

# Newcastle Civic Boulevard

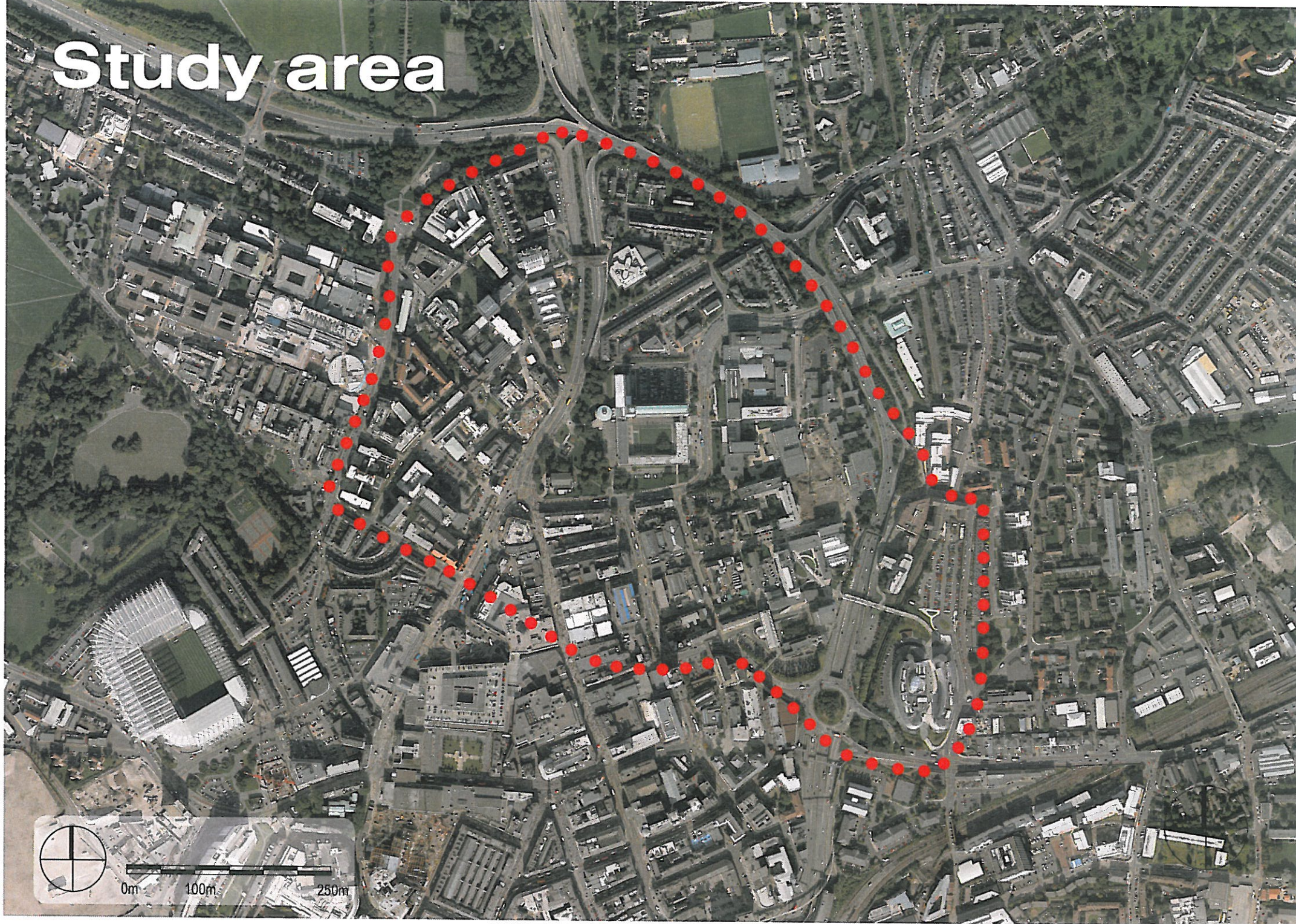
February 2010

# Contents

Objectives	5
History	7
Challenges	13
Strategies and achievements	17
Masterplan strategy	25
The project list	32
Next steps	60



# Study area



0m 100m 250m



# Objectives

*“An investment programme of over £400 million is largely completed on the two university campuses. This investment together with the proposed public realm and highway improvements has the potential to uplift the **Northern Quarter** into a distinctive and high quality ‘place’*

*At the same time there is the emerging idea of a ‘**civic precinct**’ focusing on the links between the areas around the Civic Centre.*

*What is required now is a design concept which will draw all these pieces of work together **creating a ‘Civic Boulevard’** which will link the two universities and the Civic Centre.*

*This concept should demonstrate how existing proposals can be enhanced by achieving an overall **coherence for the area.**”*

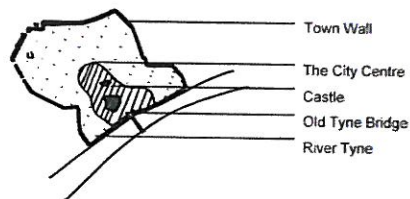




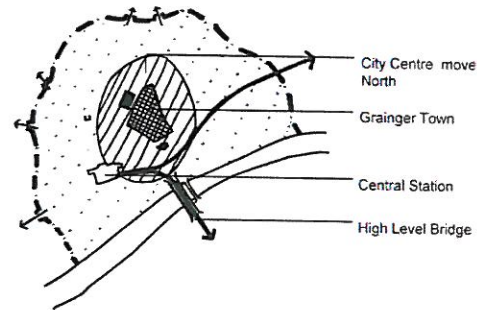


# Newcastle: a place that has evolved over time

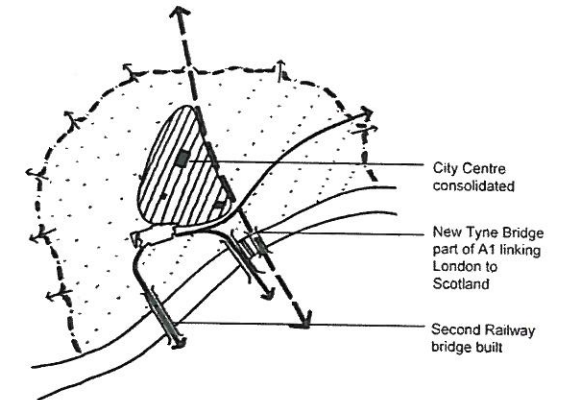
## Medieval Newcastle



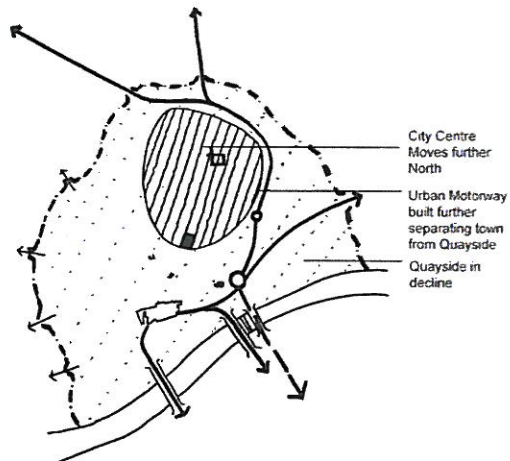
## 1840



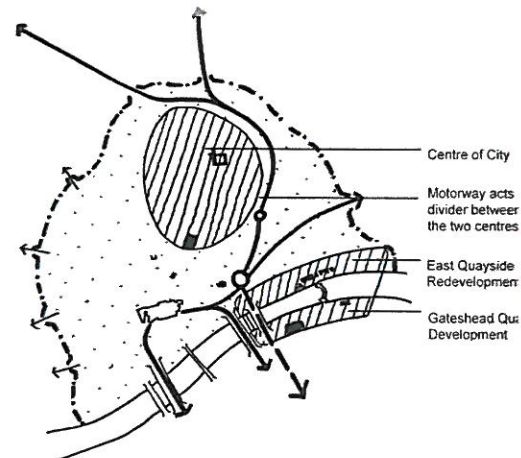
## 1928



## 1960



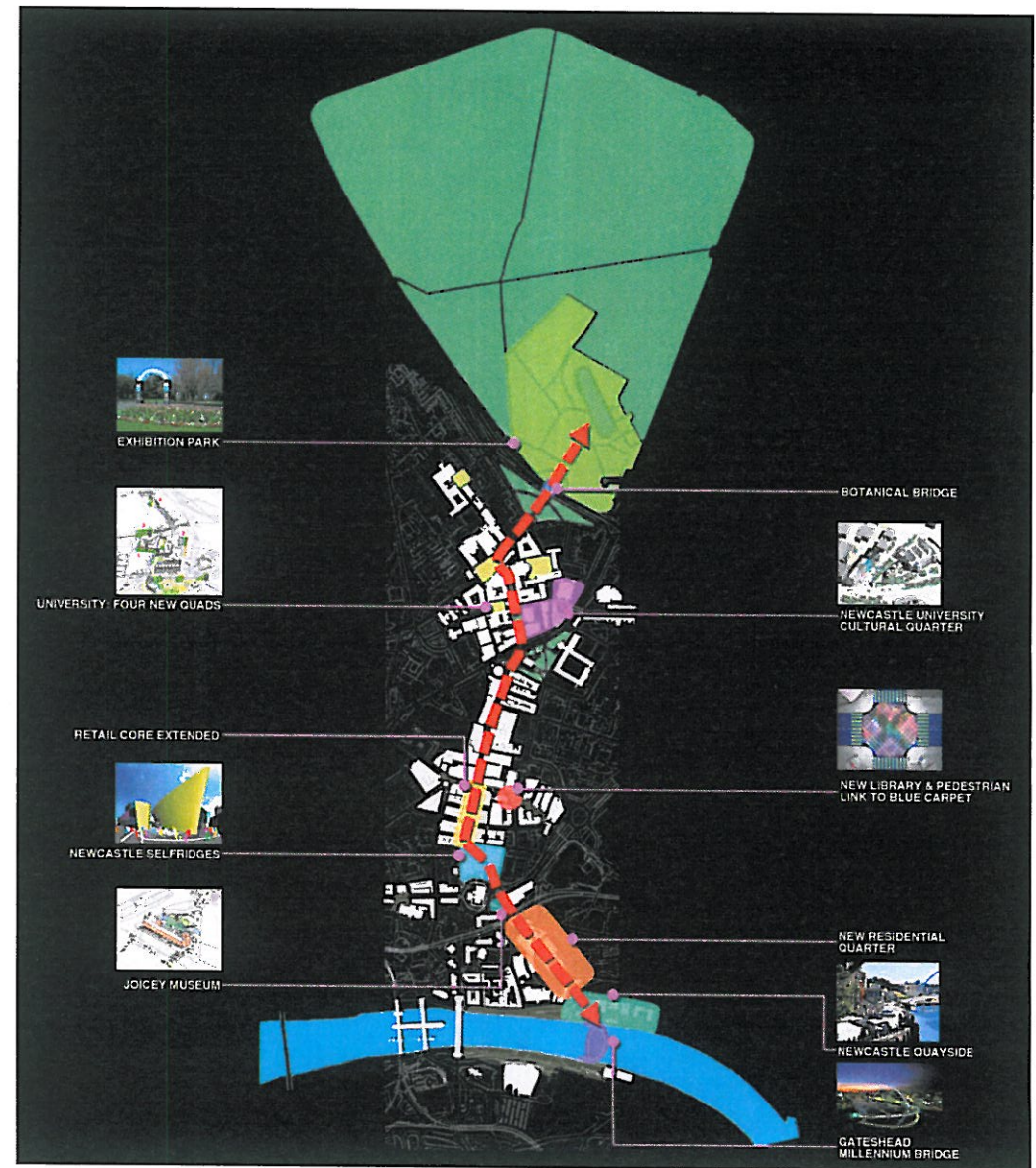
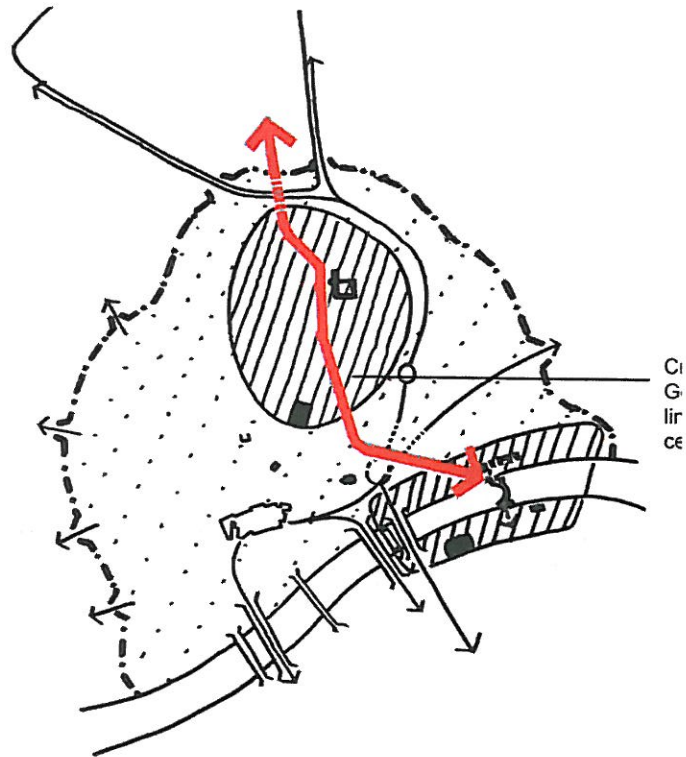
## Today





# The Geordie Ramblas

FARRELLS



Linking Newcastle's cultural and civic assets



# History of the Universities

## Newcastle University

1878



1834 The College of Medicine  
1852 Durham University

1913



- Royal Victoria Infirmary established

1938



- The University continued to expand between the wars

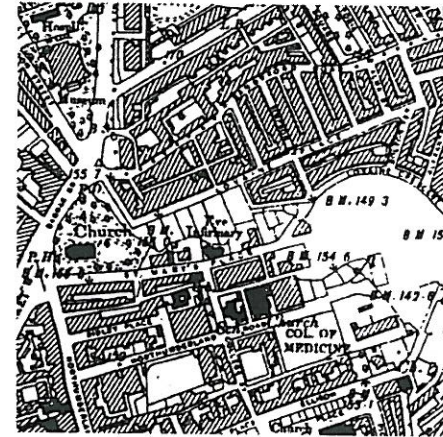
1999



- The University expanded, losing its clear physical and functional connections with the city

## Northumbria University

1895



- Church of St Thomas' rebuilt
- Mixed use neighbourhood
- School of Medicine and Surgery established in 1834

1895



- Extension of St Mary's Place, the northern half of Lovaine Crescent, and the railway to the east

1973



- The new Civic Centre is built
- Newcastle Polytechnic opened in 1969

2005

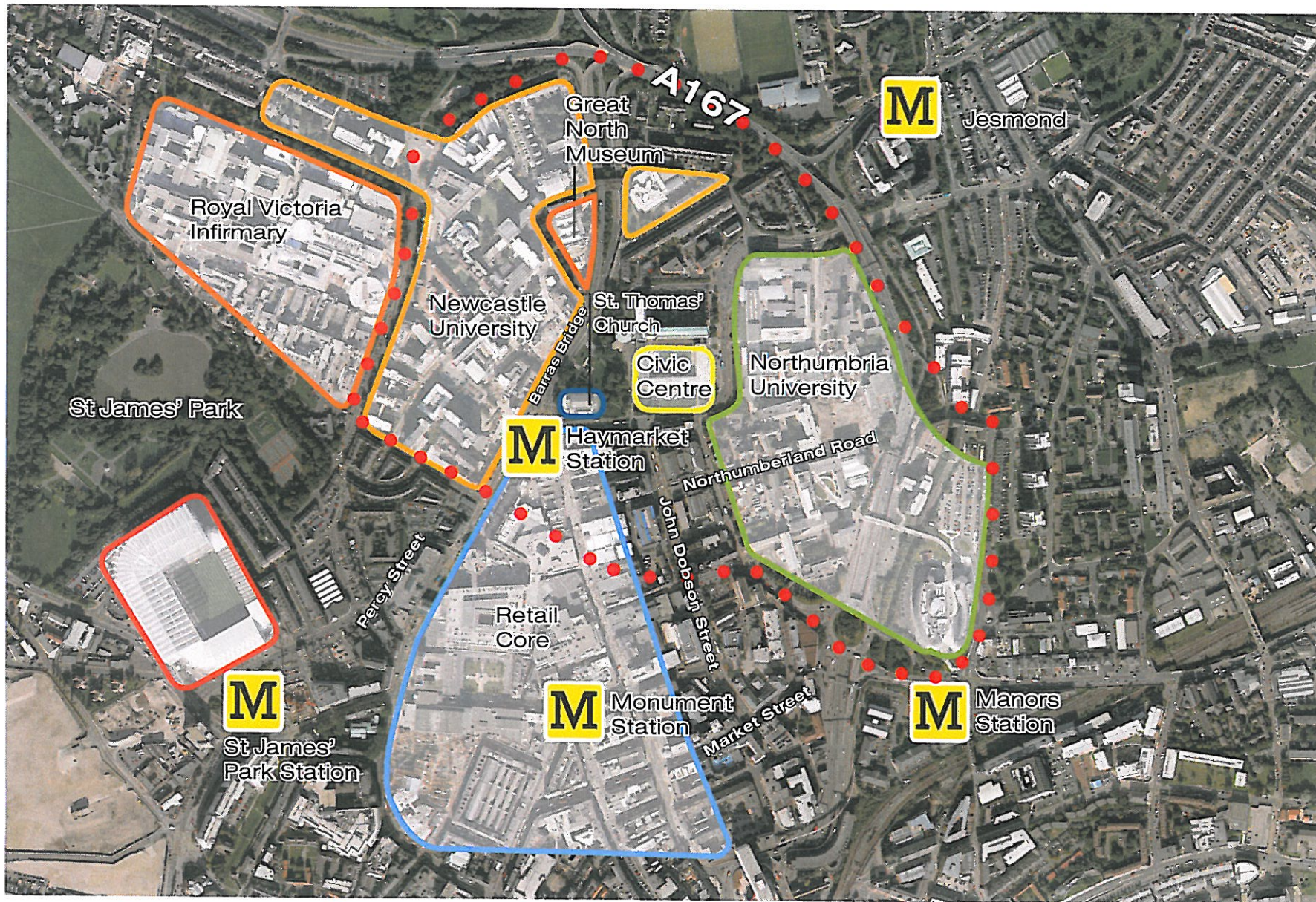


- The new university took the opportunity to expand over major infrastructure to provide a 'integrated expanded campus'



