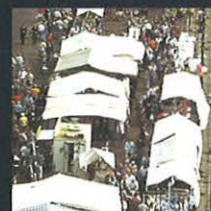


**STREETS FOR PEOPLE**

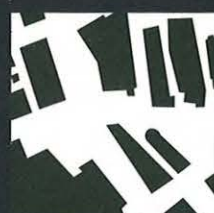


C I T Y S C A P E



**NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**







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ENGLISH HERITAGE





**STREETS FOR PEOPLE**

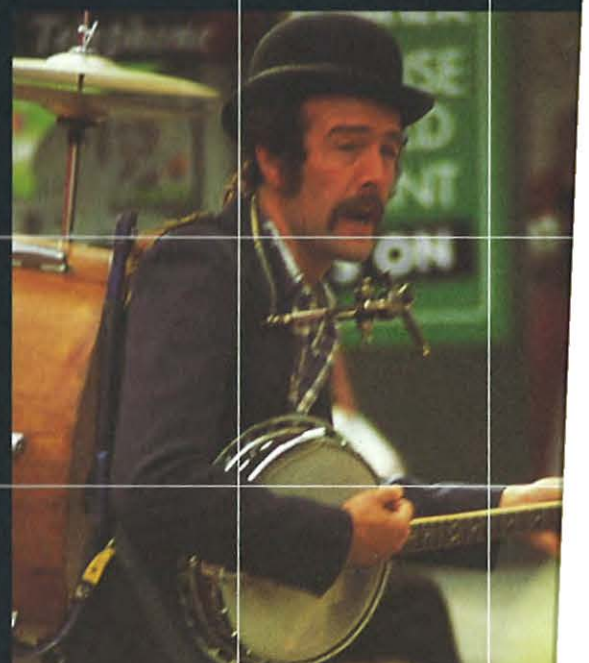
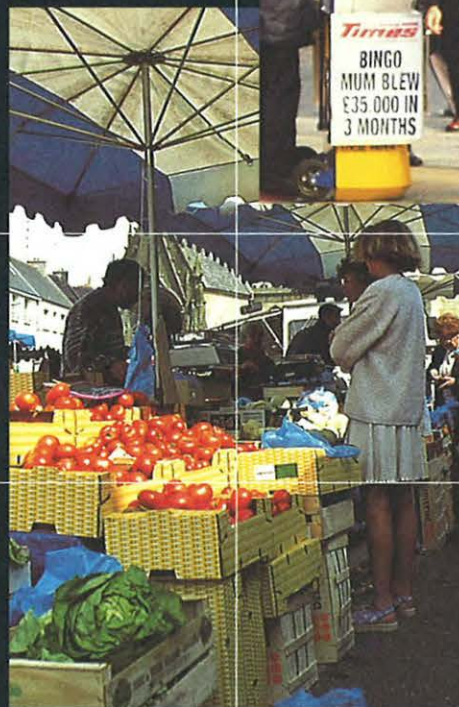
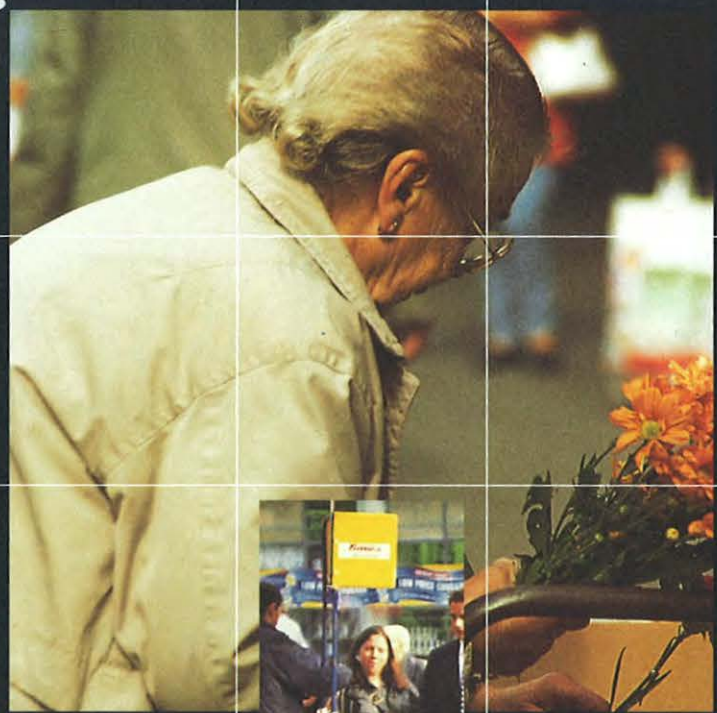


# CITYSCAPE



**NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**









Cityscape is an initiative of the Northumbria Branch of the Northern Region of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Cyril Winskell convened and chaired the working group.

Alan Simpson initiated and developed the 'Streets for People' strategy.

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The views expressed in CITYSCAPE are solely those of the working group.

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## CREDITS







## FOREWORD

**D**esign in cities is often a controversial issue about which more and more people have something to say. The subject of quality in cities, quality of life and quality of place, is also now higher on the agenda of politicians and princes, and most importantly of local people and their communities. This revived interest is very welcome. The quality of city streets and places, and the architecture which surrounds them, is a variable commodity dependant upon many issues and characteristics to which we all relate on a highly personal and often critical level. We respond to the environment our towns and cities provide, sometimes positively but also too often negatively because that environment does not generate a true sense of pride or sentiment, security and enjoyment, a sense of belonging and well-being, a sense of citizenship. Our city streets and spaces are too often intimidating and alienating.

The provision of accessible urban streets and places requires a subtle mosaic of traffic and pedestrian management, the design of surfaces and features in the street environment such as paving, lights, seating, landscape, and the careful maintenance of the surrounding buildings. The urban designer's role is central, but so too is that of the local community who should be involved and consulted in all aspects of design in the public realm.

We need to strive to raise standards of both city space design and its subsequent achievements. The Trust therefore warmly welcomes this book both as an appraisal of one city, its problems and opportunities, and also as a manifesto on the quality of urban life that is applicable to many other towns and cities in Britain.



Michael Gwilliam, Director, Civic Trust





# The Growth of the City

## AND THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

**N**ewcastle upon Tyne is a unique city. It has Roman origins and, like York, grew to become an important strategic location and market centre in medieval times. It was re-developed during the 19th century, providing the City with a Georgian New Town comparable with Edinburgh and Bath. Tyneside developed as a world centre for ship-building and the export of coal. It also experienced the full thrust of the Industrial Revolution during the 19th century.

The latter part of the 18th century witnessed important changes in the physical characteristics of the town. Between 1763 and 1812 all of the gates and many sections of the Walls were demolished

and the process of internal reorganisation and suburban growth combined to change the plan and morphology of the town. New high class residential areas were established within the line of the walls at Charlotte Square, Hanover Square and Clavering Place, as prominent townsmen left the older riverside areas.

Important public buildings were also built in innovative classical styles such as the Assembly Rooms (1776), the Theatre Royal in Mosley Street (1788 – later demolished) and the Moot Hall (1812). Street improvements included the construction of Mosley Street and Dean Street in 1784-89 and later Collingwood Street in 1810. Dean Street was constructed on the infilled valley of the Lort Burn and linked the Sandhill to the upper part of the town. Mosley and Collingwood Streets allowed improved traffic between Pilgrim Street and Westgate Road. All streets were broad with flagged pavements and had modern type shop fronts with glass windows. (The production of glass was an important Tyneside industry.)

A fundamental contrast therefore began to emerge between streets dominated by the remnants of the medieval burgh plots, at right angles to the street and the new streets with shallow rectangular building plots, providing sites that were easier to develop for the expanding town. The public buildings, churches, chapels and new recreational spaces gave the town new morphological elements which were to display characteristics of the English Urban Renaissance.

The construction of Blackett Street, along the line of the wall, in 1824 and Eldon Square (1825-1831) can be seen as the forerunners in terms of architectural style, scale and building materials of a revolutionary re-planning of the upper town in the 1830s and 40s. This new town centre was planned by Richard

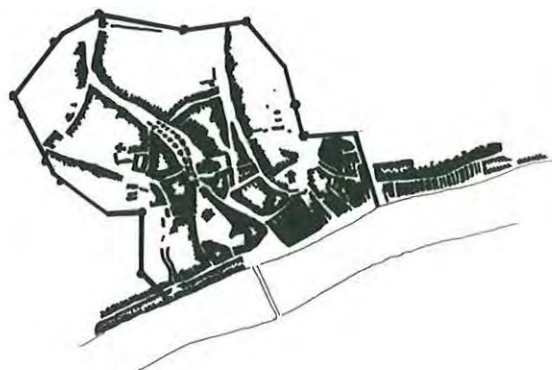


Grainger the developer, with John Clayton the town clerk, John Dobson the architect and others. The acquisition of the Anderson Place/Nun's Field site by Grainger in 1834 provided the opportunity for this scheme.

In contrast to the organic form of the existing medieval town, the layout of the new town centre was characterised by a regular planned street pattern with elegant neo-classical stone buildings, many conceived as ranges, together with central siting of public buildings and monuments. The upper Lort ravine was filled in so that Grey Street could be constructed to link Dean Street with Blackett Street. A new covered market was constructed and surrounded by new streets: Grainger Street, Bigg Market,







1724

Clayton Street, Nun Street and Nelson Street. Market Street, Shakespeare Street and Hood Street completed the development.

