OXTED BID
1.0 Oxted BID

1.1 Introduction

Oxted Public Realm Study

GreerPritchard have been appointed by the Oxted BID team to lead on a public realm study to enhance the business centre of Oxted.

This document examines the streets and public spaces of Oxted in order to help inform decision-making on how future public realm upgrades might be undertaken. The area is covered by The Tandridge Local Plan.

This study does not supersede or replace other documents, but informs how the future of Oxted could be enhanced by outlining a series of suggested improvements. These include:

- Station Road East (north side)
- Station Road East (south side)
- Station Road West
- Master Park
- Oxted Station
- Gasholder Site

About The BID

The town centre and Master Park is designated as a business improvement district (BID). The BID area is diverse in character ranging from a specialist printer, to hairdressers, clothing stores, cafes, restaurants and charity shops. The boundary of the BID area is illustrated on page 7.

Oxted

Oxted is a vibrant town and civil parish in the Tandridge District of Surrey, located at the foot of the North Downs. The town is formed of two distinct halves split by the railway station which offers direct services to London.

It is well-served by a variety of local shops and services and includes a leisure centre, schools, a public library, and civic buildings including the Tandridge District Council offices.

Oxted is designated within the Core Strategy as one of two Town Centres within the District, and is defined within the Core Strategy as:

*The District’s town centres are host to a variety of activities. These include leisure activities such as restaurants, pubs and cinemas; businesses such as banks and estate agents; limited residential use; and other community facilities such as libraries and leisure centres.*

Brief

The Brief is to undertake studies to inform and ensure the future growth and success of Oxted and businesses within the local area. It is currently a town of two halves, with two high streets running west-east from either side of the station. It is the aspiration of the BID to:

- Bring the two sides together and attract people in;
- Improve wayfinding;
- Enhance entrances to the town centre, improve visitor awareness of shops and restaurants, and overall visitor experience in both parts of the town;
- Improve the walkability and quality of the streetscape.
1.0 Oxted BID

1.2 Challenges

Oxted has a wide variety of small and local businesses, with strong demand for more retail floorspace. Units are rarely vacant for any lengthy period of time.

However, it is important to recognise the number of shopping trips to the UK’s high streets has fallen in recent years. To combat this, communities are enhancing their local high streets. There is evidence to show that:

- Public realm improvements are a key part of tackling street decline and increasing footfall;
- Those who travel by public transport, on foot, or by bicycle spend more time and money in shops and restaurants than those who arrive by car.

A number of case studies and precedent images are set out on the following pages to illustrate these points.

Summary of Public Realm Interventions

- Support the delivery of a town square to accommodate special events such as street markets and fairs, to attract more people in, which can deliver tangible social and economic benefits to communities and local business. Special events will support regeneration, economic development and tourism as well as improve access to culture, regional arts, crafts and foods and thereby make a significant contribution to the vitality and diversity of Oxted.

- Improve the public realm experience of Station Road East and Station Road West by introducing landscaping and providing places to sit, meet and greet.

- Improve connectivity between Station Road East and Station Road West as well as the town centre and Master Park by coherent wayfinding and surface treatment.

- Encourage alternative means of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling, and thereby reduce vehicle movements within the town centre.
Preliminary works (costing in the region of £400,000) have taken place to improve the physical appearance and vitality of Hitchin Street, a key shopping quarter adjacent to the market square. This provided an opportunity to pilot ‘shared space’ principles, introducing equal priority for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The new single surface has been laid with block paving and the limits of the carriageway are delineated by colour contrast tactile paving to help visually impaired pedestrians. Street furniture has been kept to a minimum and is removable to allow for future use for markets, festivals and other local events.

Source: The Pedestrian Pound, Living Streets

Lambeth Council undertook a programme of public realm improvements to achieve balance and harmony between pedestrians and motorists, creating a more positive shared space environment. This included the part-pedestrianisation of Railton Road, closing it off to through traffic and creating a new public space. As part of its Step Out in London project, Living Streets worked with the Herne Hill Forum to encourage and publicise the use of the area via activities and promotions. A unique feature was the designation of Railton Road as a community-run space managed by a community forum comprising local businesses and organisations.

Source: The Pedestrian Pound, Living Streets

The London Borough of Waltham Forest was one of three boroughs awarded £30m by Transport for London (TfL) in March 2014 as part of the Mini Holland programme to reallocate road space to public space. This included:

- Temporary road closure during a trial period to assess the impacts of the proposals prior to the final implementation;
- Traffic, with the exception of local buses and cycles, is restricted between 10am and 10pm.

