IMPROVEMENT/ DEVELOPMENT
- FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
- TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY (LOCAL PLAN)







# 3.0

## ENGLAND'S SPA TOWN

### 3.1 AN EXCEPTIONAL PLACE

Buxton has assets that place it in a select group of towns in the United Kingdom that have the capacity to be thought of as 'special' and attract visitors from afar, including from abroad, in addition to having a considerably greater appeal as a shopping and leisure destination to people living in its vicinity than is typical of a town of its size. The primary assets that make it special are its thermal spring, its architectural heritage, its location at the heart of a national park, the extent and reputation of its cultural offer and the recent development of a university campus.

Currently struggling in many areas, the town centre will be transformed when the spa is reopened and hotels and shops are rejuvenated. This will immediately re-launch Buxton into a unique class of similar small towns and, arguably, will be one of the few tourism assets in the region that is of truly world class calibre and capable of attracting a high level of spend from outside of the region.

The presence of additional visitors will provide Buxton with the opportunity to extend the quality, quantity and diversity of shopping and leisure on offer and encourage further investment that will make the Buxton an exceptionally attractive place to live and work in. Making the most of this opportunity needs an understanding and recognition that Buxton is 'special' and that things that take place there should, as far as possible, also be special. Buxton is one of the rare places which deserves, and can make much of, aspiration that is higher than normal.

The phrase 'spa town', which has been historically associated with Buxton, has positive connotations and implies a certain quality. Successful spa towns generally share common elements, some of which are present in Buxton town centre, others will be developed over time. These elements include pristine streets and gardens, a respect for heritage mixed with modern standards, pedestrian friendly streets and spaces, a quality and distinctive retail offer, a good selection of restaurants and bars with places to eat and drink outdoors, a vibrant cultural and leisure offer and attractive arrival points.



### 3.2 THE VISION

The overall vision is for Buxton to be England's leading spa town at the heart of the Peak District, offering an experience to local people and visitors alike that is consistent with that reputation.

### 3.3 SUPPORTING THEMES

There are eight supporting values or themes that underpin the vision:

- 1. Maintain and enhance the 'specialness' of the town.** Buxton is one of the most distinctive, unique and 'special' small towns in the UK and will be treasured as such. While recognising that development in the town centre will only happen if there is a return for investors and that there must be change if Buxton is to be regenerated, changes must have respect for and contribute to the special character of the town centre. Quality and imagination must also apply to the care and development of the public realm. This is the best way to optimise the quality of life and long term prosperity of current and future residents of Buxton.
- 2. Attract and serve people from the local community and further away.** The town centre will provide a range of services that are valued by people who live, work and study in the town, who live within easy reach of it and who live further a field. The range of services will be greater than expected and of a higher quality than comparable towns of Buxton's size owing to its status as a leading spa town at the heart of the Peak District.



- 3. Combine deep respect for heritage with best contemporary standards of experience.** The heritage of Buxton town centre means much to the local community and has an appeal to visitors that is impossible for more modern places to match. Equally, people want contemporary standards when shopping and spending leisure time or living and working. The two need to be mixed to produce an experience that is distinctively Buxton, but meets people's standard expectations.
- 4. Provide an exceptionally pleasant environment to spend leisure time.** All spa towns must be exceptionally attractive places to spend leisure time, including recreational shopping, to be successful. This makes it attractive to people who live, work and study there and to visitors. The town centre will be easy to get to, attractive and welcoming on arrival, well maintained and clean, and pedestrian friendly.
- 5. Establish a reputation as 'England's Festival Town'.** Buxton will build on the reputation of its festivals to establish itself as the foremost festival town in the country. With the rare advantage of a successful Opera House, Buxton town centre is already the cultural capital of the Peak District and this will be developed in a sustainable way by expanding further into other areas of the arts and crafts.



6. **Nurture a 'Mosaic' of attractive experiences around the town.** Different parts of the town centre serve different purposes, have different characteristics and history. A Mosaic of well connected areas, each with different sorts of experiences, will be developed in line with the overall vision for the town centre. This will reinforce the diversity of the town centre and make it more interesting and attractive to those visit it both locally and from further a field.

7. **Create a strong hub for the Peak District.** The vision for Buxton reflects the values of the Peak District National Park and will add to the quality of the experience offered by the Park. Buxton is ideally placed to serve visitors to the Park and those who live and work in it, and will be the centre of its shopping and cultural offer.

8. **Recognise the importance of water to Buxton.** Buxton is famous for its water and that will be reflected in the design and development of the town centre. Whether it is St Ann's Well, where the thermal water can be taken on the street, or the River Wye which flows along the Serpentine Walk before passing through the centre, water is already an important feature of the town centre. Additional water features, particularly those that manage storm water run off, could be developed to add to the specialness of the town centre.





# 4.0

## DESIGNS ON BUXTON

### 4.1 THE VALUE OF GOOD DESIGN

Urban design is not just about the design of buildings. It is also the complex inter-relationship between different buildings and the relationship between buildings and streets, squares, parks and other spaces that make up the public realm. It is also concerned with the nature and quality of the public realm itself.

Good urban design brings people together and will encourage a vibrant mix of self-supporting uses and activities within the town centre. It will help create a place which is greater than the sum of the individual parts and allow a stronger urban life and culture to evolve out of a collection of buildings and spaces.

The purpose of this section is to support the regeneration of Buxton town centre by providing guiding principles for good urban design that all those responsible for its physical improvement can sign up to.

Successful streets, spaces, neighbourhoods and cities tend to have characteristics in common and these form the basis of Buxton Town Centre's Urban Design Principles. These eight principles will be used to guide future development in the town centre.

#### **CHARACTER**

Reinforce the distinct identity of the town centre

#### **CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE**

Create streets and public spaces that are coherently and attractively defined

#### **A QUALITY PUBLIC REALM**

Create public spaces that are safe, comfortable, well maintained, welcoming and accessible to everyone

#### **EASE OF MOVEMENT**

Make the town centre easy to get to and move around in, particularly for pedestrians

#### **LEGIBILITY**

Create a town centre that both residents and visitors can understand and find their way around

#### **ADAPTABILITY**

Create a town centre that can adapt to change

#### **DIVERSITY**

Create a town centre with variety and choice

#### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Create a social, economic and environmentally sustainable town centre for the future



## 4.2 CHARACTER

The appearance of the built environment defines an area's identity and character and creates a sense of place. Most areas of the town centre have a well-established character that needs to be protected and enhanced.

No site is a blank slate. It will have shape and there will be adjacent development and a history which make it distinctive. This context should be established for each site and responded to in order to build something that is recognisable and special to Buxton town centre. Appropriate high quality contemporary design that has evolved from its context is encouraged in many areas.

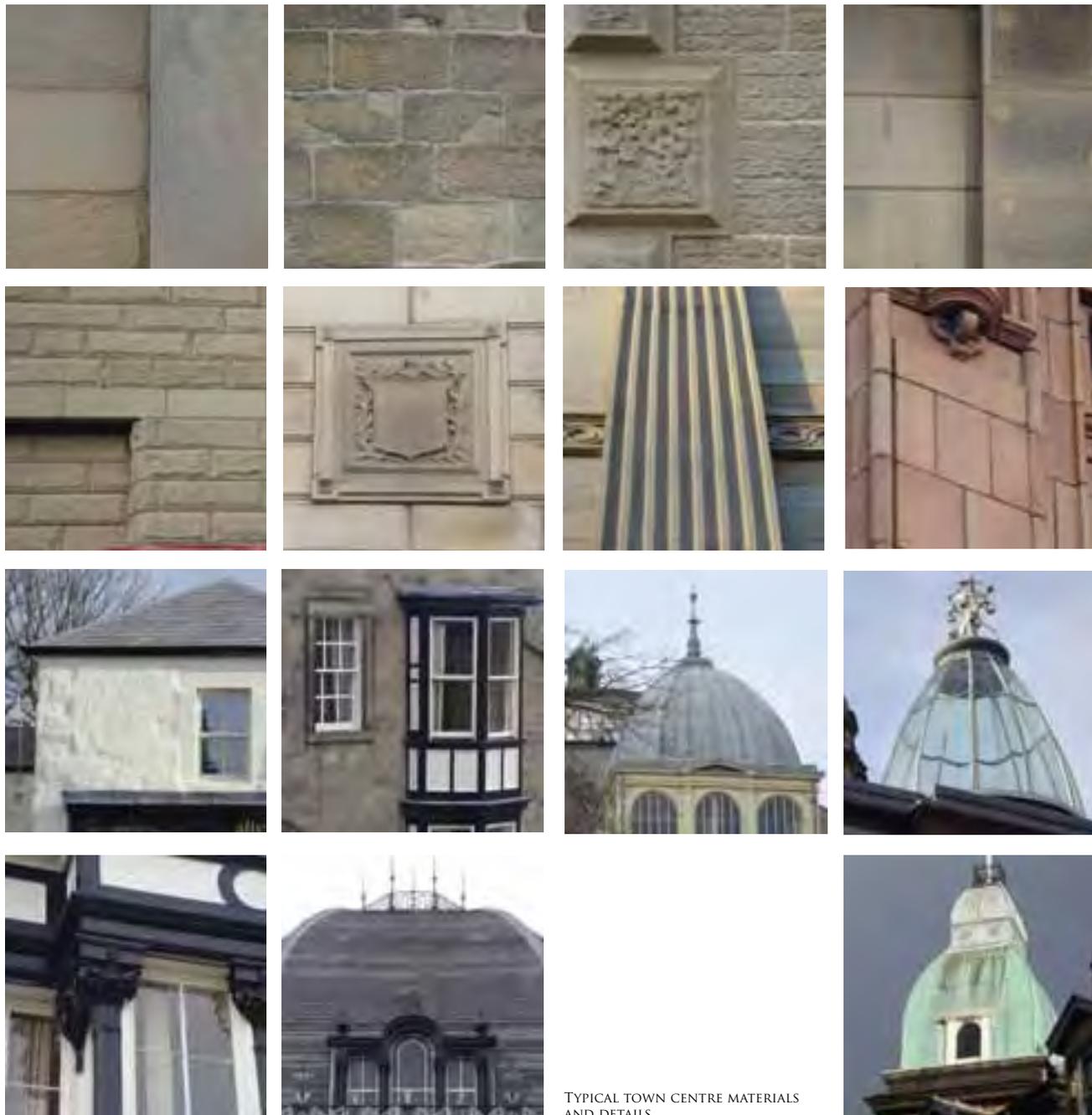
Places that are distinctive are memorable and popular. A common element within an area will distinguish it from adjoining areas and create a sense of place. The use of local natural stone is one such example in Buxton town centre.

