

WICK HIGH STREET CONCEPT DESIGN

OVERVIEW

This concept design has been developed based on the **design objectives** identified through the local community's participation and feedback on what changes they would like to see in Wick High Street. The design also endeavours to meet the **project aims** of creating:

- Warm, welcoming and more attractive public spaces;
- A comfortable and safe environment to walk, wheel and cycle;
- Better travel experiences through Wick town centre particularly when accessing local facilities; and
- A sense of identity for the town centre in Wick, drawing on local culture and heritage.

TERMINOLOGY:

Advanced Stop Line

A stop line for people on bikes which allows them to wait safely in front of cars on a red light, and get a head start when the light turns green.

Advance cycling traffic signal

A separate traffic light for people on bikes which turns green a few seconds before the vehicle traffic light, allowing them to manoeuvre out of the junction safely.

Puffin crossing

Traffic lights which have a pedestrian signal light on the near side of the road, and contain a sensor which detects when pedestrians are crossing the road and keeps the traffic light red until they have safely crossed the junction.

Central delineation

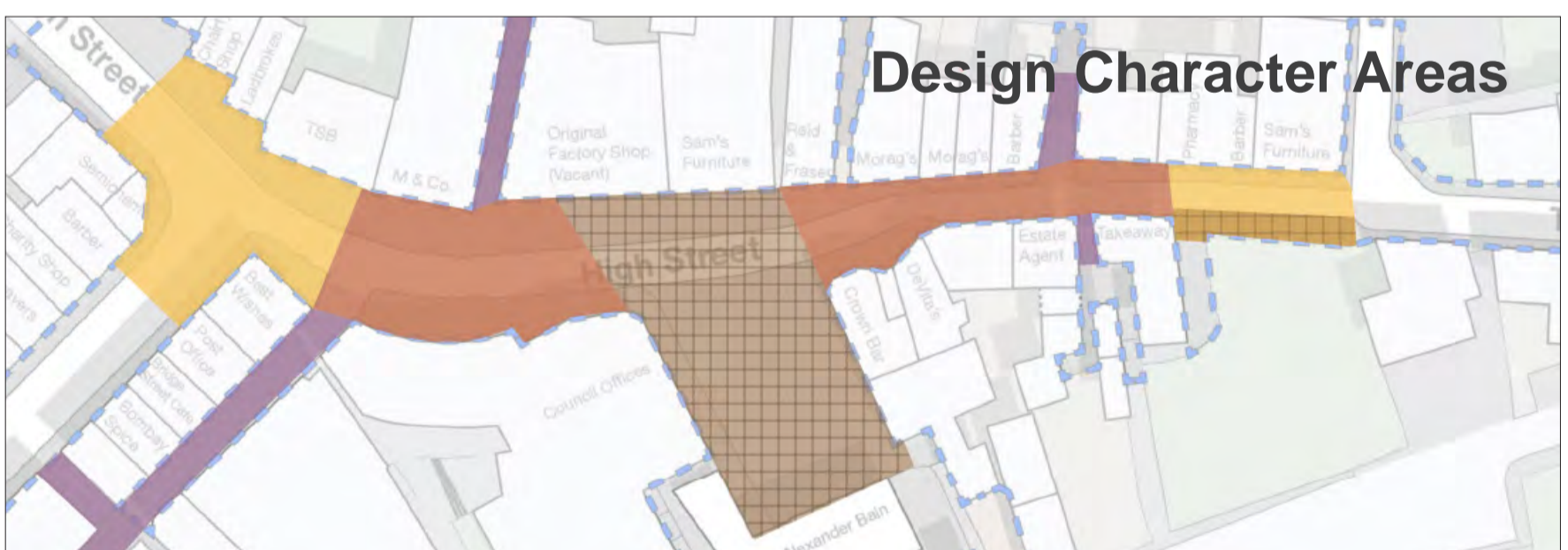
A low angled, raised strip delineating both sides of the path, proposed as one option to consider to assist people with visual impairments in moving through the space.

Automatic hydraulic bollards

Bollards which lower when authorised vehicles request access, and prevent unauthorised vehicles from entering when they are raised.

Raised table

Where the road is raised to the height of the pavement, providing a level crossing across the road, as well as acting as a traffic calming feature.



Gateways

Gateways are located at either end of High Street, marking a transition into a space which is different to a road environment.

Linear

Linear areas maintain a visual flow across High Street along sections which are not suitable for other interventions due to space restrictions or environmental conditions (e.g. shade).

Public Realm

Public realm areas have the most potential for places for people to use due to combination of large available space and areas which get the most sun.

Lanes

Lanes provide key points of access on to High Street.

*This is the conceptual design proposal for Wick High Street, subject to further development and revision at technical design stages.



Automatic hydraulic bollards



Advanced stop lines



Raised table crossing

	Trees		Engraved pavers		Blue badge bay sign
	Planters		New paving		Taxi pick up/drop off sign
	Cycle parking		Caithness stone		Tactile paving
	Existing lamp posts		Existing setts		Caithness stone monolith
	Heritage plaque		Bollards		Automatic bollard access
	Bin storage		Bins		Traffic signal

MARKET SQUARE PUBLIC REALM

FEATURES AND BENEFITS:

- Maintain access for blue badge holders by providing blue badge bays for those who need help accessing High Street
- Maximise space for people by controlling where deliveries happen with demarcated loading bays
- Create a safer, friendlier High Street for pedestrians by slowing vehicles with a narrowed vehicle path
- Create a flexible public space in Market Square by providing space for a range of events and activities including the site of the Christmas Tree, market stalls, the pipe band, play space, cafe culture, pop-up events and larger temporary structures
- Maximise the existing benefits of the space by providing seating and space for people to socialise in sunny, open areas
- Make High Street more attractive by introducing more greenery and varied paving
- Celebrate the history and heritage of Wick by introducing art, heritage and colour
- Ensure emergency access and delivery access remains uninhibited



Parklet in town centre



Planters for trees with benches



Ensure space for the pipe band
(image credit: Bill Fernie)



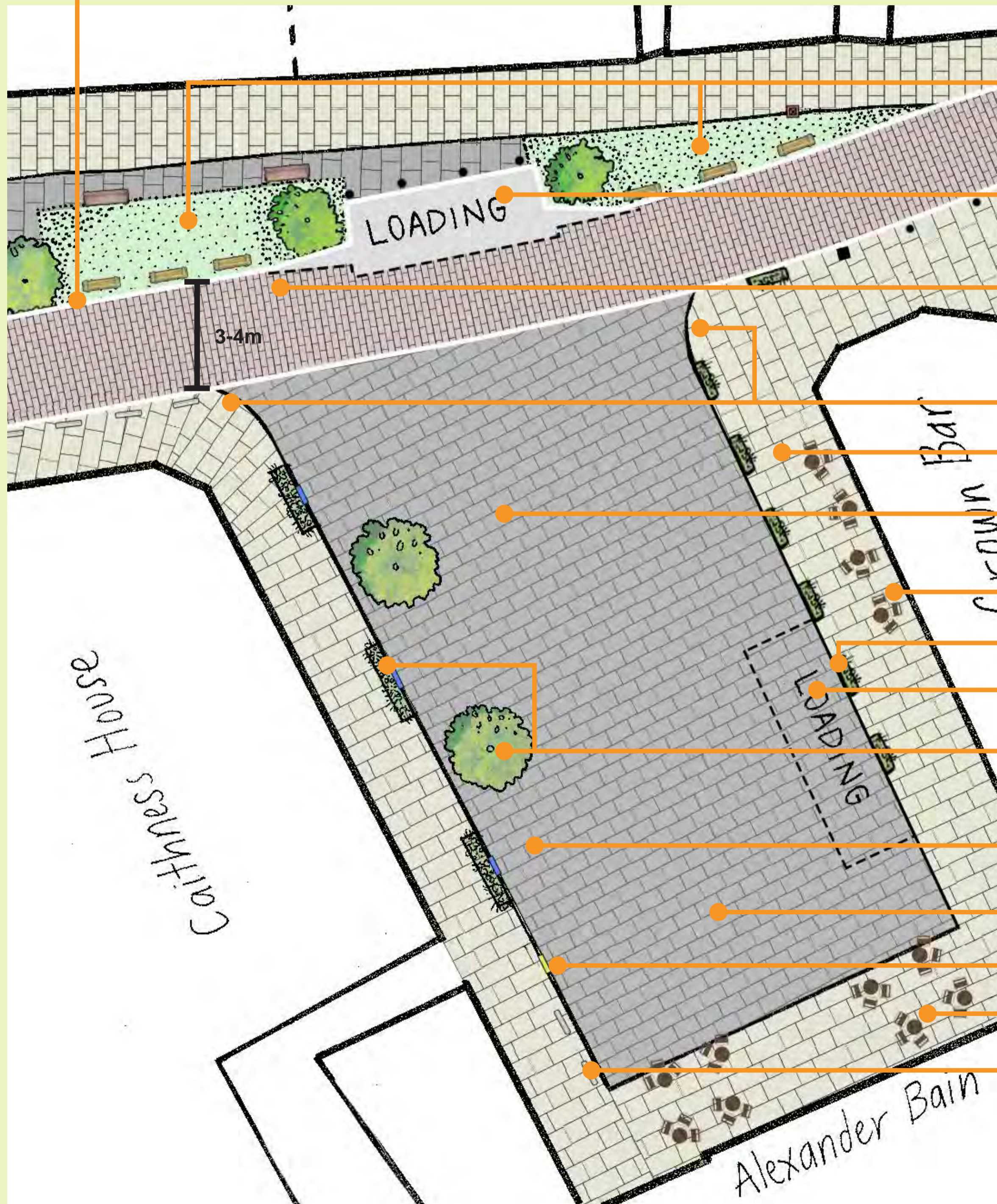
Market stalls



Reduce visual impact of cars with trees and planting



Christmas lights/market



Central delineation to support people with visual impairments, shown as one possible approach to providing delineation through High Street.

Parklet with lawn, benches (including Sam's wooden sofa), and trees on the sunny side of the street to bring the benefits of a greenspace to the central public realm area.