Source: Human Streets - The Mayor’s Vision for Cycling Three Years On, GLA (2016)
The principle aim of this document is to undertake an assessment of Oxted and provide recommendations to enhance the BID area. This includes:

- Promoting the unique identity of Oxted as a great place to visit, shop and explore.
- Identifying areas for short-term public realm interventions including public art and temporary uses.
- Establishing a sense of place by promoting local distinctiveness, visual quality and social activity.
- Enhancing the walkability of the town by improving the streetscape, by creating a more liveable public realm and reducing the impact of on-street parking.
- Promoting alternative modes of transport, focusing on improving walking and cycling.
- Encouraging more people to visit the town by improving the quality of the streetscene, accessibility and wayfinding.
- Providing a strategic planning framework to maintain and enhance the town centre.
1.5 Successful Precedents

Market place: draws people in and promotes a sense of community

Shared space: Duke of York Square, London

Slow traffic and a safer environment: Orford Road, Walthamstow

A pocket park, replaces parking and provides meet/greet opportunities

Quality shopfronts and sensitive signage enhance local businesses

Shared roads: New Road, Brighton
1.0 Oxted BID

1.6 Summary of Issues, Strengths & Weaknesses

✓ Local character

✓ High quality shopfronts

✓ Diverse retail offer

✓ Built Heritage

✓ Specialist food shops

✓ Quality materials
Summary of Issues, Strengths & Weaknesses

- Parked cars
- Blank facades
- Poor quality surface treatment
- Traffic and physical barriers
- Low Quality Streetscape
- Poor Accessibility east and west
2.0 Site

2.1 Wider Area

Situated at the foot of the north downs, 10 miles from London and located between the A25 and M25, Oxted benefits from good accessibility, and is in an area popular with walkers and cyclists.

The station, located in the heart of the town, provides direct trains to London, Clapham Junction, East Croydon and South Grinstead.

The town centre is not directly located on a major through route, allowing much of the local traffic to bypass the area. Furthermore, Oxted is not directly served by a junction with the M25, which reduces through movements.

Due to its proximity to south London, there is a certain amount of north-south traffic travelling to other local centres, but this is limited by the B269.

Bus services are infrequent, particularly during off-peak hours. For example, the 410 Redhill - Hurst Green only runs 2 buses per hour at peak times weekdays and Saturdays; the 236 Oxted to E Grinstead runs once every two hours and not on Saturdays; the 594 to Westerham runs once every hour at peak times weekdays and Saturdays.
2.3 North Downs Trail

At almost 130 miles, The North Downs Trail connects Farnham on the Hampshire/Surrey border to the White Cliffs of Dover in Kent through the countryside of the Surrey Hills and Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Oxted is well situated at the foot of the trail to cater for groups walking or cycling along the routes and seeking an overnight stop, or passing through on day trips.
2.2 Oxted Town Centre

The retail heart of Oxted is located along Station Road East and Station Road West, split by the railway station. Access to the station is from Station Road East, Station Road West and Station Approach.

The two sides of the town are joined by a spatially constrained foot tunnel under the station.

The west side forms part of a conservation area and features a number of fine buildings with timber framed stucco facades, and connects to Master Park - a large recreation ground.

Morrisons supermarket is a major retail anchor in the town and is accessed from the A25, there is a pedestrian route north, from the car park to the town centre.

There are numerous public car parks within easy walking distance from the town centre (as annotated in yellow), but signage is poor and parking enforcement is intermittent.
2.0 Site

2.4 Planning Framework

Current Policy

The Core Strategy was adopted in 2008

Site designations include:

- As one of the two Town Centres in the District, Oxted is identified as being the principal shopping area in the District. Much of the BID area forms part of the designated Town Centre.

- Station Road East and Station Road West are identified as a Primary Shopping Frontage. The Council will seek to protect existing retail (A1) uses along this frontage, by maintaining at least 70% of each town centre’s primary frontage width as an A1 use.

- Station Road West and the buildings located either side are designated as a conservation area.

Emerging Policy

The emerging Local Plan for Tandridge will set out the vision for the district for the next 20 years and provide a framework for the future improvement, development and local protection of the area and the Green Belt.

