

Culture Hub

Introduction

As part of the Energising Blyth regeneration proposals, Northumberland County Council have secured funding through the Future High Street Fund and Town Deal Fund to revitalise the Town Centre and transform the wider Blyth area.

A new Culture Hub is being developed at the heart of a revitalised market place in Blyth Town Centre. It will be a new attraction responding to what the community said they want to see and do. The area will be more vibrant with new things to do bringing visitors and increasing spending locally. The project will kick start the wider renewal of the town as a place everyone can be proud of. The project will support health and wellbeing, enhance learning opportunities, strengthen community cohesion and reduce anti-social behaviour.

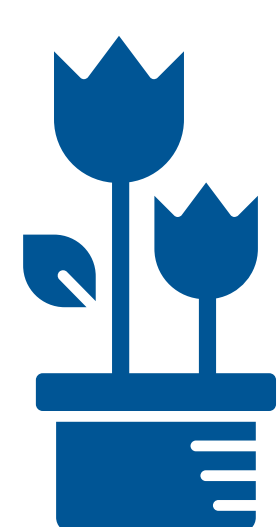


New things to see and do



The proposed Culture Hub will improve the culture and leisure offer in Blyth with a new 3 screen cinema, a creative play facility, and multi purpose space to encourage more residents to spend time and money in the area.

Kickstarting the town centre's renewal



The project is a once in a generation opportunity and will be delivered with funding from the County Council and HM Government. It is the first major project to change the future of the town centre making it a more welcoming and attractive area. It will transform the current tired and stark Market Place into a greener and more useable space for the whole community.

Creating opportunities and new experiences for all



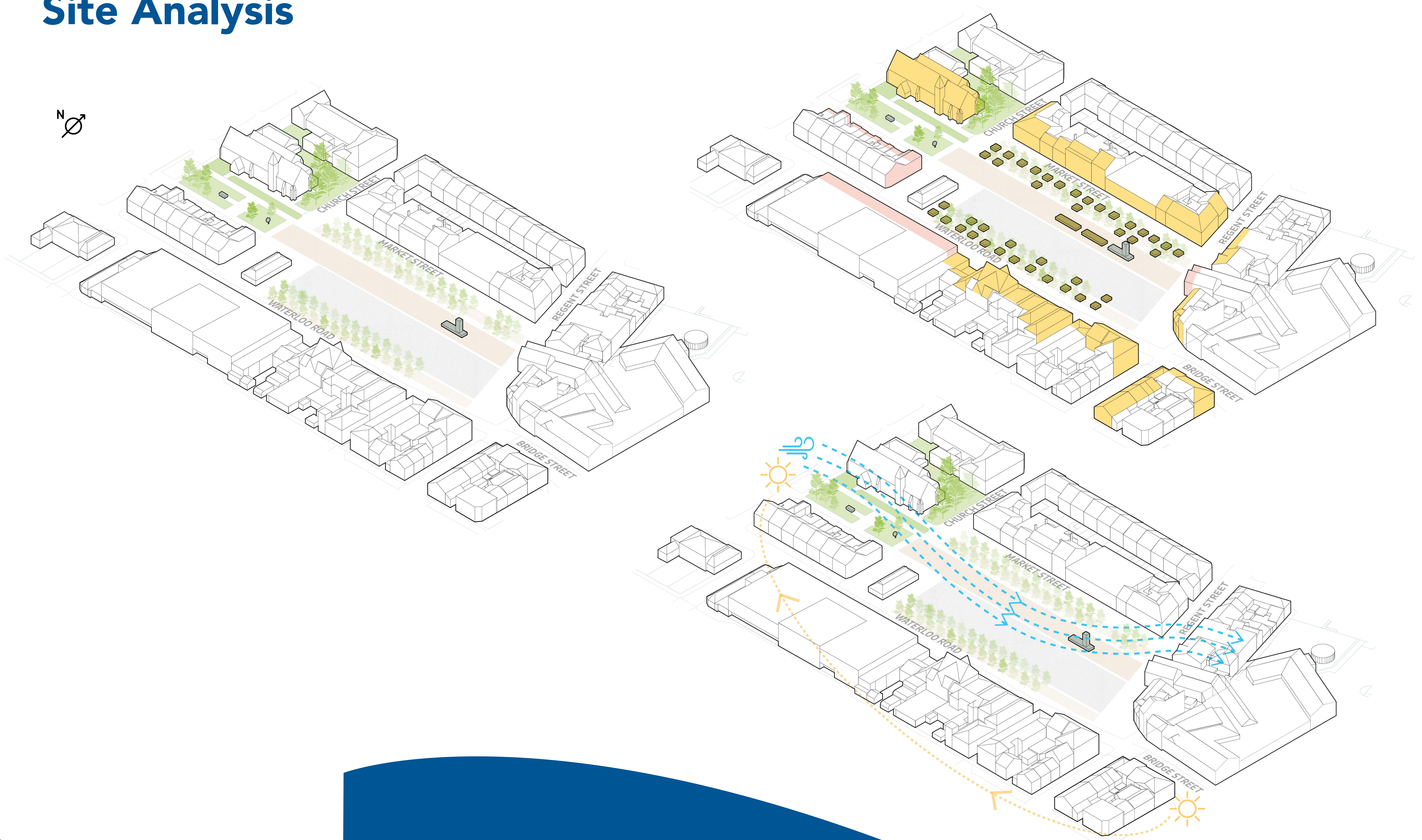
The project will improve the health and wellbeing of people in Blyth by creating opportunities to participate in cultural and artistic activities that have positive impacts on mental and physical health.

