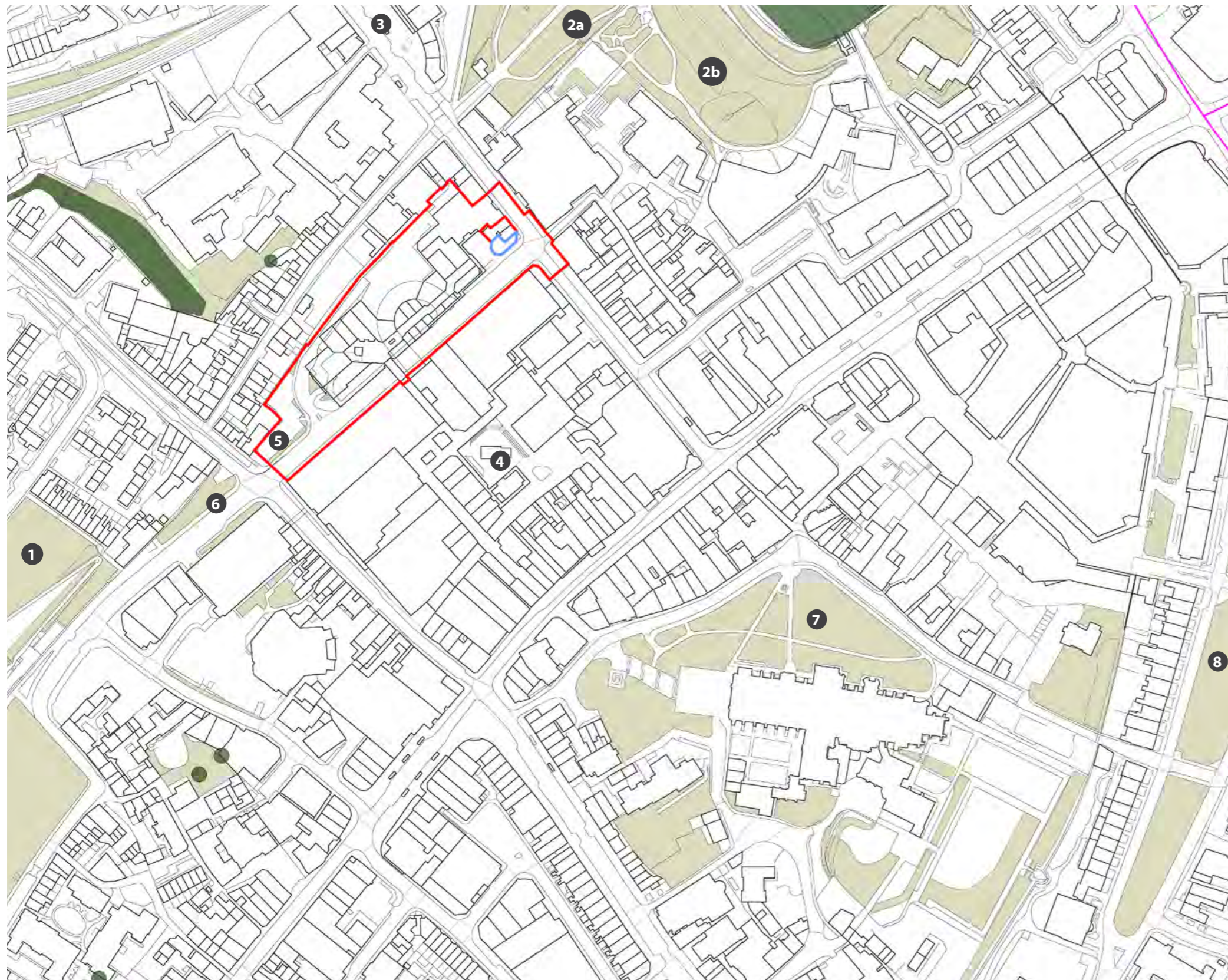


Chapter 2.0 Site and Context Appraisal













2.0 Site and Context Appraisal

- 2.0** Existing City Centre Green Spaces
- 2.1** Townscape Appraisal - Existing Hard and Soft Landscape Areas
- 2.2** Townscape Appraisal - Existing Building Frontages Study
- 2.3** Townscape Appraisal - Existing Pedestrian Routes
- 2.4** Townscape Appraisal - Existing Vehicular Movement
- 2.5** Townscape Appraisal - Character Areas
- 2.6** Townscape Appraisal - Building Height Analysis
- 2.7** Townscape Appraisal - Historic Context
- 2.8** Townscape Appraisal - Conservation Area
- 2.9** Summary of Key Opportunities and Constraints
- 2.10** Conclusion Opportunities and Constraints

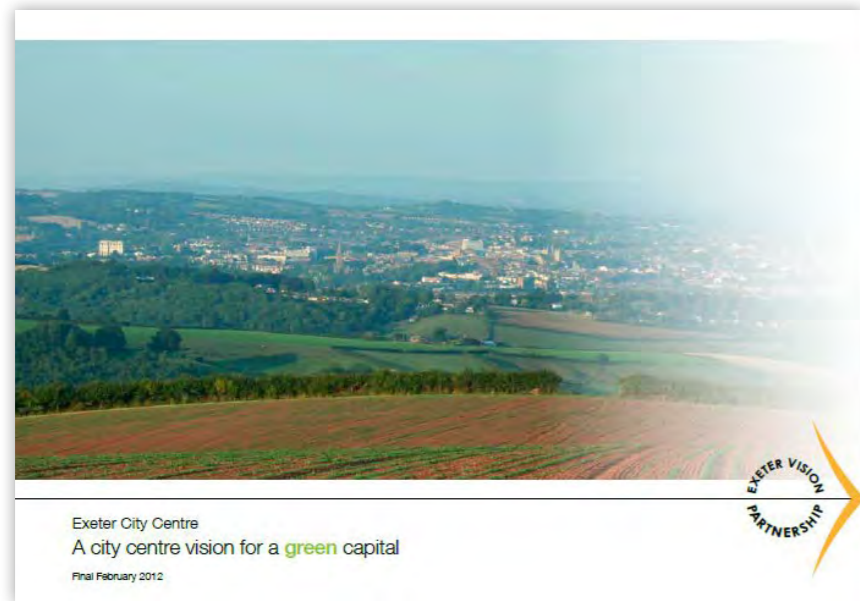
2.0 Existing City Centre Green Spaces



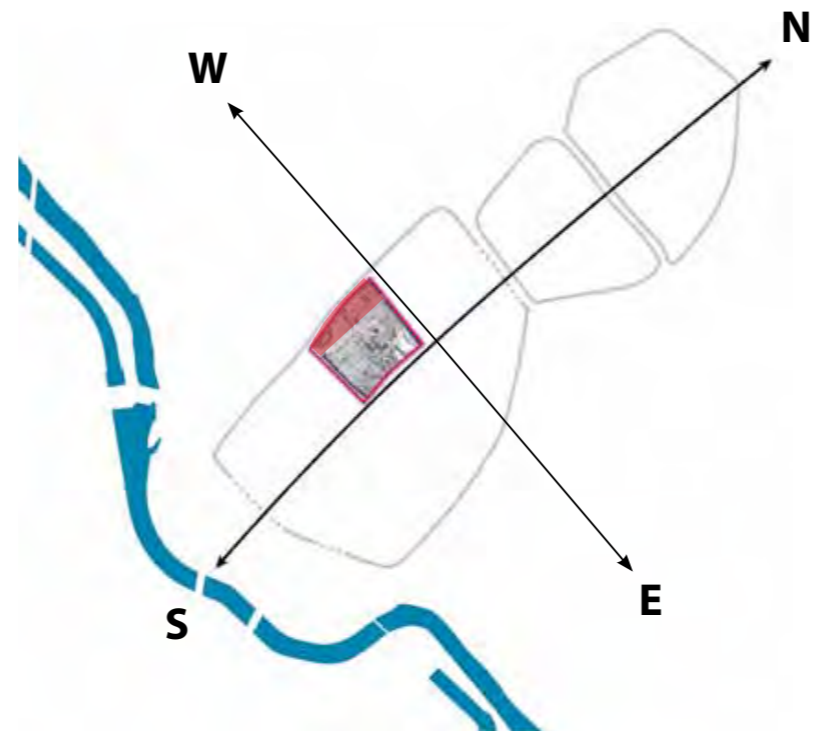
The City's Landscape Analysis

-  Harlequins Centre Re-development Application Site
-  Tree Preservation Orders Area
-  Green Spaces
-  1 St Bartholomew's Cemetery
-  2a Northernhay Gardens
-  2b Rougemount Gardens
-  3 Exeter Central Station civic space
-  4 Guildhall Shopping Centre civic space
-  5 Harlequins Shopping Car Park
-  6 Green Planted Verges on the corner of Bartholomew Street East
-  7 Cathedral Gardens
-  8 Southernhay Gardens





Exeter's City Centre - A City Centre Vision for a Green Capital (February 2012)



Linking The Site To The Rest Of The City And Beyond

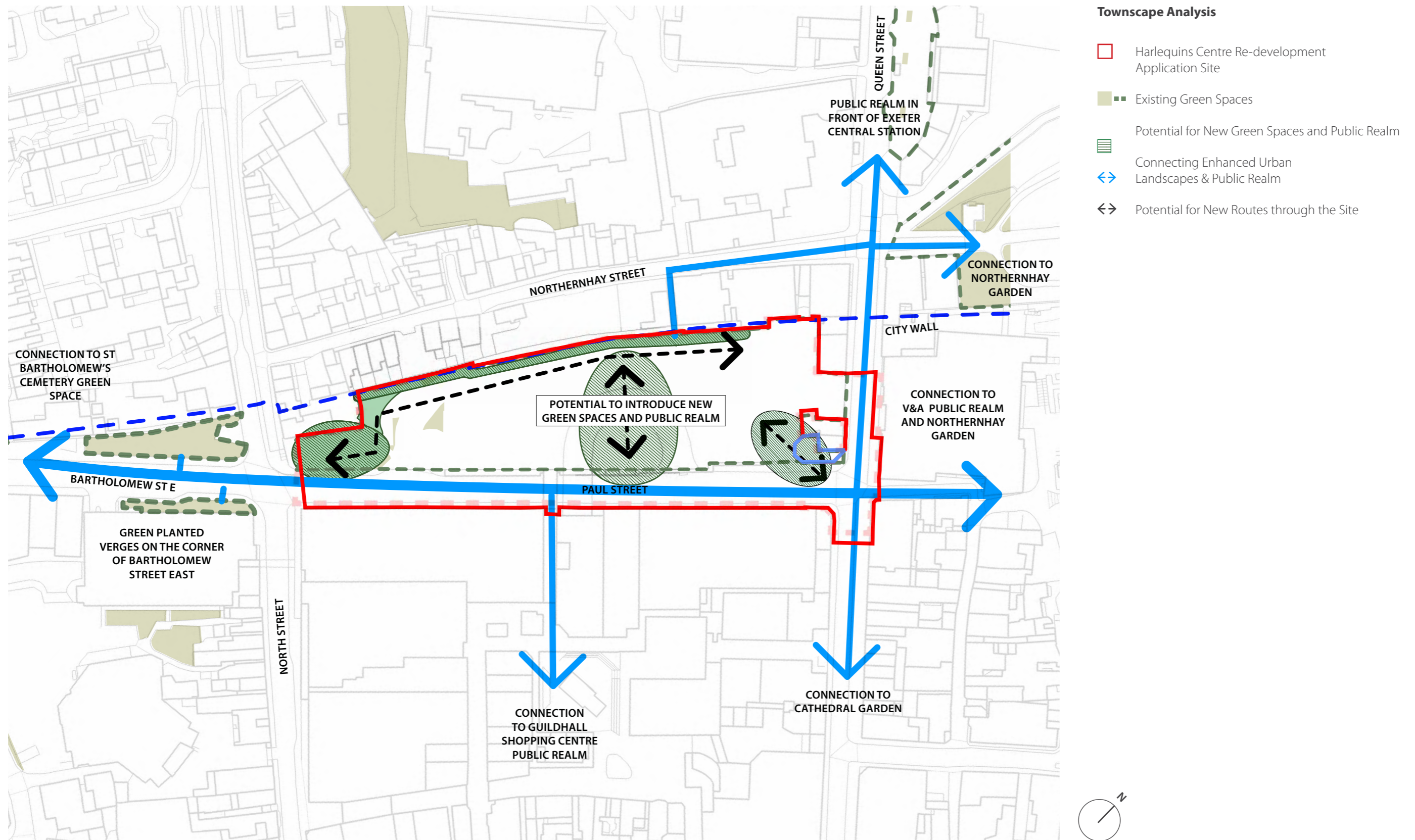
The Harlequins centre has been identified within '*Exeter's City Centre – A City Centre Vision for a Green Capital*' document (February 2012) as a key strategic site within the city centres regeneration. Helping link up the city as a whole.