Status of BID

The Oxted Business Improvement District (BID) commenced on 1 January 2016. The BID incorporates all units in Oxted Town centre who have a rateable value and are in the defined area (please refer to the BID area map on page 7 or 21). The BID is funded by businesses in the BID area who pay the equivalent of 2% of their Business Rates in the form of a levy. The levy pays for the projects which were defined in the Business Plan and will be delivered over a 5 year period.

For more information please go to the BID’s web site:

- http://www.loveoxted.co.uk
SITE ANALYSIS
3.0 Site Analysis

3.1 Significant Streets & Places

The following places (shown opposite) have been identified as important local destinations in Oxted. Assessment of these places will help to establish a ‘movement framework’, recognise key desire lines, and new potential connections.

- Morrisons and Waitrose supermarkets
- Gasholder site
- Leisure Centre
- Railway Station
- Tandridge District Council Offices
- Master Park
- Station Road East
- Station Road West
- District Community Hub / Library
- War memorial

**Morrisons**

Morrisons is a key retailer within Oxted with free parking for customers and visitors for up to 2 hours. Access between Station Road West and Morrisons is via a covered walkway for pedestrians.

Despite this, the interface between the car park and Station Road West is particularly poor and would therefore benefit from better signage and landscaping, as illustrated below.

**Gasholder Site**

Built in the 1960s, the existing gasholder replaced a number of smaller gasholders on the site. Decommissioned for over 15 years, the site can be accessed from Johnsdale car park, which is owned by the Council and Station Road East. The overall height of the holder is around 28 metres, equivalent to an 8-10 storey building and it is visible from many parts of Oxted and surrounding areas.

The Gasholder Site is likely to be redeveloped for housing in the near future, as the developers (St. William) is currently in pre-application negotiations with the council.
3.0 Site Analysis

3.2 Entrances

Station Road East

Approaching from the east, the view of shops along Station Road East marks the entry into the Town Centre, although there is an absence of a clearly defined threshold, and parked cars forming a significant part of the streetscene.

From the north, the Gasholder is a significant visual landmark. Spatially the street is wide with mature trees adding to the visual amenity.

Station exit

The arrival into Oxted from the Station is generally weak, particularly when exiting to the eastern side of Oxted where the lack of public space and dominance of vehicles reduces the opportunity to mingle. To the west, the public space provided around the exit lacks active uses, reducing the character of the space to that of a thoroughfare.

Station Road West

The roundabout marks the entrance to the town centre from the west, although visually it is weak and pedestrian access across the centre from the Master Park unsatisfactory.
3.0 Site Analysis

3.3 Street Types

Street types not only establish the character of the street, but define design parameters including materiality, footway & carriageway widths, parking arrangements, planting and lighting strategies.

With Oxted, the following street types have been identified:

- Retail centre / high street
- Residential street
- Access / servicing road
- Main trunk road

**RETAIL CENTRE / HIGH STREET**
Station Road East and Station Road West, divided by the Station, form the commercial centre of Oxted. Both streets offer a good mix of shops, cafes, restaurants and services.

The east and west forecourts to the station are used for pedestrian drop-off and pick-up trips. Taxis queue down the centre of the SRE. The pressure on these areas are likely to be a significant issue in relation to public realm improvements near the station.
PROBLEMS & OPPORTUNITIES
4.0 Problems & Opportunities

4.1 Parking

Existing Condition

Both Station Road West and East are dominated by public parking, causing both physical and visual implications on the nature of the high street, though the town is well-served by a number of off-street car parks located within a couple minutes walk of the retail centre.

Parking enforcement is intermittent. Long term parking restrictions should be introduced to increase turn over and high street foot fall. Increasing parking should only be proposed as a last resort.

Problems

- Service vehicles parking on footway create safety problems by blocking vision splays and inconvenient for pedestrians and visually impairs;
- Cars act as physical barriers making it difficult to cross streets;
- Parking dominates visual character of the town;
- Vehicles take valuable spaces which could be better served for other activities and functions;
- Cycle parking is provided near to the railway station, but is lacking along both Station Road East and Station Road West

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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The existing streetscape is dominated by parking

Parking at 45 degrees takes valuable space away from the pedestrian footpath

Existing parking at the northern end of Station Road East
Existing parking provision. Parking restriction vary with car parks, however on the high streets it is restricted to 1 hour (Monday to Saturday 8:30-6:30)
4.0 Problems & Opportunities

4.1 Parking

**Opportunities**

- Reduce reliance on on-street parking by encouraging cycling, walking and public transport;
- Make better use of off-street car parking by restricting the length of stay and improving enforcement;
- Open up views to shops by reducing clutter;
- Create places for people to meet, greet and rest;
- Increase on-street cycle parking.