Designated loading bay (9m long) for deliveries to High Street. Trees in sturdy planters and removable bollards further contain the loading bay. For large events, we propose assembling the stage in this location, and including connection points for electrics.

Vehicle path narrowed from 5+m to maximum 4m in this section, and curved for traffic calming. The width ensures there is space for the Pipe Band Material is proposed to remain as existing setts. Additional options for accommodating the Band on Linear Section.

A tactile cue suitable for this context to indicate a crossing across Market Square for those with visual impairments. The exact type of tactile to be determined through engagement with the Access Panel.

Proposed for repaving with high quality, accessible material.

Flexible, multi-use space with options for fixings for removable furniture, temporary canopy, and the Christmas Tree. Additionally can be kept open for larger or events and festivals.

Crown Bar cafe seating. Low level planting and tables and chairs sited with 2m clearance for people to walk past.

Planters protect the edges of the Square, can be moveable for events.

Additional 9m long designated loading bay.

Trees and plants soften the parking in the Square. If possible, trees planted in tree pits with roots trained away from services, or alternatively in raised planters.

3 Blue Badge bays marked by signs to supplement the part time blue badge bay by the pharmacy. Badge holders can gain access through the bollards.

Reuse Caithness flagstone from the Street to repave the square.

Dedicated taxi pick up/drop off marked by a sign.

Existing Wetherspoons cafe seating.

Cycle parking.

***This is the conceptual design proposal for Wick High Street, subject to further development and revision at technical design stages.**



Blue Badge Parking

The concept design proposes 3 blue badge bays in Market Square, 2 behind Caithness House in the carpark, and 1 additional part time bay in front of the pharmacy. Some comments suggested that the blue badge provisions shown in the initial draft of designs were not sufficient. The next stage of design should include a full parking and loading survey to determine demand and requirements for both blue badge bays as well as loading bays.

Following the parking survey, the design for Market Square should reflect the minimum number of blue badge bays required by the demand, to ensure the majority of the space can be enjoyed by people as a town centre public realm.

The above alternative plan view of Market Square shows that up to five bays (which is the current number of bays in the Square) can be accommodated in the designated blue badge parking area.

MARKET SQUARE



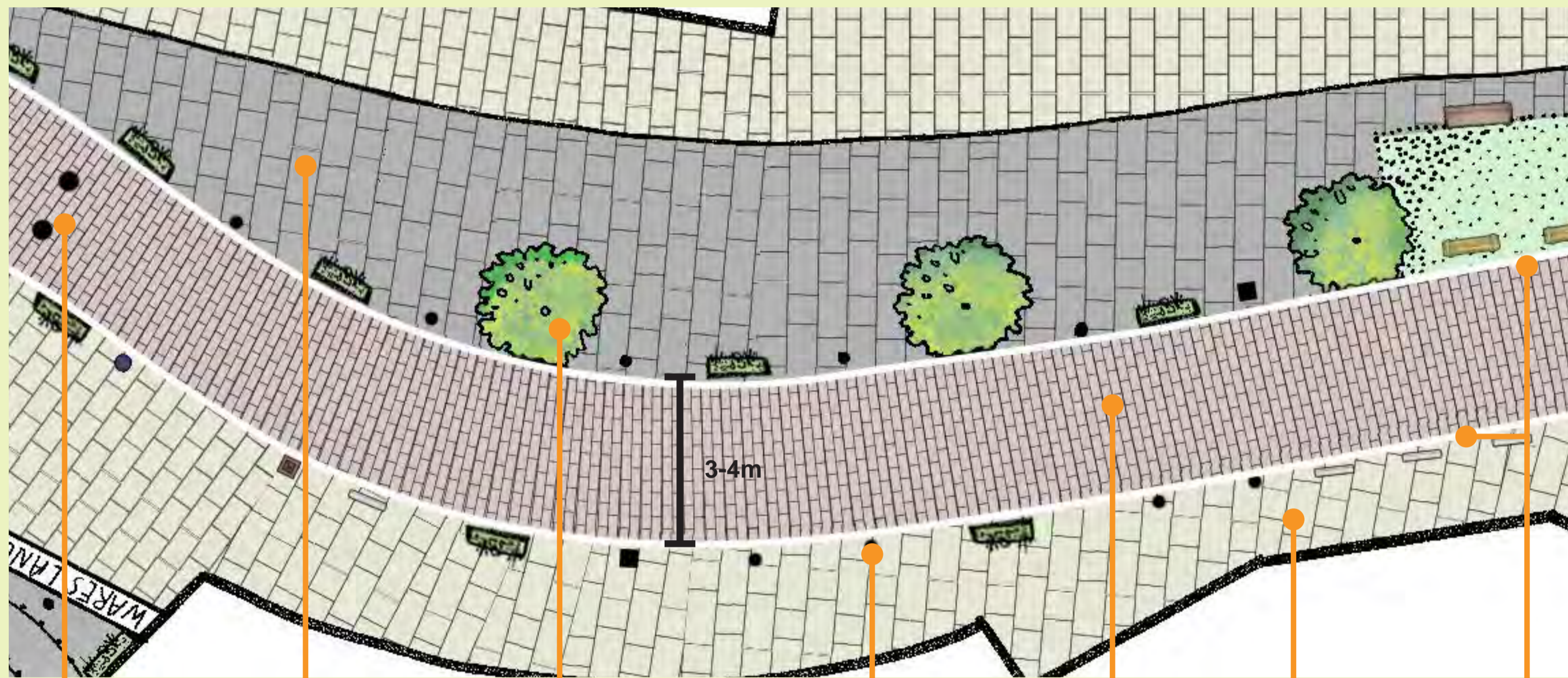
MARKET SQUARE



LINEAR SECTION

FEATURES AND BENEFITS:

- Maximise the public realm space on the sunny side of High Street, and introduce traffic calming by re-aligning and narrowing the vehicle path in this area
- Create a sense of continuity on High Street by using linear place-making elements such as trees and contextual artwork/history/heritage elements
- Improve wayfinding in High Street and town centre by using trail-based wayfinding elements (eg. trail of fish/silver darlings, heritage trail etc)
- Introduce more lighting in the areas which don't receive much light during some or most of the year with lighting and reflective art
- Prevent vehicles from encroaching on the footways by placing trees, planters, cycle hoops, and attractive street furniture along the edge of the vehicle path
- Provide a more coherent and clear route through by removing clutter
- Provide a system for people with visual impairments to navigate through the space. One option, presented here, are central delineators on either side of the vehicle path to delineate this area
- Make shops more accessible and inclusive by using custom painted, portable ramps for shops which have a stepped entry



Vehicle path to retain existing red setts. Realign and narrow the vehicle path from 5+m to 3-4m from Bridge Street to the proposed loading bay to maximise pedestrian space and provide a traffic calming measure, while retaining enough space for the Pipe Band. Further description of options for the vehicle path are shown in the adjacent box.

Retain and reuse existing grey Caithness flagstones in this section to feature this heritage material in High Street.

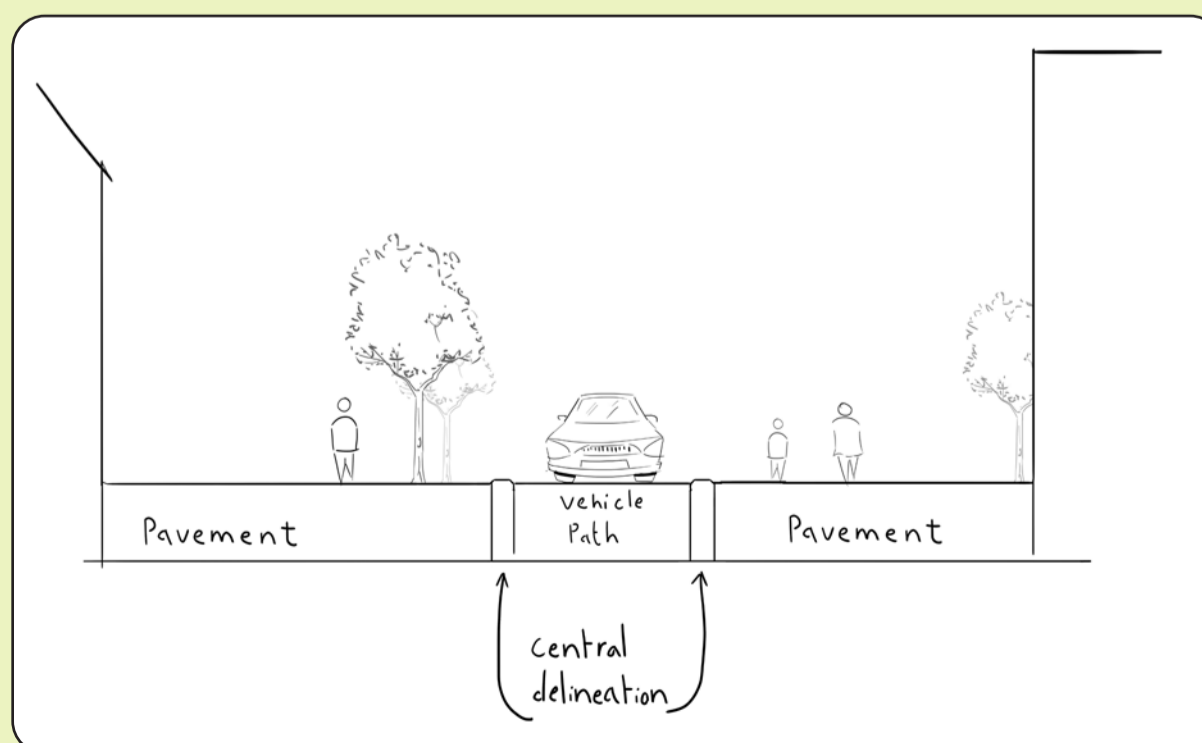
Trees provide attractiveness and some wind break along High Street. Uplighting them brings more light to the area in winter months. If services permit, trees can be planted in tree pits with roots trained away from the services, or alternatively above ground in planters.

Planters, bollards, cycle parking, bins, trees, and other attractive street furniture along the path edge create a sense of place and prevent vehicles from encroaching on pavements.

Potential for a canopy of lights or creative art to bring more light, especially during darker months.