The Site as a Green Stepping Stone

Opportunity to connect the site into Exeter's existing network of high-quality pedestrian-dominated streets, public spaces and parks which the development can positively contribute to and enhance.

2.1 Townscape Appraisal - Existing Hard and Soft Landscape Areas



2.1.1 Local

The summary analysis below should be read in conjunction with Aspects Tree Consultancy Arboricultural Impact Assessment Reports, along with EAD Ecological Assessment Report.

Existing hard and soft landscape areas across the site exist as follows:

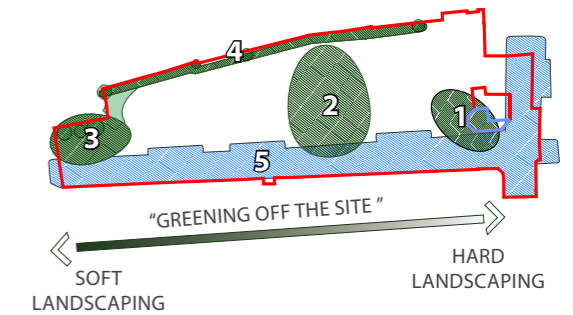
- The existing Harlequins Centre site is currently an underutilized city centre brownfield site
- The existing landscape in and around the site is heavily car dominated. There is a service road which runs at the back of the site with a large service yard at the back of the ramp and around the existing buildings.
- There is a surface car park to the southern corner of the site which currently accommodates circa 25 spaces. There are raised planters boarding the carpark where there is currently dense overgrown vegetation. There are currently further car parking spaces underneath the ramp.
- The surface treatments throughout this area are low-quality with either tarmac or concrete pavers being used. The area is utilitarian in its use and appearance.

- The courtyard area to the north of the site fronting onto Paul Street and Queen Street junction is a hard surfaced area with brick pavers. There is currently no greenery in this area.
- There is currently a high-level fence separating the northern corner of the site from the main service yard.
- The area immediately adjacent to the City Wall is currently grassed but there are a number of areas left bare or weedy. The general quality of this space is poor with the City Wall being denied it's potential to be read and experienced as a local and national heritage asset.
- There is a deciduous tree in close proximity to the wall in the southwestern corner of the plot. This tree offers some screening of the site from adjacent properties along Northernhay Street.
- There is a further cluster of approximately seven deciduous trees in a raised planter to the south eastern corner of the site. The height and diameter of their canopies mean they offer some screening of the site when viewing the existing building from Bartholomew Street East, North Street and the Iron Bridge. There is some shrubbery around the trees in this area which is considered of low quality and overgrown for the flower beds.

Summary of Key Opportunities

- The redevelopment of the site offers the potential to create a number of high quality soft and hard landscape spaces in and around the new building and existing vehicle ramp. Each space within the proposal has its own distinct character with an interlinking green corridor running along the back of the site and adjacent to the City Wall.
- There are opportunities to enhance the setting of the City Wall at the rear of the site and to introduce a green passageway linking the rear of the development and maintaining the existing right of way to Maddocks Row.
- Where possible the proposal will retain the existing trees on the site helping to screen views across the site and neighbouring buildings.
- Opportunity to offer biodiversity and ecological net gains across the site.
- Opportunity to create a better streetscape environment with street planting helping improve air quality along Paul Street and to create a better environment for pedestrians.

- Opportunity to introduce habitat boxes across the site and within the elevations of the building to encourage new wildlife across the site.
- Opportunity to ensure that the scheme makes a positive contribution to the city's existing rich network of biodiverse green spaces such as Northernhay Gardens and Bartholomew's Cemetery positioned to the north and south of the site respectively.



Key Opportunity Diagram NTS



Photograph from Northernhay Street



Photograph from the corner of North Street and Bartholomew Street East showing the existing tree cover offering some screening of the existing building.

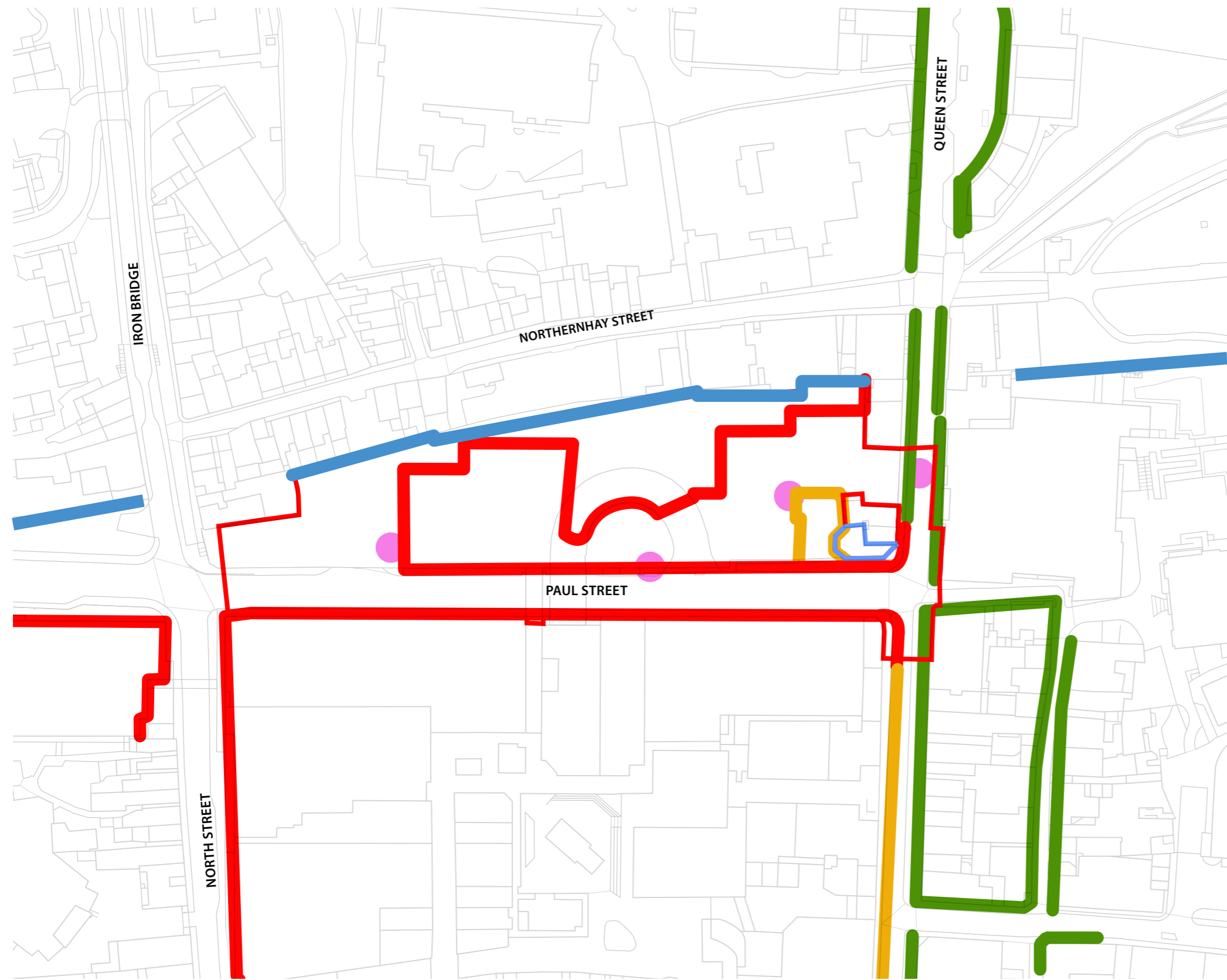


Photograph of the existing poor quality courtyard fronting onto Paul Street and Queen street junction.



Photograph of the city wall at the rear of the site with low quality surface treatments and soft landscaping

2.2 Townscape Appraisal - Existing Building Frontages Study



Townscape Analysis - Frontages Study

- Harlequins Centre Re-development Application Site
- Inactive Low Quality Frontages
- Semi Active Frontages
- Active Frontages
- Multiple Existing Entrance Point
- Existing City Wall



Strategic Diagram



Opportunity for the proposal to offer new high quality active frontages which connect into the Network of pedestrian-dominated streets and public spaces and parks which the development can positively enhance.

2.2.1 Local

Paul Street

- The main entrance to the existing Harlequins Centre is situated off a courtyard in the northern corner of the site. There is an entrance to the undercroft car park in the middle of the site and a further entrance into the existing building in the southern corner via a flight of steps. There are a small number of active retail frontages positioned in and around the public square. These continue around the corner of Queen Street via the Hide and Seek unit as shown in the photographs below.
- The Paul Street frontage is predominantly a large brick characterless elevation with red window frames and obscured glazing. There is currently a pedestrian link bridge and vehicle ramp at a high level across Paul Street.
- The vehicle entrance and circular ramp up to the Guildhall Shopping Centre and air grilles to the undercroft car park are prominent features along Paul Street and make a negative contribution.
- The environment along Paul Street is made worse by the Canyon effect of the Guildhall Shopping centre which is also a characterless and a inactive low-quality frontage.
- The shop fronts within the existing building face inwards and onto a enclosed central mall and pedestrian thoroughfare.
- The shops within the existing building make little or no offering to the streetscape along Paul Street itself. Any windows in the building that manifest themselves on the external elevation are either small, featureless or positioned above street level.