The Report on Market Research Survey Findings for the Oxted BID Board discusses tensions between works and shoppers, who all compete for parking accommodation.

Proposals could reduce the number of on-street parking spaces by approximately 35%. If the short-term high street parking restriction was reduced to 1 hour (rather than the current 2 hours) and enforced, the turn-over of cars would increase dramatically. Those wanting to stay longer would be encouraged to use the long-term car parks, but these too need to be enforced.

Shopkeepers within the BID area might also assist by encouraging staff to use alternative means of transport and introduce schemes such as 'Bike-to-Work'.

The local cycle shop could run training sessions to boost confidence and lend technical advice.
Design Recommendations

- Parking bays should be integrated within the streetscape through planting, and limited to runs of four separated by planting and/or pedestrian crossings.

- Loading bays should be provided as inset bays. These should be articulated by small-unit, modular paving, to provide a visual contrast with that of any adjoining footway or other non-carriageway area.
4.0 Problems & Opportunities

4.2 Access & Servicing

Problems

- Vehicles parking on footway.
- Access for residential units above high street shops required.
- Lack of designated loading bays
- Station Approach is often congested due to two-way traffic and heavy parking
- Poor parking enforcement.

Opportunities

- Along Station Road East, the majority of retail units could be serviced from back of house locations, accessed via Amy Road and Johnsdale.
- On-street loading bays should be provided in the form of inset bays, with a 20 minute limit, to allow for flexible use of the space available.
- Service areas could be better utilised by shops instructing deliveries to the rear and negotiating parking for staff with the landowners.
Oxted Public Realm Study

STATION APPROACH

AMY ROAD

GRESHAM ROAD

JOHNSDALE

STATION APPROACH EAST

STATION ROAD WEST

Back of house servicing area

Vehicle access
4.0 Problems & Opportunities

4.3 Walking Environment

Existing Condition

At present, the unfriendly quality of the walking environment is reflective of the harshness of the surface treatment, frequent use of guard railing, and interrupted footways caused by the random positioning of street furniture.

The greenery, which is part of the identity of surrounding residential streets, is largely absent from the town centre.

Furthermore, a significant amount of available space is given over to parked cars that exceed the 1 hour maximum stay and to under-utilised retail forecourts, reducing the quality of the public realm.

Problems

- Poor-quality and inconsistent surface treatment
- Lack of pedestrian permeability
- Insufficient benches and seating areas
- Footway interruptions
- Lacking greenery
- Side streets interrupt footways with priority given to motor vehicles
- Visual and noise pollution from private vehicles

Inconsistent surface treatment throughout the town centre

The current road design strongly favours motor vehicles that often travel at speed down the high street.

Guardrails restrict pedestrian movement and provide minimal safety benefits
Opportunities

- Enhancing the quality of the pedestrian environment improves the attractiveness of town centres, which will increase visitor numbers and footfall.
- The streets within Oxted should reconsider the hierarchy of users, with the needs of pedestrians prioritised.
- The width of Station Road East and Station Road West are considered to be wide enough for better allocation of space to meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Enhancing the pedestrian experience

To enhance the pedestrian environment, the following should be considered:

Consider first

- Traffic volume reduction
- Traffic speed reduction
- Relocation of road space to pedestrians
- Provision of direct at-grade crossings
- New pedestrian alignment or grade separation

Consider last

User hierarchy

To enhance movement, the design must be based upon a user hierarchy, which is set out below:

Consider first

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Public transport users
- Specialist service vehicles
- Other motor traffic

Consider last

It is important to recognise the viability and needs of all users including disabled people, public transport users and servicing requirements.

Furthermore, interventions that reduce traffic flows should consider the economic impacts, the retail capacity and alternative modes of transport available, whilst designing to increase the attractiveness of walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
4.0 Problems & Opportunities

4.3 Walking Environment

Recommendations

The design of the local environment should prioritise pedestrians to improve the quality of the walking environment, particularly along the retail streets and between local destinations and car parks.