New durable and accessible paving material in key pedestrian movement areas.

Using central delineators along the vehicle path is one option to consider for assisting people with visual impairments by including delineation on High Street.



Central delineator along vehicle path

Providing a way for people with visual impairments to safely navigate High Street is a key element of the proposed design. Central delineation refers to one option for providing tactile and visual delineation. It consists of a strip with a raised profile and low angles on each side, whose dimensions should be detectable for both people with dogs or long canes. The colour of the strip should visually contrast with the surrounding material.

This is presented in the concept design as one possible approach to providing delineation on High Street, but further engagement with the Accessibility group should be undertaken to determine the best design for the community.



Bespoke bollards



Light reflecting canopy



Canopy art



Tree and furniture lined linear



Wayfinding bollards



Cycle parking & trees along pavement



Portable ramps at premises



Image Credit: Wick RBL Pipe Band Facebook page

Space for the Pipe Band

Some people commented on the space needed for the Pipe Band and larger events. After speaking to a member of the community about the Pipe Band, we learned that they march in a configuration of 4-5 people across. From photos of the configuration, we determined that a meter between each piper would be sufficient. The recommendation is that a trial is done to determine the amount of space required for the band, and that the vehicle path is kept as narrow as possible and maximum 4m.

In addition to space for events, equally important for the design is the traffic calming benefit of a narrower vehicle path, for eg. 3-3.5m. With this in mind, a few options are presented below.

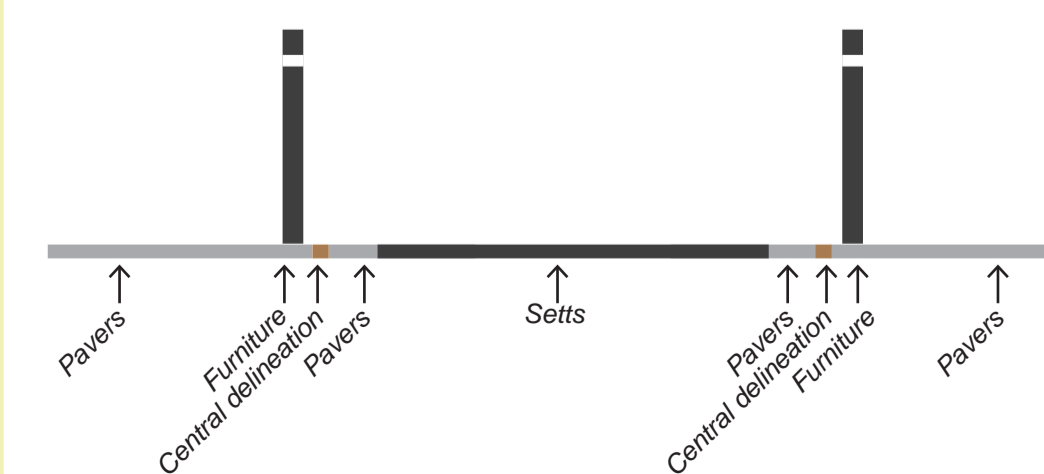


Option 1

The vehicle path is 3-3.5m wide when the street furniture along the edges of the path is in place. However the furniture is set in retention sockets which allow them to be removed, and furniture and planters are removed for the Pipe Band, and replaced immediately after each event. This is the preferred option as it physically enforces a lower vehicle speed, however the furniture must be reinstated after each event in order for the space to prioritise people and control vehicle speed and parking.

Option 2

The vehicle path from Bridge Street to the proposed loading bay outside of Sam's is a maximum 4m to allow space for the band to march. If during the trial, the space required by the band is determined to be more than 3.5m, then the vehicle path setts are 3m wide, visually narrowing the path for vehicles, but the street furniture is set 4m apart. This option is less desirable than Option 1 because physical traffic calming will have a greater impact than visual or psychological measures.



MARKET SQUARE AND LINEAR SECTION

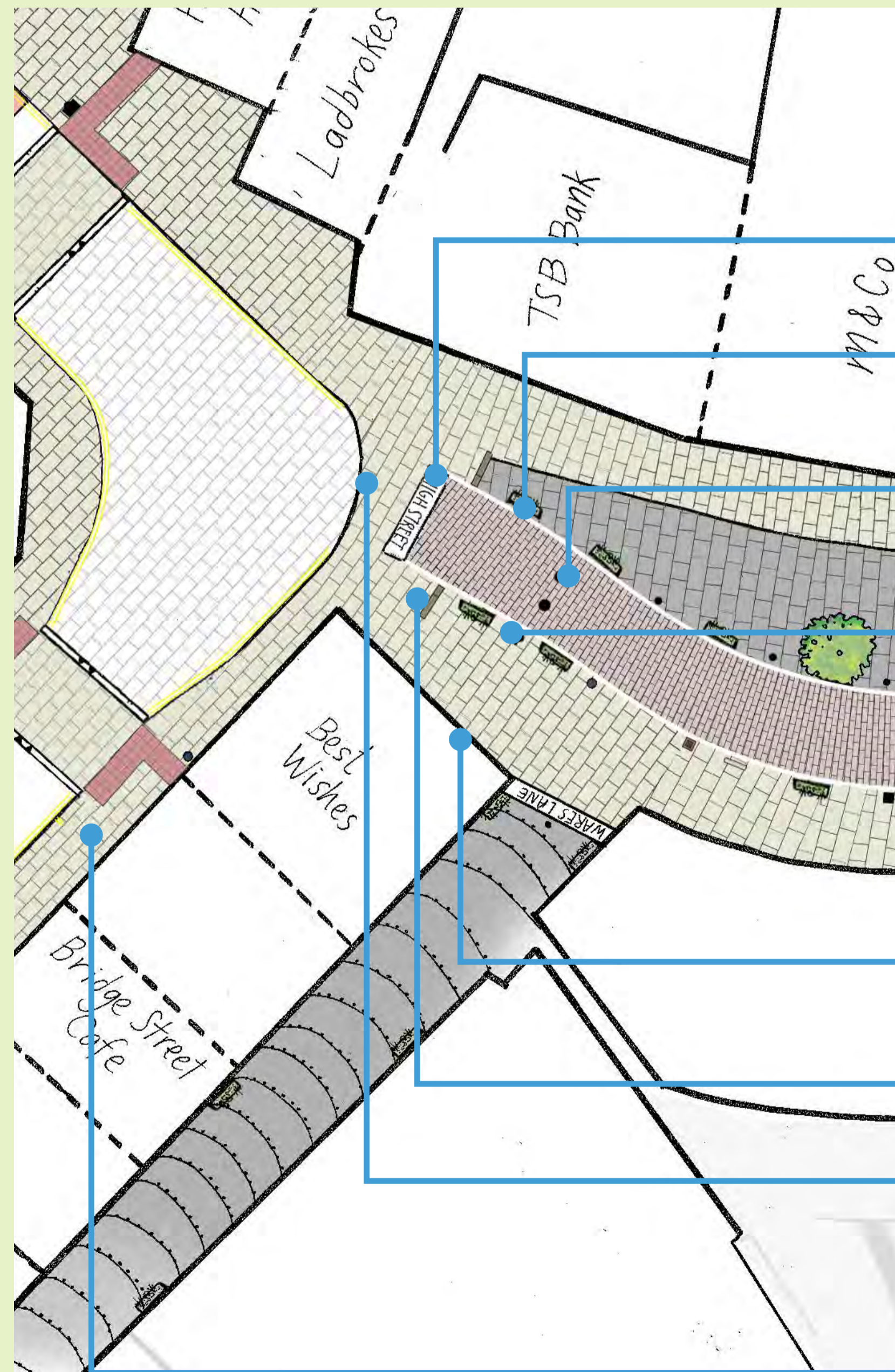


GATEWAYS

HIGH STREET / BRIDGE STREET GATEWAY

Features and Benefits:

- Make it easier and safer for people to access High Street by improving the junction and controlling vehicles exiting High Street
- Enhance the place quality of Bridge Street and High Street by extending the look and feel of the pedestrianised High Street entering into these areas with high quality paving
- Create an information point for the town centre with maps and signage
- Create a colourful, clutter-free and inviting entrance which entices people to enter and spend time on High Street



- Paving with engraved street name.
- Planters to create a sense of entry and to prevent vehicles from encroaching on pavements.
- Automatic bollards drop when an authorised vehicle exits on a green light.
- Traffic light synchronised with the rising bollards, to drop the bollards for authorised vehicles to exit when lights are green for vehicles.
- 'No entry except cycles' and 'Rising Bollard' signage located on traffic light post to reduce clutter.
- In next design phase, artist commissioned to redesign map for this location, on building wall, to illustrate information about walking routes, points of interest, and local amenities.
- In next design phase, artist commissioned to redesign stone slabs as decorative gateway entry features.
- Continuous pavement with priority for pedestrians. A tactile cue suitable for this context for those with visual impairments. The exact cue to be determined through engagement with the Access Panel.
- New paving extended onto Bridge Street and High Street footways to extend High Street onto the road.



Illustrated town map



Interpretive heritage board

HIGH STREET / SHORE LANE GATEWAY & PUBLIC REALM

Features and Benefits:

- Create a pedestrianised High Street by restricting vehicles with automatic bollards
- Create a connective information point for the town centre and links to Pulteneytown by using maps and signage at the gateways
- Create a colourful, clutter-free and inviting entrance which entices people to enter and spend time on High Street
- Celebrate the history and heritage of the Harbour through interpretative plaques and creating visual links from High Street
- Create a public realm space which benefits from views of the river and a sunny position, by introducing seating and using planting to create some screening from the wind
- Maximise space for people by controlling where deliveries happen with a demarcated loading/blue badge bay



Decorative gateway slab



Existing lamppost



Seating on wall



Planters / pavement protectors



Street name paving

Continuous pavement with priority for pedestrians. A tactile cue suitable for this context for those with visual impairments. The exact cue to be determined through engagement with the Access Panel.

Automatic bollards lower for authorised vehicles.

Paving with street name.

Reposition existing lamppost to edge.