A place for the whole community



The project is for everyone in Blyth and will increase participation in culture and arts by creating accessible, affordable, and enjoyable opportunities to engage. It will add value and complement the existing offer in the town and help to create a more sustainable and wide ranging offer.

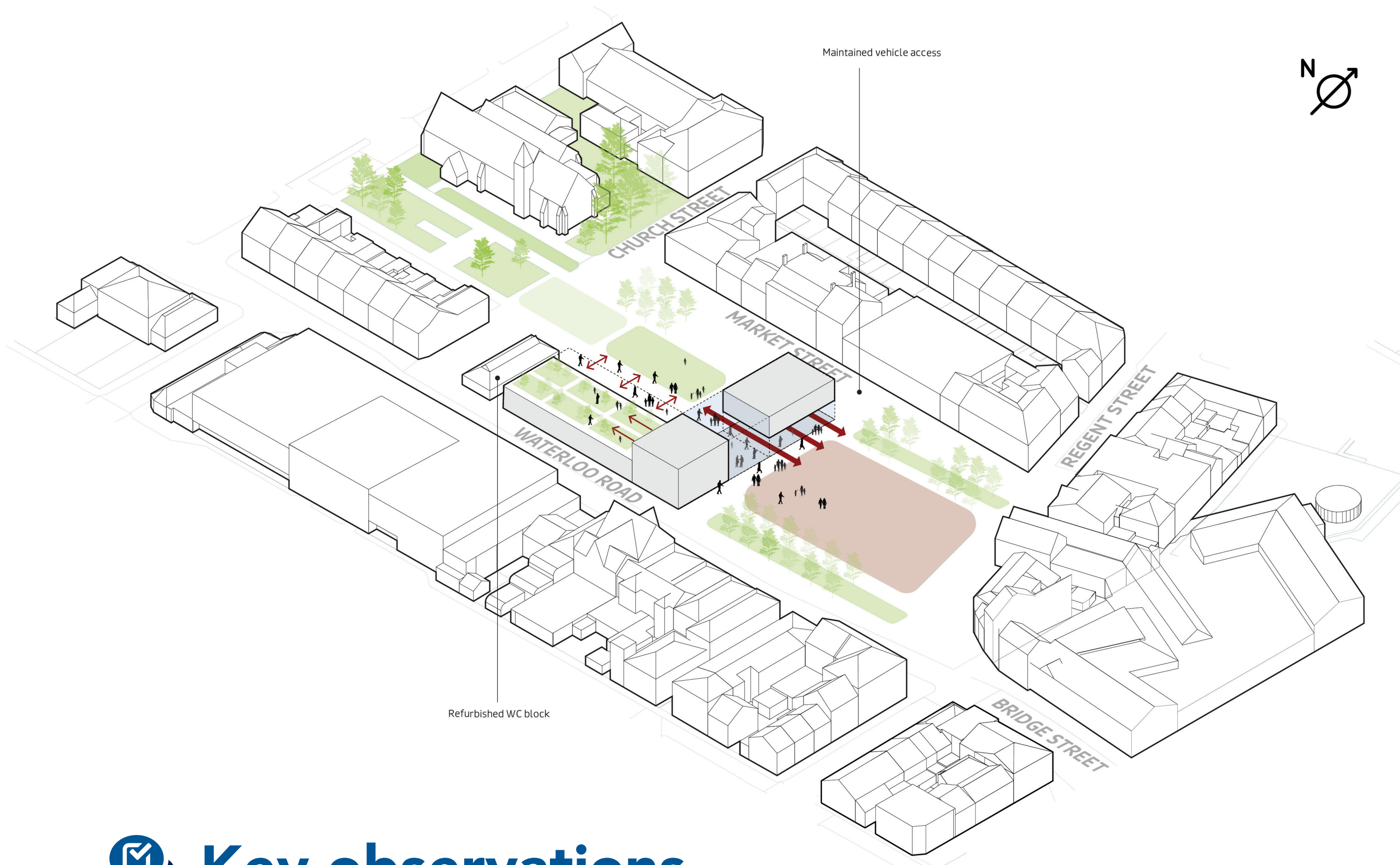
Site Analysis



Key Observations

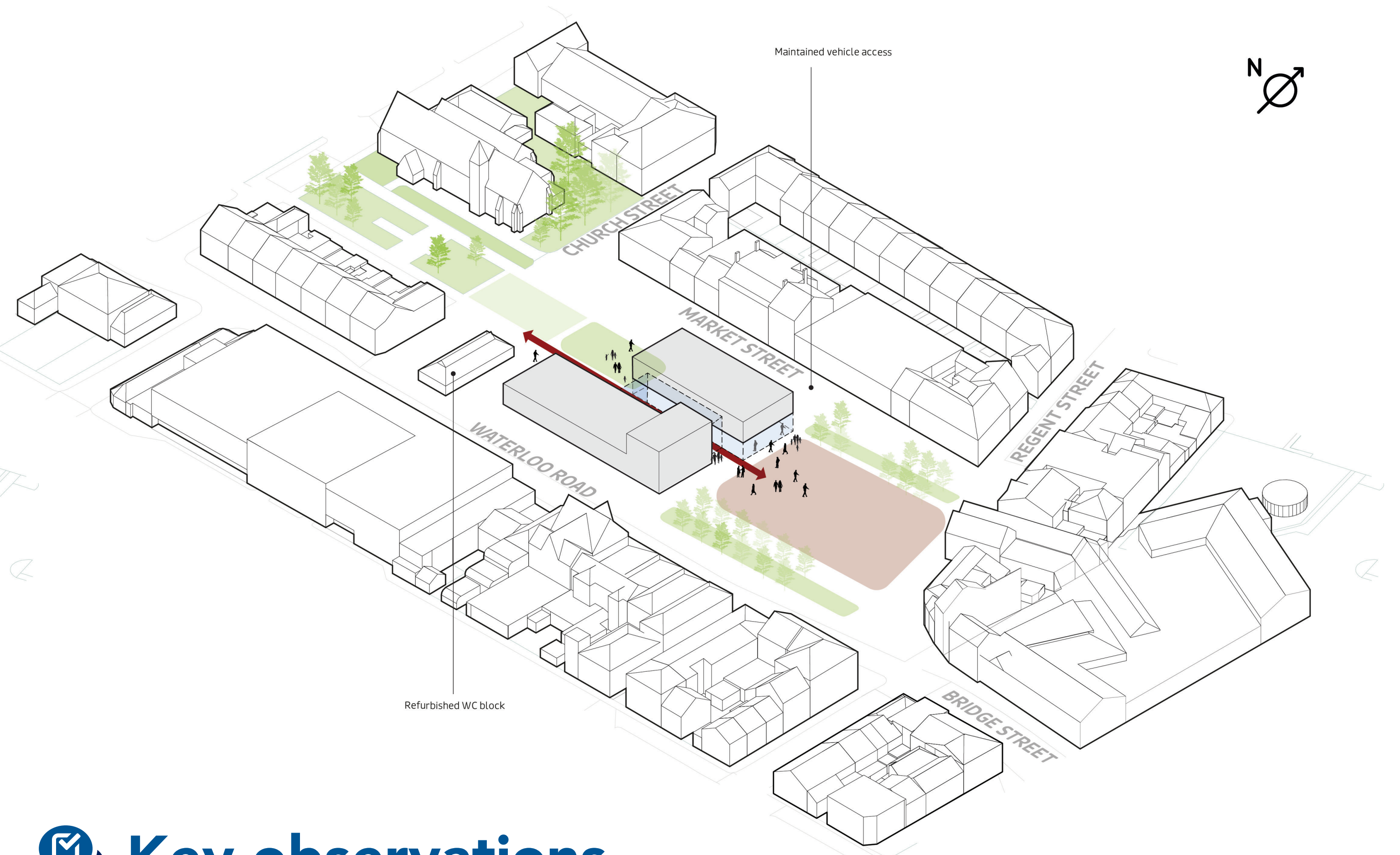
-  There is a current disconnect between the Town Centre and natural landscapes that surround it, meaning there is little sense of place and identity when visiting the Town.
-  The Marketplace would benefit from greater interest and variety of pedestrian experience through planting, seating and landscape features.
-  More activity for prolonged hours of the day would create a safe, more self-policed public realm.
-  St Marys Church is an important part of the architectural scale and character of the market place.
-  The quality architecture should be celebrated and utilized to form positive edges to the square.
-  Lack of opportunity for social engagement due to arrangement and spacing of seats.
-  Improved landscaping and architectural features could draw people into the space to encourage new and different experiences.
-  Westerly prevailing wind can be very strong and due to the open nature of the Market Place it can feel very cold and exposed.
-  Improved lighting would create safer, more attractive links in the hours of darkness.