Existing Service Road / Yard At The Rear Of The Site

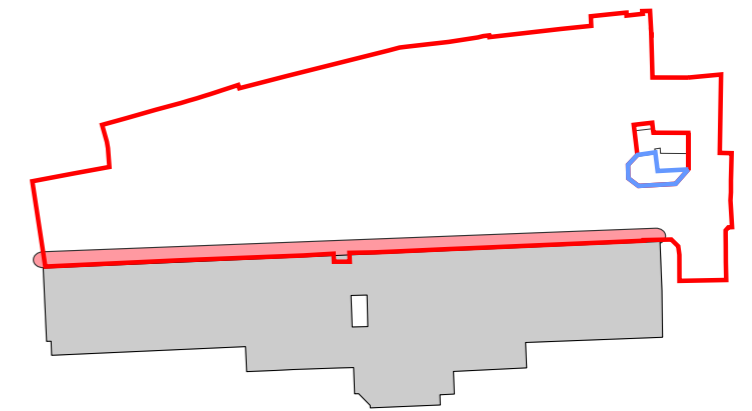
- The rear of the site is predominantly utilitarian in design and appearance. There are minimal active frontages at the rear of the site with only entrance points for services and deliveries.
- There is also a vehicle entrance into the car park at the rear of the site which detracts further from the frontages of the buildings at a low level.

Queen Street

- There are vibrant and active frontages along Queen Street predominantly commercial in use being either shops or restaurants.
- The Royal Albert Memorial Museum is also situated on Queen Street and is a key tourist attraction in the city.
- There is a large footfall of people moving along Queen Street it being a key primary pedestrian route through the city.

Summary of Key Opportunities

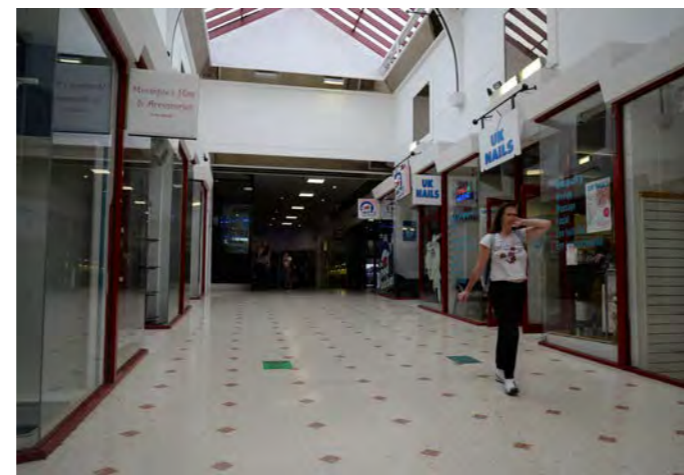
- Opportunity to upgrade the appearance of the development addressing Paul Street and Queen Street with new active frontages and clearly defined entrances that tie into existing high-quality pedestrian dominated streets and public spaces
- The elevation facing Paul Street and the corner building facing onto Queen Street (red below) are largely featureless with no reference to the scale or detail of surviving historic buildings in Exeter. There is an opportunity for a contextual response that contributes and enhances the conservation area and city via delivery of new open public spaces at pedestrian level



Key Opportunity Diagram NTS



Photograph of the city wall at the rear of the site showing the existing low quality and inactive frontages



Photograph of the existing shopping mall inward-looking and offering no active street frontage to Paul Street.

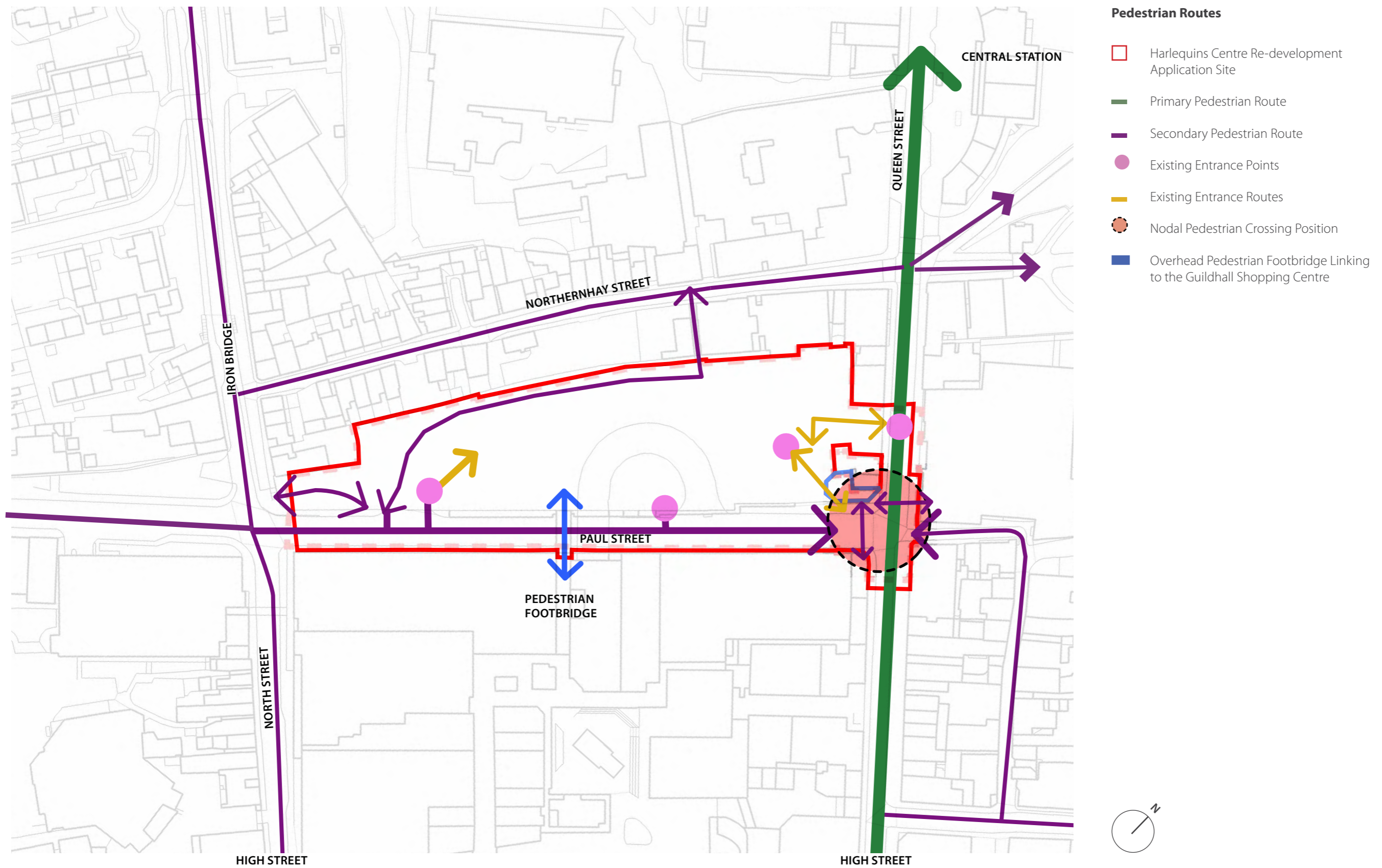


Photograph of the existing vehicle ramp entrance and exit to the Guildhall car park situated along Paul Street



Photograph of the existing courtyard fronting onto Paul Street and Queen Street Junction.

2.3 Townscape Appraisal - Existing Pedestrian Routes



2.3.1 Local Level

Paul Street

- Paul Street is a poor quality car-dominated street with narrow pavements on each side of the road. There are no active frontages along Paul Street with blank featureless elevations either side of the carriageway.
- The existing Harlequins Centre has three pedestrian entrance points one situated to the north of the site with access off the existing courtyard area. A second entrance close to the ramp which allows access into the undercroft car park and a third entrance to the south of the site with access to the main shopping mall.
- There is an existing pedestrian right of way along the rear of the site following the service road which needs to be maintained and which links the south of the site to Maddocks Row.
- There is an existing high-level pedestrian footbridge which crosses over Paul Street linking the existing Harlequins Centre at a high level to the Guildhall shopping centre. There is also a separate vehicular ramp which acts as the sole means of access into and out of the Guildhall Car park.
- There is a low-level entrance to the Guildhall car park which discharges onto Paul Street. This is situated just below the ramp on the opposite side of the road. There is an occasional flow of people using this entrance and exit.
- Paul Street is also used as a service street with a large number of heavy service vehicles using the road to deliver to the Harlequins Centre and the Guildhall Shopping Centre. There are two dedicated service entrances along Paul Street for the Guildhall Shopping Centre.

- The cumulative effect of high levels of traffic is made worse by the height and massing of the buildings on either side of Paul Street and creates a canyon-like effect which is seen as contributing negatively to pedestrian experience on Paul Street.

Queen Street

- Queen Street is a primary pedestrian route linking the east and west of the city. The streetscape along Queen Street is vibrant with a number of active frontages along its length. There are a large number of important buildings situated along Queen Street such as Exeter College building, Exeter Central Train Station and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum all of which generate a lot of pedestrian movement. Queen Street is also a key route linking the city centre to the city's main St David's railway station to the west.

Northernhay Street

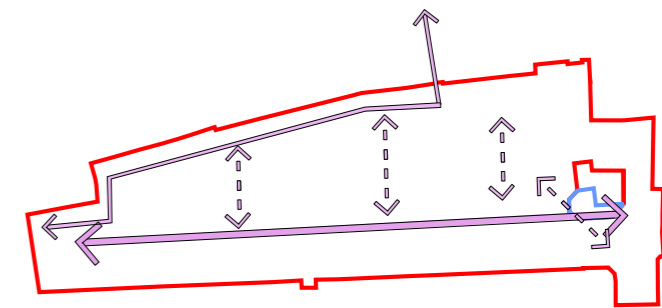
- Northernhay Street is predominantly residential in use, therefore, the footfall is more moderate. However, at times the route is used as a cut through for accessing destinations south of the city and to the River Exe.

Paul Street and Queen Street Junction

- Currently, the junction is poorly designed to cater for the amount of vehicle and pedestrian movement. There is also street clutter in the form of railings and highways signage which acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement.

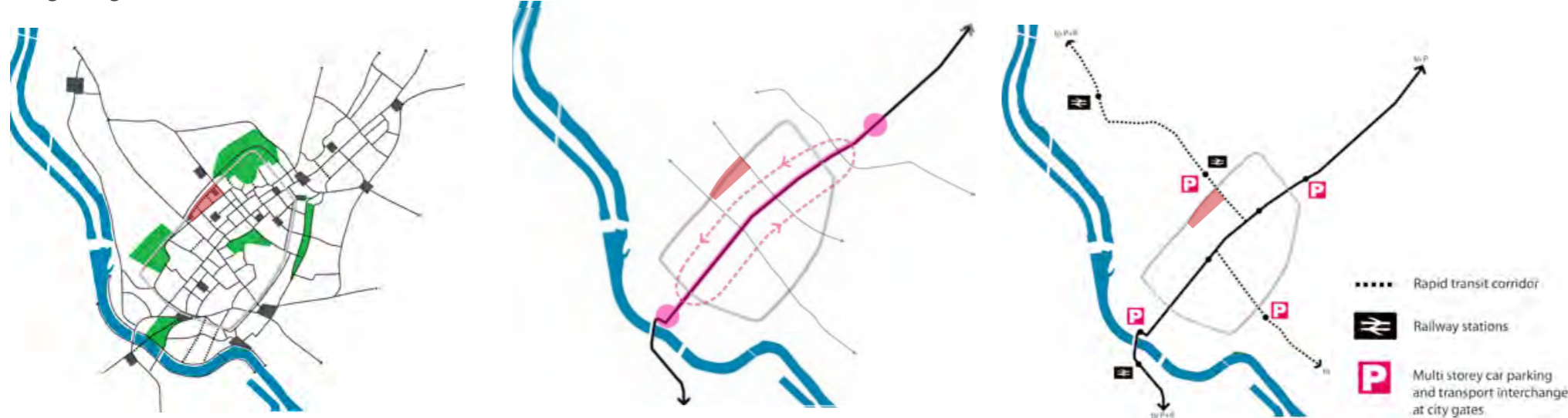
Summary of Key Opportunities

- There are opportunities to significantly improve the highway along Paul Street in order to prioritise pedestrian movement along its length.
- Opportunity to reconfigure Paul Street and Queen Street Junction to reduce traffic flows and reduce the conflict between pedestrian and vehicle movements creating a better pedestrian environment.
- Opportunity to green up the highways with new street furniture and street planting
- Opportunity to create an attractive secondary route along the length of the City Wall at the rear of the site which maintains the existing right of way and better utilises Maddocks Row.
- Reduce the canyon-like effect along Paul Street with the potential to set the buildings massing back from the highway and opening up the ground floor planes for sight-lines and thoroughfares across the site and to the city wall beyond.