# The Northern Quarter

FARRELLS



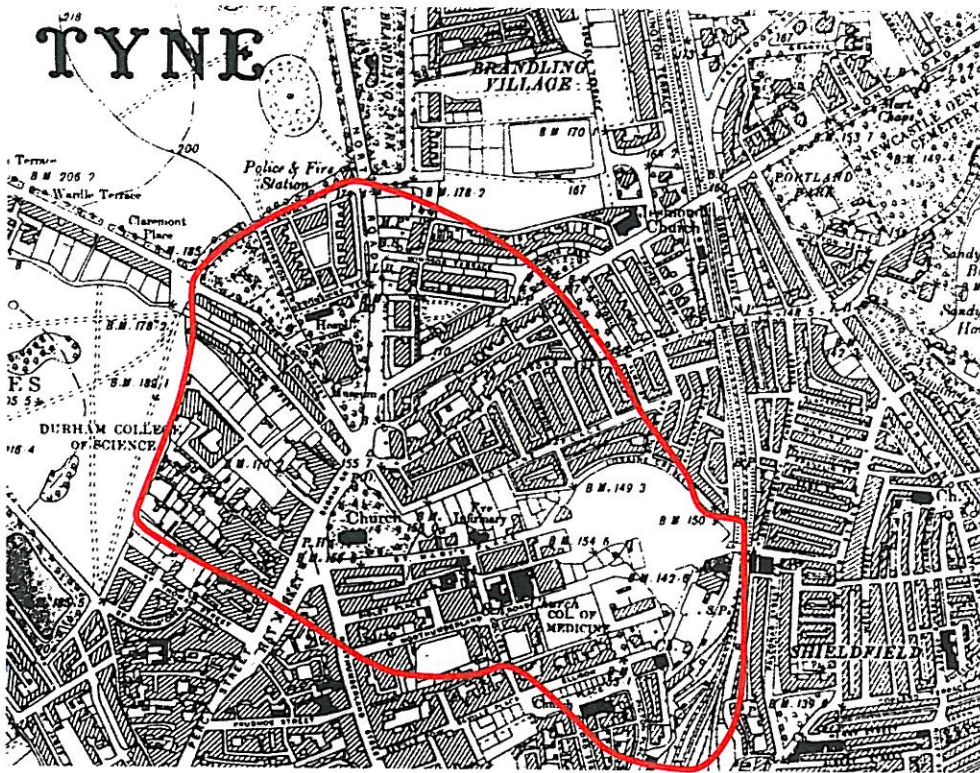




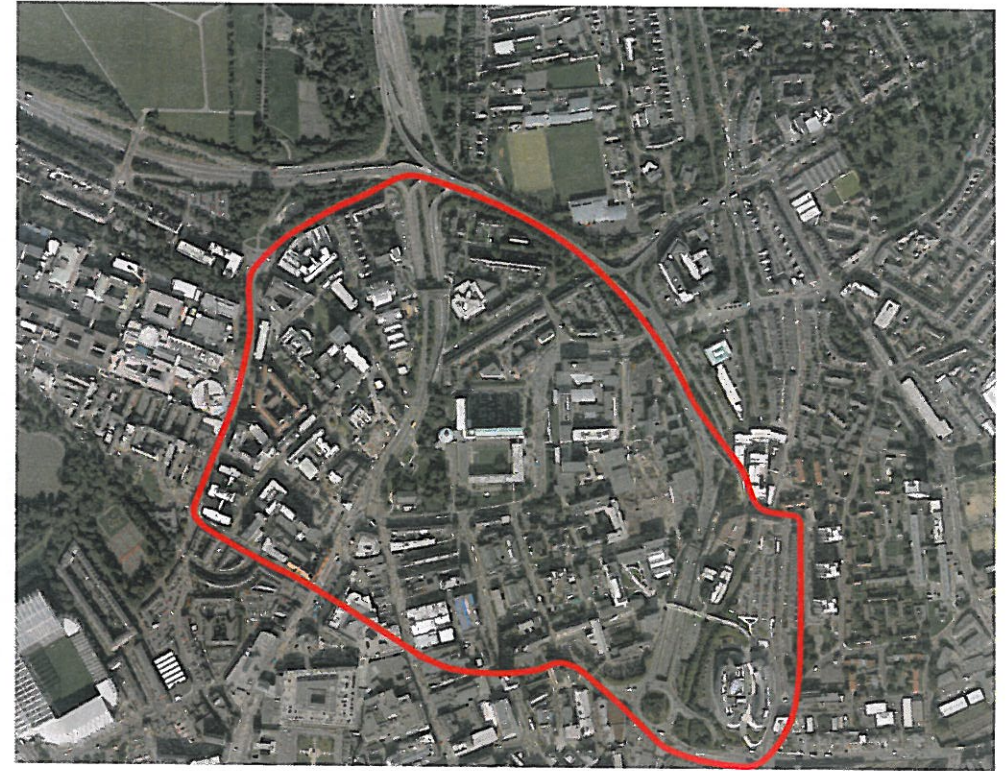


# From a fine urban grain to a fragmented disconnected city centre...

1894



2007

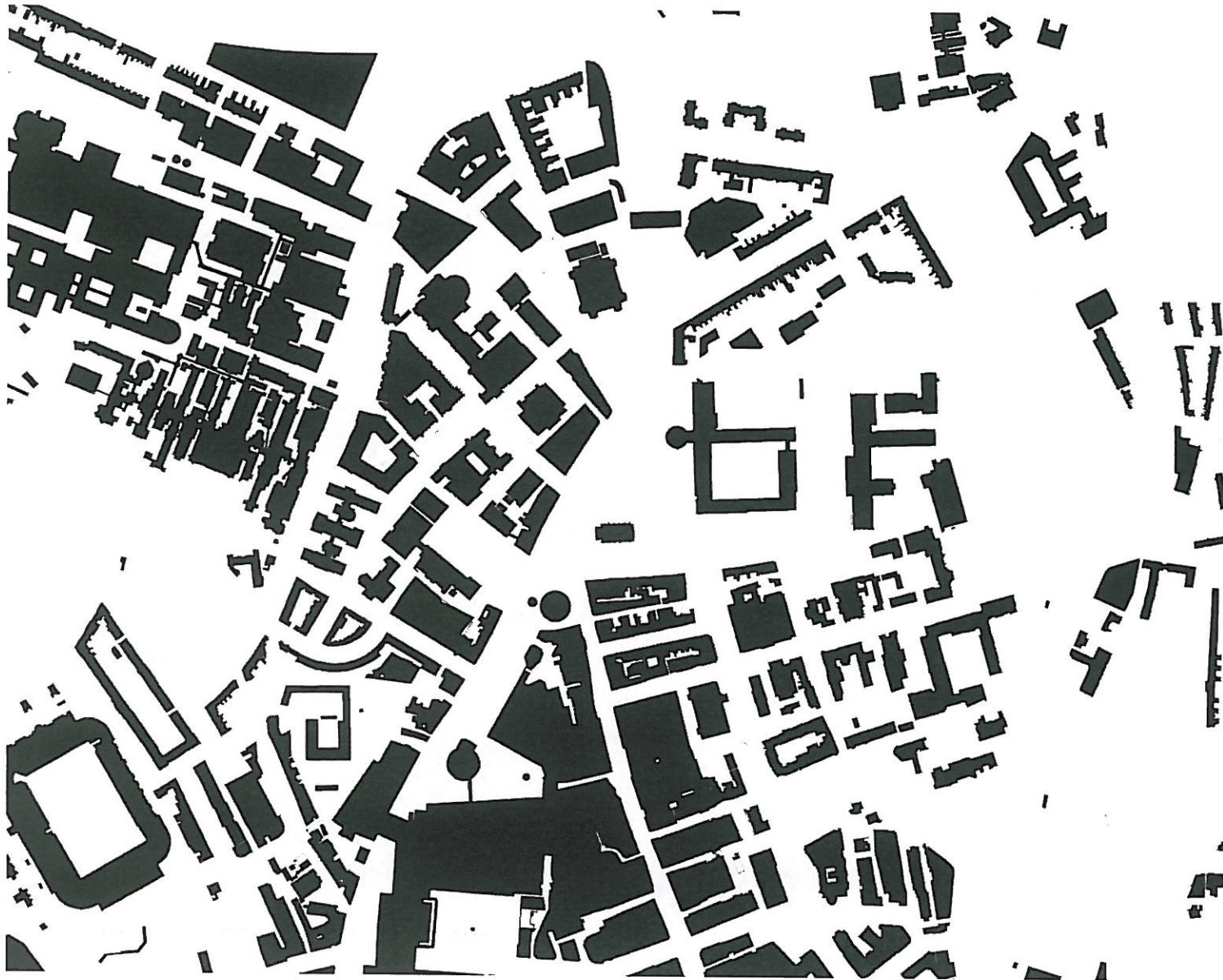


- Poor connection between the two universities
- Civic Centre is disconnected from surrounding urban areas



... with limited active frontages along streets and public spaces

FARRELLS





# The urban realm is dominated by cars...





...and the pedestrian environment suffers

FARRELLS



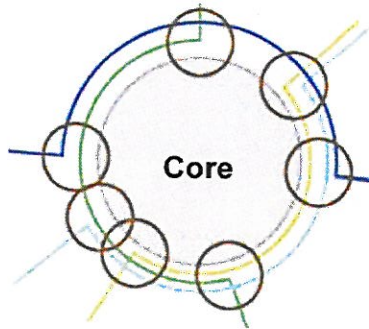


# Strategies and achievements



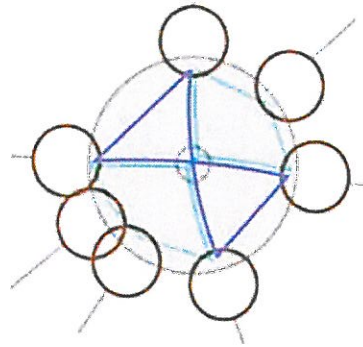
# Potential core transport strategy for the city centre

## Approaching the Core



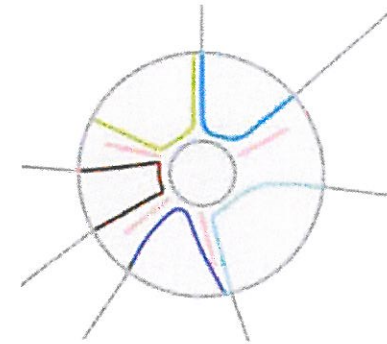
- Public transport routes reach the edge of the core. They do not penetrate or cross the core but run around its edge and then out of town on another axis.
- Private transport reaches the edge of the core and is deflected around the core or parks in a car park at the arrival point.

## Public Transport within the Core



- Small shuttle buses run on figure of eight routes within the core.
- The routes collect from the arrival point car parks and loop through the core penetrating the very heart.

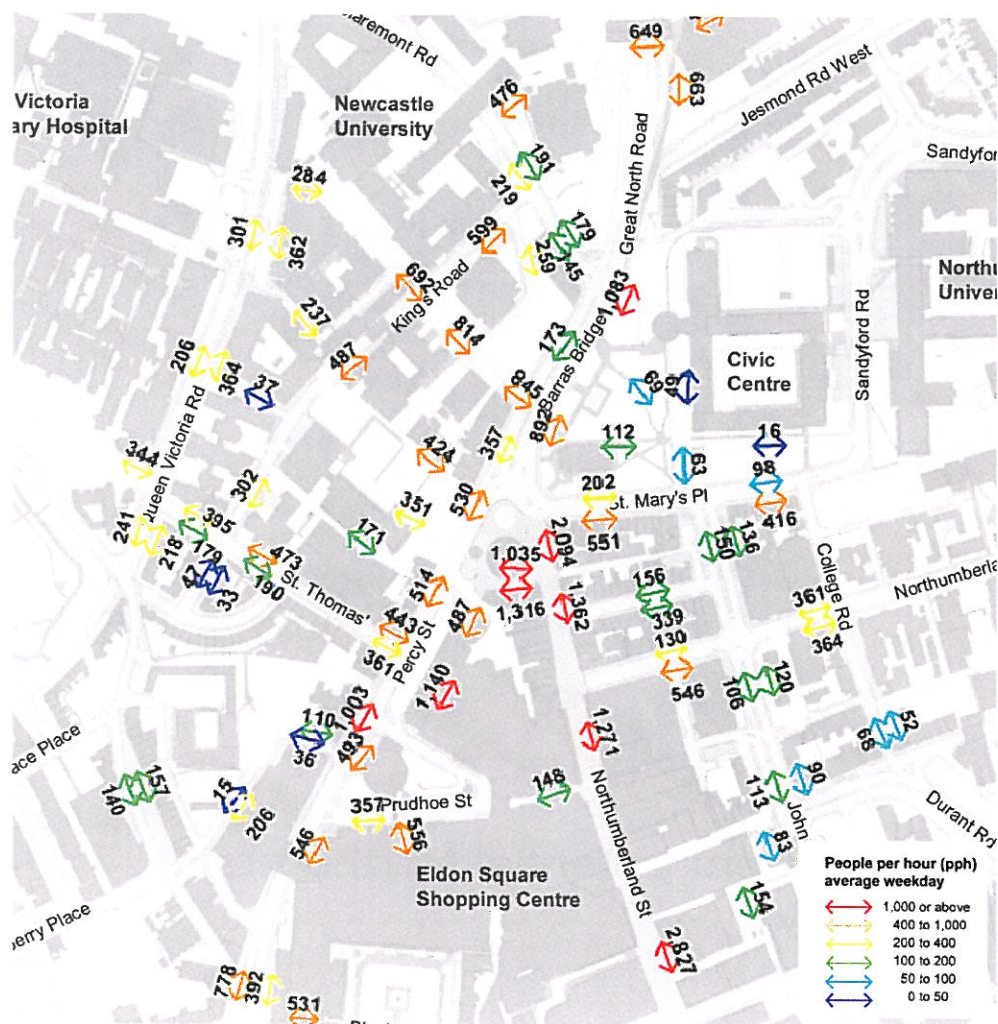
## Private Transport within the Core



- The core is divided with a number of zones.
- Cars and most vehicles can enter, loop through and exit each zone - but cannot pass between zones and therefore cannot move across or through the core.

