

## 4. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The urban design framework for the city has been prepared on three distinct levels:

- **Level One** - the city centre framework (discussed in this chapter)
- **Level Two** - character area guidance, at a finer structural grain (presented in chapter 5)
- **Level Three** - keynote projects, defining specific aspirations and concepts for key development sites and spaces (defined in chapter 6)

This structure has been prepared to ensure that there is a logical sequence in the progression of the design guidance from the large scale vision for the city through to the individual arrangement for prominent sites.

The City Centre Urban Design Framework drawing illustrates the first of these three tiers and should be considered to represent a 15-20 year time frame. More focused guidance for the character areas, level two, will

memorable, iconic place with distinctive new buildings and people orientated public spaces. Roads may be removed, poor buildings replaced, the parks refocused and the connections to neighbouring districts redefined to form a network of human and business communication. To guide this transformation a set of five key themes have been defined to drive the delivery of the city wide framework. In addition a set of strategic goals have been set for both the public realm and the built form within the city.

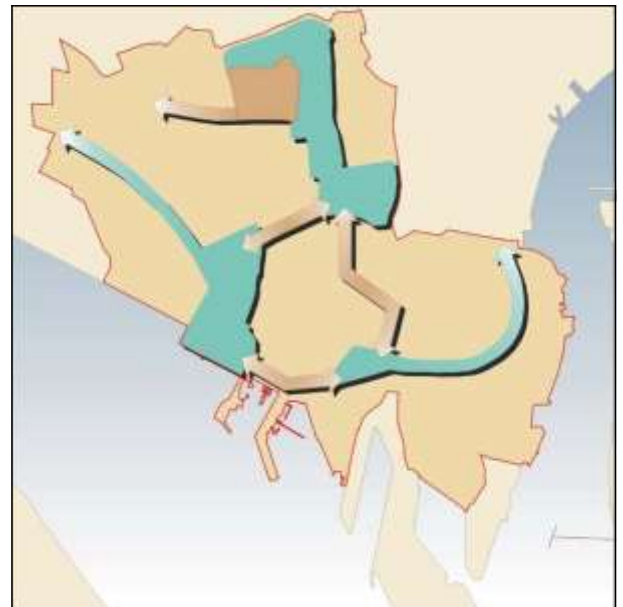
### 4.1.1 Spatial Structure - Key themes:

- Enhancing the arrival to and movement through the city
- Reconnecting the waterfront with the central core of the city
- Enriching the public realm and defining a clear hierarchy and linkages
- Creating powerful landmarks for identity and navigation
- Reinforcing the individual character of distinct areas in the city



**THE RECONNECTED WATERFRONT**

be seen to guide development over the next 10-15 years whilst specific design frameworks that have been prepared for the keynote projects, level three, should ideally be implemented within the next 10 years.



**THE WALKABLE CITY**

### 4.1 CITY CENTRE THEMES & GOALS

The strategic vision for the city, set out within chapter two, describes a city that is a strong, visually stimulating,



*Simple contemporary design for Public Spaces - Paley Park, New York*

#### **4.1.2 Public Realm & Open Space Strategic goals:**

It is proposed that the creation of a contemporary, yet timeless, streetscape image for the new century is incrementally introduced throughout key areas of the city. Though high quality design and carefully selected materials these improved pedestrian areas should last for many years.

Greater emphasis needs to be given to the street and to the sequential network of pedestrian spaces if the city centre is to become more attractive to future users and investors. The aim is to produce a more co-ordinated and seamlessly legible townscape, not only for pedestrians, but also for cyclists, drivers and public transport users.

New and existing public spaces are to be linked by improved streetscape treatment. Public art, planting, lighting and water features will be incorporated into the new and enhanced spaces.

New, higher quality street surfaces will be necessary, particularly along busy pedestrian routes and at major public spaces. These should be simple and robust, with natural materials used wherever possible. The building of new focal areas into the heart of different 'quarters' is also desirable to increase legibility and the general conviviality of the whole centre.