Design Summary/Design Development – Location Options



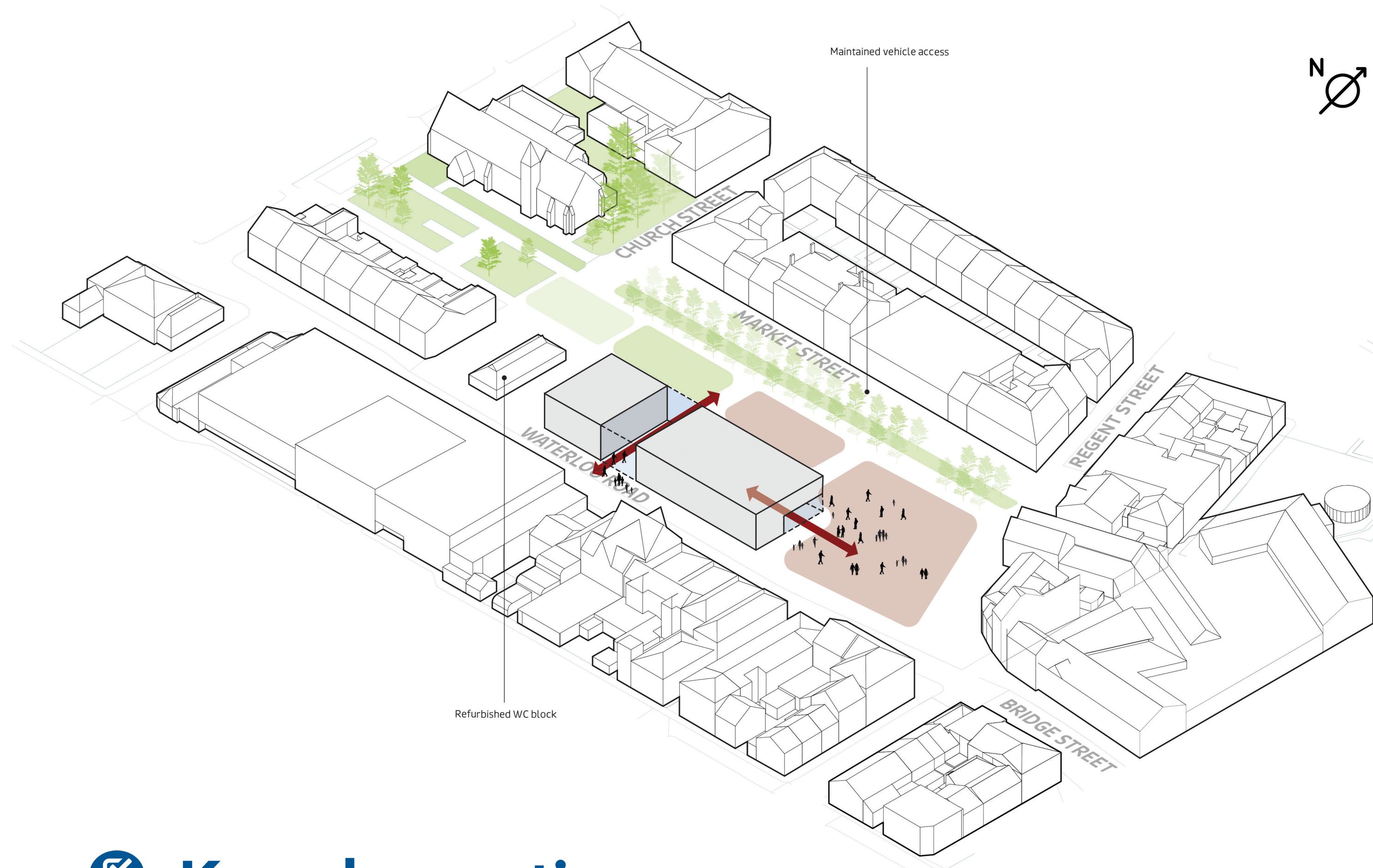
Key observations

- Café seating arranged along shaded northern edge of plan
- Building provides limited positive contribution at street level to Waterloo Road