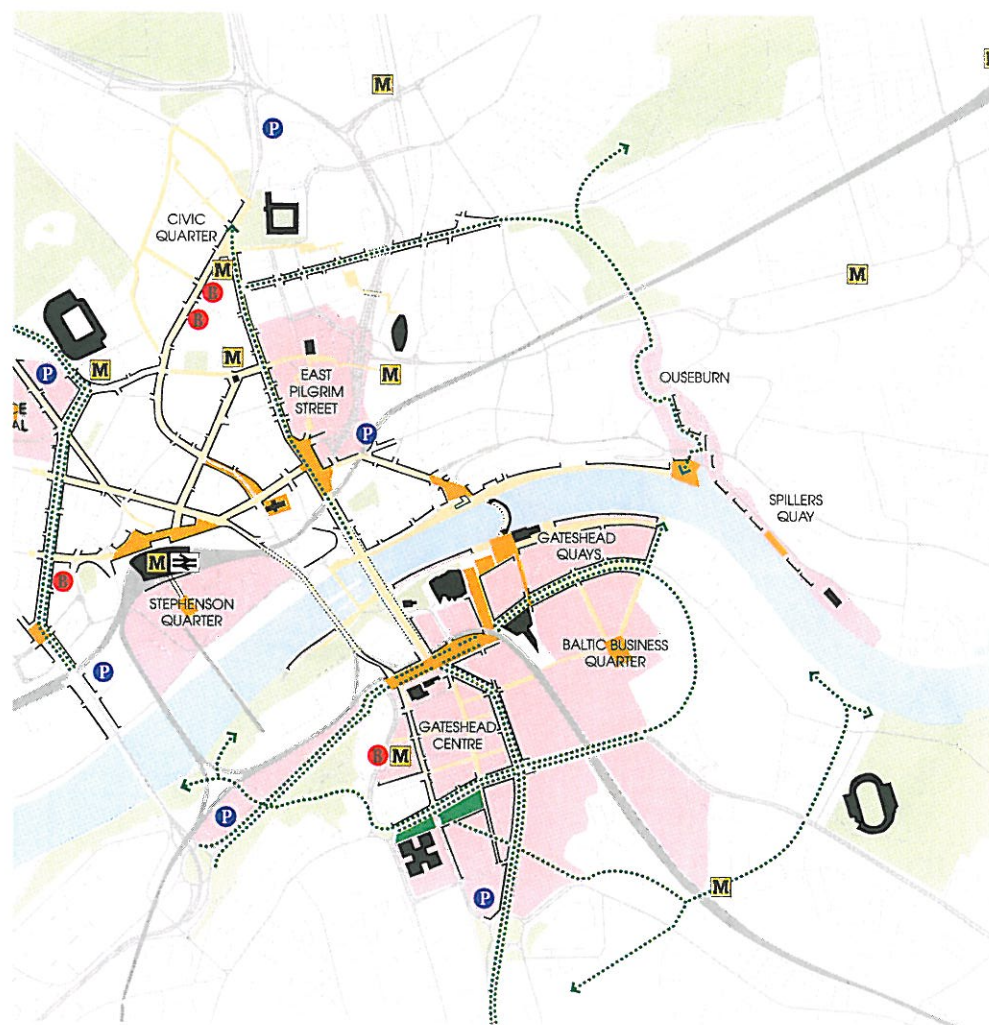


We understand, and can influence, existing and future pedestrian and vehicle movement



Space Syntax Limited study 2009  
Newcastle Haymarket - Newcastle City Council

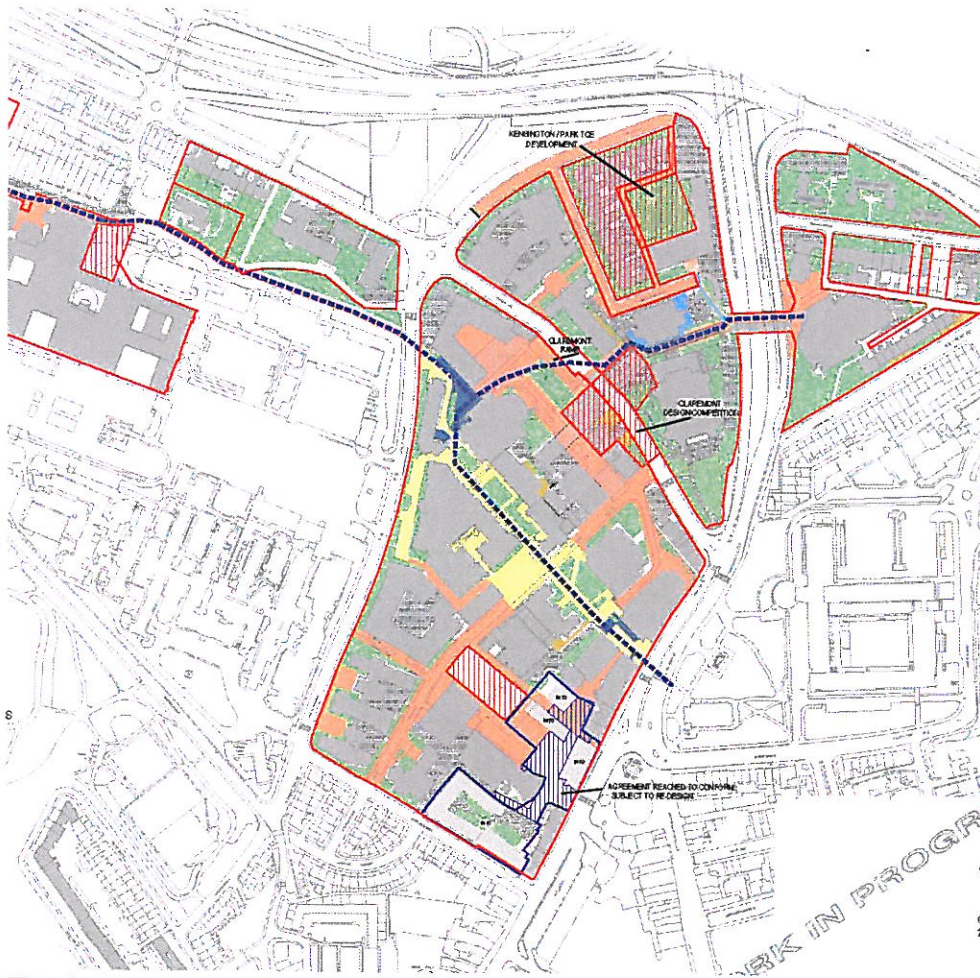
The Northern Quarter is part of the bigger picture



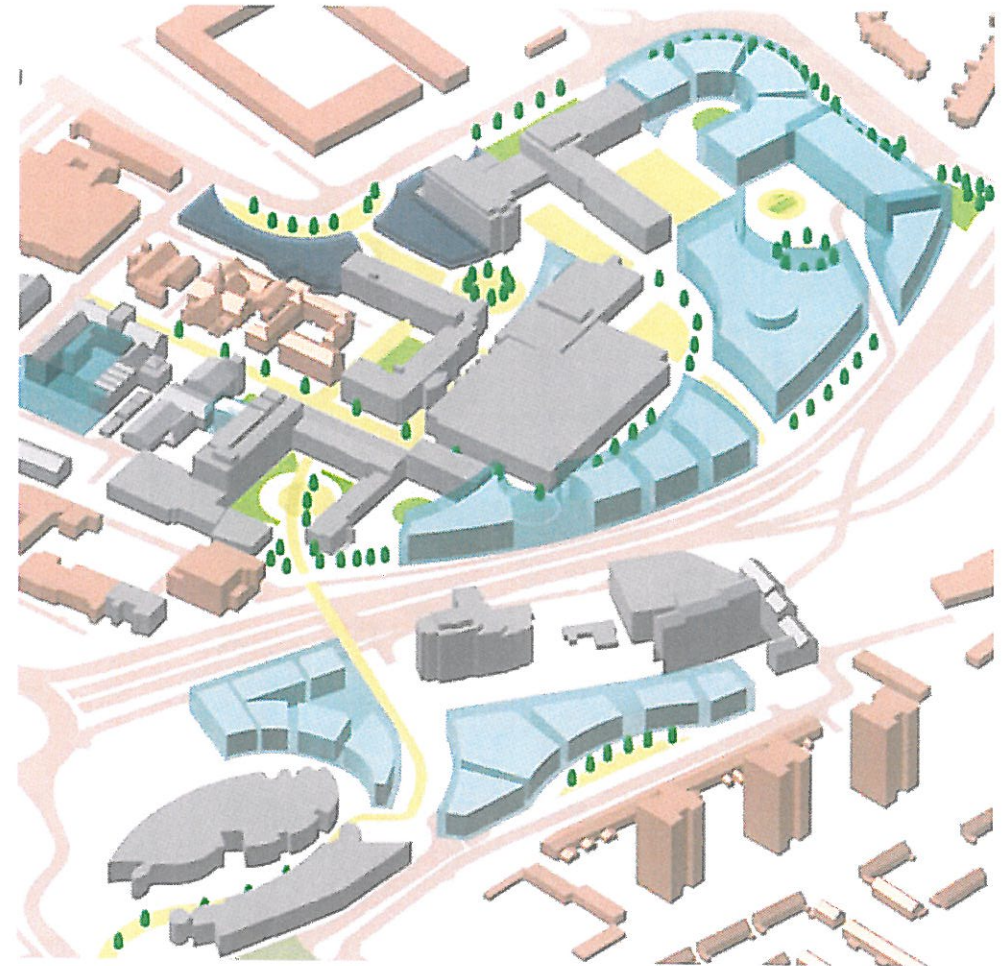
Newcastle Gateshead plan - Strategic framework



# Strategies are in place for the future development of the two universities



Public Realm Strategy  
Newcastle University



Development potential Northumbria  
University



# The Universities are implementing high quality pedestrian connections and public spaces

FARRELLS



Inter-Site bridge



Armstrong Quadrangle



Ellison Courtyard



Student Union Square



# Masterplan strategy



# Creating one place - bringing the strategies together

## 1. Enable the emerging Cultural Quarter around the Civic Centre



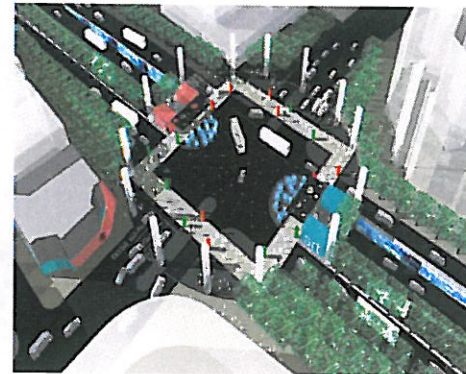
## 3. Enhance the Civic Gardens



## 2. Create a coherent urban environment for pedestrians and cyclists



## 4. Re-urbanise the roads extend the active frontages





**5.** Legible front doors  
to the Universities and Civic Centre



**7.** Re-integrate the Civic Centre in the public  
domain



**6.** Transform the setting of Northumbria University  
and the Civic Centre



**8.** Complete the transformation of the public  
realm within the two universities





# Newcastle Civic Boulevard

FARRELLS

**1.** Enable the emerging Cultural Quarter around the Civic Centre

**2.** Create a coherent urban network of routes for pedestrians and cyclists

**3.** Enhance the Civic Gardens

**4.** Re-urbanise the roads - extend the active frontages



**5.** Legible front doors to the Universities and Civic Centre

**6.** Transform the setting of Northumbria University and the Civic Centre

**7.** Re-integrate the Civic Centre in the public domain

**8.** Complete transformation of the public realm within the two universities



# The Project List



# The Project List

FARRELLS

1 Urbanise Barras Bridge junction and Claremont Road

2 Make the Haymarket hub pedestrian friendly

3 Revitalise St Thomas' and it's setting, as the heart of the Civic Boulevard

4 Urbanise Claremont Road / Barras Bridge

5 Define and repair the civic gardens

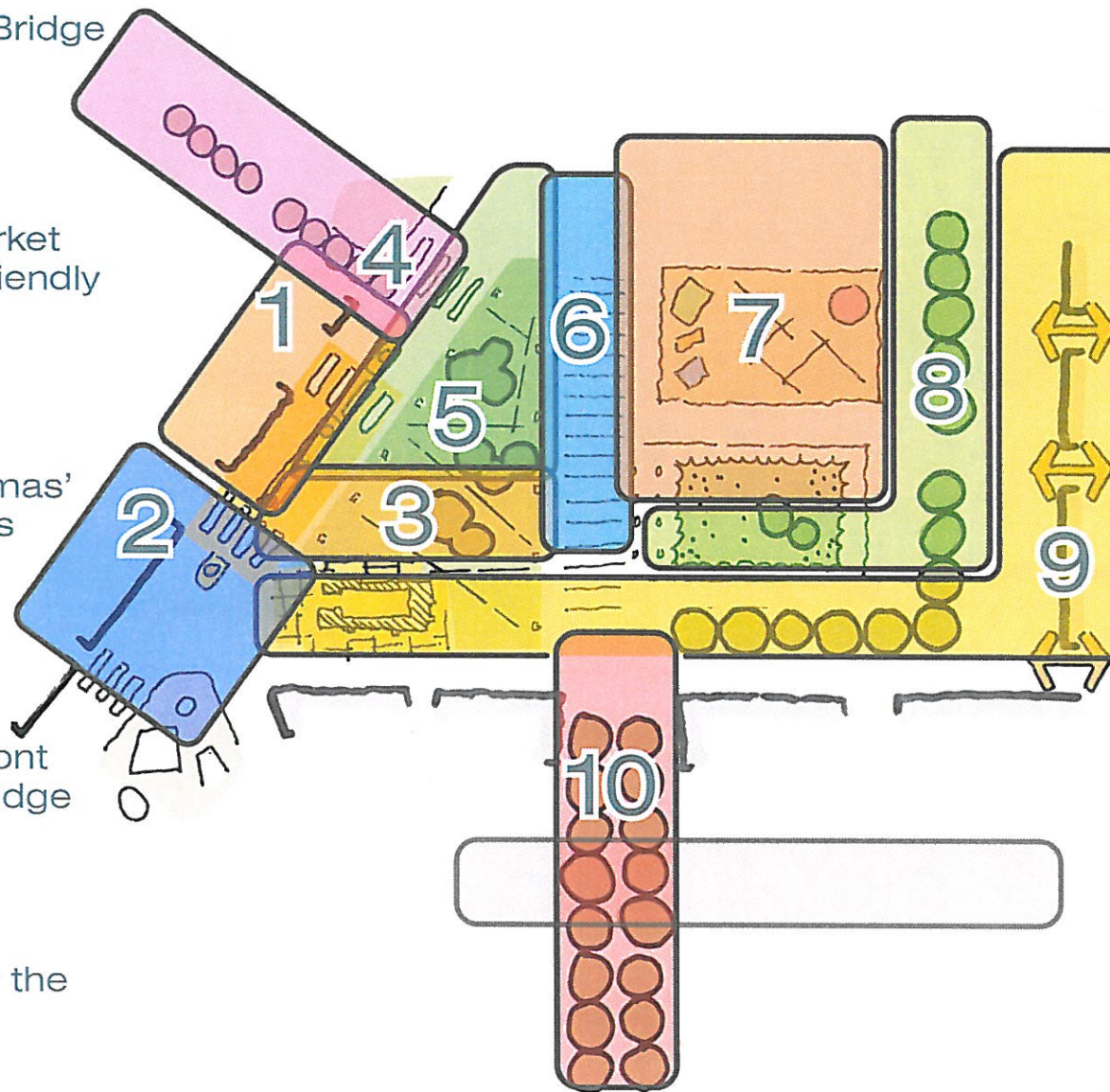
6 Revitalise the ceremonial face of the Civic Centre

