



**APPENDIX 02**

HEMEL  
HEMPSTEAD  
TOWN CENTRE  
VISION

**URBAN  
ANALYSIS**



The purpose of this document is to highlight facts, figures and analysis of Hemel Hempstead.

- This analysis includes:
- 1. Character zones
  - 2. Historic assets
  - 3. Parks and rivers
  - 4. Sentiment map following community engagement
  - 4. Ground and first floor uses
  - 5. Building heights
  - 6. Extract from Two Waters Draft Masterplan Guidance
  - 7. Transport infrastructure
  - 8. Urban appraisal summary

This appendix helps to provide a high-level summary, further data and evidence has been considered whilst drafting the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Vision.





**HEMEL IS A FAMILY OF WELCOMING  
NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THRIVING  
COMMUNITIES. WORKING  
TOGETHER WE WILL SHAPE OUR  
FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE.**





# WHERE IS HEMEL

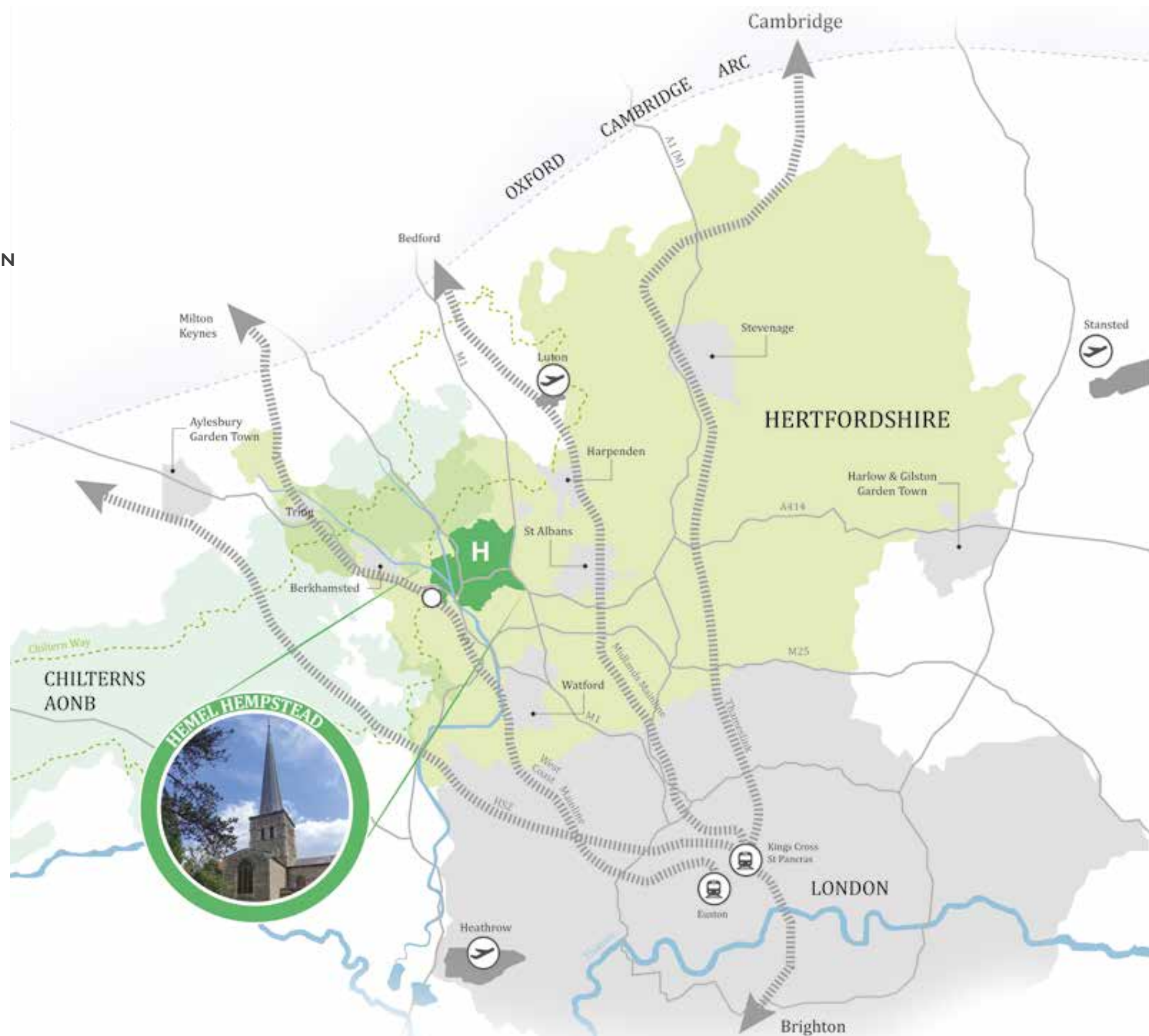
**24** MILES NORTH-WEST OF LONDON

**1539** HENRY VIII GRANTED A CHARTER OF INCORPORATION TO HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

**93,591** HEMEL HEMPSTEAD POPULATION\*

**26** MINUTES  
EUSTON STATION

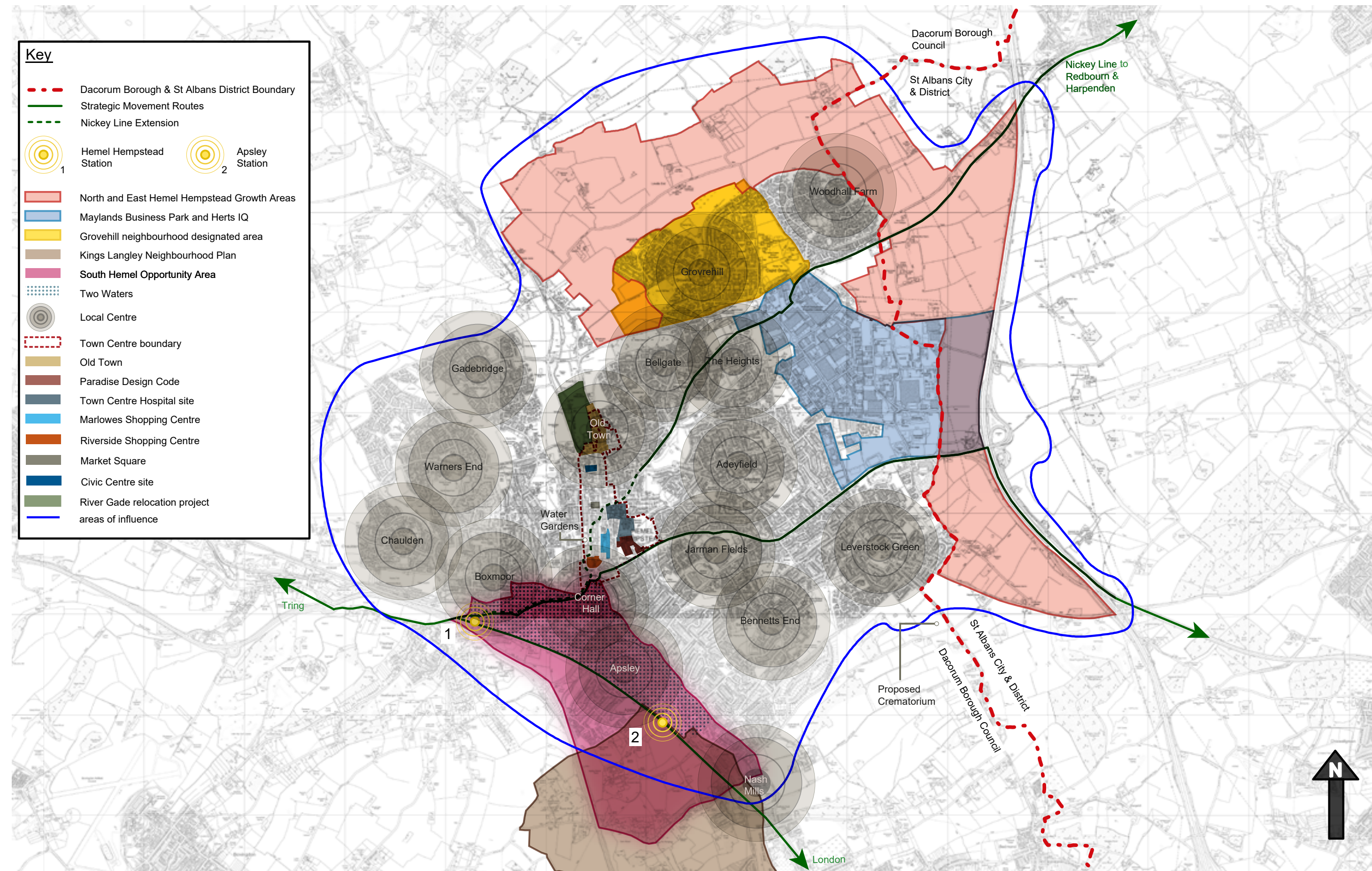
**25** MINUTES  
LUTON AIRPORT



# HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

# HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

# HEMEL BUBBLE PLAN



\*Dacorum Borough Council Data Dashboard - Hemel Hempstead total population in 2019