Key recommendations include:

- Introduce the principles of shared space giving priority to pedestrians and shoppers;
- Use distinctive surface treatments and materials to make cars feel like ‘guests’ within the town centre;
- At grade/level pedestrian crossings should be provided;
- Landscape improvements including appropriate planting should be introduced to enhance the quality of the streetscene;
- The reduction in available on-street parking bays will allow for appropriate levels of greening, which will enhance the walking/visiting/shopping experience.
- Reduce the speed limit on SRE, SRW and Station Approach to 20 mph.
High quality shared space

Shared space is an effective approach to creating good-quality public realm, and redefines streets as places for pedestrians to interact with one another and their local surroundings.

‘The principles of shared space involve decluttering the streetscape by removing unnecessary obstacles and de-cluttering the area from excessive street signage and furniture.’

SOURCE: LONDON PLAN HOUSING SPG

Benefits

- Promotes the principles of inclusive design with priority given to pedestrians and cycles.
- Alternative surface treatment, lack of signage and road markings reduces vehicle speeds.
- Establishes a sense of place and helps streets become destinations in their own right. New Road in Brighton saw a 175% increase in pedestrian activity and a 600% increase in people deciding to shop or simply stop, sit and enjoy the new space.

Constraints

- Kerbs provide many disabled people with the confidence that they are segregated from traffic.
- Kerbs can provide blind and partially sighted people with a ‘shore line’ to follow, to help them navigate an area.
4.0 Problems & Opportunities

4.4 Street Furniture, Signage & Planting

Coupled with high quality shared space is the need to provide quality places for people to sit, enjoy their sandwiches, meet-up with friends or people watch. Street furniture in Oxted is generally of poor quality, dated and add-hoc. Where improvements have been introduced there is little continuity, with different design approaches, materials, and scale being used and thereby creating a cluttered effect. As a consequence there is a lack of coherance and sence of place or identity for Oxted.

A street furniture strategy, signage guidelines and landscaping plan would give Oxted the sence of place it currently lacks.
Design Principles

- Planting and integrated seating should be low maintenance.

- The positioning of street furniture including seating, cycle parking and lighting should be coordinated within an identified zone.

- Signage should be appropriate to the context, be externally illuminated, backlit or halo lit. Large internally lit box signs with oversized lettering should be avoided.

- Lighting should be used to provide a sense of safety and well-being, accentuate routes and enhance physical features and buildings.

The simple use of street furniture can be used to control vehicle access

Bermondsey Square, Bermondsey

Coordinated street furniture layout

Planters can also be used as seating

Planting should be simple and low maintenance
5.0 Design Response

5.1 Oxted Vision

- Improved connection from car park to high street
- Pedestrian only station square
- Raised junction/table
- New gateway to master park
- Arrival square enhancements
- Improved pedestrian crossing & junction layout
- Uniform surface treatment
- Potentially traffic restricted area
- Major interventions to create continuity between the two parts of Oxted
5.2 East meets West

Delivering improvements to four key areas, as set out below, have been identified as important to ensure the successful integration of Oxted and improvements to the BID generally. Ideas are summarised below and explained in greater detail on the following pages.

1 Linking East with West

Little can be done to improve or widen the underpass, other than improve the existing lighting, which is discussed in Section 5. However, if the two sides of the station are improved, by creating two new hubs/focus points, using common features and language - this will help to overcome many physical obstacles that can’t be changed, and give Oxted a strong identity.

To accommodate change new arrival points are required which should be done by creating a new town square on the eastern side to provide a place for markets, community art, public seating and special events. By improving the public realm on the western side to also accommodate events the two sides will feel connected. Changes to Station Road East, Station Road West and the Master Park Gateway are summarized below and explained in further detail on the following pages.

2 Station Road East

- Potential for access to be restricted at certain times to allow for local events such as markets/festive celebrations
- Reduced lane width (5.5m)
- Potential for two-way cycle lanes and single lane carriageway
- Additional bus stops could be provided
- Landscape improvements with clear footway and new cycle parking

3 Station Road West

- Uniform surface treatment north of Hoskins Road
- Better integration of car parking
- Designated loading bays

4 Oxted West / Master Park Gateway

- Improved pedestrian crossings
- Potential for new road layout at the junction of Station Road West, East Hill Road and Church Lane
- New Gateway to Master Park

Sections 5.2 and 5.3 set out short term (quick wins) and long term interventions, which can be stitched into the ideas set out below - starting in section 5.4.
5.0 Design Response

5.3 Short-Term Interventions

**Temporary Uses**
- Portable 'parklet', Tooley Street

**Community Installations**
- 'Yarn bombing' and local art, Penge
- Community planting and integrated seating, would enhance the high streets, private forecourts and the entrance to Master Park

**Temporary Street Closures**
- Roman Road market, Bow
- Orford Road, Walthamstow
5.4 Long-Term Opportunities

Reinforce Local Identity

- Local history told within pavements

Strengthen Sense of Place

- Herne Hill Station, Herne Hill

Enhance Public Realm

- Festive events bring long-term benefits
- New Road, Brighton
- Southwark Bridge underpass, Southwark
- Signage, Herne Hill
5.0 Design Response

5.5 Station Square & Underpass

The Station Square (SRE) and main entrance to the station from Station Approach (SRW) is currently clogged with taxis and parked cars. The existing environment is low-quality and wayfinding is poor.