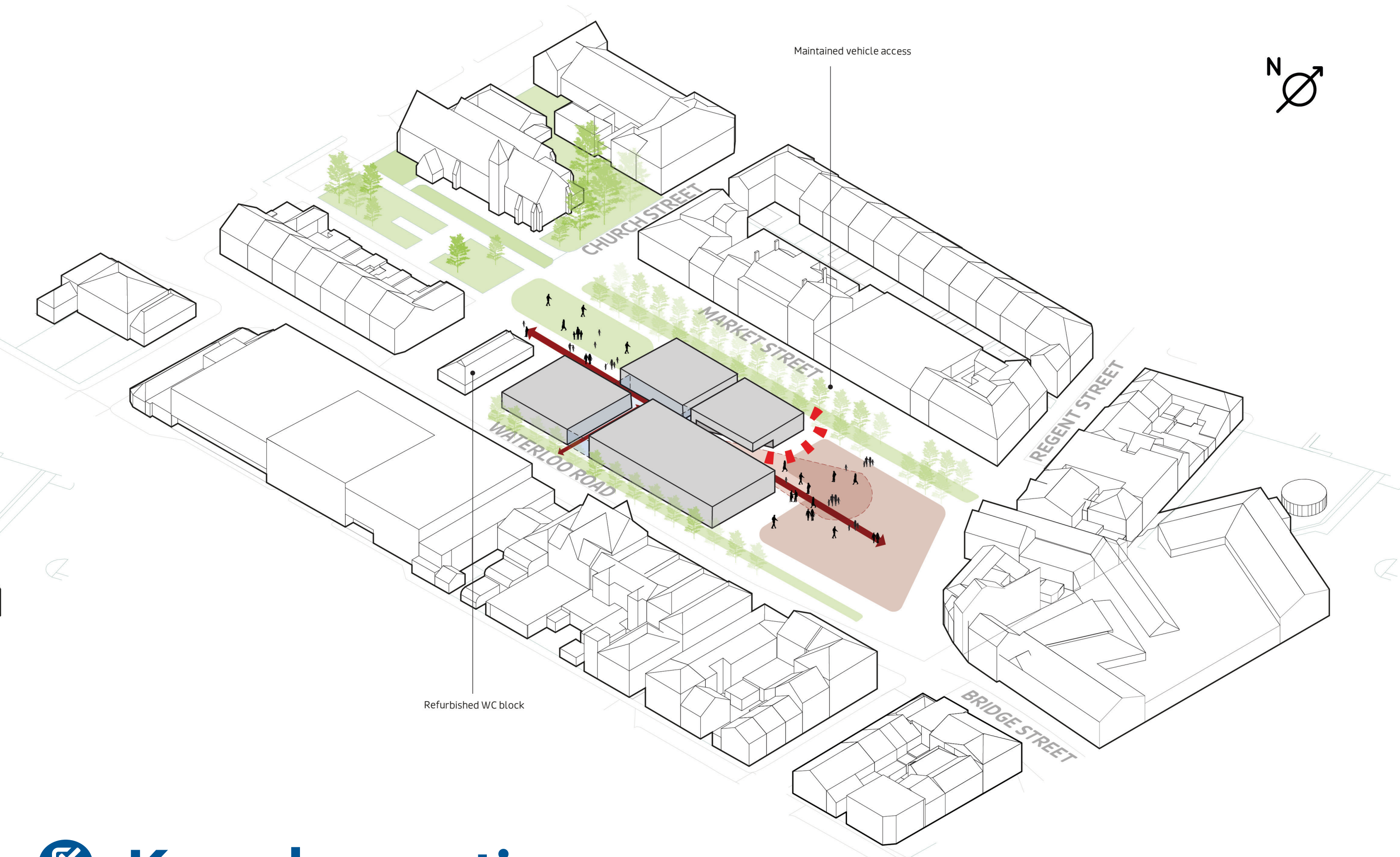
Key observations

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Key observations

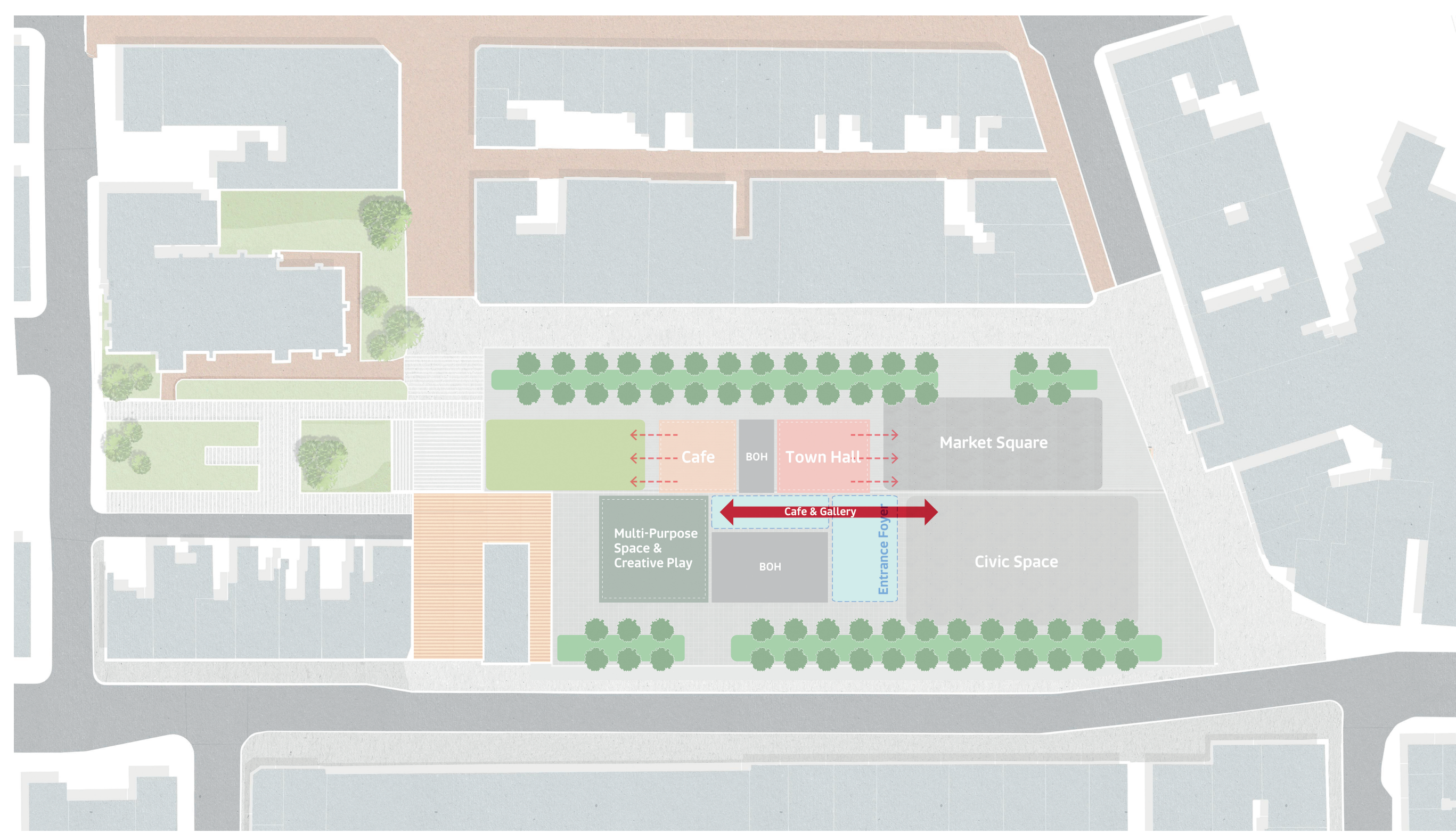
- Does not divide the Market Place into smaller zones
- Town Hall situated along vehicle edge of site
- Café and seating placed to east of floor plan