Key Opportunity Diagram NTS

Strategic Diagrams



Opportunity to connect into a Network of high-quality pedestrian-dominated streets, public spaces and parks which the development can positively contribute to and enhance.

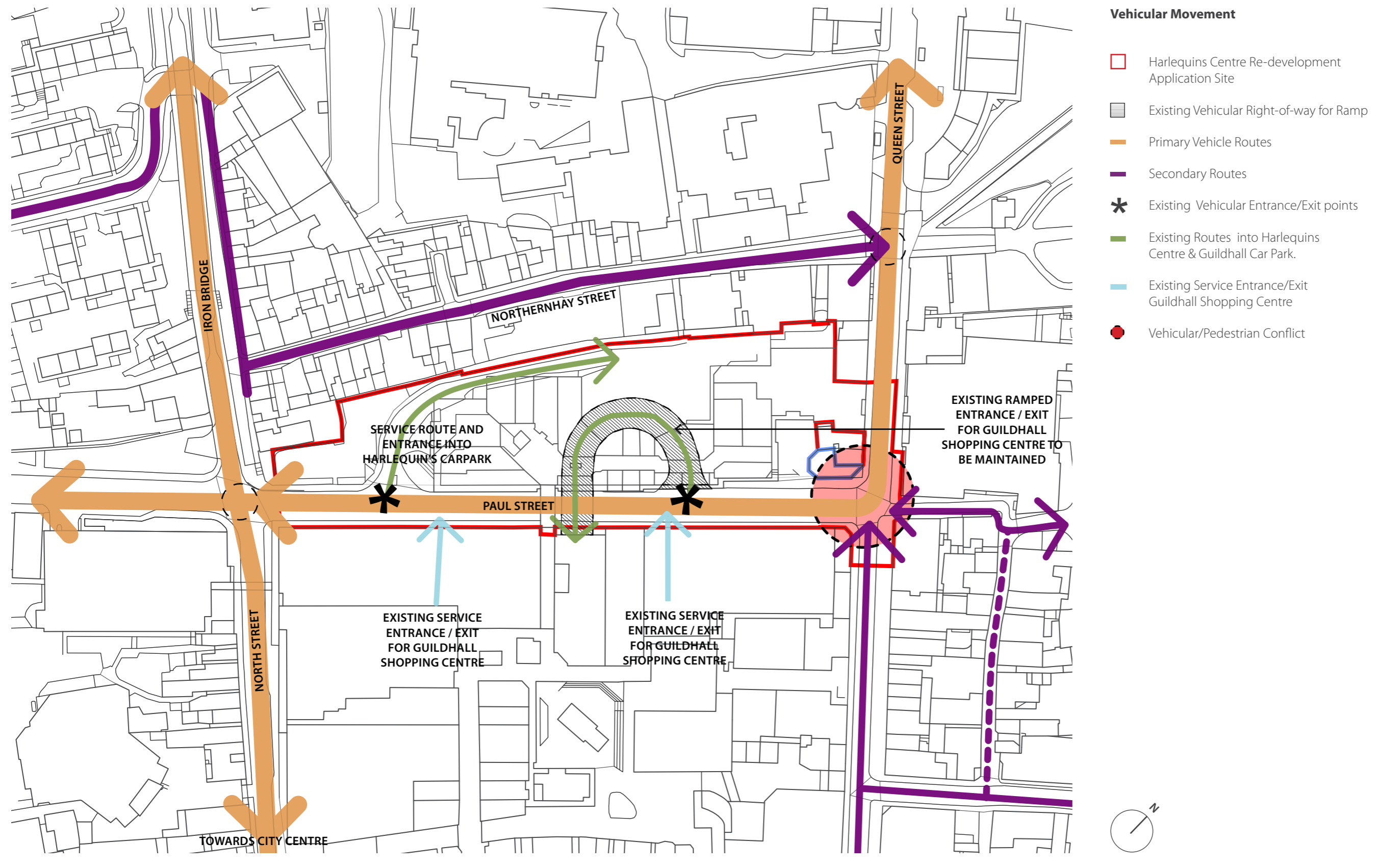
Opportunities to create and activate an attractive secondary network of streets and lanes which connect back to the city centre quarters and high street.

Opportunity to prioritise pedestrians movement in the city centre and discourage cross-town through traffic reducing conflict between pedestrians and vehicle movement.



Photograph down Paul Street of the existing pedestrian link and vehicle ramp flyovers.

2.4 Townscape Appraisal - Existing Vehicular Movement



2.4.1 Local Level

Paul Street

- Paul Street is currently a utilitarian service road which is a primary vehicle route for traffic heading in and out of the city centre. Paul Street is often used as a cut through for traffic prohibited from using the main high street to the west.
- The road is car dominated with three traffic lanes and narrow pavement widths either side. There is a dedicated turning lane into the surface car park to the south of the site and a dedicated turning lane into the vehicle ramp.
- There is an existing service road at the back of the site which accesses the service yard at the rear of the existing Harlequins Centre and the undercroft car park.
- The existing vehicle ramp is a key site constraint it being the sole means of access into and out of the Guildhall Car Park opposite the site. This needs to be maintained as part of any future redevelopment of the site.
- Currently, the ticket barriers for the car park are situated at the top of the ramp and during peak times, there is a backlog of queueing traffic down the ramp and onto Paul Street.
- There are two existing service entrances and exits along Paul street which serve the Guildhall Centre. These discharge out onto Paul Street.

Queen Street

- Queen street is equally a primary route through the city. Several bus routes and stops are positioned along its length. Buses use this as a key artery into and out of the city connecting up to the High Street.
- Queen Street is a key route for traffic accessing the Guildhall Carpark and Harlequins Car Parks

North Street / Iron Bridge

- North Street and Iron Bridge are also primary routes for traffic crossing the city with traffic turning along Paul Street in order to access the Harlequins and Guildhall Car Parks.

Northernhay Street

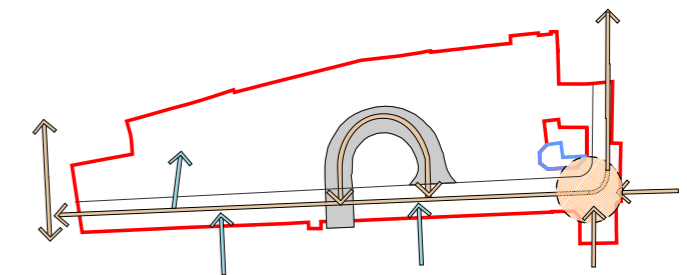
- Northernhay Street is predominantly residential in uses with little traffic flowing along it. There is a surface car park adjacent to rear of the site.

Queen Street / Paul Street Junction

- The junction is currently poorly designed with traffic signals and railings cluttering the street scape. The junction is currently heavily car dominated with traffic flowing in all directions causing hindrance to the movement of cyclists and pedestrians across the junction.

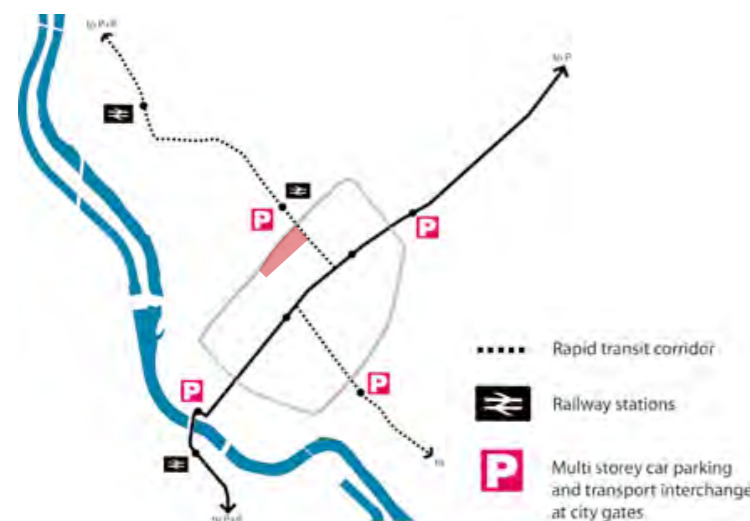
Summary / Conclusion of Key Opportunities

- There is an opportunity to significantly improve the highway along Paul Street and the Queen Street junction in order to reduce traffic flows and prioritise pedestrian movement.
- Opportunity to reconfigure the access arrangements into and out of the Guildhall shopping centre car park by moving the existing vehicle barriers from the top of the ramp and relocating them to the bottom in order to prevent cars queuing on the ramp and adding to the noise and air pollution.
- Opportunity to reconfigure the Paul Street and Queen Street Junction to reduce traffic flows and conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle movements.
- Opportunity to create an attractive secondary route along the length of the City Wall and turn what is currently a service road and service yard into a new pedestrian friendly corridor.
- Opportunity to reduce parking numbers on the site in favour of encouraging people to use modes of public transport such as bus and train stops which are located along Queen Street a short walk from the site.



