

# Retford Design Code

A supporting document to  
Retford Neighbourhood Plan

August 2022

## Quality information

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## Revision History

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
	1.1 Objectives	5
	1.2 Process	5
	1.3 Area of study	6
<b>2</b>	<b>2. Neighbourhood Area Context Analysis</b>	<b>8</b>
	2.1 Material Palette	9
	2.2 Roofscape	11
	2.3 Windows	13
	2.4 Frontages	15
	2.5 Public Realm	17
<b>3</b>	<b>3. Character study</b>	<b>18</b>
	3.1 Character areas overview	18
	3.2 Character Area 1 : The Square	20
	3.3 Character Area 2 : Bridgegate	24
	3.4 Character Area 3 : Supermarkets	28
	3.5 Character Area 4 : Cannon Square, Chapelgate, Churchgate & Grove Street	30
	3.6 Character Area 5 : Carolgate East	34
	3.7 Character Area 6 : Carolgate West	38
<b>4</b>	<b>4. Design guidance &amp; codes</b>	<b>45</b>
	4.1 Introduction	45
	4.2 Design Codes	45
<b>5</b>	<b>5. Next Steps</b>	<b>58</b>



Introduction

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# 1. Introduction

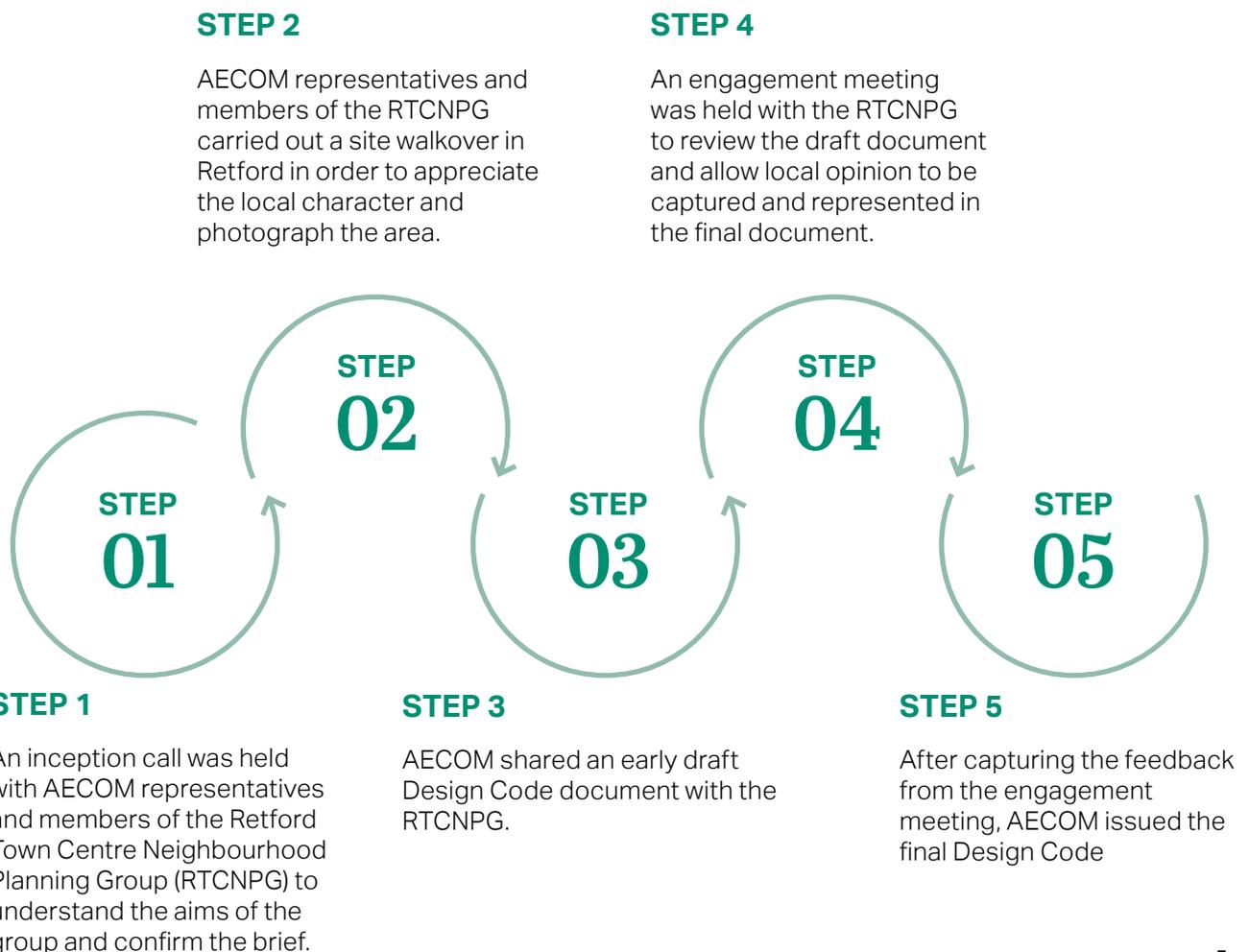
**This section provides context and general information to introduce the project and its location**

## 1.1 Objectives

This document provides a description of the Retford Neighborhood Plan area, describing its characteristics as the basis for design codes that will apply to future development. This will help to ensure that as any new development comes forward, it responds to its context, supporting and enhancing the quality of the Town's existing character.

## 1.2 Process

The process that was undertaken to produce this Design Code document is as follows:



### 1.3 Area of study

The Design Code study area comprises the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan Area



F.1 | Figure 01: Retford Neighbourhood Plan Study Area



**Neighbourhood Area  
Context Analysis**

**02**

## 2. Neighbourhood Area Context Analysis



**Figure 02:** Contrasting coloured Flemish bond brick elevation on Market Square

**Figure 03:** Red brick building elevation of a building on the corner of Bridgegate and Market Place

**Figure 04:** The embossed Trinity Hospital plaque stones on a building on Bridgegate

**Figure 05:** A mix of red brick and rendered buildings on Market Place

## 2.1 Material Palette

The material palette in the town typically adheres to the use of red brick or render for elevations and natural slate, red pantile or rosemary roof tiles. Contrasting details of stone are frequently used for door surrounds, windowsills, and lintels. Courses of stone are also typical, stretching across the full width of a front elevation, along the line of the windowsills.

The brickwork of most buildings appears uniform in colour, laid in either an English garden wall bond or Flemish bond while there are some buildings where the brickwork has been laid in a Flemish bond with contrasting coloured bricks.

Staffordshire blue bricks and yellow bricks are used to add contrast and detail to many buildings. This is particularly prevalent along Bridgegate, where many of the buildings were built by the Trinity Hospital. These are identifiable by the embossed stone or brick plaques illustrating the initials 'TH'.



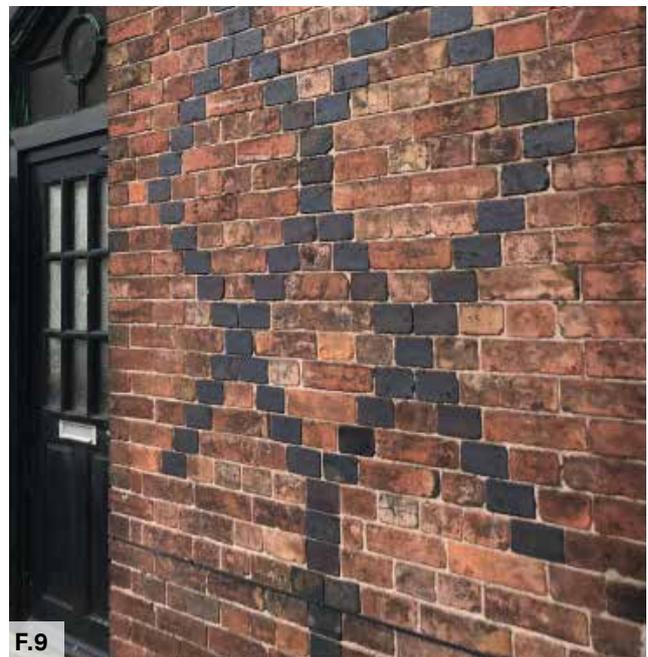
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**Figure 06:** Natural slate

**Figure 07:** Red pantiles

**Figure 08:** Rosemary roof tiles

**Figure 09:** Contrasting Staffordshire Blue and red brick detailing on Bridgegate



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**Figure 10:** Stone window surround detailing



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**Figure 11:** Gable roof forms on Bridgegate

**Figure 12:** Hipped roof forms on Carolgate

**Figure 13:** Dentil masonry detailing along the eaves of buildings on Bridgegate

**Figure 14:** Flemish gables on Bridgegate

## 2.2 Roofscape

The roofscape of the town is varied, with building heights typically being two or three stories with a mix of gable, hipped, flat, and a small number of twin gable roof forms. At the eaves of many buildings, dentil brick or stone detailing as well as timber fascia boards can be seen. There are a small number of buildings that have parapet walls and Dutch gables with carved stone detailing.



