

# Wokingham Town Centre

## Environmental Improvements:

feedback from the Market Place & Peach Place workshop held on 16 November 2015

### Market Place

#### What is the role of this space?

- Market stalls
- Christmas tree - ideally at the road entrance corner
- Food spaces - for others as well as the Courtyard
- Transportation - lorries as well -both through and unloading
- Entertainment
- Walking (and space for mobility scooters to share pedestrian areas)
- Entertainment / Social / Market / Hub / Heart
- Evening events - user friendly - help Purple Flag initiative
- Enabling retailers to function including servicing (business ratepayers)
- Focal point for town
- Space for community to meet / socialise
- Market stalls
- A road traffic
- Create a setting for the Town Hall
- Pedestrian through route
- Major purpose is a Market Place (trading 50% of the time)
- "Courtyard" location and convenient social location
- Centre for major events
- Thoroughly Victorian - dominated by the Town Hall
- Multifunctional, adaptable, versatile
- Host variety of markets (night time, Christmas, food)

#### Does the proposed layout respond to the way the space is used?

- Very happy with it - definitely will use and market better
- Christmas tree and poppy corner very good
- Prefer planting and seating vs bollards
- Consider using bollards for security against ram raids (e.g. banks)
- Food traders downwind from market please

- Signalised crossing in wrong place (signalled mid-way, courtesy at the top)
- Signals need to be linked across town centre
- Top tree (closest to Courtyard) will prevent putting in the big stage for Carnival and concerts. Would be good to mark off an area for a stage and on site power supply
- Like the level area for stalls either side of road
- Needs to be completely flat at the top in front of Costa
- Start with a courtesy crossing to introduce people to the town
- Real issues with drainage - needs addressing
- No kerbs
- Pedestrianise out of hours e.g. 10am
- Exclude A-boards
- Is there an economic alternative to York Stone? Do we use it only in significant areas?
- Not enough thought given to servicing of retail units
- Not enough trees being proposed
- Good to lose the dropped level roadway through the Market Place
- Can offloading bays be located on the western side of Denmark Street? Rear access is better to units on the eastern side
- Concerned about proposed colour of material for paving around the Town Hall. Grey is dull and will not wear well if Yorkshire stone. Red would be much nicer for a market town.
- Materials - York stone but not too bland
- Declutter - keep to the edges / open
- Remove bollards
- Market stalls back to back and facing shops
- Outdoor café seating needs line to follow - could be contrasting paving
- Van blocks view of Sunny Saturdays
- Should events be more central? Need space between Courtyard and entertainment
- Needs to be attractively laid out with trees, benches, flowers and planters
- Need options for locating an illuminated Christmas tree
- Needs to be suitably illuminated as a Town Hall and town centre in the evenings
- CCTV in all spaces - for safety
- 20mph zone required
- Flexibility - need level surfaces and minimum physical objects
- Legibility of town and routes - match crossings with routes (e.g. Peach Street to new square)
- Back to back market stalls
- Trees clutter and obscure the focal point of the Town Hall. Placement is crucial - need to maximise view from all directions
- Seating round the base of the trees
- Public WiFi
- Discourage right hand turn into Rose Street

## **Is there enough flexibility in layout for all potential uses?**

- Yes
- Need more power points
- Servicing of existing retailers needs to be further considered
- Need to allow for parking for weddings
- Distributed utility/power/lighting
- Parking for Mayor, weddings etc.
- Privileged parking immediately adjacent to Town Hall for weddings and special occasions
- Power points all round
- Yes if you realign the trees (not on Clintons Corner, in the way of the Town Hall)
- Consider additional controlled crossing on Denmark Street

## **Other**

- Concern about utilities - programme of replacement. Can we coordinate works at the same time (offer incentives)?
- August 16 start - will it be finished in time for the Winter Carnival? Should Winter Carnival 2016 be cancelled?

# **Peach Place**

## **What is the role of this space?**

- Christmas market and events
- Themed days
- Quieter, much more planting
- Café with seating - somewhere to meet friends but what about impact on residents in the evening?
- Looks nice for walking through
- Opportunity for plaza-type approach: a place to socialise
- Hub for cafes and restaurants
- Communal space
- Specialist markets to complement those in the Market Place
- Focus on food and socialising
- Major centre for café society (evening meals and socialising)
- Retail concentration area
- Secondary events location (after the Market Place)
- Location for public art displays, statues etc.
- Good for eating
- Craft shops (e.g. Holme Grange)
- Children's entertainment
- Not a destination
- Social function / meeting place, spilling out of restaurants
- Child friendly throughout the day
- Social and Community events
- Christmas / specialist markets
- Ice rink
- Configurable, as unrestricted as possible
- Alfresco - tables and chairs
- Upmarket boutique area
- Street entertainment, Christmas market, ice skating rink, bespoke events