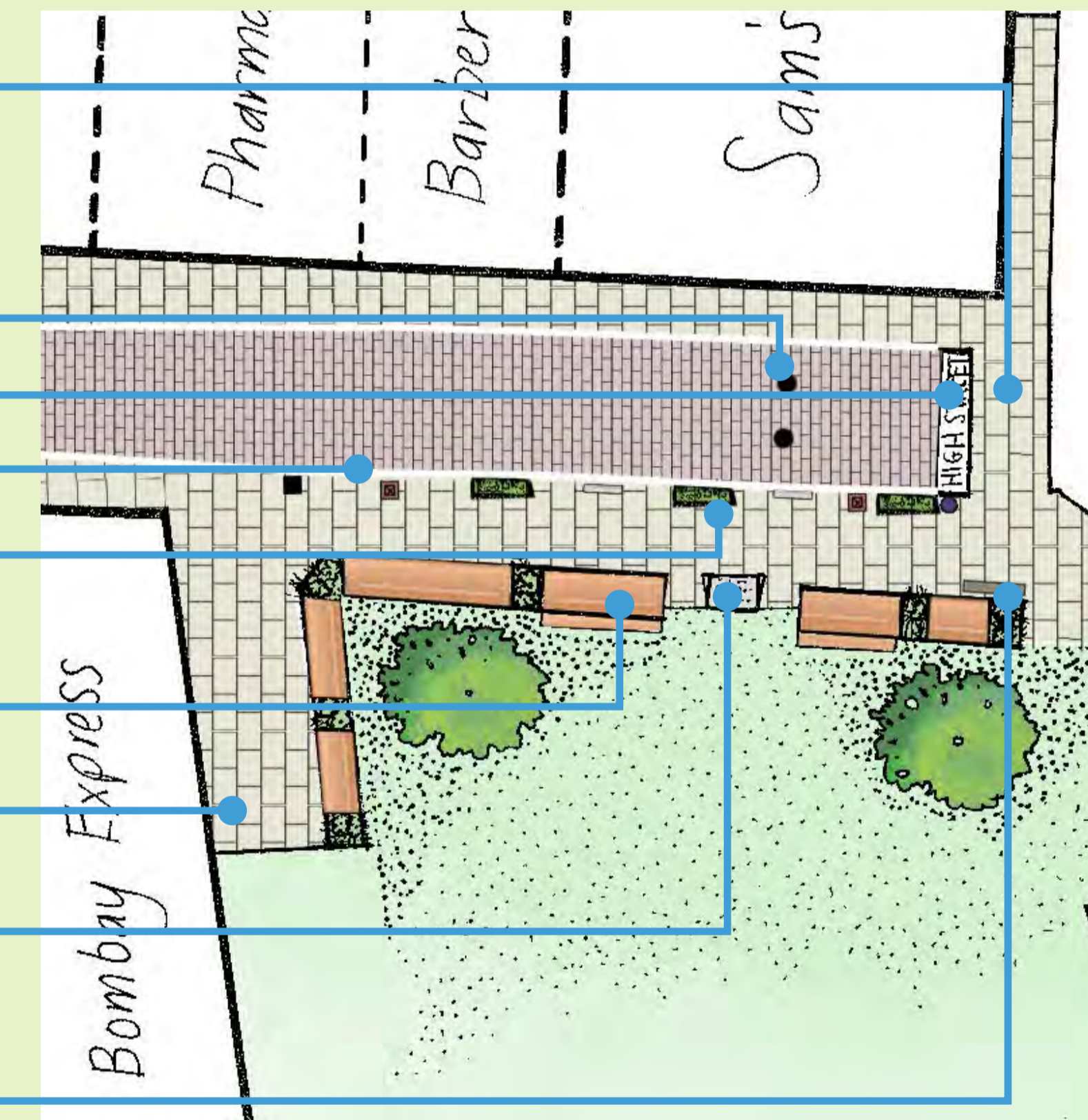
New planters and furniture create a sense of place and prevent vehicles from encroaching on pavements.

Seating and planting on wall for people to enjoy the view; planting provides some wind shelter.

Improved paving surface.

In next design phase, artist commissioned to design interpretive heritage board with information about Pulteneytown and the Harbour, which can be viewed from this point.

In next design phase, artist commissioned to redesign stone slab as a decorative entry feature, and it is repositioned to improve view.



*This is the conceptual design proposal for Wick High Street, subject to further development and revision at technical design stages.

HIGH STREET / BRIDGE STREET GATEWAY



HIGH STREET / SHORE LANE GATEWAY



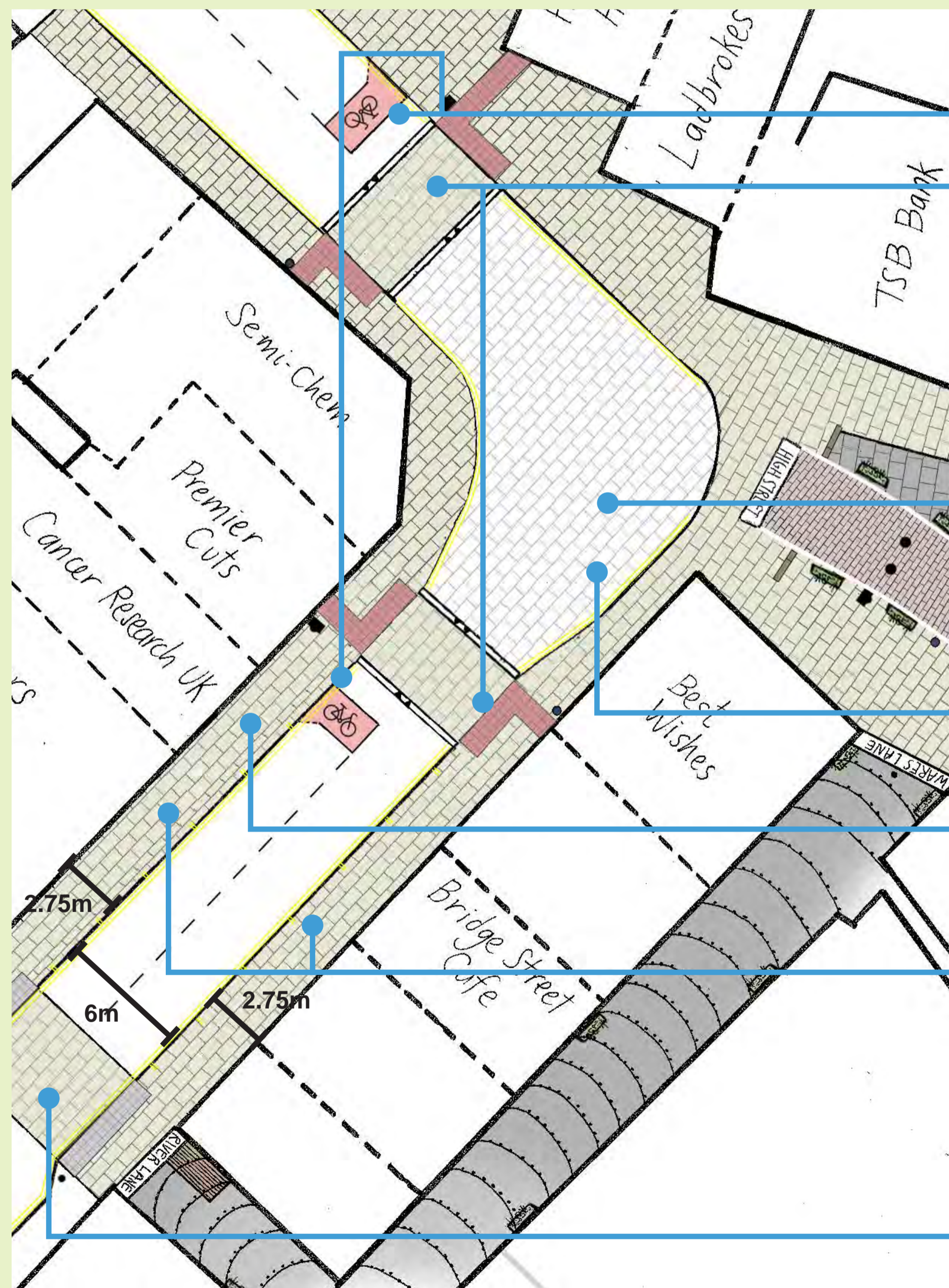
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH STREET/ BRIDGE STREET JUNCTION

JUNCTION RECOMMENDATIONS

High Street/Bridge Street junction is the key access onto the pedestrianised High Street. Whilst this project primarily focuses on High Street, we've provided some recommendations and high level concepts for improving this junction for people, with the aim of making it easier and safer to access High Street by walking or wheeling. Further technical investigation is needed for the junction design to progress, including a detailed swept path for oversized vehicles.

Features and Benefits:

- Make it easier and safer for people to cross the junction by controlling traffic movement on all three arms, improving crossing times and distances with a Puffin crossing, and making it easier for people on bikes by introducing an Advanced Stop Lines and an advance cycling green traffic signal
- Make it easier and safer for people to access the pedestrianised High Street by improving the junction
- Enhance the place quality of Bridge Street and High Street by extending the look and feel of the pedestrianised High Street into these areas with high quality paving
- Improve the footways on Bridge Street by widening the pavements and narrowing the road



Advanced Stop Line for bicycles provide a safer waiting space at a red light. An advance cycling traffic signal for bicycles gives people on bikes extra time to manoeuvre out of the junction ahead of vehicles.

Upgrade crossing to a Puffin. Puffin crossings include a pedestrian signal light on the near side of the road, as well as contain a sensor to keep the vehicle light red if a person is still crossing the junction.

Include a raised table at each crossing which allows people to cross at pavement level, and which provides a traffic calming element for vehicles to reinforce the 20mph speed limit. A surface treatment can be used to make the surface appear as paving while retaining the robustness of tarmac for vehicle use.

Synchronised lights at all three arms go red for cars at the same time, allowing people to cross freely over the junction.

Phasing of the automatic bollards synchronised to drop only on a green light, and only when an authorised is waiting to exit.

Surface treatment which looks like paving used over the junction to visually change the appearance of the road to match High Street, while retaining the carriageway loading of tarmac for vehicle use.

New paving extended onto the junction to stretch High Street onto the road.