This new city centre, (1834-39), substantially improved the status and quality of life in the regional capital with new sanitary arrangements, gas lighting, macadamised streets and an impressive architecture to attract banking, financial and retailing interests.

The completion of the High Level

Bridge in 1849 brought the railway into the heart of the city with the erection of the impressive Central Station designed by John Dobson (1850). By 1870, Grainger Street had been extended from the Bigg Market junction to Neville Street linking the station to the new city centre.

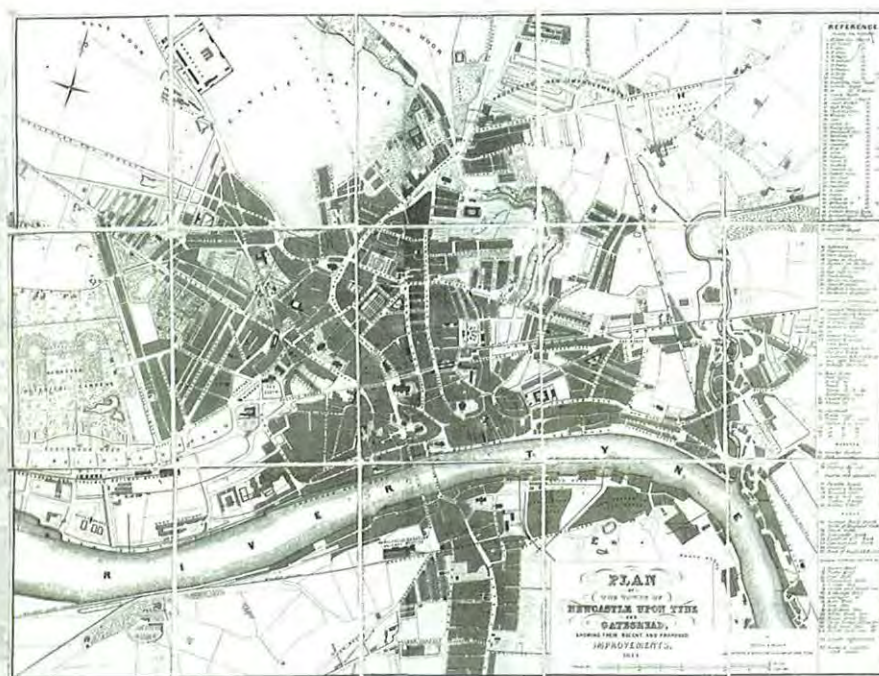
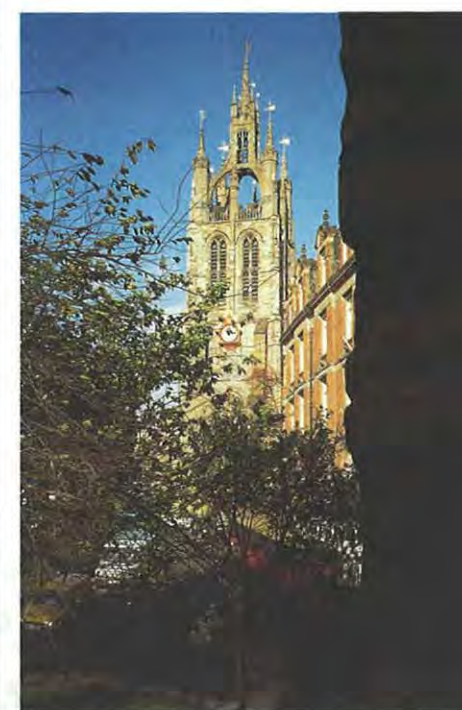
The construction of the Tyne Bridge by 1928 caused a reorientation of traffic flow, making Northumberland Street, at the top of Pilgrim Street, supersede Grainger Street as the principal shopping



1830

focus. Prominent new buildings of the 20th century inside or adjoining the Central Conservation Area include the substantial Co-operative Society building in Newgate Street (1931), Carliol House (1920) and the Police and Fire Stations (1937) in Pilgrim Street.

During the latter part of the 20th century, the changes in Newcastle have been a product of the process of central or local government planning policies rather than just the historical forces that shaped its earlier growth. The comprehensive strategy for the City in the 1960s, to improve the City Centre environment whilst attempting to solve the problems of traffic congestion, led to widespread changes in the physical appearance of the City. Although schemes for pedestrian/traffic segregation manifested themselves outside the study area, the major change was the construction of the Eldon Square Shopping Centre (opened in 1975). This provided an introspective shopping mall largely turning its back on the surrounding streets.







1865

Unfortunately many of the buildings erected during the 1960s and 70s have been very obtrusive (eg Westgate House and the Norwich Union building) and do not respect or enhance the quality of the adjoining townscape. Also large developments like the Newgate Centre have obliterated the historical scale and 'grain' of the area, and the new buildings associated with the Central Motorway East have truncated Pilgrim Street and are of an inappropriate town scale.

Recent social changes in housing requirements have led to residential development in the City, as in the newly-built Charlotte Mews/ Blackfriars development or the use of listed buildings in Clayton Street, to again provide flats on upper floors. Growth in leisure activities has also led to specific initiatives by the City Council to encourage the physical, economic and social regeneration of areas such as the Theatre Village and Chinatown area.

Like other major Victorian and early 20th century industrial centres, such as Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, Newcastle has become a regional capital for shopping, culture, entertainment, commerce, tourism and industry. It has been the third home of The Royal Shakespeare Company since 1980 (the year of the City's 900th anniversary) and it is strategically located between Edinburgh, Leeds and Carlisle. As a Regional centre the City serves Northumberland, the Tyne Valley, the Lake District, County Durham and North Yorkshire.



1899

The City also has close ties with Scandinavia, Germany and an ever-increasing number of other European and international countries and companies. As a wonderful place to live, work, play or visit, it is surrounded by four National Parks; historic cities and towns (including The World Heritage Centre of Durham); a national heritage coastline and some of the most isolated and beautiful moorland in Europe.

Newcastle upon Tyne has been successful over the last 25 years in a number of areas of redevelopment and modern planning initiatives. One of Europe's most impressive and successful public housing projects was built, under the guidance of Ralph Erskine, at Byker in the 1970s. The Byker Wall Project fulfilled an impressive community liaison programme in both planning terms and the provision of much needed housing.

In 1980, the Tyneside Metro was opened. Based upon an existing railway network, it was the first rapid transit system in Britain. It provided a link







1954



1996



between the outer suburban areas and the City Centre: this latter part of the route providing an underground network comparable with those of other major European cities. The system serves the whole of the Tyneside area, from the coast towns to the east of the City to the International airport in the west. Further extensions to Sunderland and the MetroCentre are planned.

During the 1980s and early 90s, a great deal of urban regeneration has taken place within the City. Most significantly within the Quayside area, Scotswood and Elswick. Other City Centre areas have been redeveloped for a range of modern uses. Unfortunately some of these have been carried out at the expense of the City's historic core. Cities in Europe, the USA and, recently in the UK and Ireland are learning that high quality, in the design and management of city streets and places, contributes positively to the economic and social well-being of the city as a whole. Leeds, Birmingham, Glasgow and Dublin are notable recent examples.



This 'Streets for People' strategy has identified nine public spaces or places within the central Area: Haymarket; St James Park; Eldon Square; Monument; Portland Place; Bigg Market; Central Station; Pilgrim Square; and Quayside. The strategy analyses the problems of each area, and makes general suggestions for improvement through comparisons with the achievements of other UK, European and North American cities. The drawings illustrate general possibilities for the future of Newcastle street culture and activities. The overall intention is to develop a new 'street design' structure, building upon the existing architectural character of the City and the powerful social and physical street culture and identity for which the City is renowned. The aim is to enhance the environment of the City and to develop a positive facility for the provision of public places and streets for people. The City streets must be returned to the people. It follows that people will return to the streets.

The City of Newcastle upon Tyne must be managed and designed to facilitate the needs of all those who live, work, and play within its boundaries but it must also accommodate and enthuse all those who simply desire to be within its walls to sample its unique and special qualities.