7 Re-integrate the Civic Centre into the life of the city

8 Revitalise the Civic Centre setting

9 Connect the front doors of Northumbria University to the city

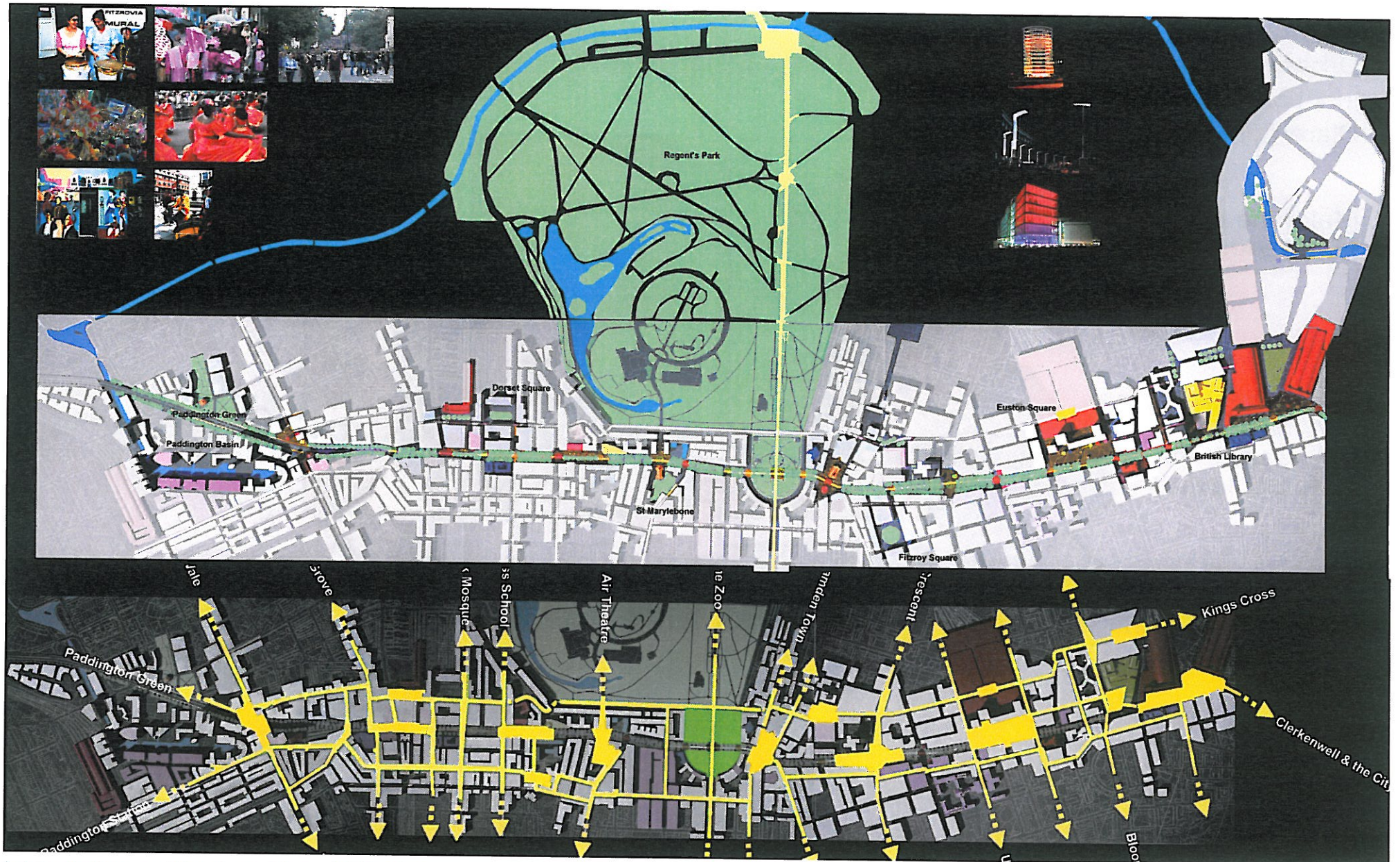
10 Re-urbanise John Dobson Street and the approaches to Northumbria University



Not a single project but a collage of deliverable mini-projects

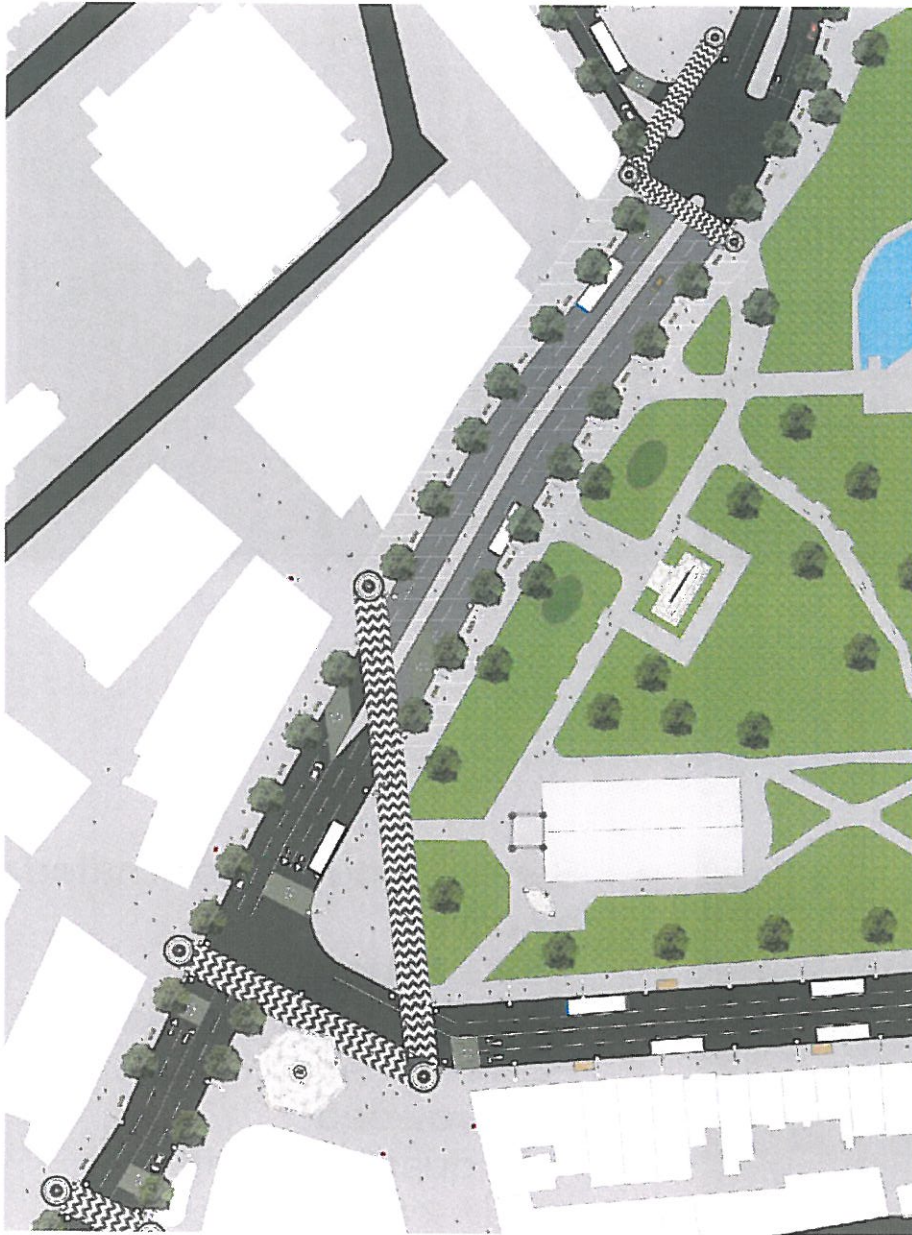


# 1 Urbanise Barras Bridge



Marylebone Euston Road Study

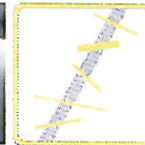




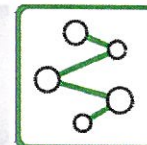
Concept Design Study - Space Syntax



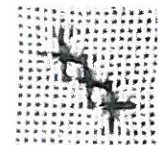
Scenario 1  
BRIDGES



Scenario 2  
HINGES

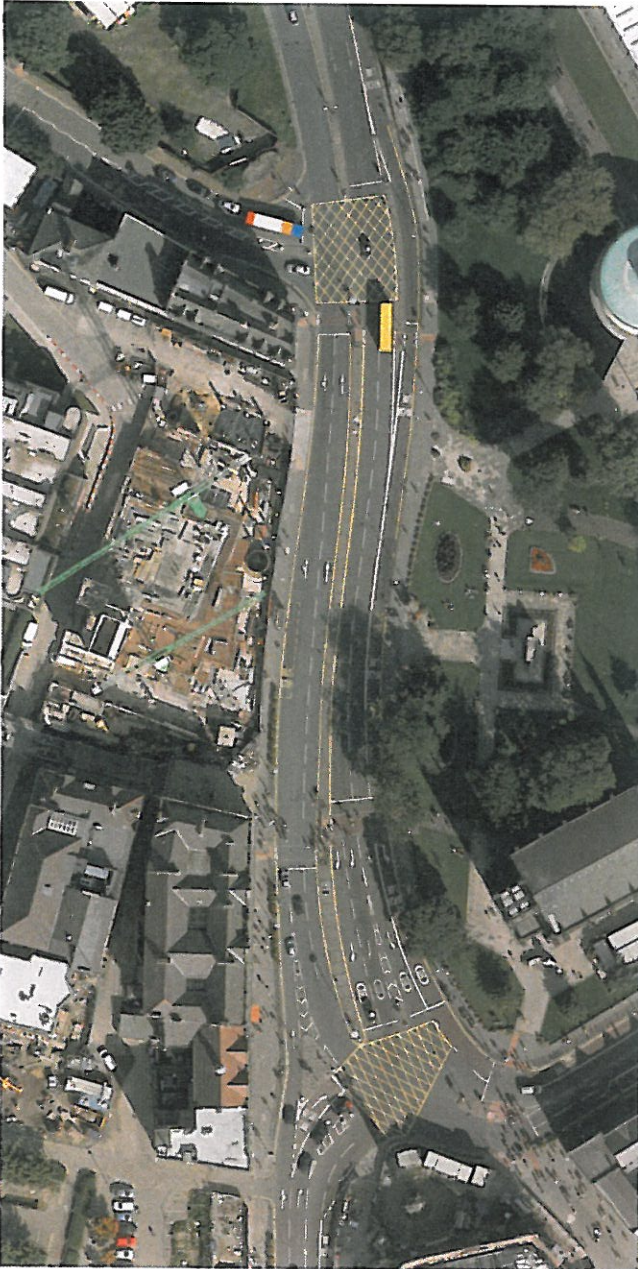


Scenario 3  
STITCHES





# 1 Urbanise Barras Bridge



Percy Street



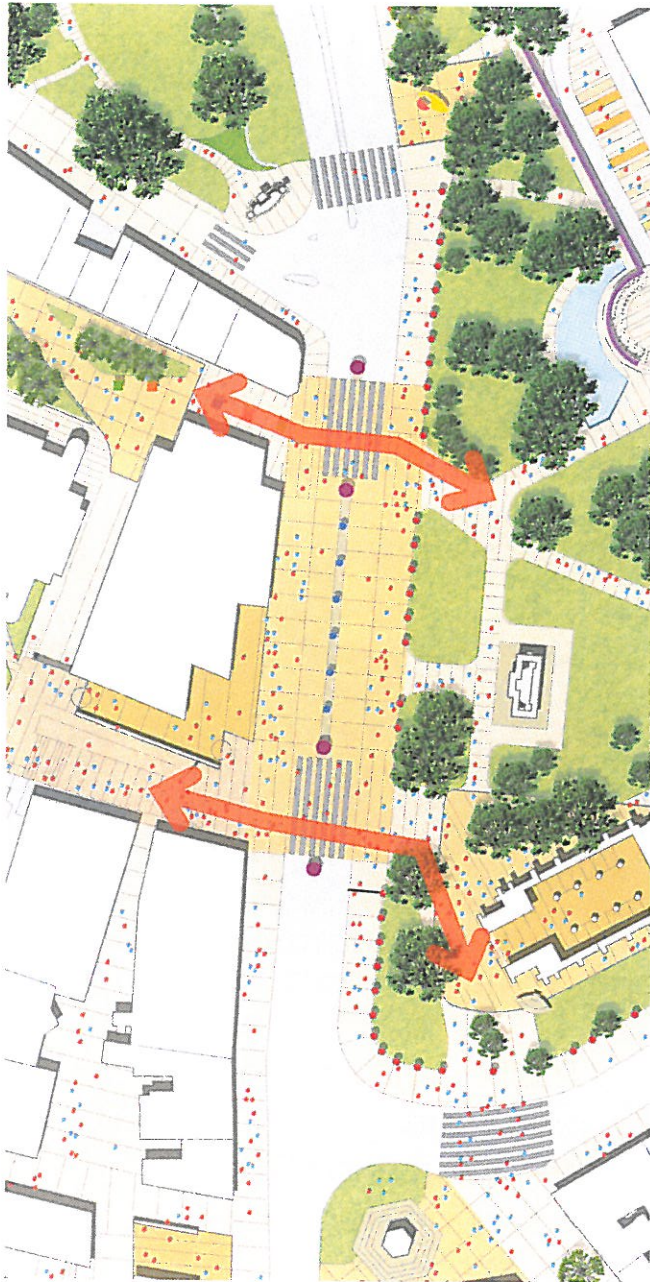
Barras Bridge



Barras Bridge - Claremont Road

- Barras Bridge is dominated by cars
- Limited space for pedestrians and cyclists
- Public transport hubs are overcrowded
- Poor quality pavement
- No direct pedestrian crossings





Get rid of clutter



Put trees back in the streets



Introduce safe, broad and direct pedestrian crossings



Extend active frontage - potential for arts end design retail



## 2 Make the Haymarket hub pedestrian friendly



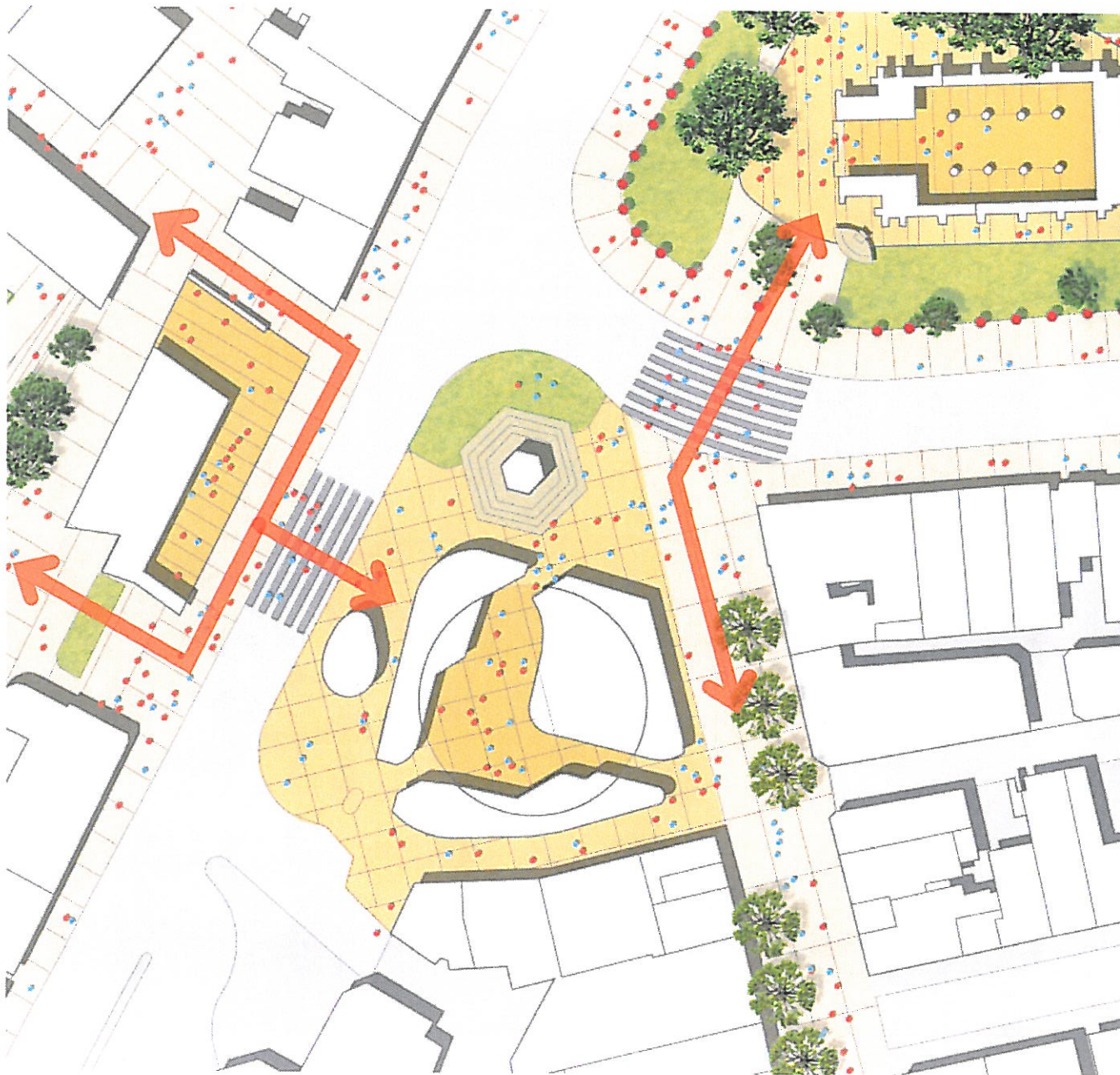
Barras Bridge crossing



Crossing Northumberland Street and St Mary's Place

- Traffic signs dominate the junctions
- Key crossings are disconnected and overcrowded





Remove all railings and street clutter



Safe pedestrian crossings

- Create a wide direct pedestrian and cycle crossing
- More space for pedestrians
- Redefine the junction - create a place



## 2 Make the Haymarket hub pedestrian friendly

**W**HAT do you want from your streets? Cleanliness, safety and good lighting, and the ability to go where you want and do what you want. A little generosity and dignity in the pavements, and surfaces that are pleasant to look at or feel underfoot, and the odd tree or water feature. A feeling that unseen, wise people are caring unobtrusively about what these places are like.

What you don't want is to experience, every 10 yards, a new manifesto on the meaning of public space, or the latest theory from an Academy of Streetscapery to be put into practice under your toes. You don't want pavements that suddenly change colour and style for no reason, or multi-coloured lamp-posts, or public art that the public didn't ask for. Nor do you want to circumnavigate endless barriers, in theory to protect you from traffic but actually to protect council departments from legal action.