Widen footways on Bridge Street from the informal crossing to the junction. Footways can be widened from 1.9 and 2.1m to 2.75m, by reducing the carriageway from 7.5m to 6m, which improves the area for pedestrians, as well as slows down vehicles.

The carriageway narrowing is roughly 20m before the junction, and for this distance vehicles are restricted from stopping for safety of everyone using the junction, indicated by the double yellow lines along the pavement.

An informal crossing, indicated with a visual change to the surface and dropped kerbs, to provide link from the pedestrianised High Street to the carpark, via Wares Lane/Back Bridge Street.



*This is the high level draft for the junction, in the development of a conceptual design proposal for Wick High Street, subject to further development and revision at technical design stages.

LANES RECOMMENDATIONS

LANES RECOMMENDATIONS

Four lanes (Wares Lane, Tollboth Lane, John Street and Market Place) provide key points of access on to High Street, while additional lanes such as Parliament Sq and Miller Lane provide access and links to upgrade to the carparks.

While the lanes are not included in the main concept design for the Wick Street Design project, we have provided recommendations to improve the look and feel of the lanes. The aim would be to make them safer and more inviting to use to enter and exit High Street at multiple points. In addition to providing access to High Street, they could easily lend themselves to showcasing community artwork, history and heritage, and creating visual points of interest along High Street.

Recommendations:

- Create a safer feel for the lanes with more lighting via canopy lights and lights on buildings
- Introduce artwork, murals, history/heritage and local elements specific to each lane to give each one a unique, playful character
- Where space permits, include small planters with low-maintenance planting to improve the look and feel
- Provide attractive storage for bins
- Include street name pavers on the entry and exit of each lane
- Upgrade surfaced to be more accessible and smooth
- Restrict vehicles from entering
- Continue wayfinding from High Street (eg. trail of Fishies/silver darlings in pavement) into the lanes
- Consider what improvements can be made to make lanes and the routes connected to the lanes more accessible and inclusive for people
- Include a resting platform on John Street if gradient is above 5%



John Street



Wares Lane

* This is the conceptual design proposal for Wick High Street, subject to further development and revision at technical design stages. The lanes are outwith the scope of specific proposals within the Street Design project, but recommendations on how to improve the look and feel are provided, which can be progressed into a proposal.

HERITAGE & IDENTITY

OVERVIEW

Wick is a town and community rich in history and heritage. Engaging with the community around local stories, memories and historical events and people highlighted both the wealth of information and passion that locals have for Wick. Feedback collected during the engagement events demonstrated a strong desire to see the history and heritage of Wick reflected and celebrated in the town centre, for both locals and visitors to appreciate.

The proposals for Wick include recommendations and suggestions on how to weave the stories of Wick into the built environment, and these recommendations can be further developed in the next phase of the project with the community's input, and led by artists or an arts-based organisation. The Wick Society can inform the development of historical themes, stories, and information to ensure accuracy.

HISTORY ON THE HIGH STREET

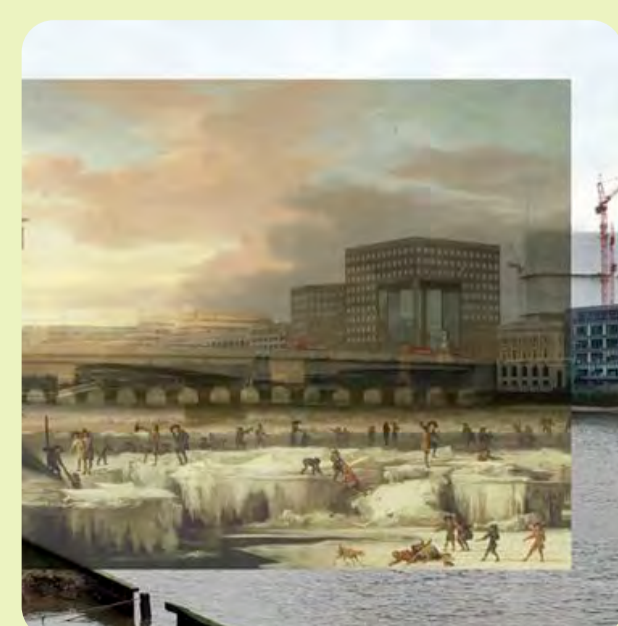
High Street contains a number of interesting locations and stories that touch on a diverse range of some of Wick's heritage themes. A selection of these locations and stories which could be celebrated have been marked on the above map. These stories, songs, and poems could be brought to life by artful plaques placed on buildings or in the pavement, through interpretive signs or street furniture, a heritage trail, or even through a digital app.



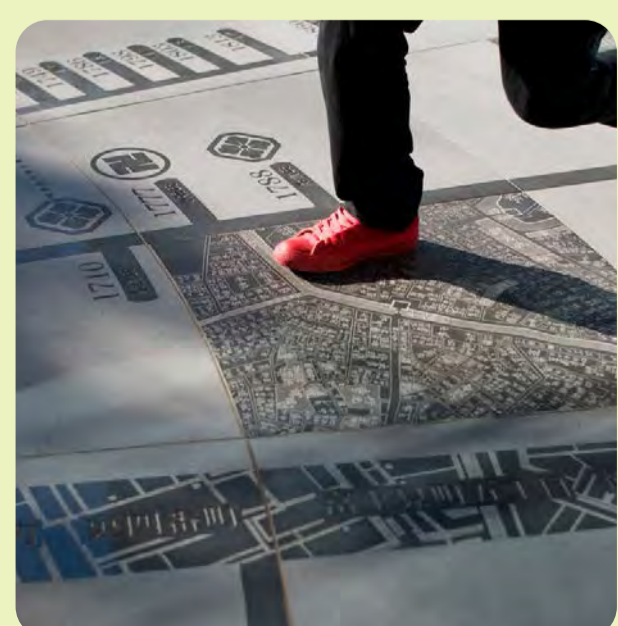
Narrative plaque



Narrative tree pit



VR digital app



Map in the pavement

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

There are a number of local points of interest and amenities which are relevant for both locals and visitors alike. In the next design phase, an artist could be commissioned to work with local groups and schools to collaboratively develop a creative and inviting signage and wayfinding approach. This would ideally be applied consistently throughout the town centre, and link into other signage and wayfinding projects which are currently being developed. From initial research and engagement feedback, the following list of places have been identified as potentially interesting and useful points of interest and amenities to highlight. The list, which is by no means comprehensive, includes transport links, cultural centres, heritage and history sites or resources, outdoor activities, and others. Locations which are just outside of Wick have been included if they are within a cycling or walking distance.

- Train Station
- Riverside Walk
- John O Groats Trail
- Telford Trail
- The Trinkie
- The Pulteney Centre
- Lyth Arts Centre
- Pulteney Distillery
- Carnegie library?
- Pilot House
- Pulteneytown
- Ebenezer Place
- Castle Sinclair Girnigoe
- Castle of Old Wick
- Sea Coast Tours
- Heritage Museum
- The Nucleus
- Harbour



Signage co-designed by an artist and children



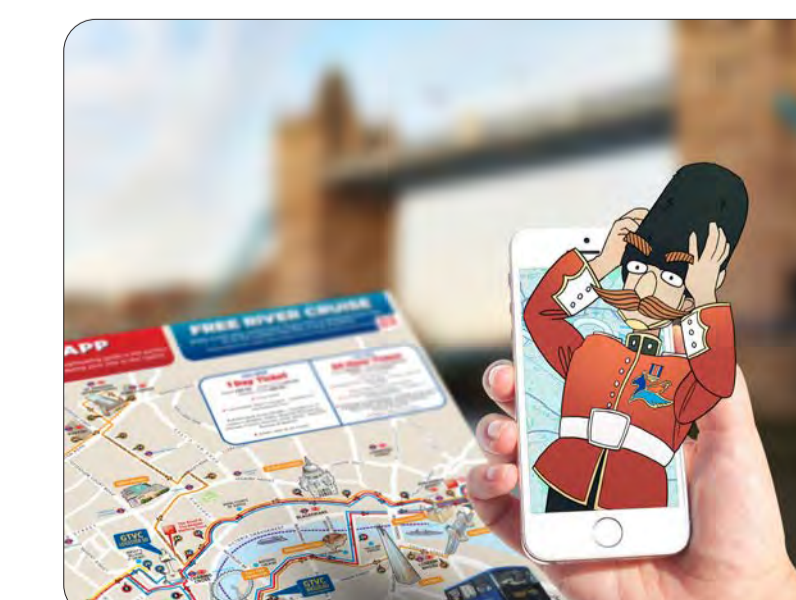
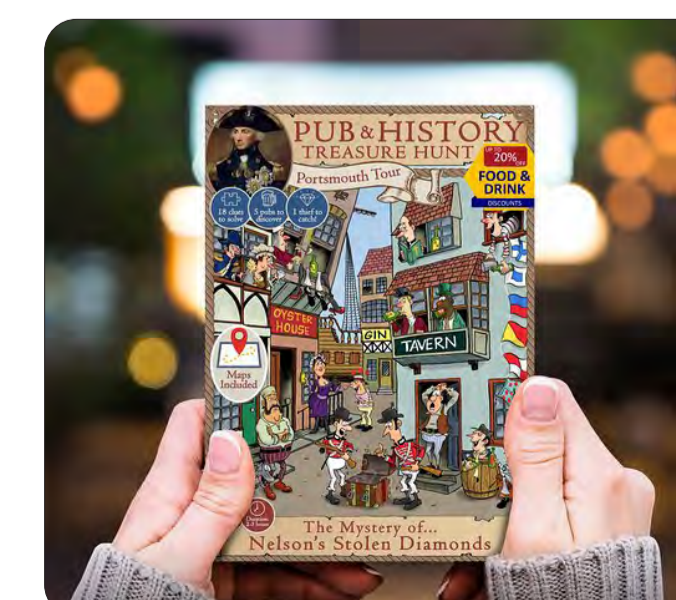
Wayfinding Trail of Fish

HISTORY AND HERITAGE SCAVENGER HUNT

Whilst there is much to find interesting in the vicinity of High Street, there are many more stories which relate to the wider town. One way to incorporate these gems into the town centre could be to create a treasure hunt for visitors and locals to discover, with subtle clues dotted through the town centre. This could be delivered through little art interventions, a digital app, or even a designed trail. As a starting point, some themes, interesting facts, and fragments of stories which emerged through the engagement this year as strong parts of Wick's identity and culture include:

- HMS Exmouth
- Heroes of Telemark
- Lanes and Buildings below ground?
- Telford named roads by names of fish
- Cairness Glass
- Scott Sutherland
- Alexander Henry Rhind
- Evan Oliphant
- James Bremner—statue in the harbour
- Robert Louis Stevenson and his uncle Alan Stevenson
- Lawrence Stephen Lowry—painted the Black Stairs painting

- Wick's Doctor—pioneering achievements, statue by the river
- Bridges in Wick
- Pirate John Gow
- Alexander Bain
- Viking history
- Wartime history
- Herring industry history
- The weir
- Notable marine visitors (Wally the Walrus, orcas)
- Wick words and poems



Left: Simple leaflet with history and heritage themed scavenger hunt clues

Middle: Combining a scavenger hunt with an escape room style game, which includes visiting local pubs and other venues

Right: Integrating an AR app with a history focus with the scavenger hunt element

SIGNAGE & STREET FURNITURE PALETTE

Signage and Wayfinding

There are a number of local points of interest and amenities which are relevant for both locals and visitors alike. In the next design phase, an artist could be commissioned to work with local groups and schools to collaboratively develop a creative and inviting signage and wayfinding approach. This would ideally be applied consistently throughout the town centre, and link into other signage and wayfinding projects which are currently being developed. From initial research and engagement feedback, the following list of places have been identified as potentially interesting and useful points of interest and amenities to highlight. The list, which is by no means comprehensive, includes transport links, cultural centres, heritage and history sites or resources, outdoor activities, and others. Locations which are just outside of Wick have been included if they are within a cycling or walking distance.

- Train Station
- Riverside Walk
- John O Groats Trail
- Telford Trail
- The Trinkie
- The Pulteney Centre
- Lyth Arts Centre
- Pulteney Distillery
- Carnegie library?
- Pilot House
- Pulteneytown
- Ebenezer Place
- Castle Sinclair Girnigoe
- Castle of Old Wick
- Sea Coast Tours
- Heritage Museum
- The Nucleus
- Harbour



Signage co-designed by an artist and children



Wayfinding Trail of Fish

Bollards

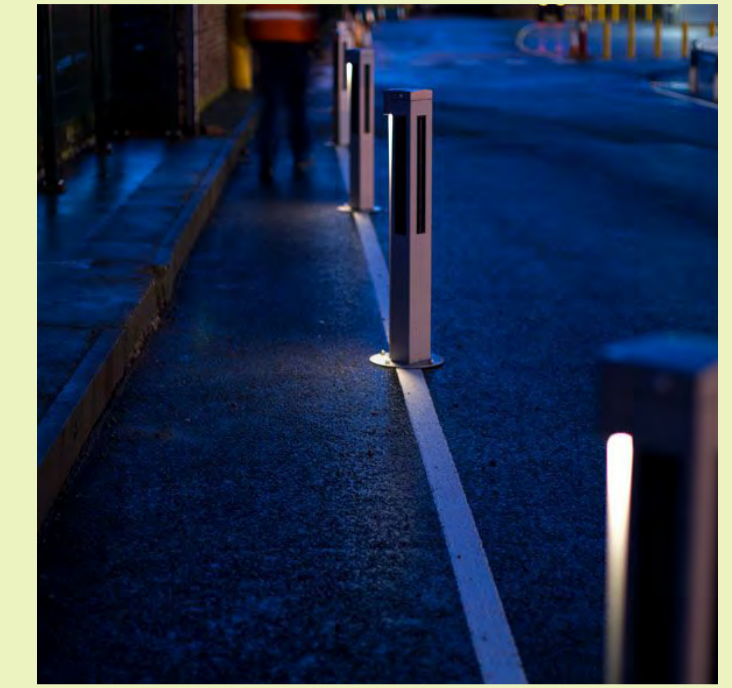
The purpose of bollards in the proposed design are to help ensure vehicles cannot encroach on or access areas in which they are not meant to be in. Though the bollards serve a very functional purpose in the proposed design, their visual appearance and style should enhance the sense of place on High Street, and their design can also provide additional functions.



Wayfinding bollards function as mini way-finding totems



Heritage inspired bollards artistically symbolise some element of heritage



Lighting bollards add more illumination to High Street



Bollards as plinths which display small pieces of art highlighting stories from Wick's history or heritage



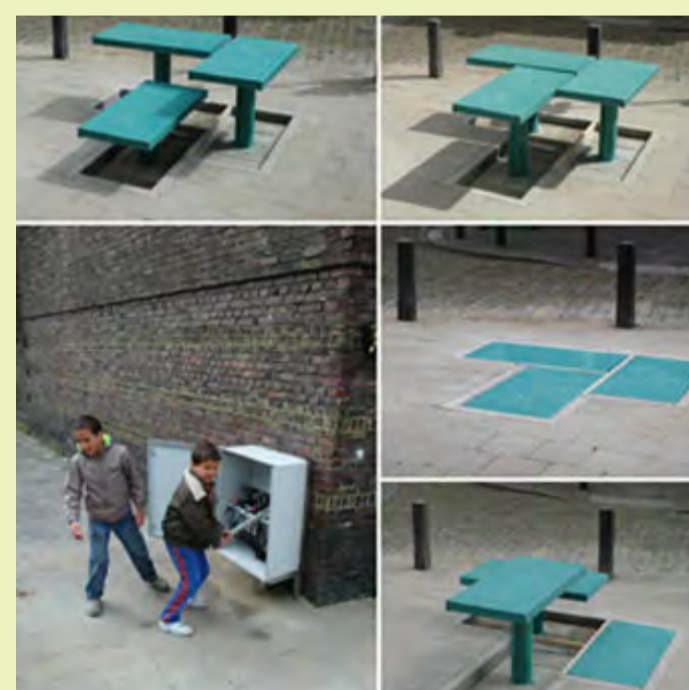
Some bollards need features such as being removable, or containing fixings to anchor other furniture to them



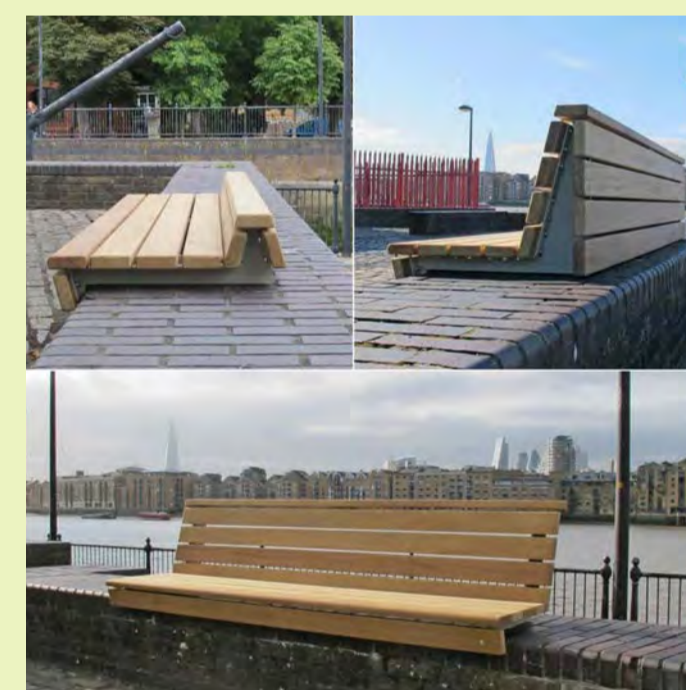
Bollards with a series of unique sculptures on them can form a history-themed treasure hunt within the town centre

Seating

Seating is being introduced into High Street at: the Shore Lane Gateway, in the Market Square parklets, cafe-style seating in Market Square, and removable seating in the middle of Market Square. The types of seating for each area will differ based on the location but all types should include options with a back and arm rest to make them more comfortable and accessible for people, and the materials should be durable to weathering. Different materials and styles can be used for different areas, but should still keep a cohesive feel overall.



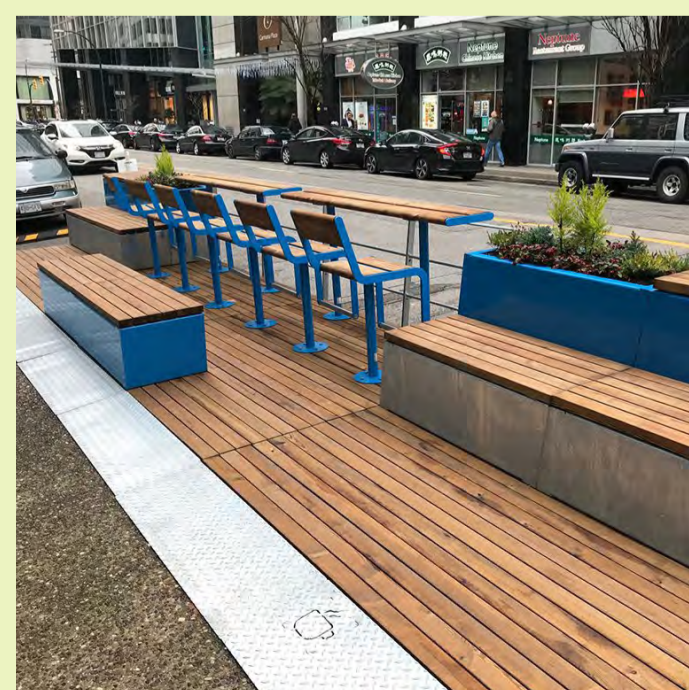
Pop-Up or removable seating and tables in Market square will allow the space to be flexible



Wall-top seating at Shore Lane Gateway encourages people to sit and enjoy the view of the River and Pulteneytown



