

5. A High Quality Public Realm

The sketch design for Swan Street/ High Street provides for the implementation of Leicestershire County Council's proposal to allow, for a one year trial period, southbound buses only to pass through this space. In the longer term there is the option to completely pedestrianise the area.

The public realm improvements will:

- Reduce the barrier to north/south pedestrian movement in the Town Centre.
- Integrate with recent environmental improvements to Biggin Street and Church Gate.
- Improve surfacing, street furniture and lighting, and provide the opportunity for public art.
- Widen pavements and extend pedestrian priority measures where possible on Leicester Road / Baxter Gate.
- Incorporate high quality, on-street bus facilities within hubs on Baxter Gate and Derby Square.
- Incorporate new street trees and enable other landscaping opportunities to create an improved sense of place and to soften surrounding buildings.
- Create an attractive space that in the longer term can be used for a range of events and activities.
- Provide for cycle access where this is feasible and justified as part of wider strategic cycle routes serving the Town Centre.

(ii) Bedford Square/ Ward's End

Bedford Square is the southern gateway to the Town Centre and provides the main formal entrance into Queen's Park with a vista to the Carillon tower, an important local landmark. The Square also fringes the Queen's Park Conservation Area. Bedford Square has the potential to become a high profile, quality public space but is currently dominated by surface car parking and traffic using the busy road network which bisects it at several points. The Masterplan proposes the removal of through traffic and the redesign of this space to create a new, coherent public square which will greatly improve first impressions of the Town Centre. Opportunities exist to provide new high quality development to the south of the Square, with active uses on the ground floor having the potential to add to the attractiveness of the space.



Ward's End / Bedford Square



Bedford Square

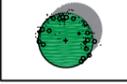
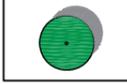
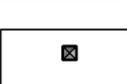
The public realm improvements will:

- Create a gateway square into the Town Centre that will act to draw visitors into the centre. The quality of the Square could be enhanced by the central location of a major public art feature to create a focal point.
- Emphasise New Street, the main approach to Queen's Park, by improving the materials and street furniture. On-street car parking here will be relocated and the remaining walkway enhanced through additional tree planting and specially tailored paving.
- Discourage through-traffic with street calming measures and increase the efficiency of a retained but reduced car park to the south east to readdress the balance between pedestrians and vehicles. Along Wards End existing pinch points in the footways will be eliminated by reducing the road width, whilst some on-street parking will be maintained.
- Improve the pedestrian experience and encourage visitors to linger longer in the Square. The introduction of outside eating areas would contribute to a more pedestrian friendly, attractive environment.
- Provide cycle access through this area as part of desired east to west links.

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Plan 9 - Bedford Square / Ward's End Indicative Layout

Key

-  Proposed tree
-  Existing tree
-  Clifton Paving (Formpave)
-  Granite sett trim
-  Concrete sett paving Tegula - pedestrian areas vehicular areas
-  Stainless steel litter bin
-  Feature panels
-  Stainless steel cycle hoop
-  Sign
-  Public art/focal point - design to reflect the site's Heritage
-  Picnic bench
-  Seat



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