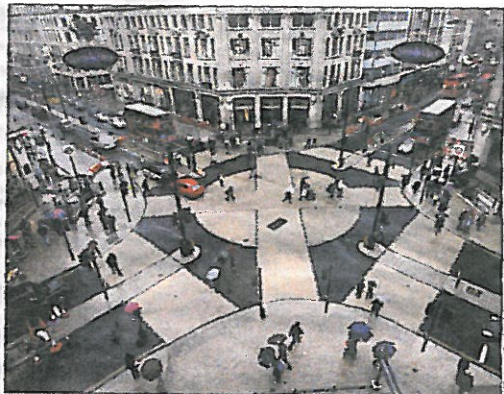
You probably want streets that allow you to get on with your life, and make you feel pleased to be in your city. If so, you have Mayor Boris on your side. Under the heading of "London's Great Outdoors", he has this week promised "Better Streets" and "Better Green and Water Spaces". He sets out ideas for achieving these things, and mentions that £220 million under his control is going towards them. Further money, from national government, boroughs and business, could augment it. He lists more than 40 public space improvements that will or might happen. One that has already happened is the new X-crossing on Oxford Circus.

You also, in fact, had Mayor Ken on your side, as he too wanted to upgrade London's public spaces. It is, simply, a good idea to improve a city's streets. It makes people feel better and encourages them to walk, with benefits for traffic, the environment and human intercourse. Walking people notice each other and are less prone to road rage.

Actually making a significant difference is agonisingly slow, the work of many mayoralities. This is partly a matter of scale – there are an awful lot of streets in London – and therefore cost, but also because of the conflicting demands on public spaces, between cars and people and safety and enjoyment.

There is in particular the dread figure of the local authority highways engineer, a character trained to measure success in terms of vehicle speed and volume, and to worry obsessively about safety. Highway engineers, at least in the minds of other planners, are unreflective automatons who will apply rules without regard to their cumulative effect, or the overall quality of a place. Left to their own devices, they will eventually fill every street in London with signs, barriers, humps and bollards designed to guard against every conceivable mishap.

On these thorny questions, Boris's documents speak sense. They speak of "simple and robust principles" rather than making every street into a work of art. "That people can be responsibly" say the texts, "and take responsibility should be recognised." They call for use, where appropriate, of shared surfaces – the idea pioneered by the Dutch engineer Hans Monderman that cars and pedestrians didn't always have to be kept apart, as drivers could be trusted not to mow people down. He liked to prove his point by stepping backwards into the road and not getting run over. The £220 million is not completely



Open-plan: the new X-crossing makes formerly frenetic Oxford Circus seem calmer and more spacious

### London's streets need less clutter and more class

The Mayor's plan to upgrade our city needs visionary designers to make it happen, but they are in short supply

Rowan Moore



new money but at least it has not vanished, as it might have done in cash-strapped times. The Mayor also recognises, correctly, that improving London's streets is a job for boroughs and other agencies, even if he spots the effect by seeming to grab credit for projects that are not his.

London's Great Outdoors, in short, is a sane document in pursuit of aims that everyone should support, the only question being whether it will actually deliver the good things of which it speaks. Here the answer is a resounding maybe – for this slender set of documents, although esquisitely designed by one of London's finest graphic designers, doesn't seem equal to the scale of the task.

The Mayor does have on his side Daniel Moylan, the deputy leader of Kensington and Chelsea who pushed through the de-cluttering of Kensington High Street. Moylan has his detractors but he does know how to bring highway engineers along with him, and is also on the board of Transport for London, the gigantic, engineering-minded organisation with more say than any other on London's streets. With his support, TfL is already engaged in removing pointless barriers.

But the job will take more than one man, and slim pamphlets, and a seminar that is apparently planned to educate boroughs on good practice. It needs a concentration of people who know how to make streets safe, functional and beautiful at the same time. London's laughable and capricious cycle lanes, that stutter like lines of experimental verse before discharging cyclists before trucks, show what happens when such expertise is missing. Yet Transport for London only has two staff members dedicated to urban design, which is not encouraging.

If you can tell a man by his shoes, you can tell a city by its pavements, and London's indicate a fractured, shambolic, careless body politic.

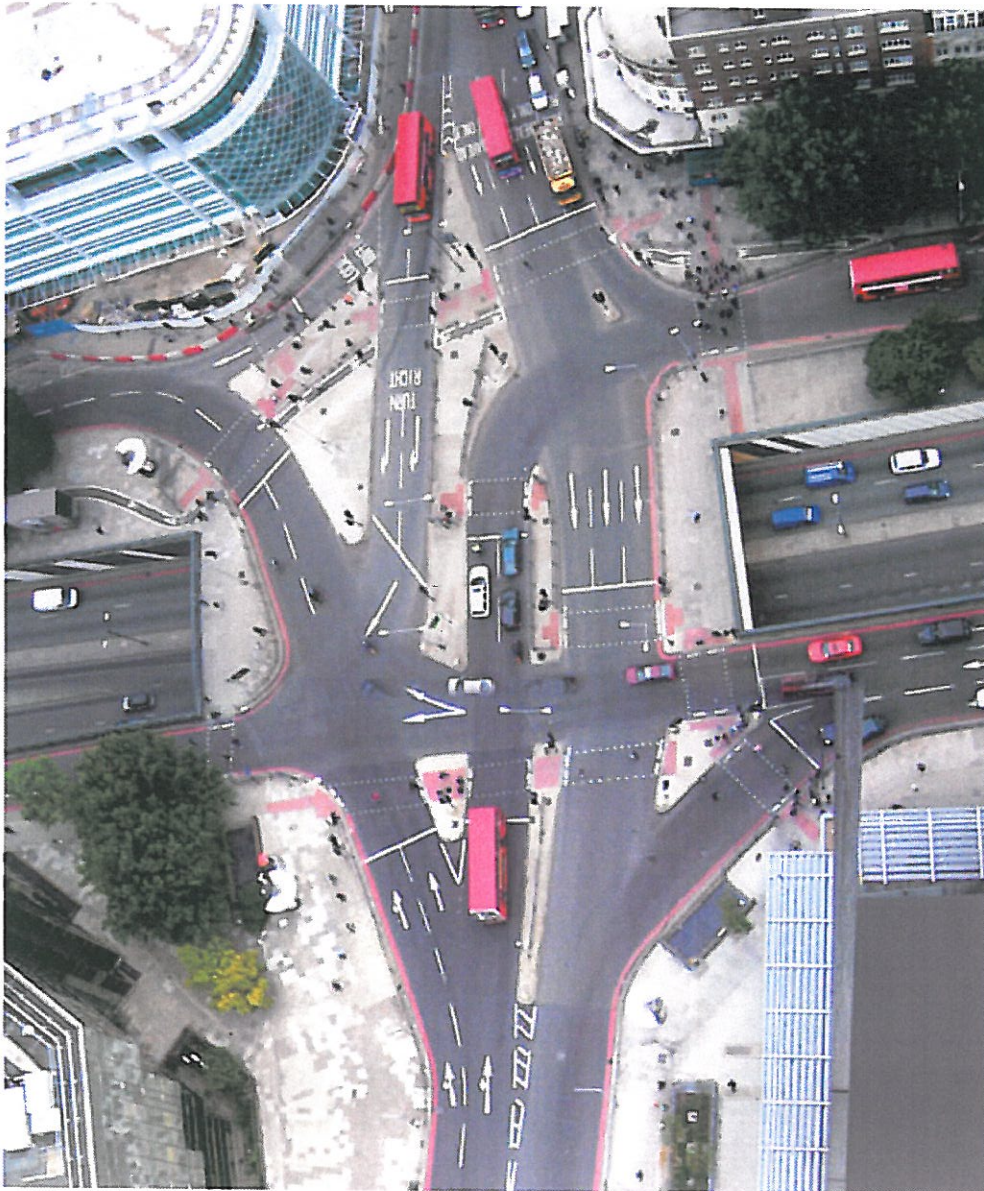
If you can tell a man by his shoes, you can tell a city by its pavements, and London's indicate a fractured, shambolic, careless body politic.

Read more at: [standards.co.uk/comment](http://standards.co.uk/comment)