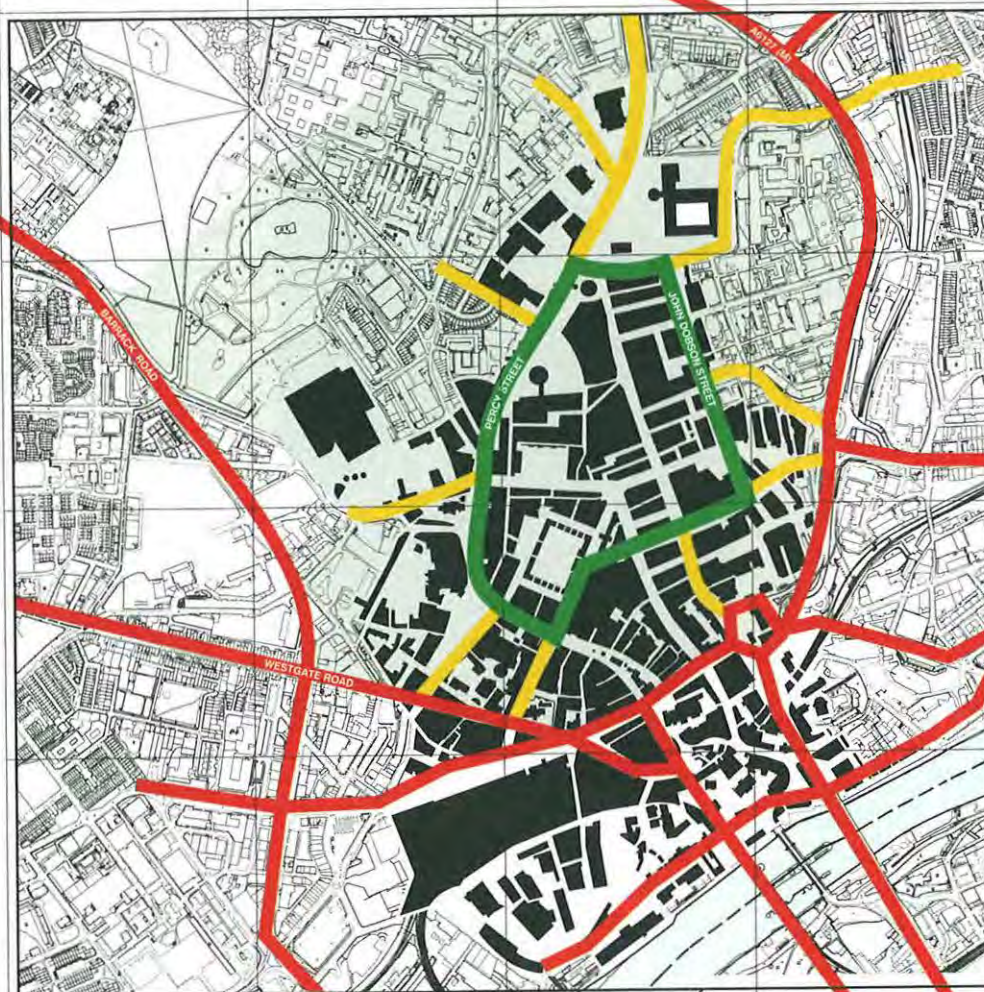
## MOVEMENT

**T**he City's transport strategy aims to meet the needs of its retail, commercial and leisure interests, whilst protecting and enhancing the streets by removing non-essential traffic. It defines Control Zones (in which only permitted traffic would be allowed) and a number of Control Roads which limit access to these areas. Traffic access to the Central Zones will be on the basis of need: allocating priority to service vehicles, public transport and other essential business vehicles.

The City is about to complete its comprehensive integrated road network. The network is hierarchical with roads identified to carry traffic around the City, distribute traffic across the City and provide access to specific locations within the City. Finally, in particularly sensitive pedestrian areas, vehicles are to be banned altogether and the roads replaced by places for people.

Bypasses to the east and the west (Tyne Tunnel and Blaydon Bridge), can take traffic beyond the City. The Motorway East and the West Central Road can distribute traffic around the conurbation. The access and control roads can serve the inner area.

Linked to the bridgeheads of Tyne Bridge and Redheugh Bridge is Gateshead's east-west route and Newcastle's Central Motorway and proposed West Central Route. Both the City and the Town could be served by this one inner ring road.



This would allow the settlements on both sides of the river to re-order the access and egress to and from their centres. In Newcastle it would relieve traffic movement on Westgate Road, Collingwood Street and Mosley Street, in particular. It would enable the traffic calming of more streets which, in turn, would allow safer and cleaner access.

People's enjoyment of city streets cannot be separated from the transport they use to move around. The City's capacity to function as a place for living, working and recreation depends upon a system of movement which is clean, pleasant, affordable and safe.

Newcastle's streets, however, are not working in this way: pollution, traffic congestion and litter are consistently identified as areas of concern. Major parts of the City are dominated by roads to the detriment of other users, creating health and road safety problems.

A radical reduction of traffic could release space for other uses. Greater priority could be provided for alternative transport: cycleways, trams, buses and other people movers. This could result in a network of attractively-designed and linked green spaces, providing a circulation, meeting and amenity space system throughout the City.

The same forward-thinking approach which brought us the Metro system could recreate the 'streets for people'. This would allow more land to become pedestrianised and would improve the City's commercial viability and vibrancy. A tram system could be extended to link the residential areas, in the west, to the City Centre.

Whilst disincentives such as parking and fuel costs will continue to discourage the use of private cars, the main emphasis should be on the provision for users of a 'least cost' option in terms of time, money, safety and quality of experience. Land use in the City and its transport needs are inextricably linked. The two must be planned together.



## Q - LINE

**T**he Q-line represents a new transport facility which could be applied to the street infrastructure of the City. It was first proposed in 1985 (Brookes and Simpson, 'Q - Quayside Connection'), and presented to Newcastle City Council and the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation. It is a ground level streetcar system surrounding the inner-city area and extending to the Quayside. The route of the Q-line primarily links Grey's Monument with the Quayside and additionally circumnavigates the City Centre from Haymarket through Northumberland Street to Grey's Monument via Blckett Street; and from Haymarket via Percy Street, Newgate Street and Bigg Market, completing a loop in meeting the Grey Street-Quayside link at Collingwood Street. The Q meets with the Metro at Haymarket and Monument, and would provide much needed regular and efficient public transport links between the City Centre and the Quayside.

Manchester



Sheffield



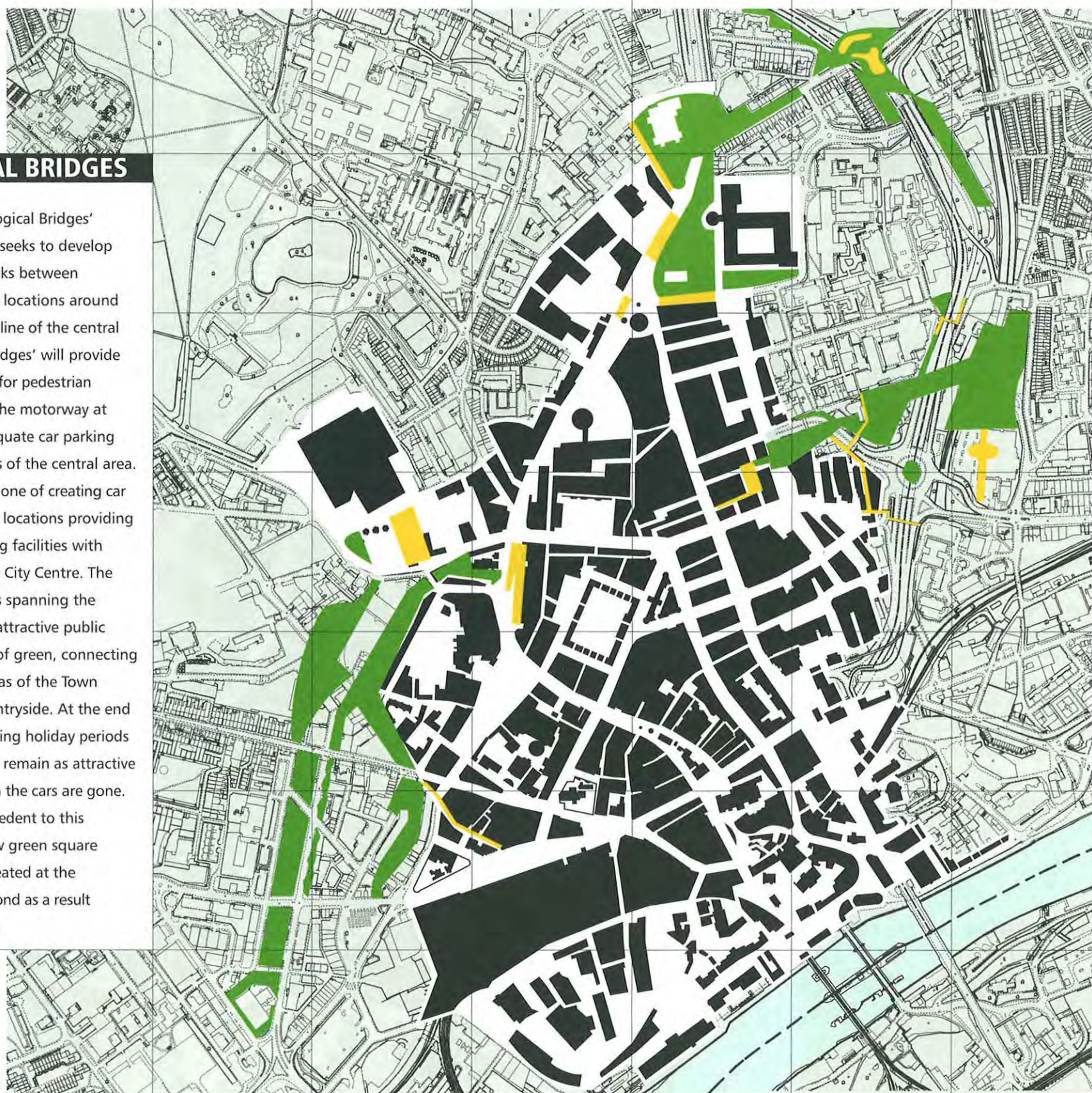




Leeds

## ECOLOGICAL BRIDGES

**T**he 'Ecological Bridges' concept seeks to develop green links between strategic locations around the City, along the line of the central motorway. The 'bridges' will provide a parkland setting for pedestrian movement across the motorway at high level and adequate car parking to satisfy the needs of the central area. The impact will be one of creating car parking at strategic locations providing central area parking facilities with good access to the City Centre. The spaces and bridges spanning the motorway will be attractive public parks, like fingers of green, connecting with the green areas of the Town Moor and the countryside. At the end of the day and during holiday periods these car parks will remain as attractive people parks when the cars are gone. An interesting precedent to this initiative is the new green square which has been created at the Cradlewell in Jesmond as a result of the new by-pass.