### CHARACTER AREAS

Six distinctive character areas have been identified in the town centre (see Section 5) and these must be recognised and enhanced through any new development or improvement.

Local positive characteristics, such as a building line, should be reinforced with all new development. However, innovative design that responds to its context in layout and detail is encouraged as long as it reinforces the overall character of the area.

Where characteristics of an area are poor, they should not be used as a precedent. Poor characteristics will include buildings that back onto the street for example.



TYPICAL TOWN CENTRE MATERIALS AND DETAILS





SAMPLE TOWN CENTRE COLOUR PALETTE  
FROM PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY

#### ANCHORS TO THE PAST

Buxton town centre has a rich Georgian and Victorian architectural heritage. It is fundamental to expressing the character of the town centre that any building or structure that contributes rather than detracts from either the continuity of the built fabric, local distinctiveness, historic interest or townscape merit is retained. Distinctive buildings should not be demolished unless there is a compelling case to do so and definite proposals to replace with them with development that will substantially improve the area.

It should be remembered that a new development could be part of the town centre's urban fabric for many decades or longer. It is therefore vital to make sure it is not only appropriate for its context, but that it actively enhances its surroundings.

#### STYLE, SCALE AND CONTEXT

'Anywhere' type development and standard designs duplicated and brought in from elsewhere erode the local sense of place. The design of buildings and spaces should respond to both their context and the character of the town centre. However, poor imitations or inappropriate pastiche designs must be avoided as this can weaken the character of a place more than anything. Responding appropriately to scale, massing, proportion and the use of local materials and colours are the primary means of reinforcing an area's character, not the imitation of past styles to 'fit in'. However, traditional architecture may be appropriate in the right context if it can be justified, and if so, it is essential that traditional and historically correct proportions, materials, details and construction methods are employed to ensure quality and response to context.



Overall, the town centre should be visually interesting if people are to be attracted to it and enjoy being there. Variety in architectural style can contribute to an area's identity and this is characteristic of the town centre. Responding to local context should therefore not restrict innovative contemporary design, particularly where change is needed. "Respecting the best of the past provides a powerful justification for gracing our surroundings with the very best of the new" (English Heritage, Power of Place, 2000).

#### VISUAL CHARACTER

Landmarks and vistas create the kind of interest that helps enliven and define areas of the town centre. New development should be designed and planned to make the most of vistas along streets and the town centre as a whole. Existing important and valuable landmarks and views should be protected and enhanced.

One distinctive characteristic of the town centre is an interesting and varied roofscape. The variation between individual buildings is a result of differences in floor to ceiling heights, features such as cupolas on key or landmark buildings and the stepping of buildings or terraces on slopes. This traditional variation in roofscape will be encouraged with all new development.

There are few tall buildings in Buxton which has buildings such as the Town Hall, Trinity Church and the dome of the University (formally the Devonshire Royal Hospital) to remain dominate features of the skyline over time. Proposals for new tall buildings over 4 storeys, or taller than existing key landmarks, will need to be justified and the impact fully understood on the skyline and local context. In addition, with the natural topography of the town centre, new development, even low, located at a higher level could have a significant visual impact. All proposals will be therefore be considered in respect of their context and proposed height.

### 4.3 CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

Every building is just one part of the fabric of the town centre which is held together by the network of streets and spaces. Well enclosed and connected spaces allow people to use and enjoy the town centre conveniently and in comfort. The street forms the interface between the public and private realm.

Developing and protecting the urban fabric or structure with strong spatial continuity and a good sense of enclosure will benefit the town centre over time. It will help remove gap sites and inappropriate developments and severance caused by overly wide roads.

#### CONTINUOUS FRONTAGES AND BOUNDARIES

Continuous street frontages and well defined open areas stimulates activity and brings a greater sense of security to the public realm. The effective treatment of the boundary between the public and private realm is essential to good urban design.

Public spaces are safer and easier to understand when defined by buildings which face onto them with active frontages, especially at ground floor level. Streets must never be defined by blank walls and dead frontages in the town centre. Service areas and car parks should generally be located behind off street to avoid breaking up and deadening the street frontage.

#### PERMEABILITY

A key element of good urban design is the recognition that pedestrian 'through movement' is an essential characteristic of a successful place. Where people pass through an area they provide activity, security through natural surveillance and passing trade for shops and businesses. The continuity of existing pedestrian routes will therefore be preserved and enhanced and cul-de-sacs discouraged.

New development should respond to and connect well with established street form. Where the traditional street structure has been interrupted, the opportunity to re-establish a permeable network should be considered. Similarly, new routes where none have existed before are encouraged to 'knit' new development into the town centre.

#### FRONTS AND BACKS

A clear separation of public and private space should be created by having buildings front onto the street. Buildings with a clearly defined front and back provide better security and privacy, animate the public realm and help people orientate themselves. Entrances to buildings should therefore be from the street and easily defined as such by visitors. Private enclosed areas to the back should be secure.

#### DEFINING THE STREET

Building lines within the town centre should be clearly defined to create a largely unbroken urban edge to the street. Projections and setbacks from this line, such as bays, foyers and entrances can be used to aid legibility and add variety to the townscape. Existing historic building lines must be respected with infill development.

A strong degree of enclosure should be provided for all streets in the town centre. Building heights should generally be scaled to the proportion of the street. This results in wider primary routes requiring taller buildings. A good street height to width ratio (as measured from building line to building line) will range between 1:1.5 and 1:2.5. Below 1:1, spaces begin to feel claustrophobic and above 1:4, the sense of enclosure progressively diminishes. Street trees are an effective means of creating secondary enclosure where it is difficult to create it primarily with built form.



Where buildings are set back significant distance from the street, they should still have a presence. Although such development is generally discouraged, it should be scaled to relate to the street and incorporate suitable boundary treatment such as railings and trees, which contribute to the enclosure of the street and relate to the building line. This would only be appropriate in areas where there is a precedent for development of this kind, such as the former Royal Devonshire Hospital or Palace Hotel for example.

#### STREET PLANTING

Buxton town centre still benefits from the foresight of previous generations who provided a great legacy of mature trees in a number of areas. Thoughtful landscaping and planting can enormously enhance the continuity of street form and the comfortable enclosure of public spaces, as well as delivering important environmental benefits.

Street tree and other planting will be encouraged where it will enhance the character of an area, particularly where there is an historic precedent for it. Supporting biodiversity and future maintenance should be key considerations when introducing new areas of street planting both to enhance its value and ensure its future.



#### 4.4 A QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

The term 'public realm' means any part of the town centre that can be experienced by everyone, from buildings to bollards. Everything in the public realm has an effect on the town centre's image and character.

A key principle is that 'people attract people'. Places which feel good will encourage people to use them and places which are well used stand a better chance of being well cared for. The aim is to produce friendly, vibrant public places where people feel welcome to visit, socialise and go about their business and leisure in comfort and safety.

Buildings define spaces and good architecture is obviously important. However, concentrating on the quality of those buildings alone ignores the fact that it is the public realm above all that most people will experience up close. Quality in the public realm is an investment in the whole town centre and its future.

#### STREETLIFE

Public spaces should have a clear function and must be pedestrian friendly to be successful. They should act as comfortable focal or meeting points as well as places to pass through. Where new public spaces are planned, it is essential to give full consideration to its use, relationship to adjacent buildings and longer term maintenance.