Comfortable street level activity is important, both for civic and event purposes, but also to stimulate general footfall and a sense of public safety and vitality.

Integrating public transport (both routes and infrastructure) in a positive manner is essential in order to create functional spaces where the interface between structures and pedestrian flows is well designed. The perception and visual dominance of the motor car needs to be mitigated to enhance the perception of pedestrian comfort. This applies not only to roads but also to other public spaces, including car parks.

#### **4.1.3 Built Form & Urban Design Strategic goals:**

The vision comprises an urban design strategy to guide the nature and scope of future development and public realm in a coherent direction. The over-riding philosophy is to provide a more coherent, legible and harmonious city centre consistent with European best practice.

The vision seeks to promote a more integrated, unified centre in terms of areas of character, scale and building lines, all of which create and reinforce the street /city block relationship. The centre should build upon the distinctive identities of the different parts of Southampton, such as the Old Town, Waterfront and West Quay, whilst increasing their connectivity and functional relationships.



*Mixed used activity adds life to the pedestrian environment Santa Monica Boulevard, California*

The centre should move away from segregated virtual mono-use to supply a more mature mix, variety and conviviality across the whole of the centre. Key opportunity sites are identified for priority treatment (redevelopment and/or refurbishment). Energy efficient buildings are to be particularly encouraged, as are buildings which have facilities provided for cyclists and pedestrians.

Active ground floor uses will be encouraged along main pedestrian routes, irrespective of upper floor use, to spread the flows of people and to stimulate new investment and employment. New small scale uses such as cafes and restaurants will be encouraged as

vital ancillary functions, particularly in those areas where there is a shortfall.

The Old Town should act as a focus for the growth of smaller scale cultural activity that reinforces the archaeological heritage of the area and provides opportunities for niche retail, cafe and restaurants that are consistent with the fabric, scale and character of the area. Buildings which address the street well, particularly at ground level, are essential in virtually all parts of the centre, so the presence of dead frontage is minimised.





*Defining attractive rooftop fenestration - Westbourne Grove, London*

Irrespective of height, the tops of buildings need to be carefully designed because of the contribution they make to the overall skyline. The selection of materials for new or refurbished buildings should seek to recognise and contribute to the particular location in Southampton, rather than considering the building in isolation.

Designers of schemes should provide urban design statements to support and explain their proposals in context. The Strategy is therefore seen as a flexible framework which aims to guide change, identifying physical projects to act as catalysts and opportunities that underpin a sustainable programme of development in the city over a 10-20 year horizon and beyond.

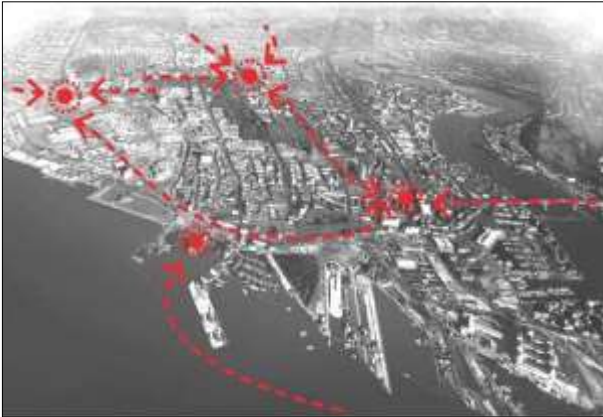
### ENHANCING THE ARRIVAL AND MOVEMENT THROUGH THE CITY



-  City Centre Gateway
-  Key City Route

## 4.2 KEY URBAN DESIGN THEMES

### 4.2.1 THEME 1 : Enhancing the arrival and movement through the city



*Defining key points of arrival into and clear routes through the city*

From Medieval times Southampton has been a port and has held this position in terms of its location on high ground descending towards Southampton Water. It has had both the potential to channel entry from the north to a few key waterfront locations, and also to present a dramatic introduction from the water. At present, any sense of arrival in Southampton city centre has become dissipated by unwelcome views of a place which has lost its identity. It has neither a readable pattern of buildings nor a strong sense of progressive transition leading to arrival in a distinctive central area.