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**Figure 15:** A mix of flat and gable roofs and varied building heights on Bridgegate

**Figure 16:** Roof and eaves detailing along Carolgate



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**Figure 17:** SGeorgian sash windows, Bridgegate

**Figure 18:** Traditional sash windows, Carolgate

**Figure 20:** Projecting oriel window, Grove Street

**Figure 19:** Projecting oriel window, Bridgegate

## 2.3 Windows

The upper floors of most historic buildings in the town have sash windows. Many of these, particularly in The Square, are detailed in a Georgian style with multiple windowpanes. There are also numerous buildings with arched windows across the town. Oriel windows on the upper floors of some elevations are another detail seen on some buildings. These protruding windows articulate the frontage of a building providing interest to the street.



**Figure 21:** Georgian sash windows, Grove Street



**Figure 22:** Arched windows, Market Place



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**Figure 23:** Traditional shop front design, Carolgate

**Figure 24:** Modern shop front design which is less sympathetic to the historic character of the town centre, Market Square



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**Figure 25:** Access to Dyers Court off Grove Street

**Figure 26:** Traditional shop front design, New Street

## 2.4 Frontages

The historic character of the town's architecture is in many cases harmonised by using well-proportioned, traditional shop front designs. However, there are some historic buildings where retail frontages have been unsympathetically designed with overbearing signage and proportions that jar against the host building.

The main streets in the town – Bridgegate, Churchgate, Chapelgate, Grove Street and Carolgate have a strong building frontage line, with buildings arranged in a terraced perimeter block layout. This has resulted in open yard spaces to the rear of buildings, accessed via small passageways with arched gateways and entrances.



F.27

**Figure 27:**  
Outdoor seating  
/ spill-out space,  
Market Square

**Figure 28:**  
Traditional shop  
front design,  
Churchgate with  
arched cart access  
to the side



F.28



**Figure 29:** General waste litter bin, Carolgate

**Figure 30:** Street trees, Carolgate

**Figure 31:** Traditional style street lantern, Carolgate

**Figure 32:** Herringbone red brick surfacing scheme, Carolgate

## 2.5 Public Realm

There are street trees within The Square and along Carolgate and Grove Street. They soften the appearance of the hard surfaces and buildings, providing a contrast in colour to the town's material palette as well as offering shade in the summer.

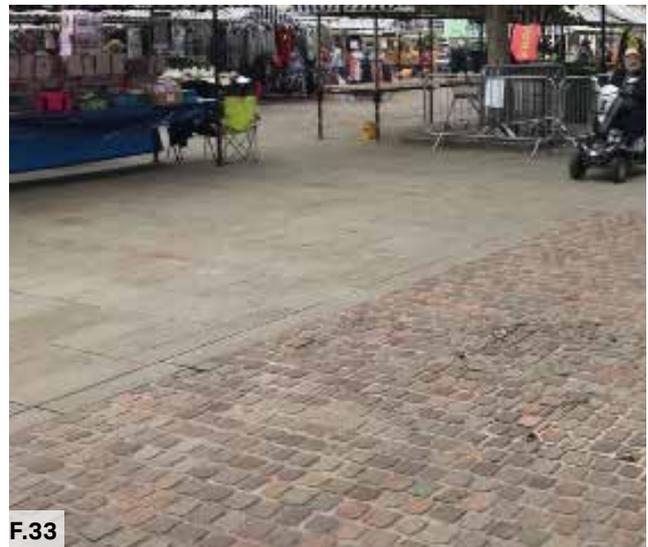
Litter bins are provided throughout the town, but they are for general waste only (no recycling bins). There are two 'styles' of bins provided in the town centre and some are in poor condition.

Street lighting on the town's main streets and in The Square is designed in a traditional street lantern style, which upholds the historic character of the town centre.

The public realm surfacing comprises a series of schemes which has resulted in the visual fragmentation of different parts of the town. For example, Carolgate's surfacing scheme has been laid in red brick in a herringbone pattern whilst The Square has a more contemporary stone surfacing scheme.

There are street benches provided on many of the town centre streets. On Spa Road, benches are provided but on an elevated platform which is poorly designed for ease of accessibility.

There are railings for bicycle parking at numerous locations.



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**Figure 33:** Contemporary stone surfacing scheme Market Square

**Figure 34:** Seating on raised platform and bicycle lock-up railings, Spa Road

**Figure 35:** Seating and bicycle lock-up railings, West Street

# 3. Character study

The Neighbourhood Plan area has been divided into six character areas. They are analysed and related design code recommendations are detailed in this section of the report.

## 3.1 Character areas overview

The following character areas are identified. The extent of each of the character areas is identified on Figure 36.

- 1 The Square
- 2 Bridgegate
- 3 Supermarkets
- 4 Cannon Square, Chapelgate, Churchgate & Grove Street
- 5 Carolgate East
- 6 Carolgate West



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## 3.2 Character Area 1 : The Square

The Square is an inward-looking public space with active frontages on all sides.

Street trees, outdoor seating and heritage style lighting contribute positively to the character of this area.

Traffic flow running through The Square along Market Place has a negative impact on the environment with cars affecting air quality and restricting pedestrian movement.

Outside the square the remaining spaces are to the rear of buildings with much fewer active frontages such as shops and cafes. Remaining spaces are mostly used for car parking.

The building currently occupied by Pound Stretcher is one of the few buildings in The Square that is not in neoclassical architectural style. It has strong vertical emphasis to the fenestration. It visually dominates The Square in both colour and proportion. Other retail frontages in the square tend to be more subtle, respecting the character of the host building.

The active market contributes to the market town feel of Retford Town Centre and creates a 'buzz' in the town on market days.

Restaurants and cafés spill out on to The Square with tables and seating. This contributes to the character of this area and creates a sense of activity.

Goodwin Hall and Chancery Lane Offices tend to distract from the setting of Kings Park to the west of this area. These are the only flat roofed buildings in this area and they don't adhere to the local material palette.



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**Figure 37:** Market Square

**Figure 38:** Market Square

**Figure 39:** Goodwin Hall



-  Retford Town Hall
-  Active frontage
-  Negative frontage
-  Trees in the public realm
-  Enclosed routes into The Square
-  Vehicular movement routes
-  Buildings that do not contribute positively to the character area
-  Areas of car parking
-  Key route to Kings Park
-  Public space



Exchange Street provides a connection from Carolgate to one of the main entrances to Kings Park. This route is pedestrianised except for the stretch of the road inside the Chancery Lane loop.

The Square's surfacing scheme is of a high quality but this contrasts with other areas of lower quality surfacing. The use of small cobble stones has led to accessibility issues for wheelchair users.

Town Hall Yard and the passageways in the north west and south west corners of the square are enclosed spaces leading to The Square. Accessing the square via these routes provides a pleasant contrast as you move from enclosed to open space.