A street is more than just a road. A road is simply a channel for traffic, whereas a street may still carry traffic, but is first and foremost a social space at the interface of the private and public domains. Spaces that function as lively streets are therefore preferable in the town centre and even those that carry large volumes of traffic such as Station Road should be redesigned as great streets.



**SPACE TO BREATHE**

The quality of public open space in the town centre is more important than the quantity. Too often minor open spaces are ill defined and poorly maintained because they are simply left over after development or highway works.

The creation of a clear network or sequence of quality open spaces throughout the town centre will provide a focus for many of the character areas and consequently a sense of ownership.

**ACTIVITY, NATURAL SURVEILLANCE AND SAFETY**

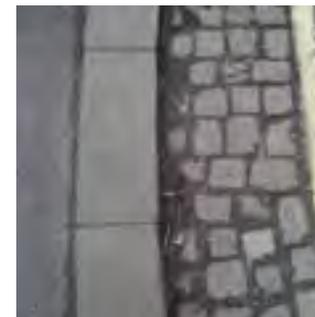
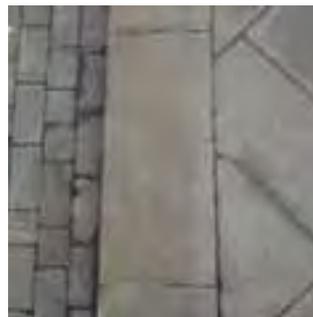
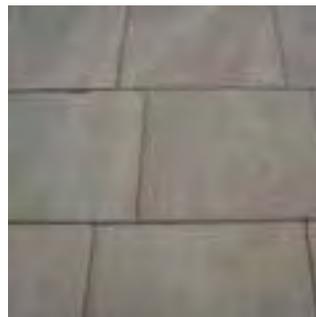
Keeping the public realm animated by the presence of people throughout the day and night helps reduce crime and the fear of crime. Buildings should always offer active frontage to overlook and animate the public realm and provide 'natural surveillance'.

A welcoming public realm is comfortable to be in at any time for people of all ages, gender and background. Street lighting is fundamental to perceptions of public safety and is therefore more than just a highway requirement to be met.

The more animated that spaces are by people and activity, the safer they will feel and the less need for intrusive and expensive security systems such as steel shutters and CCTV there will be. Such systems can have a detrimental impact on the townscape and can increase fear even when the actual risk of crime is low as in Buxton.

**VISUAL RICHNESS**

Vibrant spaces with a variety of uses and richness of detailing will welcome and attract the widest range of people. Imaginative means of enlivening the public realm encompassing public art, lighting, water features, street cafes and entertainment will be encouraged in the town centre.



TYPICAL TOWN CENTRE STREETSCAPE MATERIALS AND FEATURES



### STREETScape AND STREET FURNITURE

The integrated management of the quality and maintenance of the public realm is encouraged. At present, the public realm is not treated as a single unified entity, but often as a set of unrelated components that are managed separately leading to clutter and overlap of responsibility.

As a general rule, quality comes from simplicity – ‘less is more’. Nothing should be placed in the street unless it is unavoidable or highly desirable.

Although very few of the town centre’s streets still retain their original finishes and detailing, these should be conserved where possible or reinstated. All materials that appear in the public realm should be selected with reference to their context to ensure they are appropriate for both place and function. Surfaces should complement surrounding buildings and streetscape, thus defining and unifying spaces. There should be a preference for the use of natural materials, which should be locally sourced where possible, particularly within the Conservation Areas.

There no overall style of street furniture in the town centre, but as the town centre is made up of a number of different areas, this should be used to reinforce their individual character. What is essential is that each element in an area is coordinated. Care should also be taken in selecting historic styles of street furniture. There was obviously no such thing as a Georgian or Victorian CCTV camera or pay and display machine. The use of coordinated materials and colour will therefore be the most appropriate means to incorporate such modern elements, not an inappropriate historic style.

## 4.5 EASE OF MOVEMENT

Movement of all kinds is the life-blood of towns and Buxton is no exception. The movement network must operate in a way which brings the town centre to life, yet high levels of traffic can impact negatively on quality of life and perception of place. Future development in the town centre should therefore reduce both the need to travel and dependence on the car as much as possible.

Transport planning should acknowledge that streets have vital social, economic and amenity roles in addition to that of being channels for vehicles. A well designed urban structure will have a network of streets and spaces that can accommodate these roles as well as the traffic which should not be allowed to dominate.

### THROUGH MOVEMENT

Maintaining access to the town centre for all groups is vitally important for its future success, yet excessive through traffic can have a detrimental effect without any benefit. Through traffic should therefore be restricted to only a couple of key routes in order to contain and minimise its impact.

Traffic should not be allowed to dominate the public realm, but at the same time should not necessarily be excluded all together. Traffic essential for access and servicing should be ‘tamed’ in order that the street can be shared successfully with pedestrians, cyclists and buses.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The creation of nodes of activity near bus stops and the rail station will encourage sustainable transport patterns. Making journeys by public transport should be safe and easy and provide a convenient alternative to the private car. Clear and up to date information, accessible stops and safe pedestrian routes to and from the station and bus stops will help achieve this.

### WALKING AND CYCLING

Walking is the main means of movement in the town centre for short journeys. The quality of the streets must encourage walking and a pedestrian friendly environment is an essential ingredient of attractive, inclusive places and is likely to support their economic success. It is vital that streets in the town centre are safe and comfortable for pedestrians to cross.

Cycling provides a healthy and environmentally friendly alternative to the car and should be encouraged in the town centre. Dedicated cycle infrastructure should be provided on more heavily trafficked routes and new development should provide good facilities for cyclists, including secure parking and changing facilities.

### PARKING

Parking fulfils a vital need for accessing the town centre, but requires careful consideration to support good urban design. Limited on-street parking can assist in reducing traffic speeds, stimulates activity and attracts passing trade essential for local businesses. Surface parking areas should be provided in ways that do not affect established building lines such as courtyards within a block. To increase parking spaces in the centre, the possible use of underground parking should be considered on key sites and multi-storey car parks may be acceptable in appropriate locations, but should always provide an active ground floor use onto the street.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Environments that facilitate greater equality of access promote prosperity and fairness. The town centre will not perform to its full potential if some areas or facilities are perceived to be too difficult to access, particularly for those whose movement and/or sensory perception is impaired in some way. New development and public realm improvements must be designed to allow access for all.



#### 4.6 LEGIBILITY

Good urban design can help create a town centre that is easy to understand and find one's way about. Streets, buildings, vistas, visual details and activities should be used to give a strong sense of place and to provide an understanding of destinations and routes. A legible urban environment is the sum of many of the urban design principles.

##### ROUTES

The routes people take are a key element in the way the town centre is perceived. Careful consideration must be given to the sequence of experiences the town centre offers residents and visitors when moving through.

A clear hierarchy of streets should be established to enable people to orientate themselves in the town centre. For example, primary routes should generally be wider with taller buildings which enables people to 'read' the town centre without the need for signage and maps. On such primary routes, people would naturally expect to find a bus stop for example and would not look for one on a more intimate and quiet lane.

Gateway features on key routes can create a memorable sense of arrival to the town centre and to places within it.

##### LANDMARKS

Gateway and other landmark elements in the urban environment should not only be thought of as physical objects, although these often the most common. They are any kind of reference point that people single out as being memorable that helps orientate themselves.

Aspects of the town centre a visitor might encounter as landmarks include public art or a unique lighting scheme, a strong element of urban character such as a busy shopping area or junction, a distinctive building or a striking vista.

Some landmarks are distant ones, often visible from many angles and places, such as the dome of the university, whilst others are local reference points such as a public house on a corner.

New development should reinforce the legibility of its local area and the town centre by including local features that relate to local circumstances. Some of these will include fine grained details that provide interest to pedestrians, others more striking elements to provide interest to those passing in vehicles. These should always remain appropriate to their context.

##### FOCAL POINTS

Public spaces are key to the legibility of the town centre. The best are active areas where people gather and meet and such focal points should be emphasised, given clear definition and purpose. The vitality of street life and the relationship of buildings to the proportion and nature of the street is fundamental to the creation of a sense of place which welcomes residents and visitors.

Junctions are 'nodal points' where people decide their route and come to meet. Street junctions should therefore be designed as active spaces and places, not characterless traffic interchanges. Landmarks at nodes reinforce their function by giving good reference points to aid orientation and navigation.



Corner buildings higher than surrounding buildings can serve to emphasise junctions and add to the character of the local area. Strong corners give definition to streets and become easily identifiable minor landmarks. Wherever possible corner buildings should have an active ground floor use in the town centre.

#### VIEWS

Protect key views and create new vistas and landmarks to help people locate themselves in the town centre and create links within and beyond the immediate area. New development should protect important existing views, whilst taking opportunities to create new memorable ones.

#### SIGNAGE

Character areas are the larger parts of the town centre recognisable as having a particular identity which assist people as they pass through and by them.