## **Does the proposed layout respond to the way the space is used?**

- How will people know the square is there (can't see from the road)?
- Prevent vehicle access out of hours
- Locate stage against M&S car park
- Need active usage to see things are happening in the square
- Address the levels, there is a distinct height difference between Peach Street and Rose Street
- Needs a feature to relieve dead space and create interest
- Boundary between shops and square is good
- Locate seating on sunny side
- Softer curves, not angular - diagonal is wrong line to encourage shop use

- Avoid permanent seating and structures to allow for youth activities and events
- A raised fountain would be nice
- Concerns about darkness and safety - height of buildings
- Increase utility by avoiding fixed objects, but need something to act as a feature
- Need awnings to offer protection from the elements
- Facility for temporary art installations (plinth)
- Benches and greenery, but not too strict and regimented
- Should be traffic free for most of the day
- Lighting should be appropriate to the area (tasteful, not too dark or bright, safe and relaxing)
- Paving should be tasteful and interesting (possibly textured)
- Could we have a water feature?
- Need to consider impact of noise on residents
- Don't obscure the Town Hall from Peach Street
- Trees are OK, position benches in front
- Like the indicative lighting
- Concerns about emergency access
- Public WiFi

### **Is there enough flexibility in layout for all potential uses?**

- How wide is the pedestrian link between the square and Peach Street? Too narrow for stalls? Add 1 metre
- Need at least 3 metres between doorways for a stall
- Can you run paid events by closing off the space at the entrances?
- Need power and water

# Unique to Wokingham

## What unique qualities make Wokingham special?

- Market
- Heritage
- Car accessible
- Flexibility of streets (can be closed on occasions)

## Can these be reflected in public art, materials & street furniture?

- Benches and detailing. Integrate with paving materials
- Don't fill the whole area with art, spread it around the town
- Multifunction approach, e.g. a sculpture which includes a light
- No modern art (no-one agrees with what's good). Better located in the entertainment zone at Carnival Pool
- Like the quirky cycle-shaped bike racks
- Need softer curves, not big blocks
- Like the wayfinder mosaic idea
- Art should be fun/lighthearted/quirky but in keeping with a market town
- War memorial near the Town Hall?
- Like the wayfinding features in the paving but mustn't be confusing to the visually impaired. Need careful placement
- Can we have a war memorial?
- Blue bricks in Town Hall edging for roads
- Signage to indoor war memorial
- Traditional art (not modern)
- Yes, reflect the town's unique qualities

## Can historic & cultural references be integrated into the spaces?

- Old Windsor forest, oak leaves & acorns
- Silk and weaving
- Walter family
- Horse trough (should be moved to its original position facing Peach Street)
- Fire engine stores to be retained
- Founded by Saxons
- Tudor - silk production
- Elizabethan - town charter
- Roundheads vs Cavalier battles
- Bishop of Salisbury
- Bell foundry
- Bull and bear baiting

## **Public art or large permanent object integrated into design of the space?**

- Avoid standalone sculpture, unless at the top where the road divides, as it gets in the way
- A water feature, something to gather round (but concerned about maintenance)
- Public art
- Prefer large permanent object
- Lots throughout the town rather than one dominant piece
- Integrate public art into design of the space
- Integrate public art into design of the space

# Materials

## Are the materials suitable for the role of the space?

- Needs to be non-slip
- Needs to be flat
- Don't like the clash of patterns (bottom left of materials sheet). Either properly regular and matched, clear contrast or intentionally softer.
- Keep track of fire station
- Metal studs are OK
- Keep paving simple - York stone all over rather than a mixture
- Not fond of the shiny silver granite
- Recover as many red pavers as possible for repair elsewhere
- Bland like any town
- We do not favour silver granite, prefer Yorkshire paving
- Materials must be safe - not slippery

## Should materials be the same across Wokingham?

- Use materials on the ground to show routes and highlight links through the town centre
- Use coloured paving to differentiate areas. No kerbs! Small kerbs are a trip hazard
- Different surfacing for the highway (cobble, granite setts) so you know you're entering a different zone
- Asphalt is not appropriate in the Market Place. It's cheap to install and replace but doesn't look good in between
- Granite setts are more expensive but durable. Concerns about maintenance.
- Market Place should reflect a market town
- Peach Place should reflect piazza & café culture
- Keep the York stone pattern of mixed shapes throughout the public places
- Desirable to have a clear perimeter (different material) around the Market Place

## Size of paving units

- Smaller blocks are preferred
- Mid-size blocks (not street size paving slabs or cobble stones)
- Larger blocks with integral mosaics