Key Opportunity Diagram NTS

Strategic Diagrams

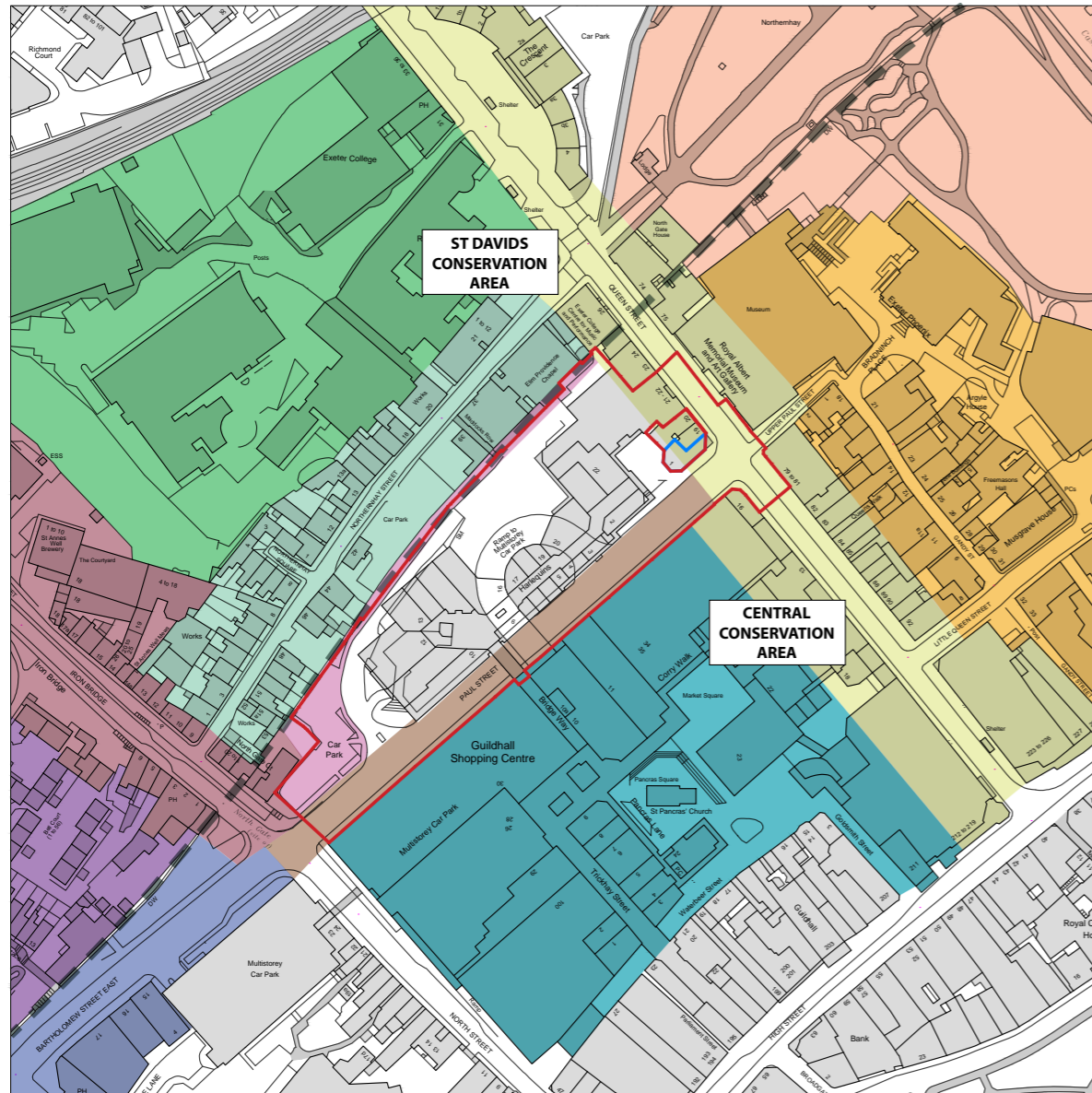


Opportunity to prioritise pedestrians movement in the city centre and discourage cross-town through traffic and reduce conflict between pedestrians, cyclist and vehicle movements



Opportunities to create and activate an attractive secondary network of streets and lanes which connect back to the city centre quarters and high street.

2.5 Townscape Appraisal - Character Areas



Townscape Character Areas

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| — Site Boundary | ■ Northernhay Street |
| ■ Queen Street | ■ Northernhay & Rougemont Gardens |
| ■ Exeter College | ■ Guildhall Shopping Centre |
| ■ Gandy Street | ■ City Wall |
| ■ Iron Bridge/St David's Hill | ■ Exe Street & St Bartholomew's |
| ■ Bartholomew Street East | ■ Cemetery |
| ■ Paul Street | — Conservation Area Boundary |

2.5.1 Local

Harlequins Centre

The Harlequins Centre comprises of a large 'American' style shopping mall of around 32 shops. The centre is connected to the Guildhall Shopping Centre via a high-level pedestrian footbridge and vehicle ramp into the neighbouring Guildhall car park. The shopping centre has been a satisfactory destination with a variety of different businesses occupying the centre over time benefitting from an internal open fronted market style shopping experience. However, in recent decades it has fallen into decline and despair with shoppers choosing to use the nearby high-street, Guildhall or Princesshay development instead. Due to the centre facing onto a heavily trafficked street along with poor architectural design and inactive frontage the building and its external environment has had a damaging impact on the area.

City Wall

This linear space follows the City Wall from the junction with North Street in the south to Maddock's Row to the west of the Harlequins Centre. A public footpath follows the eastern side of the wall, rising up from southwest to northeast.

Guildhall Shopping Centre & Car Park

The site is in close proximity to the Guildhall Shopping Centre and Car Park. The Guildhall has become a premium shopping and dining destination in recent years with good connections to the high-street and nearby transport hubs such as Exeter Central Station. The Guildhall centre with its large carpark and poor architectural design and inactive frontages has resulted in building and its external environment having a damaging impact on the area and acting as a barrier to movement across the city.

Queen Street

Queen Street comprises a large scale, formal streetscape with an urban character with a variety of three storey traditional buildings and associated materials, including public buildings such as the Royal Albert Memorial Museum which is a major destination for visitors. The street is lined by a mix retail, commercial and civic land uses - with a change from educational/civic uses to the north-west to retail and leisure as Queen Street nears the High Street. Central Station forecourt, in the centre of the street, is Exeter's second train

station situated within the heart of the city centre. The station is a classic 1930's building on a gentle curve with a central entrance. Queen Street is used as a key primary route for both pedestrians and vehicles. The street is broadly level with well contained views and vistas along the street - terminated by the High Street and Cathedral Towers to the south-east.

Paul Street

Paul Street is currently a canyon like space dominated by adjacent large scale retail and commercial buildings with largely blank facades. The street falls from the northeast to the southwest. There is significant vehicular movement and associated activity, and the street is currently dominated by the vehicular movement areas, with narrow pavements.

Bartholomew Street West

Bartholomew Street West comprises a mix of land uses including retail, pub/restaurant, parking, student accommodation and small scale commercial & leisure uses. The street rises up to the southwest from the junction with Paul Street, Iron Bridge and North Street creating views along Paul Street to RAMM and the Phoenix, which is partially hidden behind the existing pedestrian bridge.

Northernhay Street

Northernhay Street is situated at the rear west of the site is linked via a public right of way along Maddocks Row. The Street is characterised by one, two and three storey period houses that increase in height as you go move down the hill, including several listed buildings and structures and a number of pleasant groupings including Northernhay Square.

Gandy Street

To the north of Queen Street, Gandy Street is lined by a continuous frontages of mainly three storeys, mid-19th century terraced buildings. The relative narrowness of the street, give a different character, with more intimate spaces and sense of enclosure, and provide a different mix of uses with a range of independent shops and bar/restaurants that complement Queen St and the Guildhall Shopping Centre. Exeter Phoenix and Exeter Central Library are located to the north of Gandy Street and are major city centre visitor destinations.

Northernhay & Rougemont Gardens

Northernhay & Rougemont Gardens are a Registered Park and Garden. They have a green, relaxed character which contrasts strongly with other parts of the city centre, and are elevated above the surrounding city centre providing open views to the north and west, with framed vistas between existing buildings and in particular along Northernhay Street from the War Memorial.

Exeter College Campus

This area of the city is home to number education facilities, in particular, Exeter College which has a number of campus buildings situated along and off Queen Street. This generates a lot of daily footfall along Queen Street particularly from Students visiting the college buildings and High Street.

Rougemont Hotel

The Rougemont Thistle Hotel, situated on the corner of Northernhay and Queen Street stands opposite central station and is as a large prominent Victorian building that is a significant feature of the city townscape. The building is locally listed and acknowledged as making a positive contribution to the character of the area. The building height is noticeable on the city's skyline and the tallest building in the immediate area measuring in excess of 6 storeys in height.

Iron Bridge Street & St David's Hill

This historic route forms one of the western approaches into the city centre, with the dramatic Iron Bridge cutting across the Exe Street valley - linking St David's Hill to Northgate. The tighter grain of the buildings creates a more intimate urban form. There are several listed buildings and structures.

Exe Street & St Bartholomew's Cemetery

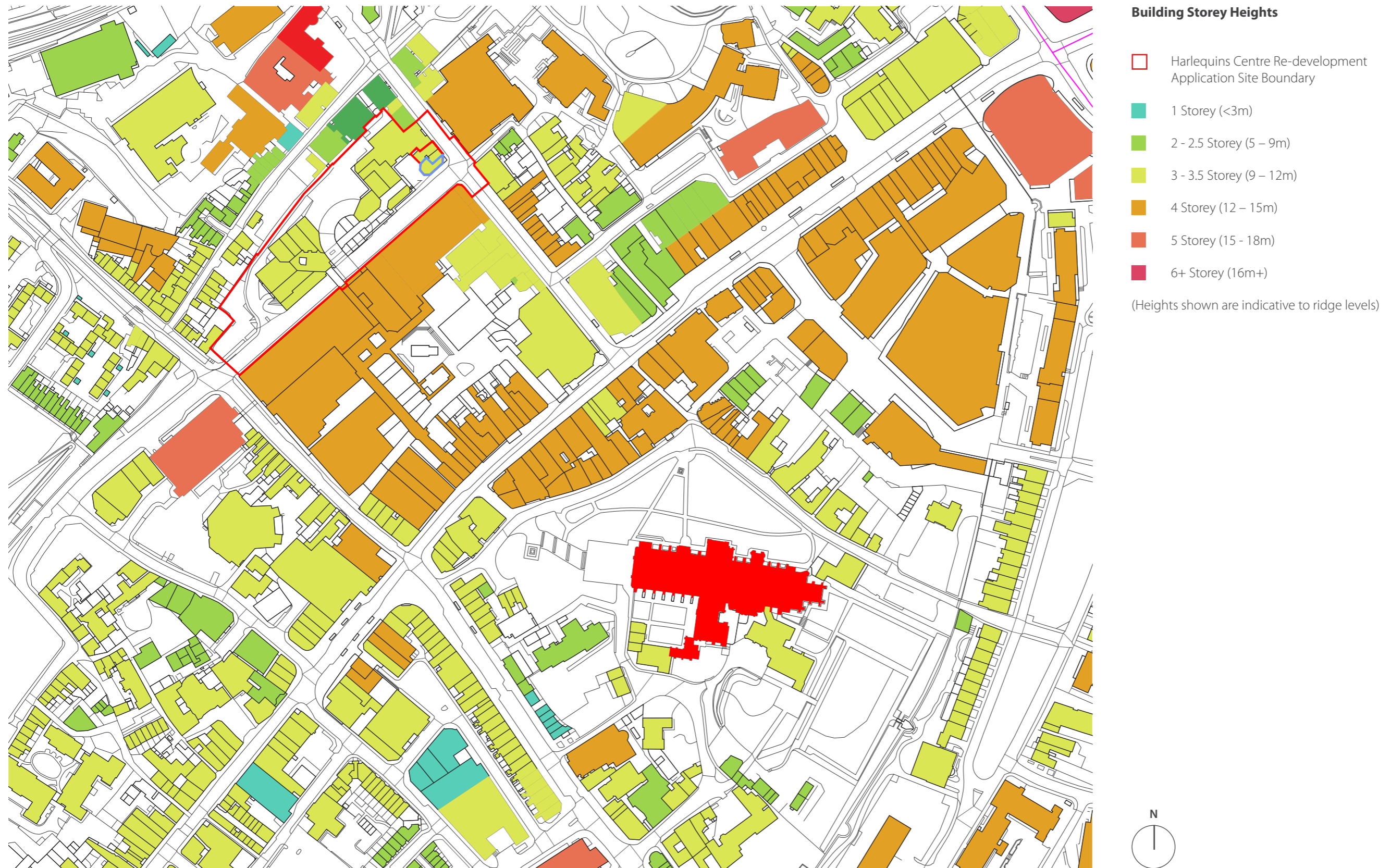
Exe Street and St Bartholomew's Cemetery are located in a valley SW of the site, linking the city centre to the River Exe to the southwest. St Bartholomew's Cemetery is a green space with significant mature trees running along the south-eastern side of Exe Street, which comprises a mix of 2-3 storey residential properties.