The provision of good signage and guidance at key points is important in aiding orientation for pedestrians. Direction signs will always have a role in helping those unfamiliar with the town centre find their way about, although good urban design should help reduce the need for signage in the first place. Street name plates are another often forgotten piece of street furniture, but are vital to help people locate themselves in the town centre. Street name plates were often historically mounted on buildings.

Clear and direct signage to car parks can also help reduce the number of cars circulating unnecessarily and adding to congestion.

Public transport stops and car parks should provide maps of both the local area and town centre to help people orientate themselves. As a piece of street furniture, signage should have a coherent design and be of a high quality in the town centre.



#### 4.7 ADAPTABILITY

Successful towns accept change and continually adapt to remain vibrant over time. Buxton has benefited from the robust nature of much of the historic street pattern and building stock, which has proved able to respond to change many years after its construction.

Thoughtful and good urban design is required to achieve this flexibility. New developments and public realm improvements should be designed both to respect the existing context and to accommodate future change.

As well as needing to adapt to economic and lifestyle changes, Buxton town centre will need to adapt to climate change. Like many other areas of England, Buxton will likely see warmer and drier summers and warmer and wetter winters in the future. The potential increase in rainfall in particular means that the town centre will need to respond to an increased risk of extreme storm events and flooding.

#### PUBLIC REALM

Streets and spaces that connect well to the town centre's movement network and are relatively simple in design can accommodate and adapt to the widest range of uses and building types. This is why most of the town centre's oldest streets remain vibrant.

Streets should be more than just access roads to buildings. They should be designed to link with the surrounding public realm. Individual buildings may come and go, but streets last a lifetime and longer.

Even key public spaces should be made easily adaptable for a range of functions such as markets, events and concerts.



**BUILT FORM**

New development should be designed and developed to allow for changes in the future. This is supported by buildings having a clear relationship with the street and flexible internal layouts that are capable of being adapted to different patterns of use.

A fine grain urban structure is more adaptable to a coarse grain structure over time. 'Super' or 'mega' blocks that are out of scale with the traditional block size of the town centre will be discouraged.

**INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS**

Within a smaller block, individual buildings should be made as adaptable as possible to ensure they can change over time. The Georgian townhouse is a good example of an adaptable building which can easily switch uses as circumstances change. Many have gone from residential to office or retail and back to residential over time.

In terms of residential development, the provision of 'lifetime' homes is encouraged. These homes are designed to be capable of straightforward adaptation as residents' needs change.

**4.8 DIVERSITY**

Housing, leisure, shops, places to work and meet should interrelate to form an identifiable and walkable town centre that meets the needs of residents. Town centres which benefit from a mixture of good amenities have the means to support their own requirements and reinforce a sense of community. Retaining a good proportion of a city's spending locally is also of great economic as well as social benefit.

**MIX OF USES**

Providing a mix of uses, whether vertically in a building, in a block or simply along a street, creates vibrancy in an area. Single uses over a large area of the town centre or single use 'zoning' is discouraged. The town centre is more than just a place to shop or work 9 to 5.

**PHYSICAL DIVERSITY**

A robust and diverse street and block form allows for a wide range of architectural styles to be accommodated throughout the City Centre.

**VISUAL DIVERSITY**

The principle of diversity applies equally to the style and design of individual buildings. Respect for scale, massing (the shape and size of blocks of development) and a robust street form allows a wide range of architectural styles to be accommodated which is traditional through the town centre. Provided good designers are used, this variety greatly enriches the identity of the character areas and assists legibility. New development should always ensure that it animates the public realm with a rich and diverse visual interest.



## 4.9 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development aims to foster and balance continued and diverse economic success, environmental improvement and the development of social equity through stronger and fairer community life. Sustainable development is concerned with the overlapping working of the economy, environment and society.

The vision for the town centre encourages a sustainable and innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to development that makes use of current best practice to make it more energy and resource efficient and able to adapt to climate change. This begins with the overall layout of the town centre which should be efficient in the use of land by ensuring that the urban form is compact and of a density that maximises the potential of each site or area while protecting distinctive character. A variety of building types, uses, sizes and tenure will encourage the creation of a mixed and balanced sustainable town centre.

### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

A key ingredient in diversity and sustainability is a successful mix of tenures where rented, shared ownership and private can co-exist and complement each other in a variety of building types and public realm. The management and maintenance of any new development is fundamental to the sustainability of the town centre. Tenants, owners and landlords have responsibilities to the wider community.

Good design can assist social inclusion by making social housing in new developments in the town centre indistinguishable in terms of quality, appearance and site location to private housing.

### MIX OF USES

Sufficient development density and mix of compatible uses lend support to many of the other urban design principles. It encourages long term sustainability by promoting more economic use of land, a critical mass of local population which in turn supports a rich mix of facilities and activities and an efficient public transport system. Town centre residents, workers and visitors should be able to walk to facilities such as a corner shop, primary school and public transport within a matter of minutes. Good urban design supports this by ensuring individual developments contribute to achieving this.

### REUSE AND RECYCLE

The reuse and recycling of existing buildings, particularly historic ones, is encouraged throughout the town centre. Most existing buildings worthy of retention represent a significant amount of embodied energy and finding new uses where appropriate and renovation to modern standards is encouraged as opposed to demolition and reconstruction.

### EFFICIENCY

Individual buildings should be efficient in their use of energy and water by incorporating energy and water saving devices, together with renewable energy technologies where appropriate and practical. Wherever possible, sustainable building materials and techniques should be employed during the construction phase, including waste reduction and recycling.

### REDUCE THE RISK OF FLOODING

Considering the importance of reducing the risk of flooding in the town centre which may become more acute in the future with climate change, sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) are encouraged in both new development and improvements to the public realm where possible, but subject to the policies of the adopting authority, to reduce the speed and quantity of surface storm water run-off. The incorporation of SUDS can also support increased biodiversity where water is kept at the surface or green roofs are used where appropriate.

### BIODIVERSITY

New landscape features and green spaces should ensure they have wildlife value wherever possible to support increased biodiversity across the town centre. Individual buildings can also support increased biodiversity through the incorporation of green roofs and bird and bat boxes where possible.







# 5.0

## THE BUXTON MOSAIC

### 5.1 THE MOSAIC APPROACH TO PLACE MAKING

The theory underpinning 'Mosaic' thinking is that all towns and cities, Buxton included, divide into sections where businesses of different types cluster. Businesses do this to benefit from critical mass. By locating in proximity to each other, they are able to attract like-minded customers.

The mapping of businesses in a town or city always shows clustering of like-minded businesses that have a common customer base. Cities and towns that want to develop a truly distinctive and attractive sense of place need to find away of encouraging interesting and attractive clusters to develop. In other words, they need to nurture a 'mosaic' of areas where like-minded businesses cluster. In some cases these areas may be relatively large (such as a shopping mall), but typically they are smaller – sometimes a single street or a block of a street or even part of a block.

The towns and cities that are most attractive to live, work and spend leisure time in are those that are a mosaic of attractive clusters of distinctive character. One of the main reasons that these clusters develop is in response to differing consumer preferences. In simple terms, certain types of destination experience attract certain types of customer.

Businesses that seek to attract like-minded customers congregate so that these consumers can find them and have a reason to go to where they are. The characteristics of people who might like a certain part of the town or city can be assessed in a number of different ways, including age, life stage and household status and by socio-economic status. In addition, a cluster can only develop if there is a market and physical environment to support it. For example, a cluster attractive to students needs a higher education facility nearby to support it and independent orientated areas are often associated with designated conservation areas.

In addition, few towns are homogenous in terms of the physical built environment. Areas will have developed separately over time and will reflect both different periods of architecture and degrees of change. Often there is a strong correlation between these physical characteristics of an area, land use and the types of businesses and people that have been attracted to it.

Buxton has a number of different areas that have a distinctive character, reflected in the townscape, land use and types of businesses that are present. Some of these are more established than others, but they are all distinctive and this distinctiveness needs to be nurtured and reinforced to support the overall vision for Buxton.