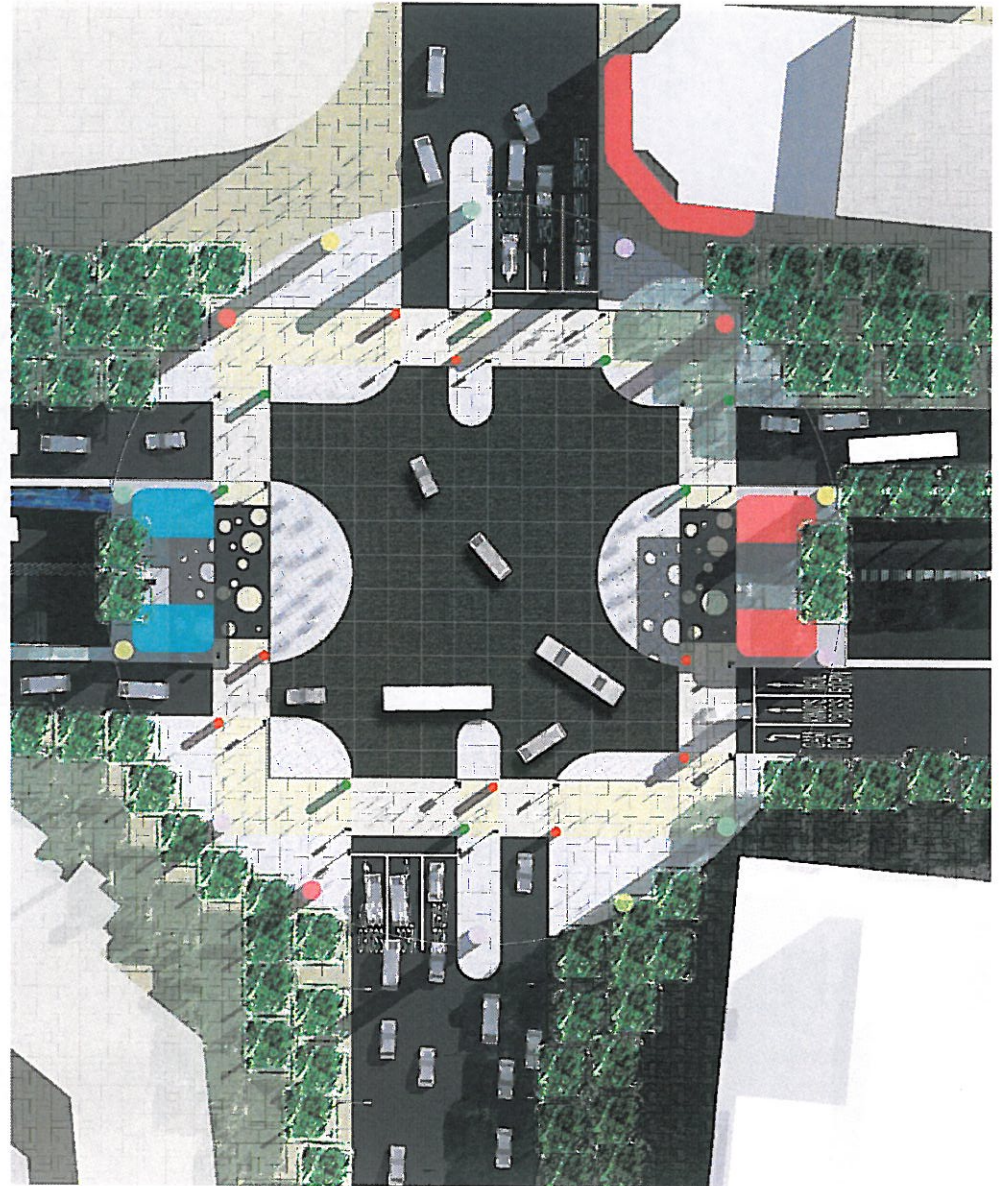


Oxford Circus





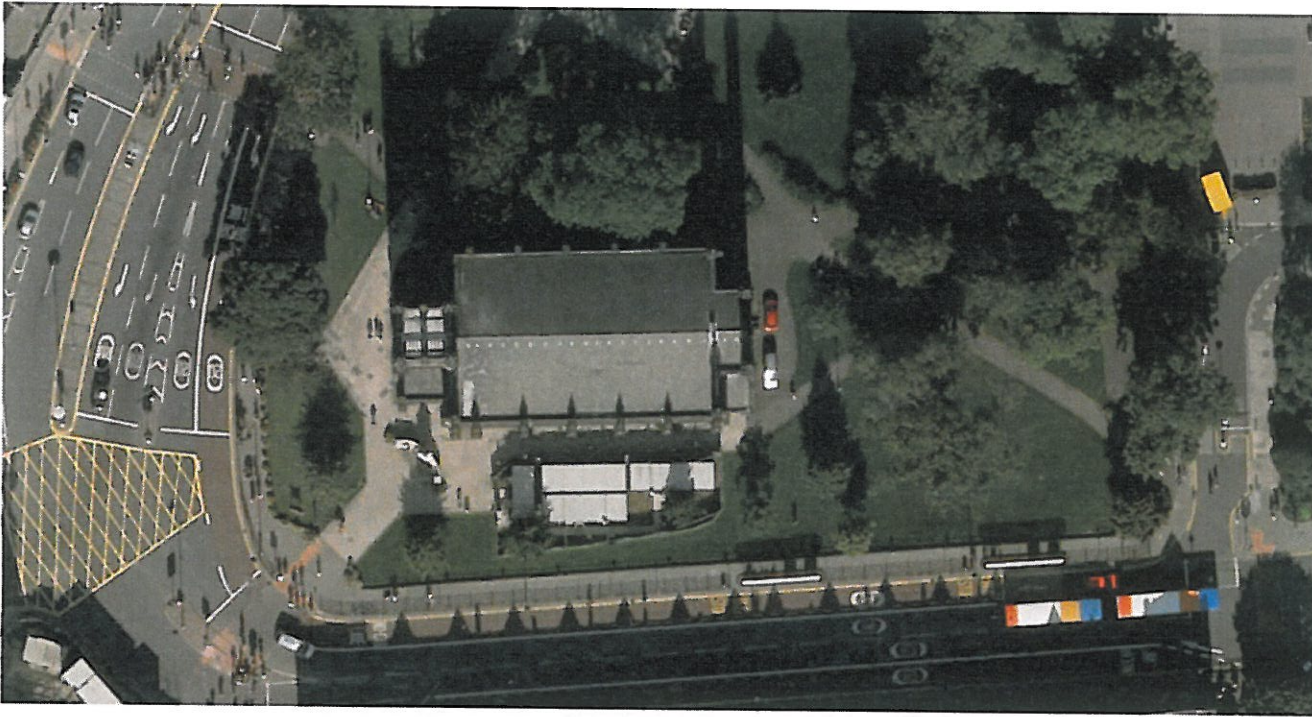
BEFORE - **Euston Circus**



AFTER - **Euston Circus**



### 3 Revitalise St Thomas' and its setting, as the heart of the Civic Boulevard



The Civic Garden

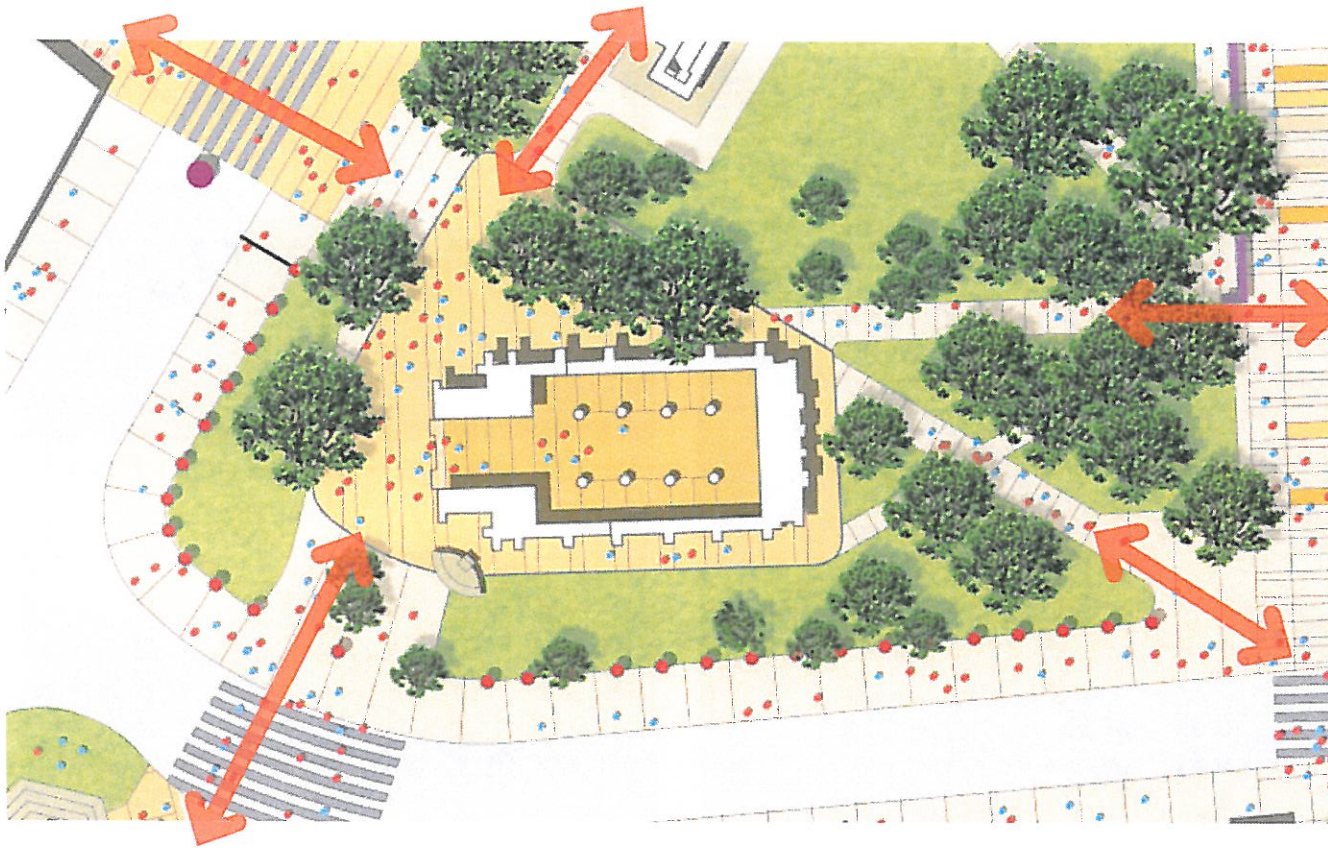


St Thomas' Church

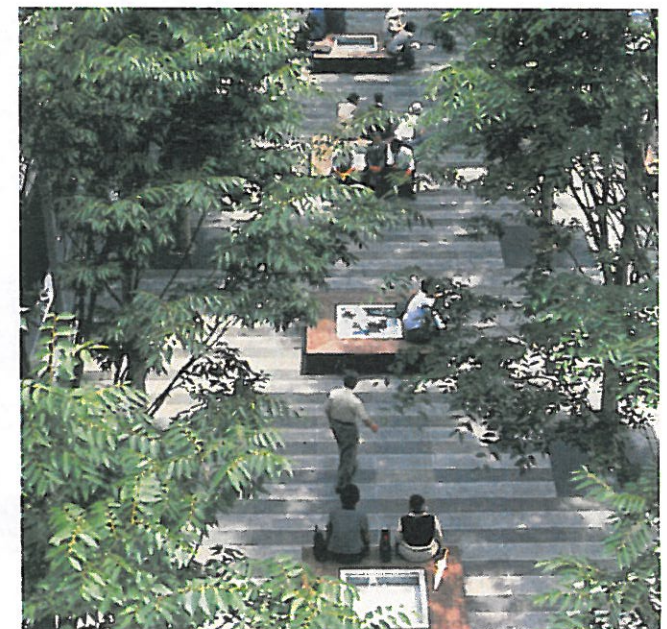


- St Thomas' Church has a poor urban setting
- Car traffic dominates the public environment





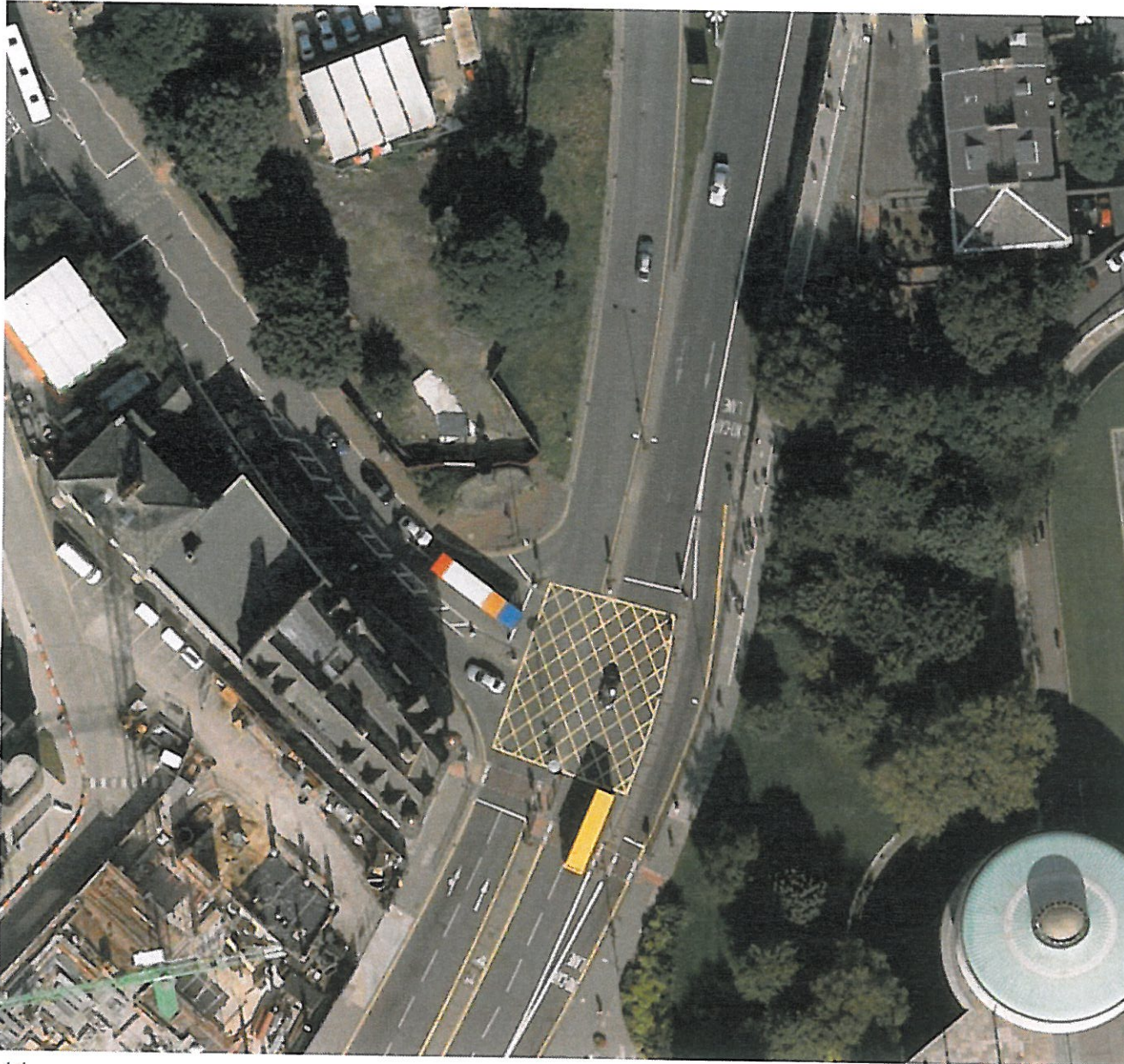
Use perimeter planting to embrace the park



Improve the urban setting of St Thomas'



## 4 Urbanise Barras Bridge junction and Claremont Road



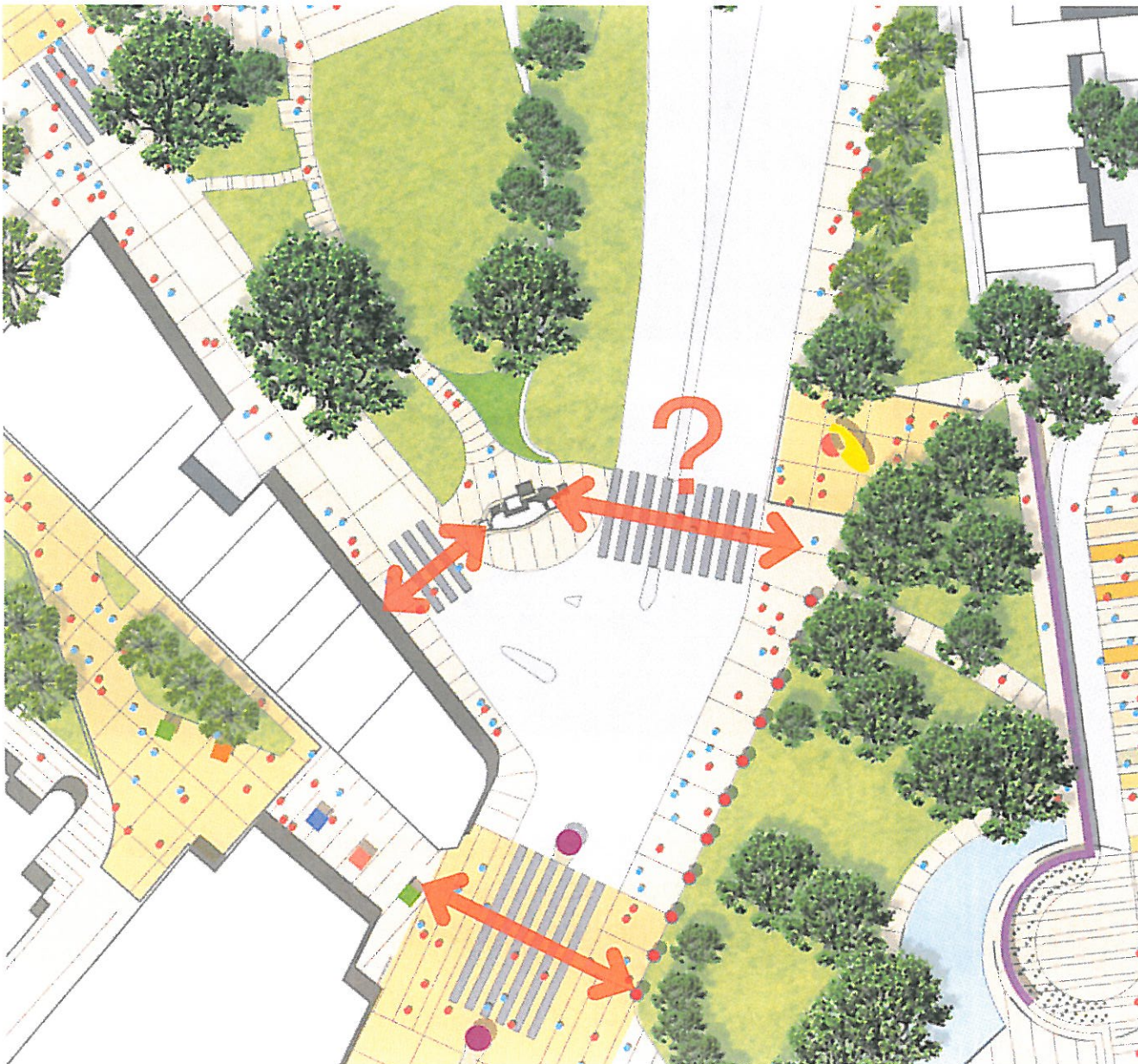
Barras Bridge - Claremont Road



Crossing Barras Bridge - Claremont Road

- Limited and indirect pedestrian crossings
- Junction is dominated by car movement





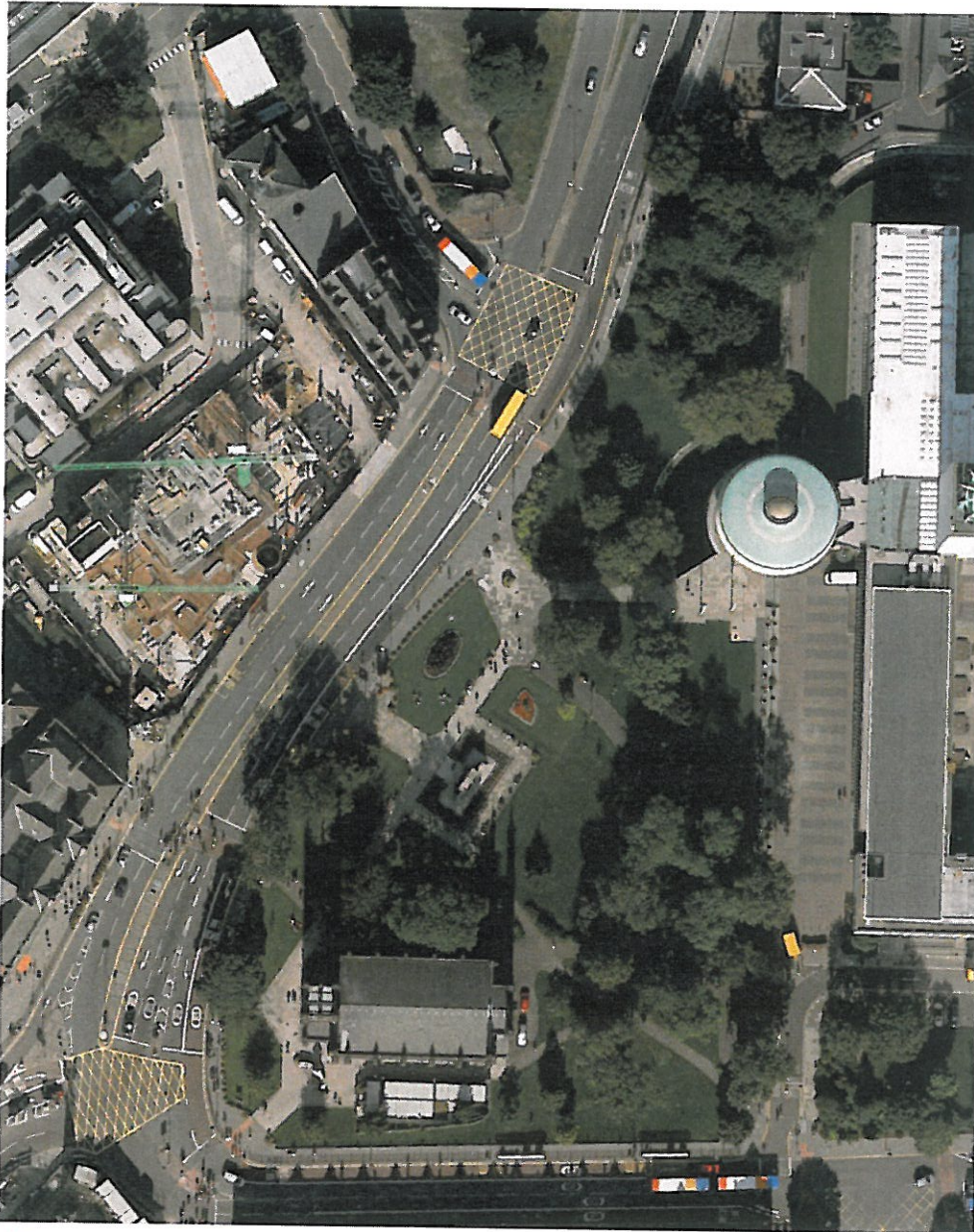
Get rid of street clutter



- Create wide direct new pedestrian and cycle crossings
- Integrate the junction back into the city
- Work towards the university's ambition to pedestrianise Claremont Road