Leeds



## STREETS AND SQUARES

**T**he 'Streets for People' strategy has identified nine public spaces or places within the City Centre: Haymarket; St James Park; Eldon Square; Monument; Portland Place; Bigg Market; Central Station; Pilgrim Square; and Quayside, all linked through Northumberland Street and Pilgrim Street, Grey Street, Dean Street, Grainger Street, Blackett Street and Gallowgate.

The following analyses the problems of each area, and makes general suggestions for improvement through comparisons with the achievements of other UK, European and North American cities. The drawings illustrate general possibilities for the future of Newcastle street culture and activities. The strategy is as much concerned with management as with planning and design.

St James Park

Haymarket

Portland Place

Monument

Pilgrim Square

Quayside

Eldon Square

Bigg Market

Central Station





Newcastle upon Tyne

Newcastle upon Tyne

**HAYMARKET** At the northern end of the Haymarket, Percy Street and Northumberland Street come together before crossing Barras Bridge to become North Road. Just before the junction, Percy Street broadens considerably. This space was formerly used as a parade ground for the military but, from 1828, a market for hay was established here. However, for generations of Northumbrians, 'Haymarket' has meant 'bus station'. Around Armstrong College, which was established towards Leazes, the complex of the University arose and, now, 'town' meets 'gown' across one of the heaviest trafficked roads in the City.

Haymarket now bears witness to a process of erosion – a gradual eating away of pedestrian space, as the streetscape has been re-shaped to accommodate the ever-increasing traffic. Corralled by protective barriers and inhaling some of the dirtiest air in Britain, people jostle to negotiate up to four crossings to reach their destination. Scant

shelter is provided from the noise and dust, as a few tired souls sit on benches in left-over spaces.

The need to concentrate on road safety denies appreciation of some fine architecture: the modest elegance of Dobson's St Mary's Place, the eminence of his St Thomas's Church and the flamboyant façades of Percy Street.

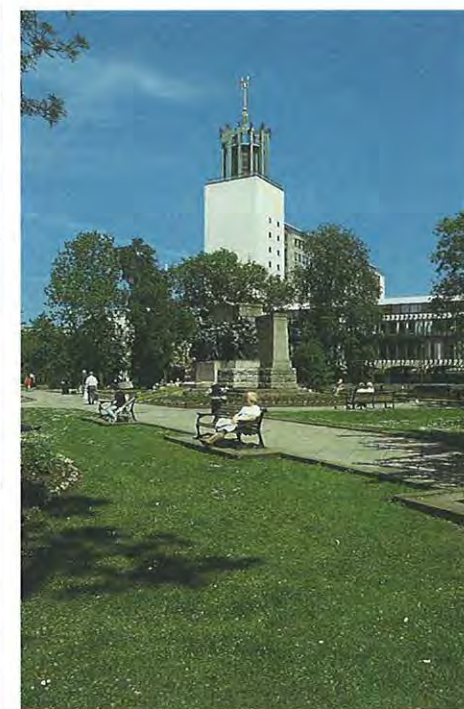
Potential links between the green space of the town moor and the parkland setting of the Civic Centre have been denied.



Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne





Stuttgart



## HAYMARKET

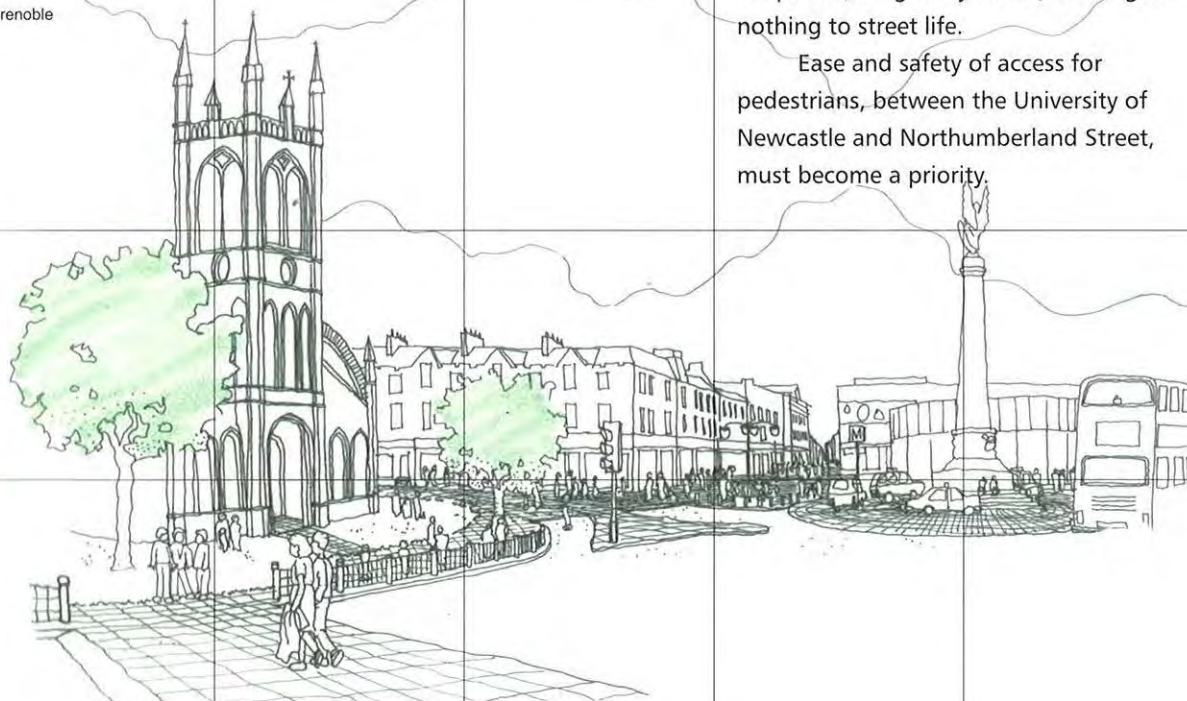


# HAYMARKET

But for the intrusion of traffic, the Haymarket could boast an idyllic network of pedestrian and cycle routes, linking outlying areas, via the town moor and the Green Links, to the heart of the City. Little can be achieved without a shift in priority. Whilst it would be unrealistic to imagine no traffic, a new system of peripheral car parking linked to an inner-city tramway, restricted access for service vehicles and generous pedestrian crossings could transform the situation. Also, shops and housing could replace those multi-storey car parks (along Percy Street) which give nothing to street life.

Ease and safety of access for pedestrians, between the University of Newcastle and Northumberland Street, must become a priority.

Grenoble



Prague





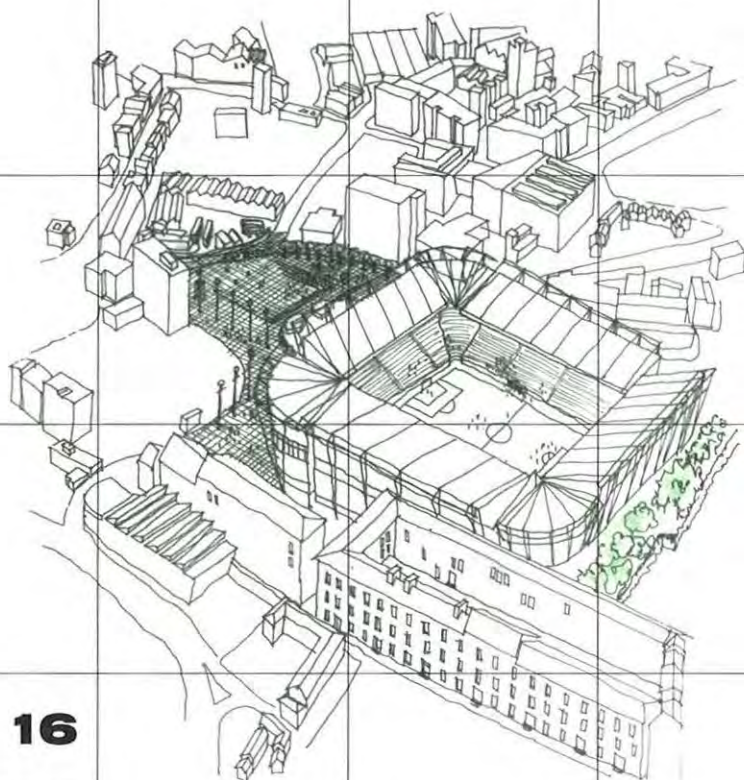
Newcastle upon Tyne

## ST JAMES PARK & GALLOWGATE

During the wars of the 1640s, the Scots used the high ground which was part of Castle Leazes to besiege and bombard the town walls. Also on this site public hangings used to take place (*Gallowgate*): the last in 1844. St James Park was leased by West End Football Club in 1886 from the Town's Freeman. In 1892, the club was taken over by East End Football Club and since that date the ground has been home to Newcastle United. The ground was bounded to the north by St James Street, the west front of Leazes Terrace and Strawberry Place which were all early Grainger developments.