### 3.2.1 Design recommendations

- Shop frontage guidelines, specifically within the more historic parts of the town, should be adhered to.
- The public realm along Exchange Street should be improved to improve the pedestrian experience along this connecting route.
- Opportunities to upgrade Goodwin Hall and/or Chancery Lane Offices with well designed buildings and landscaping that uphold the character of this area and the setting of the park should be encouraged.
- It is important that space in The Square is not restricted in any permanent manner.
- The Georgian architectural character of The Square should be preserved.
- Upgraded surfacing, landscaping and trees within the Chancery Lane car park would reduce the visual impact of parked cars and make this a more attractive space for pedestrians.
- Consider wheelchair users when redesigning any areas of surfacing.



**Figure 40:** Chancery Lane Offices

**Figure 41:** Retford Town Hall

**Figure 42:** Cafe spill out space / outdoor seating

**Figure 43:** Enclosed spaces leading to The Square

**Figure 44:** Parking areas between The Square and Kings Park

**Figure 45:** Enclosed space leading to The Square

**Figure 46:** Poor quality shop frontage with brightly coloured detailing and signage which contrasts with and detracts from the historic character of The Square.



### 3.3 Character Area 2: Bridgewater

Bridgewater is a historic arterial route into the centre of Retford. Crossing the bridge over the River Idle, traveling into the town centre, there is a strong sense of enclosure with a terminated view of a neoclassical building situated on Market Place. This part of Bridgewater is well occupied by retail businesses at ground level. Most buildings here have a further two storeys above. Historically, the bridge had lamps on each corner which have since been removed. This bridge is the historic location of a red ford, from which Retford takes its name.

The carriageway along Bridgewater is narrow and at wider points has on street parking. Cyclists and cars share the narrow carriageway which increases the risk of accidents.

Arched access points to yard spaces can be found here. One of these passageways leads to a small linear public space which connects to the north west corner of The Square.

The River Idle corridor provides a leafy pedestrian connection in a north south direction. This corridor supports the ecology of the town centre. To the west of the river many of the buildings are marked with the crest of the Trinity Hospital. The architecture in this area also has a unifying quality with many of the buildings sharing the same or similar architectural detailing. St Michael the Arch Angel Church is a landmark building in this area.

Ancott Way is a busy A road abutting the northern border of this character area. The river corridor and a wedge of scrub land provide a green buffer between Ancott Way and the town centre, reducing the visual and acoustic impact of this busy, well trafficked route.



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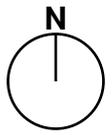
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**Figure 47:** Bridgewater with terminated view of building on Market Place

**Figure 48:** Rectory Road

**Figure 49:** Bridgewater

-  St Michael The Archangel Church
-  Active frontage
-  Trees in the public realm
-  Vehicle free routes
-  Vehicular movement routes
-  Areas of car parking
-  Key route to Kings Park
-  Vacant sites and spaces
-  River Idle corridor
-  Public spaces
-  Trinity Hospital buildings
-  Green buffer



The pedestrian link to Kings Park entrance is a poor-quality environment which cuts through the Sports Direct Car park.

Market Place roundabout is a car dominated space with a large area of tarmac road surfacing, taxi rank and loading areas. This area also has poor cohesion of public realm surfacing schemes, with fragments of various phases of surfacing schemes present within the space.

### 3.3.1 Design Recommendations

- Improve public realm and attractiveness of Market Place and reduce perception of this space as a car dominated area. Consider widening paving areas and change highway surface material to slow through traffic.
- Upgrade connection between Brigegate and Kings Park to create an attractive welcome point into the park.
- Upgrade the linear public space leading to The Square and potentially make use of the vacant site in this area.
- Reintroduce heritage style lamps on the corners of Bridgegate Bridge to reinforce the historic significance of the red ford historically located here.
- Respond to the red brick and Staffordshire blue material palette typical of the Trinity Hospital buildings.
- Consider breaking up areas with on street parking by providing small areas of landscaping and street trees.
- Upgraded surfacing, landscaping and trees within the Churchgate car park would reduce the visual impact of parked cars and make this a more attractive space for pedestrians.
- Traditional shop frontages should be preserved along Bridgegate and will be encouraged where new shop frontages are being designed.
- Consider road enhancements to improve the safety of cyclists along Bridgegate.



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**Figure 50:** River Idle

**Figure 51:** Sports Direct car park / access to Kings Park

**Figure 52:** Bridgegate with view of St Michael the Arch Angel Church

**Figure 53:** St Michael the Arch Angel Church

**Figure 54:** Linear public space between The Square and Bridgegate

**Figure 55:** River Walk

**Figure 56:** Vacant site on north side of Bridgegate



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### 3.4 Character Area 3 : Supermarkets

This area encompasses two large buildings currently occupied by a Morrisons Supermarket and Home Bargains as well as associated car parking areas. The area also includes the green corridor of the River Idle and footpath. It also has an interface with Amcott Way / Moorgate. There is a densely wooded / overgrown wedge of land in this area which fronts on to Amcott Way and runs along the edge of the River Idle.

The trees at Morrisons Car Park and Home Bargains greatly improve the quality of this largely hard surfaced area.

#### 3.4.1 Design Recommendations

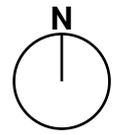
- Retain and enhance a corridor of landscaping and trees along Amcott Way to reduce the visual impact of parking areas and traffic.
- Retain and enhance the north south pedestrian connection along the River Idle.
- Consider providing a mural / public art underneath Amcott Way Bridge.