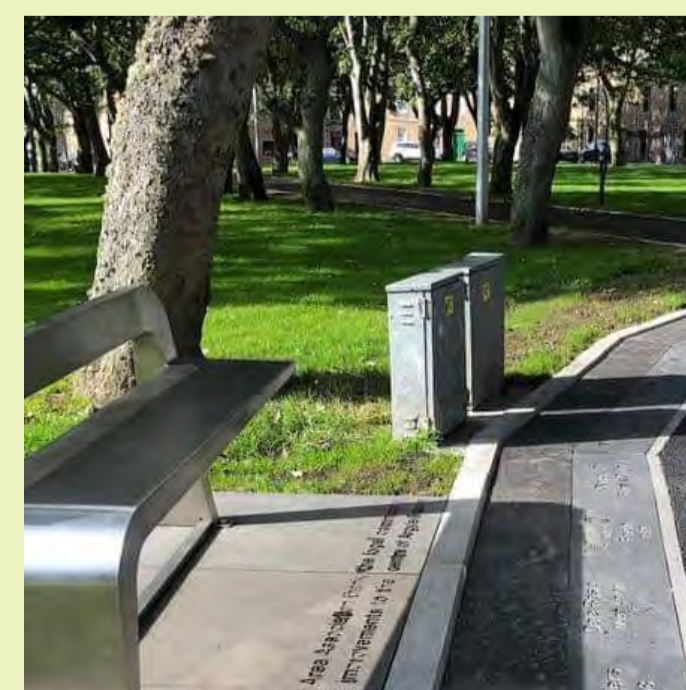
Benches in the proposed parklets in Market Square could have a heritage feel, similar to benches on the Riverside walk



Café seating proposed in Market Square can be the table and chairs type or parklet style



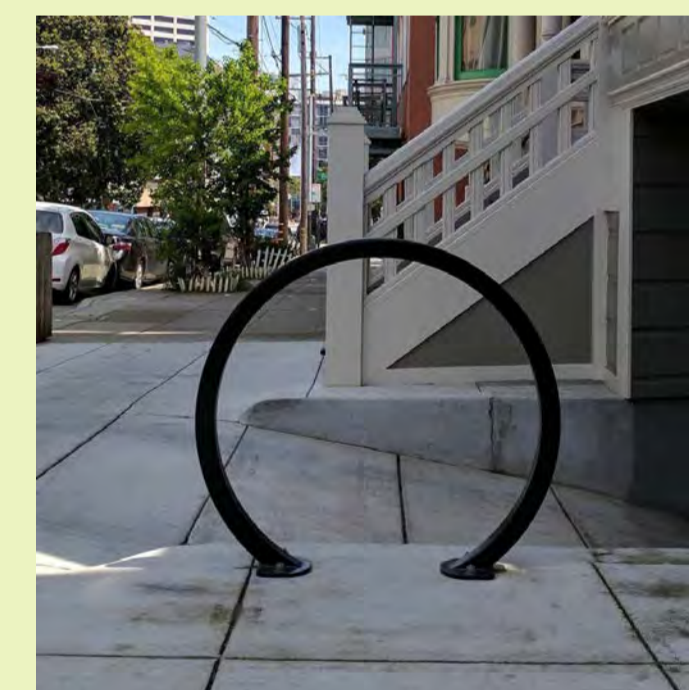
Different materials (metal, wood, stone) have different benefits and challenges



Benches in the proposed parklets in Market Square could match those in Argyle Square

Cycle Parking

Cycle parking helps to encourage locals and visitors to visit High Street by bike. People travelling in a non-motorised way tend to spend more time in a place, and often there is an increased footfall in shops.



A basic cycle stand can be designed with more elegant shapes or finishes



Cycle hoops can be attached to bollards for additional cycle parking



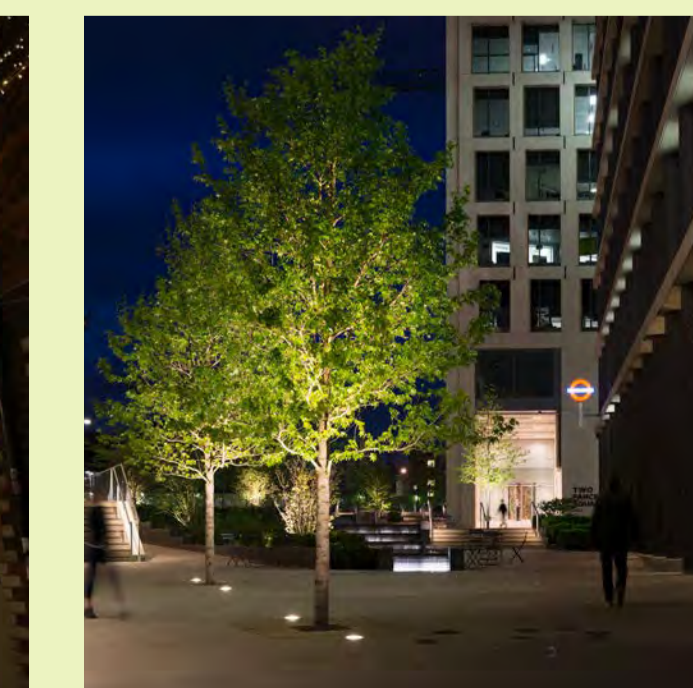
Cycle parking can be creative and add an element of art or follow a heritage theme

Lighting

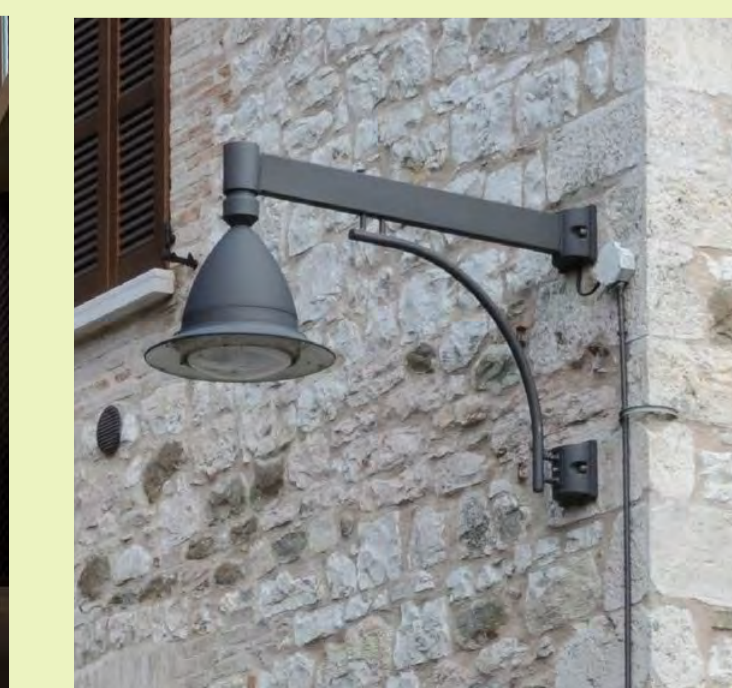
While the street lights have recently been updated in the town centre, there are opportunities to include additional creative lighting to bring more light to High Street and Lanes.



Light canopies and overhead installations are especially effective in the winter



Uplighting trees and buildings enhance them and bring more dynamic lighting to the area



Adding more wall-mounted lights can brighten areas which don't receive enough light

PLANTING & PAVING PALETTE

Planting

A planting plan should be developed in the detail phase of the project by a landscape architect who understands the environmental context of Wick, and with the input of an ecologist. Using native species further increases the ecological value of planting in towns and cities, and should be done whenever possible. This palette proposes a few planting concepts which are alternatives to ornamental planting, and which could feature plants which celebrate the local landscape of Caithness.

Trees

New trees proposed for High Street area are recommended to be local species which do well in the Wick weather and High Street environment.



Alder in summer

Alder

A native tree, alder is a pioneer species which means grows quickly and suited for open areas. It is tolerant of exposure, wet, coastal air, and air pollution, and recovers well from windburn, making it well-suited High Street. Alder is a medium sized, conical tree, with dense foliage, which further makes them suitable for screening wind.

Alder produces lovely yellow catkins in the spring, and small cones in the winter. It is great for wildlife including insects, birds and lichens.



Downy Birch in autumn

Downy Birch

Another native, downy birch is also a fast growing pioneer species that does well in similar conditions to alder, and is well-suited to the conditions of High Street. They have a light, open canopy, and a beautiful white, diamond patterned bark. They can be planted as a single stem or multi-stem.

The leaves turn a glowing yellow in the autumn, and in the winter the bark and shape of the branches creates a striking form. Birch trees provide habitat and sustenance for many species of insects, fungi, and some species of nesting birds.

Planters

Planters, like other street furniture, comes in a variety of shapes and materials, and a variety of heights. They can sometimes serve multiple functions, depending on their design.



Planters with benches attached provide additional seating opportunities



At Shore Lane gateway, in addition to seating, the wall could have inset planters



Rectangular or round planters placed linearly can neatly delineate a boundary

Bog Garden Experimental Concept

A very experimental idea for the proposed Shore Lane wall planters is to create bog gardens with the conditions to support flora and fauna found in local bogs to celebrate the Caithness landscape by featuring unique and rarely seen species.



Saxifraga hirculus



Drosera anglica



Eriophorum vaginatum



Rhynchospora alba



Hammarbya paludosa

Caithness Mix Concept

High Street planters could contain mixes based on plants native and local to Caithness, supporting the biodiversity the area.



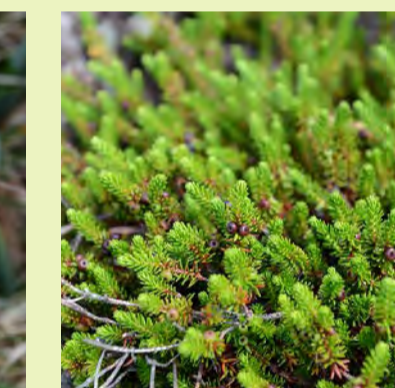
Carex nigra



Erica cinera



Primula scotica



Empetrum nigrum



Viola riviniana

Here is an example of some of the beautiful local plants which could be considered, if they are suitable for planters and High Street environment.

Some species are rare and unique to the area, and if these wild plants are able to grow in High Street, it would help to connect the town centre with the local landscape, as well as provide a place for people to learn about the unique local flora.