The present 36,000+ seater stadium dominates the skyline from all sides and will visually terminate the boulevard planned to run from here southwards to link the 1984 Redheugh Bridge with Barrack Road and Cow Hill.

St James and Gallowgate is a massive incoherent space close to the core of the City Centre but surprisingly isolated from it. The long-distance bus station is here, so, for many people it is their point of arrival in the City. What faces them, other than the football stadium, is a wild, modernist nightmare of buildings, roads and car parks. The pedestrian does not belong in this no-man's land of crude functionality. Spaces not occupied by cars are left-over patches of dereliction or mean pedestrian conduits. This is not a place to linger in and savour the pleasures of urban life.

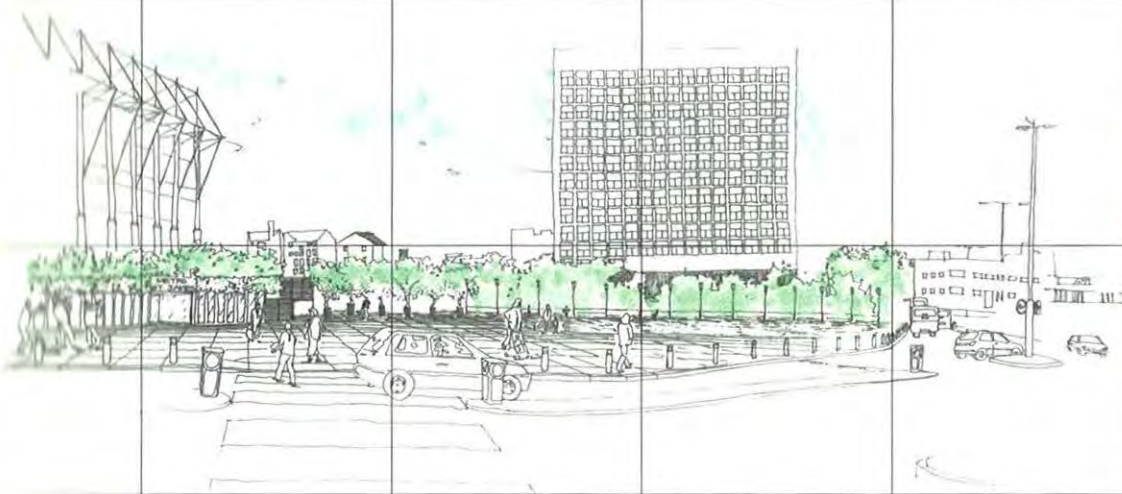


Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne





ST JAMES PARK

# ST JAMES PARK

But it need not be like this, there are ingredients to make a better story for Gallowgate. Transportation connections are good, with a metro station and a bus station. The area is also within a few minutes' walk of the Monument. The space is thronged with thousands of football fans on match days and, for many people, this is the emotional heart of Newcastle. A new public space on the scale of Prague's Wenceslas Square could be created, fronting the football ground in Strawberry Place (with car parking decked underneath).



The demand for cafés and shops would build up the momentum for a thriving and lively new square that could function on all days of the week. Increased confidence and a good urban design plan would encourage further development and reconstruction of the area.

The approach to St James Park from the south could be a triumphant avenue or boulevard – the north's own version of 'Wembley Way'.

Basle



Prague



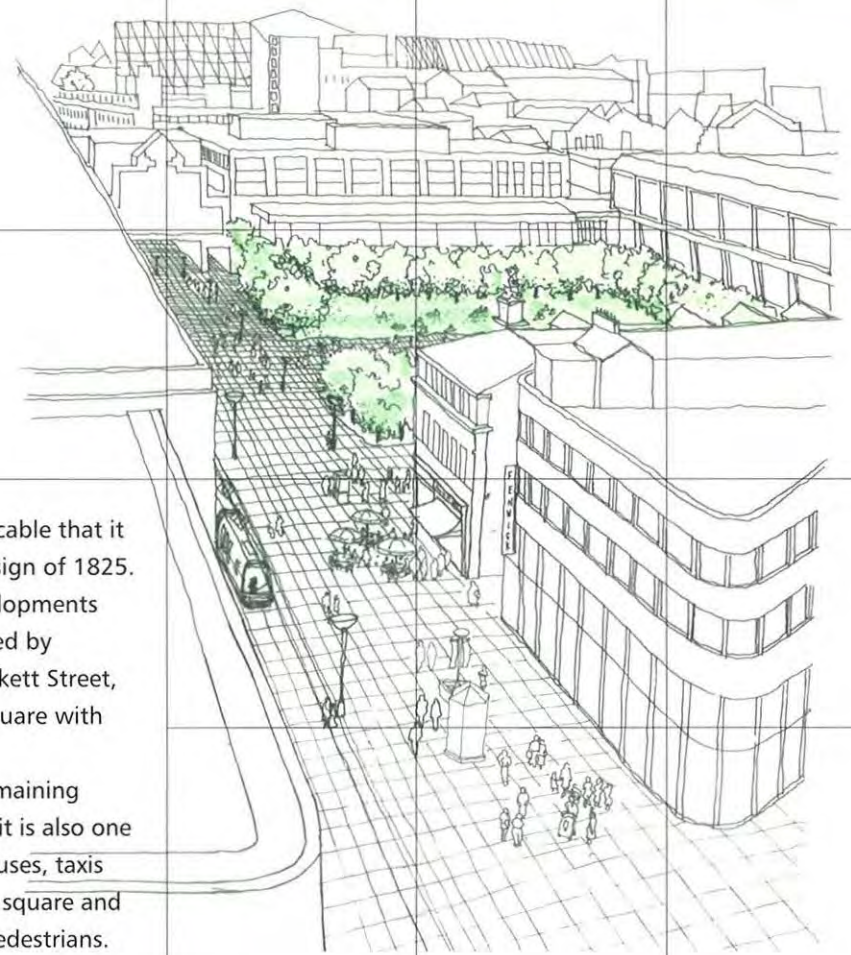
Dresden







Newcastle upon Tyne



**ELDON SQUARE** It now seems inexplicable that it was considered necessary to demolish Dobson's design of 1825. The development was comparable with earlier developments in Edinburgh, London and Bath and was commended by MacKenzie 'a new and handsome street, called Blackett Street, 70 feet broad and on the north side a handsome square with a shrubbery at the centre'.

Eldon Square, even today, is one of the few remaining green spaces in the heart of the City. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most polluted. The Blackett Street route for buses, taxis and service vehicles dominates the south side of the square and results in a hostile and unhealthy environment for pedestrians.

There is no incentive to linger on the southern pavement, where people are channelled between the traffic and the blank backside of the 1970s shopping centre.

The north side is equally unfriendly and the indoor shopping malls have sucked away the lifeblood of this traditional urban space. Although well used in summer months, the square is not a natural or welcoming route across this part of the City Centre.



Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne



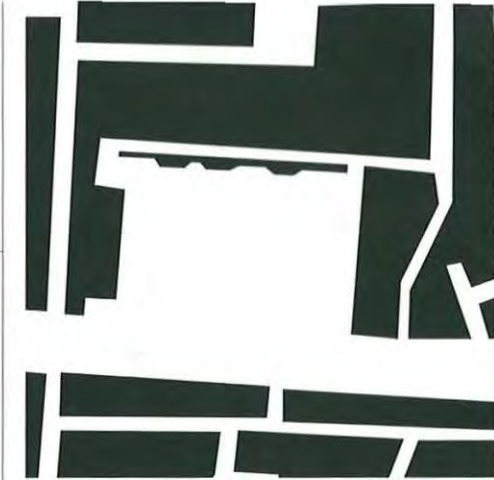
Newcastle upon Tyne







New Orleans, USA



ELDON SQUARE

# ELDON SQUARE

The suggested solutions are simple. Remove the traffic from Blackett Street; introduce the central tram system; restrict servicing access to core hours; encourage the opening up of the shops and cafés on to all sides of the square; provide more seating, a fountain and high-quality surfacing; introduce housing above the shops on the eastern side and encourage the formation of a tree-lined route from Percy Street, along Blackett Street, through the Monument to the Laing beyond. With minimal effort the mistakes of the 60s and 70s could reinstate the 'handsome street' and re-vitalise this historic urban square.



Savannah, USA



Munich





Newcastle upon Tyne

**MONUMENT** Grey's Monument was designed in competition by Benjamin Green in 1838. Its 135 foot high Roman Doric Column carries a statue of Earl Grey, the promoter of the Great Reform Bill of 1832. A long inscription attests to his achievements as a Champion of Civil and Religious Liberty.