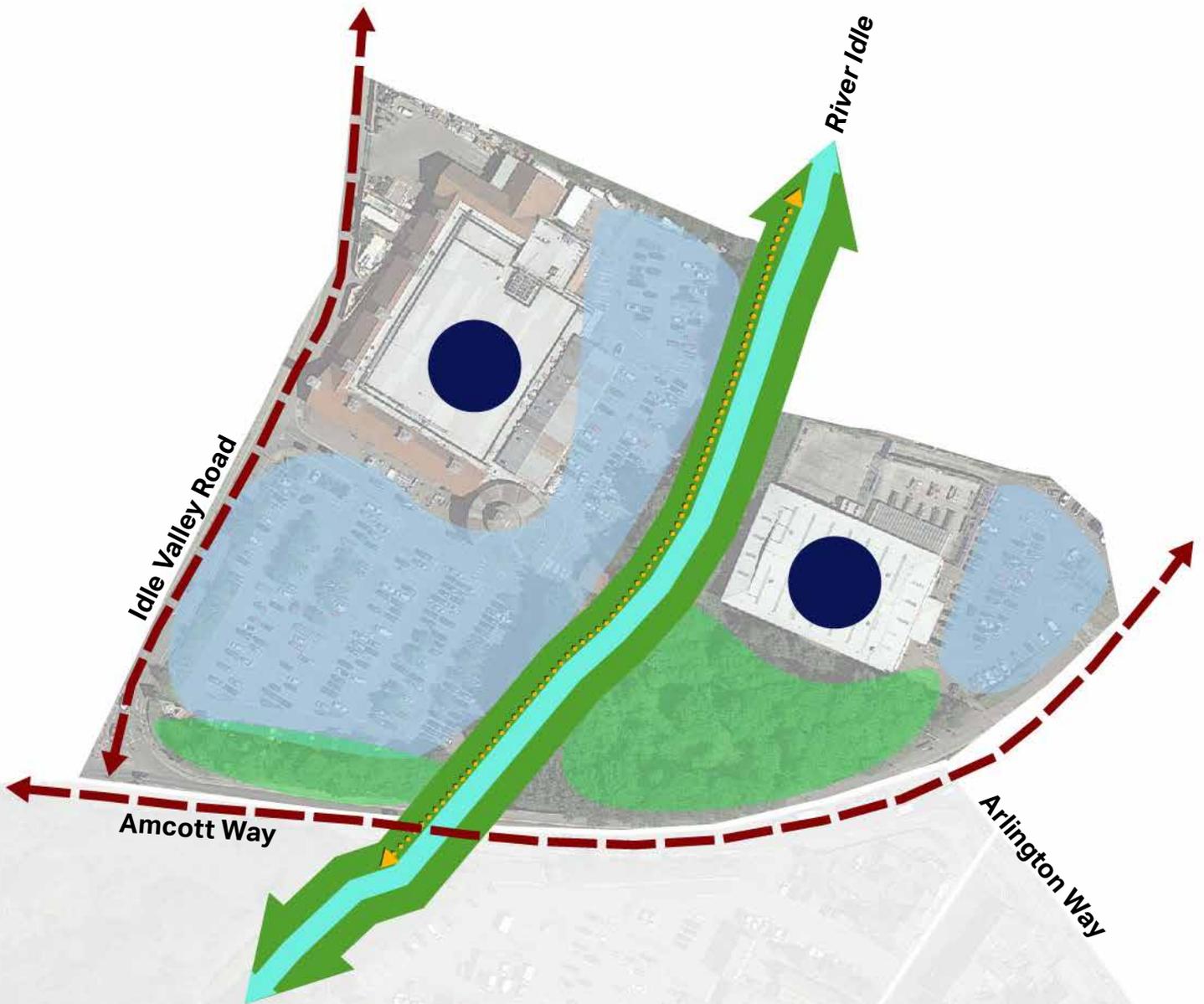
Figure 57: Idle Valley Road

Figure 58: Amcott Way

Figure 59: River Idle



-  Vehicle free routes
-  Vehicular movement routes
-  River Idle corridor
-  Supermarkets / large shops
-  Areas of car parking
-  Green buffer / corridor



### 3.5 Character Area 4 : Cannon Square, Chapelgate, Churchgate & Grove Street

St Swithun's Church and Grove Street Methodist Church are key landmark buildings in this area.

Market Place, Chapelgate, Union Street and Grove Street form a strong perimeter block layout with parking and gardens provided behind the main frontage.

Dyers Court is a covered access point to a small area of public space and Chapelgate car park to the north of Grove Street. The public space has a mural on the wall of the former Clark's Laundry depicting the historical significance of the former use of the building. Dyers Court also provides a pedestrian link to Chapelgate with views to St Swithun's Church.

Churchgate and Chapelgate are dominated by parked cars creating an unattractive environment. There are some areas of wider paving with street trees and benches along Grove Street which have created a much more attractive street scene.

There are no cycle lanes in the area, forcing cyclists to share the road with cars.

Cannon Square is a triangular public space connecting Market Place to St Swithun's Church. Vehicular movement through this space currently divides the church and the public space at Cannon Square.

There are some poorly designed building elevations on Chapelgate with no reference to adjacent buildings' proportions or fenestration. This has a jarring effect on the rhythm of the street's building frontages.

There are a number of arched cart entrances which contribute to the historic feel and character of this area.

There are some attractive shop frontages with traditional detailing that is sympathetic and harmonious with the host building. There are also some poorly designed shop fronts which detract from the historic character of the area.



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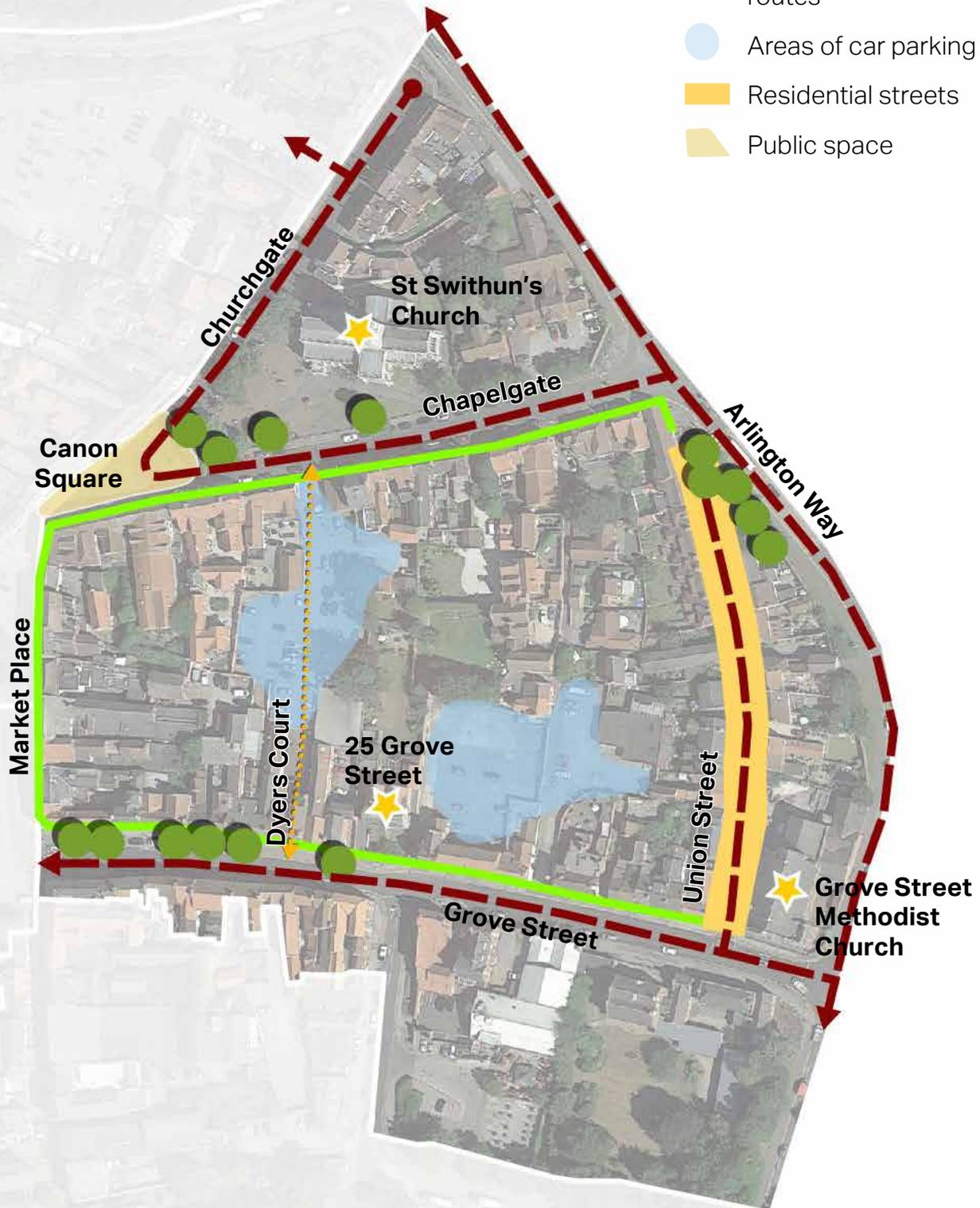
Figure 60: Cannon Square

Figure 61: Grove Street Methodist Church

Figure 62: Wider paving with street trees on Grove Street



- ★ Landmark building
- Active frontage
- Trees in the public realm
- ↔ Pedestrian connection
- ← Vehicular movement routes
- Areas of car parking
- Residential streets
- Public space



Union Street is a pleasant street of historic terraced dwellings. It has a purely residential function with very few retail or commercial buildings.

### 3.5.1 Design Recommendations

- Consider breaking up areas with on-street parking by providing small areas of landscaping and street trees.
- Upgraded surfacing, landscaping and trees within the Chapelgate car park would reduce the visual impact of parked cars and make this a more attractive route for pedestrians moving between Grove Street and Chapelgate.
- An open to traffic public realm scheme between Canon Square and St Swithun’s Church could activate this space and strengthen the connection between the church and the public space whilst still providing vehicular access to Churchgate and exit from the Churchgate Car Park.
- Avoid designing buildings that do not respond to the character of the area. The architectural style and detailing of the building on Chapelgate (F.63) should be avoided as this has degraded the historic character of the street.
- Consider providing additional street trees along Grove Street.
- Consider road enhancements to improve the safety of cyclists along Grove Street.
- Consider reducing the speed limit and/or partial pedestrianisation of Grove Street, Market Place and Bridgegate between Beardsall’s Row and Bridgegate car park.