The city centre analysis stage identified potential gateway locations, some already functioning as such – including the rail station and ferry terminus - but failing to signal a distinctive identity for Southampton.

Key movement routes should assist the arrival experience and present a clear structure for negotiating routes around and to key locations such as key attractions, car parks and public transport termini within the city centre.

Movement patterns should be directed towards creating:

- Simple two tier types of routes - city edge circulation
- city centre circulation
- Routes developed to be sympathetic to the predominant type of traffic they will be carrying ie. pedestrian, vehicular, or public transport

### Clear gateway components

By recognising where gateways into the central area exist or should be created, development and physical restructuring can be encouraged. Gateway components should aim to:

- Provide identity and meaning to the arrival experience – clearly crossing a threshold of scale
- Exhibit an intensity of activity
- Exploit the role of bridges, structures and architecture to provide a distinctive focus or transition that reinforces the identity of the city
- Indicate a sense of destination or arrival

### Integrated Transport Strategy

Key transportation corridors have been defined within the city centre for private, public, cyclist and pedestrian routes.

- Cross-city traffic is to be routed along Cumberland Place / Brunswick Place (northern) and A3057 Western Approach (southern) in the strategy area.
- Public transport will be serviced through two main facilities: a high profile city centre shuttle linking the Central Station, Civic Centre, Above Bar Street, the Coach Station, West Quay, the Waterfront and ferry terminus; and two improved bus interchanges on Pound Tree Road/ Vincent's Walk and Portland Terrace. Cross city routes are to be prioritised along New Road, West Quay Road and Palmerston Road.
- Cycle networks are intended to offer a high degree of permeability throughout the city centre with cycle lanes incorporated into existing highway lanes and extended cycle parking facilities at public transport interchanges, the central retail core. The main routes include Above Bar and High Street, East Park Terrace and Palmerston Road, Bargate Street and Hanover Buildings.
- The key pedestrian networks are focussed along the north - south spine with west - east connections from the main train station to Guildhall Square, Arundel Circus / Bargate Street to Hoglands Park and St. Michael's Street across to Bernard Street.

**RECONNECTING THE WATERFRONT**



-  Key Access Points
-  Key Visual Connections
-  Pedestrian Accessible Waterfront
-  Primary Public Spaces

**4.2.2 THEME 2 : Reconnecting the waterfront**

The role of the sea and rivers in Southampton’s history, culture and economic prosperity has been critical. Yet the relationship between the city and water has

become dislocated. The current heart of the city is distant from the water, and little of the waterfront area is accessible to the public. Some views towards the water remain, particularly from the old town which provide windows to the past and a hint of future relationships and

attractions that might be possible. The views of the docks are also important, providing evidence of both the city's economic role and industrial heritage.



*Defining key points of arrival into and clear routes through the city*

### Strengthening the North/South Spines

A number of key north-south routes exist within the current structure of the city. By strengthening the predominant north-south spines that form part of the city street pattern connections with the waterfront can be re established. These include the primary backbone of the city - Above Bar and the High Street along with Western Esplanade, Bugle Street and French Street.

This strengthening would be achieved through the following measures:

- Providing a clear unity and simplicity in terms of public realm materials and pedestrian realm design.
- Removing physical and visual barriers to pedestrian movement and facilitating crossings, particularly across the Town Quay
- Enhancing the pedestrian and visual corridors with the enhancement and animation of street frontages, including active ground floor use
- Increasing the width of pedestrian footpaths

- Protecting existing views and developing spaces around appropriate view points as a means to experience and interpret the city.