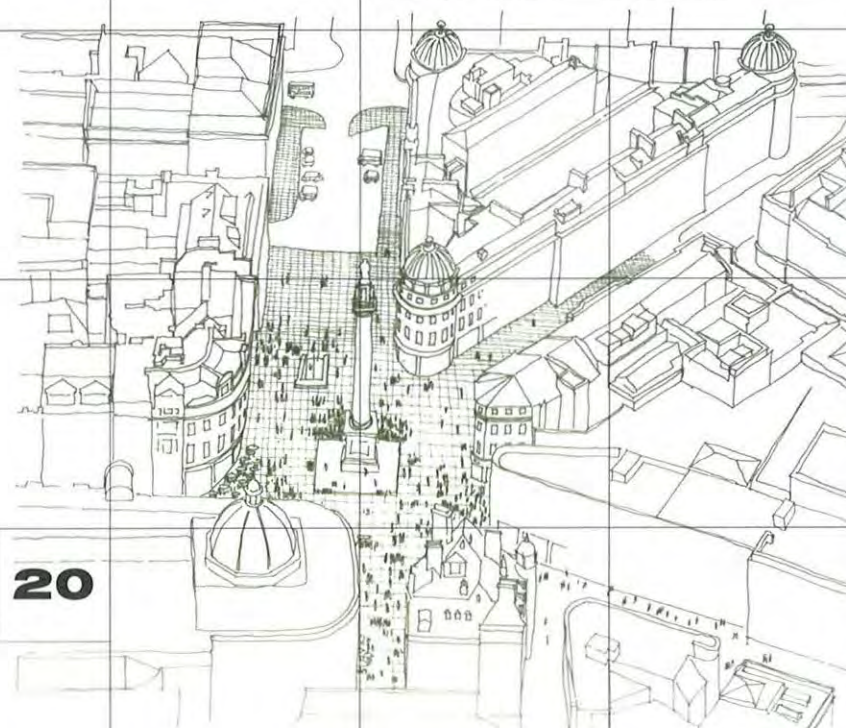
The Monument marks the spiritual centre of Newcastle. It is the visual focus of Grainger's Newcastle, standing at the head of Grey Street and Grainger Street like a beacon. Slightly withdrawn from the axis of Blackett Street, it marks the spot called (on some plans) five dials. Oliver, Grainger, Wardle and Walker, Burns Dick and the 1945 development plan, all proposed an extension of Grey Street northwards to the Haymarket.

Monument is currently a place of conflict and severance. Pedestrians still have to compete with a major bus route across its northern side. Instead of being

a safe haven in the heart of the City, it has become a polluted and untidy place. Although pedestrianised to the south, the lack of adequate seating, landscaping and high-quality surfacing detracts from its obvious potential as a focal point for shoppers, workers and street entertainers.



Newcastle upon Tyne



Manchester



Newcastle upon Tyne







Bologna



MONUMENT

Stuttgart

# MONUMENT



The solution for the Monument is inextricably linked with solving the problems in Eldon Square to the north west and Portland Place to the east. By ridding Blackett Street of traffic (except for the inner circuit tram system and essential deliveries) and forming a boulevard from Percy Street to the Laing, this historic City Centre core can be transformed quite effectively into a safe and pleasant place for the people.

More greenery, more well-designed seating, street furniture, fountains and sculpture will transform the area into a 'monument' which will symbolise the 'streets for people' concept. As well as the link to Portland Place, the areas to the north of Grey Street and Grainger Street could benefit from, and be greatly enhanced by, appropriate surfacing, signage and landscaping.



Leeds

Leeds







## PORTLAND PLACE

was a terrace of nine houses on the south side of New Bridge Street. Opposite was Higham Place, Grainger's first speculation. The detached and double detached villas included John Dobson's own house which now forms the frontage to 'Tiffany's' club.

These early 19th century developments were just outside of the City walls, where only the Plummer Tower now survives. Between Portland Place and the wall is the Lying-in Hospital of 1826, in the Tudor Style by Dobson.

New Bridge Street eastwards was severed by the construction of the Central Motorway East in 1973 and this severance is emphasised by the physical blocking of the roadway by the construction of the Crest Hotel, a dull lumpish brick structure, also incorporating a pedestrian deck which has a neglected and intimidating air. A steel circular staircase leads the unfortunate and disorientated pedestrian to terra firma and a soulless urban space.



Newcastle upon Tyne

Manchester



Newcastle upon Tyne







Munich



## PORTLAND PLACE

Portland Place (The Laing), with its eastern motorway boundary, has been further isolated by making John Dobson Street into a major inner-city traffic-route.

An elegant tree-lined pedestrian route must be provided between Blackett Street, the Monument and Portland Place. In part, this will rely upon reducing motor traffic and introducing an environmentally-friendly tram system.

The pedestrian route to the east could be extended to 'green bridges' across the motorway. Barriers could be re-placed; quality surface finishes laid and traffic made subservient to pedestrians.

The night-clubs and pubs of the square could be complemented by cafés and a street market, whilst to the south of the library, more shops or housing could be introduced. The hotel and other businesses in the locality could only benefit from such obvious street improvements.

Norwich



Leeds

# PORTLAND PLACE



Leeds





**BIGG MARKET** takes its name from 'bigg', a type of barley which used to be sold here. In early times buildings had filled up the broader, lower end of the space forming three routes, Flesh Market (the present Cloth Market), Middle Street (now built over) and Groat Market. This is the oldest part of the upper town and preserves some of the medieval layout. Pudding Chare and High Bridge are obvious; less so are the entries to White Hart Yard, The Old George and Wilson's Court which were originally only the access to private plots.

Bigg Market is the most famous place in Newcastle. At night, it is a scene of such Rabelaisian carousing, debauchery and display, that it earned Newcastle the title of seventh most lively City in the world.

In the daytime it is a more prosaic place with market stalls and traders fighting a losing battle with the demands for car parking and through traffic. As elsewhere, the setting paving is undervalued, neglected and run through with patched service trenches.

To a European visitor it looks like a part of a city where people might live as well as work and play but, as in most cities in Britain, this is not the case. The upper storeys of the historic buildings are unused and in poor repair.

In the medieval period, the Bigg Market, the Flesh, Groat and Cloth markets were one great space, flowing downhill to St Nicholas' cathedral. In the 19th century the town hall was built on the site. It was a handsome building but it changed the Bigg Market into a more

static space and obliterated one of the great dynamic city spaces of Europe. The old town hall was demolished to be replaced by a dull office building of mediocre design.

Whilst vibrant and full of vitality, due to its market, pubs and restaurants, it nevertheless always seems to retain an air of squalidness. It is an untidy, uncared for and semi-dilapidated part of the City.



Newcastle upon Tyne

Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne







Stuttgart

Leeds



**BIGG MARKET**



# BIGG MARKET

Versailles

The remedies are simple but dramatic: demolish the office building and reinstate the great square. This will generate more activity: cafés, pubs and shops as well as an arts, performance and gathering space which will rival many in Europe.

The ground treatment in Bigg Market is important, historically and of today. The surface has traditionally been made up from stone sett and this should be so in the future. Stone setts laid across the whole area – wall to wall.

Inevitably, street improvements and maintenance will play a key role in sustaining this as a lively and attractive space for both day-time shoppers and night-time revellers.



Barcelona



Barcelona





Newcastle upon Tyne



**CENTRAL STATION** The first Neville Street was constructed in 1835 to Dobson's design as a westward extension to Collingwood Street. It was bounded by the Forth Walk (an ancient place of recreation) and by the Infirmary to the south. It was connected with the Scotswood turnpike at the foot of Marlborough Crescent where Dobson had planned a new square.

In 1839 the separate termini of new railways from Carlisle, Tynemouth and the south opened and a line was constructed to Edinburgh. It was logical to connect the the existing railways across the City and Dobson and Robert Stephenson were deployed to design the the new structures. The masonry viaducts, the revolutionary high level road and railbridge and the graceful curve of Central Station itself all resulted. Neville Street was realigned in a broad masterful arc in response to the later projecting portico.

Central continues to serve the City well, as a literal threshold and as an eloquent reminder of Newcastle's proud and innovative past. Sadly, initial impressions are undermined by its rude juxtaposition with a m  le of encircling traffic and a cacophony of ill-matched street furniture. Priority has been given to three lanes of fast traffic. The area is characterised by cluttered signage; ugly barriers and planters; alien bus shelters and a profusion of tarmac.



Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne







Moscow



CENTRAL STATION

# CENTRAL STATION

The area can be revived but only by removing the bulk of the traffic, either by re-routing it behind the station or by sinking the roadway in front of the portico. Signs, barriers, planters and surface finishes could be designed so as to enhance the character of the place.

Links to Monument, Bigg Market, Pilgrim Square, Gallowgate and Grainger Street could be emphasised by tree-lined walkways and the new tram system could provide a regular direct link to the heart of the City.



Prague



Grenoble







Newcastle upon Tyne

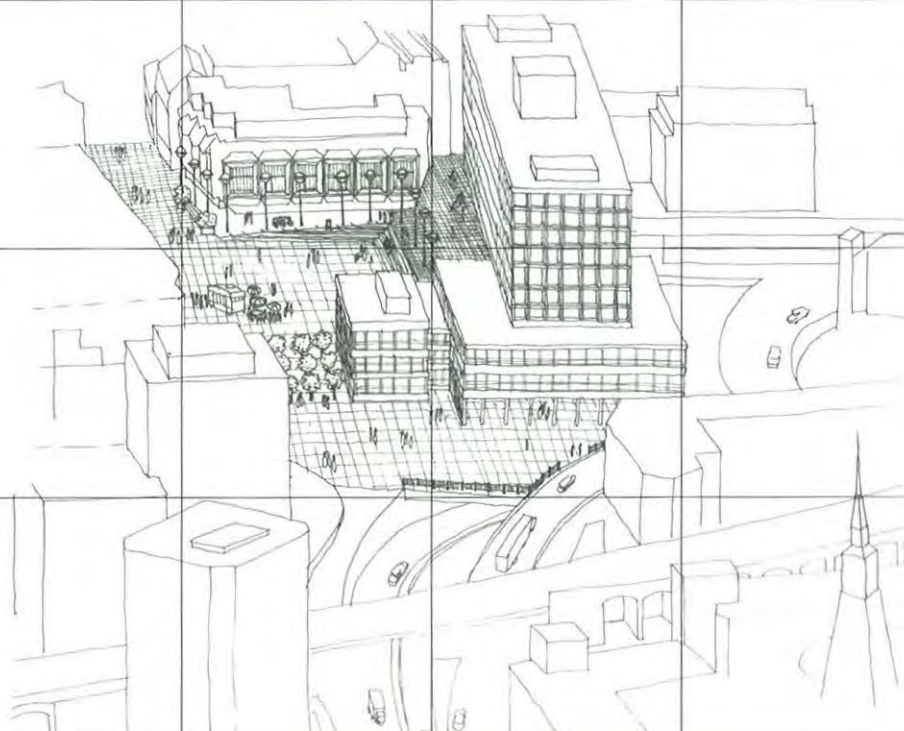
**PILGRIM SQUARE** Pilgrim Street took the route north east of the Lort Burn. Two main routes led north and upwards from Sandhill in Medieval times. Pilgrim Street gained the east ridge of the Lort Burn by way of Butcher Bank. At the summit, on the right, was the medieval church of All Hallows. The street was lined with fine buildings and progressed northwards, through the Pilgrim Gate into Northumberland Street. The layout at Pilgrim Street is arguably the most complete section of the 1960s Burns' Plan.