**Figure 63:** Poorly designed fenestration looks imbalanced with the building frontage and has resulted in a featureless elevation

**Figure 64:** Churchgate

**Figure 65:** Chapelgate

**Figure 66:** Union Street

**Figure 67:** 25 Grove Street

**Figure 68:** Shop fronts, Grove Street

**Figure 69:** Chapelgate car park with view to St Swithun’s Church

**Figure 70:** Clarks Laundry Mural



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## 3.6 Character Area 5 : Carolgate East

The grade II\* listed Amcott House is a key landmark building in this character area. It is now home to the Bassetlaw Museum.

The edge of this area to the east abuts Arlington Way. This edge is tree lined, which reduces the impact of this busy movement corridor on the town and also screens the large New Street car park and Jewson's yard.

There is a short section of the Chesterfield Canal corridor running through this area which has a pedestrian route along the towpath. The towpath is in a state of disrepair in some areas. The Carolgate and Arlington Way bridges cross the canal overhead and have resulted in dark insecure areas.

Retford Bus Station is located behind the main shopping area. The bus station can be accessed via Beardsall's Row or Spa Road. Spa Road provides a pedestrian connection to the High Street (Carolgate). This route is a gateway to the Town Centre but has a poor quality public realm with surface materials which do not match the high street. It has raised surfacing where street furniture has been located, creating accessibility issues.

East Street is another east-west connection providing access from New Street car park to Carolgate. This narrow route has no frontages and lacks surveillance, which has led to members of the local community avoiding using the route. Street lighting is located along the route to create a safer environment in the evening.

Jewson builders' merchant and yard fronts on to New Street, the Chesterfield Canal and Arlington Way. The frontage and location of this business and its operations detracts from the historic character and experience of the town centre.

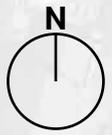
The Aldi store on Carolgate, at the gateway to the town centre, has a large inactive



**Figure 71:** Carolgate

**Figure 72:** Retford Bus Station

**Figure 73:** New Street



- Active frontage
- Negative frontage
- Trees in the public realm
- Pedestrian connection
- Vehicular movement routes
- Buildings that do not contribute positively to the character area
- Areas of car parking
- Green buffer / corridor
- Bus station
- Chesterfield Canal corridor

Grove Street

Beard's Row

Retford Bus Station

Spa Road

Carolgate

Arlington Way

East Street

New Street

Chesterfield Canal

brick building frontage with a tarmacked building apron.

Carolgate is where the highest concentration of retailers are within the town centre and there are active frontages along its full length.

Carolgate is a pedestrian zone for the majority of its length. The surfacing scheme along this area is dated and of a lower quality than The Square. There is a short section of Carolgate that allows vehicular movement to join New Street. This section of Carolgate feels disconnected from the main high street and is a less welcoming environment to pedestrians visiting the town centre.

To the south of the Chesterfield Canal are residential apartments at Carolgate Court. This building has been oriented to face the canal providing a pleasant waterfront setting for residents.

### 3.6.1 Design Recommendations

- Adding the southern end of Carolgate to the pedestrian zone and slowing or removing traffic from this area would improve the pedestrian experience and connect the businesses in this area with the rest of the High Street. Softer measures including pavement widening or road markings could also be explored.
- Consider upgrading the frontage of Jewson builders' merchants.
- Support changes of use that would deliver new attractive building frontages and canal-side public space on the Jewson's site, should the business choose to relocate.
- Support opportunities to upgrade the space outside of and frontage of Aldi. Landscaping the area of wide paving could create a more attractive welcome point to the south of the town centre.

- Encourage enhancements to New Street Car Park and East Street with planting and public art.
- Support upgrades to the Carolgate surfacing scheme.
- Consider surfacing improvements along the canal and providing public art underneath the bridges crossing the canal.
- Support the provision of pocket parks and other small areas of landscaping along Carolgate.



**Figure 74:** New Street car park

**Figure 75:** Aldi with blank frontage on to Carolgate

**Figure 76:** Chesterfield Canal and towpath

**Figure 77:** East Street

**Figure 78:** Jewson

**Figure 79:** Spa Road

**Figure 80:** Amcott House / Bassetlaw Museum



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### 3.7 Character Area 6 : Carolgate West

The southern edge of this area abuts the Chesterfield Canal corridor with the pedestrian route along the canal towpath running along this edge. Along the western edge of this area is the River Idle corridor which leads north into Kings Park

There is a large Asda supermarket on Wharf Road with a large associated parking area. Further along this route at Chancery Lane there are a number of dwellings which face Kings Park. Saville Street is another street which serves a solely residential purpose with Victorian terraces on both sides of the street.

There are some small town centre parking areas between Wharf Road and West Street.

Well established street trees along Exchange Street contribute to the attractiveness of the area and bring the natural environment into an otherwise hard surfaced area of the town.

Exchange street is a key access corridor leading from Carolgate to Kings Park. To the east this route is part of the town centre pedestrian zone but leading to Chancery Lane the route is shared with vehicles.

West Street is another east west connection which leads from Carolgate to Kings Park. This route is almost entirely shared with vehicles and also crosses Wharf Road.

The telephone exchange building is an unattractive flat roofed building situated



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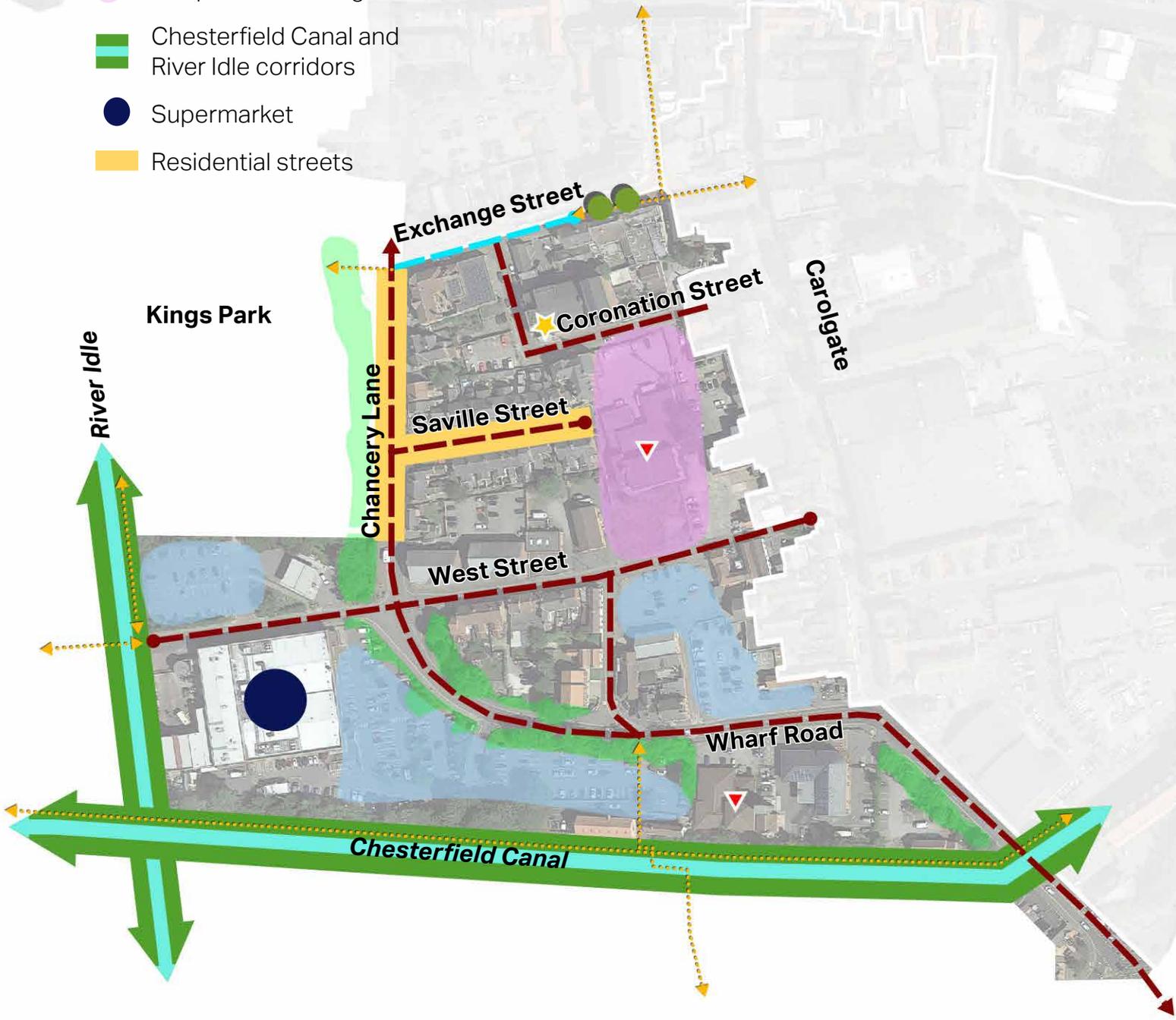
**Figure 81:** Wharf Road