## 5 Define and repair the civic gardens



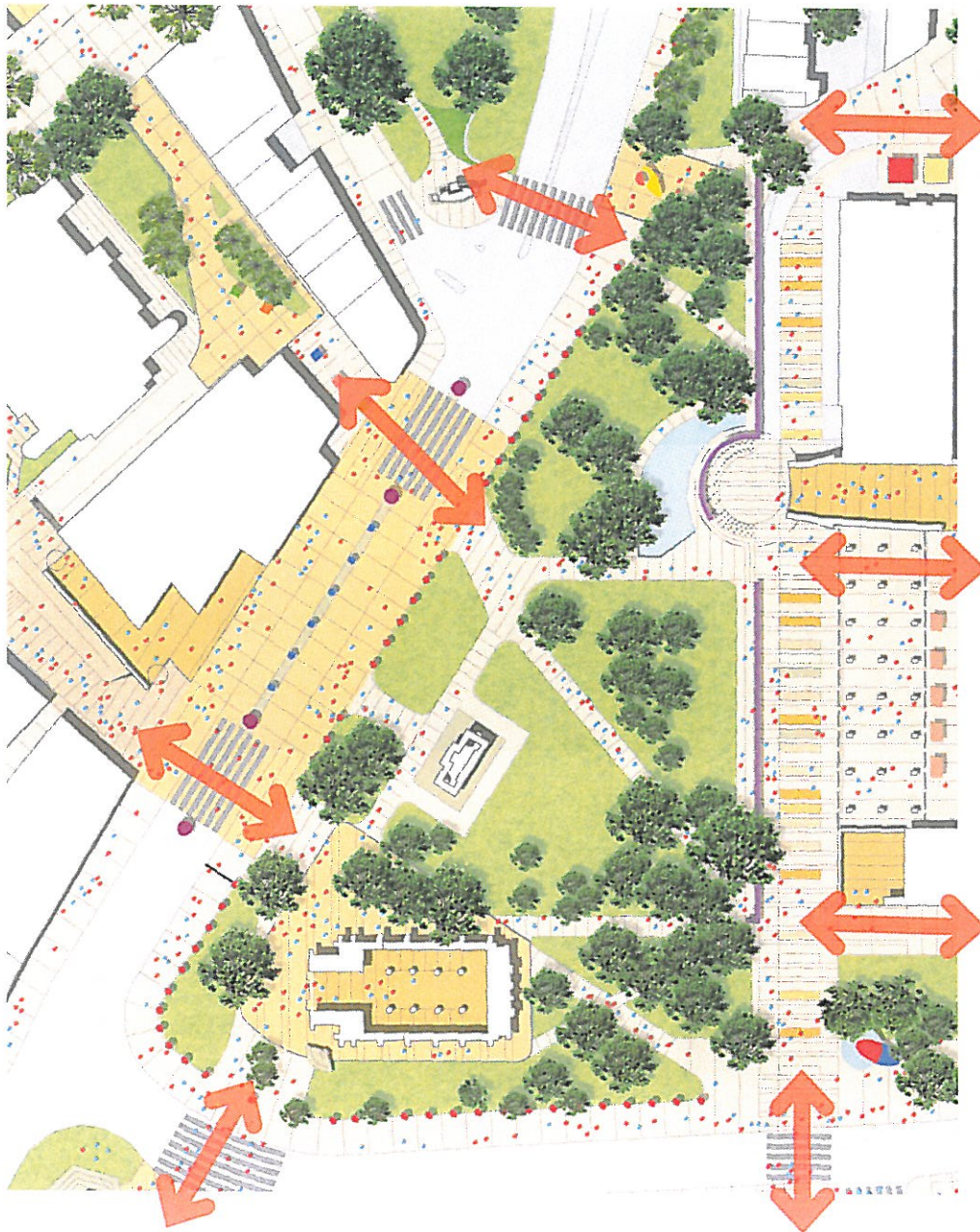
The Civic Gardens



War Memorial

- The civic gardens are fragmented and disconnected - a place with no name
- There is no strong definition of the edge of the gardens
- A wonderful civic asset - but one that under performs

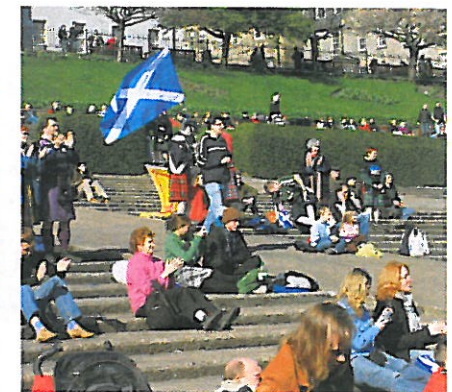




Offer more seating facilities



Define the edge of the Civic Gardens

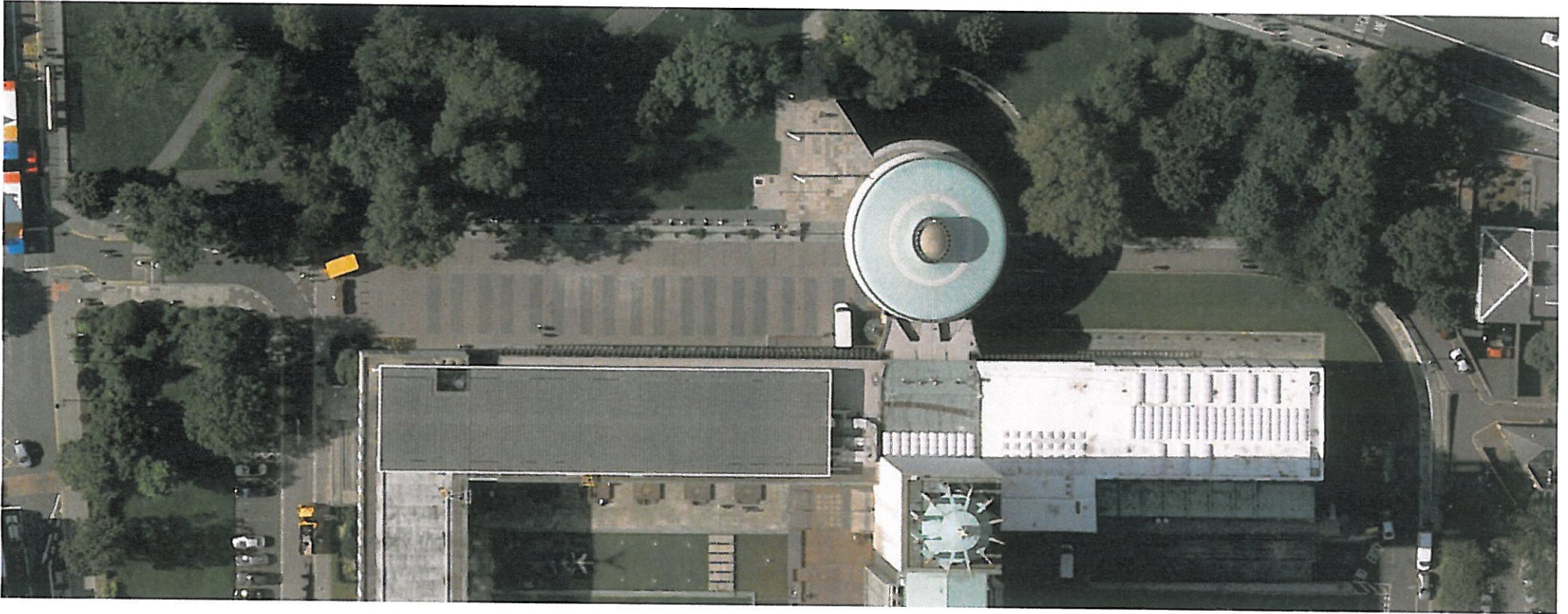


Bring more activities towards the gardens

- Provide a continuous network of pedestrian routes and link in with the surrounding context
- Exploit the gardens for arts / culture activity - stalls, events and festivals
- Improve wayfinding



## 6 Revitalise the ceremonial face of the Civic Centre



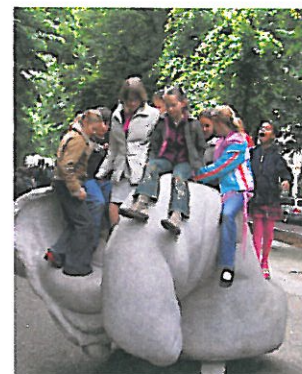
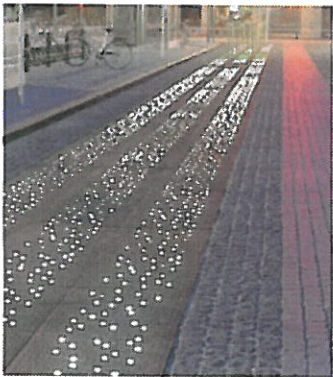
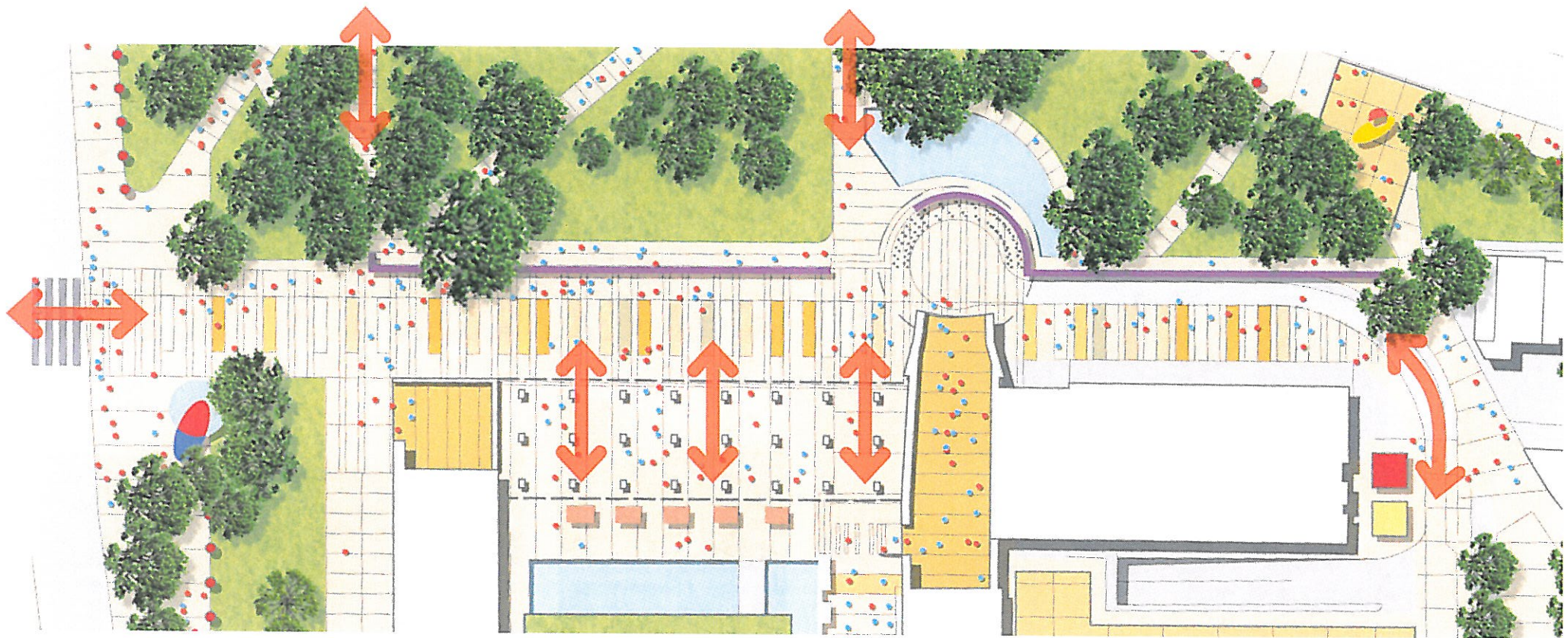
The 'Civic Square'



Exit to St Mary's Place

- The exit to St Mary's Place is designed for cars, not people
- The 'Civic Square' is in use for limited activities only