The creation of a new square will give the community a place to meet and greet and provide space to accommodate special events on weekends. It is where east meets west - on arrival visitors and shoppers will be greeted by an exciting space that will invigorate the town. Lighting will be important as illustrated on page 63.

Station Road West should be closed on event days to provide further temporary special event accommodation. By participating, visitors will be attracted to the west side of town and both sides will be read as one.

In addition, the following recommendations are made:

- Taxi rank to SRE relocated to the south-east side of Amy Street;
- Success will depend on all shops having entrances onto the square, with active frontages;
- Surfaces are shared;
- Lighting (see page 63) and/or a water feature should included in the final detailed design.

SRW: The existing condition is drab and cluttered with cars whereas it could be an intimate space for the community.

SRW: The existing condition is drab and cluttered with cars whereas it could be well landscaped with restricted parking.

Markets and special events add life to the high street and attract visitors in.

A simple water feature would transform the square and could be accompanied by an artistic sound scape.
Shared surfaces have been successful throughout Britain

Uniform stalls and canopies would limit clutter
5.0 Design Response

5.6 Station Road East

Existing

Station Road rises up by approximately 7m between Johnsdale Road and Amy Road. The change in elevation, along with the gentle curve in the road and orientation of the sun, offer good views and aspect.

- Busiest retail street within Oxted
- Little continuity with regard to the treatment of retail forecourts
- Wide footways in places, and narrow in others
- Wayfaring to and from car parks is poor

Links to the high street provide good places for notice boards, but they need to be managed and placed where they do not obstruct views.

Station Road East has good levels of sunlight, and would therefore be enhanced by improving the public realm for all to enjoy.
Proposed Layout

- **IMPROVED WAYFINDING TO CAR PARKS**
- **RAISED CROSSING WITH PEDESTRIAN FOOTWAY**
- **DESIGNATED LOADING BAY**
- **PARKING BAYS INTEGRATED WITHIN STREETSCENE**
- **RETAIL FORECOURTS ARTICULATED THROUGH A CONSISTENT SURFACE TREATMENT**
5.0 Design Response

5.7 Station Road East

Proposed

Two options are presented for discussion and illustrated on page 55. Option 1 retains the two-way carriageway with improved, integrated parking. Access restricted to allow local buses and cycles only, except during permitted hours, could be explored, though this would require further assessment of existing and proposed traffic flows.

Option 2 introduces a one-way system with cycle lanes either side and improved integrated parking, as illustrated below. Both options include:

- Better integration of parking within the streetscape
- Simple material palette clearly delineates retail forecourts, public footway and carriageway
- The planting of forecourts with integrated seating on the eastern side of the street would capitalise on the sunny aspect
- Encourage the greater use of forecourts more generally.

Materiality and different gauges clearly indicate retail forecourts, public footways and the carriageway

Potential implication of one-way system
**Proposed Option 1**

- Retain the two-way carriageway
- Parking integrated within streetscene

**Proposed Option 2**

- Potential one-way system along Station Road East would allow for 1.5m cycle lanes either side
- Parking integrated within streetscene
5.0 Design Response

5.8 Station Road West

Existing

Station Road West is quieter in character. Part of the street is designated as a conservation area.

- One of two ways to access railway station
- The route to the east side is let down by inappropriate railings and unauthorised advertising
- Access to leisure centre and pedestrian access to Morrisons
- Cars frequently parking on narrow footway to access bank machines
- Low-quality pavement/lack of greenery
The existing railings create clutter and attract unauthorised advertising. They could be replaced with planters and plants that enjoy dry conditions. Alternatively, well designed railing could be introduced.
5.0 Design Response

5.9 Station Road West

**Proposed**

A ‘shared’ surface is proposed between Station Approach and Hoskins Road, with renewed pavements and dropped curbs. Surface treatments need further research, but granite sets, resin-bound paving and concrete pavers are viable options. Any solution must be installed correctly with a good sub-base and should be permeable.