Summary / Conclusion of Key Opportunities

There is an opportunity for the redevelopment of the Harlequins site to connect into Exeter's existing network of high-quality distinctive character areas, public spaces and parks. The uses of the building will have a positive impact on the city's future growth.

2.6 Townscape Appraisal - Building Height Analysis



2.6.1 Strategic

Townscape & Visual Assessment

An appraisal of the townscape and visual effects of the proposals has been undertaken as part of the design development process.

Key Views of the application site were identified at the start of the design process and discussed with Exeter City Council, The Design Review Panel and Historic England.

Important views of historic buildings such as Exeter Cathedral, St Leonard's Church and St Michael and All Angels Church, Mount Dinham were all taken into account to ensure the proposals would minimise the impact on of these buildings and Exeter's Historic Skyline. These have been supplemented with views requested by and discussed with residents as part of the public consultation exercise.

The detailed proposals, have been developed through an iterative design process including a consultation with local residents, Exeter City Council, Historic England and independent Design Review Panel that has been informed by the emerging townscape and visual impact assessment.

The scale and massing of the proposed development and mitigation and enhancement proposals have been carefully considered to enhance the positive effects of the proposals on the site and its context. The development will result in the regeneration of a poor quality brown field site creating a new positive townscape and landscape character to this part of Exeter.

2.6.2 Local Level

Existing Building Heights

The existing Harlequins centre is predominantly a 2-storey building that increases in height to 3 commercial storeys as you move down the hill towards North Street.

The mass and height of the Harlequins Centre is characterised by varying slate pitched roofs and glazed roof lights which break the skyline when viewed from Northernhay Street and Paul Street.

Paul Street to the east of the site is characterised by two large buildings, The Guildhall shopping centre and the Harlequins Shopping Centre on the opposite side of the road. A high-level pedestrian bridge and vehicle ramp link the two buildings at a high level. The first-floor level of the Harlequins building overhangs the pavement of Paul Street. As identified in Exeter's Central Conversation Area Appraisal - August 2002 the cumulative effect of the buildings, the vehicle and pedestrian flyovers and steep level changes along Paul Streets produce a 'Canyon Like' space only perpetuated by heavy traffic which moves up and down Paul Street.

The height of the Guildhall car park is a prominent feature on the city's skyline being interrupted further by circulation cores and roof plant enclosure which discharge at the roof level of the building.

Queen Street, situated to the north of the site, is characterised by commercial properties which are predominantly two to three-storey terraced buildings. The Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Higher Market are two buildings of noticeable height and range from three - four storeys in height.

The Rougemont Hotel which is situated along Queen Street and is a building of local importance.

The building is approximately 6 storeys in height. The impact of its height is perpetuated by its architectural stylings and its high floor to ceiling heights.

The buildings along Northern hay Street to the south-west boundary of the site are mainly residential and generally increase in height from 2 storeys to 3 storeys moving down the hill.

Summary / Conclusion of Key Opportunities

- In line with 'Exeter Vision A city centre vision for a green capital and Exeter's Greater Strategic Plan', there is an opportunity for the new buildings to respond to the underlying topography of the site and to take cues from neighbouring building forms and heights such as the Rougemont Hotel. Inevitably there is a careful balance that needs to be met which allows for a redevelopment of the site to take place which respects the city's existing skyline.



Photograph down Paul Street showing the existing centre and Guildhall Car Park



Photograph from Northernhay Street



Photograph from Riverside Valley Park



Photograph from Iron Bridge with the existing Guildhall Shopping Centre in the background

2.7 Townscape Appraisal - Historic Context

2.7.1 Brief Historic Context

The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with Triskelion's Historic Environment Desk-Based Impact Assessment Volumes 1 and 2.

The site is situated close to the defences of the Second Augustan Legion's fortress. There have been several archaeological investigations to examine this. During the medieval period, circa the 1200's, historical documents indicate that the site was occupied by tenements fronting Paul Street. The site remained like this until the late 1500's. The site started to become more developed during the 1800's and became occupied by tenements fronting Paul Street with plots of land to the rear running to the City Wall. The site underwent substantial change in the 19th and 20th centuries resulting in the destruction of parts of the City Wall to facilitate the widening of Queen Street in the 1830's, the delivery of the street system and the wholesale clearance of the historic buildings in the 1920's.

The overview below explains the changes that have occurred on site over recent years which is captured in some of the photographs opposite.

- 1930's – The Devon General Bus and Coach Station was located on the site.
- The 1950's – The site reverted to being a car park.
- 1970's – Following the construction of the Guildhall Centre, the approach ramp to the Guildhall car park was constructed.
- 1980's – The Harlequins Centre was developed on site. The designs incorporated and engulfed the vehicle ramp.



The Paul Street car park and bus station late 1940's



Paul St Car Park 1920's



Paul Street 1957



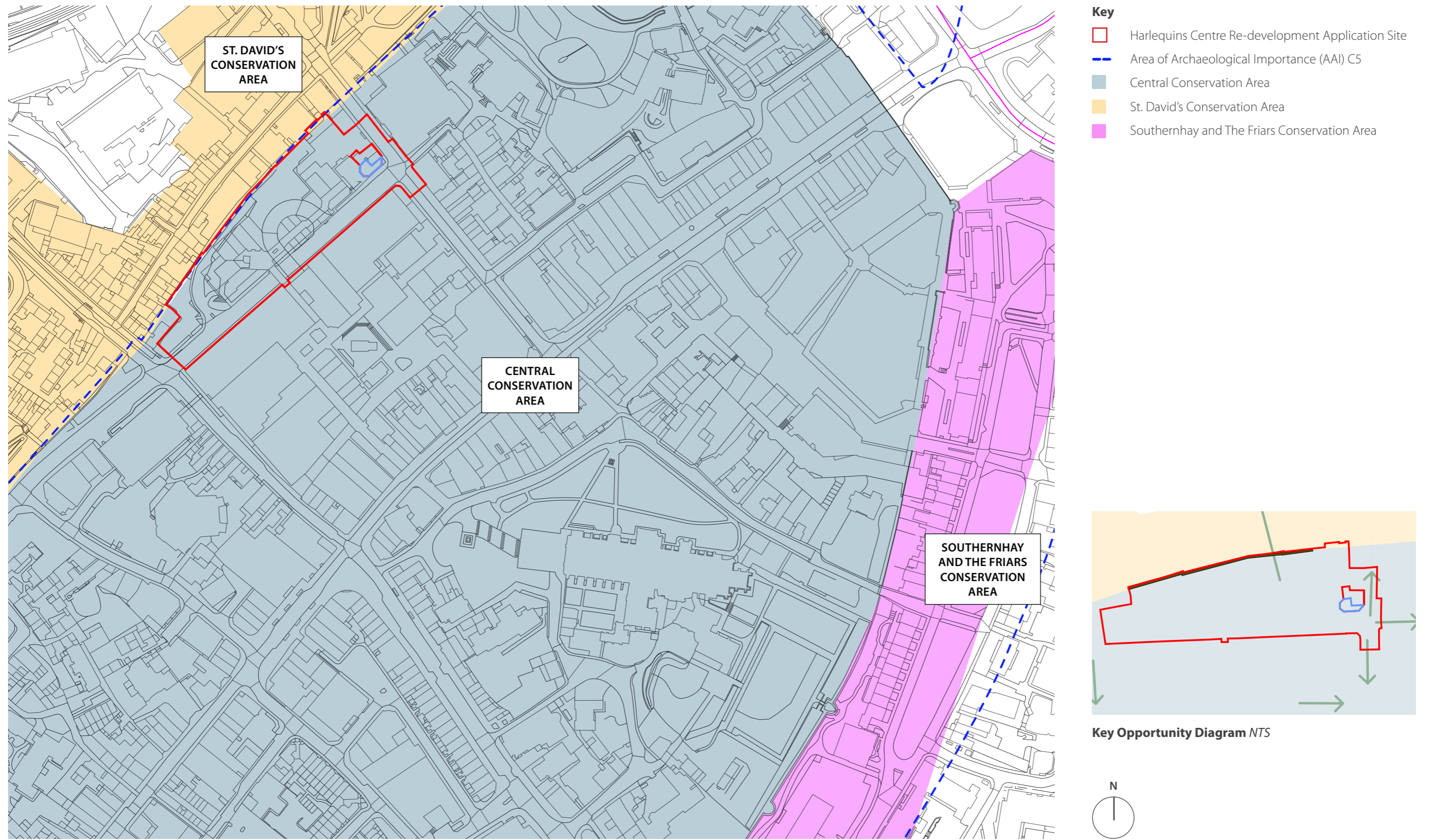
Paul Street and the bus station at the top, late 1950's



Harlequins Construction 1980



2.8 Townscape Appraisal - Conservation Area



2.8.1 Conservation Area Appraisal

The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with Triskelion Historic Environment Desk-Based Impact Assessment.

The application site is situated in the north-west of the historic core of Exeter and just within the boundary of the city wall.

The Harlequins Centre was originally designed by Bruges Tozer Architects of Bristol and built between 1984-86. Pevsner (2004) described it as “Exeter’s first large-scale essay in post-modernism, jazzed up with plenty of colourful trimmings” and “spatially quite interesting”. Others (Mellor 1985) have described it as a “vulgar shopping centre” where “the architectural style is mongrel Hollywood classicism and old fashioned ‘art deco’ touched up with red and blue paint.” The access ramp for the vehicular bridge to the Guildhall shopping centre predates the Harlequins Centre and was constructed in the early 1970s.

The site is situated within the historic city centre of Exeter which is designated as an area of archaeological importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979).

There is one registered Park and Garden which sits close to the development site being the Grade 2 listed Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens to the north.