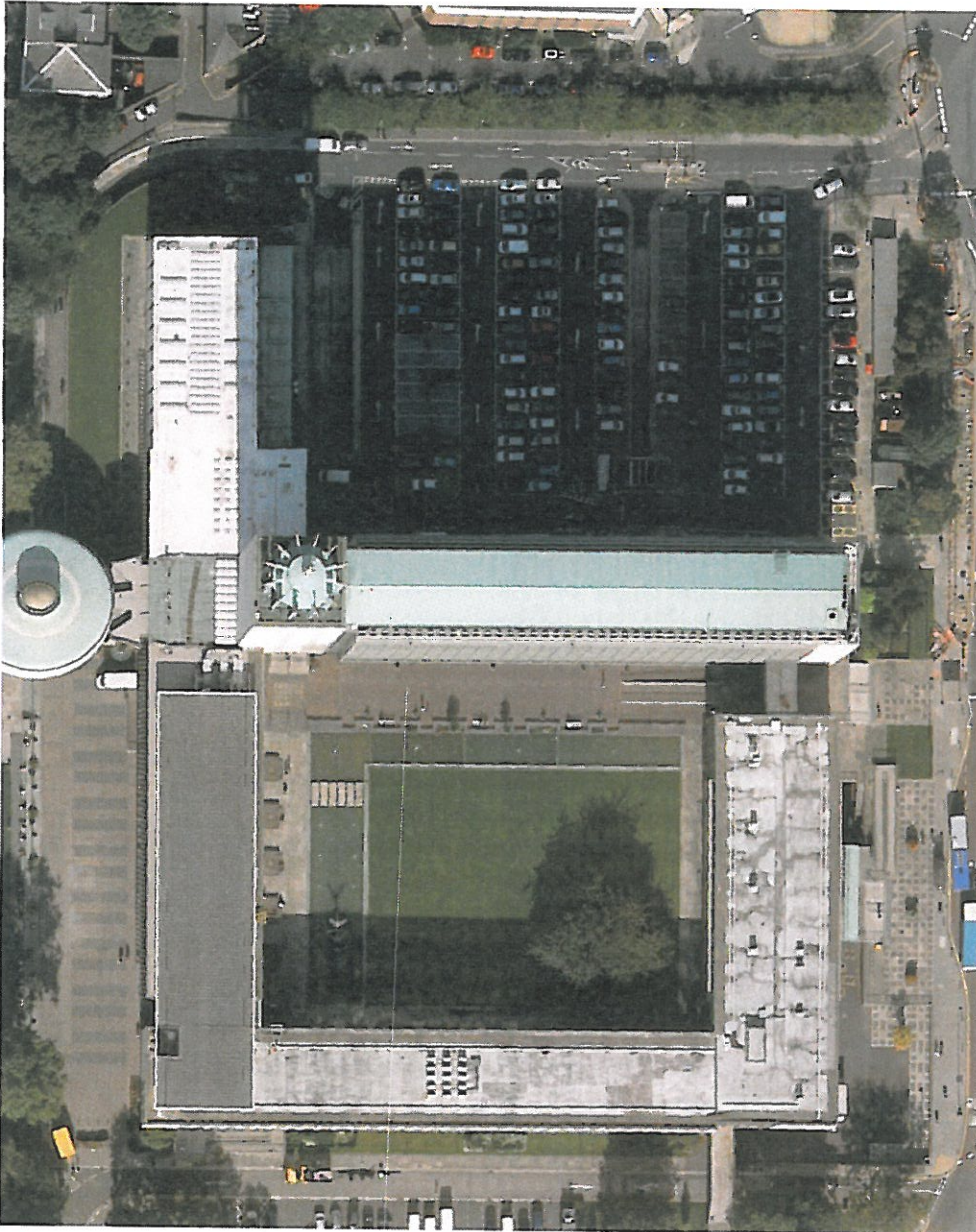


Enhance this civic asset as a wonderful place of arrival and departure

- Extend the Ceremonial Way paving
- Introduce improved traffic control



## 7 Re-integrate the civic centre into the life of the city



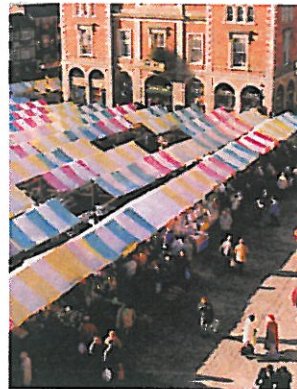
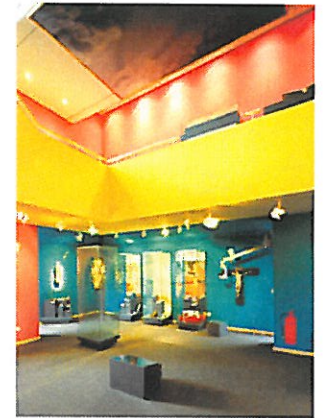
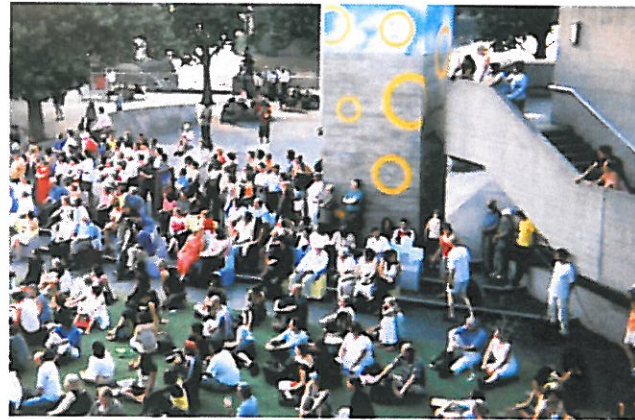
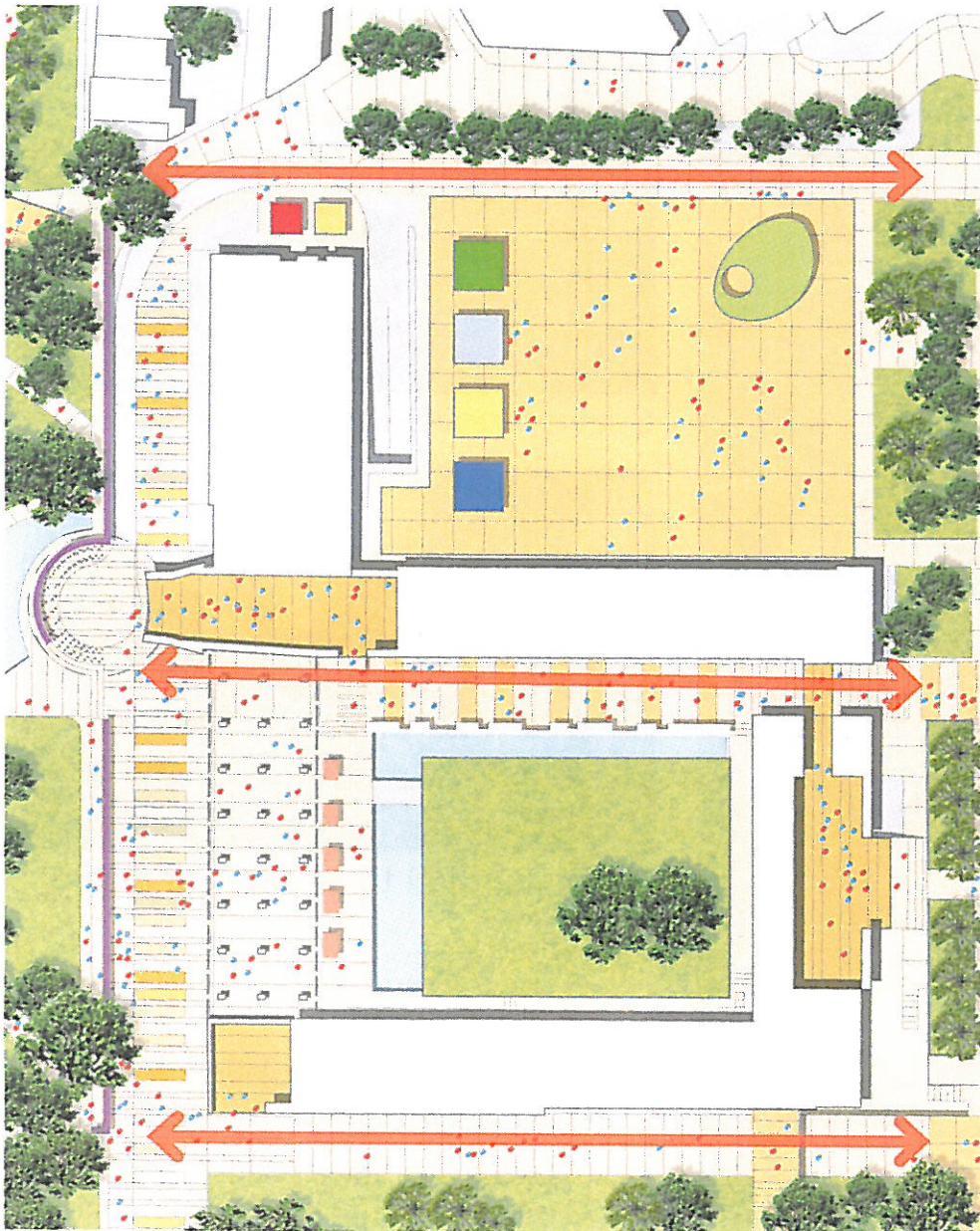
Parking entrance to Civic Centre



Courtyard Civic Centre

- The Civic Centre is not integrated within its surroundings
- The magnificent green courtyard, the surface parking and the surrounding public realm is under used





Rediscover this place for cultural events and festivals

- In and around the civic buildings and courtyards, facilitate places for permanent and temporary cultural events and festivals
- Integrate the internal civic routes and front doors into the city



## 8 Revitalise the Civic Centre setting



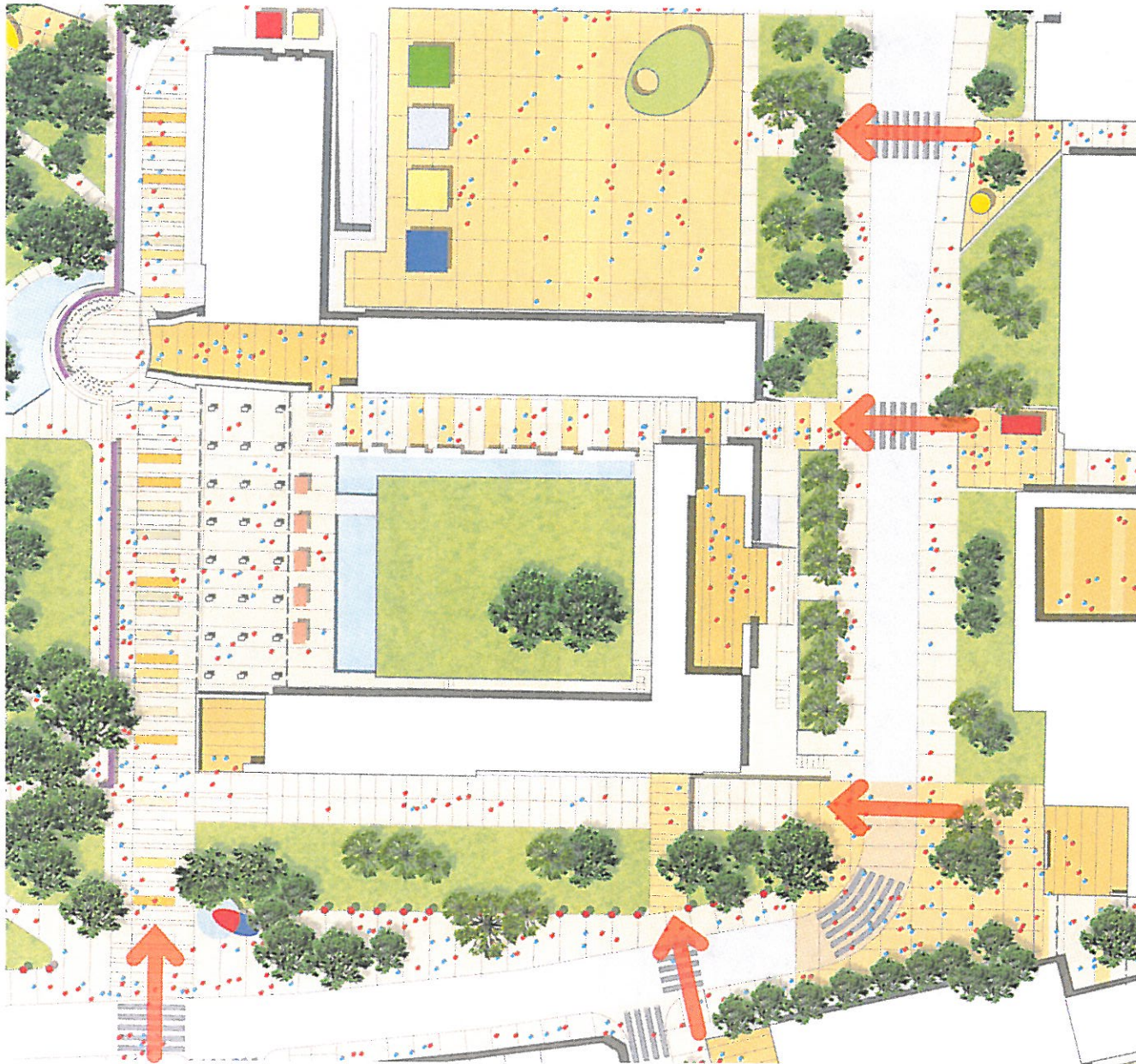
Service point Sandyford Road



Road parallel to St Mary's Place

- Fragmented public realm
- Services, parking and roads dominate the public environment





Create one coherent civic setting



A landmark to announce the Civic Centre and Northumbria University

- New lighting and furniture to clarify pedestrians routes and improve way finding.



## 9 Connect the front doors of Northumbria University to the city



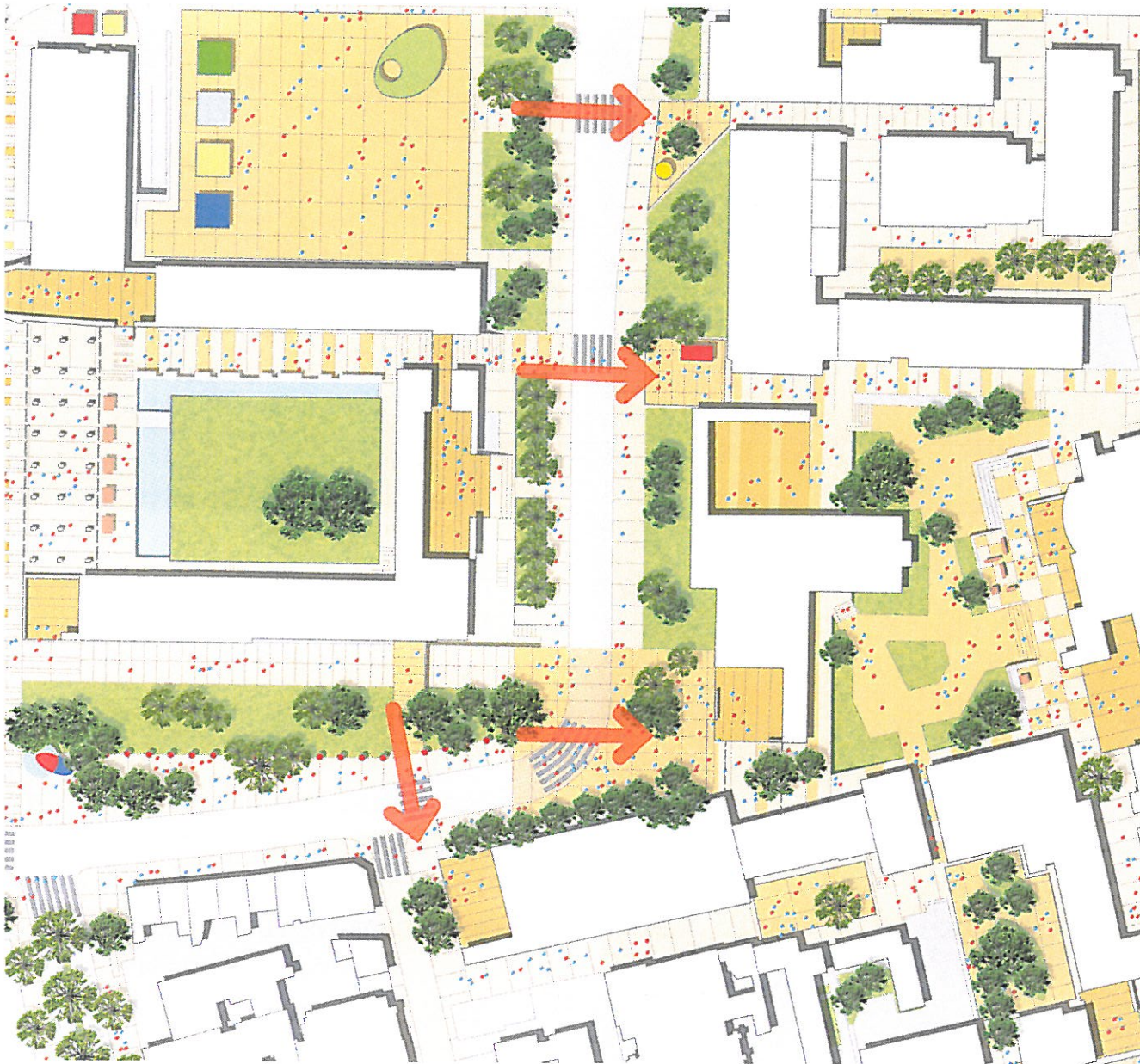
Sandyford Road



Entrance to School of Arts and Social Science

- Building and campus entrances are disconnected and hidden
- Landscape is fragmented
- Car park site on St Mary's Place is a missing tooth!





Create well defined pedestrian links

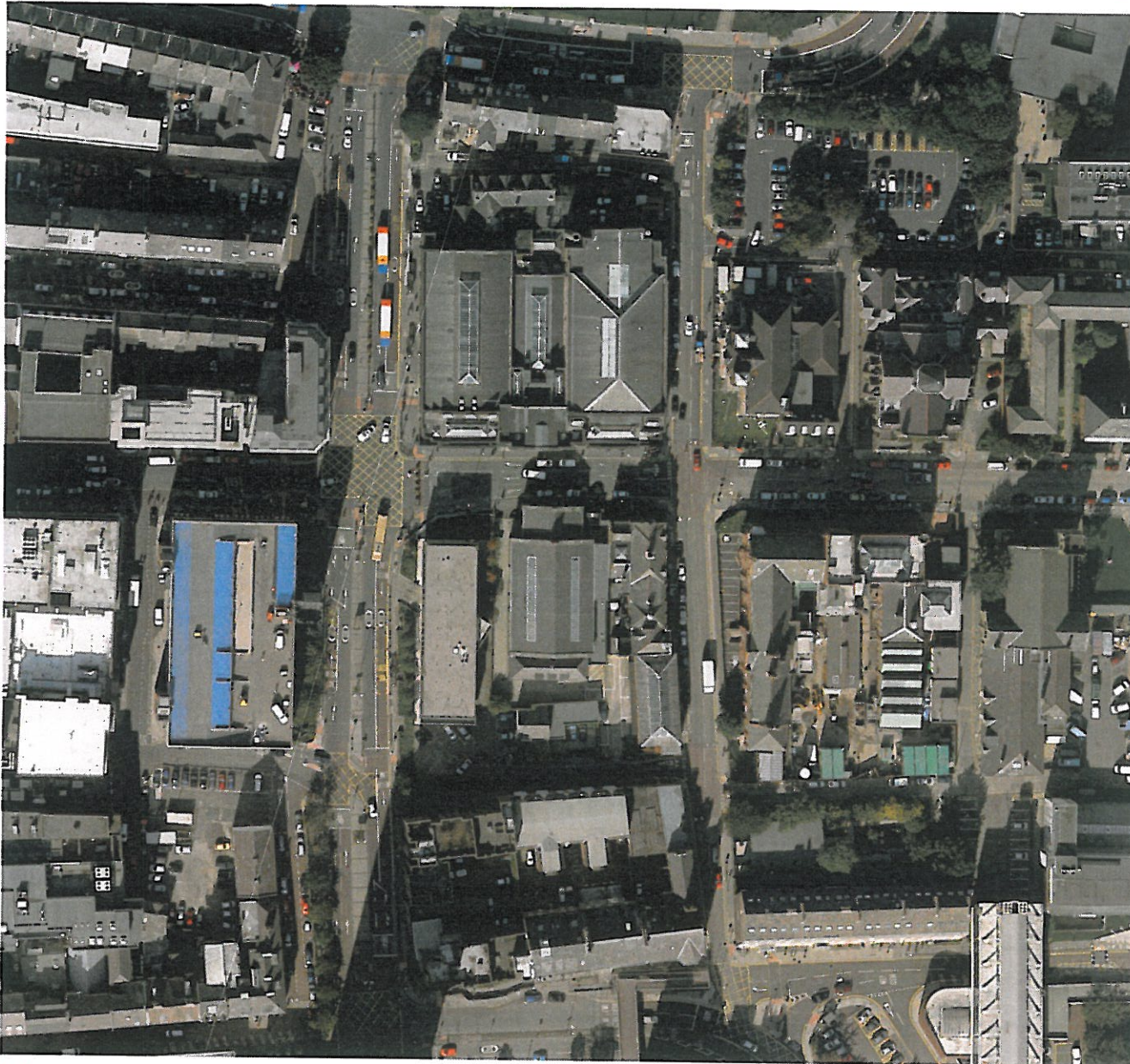


Emphasise building entrances

- Reinforce active frontages along Sandyford Road
- Develop the parking site as the new front door
- Wide and safe crossings for pedestrians



# 10 Re-urbanise John Dobson Street and the approaches to Northumbria University



John Dobson Street

- John Dobson Street is dominated by cars
- Not enough space for pedestrians and cyclists
- Poor quality pavement
- Poor approaches to Northumbria university





Improve pedestrian crossings

- Re-connect to the new front doors of Northumbria University
- Create more space for pedestrians
- Introduce safe pedestrian crossings
- More trees in the streets
- Get rid of clutter











# Next Steps

## **Agree, promote and articulate the broad strategies for the Civic Boulevard**

- Produce a strong 'killer image' for the Boulevard
- Gain detail support from 1NG and local politicians

## **Prepare and agree a project plan**

- Establish costs and relevant funding streams
- Prepare a sequential implementation programme



# Potential next design actions

## **1 Urbanise Barras Bridge**

Haymarket hub

Claremont Road/Barras Bridge

In conjunction with NCC transportation specialists, carry out a co-ordinated public realm design

## **2 St Thomas' setting**

Civic Gardens & Civic Centre

Carry out a public realm design exercise

## **3 Civic Centre setting**

Carry out a public realm design exercise for Sandyford Road

## **4 John Dobson Street**

Extend current NCC ambitions to include Northumberland Road and Saville Row connections



# The programme has yet to be defined...

FARRELLS