- The pavement width and wide, private forecourts offer opportunities for planting and seating
- Guard railings should be removed and be replaced by planters
- Parking bays limited to runs of two and three, separated by planting. Betula costata and B. albosinensis (Birch Trees) are suggested

Vehicle access could be restricted at certain times of the day or week

A shared surface in Brighton

Where shared surfaces are proposed, trees and planters, along with surface treatments can be used to delineate the hierarchy of spaces
Proposed

- Reduced carriageway width (c.5.5/6m)
- Dedicated planting and parking zone
- Uniform surface treatment
5.0 Design Response

5.10 Oxted West / Master Park Gateway

One of two entrances to Oxted town centre from the west - the western end of Station Road West - connects with the Junction of Church Lane and Master Park.

With access to the railway station, leisure centre, and retail parade, this forms an important gateway for Oxted. The Park hosts special events throughout the year, but the town centre appears to miss out on the potential additional footfall.

The existing traffic islands are not conducive to the safe crossings of pedestrians; are unmarked; and positioned in a way that does not provide direct crossing points. There is also insufficient space provided for pedestrians and cyclists. The crossing fails to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

The following interventions are suggested to enhance the gateway and are considered critical to improve links to the Oxted town centre:

- Potential for new road layout at junction of Station Road West, East Hill Road and Church Lane.
- Improved cycling infrastructure, with potential cycle lanes, cycle slipways depending on the junction design.
- Enhance the entrance to and from Master Park.
- Enhance accessibility for all users.
- Improve wayfinding and community information more generally from inside the park.
Raised table crossings, improve safety for vulnerable users

**RAISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ‘AT GRADE’ WITH FOOTWAY**

**SEPARATED CYCLE ‘SLIP WAY’**

**PLANTING TO ENHANCE PARK GATEWAY**

**NEW GATEWAY TO MASTER PARK**

**RAISED TABLE FOUR-WAY JUNCTION (CONTROLLED BY TRAFFIC LIGHTS) WITH DISTINGUISHING SURFACE TREATMENTS**

Planting, will enhance the entrance and exit from the Park.
5.0 Design Response

5.11 Wayfinding Strategy

Proposal

Wayfinding measures can include on-street maps, digital maps and signage. All are important as they will improve efficiency, accessibility and safety for people walking and cycling. A ‘family’ of units will also help enhance the character and identity of the village.

The wayfinding strategy should be prepared and include:

- An appraisal of the types and styles of signs already used;
- Identify key destinations to support with signage;
- Recommend routes and locations to support with signs and the types of signage at each location;
- Suggesting whether existing signage at proposed locations should be kept, replaced or added to; and,
- Unify public realm through coordinated visual markers.

The Market Research study revealed that insufficient information was available to let residents and visitors know what was going on in the town. On-line information and 3D maps for the visually impaired can assist with this, but so can wayfinding. Information boards should be erected at the station square and main entrance (east and west), Master Park, car parks, leisure centre and library.

Banners can create interest and celebrate events. To minimise visual clutter, existing fixtures should be used.

A ‘family’ of units will control clutter and assist with wayfinding.
5.0 Design Response

5.13 Lighting Strategy

Proposal

Changing the way light is applied to routes and spaces enhances purpose and identity and helps users make decisions about their route. Specific decorative effects are used to highlight social areas.

Strong visual landmarks can also be highlighted in key locations to link spaces together so that pedestrians can easily make sense of the space within the context of the wider area. A consistent quality of light in terms of colour rendering and temperature, alongside a deliberately limited palette of equipment, can bring cohesion and a pleasant environment, unifying Oxted as a whole, and assisting with wayfinding.

Specific light enhancements could include:

- Newly created public amenity areas and the proposed public square;
- Decorative effects in the pedestrian underpass at the station;
- Lighting of heritage assets and mature trees;
- Mark entrances (see page 27) to the town.

Energy-efficient and sensitive lighting to underpasses

Lighting units can enhance nighttime special events

The newly-created public space will be enhanced by creative lighting and sound.
6.0 Delivery and implementation

A public realm strategy is the beginning of a long term process of change. It will be important to commission an architect, landscape architect or artists to develop the idea of a town square on the east side and enhanced entrance to the station on the west side. It is recommended that a competition be held between short-listed teams. GreerPritchard are happy to advise further.