Buxton's mosaic is composed of the following areas:

#### HIGHER BUXTON

An independent 'village' within the town centre with a diverse and interesting range of businesses including shops, galleries, cafés, bars and restaurants

#### SPRING GARDENS

A 'smart high street' area that contains a number of national multiples, as well as local retailers, to serve Buxton and its hinterland

#### THE STATION

A 'green gateway' to the town centre, both in terms of landscape and sustainable transport, where change has the potential to create a high quality new piece of town

#### THE QUADRANT

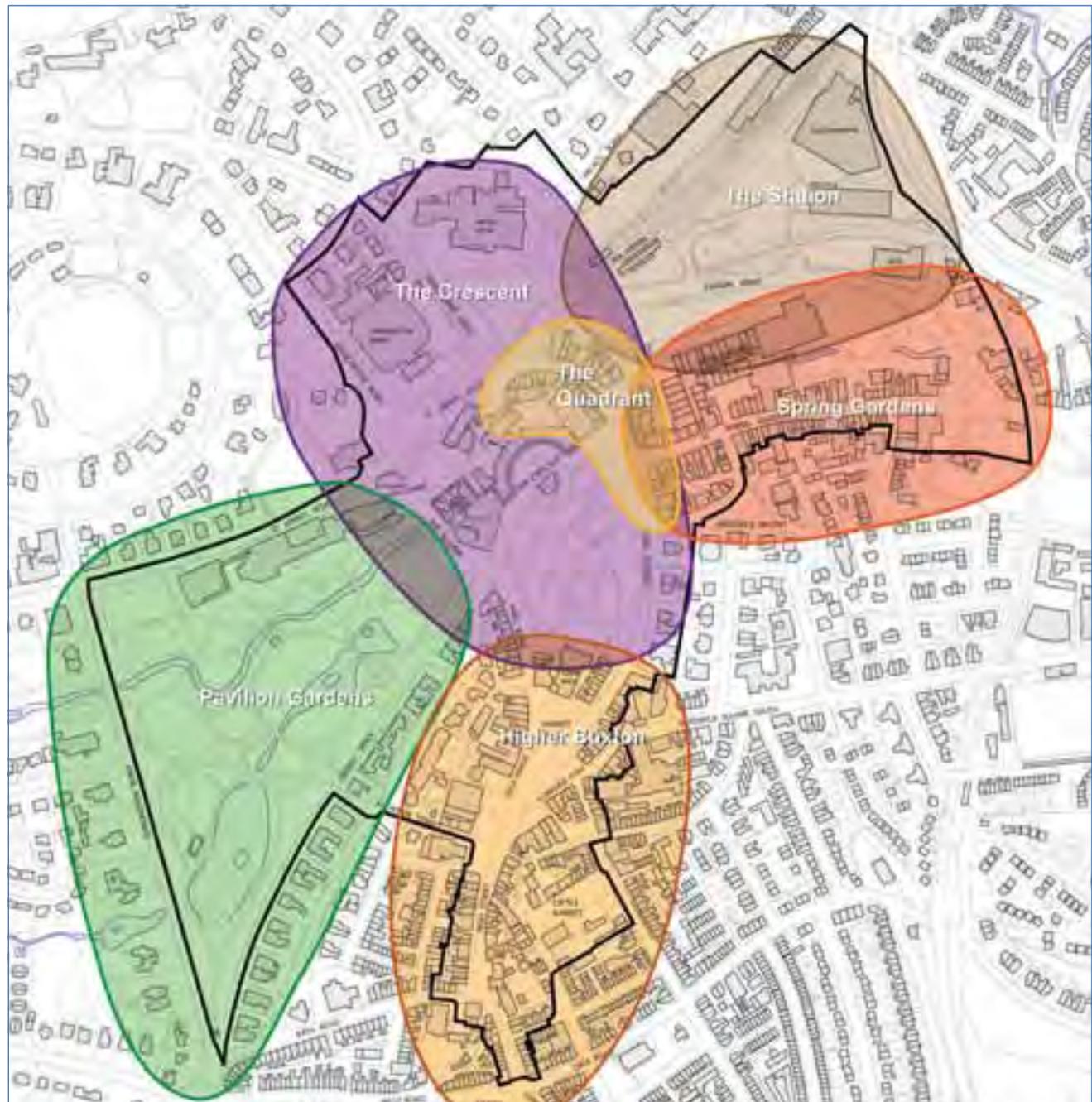
A 'cosmopolitan' area with an interesting high quality mix of businesses including independent and branded shops, restaurants and bars

#### THE CRESCENT

A 'premium' area at the heart of the town centre focused on the Crescent and new spa, with links to both the University and Palace Hotel

#### PAVILION GARDENS

A 'green' leisure and cultural area focused on the Pavilion and the Opera House within an historic park setting



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## 5.2 HIGHER BUXTON

### KEY ISSUES

An almost forgotten part of the town centre, the Market Place is a large inward looking space dominated by car parking. The quality of the architecture is high, but the quality of the public realm is in need of further improvements in parts.

### VISION

An independent 'village' within the town centre with a diverse and interesting range of businesses including shops, galleries, cafés, bars and restaurants

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

New infill development should respect the scale, character and materials of the area. The innovative reuse and refurbishment of existing historic buildings is encouraged to preserve the architectural character whilst establishing a new identity for the area as a 'village'. General improvement to shop frontages in keeping with the character and style of the buildings is encouraged.

The Market Place should be fronted by mixed use buildings that provide active edges and natural surveillance to ensure both quality continuity and enclosure. Landscape improvements including street trees could create a better sense of enclosure in the Market Place.

Market Place, High Street and Terrace Road should be safe, attractive and people friendly to encourage visits from other areas of the town centre. A quality public realm, including street lighting improvements will help and promote a village feel and café culture.

Widened footways, reduced street clutter and improved pedestrian crossings will ease pedestrian movement and strengthen connections to other areas of the town centre.

Market Place should be reinforced as both an arrival point and destination within the town centre and High Street as a gateway to aid legibility. Views to the Town Hall from all areas of the town centre must be preserved to ensure this landmark remains so.

Simple street design will accommodate a range of buildings, uses and activities in the area and it should not be 'over-engineered'. Innovative new uses must be found for vacant premises and changes should ensure adaptability to allow for future change of use. For example, separate entrances may need to be provided to upper floors. New infill buildings should be made as adaptable as possible to ensure they can change over time and in particular the ground floor.

Reinvigorated, vibrant uses will help create diversity and a street full of character and activity. Mixed uses will ensure there are both daytime and evening activities to create a vibrant and exciting area.

The reuse and refurbishment of existing historic buildings ensures economic, social and environmental sustainability. Biodiversity should be encouraged with all soft landscape works, including street trees.



### 5.3 SPRING GARDENS

#### KEY ISSUES

Pedestrianisation has helped reinforce Spring Gardens' role as Buxton's 'high street'. Both the shops and the buildings themselves are of a mixed quality, but the architecture is generally better towards the Crescent. The shopping centre is dated and creates a barrier between Spring Gardens and the Station area.

#### VISION

A 'smart high street' area that contains a number of national multiples, as well as local retailers, to serve Buxton and its hinterland

#### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Historic buildings must be conserved and enhanced in order to protect the character of the main shopping street. New interventions will be limited on the main shopping street and likely involve upgrading shopfronts and building elevations. Where infill buildings are required along the main shopping street, these must be sensitive to the historic context. For new buildings associated with the modern shopping centre, a contemporary approach can be adopted, but should be at an appropriate scale and massing and make use of local materials.

Building heights should generally be 3 storeys to create good continuity and enclosure. Where possible, frontage should be created to screen rear servicing areas.

The precedent established on Spring Gardens could be extended at least to the viaduct to the east and into the car parks to the north to create a consistent quality public realm.

Vehicle access to Spring Gardens should remain restricted to allow for the ease of movement of pedestrians and shoppers. Links to other areas of the town centre, and in particular the station, should be improved.

Create a public realm which reinforces Spring Gardens as the town centre's prime shopping street to aid legibility. The exploration of adjacent areas, and in particular Higher Buxton, should be encouraged through signage and art.

New buildings should be accommodated within the fine grain of Spring Gardens to respect the existing built form to ensure adaptability in the future. Spring Gardens itself as a street should be highly adaptable to allow for a range of activities and events.

Although the strong retail offer must be maintained, this could be complemented by other uses, particularly cafes and restaurants to ensure diversity. Vacant upper floors should be brought back into use, either business (office) or residential accommodation.

A mix of uses and reuse of existing historic buildings is encouraged to promote sustainability. In addition, every opportunity should be taken to enhance the course of the River Wye, particularly to support biodiversity and minimise flood risk.

### 5.4 THE STATION

#### KEY ISSUES

An area of little distinctive character that is car orientated, both through car parking and the design of Station Road. The rail station is dated and currently creates a poor sense of arrival. Visitors arriving by train are let down by poor views, primarily of the back of Spring Gardens shopping centre, and a lack of orientation.

#### VISION

A 'green gateway' to the town centre, both in terms of landscape and sustainable transport, where change has the potential to create a high quality new piece of town

#### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

New development should embrace the opportunity to reinvent the area and a sustainable approach and 'green' character would help create a 21<sup>st</sup> century image and identity for the area. Development on this gateway site should be of significance and quality that enables it to perform its role as a key entrance to the town centre.

Through their elevations, new buildings will need to create a new identity for the area by through providing good continuity and enclosure. Buildings should be organised to encourage street activity in key locations such as the gateway square.

A high quality public realm will help create a new identity for the area. A new gateway square will link the station with the town centre and Station Road should be reconfigured as an urban tree lined avenue.



The pedestrian route to the north of the rail lines past the former carriage sheds should be maintained to allow for ease of movement and enhanced by increasing natural surveillance and personal safety. The interchange between different modes of transport, such as rail, bus, taxi and cycle should be accommodated. Car parking should be sensitively integrated and surface level parking softened by landscape.