**Figure 82:** Savile Street

**Figure 83:** Chesterfield Canal



- ★ Majestic Theatre
- Trees in the public realm
- Pedestrian connection
- ← Vehicular movement routes
- Key route to Kings Park
- ▼ Buildings that do not contribute positively to the character area
- Areas of car parking
- Green buffer / corridor
- Telephone exchange site
- Chesterfield Canal and River Idle corridors
- Supermarket
- Residential streets



between Coronation Street and West Street. This building and its associated hard surfacing do not uphold the historic character of the town. The flat roof is not typical of most town centre buildings and the brown brick used does not reflect the local material palette.

The Majestic Theatre is a key landmark building in this area. The building is Art Deco in architectural style.

The canal crossing to the south of this character area is a key route to Retford Station. The route is accessed by cutting across the Asda car park. From the town centre this is one of the most direct routes to the station. The route is not accessible for all and also leads to a narrow passageway between dwellings on Albert Road which is not well overlooked.

The crescent shaped entrance to Kings Park is an attractive gateway and welcome point into the park. The tarmac surfacing of this space, where parking is not permitted, detracts from this arrival point and could be improved with planting.

Some parking areas along Wharf Road detract from the environment. At Asda supermarket trees line the edge of the parking area and contribute positively to the environment along this route.

Retford Little Theatre is located between Wharf Road and the Chesterfield Canal. The design of the building is not in keeping with the historic character of the town. It has a shallow pitched hipped roof with brown concrete roof tiles and inappropriately coloured brick elevations which contrast negatively against the



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- Figure 84:** Wharf Road
- Figure 85:** Carolgate
- Figure 86:** Retford Little Theatre
- Figure 87:** Car parks along Wharf Road
- Figure 88:** Chancery Lane
- Figure 89:** Majestic Theatre
- Figure 90:** Kings Park entrance
- Figure 91:** Telephone exchange



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town's typical material palette. The car park to the front of the building is entirely hard surfaced with tarmac which detracts from the appearance of the otherwise tree lined street.

Wharf Road and Chancery Lane have a green corridor of trees and landscaping leading to Kings Park. This route has a green and leafy character.

To the west of this area there are residential streets of terraced and semi detached housing including Chancery Lane, West Street, and Saville Street.

There is a lack of north-south permeability from Wharf Road to the Coronation Street with the telephone exchange site acting as a barrier to movement.

### **3.7.1 Design Recommendations**

- Appropriate tree planting along Wharf Road should be encouraged. Areas where there are breaks in the 'green corridor' such as adjacent to Retford Little Theatre and the Fire Station could be connected to strengthen the quality of the street environment.
- The redevelopment of the telephone exchange building site should be encouraged.
- Strengthening the town's relationship with the canal should be encouraged. Opportunities to introduce canal facing developments and spaces should be explored to celebrate the heritage of this area.
- Strengthen the connection between Carolgate and Kings Park along both West Street and Exchange Street by providing landscaping and street trees.
- Enhance the car park on West Street with planting.
- Consider the provision of planting

within the Kings Park crescent shaped gateway space.

- Enhance the north-south permeability of this area and consider providing a pedestrian connection through the telephone exchange site in any redesign
- Protect and enhance the green corridor of Chancery Lane and Wharf Road of this area.





Design Guidance & Codes

04

# 4. Design guidance & codes

**Any future development should strive to uphold the historic character of Retford Town Centre. Future developers should demonstrate that their proposals have responded to the historic context of the town. Development should aim to contribute positively to the experience of visitors to the town centre and be of a sustainable design which provides mitigation measures against climate change.**

## 4.1 Introduction

This section will provide a design guidance and codes for future development in the town centre to adhere to.

The design guidance and codes are based on the analysis provided in the previous sections and have been split into the following themes:

## 4.2 Design Codes

**1** Building Heights & Roofs

**2** Building Materials and Detailing

**3** Frontages & Boundaries

**4** Public Realm

**5** Parking

## 4.2.1 Building Heights & Roofs

Across the town, there are examples of 1, 2, 3 and 4 storey buildings. There are also variations in the roof forms across the town centre including hipped roofs, gable roofs, projecting gables, Dutch gables, dormer windows and mansard roofs. The dominant roof typology across the town are gable roofs.

The building height and roof forms of any future development should respect the existing character of the town, using the surrounding building heights and roof forms as a guide for what may be acceptable. Specifically, future buildings should reflect the heights of adjacent buildings and buildings within the character area that they will be located in.

4 storey buildings are generally not seen outside of The Square Character Area. Buildings exceeding 4 storeys will not typically be appropriate anywhere in the town centre.

Historically single storey buildings have taken the form of extensions to taller buildings (see F.93). Stand alone single storey buildings have tended to be modern buildings.

Future proposals should reflect the roof forms present within their immediate context and pay particular attention to the pitch of the existing roofs within the adjacent buildings.

Flat roofed buildings are not typical of the town centre and contrast with the roof scape of pitched red clay or slate roofs. Where flat roofed buildings are proposed, their elevations should closely adhere to the following Building Material design code.

Mansard roofs, while historic in their origins, are not typical of Retford town Centre and should generally be avoided in future.

The installation of solar panels on existing roofs is encouraged and new roofs should be designed to allow for their installation with pitches facing within 30 degrees of south where possible.



**Figure 92:** Modern single storey building, Carolgate

**Figure 93:** Single storey extension, Grove Street

**Figure 94:** Two storey buildings, Union Street

**Figure 95:** Three storey buildings, Bridgigate

**Figure 96:** Four storey buildings, The Square

**Figure 97:** Solar panels



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**Figure 98:** Mansard roofs, Bridgegate

**Figure 99:** Gable roofs, Chancery Lane

**Figure 100:** Hipped roof, New Street

**Figure 101:** Dutch gable, Bridgegate

**Figure 102:** Projecting gable, Bridgegate

**Figure 103:** Dormer windows, Bridgegate

## 4.2.2 Building Materials and Detailing

The following is a list of materials and detailing that are already found across the town centre and would be appropriate for future development:

01. Red brick for building elevations.
02. Painted render for building elevations.
03. Staffordshire blue brick for providing contrasting details to red brick elevations. This form of detailing is most appropriate within the Bridgegate Character Area.
04. Yellow brick for providing contrasting details to red brick elevations.
05. Stone for window sills.
06. Welsh slate for roofs.
07. Red clay pantiles for roofs.
08. Rosemary tiles for roofs.
09. High quality sash or casement windows with double or triple glazing.

The following is a list of materials and detailing that there are examples of across the town which are inappropriate for future development:

- Concrete roof tiles
- Alternative coloured bricks for a main elevation such as brown, buff or yellow
- Small PVC windows which result in large featureless front elevations



**Figure 104:** Existing example of inappropriate concrete roof tiles

**Figure 105:** Existing example of inappropriate brick colour

**Figure 106:** Existing example of poorly designed small windows which leave the front elevation featureless and looking imbalanced



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**Figure 107:** Red brick elevation

**Figure 108:** Timber framed sash windows

**Figure 109:** Rosemary tiles

**Figure 110:** Welsh slate

**Figure 111:** Red pantiles

**Figure 112:** Painted render elevation

**Figure 113:** Contrasting Staffordshire blue brick detailing

**Figure 114:** Contrasting yellow brick detailing

**Figure 115:** Stone window sills

#### 4.2.4 Frontages & Boundaries

The design of shop fronts should adhere to the guidance set out in Bassetlaw's shop front and signage Supplementary Planning Document\*.

