

Wokingham Town Centre

Environmental Improvements:

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

Market Place

What is the role of this space?

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

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

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

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

Is there enough flexibility in layout for all potential uses?

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

Other

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

Peach Place

What is the role of this space?

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

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

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

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

Is there enough flexibility in layout for all potential uses?

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

Unique to Wokingham

What unique qualities make Wokingham special?

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

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

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

Can historic & cultural references be integrated into the spaces?

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

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

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

Are the materials suitable for the role of the space?

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

Should materials be the same across Wokingham?

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

Size of paving units

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

Metal or stone for tactile paving & drain covers?

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

Do proposed colours complement surrounding buildings?

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

Does quality of proposed materials match that of surrounding buildings?

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

Street furniture

Views on current street furniture

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

Is current pedestrian signage adequate?

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

Which materials are most appropriate?

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

Which bench styles are appropriate?

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

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

Should benches have arm and back rests?

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

Should furniture be bespoke and unique to Wokingham?

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

Which style of furniture do you prefer?

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

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

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

Planting

Are there the right number of trees?

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

Are they appropriate for role and function of the square?

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

Upright, ornamental or more natural shape?

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

Are planting beds appropriate for role of the space?

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

What forms of planting would you like to see?

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