The station area requires a transformation in image which should be achieved through innovation, forward thinking architecture and urban design. Clear, safe routes into the heart of the town centre that are well signposted will aid legibility. Views into the heart of the town centre should also be enhanced and views to landmarks protected.

The existing station building should be retained and regenerated through new uses. The adaptability of new buildings should also be considered as change happens over time.

A mixture of uses across the site will help create a new distinct and vibrant piece of town. New development should also have visual diversity to enrich new and existing streets.

Sustainability will be a key principle for the area. Sustainable modes of transportation will be encouraged and sustainable materials, locally sourced where possible, will characterise the area. The retention of the existing station building and arch will provide a link to the past and much of the remaining land will need to be remediated, particularly under the existing rail depot, before redevelopment can progress.

Further detailed design principles for the area can be found in the Station Road Supplementary Planning Document adopted by High Peak Borough Council July 2007.



## 5.5 THE QUADRANT

### KEY ISSUES

The Quadrant sits between the Crescent and Spring Gardens and includes the Quadrant, Cavendish Arcade and the Terrace. The area already contains a cluster of fairly smart and interesting businesses such as shops and restaurants. The Grove Hotel occupies a key location at the head of Spring Gardens.

### VISION

A 'cosmopolitan' area with an interesting high quality mix of businesses including independent and branded shops, restaurants and bars

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The existing historic buildings must be conserved and enhanced to protect the character of the area. Boutique retail, cafes and restaurants are encouraged to complement existing businesses and upper floor residential. Historic shop fronts should be preserved and promoted, but contemporary design encouraged where appropriate and in context.

Active ground floor uses are encouraged to ensure continuity and enclosure is maintained along the street.

The Quadrant should be upgraded further to ensure a consistent quality public realm is created from Spring Gardens to Manchester Road.



Where possible, traffic should at least be slowed if not reduced along the Quadrant to create a pleasant environment and ensure the ease of movement of pedestrians. The crossing of Manchester Road is particularly difficult and this must be addressed with any traffic management proposals to encourage pedestrian movement into the heart of the town centre.

The Quadrant occupies a pivotal position in the town centre between a number of key areas. The legibility of these other areas must be maintained to encourage movement between.

Innovative new uses must be found for vacant premises and changes should ensure adaptability to allow for future change of use. For example, separate entrances may need to be provided to upper floors.

Reinvigorated, diverse uses will help create diversity and a street full of character and activity. A mix of uses creates vibrant streets.

The reuse and refurbishment of existing historic buildings, will ensure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the Quadrant area.

## 5.6 THE CRESCENT

### KEY ISSUES

Architecture of the highest heritage and amenity value is detracted from by a poor quality public realm, traffic and on street parking.

### VISION

A 'premium' area at the heart of the town centre focused on the Crescent and new spa, with links to both the University and Palace Hotel

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Crescent area is a special townscape and all existing historic buildings must be conserved to enhance to protect its unique character. All interventions in this townscape must respond to the sensitive historic context.

The establishment of strong frontages with active ground floor uses is encouraged throughout the area to support continuity and enclosure.

Historic street character should be reinstated using traditional materials and techniques to create a high quality public realm and suitable backdrop for the architecture. Pedestrian focused streets will encourage activity.

Car access and parking should generally be reduced in the area, particularly in and around the Crescent, to ensure ease of movement for pedestrians. The crossing of Manchester Road should be improved to better link the University and Palace Hotel with the area and town centre as a whole.

Views to the Devonshire Royal (University), St John's Church and the Crescent must be protected to reinforce their positions as major town centre landmarks to aid legibility. Better signage and interpretation will encourage exploration of this historic area.

The Devonshire Royal (University) is a model of adaptability and a precedent for all other refurbishment projects in the town centre, including the Crescent. It has been a stable, hospital and now university whilst still retaining its essential character.

Reinforcing the mix of uses in this area will help create a diverse and vibrant area.

The reuse and refurbishment of existing historic buildings ensures economic, social and environmental sustainability. Local materials should be used in all refurbishment and improvement works, including those within the public realm, to ensure mileage is minimised and character preserved.





## 5.7 PAVILION GARDENS

### KEY ISSUES

The park and the buildings that overlook it are at the heart of Buxton's leisure and culture offer. It is also the focus of Buxton's festivals. It is a green area dominated by the park's mature trees and one of the few areas of Buxton where water is a key element of the public realm.

### VISION

A 'green' leisure and cultural area focused on the Pavilion and the Opera House within an historic park setting

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Pavilion Gardens area is a green cultural oasis in the heart of the town centre and all existing historic buildings and landscapes must be conserved to enhance to protect its unique character. All interventions must respond to the sensitive historic and landscape context.

The establishment of strong frontages with active ground floor along the edges of the park is encouraged to support continuity and enclosure.

Historic character should be reinstated using traditional materials and techniques to create a high quality public realm and suitable backdrop for the Pavilion buildings and Opera House.

The ease of movement of pedestrians is paramount in this area and should remain so. Extending the closure of Water Street beyond

the festival season while maintaining service access to the Opera House should be considered to further promote pedestrian priority.

Views of the Pavilion buildings and the Opera House must be protected to reinforce their positions as major town centre landmarks to aid legibility. Better signage and interpretation will encourage exploration of the park.

The Pavilion buildings have proved their adaptability with recent improvement works, but it is unlikely the modern swimming baths will. A replacement building will need to be sensitive to the historic context.

Reinforcing the mix of uses in the Pavilion buildings will help create a diverse and vibrant area with a focus on leisure, arts and culture and complement Higher Buxton in terms of offer.

The reuse and refurbishment of the existing historic buildings has demonstrated economic, social and environmental sustainability. Future landscape works should seek to further biodiversity where appropriate.







# 6.0

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

### 6.1 THE NEED FOR CHANGE

This Strategy is intended to help guide future changes in Buxton town centre. Through engagement with the community, it provides the foundation upon which detailed proposals and funding bids can be developed and come forward, from both the public and private sectors.

The Strategy represents a commitment to the conservation and regeneration of Buxton town centre - preserving what makes it a special place, while ensuring it has a sustainable future. A 'do nothing' option which leaves historic buildings vacant and neglected and a public realm which does not provide a suitable backdrop for outstanding architecture, is not an option. However, positive change must be managed and further planning and design and private sector investment will be needed to deliver the vision for Buxton town centre.

It was clear from the 'enquiry by design' process that the community are passionate about the town centre and want to see further positive changes happen sooner rather than later. However, there is also a fear that unsympathetic change could 'ruin' what is special about the town centre. This Strategy therefore provides a common direction for all involved in the future of Buxton to secure the commitment of various public authorities and agencies, as well as private sector investors and businesses, to the regeneration of the town centre. Only with this commitment and support of the community will the vision for the town centre happen and its future be secure.



## 6.2 LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

To ensure the urban design principles outlined in Section 4 are implemented across the town centre in each of the character areas identified in Section 5, a simple three tier graded approach has been adopted to guide future change. These three levels or degrees of intervention determine the extent of development or conservation required to support the overall vision for the town centre:

### REINVENTION AND RECONFIGURATION

- ❑ Areas lack distinctive character or have fundamental issues in terms of urban design
- ❑ Can accommodate a high degree of change in terms of land use and urban form
- ❑ New buildings to reinvent the urban fabric and create a new identity within the overall urban design principles