Traditional timber shop fronts should be preserved and enhanced to uphold the historic character of the town centre.

Shop fronts applied to historic buildings should always consider the full building elevation and reference the vertical and horizontal architectural elements to create a strong relationship between the shop front and the host building.

Modern shop fronts are appropriate but should typically employ a 'less is more' approach to their design. Back-lit box signage will not be acceptable. Lettering should be clear and of a medium size to complement the fascia board, shop front and building.

Shop frontages that result in the degradation of a building elevation should be avoided. A particularly poor example of this is 20 Carolgate (Casino at time of writing). The building which formerly had glazed upper windows has been boarded up and the traditional shop frontage has been replaced with box signage which visually cuts the shop frontage off from the host building.

Typically, buildings in the town centre are positioned up against the edge of the pavement.

Some residential areas have buildings set back behind short front gardens.

Red brick boundary walls with either brick or stone coping are seen across the town and are appropriate for future development.

Metal railings are less frequently seen but may be suitable for front boundaries in combination with stone or brick walls as seen along Bridgegate, Rectory Road and at St Swithun's Church.

Boundaries between the street and areas to the rear of buildings such as parking courtyards can take the form of an access directly through the main frontage of a building. This will allow any future development to create continuous frontages and preserve the strong perimeter blocks which are typical of a number of Retford's historic streets.

Boundaries to car parks that are open to the street should include landscape buffers with tree planting to reduce the negative visual impact of cars. Successful examples of this can be seen across the town such as at Asda car park on Wharf Road and New Street Car Park along Arlington Way.

Where buildings are set back from the street and no vertical boundary treatments are provided, attractive landscaping should be provided between the front elevation of a building and the footway. It will be unacceptable to simply tarmac up to the edge of the footway. An example of this can be seen to the front of the building occupied by Aldi on Carolgate.

\* A Guide to Good Shopfront Design and Signage, Bassetlaw District Council



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- Figure 116:** Buildings set back behind short front gardens with brick boundary wall
- Figure 117:** Railing and stone wall
- Figure 118:** Buildings positioned up against the pavement edge
- Figure 119:** Open car park with no trees or landscaping resulting in excessive area of hard surface
- Figure 120:** Boundary of car park with trees and landscaping reducing the visual impact of cars
- Figure 121:** Access to rear of buildings provided through main elevation (former cart access)

## 4.2.5 Public Realm

Accessible street furniture should be located across the town to encourage dwell time in the town centre. Seating should be step free and accessed at the same level as the public realm surfacing scheme. Seating on raised platforms as seen along Spa Road is not acceptable as this is not accessible to all.

All litter bins throughout the town centre, should provide the option for visitors to recycle and be consistent in their design across the town. A colour scheme of black and gold is supported locally.

Along key streets and spaces, the public realm should have a level of consistency to create a sense of identity and uniformity.

The use of permeable surfacing within the public realm is encouraged to reduce the accumulative effect of surface water runoff.

Unless resurfacing an entire street or square, repairs or alterations to surfacing schemes should use materials that are consistent with those that are existing. Patch repairs using tarmac degrade the quality of the public realm and where possible should be avoided.

Public art pieces and murals such as those seen at Dyers Court, Spa Road and Carolgate are positive additions to the town centre and celebrate the heritage of the area. These art pieces are particularly successful in making use of otherwise blank elevations. Further public art to occupy similar places across the town is encouraged.

The provision of protected cycle lanes

across the town is encouraged. Any proposals for cycle infrastructure should be safe and designed to a high standard by following the guidance set out in the Government's LTN1/20 Cycle infrastructure design guidance document.

Any new cycle routes should aim to connect up to the Town's existing cycle network beyond the Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan boundary (London Road and North Road).

Consideration should be given to children and their needs when designing the public realm, creating streets and spaces that are safe where children can play.

Lighting should be provided in not well overlooked areas such as narrow passageways or under bridges. This will improve the perceived safety of these routes.

## 4.2.6 Landscape, Trees and



F.122

**Figure 122:** A consistent public realm paving scheme

**Figure 123:** Public art, Carolgate

**Figure 124:** Cycle lane precedent image

**Figure 125:** Contemporary street furniture precedent image

**Figure 126:** Lighting illuminating a pedestrian route at night



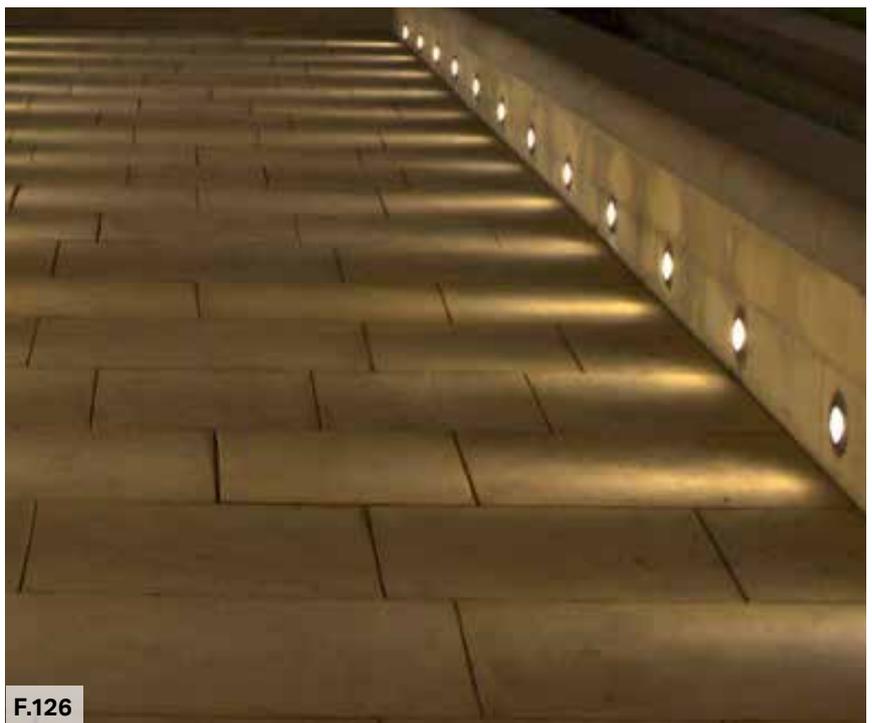
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## Biodiversity

The provision of street trees is encouraged across the town. These should be of a species which is tolerant to urban environments. Priority should be given to providing green spaces and planting trees in areas identified as having high levels of hard surfacing within the Neighbourhood Plan's ecology study. In particular, biodiversity rich soft landscaping schemes with pollinating species which would support the Neighbourhood Plan's proposed Eco-Corridor (linking Kings Park to Spa Common) will be encouraged.

There should be a strong tree network across the town, providing cooling and shade and enhancing biodiversity. Species rich areas of landscaping such as grassland or meadow are also encouraged. The installation of bird boxes, bat boxes and bee bricks is also supported across the town.

The introduction of green spaces and flexible gathering spaces such as parklets around existing areas of trees along the High Street is encouraged. These can be designed to include seating areas which can be used by cafes, bars and small traders.

Community growing initiatives such as community gardens, orchards and allotments reduce the carbon associated with food production. Future proposals including these functions will be considered as to their suitability.

The provision of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and rain gardens within the town centre is encouraged to collect rainwater and reduce the rate of surface water runoff across the town.

Proposals which include green roofs and walls will be supported where appropriate.

The enhancement of recreational routes which integrate with the town's Green Infrastructure network is supported.