*Maintaining key visual and physical corridors to the waterfront, Bugle Street*

Establishing links to key waterfront focal points (some of which relate to the north south axis) will also be essential and primarily involves providing connections across Town Quay/Platform Road, and could be achieved by:

- Extending the public realm character across the road
- Providing pedestrian priority at crossing points
- Ensuring that access points to the waterfront are provided opposite crossings
- Ensuring that the focal points or landmarks within the waterfront areas are clearly visible

**ENRICHING THE PUBLIC REALM**



Key Public Realm Connections

Improved Public Realm

Primary Public Spaces

Secondary Public Spaces

**4.2.3 THEME 3 : Enriching the public realm**

Southampton is a city that is comparatively well endowed with public space. The Central Parks form an important and unique feature providing a green oasis in the central

*Proposed key public realm spaces along the North-South Spine area. In addition there is the waterside allure of dockside spaces.*



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High quality public realm has the potential to add value to its surrounding development by virtue of the views, openness and general amenity they provide. This 'added value' from such an important townscape relationship is underplayed in Southampton's parks, where buildings turn their backs on the space.



Providing a clear structure of key pedestrian routes and spaces

### High quality streets and new public spaces

The Enriching the Public Realm Drawing illustrates the underlying need to create a network of high quality streets and public spaces in Southampton. Strategic objectives must aim to:

- Identify the key pedestrian city routes
- Define a hierarchy and network of public spaces
- Promote improved connections with the waterfront
- Reinforce connections to existing open spaces

Public realm connections with the Central Parks should build upon links with the current restoration and enhancement proposals. These include improved public realm links on the primary north-south spine that link the Cenotaph with East Park, the junction with Commercial Road, Pound Tree Road and along Hanover Buildings to Houndwell Park.

In addition, the TPP Phase 1 works on Above Bar mark the first stage in the comprehensive refurbishment of the central pedestrian spine that should finally lead through to High Street and the waterfront.



The Cenotaph



Guildhall Square



The Bargate



Holyrood Church



Town Quay / Waterside House

The links between key public spaces should involve not only reinforcing the north south spine through the centre, but also extending the public realm from that spine in an east west direction. The following streets would compliment this approach and provide important links:

- Central Station / Civic Centre / East Park
- Arundel Circus / Bargate / Hanover Buildings
- St Michael's / Bernard Street / Oxford Street
- Town Quay and Canute Road

**CREATING LANDMARKS FOR THE CITY**



- Opportunity Sites
- Landmark Project

**4.2.4 THEME 4 : Creating landmarks**

Landmarks are an important component of a city's identity and provide a means of recognition, orientation and navigation. This is sometimes referred to as its 'legibility' – how the city is read by people on the ground.

Southampton's city centre has constrained legibility, with only a few distinctive landmarks or

buildings/structures that help the reading of the centre as one moves through it, although the parks play a key role in this.



*Providing a clear structure of key pedestrian routes and spaces*

The recognition and enhancement of landmark features or buildings should be explored to reflect both their historic role and perceptual importance within the city. For example, the Civic Centre complex provides a strong point of identity and reference within the city. However it suffers in terms of the quality, use and connectivity of its external spaces. These could be improved to enhance the overall significance and identity of the area.



*The vacant West Quay Phase 3 site will provide a new landmark public space*

Appropriate locations for new landmark features or buildings could include:

- Main points of arrival or orientation
- Areas which generate or contribute to street level activity
- Sites which assist the visual framework of the city (eg main routes and skyline impacts)
- Potential high value locations, such as the waterfront and overlooking the parks
- Locations which provide or reinforce local character and identity



*The piers along the waterfront, including Town Quay, offer magnificent opportunities to locate new landmark buildings and public spaces*