Molinia caerulea



Vaccinium vitis-idaea



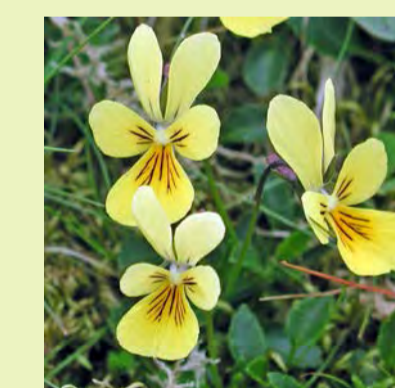
Calluna vulgaris spp.



Viola tricolor



Silene uniflora



Viola lutea



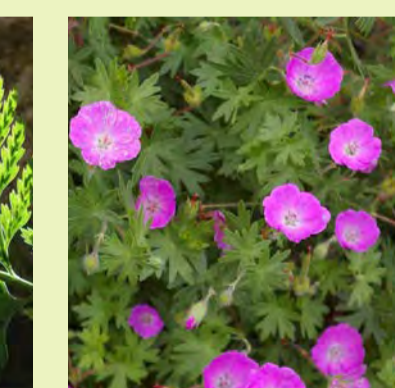
Armeria maritima



Hierochloa odorata



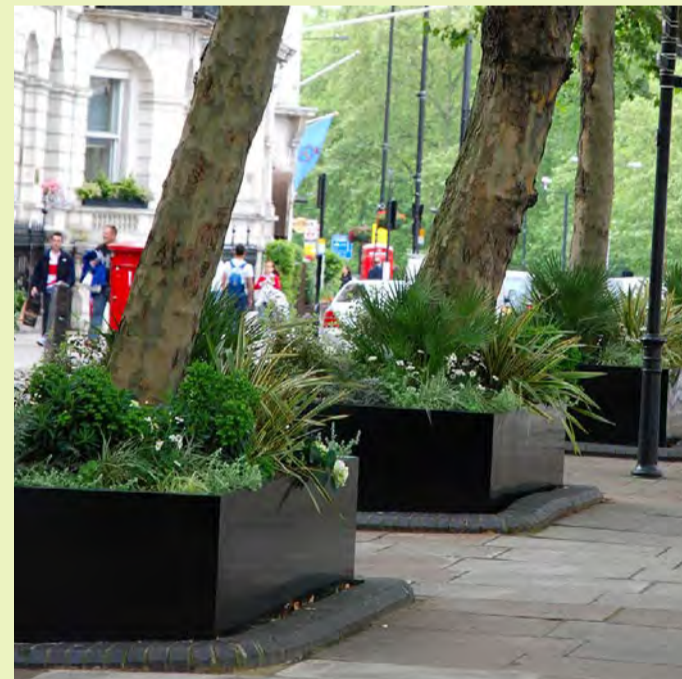
Asplenium spp.



Geranium sanguineum

Trees

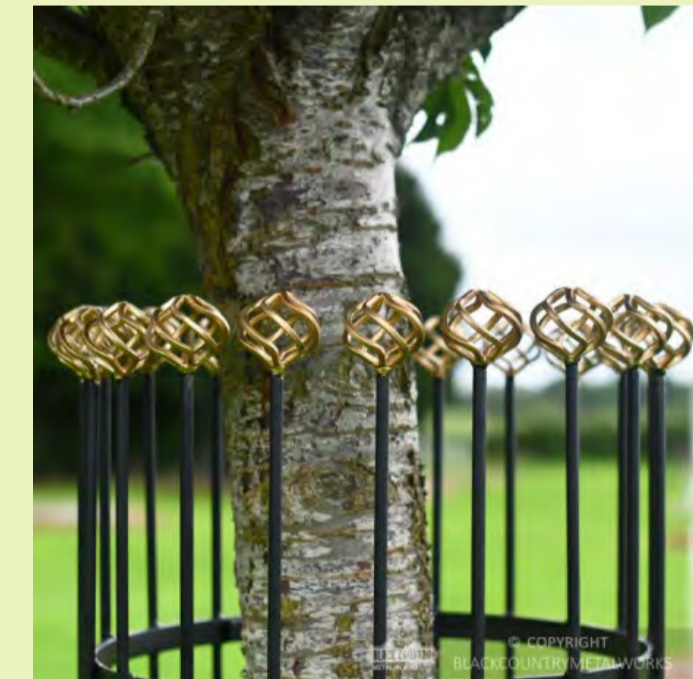
Depending on the utilities underground, trees may either be installed into the ground, or in tree planters. Trees may require protective guards to ensure their safety especially in the first few years of growth. The style of the tree pits or planters should align with the rest of the street furniture on High Street.



Trees in planters can be with or without benches



If trees are planted in the ground, tree grills can feature writing or motifs



Tree guards can protect trees and be designed with decorative motifs

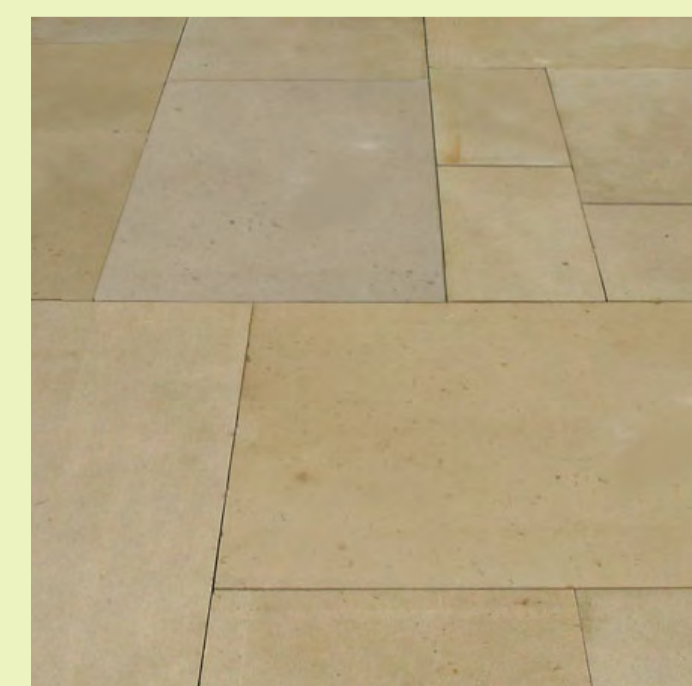
Paving

Paving in High Street currently is slippery and uneven, making it difficult for some moving through the area. The design proposes to balance new paving with improving some retained paving. With the reduced amount of vehicles using High Street, the existing paving should be easier to maintain and keep even, but maintenance of surfaces is key for ensuring the surfaces are accessible and not slippery or uneven.

Adding contrasting colours in the paving helps to delineate the space, as well as bring some diversity to the large amounts of grey. Including areas of creative paving is a way to incorporate history, heritage, and wayfinding into High Street.



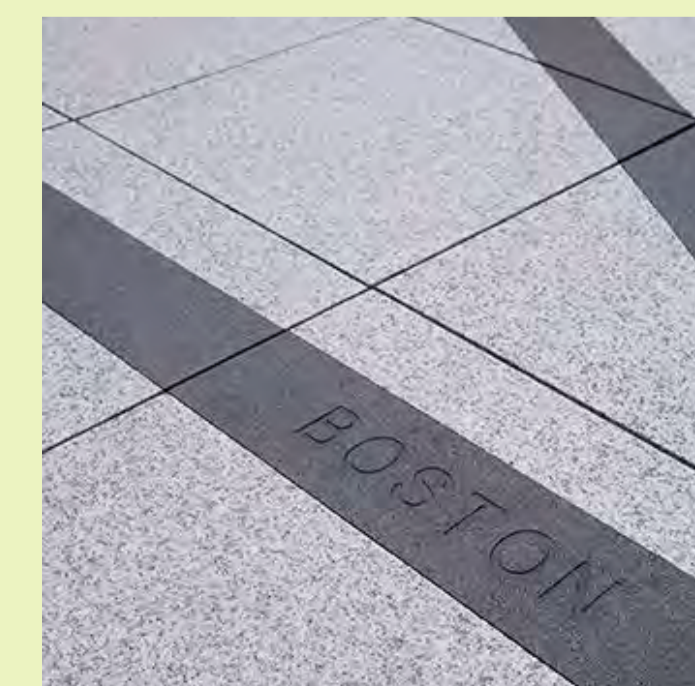
Retained existing Caithness stone should be thoroughly cleaned and repaired



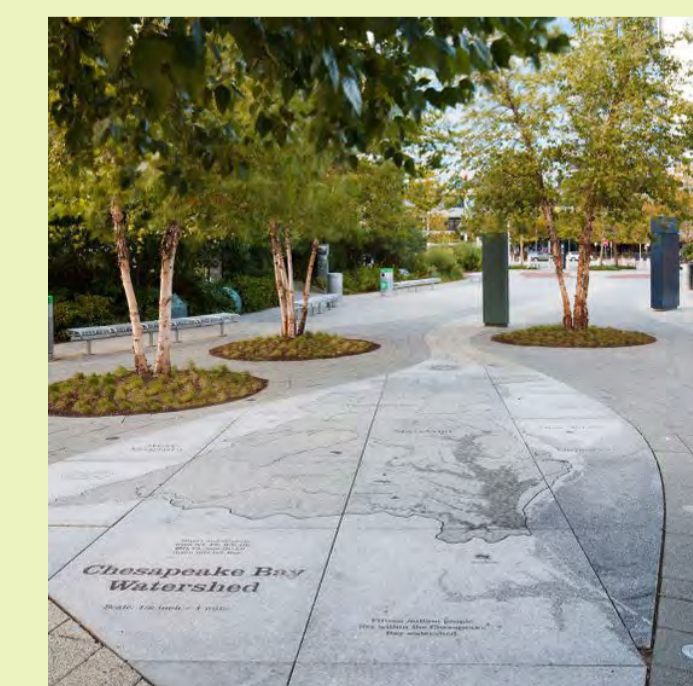
New paving is proposed to be a lighter, warm colour, and should be even and non-slippery



An imprinted surface in the carriageway gives the impression of paving



Engraved street name pavers are proposed at the entrances to High Street and lanes



Maps, wayfinding or historical information can be inset into the pavement



Local stories, poetry, or local words can be engraved or inset into some of the paving