**F.127**

**Figure 127:** Street trees and seating along Carolgate

**Figure 128:** A Sustainable Drainage System along a pedestrian route

**Figure 129:** A green roof

**Figure 130:** A bat box

**Figure 131:** A bee brick

**Figure 132:** A green wall



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## 4.2.7 Parking

Parking on many of the residential streets within the town is limited to on-street parking. Any future housing development in the town centre should provide parking off the street to avoid the negative visual impact of cars.

The boundary treatment design guidance (4.27) should be observed where car parks are provided to avoid car parks that are entirely hard surface. Soft landscaping dispersed between parking spaces is encouraged.

Permeable surfacing should be used for large areas of parking. Options such as Grasscrete will be encouraged to reduce the accumulative effect of surface water runoff in the town centre.

The provision of cycle parking across the town is encouraged and should be provided in a secure location and distributed across the area. Contemporary designs for cycle parking that provide visual interest to the street will be supported.

The provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points will be encouraged across the town centre. These should be provided in every car park with at least 4 chargers provided in each car park or 1 charger per 25 parking spaces. The provision of EV charging points within streetlights will also be encouraged. Provision should be prioritised for smaller electric vehicles.



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**Figure 133:** Cycle parking precedent image

**Figure 134:** Cycle parking precedent image

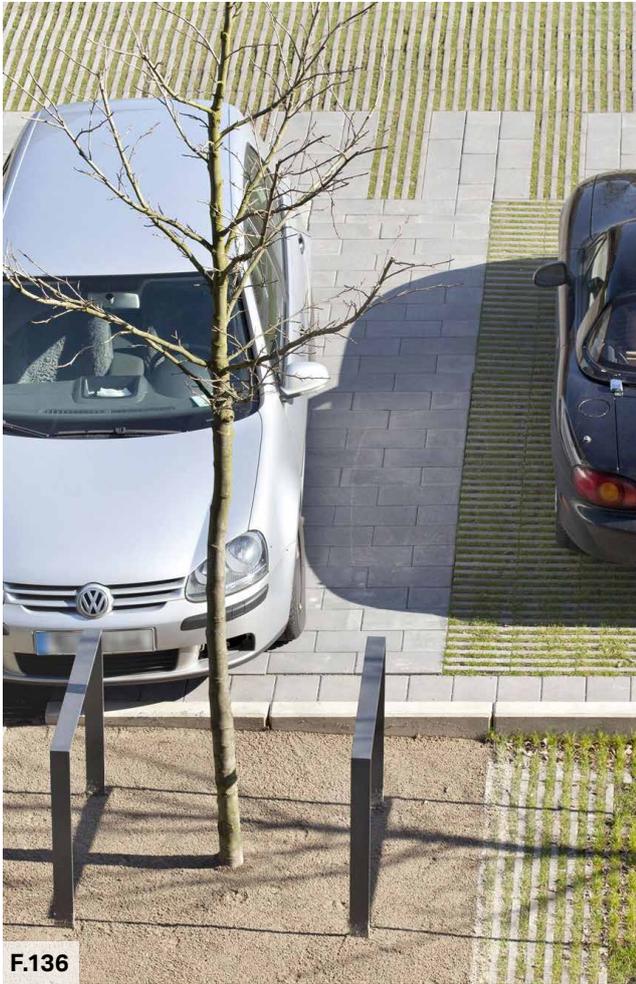
**Figure 135:** EV charging points

**Figure 136:** Permeable surfacing and tree planting in a car park

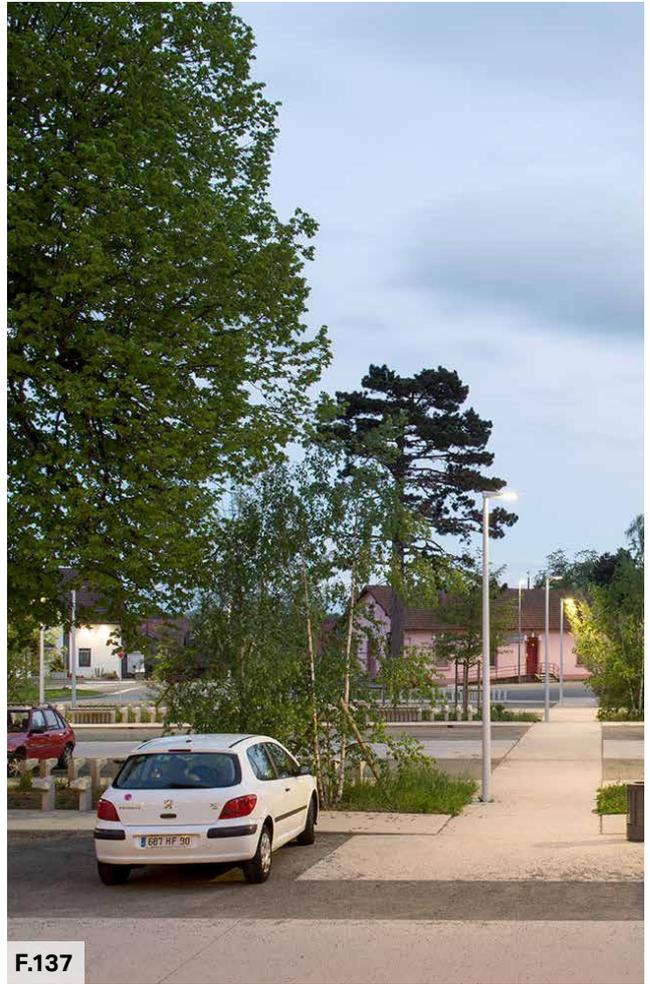
**Figure 137:** Parking broken up with tree planting and landscaping

**Figure 138:** Permeable 'Grasscrete' parking surfacing

**Figure 139:** Landscaping within a car park



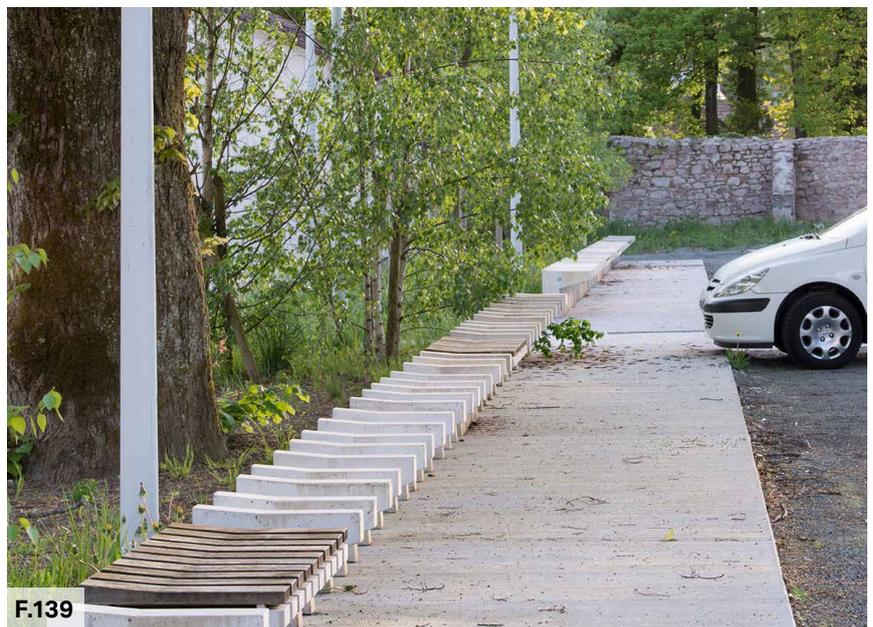
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# 5. Next Steps

This document has set out an evidence base for the Retford Town Centre Neighbourhood Plan and it is recommended that the codes are embedded within the forthcoming plan as policy.

As well as providing certainty to the local community, the design codes in this document should give more certainty to developers, as they will be able to design a scheme that is reflective of community aspirations, potentially speeding up any planning application process.

As well as using this document, future developers should also make sure that they have observed the guidance in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' National Design Guide\*.

Alongside this document AECOM have also provided technical support to the RTCNPG in the form of a masterplan document. This document further explores the opportunities in the town centre and presents these within a town wide masterplan framework.

\* Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities National Design Guide

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