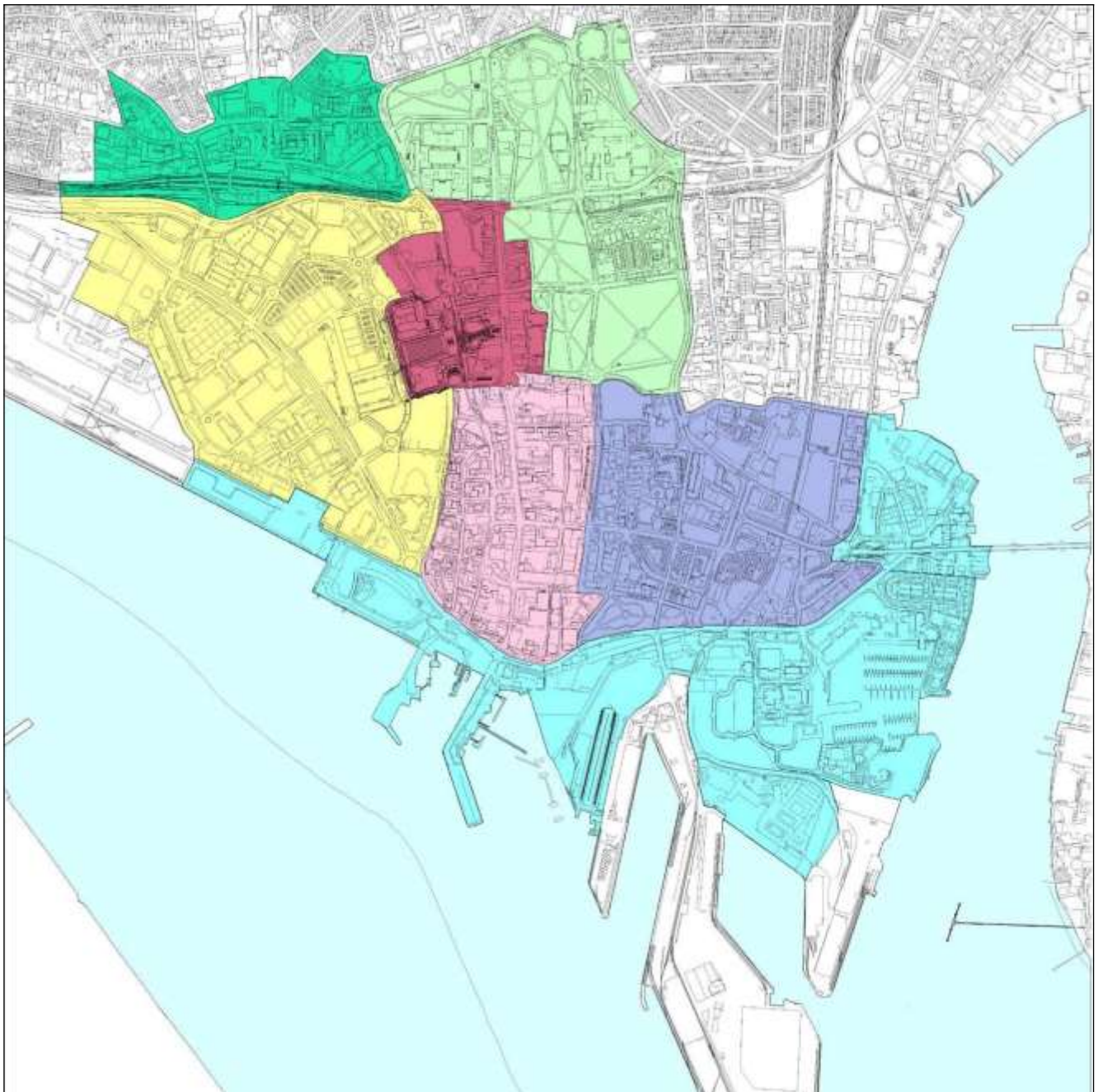
*The regeneration of the Royal Pier and Waterfront will provide the opportunity to create a significant waterfront destination for the city*

### Strong architectural elements

The keynote sites identified within the Urban Design Strategy as being appropriate for landmark elements (both spaces and buildings) are:

- Central Station Environs
- Guildhall Square and the Civic Centre together, with the potential redevelopment of Tyrell & Green
- Charlotte Place
- Town Arena and the Western Esplanade
- Royal Pier / Town Quay / Mayflower Park
- Above Bar and Bargate

**CHARACTER AREAS WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE**



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**LEGEND**

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| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Eastern  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Western           |  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Old Town | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Central Parks |  |