## Metal or stone for tactile paving & drain covers?

- Drainage is a real issue. Needs to be integrated to avoid big grilles
- If the drainage system is to be replaced can surface water be reused?
- Prefer metal
- Tactile and colour identification needed for crossings. Prefer matching stone rather than metal

## **Do proposed colours complement surrounding buildings?**

- Red brick detracts from the red of the Town Hall
- Greys and beiges work well with red brick
- Red preferably or another colour for variety - was black (blue) originally
- Split view - contrast or consistent with Town Hall?
- Contrasting paving around the Town Hall (blue stone)
- Samples of York stone required in three shades

## **Does quality of proposed materials match that of surrounding buildings?**

- Like York stone - will make buildings stand out
- The proposed extent of York Stone is overpowering and out of keeping with the Market Place. Historically bricks were made locally and red brick would be more appropriate.

# Street furniture

## Views on current street furniture

- Need sufficient waste bins (attractive ones)
- There is too much clutter. Get rid of bollards and signs
- Confusing - where's the map?
- Too much clutter
- Too many street signs and street furniture around the town centre - please remove
- Need more cycle racks around the town
- Too many "A" frames - remove from footways
- No recycling bins are available - very important to influence people's behaviour
- Current bins are all different
- Dislike bollards (unless rising) existing ones are in the way
- Cycle racks get in the way of events and encourage people to cycle in pedestrian areas - put them in the car parks
- "A" boards are untidy and hazardous and should be banned from the town centre

## Is current pedestrian signage adequate?

- Use a mosaic link to intrigue
- No (railway station not signed)
- Signage needed around the town like the upstanding maps but balanced with the need to reduce furniture

## Which materials are most appropriate?

- Traditional materials - iron and timber (hardwood)
- Wood and traditional materials
- Link to the past - oak
- More traditional materials
- Wooden benches preferred as a nod to the heritage/traditional
- Need to be consistent in furniture materials
- Oak (Oakingham)

## Which bench styles are appropriate?

- Contemporary forms
- Contemporary style
- Use top quality timber, place Diamond Jubilee plaques on new benches, relocate old benches
- Provide a variety of styles
- Black ends, not modern, not too low
- Style to match the cycle racks
- Wood, not stone, wrought iron style

- Modern and trendy for Carnival Pool
- Traditional for Market Place
- Integrated seat/planter, but hedge behind will be used as a bin!
- Market Place - wrought iron and wood - modern Victorian style
- Peach Place - wavy bench to help soften with water feature

### **Should benches have arm and back rests?**

- A mixture
- Some with arms (to prevent rough sleeping) others without for groups
- Backs preferred, some with arms and some without
- Dividers to prevent overnight sleeping

### **Should furniture be bespoke and unique to Wokingham?**

- Yes, with the old Borough acorn carved into the back
- Yes
- Really like the bike-shaped cycle racks

### **Which style of furniture do you prefer?**

- Traditional fingerpost signs
- Where possible try to match the existing fingerposts
- Contrast needed in signage, but not too modern
- Black signs with gold edging
- Wrought iron lighting to match iron and wood benches in Market Place
- Place lighting in the ground - flexible
- Signage should be consistent
- Downlighters not uplighters
- Put street lighting on buildings, not free standing
- More lighting in the market area
- Non reflective materials that colour contrast with surrounding area

### **Should furniture be same throughout the town or have subtle variations for individual spaces?**

- Benches in Market Place should be against Town Hall, not freestanding as they waste space

# Planting

## Are there the right number of trees?

- Too many trees decrease the flexibility of the space
- One nice tree is better than more small ones, but it shouldn't be dark
- Need more

## Are they appropriate for role and function of the square?

- Must be at least one oak in the Market Place!
- One central large oak with planters around
- In the correct places

## Upright, ornamental or more natural shape?

- Smaller trees, but need to be robust against vandalism
- Natural
- Oaks (palm & sessile are nice)
- Silver birch (pale bark)
- Dwarf conifers in planters
- Not too heavy looking but a good size for Christmas lights
- Not fruit trees (wasps!)
- Consistent with space
- Small growing
- Upright & natural

## Are planting beds appropriate for role of the space?

- Yes
- Raised beds provide delineation and ram raid protection
- Maybe troughs in the triangle, but scope for vandalism
- Green and flower planting is desirable but needs to be done tastefully
- Yes
- Peach Place, not Market Place
- Yes

## What forms of planting would you like to see?

- Planting that can be moved elsewhere during events
- Not too regimented - soft & flowing not straight harsh lines & boxes
- Lots of it
- "Green walls" instead of big bland walls