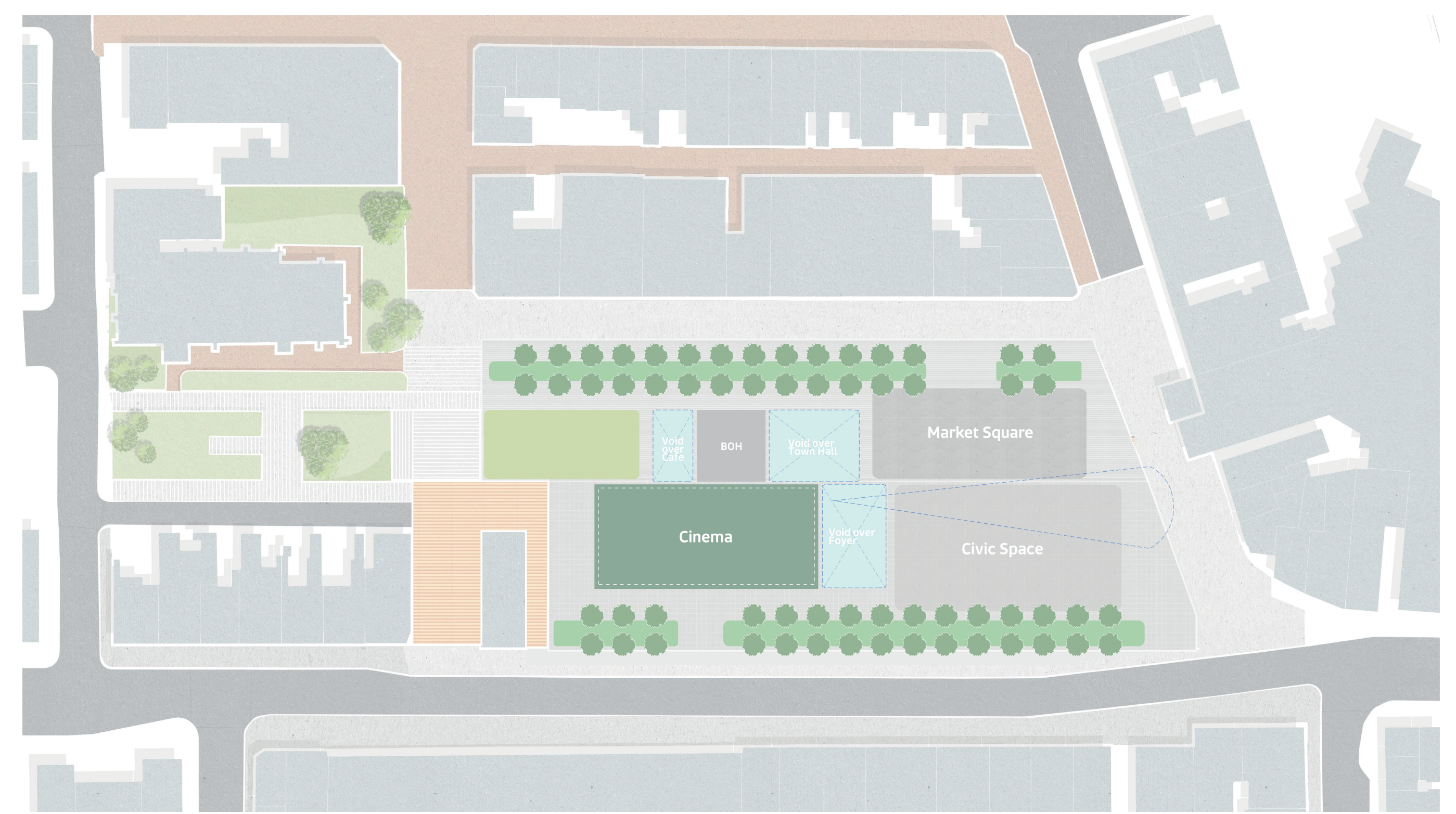
Key observations

- A blank cinema wall presents itself to the Market Place
- Main entrance into building from a central spine

Emerging Designs



Ground Floor



First Floor

Focus of Emerging Building Design

Historic Footprint of buildings on Market Place

- ✓ Redefines Waterloo Road edge
- ✓ Retains and enhances Market Place area and function

Re-configures Marketplace

- ✓ Creates two public squares
- ✓ Building can spill out east and west
- ✓ Creates weather protection from prevailing wind to East

Regent Street / Bridge Street Corner

- ✓ Creates a Focal Point
- ✓ Creates Placemaking opportunity
- ✓ Responds to higher quality buildings in conservation area