Further investigation is required to test the key principals set out in this document as progress is made towards implementation.

The first step is to agree an outline Action Plan to implement the strategy. Responsibilities, timings and funding opportunities need to be agreed and followed up.

If roads are to be closed or made one-way, than a number of research surveys and audits will be required to test the proposals thoroughly, evidence is required for further consultation and the detailed design stages.

Project plans are required for each project, as resources are identified. Action plans for each project must be prepared by the appointed lead body, with each work stage identified - from commissioning and planning through to implementation and subsequent management and maintenance.

Detailed design is likely to require the services of an architect, landscape architect, engineer and highway engineer. As detailed design options emerge, these will need to be tested and consulted upon. The local planning authority is best placed to advise on the planning process. Contractors are normally engaged at this stage.

BID to review and agree key roles and responsibilities within the group and engage with the Tandridge District Council.

Traffic and movement - detailed investigation is required to evaluate the proposals for Station Road East and West. This includes exploring the range of potential surface treatments and the implications for traffic flow and circulation within and around the town. The scope, time frame and funding arrangements will need to be reviewed by the Tandridge District Council and Highway Authority.

A parking review is required to identify the most appropriate location for loading bays and to explore on-street parking use and the needs of ‘blue badge’ holders. It is recommended for these elements to be progressed as a comprehensive traffic study for the town prior to further consultation with the public. For example, there is pressure for additional parking from the public and shopkeepers. However, the provision of additional parking should not be introduced without justification.

- Audits are recommended to review the condition, position and quality of existing streetscape items, to inform decisions on maintenance and potential replacement or repositioning.
- Strategies - more detailed work is required to guide improvements of specific elements of the public realm such as lighting, public art and wayfinding before taking forward recommended improvements.
- Materials - key decisions must be made on the palette of suitable surface treatments and the ‘family’ of street furniture items, following the principles established in this strategy. Engagement with Tandridge District Council is critical.

Work areas include:

Oxted Public Realm Study
PHASING

It will not be possible to deliver all proposed changes immediately. Delivery will depend on funding, planning, consultation, the impact on trading and opportunities presented by the private sector. As discussed above, the priority will be to establish the management structure, gather research and information, design, test and consult. Once the implications of change are fully understood, three phases of implementation can be identified:

1. Focus on the new town square, including relocating the taxi rank and on-street parking.

2. Focus on improving Station Road East, including traffic management orders to enable improvements (e.g., pedestrian crossings, landscaping).

3. Focus on improving Station Road West and traffic management orders to enable improvements (e.g., pedestrian crossings, landscaping).

4. Focus on improving key spaces such as the access and pedestrian crossing to Master Park.

The power of ‘quick wins’ should not be underestimated. Standalone projects such as developing detailed designs for landscaping private forecourts and/or the gateway to Master Park are potential projects that could come forward at any time.
6.0 Conclusions

This report has been prepared to inform the BID Board on public realm improvements to bring the two sides of Oxted together and attract people in.

We have recommended short-term and long-term interventions that will enhance the town centre, improve visitor awareness and improve the walkability and quality of the streetscape.

In terms of physical interventions this is a long-term plan, and there is much to do to realise the interventions suggested. Controlling vehicle numbers, through reducing the number of spaces available and supported by appropriate enforcement, is central to delivering an improved public realm.

Four key interventions are suggested. The first being the delivery of a town square, where markets and other special events could be held throughout the day and evening. This pedestrian only space would be enhanced by appropriate seating, semi-mature trees, a dramatic light installation and sound installation. A simple water or play feature, that takes advantage of the sloping grade, would provide a place for people to meet and children to play.

The square would be supported by Station Road West and station forecourt and Station Road East, which become a shared space, where motor vehicles feel like guests and shoppers can feel at ease. These areas would be landscaped, pedestrian crossings would be increased and street furniture would be rationalised. One or both roads might be closed for special events, such as markets, art fairs or street theatre.

The final intervention is improvements to the access arrangements to Master Park. A new gateway is proposed supported by planting and a new diagonal crossing, where vehicles are stopped and pedestrians can move in any direction safely.

Short-term or ‘pop-up’ interventions are also important to build trust and enthusiasm for managed change.

A public realm strategy is just the beginning. An architect, landscape architect or artist to should be engaged to develop the idea of a town square on the east side and enhanced entrance to the station on the west side.

Further investigation and consultation is also required to test the key principals set out in this document as progress is made towards implementation.