Pilgrim Square (Swan House) is still a landmark and a gateway to the City – but for all the wrong reasons. The building raises its assertive head above the familiar capriccio that is Newcastle: its closer scrutiny is from car windows, by motorists detained by red lights. It is an island, isolated by traffic, neither City Centre nor quayside. It is denied the opportunity to contribute to either, or be endowed with its own identity.

Nobody goes there, except to pass through, to endure. Pedestrians acknowledge their subservience to traffic and are consigned to long unsavoury tunnels. It has become 'nowhere' place, an oppressive and alien 'concrete wasteland'.



Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne





Leeds



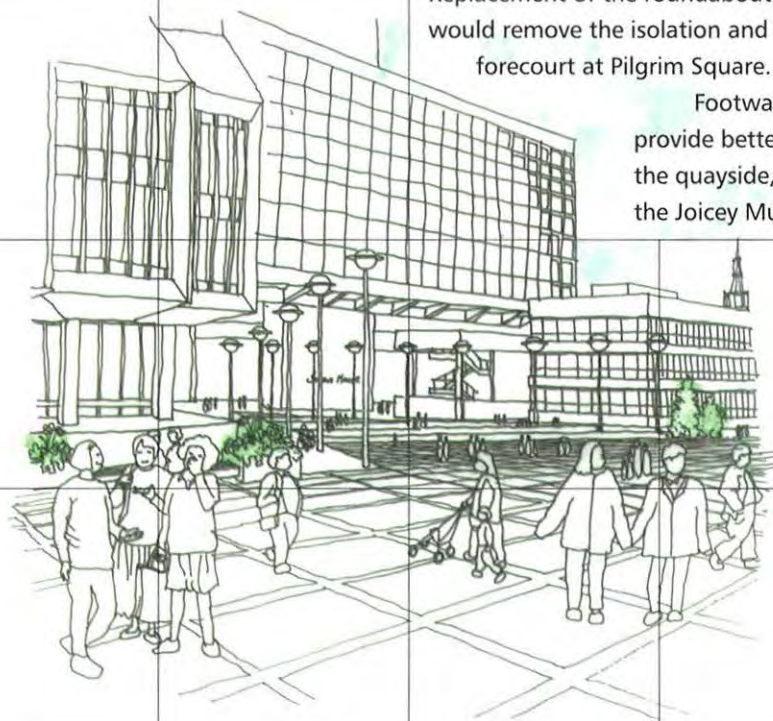
## PILGRIM SQUARE

Leeds

# PILGRIM SQUARE

It need not be so. Building, environment and circulation have the potential to be collectively transformed for everyone's benefit. BT's departure offers opportunities, previously unavailable, to open up Royal Arcade and the podium accommodation to wider access. In the hotel option (under consideration), these spaces lend themselves to core reception and function facilities. Replacement of the roundabout with conventional junctions would remove the isolation and allow landscaping of an entrance forecourt at Pilgrim Square.

Footways would replace subways to provide better links between the centre and the quayside, also improving the prospects for the Joicey Museum.



Munich





Newcastle upon Tyne

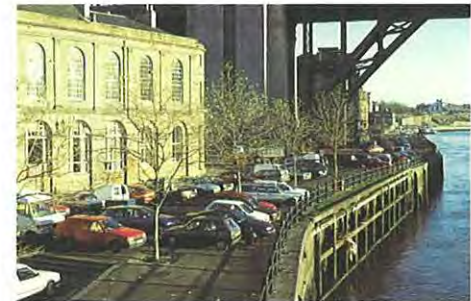


Newcastle upon Tyne

**QUAYSIDE & GUILDHALL** Newcastle's original bridgehead was at Sandhill. The medieval bridge may have been built on the site of the Roman Bridge Pons Aclius. Its latest successor is Armstrong's hydraulically operated swing bridge of 1875, another world leader in its day. The Sandhill, a mound of sand, and gravel carried down and deposited by the Lort Burn, formed a large triangular open space to the east of the bridgehead. Dominated by Merchant houses at the foot of the Castle Hill, Sandhill is separated from the river to the south by the Exchange and Guildhall, now free-standing following the 18th century demolition of the town wall which fronted the 'Key'.

The Quayside (Guildhall) now survives at the centre of a stretch of riverside otherwise given over to parking and traffic. The roundabout on Sandhill squeezes pedestrians on to narrow pavements and the volume of traffic makes crossing difficult. An extravagant road system, designed to prevent traffic from turning right as it leaves the Swing Bridge, generates large unusable traffic islands and formless car parking areas, none of which relate to the High Level Bridge, the steps, the river or the Close.

By restricting the use of the Swing Bridge, it should be possible to remove the gyratory, calm the traffic and release land between The Close and The Fish Market for development. Furthermore, banning all through traffic at night would give Newcastle an urban space to rival any.



Newcastle upon Tyne

Newcastle upon Tyne



Newcastle upon Tyne

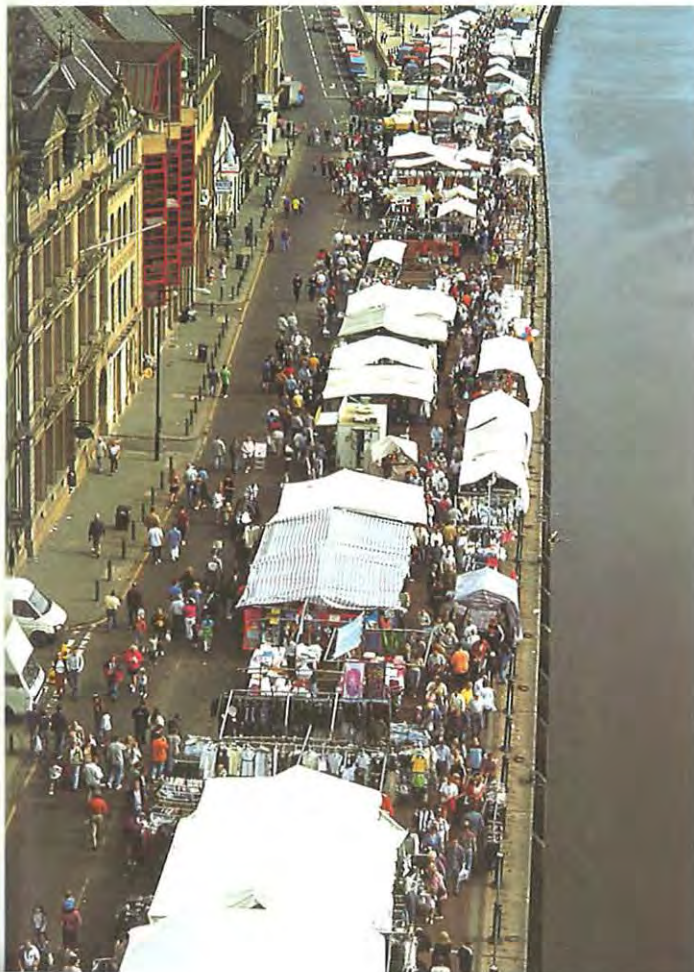




## QUAYSIDE

# QUAYSIDE

The formation of a courtyard/square could provide a variety of complementary uses, including housing, shopping, workshops or use as a nursery. The space could be the catalyst for a new pedestrian-dominated area, providing a safer and more enjoyable city experience. It would generate further pedestrian access to other parts of the City, to the rest of the quayside and even to Gateshead beyond, via the imaginative new pedestrian bridge across the river to the Baltic Mill site.



Newcastle upon Tyne

San Francisco, USA



Savannah, USA





Portland, USA



Seville



Glasgow

If we are to invest heavily in quality in our public spaces, the same culture of care and concern which initiates such projects must pass to those who will use, manage and maintain them. An acid test of the urban design process is the acceptability by the public of the projects it generates and the respect paid to their aftercare.