Completing Church Street

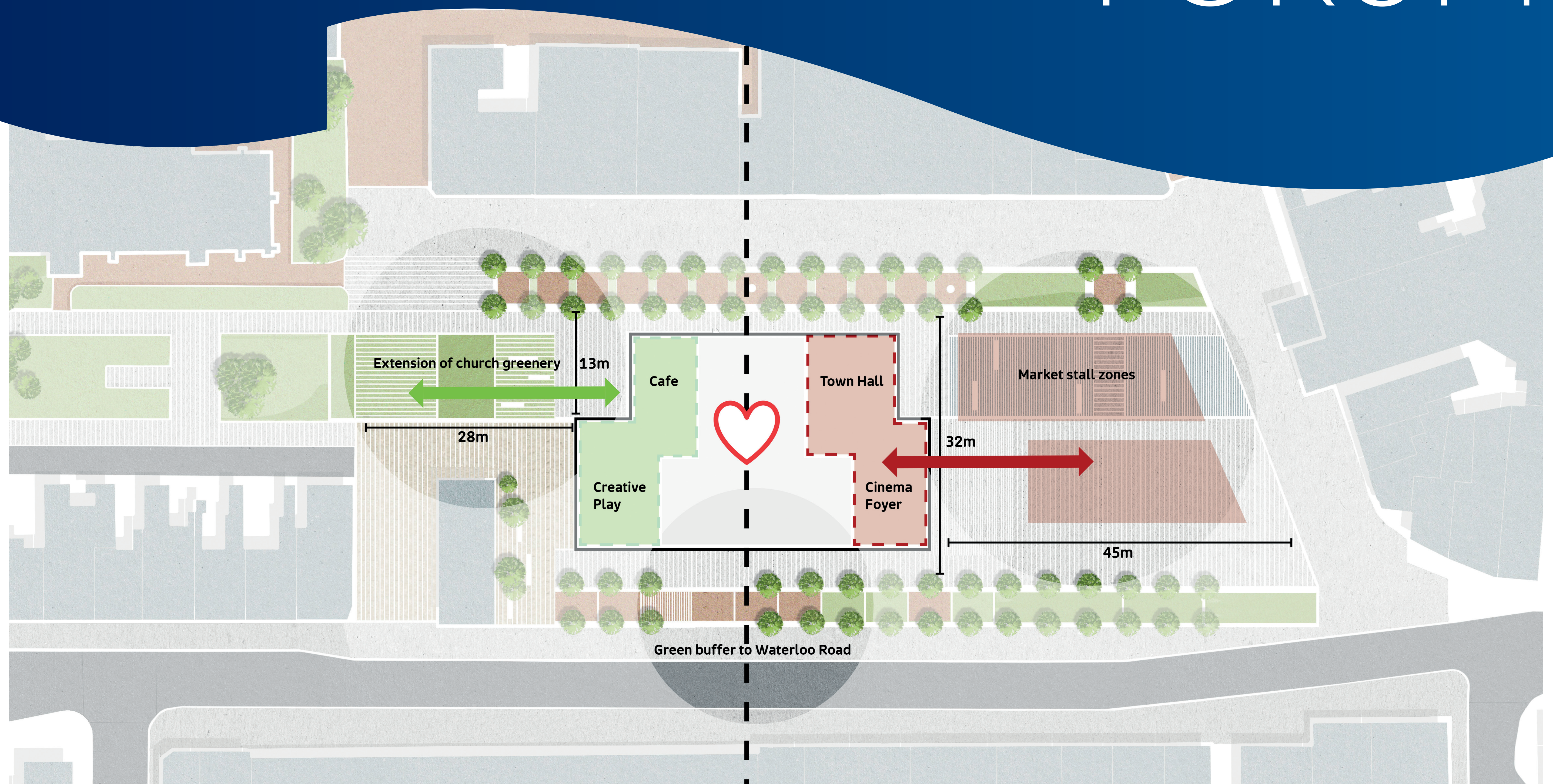
- ✓ Creates civic presence at top of square
- ✓ Connects church to marketplace, by creating a new public square

Key Assumptions

- ✓ Vehicle access via Market Street will be retained
- ✓ One way system introduced on Market Place
- ✓ Bus circulation route has been removed
- ✓ Toilet block will be retained and fully refurbished
- ✓ Market Trading stalls will be accommodated
- ✓ Existing events will continue to be held on the Market Place

- ✓ New events to be developed and promoted via the Town Council, Emerging Cultural Programme and with culture partners in the town
- ✓ Additional green spaces to be created
- ✓ Key views of assets such as St Marys Church and Conservation Area have been carefully considered
- ✓ Public Realm works to complement adjacent projects at Bowes Street and Church Street
- ✓ Cycling and walking connectivity will be linked to wider plans in the town

BLYTH TOWN FORUM



Proposed Facilities

Cinema

- Three screen cinema.
- 100, 60 and 40 seat capacities.

Town Hall

- Multi-purpose area with the capacity for 120 people seated/200 standing.
- Suitable for providing a range of activities including live music, comedy events, performances etc.
- Available to hire for meetings, family celebrations etc.

Café area

- Providing a range of light meals and drinks.

Foyer/dwelling space

- Public area able to exhibit locally produced work.

Smaller Multipurpose Space

- Will be used for arts, health and wellbeing activities.

Outdoor space

- Improved public realm.
- Market stalls.
- Events.
- Green spaces.
- Performance space.

Creative Play

- Supports children to develop their own ideas and imagination through engaging with creative experiences such as storytelling, puppetry, dance, movement, drama, and music.
- Provides a strong foundation in children in their early years from 0 - 5 years and can be continued throughout childhood and beyond.

What happens next?

- 14th August 2022 – Survey closes
- Summer 2022 – Feed survey comments into ongoing design process
- Summer 2022 – Commence procurement process for Operators for the Culture Hub

- September 2022 – Pre Planning Application Consultation, an opportunity to see progressed design and provide feedback and comments
- October 2022 – Planning Submission

- Autumn/Winter 2022-23 – Operator(s) appointed
- Summer 2023 - Construction starts
- Autumn 2024 – Opening