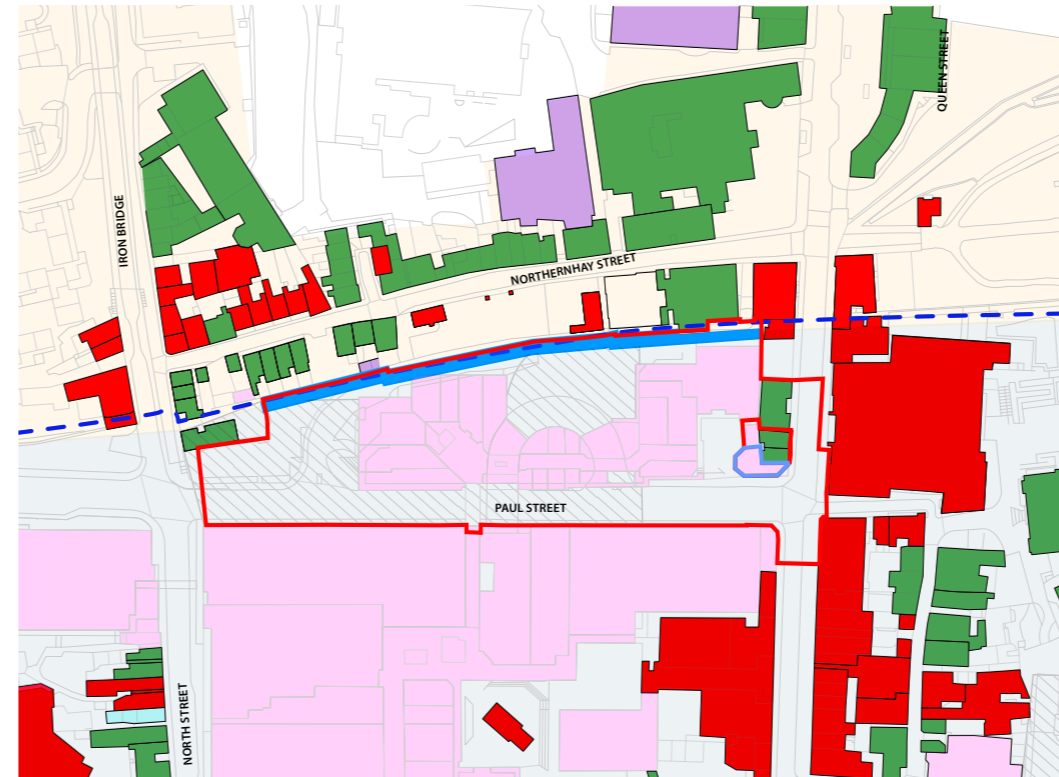
There are no listed buildings on the site but the site does sit in close proximity to a number of listed building and several non-designated heritage assets.

Both St David’s and Central Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan highlights buildings which make a positive or negative contribution to the Conservation Areas. The Harlequins Centre building has been identified as making a negative contribution and the area around the building has been identified as being negative space within the city centre.

Summary of Key Opportunities

A careful balance has been made in order to ensure that the optimal scheme is brought forward whilst at the same time avoiding or minimising harm to buried archaeology, local heritage assets, their setting and key views across the site and city’s historic skyline.

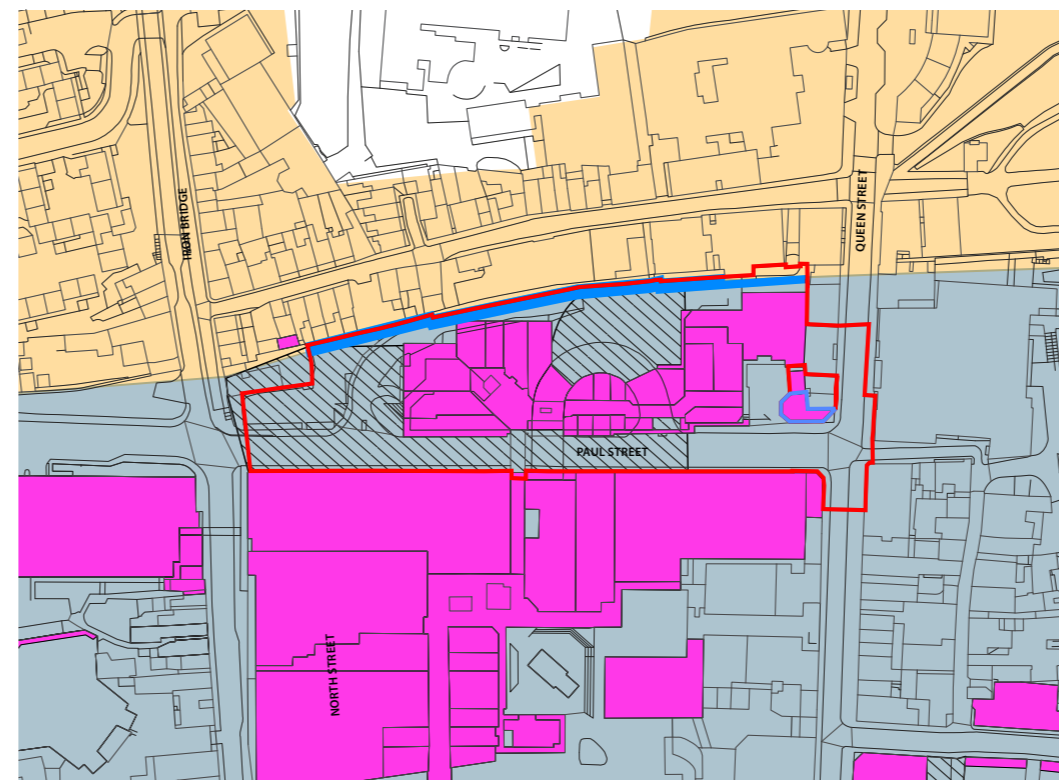
There may also be buried archaeology which will need to be taken into account. There is also an opportunity to enhance the setting of the City Wall which runs along the rear of the site which currently, the existing Harlequins Centre denies its existence.



Buildings of Architectural Merit and Heritage Assets

Key

- Harlequins Centre Re-development Application Site
- Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) C5
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings which make a positive contribution
- Buildings which make a neutral contribution
- Central Conservation Area
- St. David's Conservation Area



Buildings and spaces identified as making a negative contribution

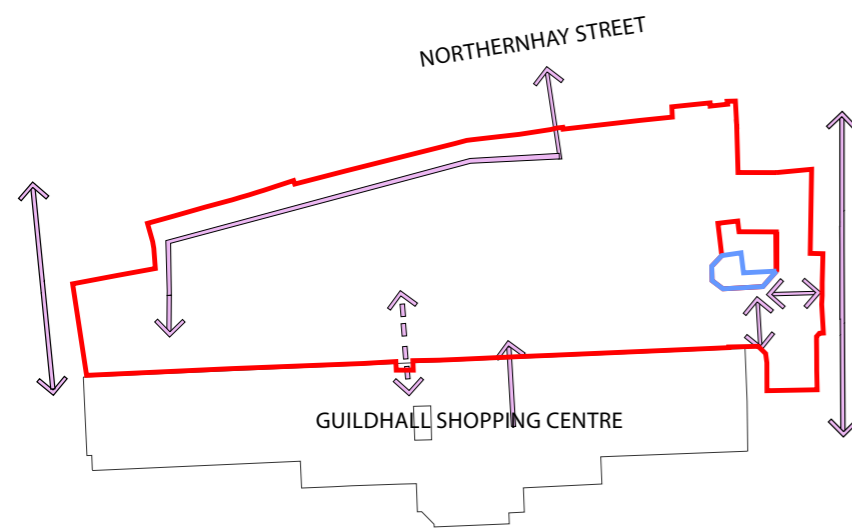
Key

- Harlequins Centre Re-development Application Site
- Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) C5
- Central Conservation Area
- St. David's Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Buildings - Negative Contribution
- Negative Spaces



2.9 Summary of Key Opportunities and Constraints

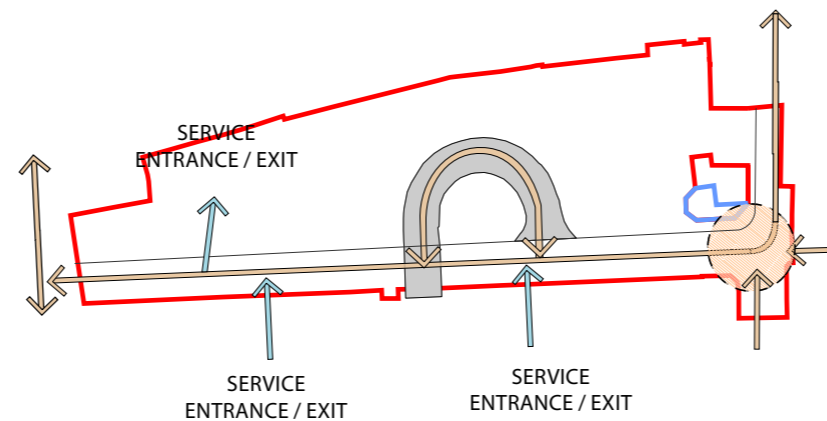
The following diagrams look to describe the executive opportunities and constraints for the site.



1

Existing Pedestrian Movement

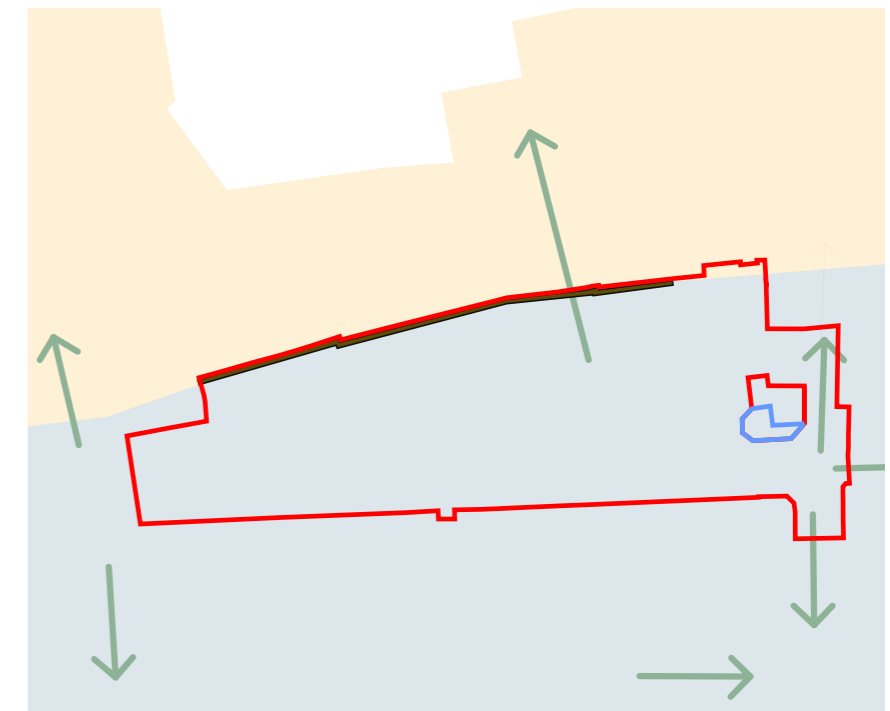
- The existing right of way at the rear of the site connecting to Northernhay Street needs to be maintained.
- There is a high-level pedestrian footbridge linking the Guildhall shopping centre to the Harlequins shopping centre, which can be removed.
- Existing entrances and exits to the rear of 19 and 20 Queen Street need to be kept.
- Existing pedestrian exits from the Guildhall shopping centre discharges onto Paul Street at a low level.
- Multiple pedestrian crossing points, narrow pavements and railings situated on the corner of Queen Street and Paul Street act as a severance to movement.