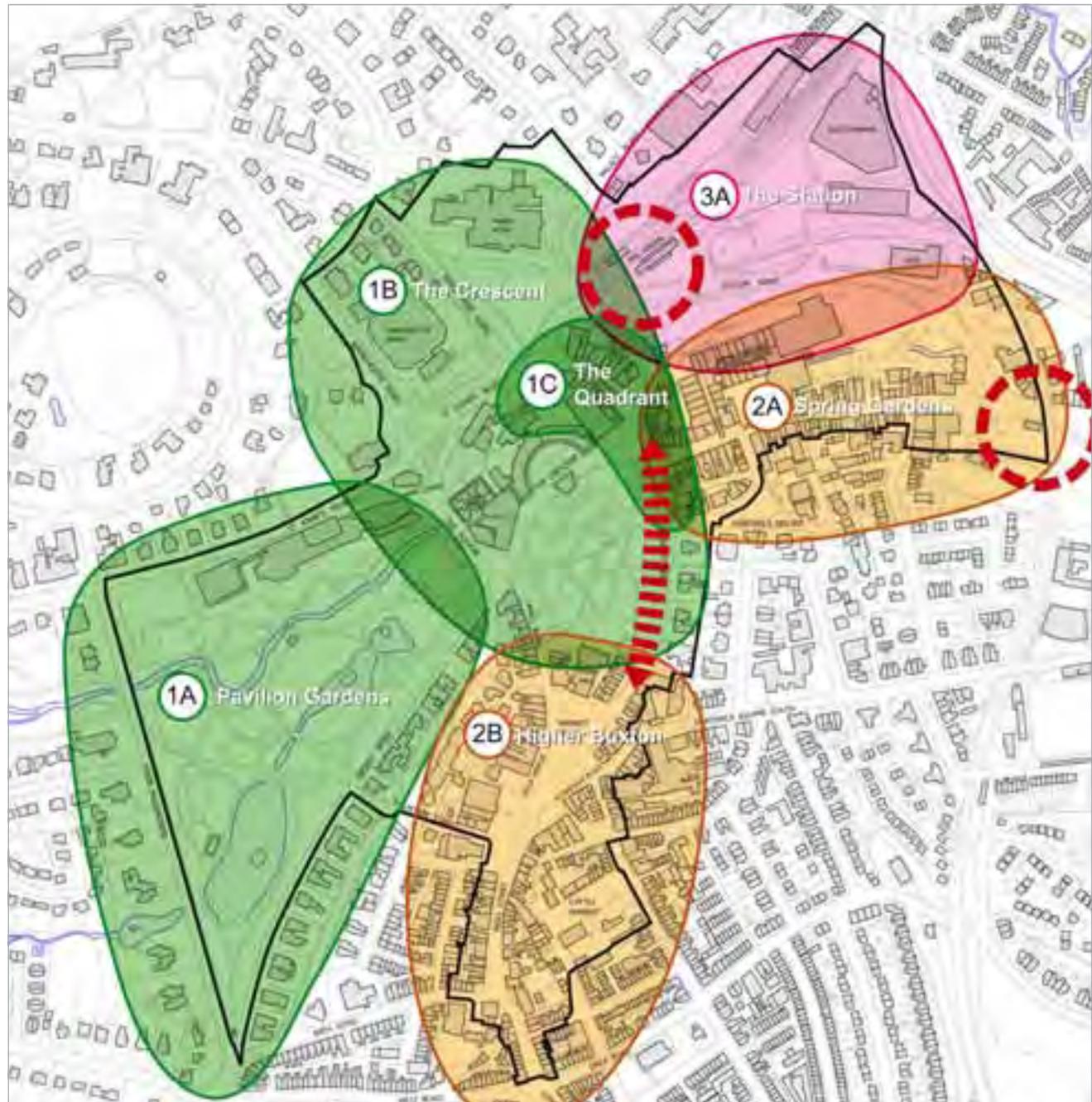
### REPAIR AND RECOVERY

- ❑ Areas with elements of distinct character and quality, but require 'repair'
- ❑ Innovative and creative interventions possible to reinforce an area's character, but new buildings should respect and repair the historic urban fabric
- ❑ Past inappropriate and insensitive development must not be used as precedent

### CONSERVATION

- ❑ Areas of reasonably intact and robust urban form which must retain their overall historic character
- ❑ Generally located in the Conservation Areas of the town centre
- ❑ Innovative and creative interventions possible, but new buildings must be appropriate and respect context

- 1 CONSERVATION
- 2 REPAIR & RECOVERY
- 3 REINVENTION & RECONFIGURATION
- KEY LINK
- KEY TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS



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## 6.3 BUILDING IN CONTEXT

Controversy surrounding architectural style is not new and in an historic environment such as Buxton town centre, it is often acute. However, subjective matters of personal taste with regard to a traditional versus a modern approach should not obscure the fact that it should be possible to arrive at an opinion about design quality that is based on objective criteria, not architectural style.

As well as meeting the design principles outlined earlier, English Heritage and CABE's Building in Context toolkit asks a number of questions regarding both a proposed building and its contribution to its context in order to establish quality. These are outlined below:

### THE SITE

- ❑ How does the proposal relate to its wider setting?
- ❑ Is there a positive and imaginative response to any problems and constraints?
- ❑ Have the physical aspects of the site been considered, such as any changes in level within or beyond it?
- ❑ Are access arrangements convenient and existing routes respected?
- ❑ Can the amount of accommodation required be fitted on the site in an elegant way?

### WIDER SETTING

- ❑ How does the proposal relate to its wider setting?
- ❑ Are the street pattern and grain of the surroundings respected?

- ❑ Are there changes in height between the existing and new development and if so, how are they managed?
- ❑ Will the result enhance or damage the quality of the townscape?

### DENSITY

- ❑ How is the density of the proposal related to that of existing and neighbouring uses?
- ❑ If there are differences, are they acceptable?

### IMPACT ON CLOSE VIEWS

- ❑ Has the impact of the building in close views been assessed?
- ❑ Is it either weak or overpowering?
- ❑ Does it respect the scale and rhythm of its neighbours?

### MATERIALS

- ❑ How do materials relate to those of the surrounding buildings?
- ❑ Is the quality as high?
- ❑ Are there interesting comparisons or contrasts in the use of materials?
- ❑ How will colours work together?

### ARCHITECTURE SUITABLE TO ITS USE

- ❑ Is the architecture of the building suitable for the uses it contains?

- ❑ Is it trying to be too grand or pretending to be more modest than it really is?

### COMPOSITION

- ❑ How does the architecture present itself to the viewer?
- ❑ Is there a strong composition in the pattern of solid to open in the façade?
- ❑ Does the detailing of the materials show signs of careful thought or originality in the way the building is put together?

### PUBLIC REALM

- ❑ What contribution, if any, does the proposal make to the public realm?
- ❑ Is new open space created, is it clear that it will provide a positive benefit and have a genuine use?

### VISTAS AND VIEWS

- ❑ In the wider setting, has the impact of the building in views and vistas been considered?
- ❑ Does it make a positive or negative impact?
- ❑ Does it form an harmonious group or composition with existing buildings or features in the landscape?
- ❑ Does it distract the eye from the focus of the view and if so, does it provide something better to look at?

Further information on Building in Context can be found at: [www.building-in-context.org](http://www.building-in-context.org)



### 6.4 PLACE MAKING ACTION PLAN

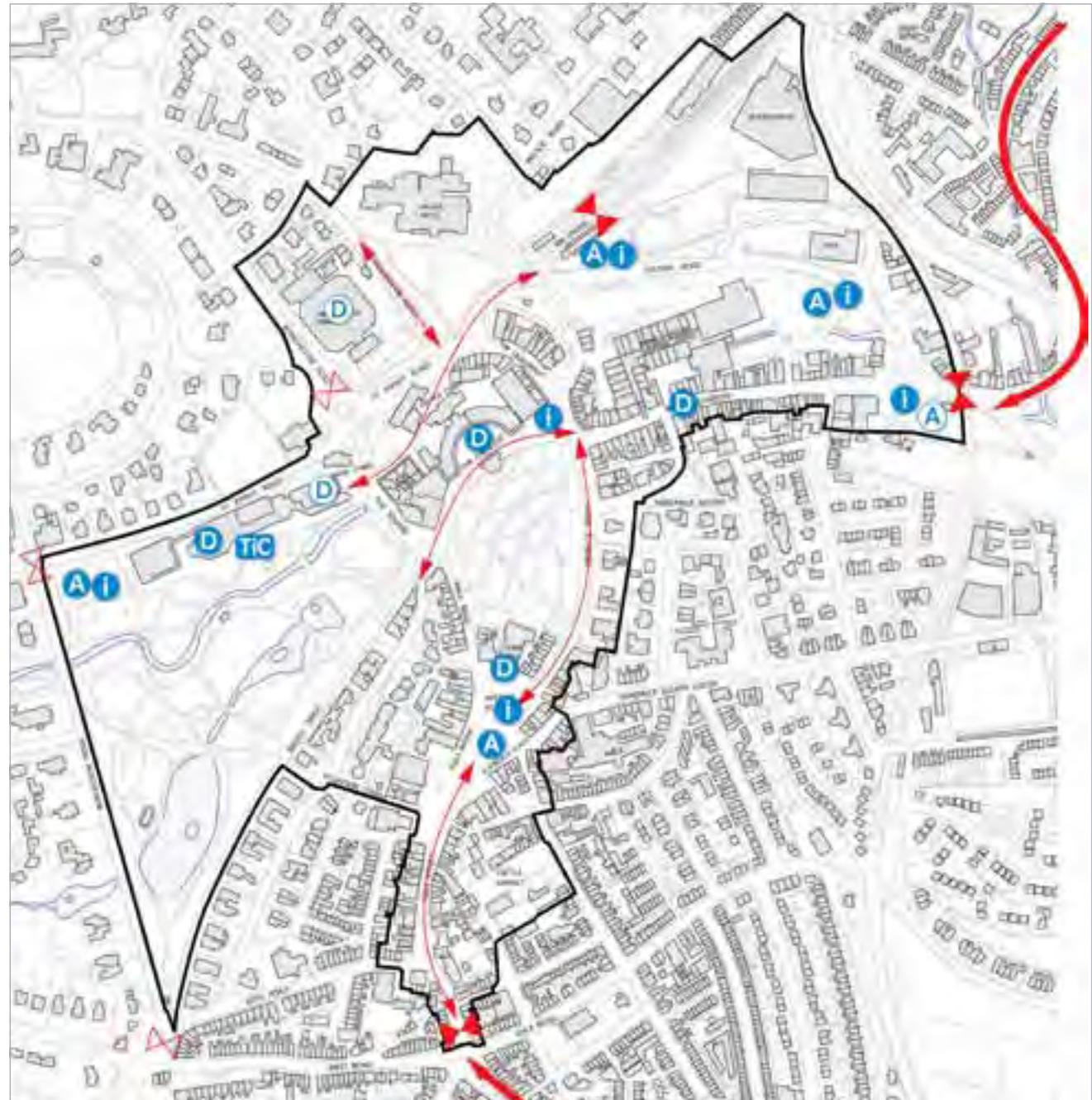
Although many of the key elements of a great urban environment and destination already exist in Buxton, further work is required to connect these elements together. In particular, it is important to create a town centre that is legible, accessible and easy to navigate through a coherent design approach.