It follows that there is greater chance of success if those who are the recipients of new streetscape schemes are actively involved in the initial design process. Design, specification and construction should be informed by the experience and practices of those who have responsibility for their future care. This means all those who have services in the street – water, gas, electricity, telecom, cable TV etc, as well as those who maintain the drains and sewers or clean the footpaths – and have a statutory duty to do so. In effect design decisions should be based on an assessment of the whole life performance and cost of the scheme. This will frequently demonstrate that the use of best quality materials and best practice in maintenance will be the most economic in the long run.

In most instances the highway authority will have been involved right from the start, so that standards of construction and finish will be guided by their requirements, including maintenance, repair and replacement of surfaces, street furniture, signing and lighting. A Maintenance Manual should

be prepared and, where necessary, a training programme established for the guidance of all those involved. A Health and Safety file is required anyway for future operations and a stockpile of spare materials and fittings should be procured as part of the implementation procedure.

But what about the basic control of traffic and the safety and comfort of pedestrians? All too frequently the aspirations of designs are not matched by the anticipation of Traffic Managers, so that the elusive balance of activity in the street cannot be achieved without resorting to draconian design or enforcement measures. The flexibility needed in our town centre schemes to ensure their vitality across an 18-hour day points up an increasing dependence on management where fixed, designed, controls would be inappropriate.

Thus it is essential at the outset to know just what design and management are each capable of delivering and recognise that they must be



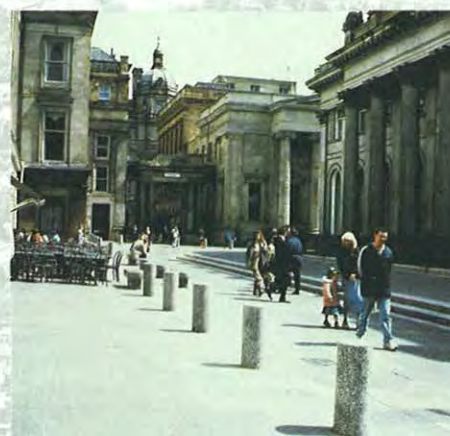
Glasgow







Glasgow



## CARING FOR THE STREET

# THE STREET



complementary parts of the process. Just as managers should be brought into the early design forum, so too there is merit in retaining the designers in the future development and evolution of the project. Many schemes are weakened incrementally by uncoordinated additions and changes – such as unsuitable street furniture or signing, and continued awareness of the original design intentions can help sustain authenticity.

The coordination of the many statutory or regulatory factors which influence the design and operation of our public spaces is a difficult task. All the evidence suggests that in normal circumstances it is the exception rather than the rule. The emergence of the role of Town Centre Manager can go a long way to bring coordination in a focused and helpful way. The manager also becomes the point of contact with those who use the streets – residents, traders, workers, visitors – often acting as a sounding board. This is an extremely influential position, helping raise the awareness of public spaces as important and valued assets in our town centres. By paying particular attention, for example, to frequent or even continuous street cleaning and rapid repairs, an environment virtually free from litter can

be achieved; in turn perhaps influencing those responsible for litter and damage in the first place.

If economic benefit and value for money are to be achieved by improving public spaces and are to be seen to be achieved, the whole community must benefit. This means encouraging the use of the street beyond the normal day. It means promoting those things which add to the texture and quality of life in our cities – street trading, outdoor restaurants, theatre, a mixture of activities. The popular use of our streets and public spaces by citizens and visitors, and pride in their quality, is the true measure of improvement initiatives and the best formula for their future care and protection.



Pittsburgh, USA





## PEOPLE FOR STREETS

**W**hat's so great about cities? Their qualities lie partly in what they offer, without charge, to anyone who wants to enjoy them: parks, squares, pavements, streets, buildings, public art, sources of information, networks and exhibitions. All of this, whether publicly or privately owned, provides the setting for civic life. Urban designers call it 'the public realm'. Cities are constantly changing. Every change to a building, a street or a space will either enrich or impoverish a part of the public realm. It may make the area of the City more accessible to some people and less accessible to others. It may make people feel safer there, or less safe. Some people may feel more at home. Others might feel that they are trespassing in a place once considered their own. At the very least, passing by a particular building may be a more or a less stimulating experience.

Taking account of such matters in the planning process is not just a matter of consulting 'the public' or 'the community'. There are likely to be several communities of interest who might use a part of the public realm. The business community; residents; shoppers; young people looking for some fun; elderly people looking for somewhere to sit and even the community of hardened drinkers wanting somewhere to drink: all of them may have a valid claim to use the public realm. However, some of their interests will conflict.

An effective process of planning and urban

design will involve finding out from sections of the community what their needs are and enabling them to play a part in resolving the conflicts. Other stakeholders have a claim in the process as well: those whose job it is to police the public realm; to clean it; to service it and to hold events in it. Often the planning system operates by someone submitting an application which others oppose. The sides are polarised and, eventually, the issue is resolved only after an acrimonious fight.

However, in many cases, there is an alternative: a process of creative collaboration involving all parties identifying their common interests as well as their points of conflict. Together a mutually-beneficial solution can be achieved. This is not always possible, of course, but to make it happen the right conditions must be created. These include all of the collaborators having access to the necessary information; to skills and professionals and to relevant networks. They must be aware of their relation to the city-wide context and must be inspired by what has been achieved in similar circumstances elsewhere. They must have a formal role in the process by which decisions are made. They must understand their role and their rights and responsibilities from the beginning. These are the essentials for open and creative planning and design in the public realm. Are there enough planners, urban designers and architects who are committed to making it happen? Will we give them the resources they need?



**N**ewcastle upon Tyne is a great and lively City. Neither whimsical nor fanciful, it possesses a robustness that speaks of assurance: from the astonishing sight of the Tyne Bridge 'flying' over the mercantile buildings of the quayside to the 'bravura' dash of the eastern motorway, slicing past the Joicey Museum. Ideal as a setting which enhances the imaginary dramas of film and television, it plays host to the whole spectrum of real life and leaves a vivid trace in the memory of all who know it. At the centre of that memory are the people of Newcastle themselves, the 'Geordies'.

Newcastle has a rich history, where each age has etched its ideas into the fabric of the City we know today. There is a proud tradition of debating and contending the future of the City. 'Cityscape' is part of this process. It addresses the present state of the City against an understanding of the formative past, in an attempt to avoid the destructive, the unsavoury and the uninspiring, in the future.

Whilst the focus of the study is Newcastle, the City does not stand alone. Many of its problems are common to most cities. The oppressiveness of traffic; its physical dominance, noise and pollution, the blank windows which tell of a city that is home to very few and the insidious, relentless decay of property deemed 'not commercially viable', are not peculiar to Newcastle. The links between involvement, responsibility, physical quality and social success are complex. However, there does seem to be direct correlation between coordinated urban design and management

on the one hand and economic and social success on the other. Enlightened cities including Grenoble, Nantes, Strasbourg and, closer to home Dublin, Leeds and Glasgow, all bear witness to this theory.

What can be learned from other cities is that partial solutions, for example, an attempt to re-structure a traffic strategy here; to try and re-kindle a desire for inner-city living there or to add random elements of street paving, furniture or signage, is not the answer. Something must be done about the whole; about the overall decision-making processes; about the methods of achieving a positive change for the benefit of all citizens and about caring for the character and appearance of the City.

Those who plan, develop and care for the City must be concerned with far more than the mere economics of urban development and management. The confusion of public and private sector transport strategies must be resolved; the piecemeal approach to streetscape design and the general management of the public realm must all be dealt with collectively. If we are to conserve and enhance the existing visual and sensual qualities of the City and to restore those which have been lost, there must be a determined, interdisciplinary effort to resolve the problems. The strategy must also include meaningful and constructive public participation.

There is no doubt that Newcastle upon Tyne already possesses many of the attributes associated with some of the finest cities in Europe: a great river with river crossings; an architectural infrastructure the envy of many cities and, notably, one of the finest streets in Britain,

Grey Street. There can be no dispute that the raw ingredients are there to enable the City to be led into the millennium in a positive and inspiring manner. To conserve and enhance its unique characteristics, as well as its social, commercial and industrial well-being, the City must be 'quality led' as opposed to being simply 'cost led'. Only a combination of 'quality' of design, construction and management will ensure continued success. This does not necessarily mean expense. A simple idea, well executed, is so much better than expensive 'frippery'.

The particular characteristics that make Newcastle upon Tyne – the dramatic topography and extraordinary juxtapositions between the polite, the grandiose and the uncompromisingly utilitarian – have survived some remarkably insensitive and alienating interventions. By analyzing streets and spaces and by making suggestions for their future, 'Cityscape' seeks to open eyes and minds to wasted potential. It deliberately looks at the City from 'eye-level', from the viewpoint of people in the street. It aims to bring this way of thinking into the re-shaping of the City and to formulate a strategy which will result in safe, healthy, vibrant and attractive places for those working, shopping, living and playing within its boundaries.

We must strive to retain a city where 'streets for the people' are conserved, cherished and enhanced, in order to ensure that there remain 'people for the streets'. 'Cityscape' has started the process: all who are concerned with the future planning, development, management and use of the city must now work together to:

## FAST FORWARD

- **Reduce traffic in the City Centre**
- **Review the integration of public transport**
- **Introduce a Monument to Quayside Streetcar link**
- **Provide strategic car parking adjacent to motorways**
- **Form landscaped parks for cars and people**
- **Provide green links between the parks and the centre**
- **Respond positively to the City's inherited urbanism**
- **Design a new street culture: street furniture, lighting and landscape**
- **Provide coordinated City management functions**



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