2

Existing Vehicular Movement

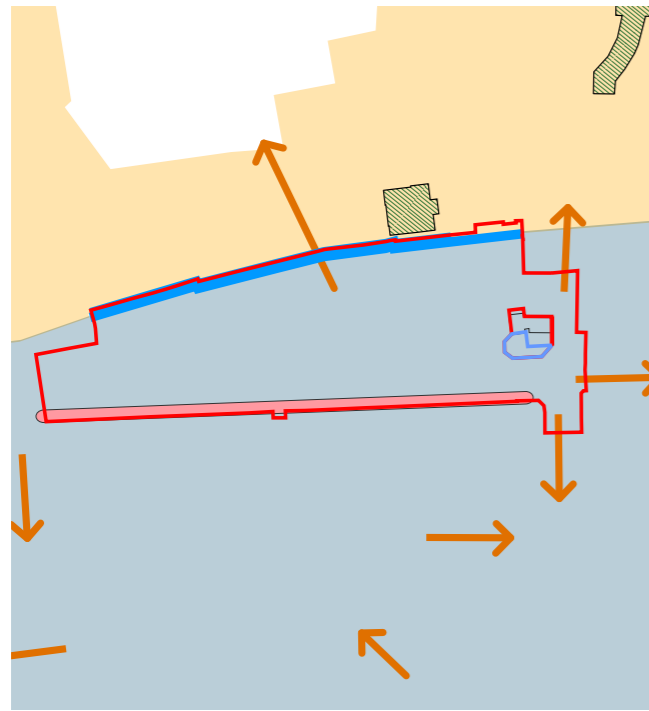
- Paul Street is a three-lane road and Queen Street two-lane road which together act as a primary route across the city centre
- Paul Street, has poor public frontages which prevent clear sight lines and offers a poor sense of arrival and way finding.
- The existing vehicular ramp leading up to the Guildhall shopping centre needs to be maintained as part of any future scheme.
- There are currently multiple vehicle entrances and exits along Paul Street which serve the Guildhall shopping centre. This results in a poor pedestrian experience.



3

Existing Conservation Area

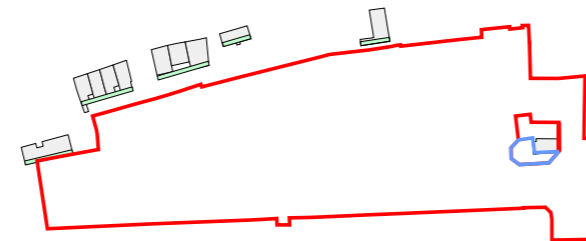
- The site sits in Exeter's area of archaeological importance and at the rear of the site forming the north-west boundary sits the three-meter-high City Wall which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)
- The site sits in Exeter's Central Conservation Area which borders onto the St. David's Conservation Area to the north-west boundary of the site.
- As identified in Exeter's Central Conservation Area Audit there are a number of significant views primarily along Queen Street, North Street and over the City Wall towards St Michael & All Angels' Church.



4

Listed Buildings Or Building That Make A Positive Contribution To The Townscape

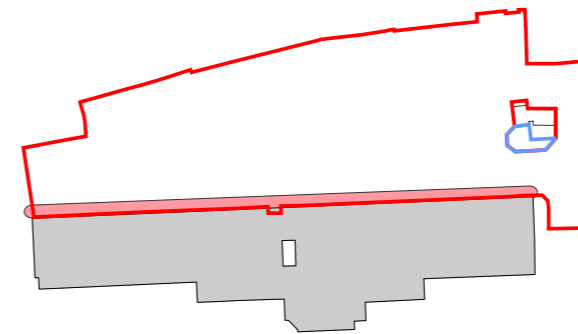
- No 19, 20, 21, 22 and 26 Queen Street have been identified in Central Conservation Area appraisal as buildings that make a positive contribution to the townscape.
- The development site sits in close proximity to listed buildings such as the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, No 74, 75, No 79 – 92 (Consecutive building) and the Higher Market Entrance.



5

Restricted Views Across The Site

- A number of buildings along the northwestern boundary fronting Northernhay have habitable outlooks across the site from the higher level.
- The lower windows of these properties are obstructed by the City Wall. There is a number of trees to the southwestern cover of the site which provides some screening of the site.

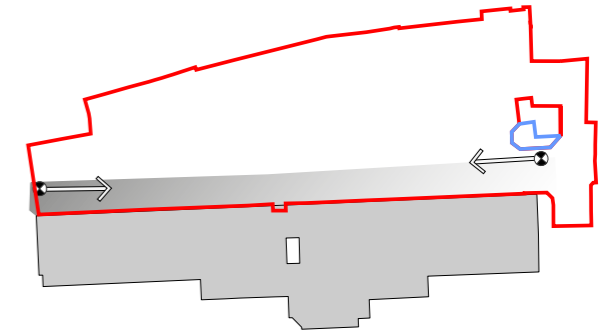


GUILDHALL SHOPPING CENTRE

6

Existing Inactive Low Quality Frontage

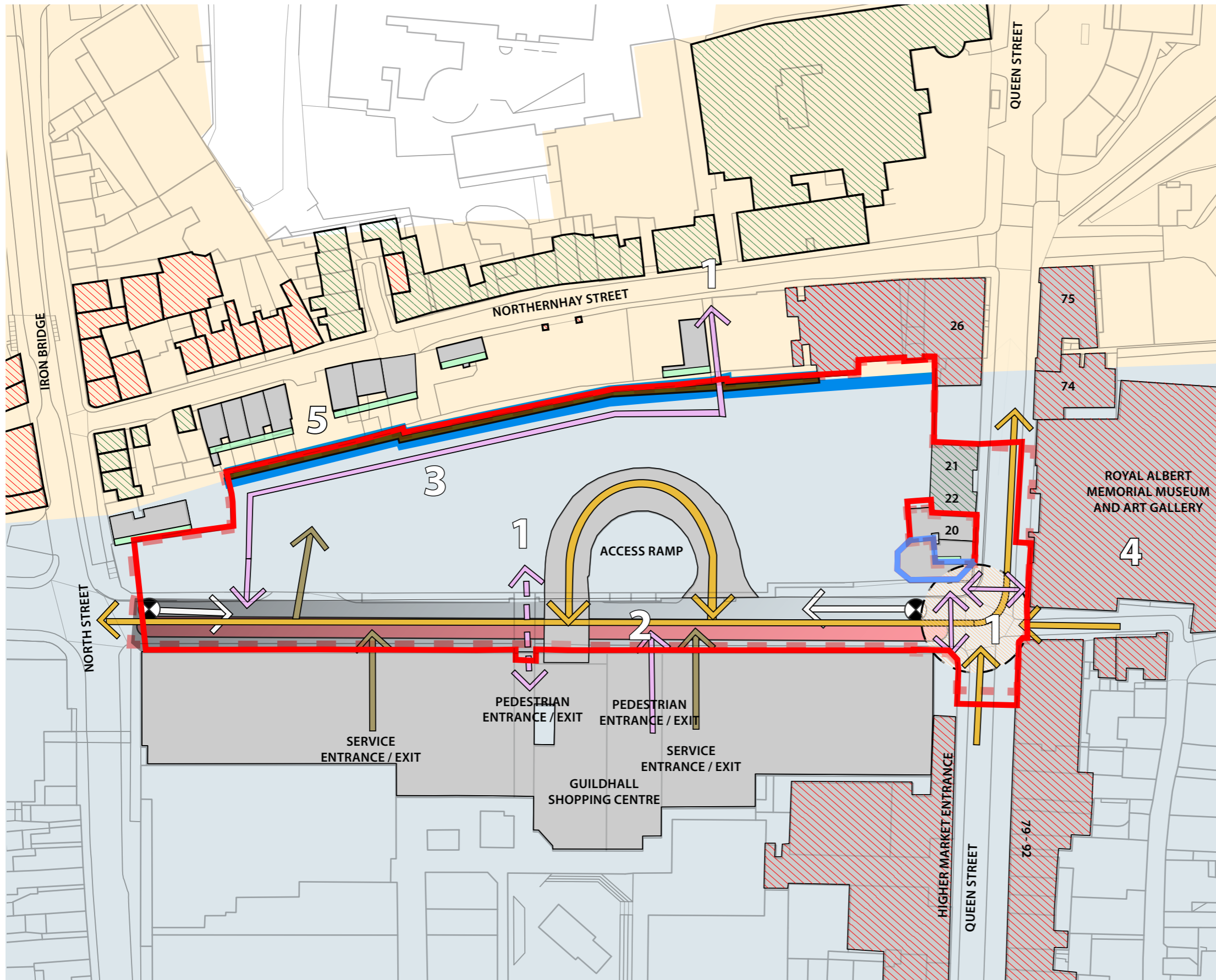
- No 19 – 20 Queen Street does not lie within the development footprint and therefore the access and existing frontages will need to be maintained.
- The Guildhall Shopping Centre (and the Harlequins centre) makes up a large percentage of the area between North Street, the High Street, Queen Street and the city wall. The architecture is typical of the period which they were built being featureless with no reference to the scale or detailing of surviving historic building in Exeter. Therefore, making a negative contribution to the streetscape and pedestrian experience. Any proposal will need to address this.



7

Site Typography And Surrounding Massing

- Queen Street is generally flat along its length.
- Paul Street falls away dramatically to the southwest west where it then meets North Street.
- The massing of the Guildhall shopping centre starts at 2-3 storey and then falls away with the road to a height of approximately 6 storeys on the corner of North Street.
- The Guildhall Shopping centre and carpark along with the typography of the site creates a canyon of two hard frontages with no relief in the road, offer poor pedestrian experience, and contributing negatively to the conservation area and urban context.



Opportunities and Constraints

- Harlequins Centre Re-development Application Site Boundary
- Existing City Wall
- Existing Primary / Secondary Pedestrian Routes
- Existing Footbridge
- Existing Vehicular Movement
- Existing Service Entrance / Exits
- Existing Inactive Low Quality Frontages
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings that make a positive contribution
- Central Conservation Area
- St. David's Conservation Area



Combined diagram of existing site opportunities and constraints

2.10 Conclusion - Opportunities and Constraints

Summary / Conclusion of Key Opportunities

The redevelopment of the Harlequins site offers a once in a generation opportunity to turn a failed shopping centre into a vibrant mixed-use development that brings inward investment into the city.

This opportunity unlocks a brownfield site within the city and delivers one of the key sites identified in both 'Liveable Exeter Strategic vision and Exeter's City Centre - 'A city centre vision for a green capital'.

There is potential for the scheme to act as a catalyst for highways improvement in and along Paul and Queen Street with a focus on reducing the amount of traffic in and around the site in favour of open pedestrian movement and more sustainable modes of transport.

There are opportunities to introduce new high-quality public realm spaces in and around the building forms and vehicle ramp helping to tie the scheme into Exeter's rich network of existing green and open spaces.

The existing vehicle ramp is a key constraint to the site's development as it will need to remain in operation throughout and post development.

The site is situated within the City Centre Central Conservation Area and in close proximity to either listed or buildings identified locally as having architectural merit. Any proposal will need to be sensitive to historic assets and their settings. The City Wall running along the rear of the site is a Scheduled Monument and the proposal will need to respect this. There is however an opportunity to celebrate and improve visibility of the wall which is currently denied by the Harlequins Centre.

The site is situated on high ground with Paul Street falling away to the southwest. A sensitive balance will need to be met in regards to developing a scheme which respects the overall height and massing of the surrounding context.