#### APPROACHES

The town centre does not exist in isolation - approaches to it are an important element of the place making action plan. They set the scene and give a first impression, even before arrival. This is particularly important for Buxton as it receives large numbers of visitors and tourists. Good quality approaches are also important to local people – a pleasant and safe approach and route to the town centre will likely encourage more sustainable trips by foot and cycle.

Unfortunately, two key approaches currently do not reflect the quality of the town centre. Both Fairfield Road and London Road are characterised by standard highway/public realm treatments and marred by a small number of poorly maintained properties, despite Fairfield Road being partially covered by Conservation Area designations. These two approaches also suffer from high volumes of traffic and congestion, particularly Fairfield Road.

-  KEY GATEWAY
-  MINOR GATEWAY
-  KEY ROUTES
-  KEY APPROACHES
-  INFORMATION POINT
-  KEY DESTINATION
-  KEY ARRIVAL
-  TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE



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Improvements to be considered for these key routes include improved surfacing materials, street lighting and other street furniture including signage, planting including street trees where appropriate and consistent quality boundary treatments, particularly for terraced properties. Property improvements should be targeted at those in the worst condition.

Other approaches of varying, but reasonable, quality include Bakewell Road, Manchester Road, St John's Road, Macclesfield Road, West Road and Dale Road. Although desirable, improvements to these approaches are not considered a priority in comparison with those needed on Fairfield Road for example.

#### GATEWAYS

The key gateways to the town centre are the viaduct at Bridge Street, the rail station and High Street at West Road and London Road. Although the viaduct structure is already an effective gateway itself, it could be improved with lighting to increase its effectiveness after dark and create an even more distinctive feature. The rail station has already been identified as an area of potential significant change and therefore improved as a major gateway to the town centre. At High Street, hard and soft landscape, signage, street lighting and public art improvements could create a significant gateway to the town centre and in particular to Higher Buxton from the south. Minor gateways include the junctions of Manchester Road/St John's Road, Burlington Road/St John's Road and West Road/Bath Road/Burlington Road. Signage, street lighting and public art improvements could better define the town centre at these gateway locations.

#### ARRIVAL

Key arrival points include Market Place, Pavilion Gardens car park, Spring Gardens car parks and the rail station. First impressions are key at these points and they must be welcoming and safe and secure. The Spring Gardens car park and the rail station itself are the most in need of improvement in terms of welcome to the town centre. All of these arrival points should have clear and consistent signage, information and orientation and if possible, toilets with disabled and baby changing facilities. Such facilities help create good first impressions (see right). Landscaping is also important at all of these arrival points and the car park at Pavilion Gardens should be considered a benchmark or precedent.

#### SIGNAGE

Although a good urban environment should be easily understood (legible), pedestrian signage is still an important element of any town centre. Signage will include information, orientation, directional finger posts, interpretation and trails. Like all street furniture, signage should be kept to an essential minimum to reduce clutter and improve clarity.

#### INFORMATION

The main tourist information centre is located in the Pavilion Gardens, but smaller information points should be located at key arrival points and destinations/landmarks such as the Town Hall, Crescent, Opera House, etc. This information should help orientate people within the town centre and provide information on the local area, attractions and events as a minimum.

Interpretative signage should also be provided at key locations to provide information on buildings and historical events. As a 'museum in the street', this interpretive signage could be linked to the town trail and/or a heritage trail.



CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE IN AN HISTORIC SETTING.



## TRAILS

In addition to the existing town trail, a number of other themed trails could be established to encourage further exploration of the town centre. This could include a heritage trail (taking in the Museum, Town Hall, Crescent, Opera House and Devonshire Royal), an arts and craft trail (Market Place, Opera House, Pavilion Gardens) and a shopping trail (Spring Gardens and Quadrant to the High Street).

## KEY ROUTES

Although there are a number of high quality areas of public realm in the town centre already, there are a number of key routes which need to be improved in order to improve connections within the town centre. These include the Crescent, Terrace Road, High Street, The Crescent, George Street to Station Road and Devonshire Road to the University and Palace Hotel. Public realm improvements and traffic management measures should be focused on these key routes.

## 6.5 IMPLEMENTATION

This Strategy is intended to help guide future change in Buxton town centre by providing a common direction for all those involved in its regeneration. Through consultation with the community, it provides the context within which proposals by both public and private bodies can be developed and come forward. It describes the form and quality of development that High Peak Borough Council expects and the sort of place the town centre will become in the future. Its primary purpose is to inform and assist the development process and to simulate and challenge land and building owners, developers and their design teams. The Council requires developers to incorporate the design principles set down in the Strategy, and to consider the wider context and collective value of their proposals, in order to retain and enhance the long-term quality of Buxton's town centre.

The enquiry by design process undertaken in drafting the Strategy has ensured the local community and business leaders are able to broadly subscribe to the vision, themes and principles. Some aspects have generated debate, but this was part of the process. High Peak Borough Council with its partners will continue with the process of participation and consultation to ensure an on-going sense of ownership and involvement in the regeneration of the town centre. Only with the support of the local community and business leaders can many of the themes outlined in the Strategy be taken forward.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required the Council to revise its key planning processes. The Act broadened the scope and content of the Local Plan and placed more emphasis on spatial planning and sustainable development than previously. At the heart of the Local Development Framework (LDF), the Core Strategy will set out the long term vision and spatial strategy for the Borough and general policies for the control of development. This will be supported by other Development Plan Documents, including Supplementary Planning Documents, to provide detail relating to policy contained within the Core Strategy.

This Design and Place Making Strategy has been brought forward in advance of the new Core Strategy as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) relating to the Development Plan. It is based on saved Local Plan policies and provides additional detail to those saved policies and will support policies being developed through the Core Strategy. It does not replace the saved Local Plan policies such as:

- ▣ GD4 - Character, Form and Design
- ▣ BC5 - Conservation Areas and Their Settings
- ▣ TC2 - Town Centre Environment
- ▣ TC15 - Regeneration Areas in Buxton

Once the Core Strategy is adopted, this SPD will relate to and support it.



### RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

High Peak Borough Council encourages pre-application discussions in accordance with PPS1. The use of Design and Access Statements are seen as an aid to these discussions, providing a useful way of understanding and addressing issues at an early stage.

All planning applications, both full and outline, will be expected to demonstrate that the proposals accords with the design principles outlined in the Strategy. These principles will be equally relevant irrespective of scale or location within the town centre boundary as defined in the Local Plan.

Where a planning application is considered not to comply with the design principles, it will be recommended for refusal and applicants will be requested to consider how the proposal can be amended to support the Strategy. Exceptions to the Strategy will inevitably occur and these will be considered where the applicant can demonstrate a sound argument on economic, planning or transport grounds or in the context of the particular site.

Following the granting of planning permission, it is important that developers seek to discharge in full all conditions and implement in full the consent given. Where this is not the case, the Council will pursue enforcement action to ensure that the quality of the development and character of the town centre is protected. However, the Council will work positively with applicants who have a clear commitment to improving the quality of the town centre to ensure proposals are viable and deliverable.

### IMPLEMENTATION BY HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

All of the Council's departments will work together to assist in the successful implementation of the vision and design principles. This will involve:

- ▣ The production of the Core Strategy and other documents which will form part of the Local Development Framework and will, over the next few years, become the guiding framework for spatial planning in the Borough
- ▣ The implementation of regeneration and conservation projects
- ▣ The preparation of development briefs for Council owned land for sale
- ▣ The provision of coordinated pre-application advice to prospective developers
- ▣ Control of development through the planning system
- ▣ The maintenance, improvement and development of Council owned buildings
- ▣ The maintenance, improvement and development of open and public spaces

In addition, High Peak Borough Council will work with Derbyshire County Council to see that highway works, including the design and construction of new roads or highway improvements, implementation of traffic management schemes and routine maintenance, reflect the Strategy as far as possible. This will be key to raising the quality of the public realm in the town centre.

### CONCLUSION

This Supplementary Planning Document has been subject of consultation with interested parties and members of the community before being adopted by the Council. It should be read in conjunction with existing policy documents and further development guidance for specific sites which may be produced in the future. However, all development proposals will be subject to the usual statutory processes, including applications for planning permission, listed building and conservation area consents. Where necessary, the use of Planning Agreements under Section 106 of the Planning Act may be appropriate. These and traffic management measures will all be the subject of further public consultation.