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre was established in the 1950s and 1960s as part of the Masterplan for the Hemel Hempstead New Town. The centre is linear in form and runs north to south along the valley floor. Geoffrey Jellicoe created the original plan based around the idea of a town in a park with generous open spaces in and around the town centre and the residential neighbourhoods. Whilst his Masterplan was substantially modified by the Development Corporation, his vision for the town centre was largely retained.

The main shopping area of the town centre was remodelled in the 1990s to include a pedestrianised area along Marlowes with an indoor shopping centre. Service yards flank Marlowes to the east and west.

To remedy this situation specific issues need to be addressed including the poor quality public realm characterised by dated frontages, surfaces and street furniture, and access and movement difficulties such as relate to pedestrians, cyclists, buses, taxis and private vehicles. The town centre has an underdeveloped evening and leisure economy and is failing to make the most of its natural and cultural assets. Regeneration and upgrading of key sites together with restoration of heritage assets is required to help secure the town centre's long-term prosperity and to create an appealing, attractive and sustainable location with a high quality environment.

By 1962 the New Town Masterplan was substantially complete. Today, Hemel Hempstead rivals Watford as Hertfordshire's largest town with a population of around 94,000.



aerial view of Hemel Town Centre

The Local Planning Framework Core Strategy identified seven distinct but interlinked zones with the town centre, each with a clear identity and character. These comprise the Old Town, the civic and educational area of the college and public sector uses along with the Market Square, the original area of Marlowes, the primary retail area along Marlowes, the Hospital and light industrial area of Paradise, the Water Gardens and the large scale buildings around the Plough roundabout. Accordingly, these seven areas are identified as individual "Character Zones" within the Core Strategy.

There is a marked difference between the Old Town in the north and the new town centre to the south. The Old Town is centred upon the High Street with its rich heritage and historic character. The High Street contains a concentration of listed buildings and is protected as a key part of the Old Town Conservation Area. In contrast, the primary shopping area focussed at the southern end of the town centre along Marlowes and the adjacent Water Gardens (registered in 2010 as a Garden of Special Historic Interest) exhibit a strong New Town character.



view of the High Street in Hemel Old Town



view of Marlowes pedestrian area in the new town centre



view of the Walled Gardens in Gadebridge Park looking north towards the spire of St Mary's Church



view of Jellicoe Water Gardens looking south toward the Kodak tower



TOWN CENTRE - CHARACTER ZONES

**7** CHARACTER ZONES

HIGH STREET IN THE OLD TOWN IS RICH OF HERITAGE AND HISTORIC CHARACTER

**1947** POST WWII HEMEL HEMPSTEAD WAS SELECTED AS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BE DESIGNATED AS A NEW TOWN

PRIMARY SHOPPING IN MARLOWES SHOPPING CENTRE AREA

The Local Planning Framework Core Strategy identified seven distinct but interlinked zones with the town centre, each with a clear identity and character. These are:

- ① Old Town Centre
- ② Original Marlowes Zone
- ③ Gade Zone
- ④ Jellicoe Water Gardens Zone
- ⑤ Hospital Zone
- ⑥ Marlowes Shopping Centre
- ⑦ Plough Zone



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - character zones\*

\*The information shown in the diagram above is extracted from 'Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan 2011-2021 - Adopted January 2013'

TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE ASSETS

A key task of the Hemel Place and Town Centre Strategy is to promote the integration and understanding of Hemel Town Centre heritage assets, providing an understanding of the historic significance of the town centre as a whole.

**76** LISTED BUILDINGS\*  
**5** PUBLIC ART PIECES  
**1** CONSERVATION AREA



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - heritage asset \*\*

\*\*The information shown on this diagram is extracted from 'Hemel Hempstead Heritage Improvement Study' dated November 2021

- key
- Listed building
  - Building of interest
  - Building of merit
  - Old Town conservation area
  - Public art
- ① The Old Town Centre
  - ② The original Marlowes
  - ③ Sir Rowland Emmett's mosaic mural to the Hillview Road elevation of the car park to the corner of Hillview Road and Marlowes
  - ④ Watergarden Street
  - ⑤ The Bank Building
  - ⑥ Architectural detailing to buildings in Bridge Street
  - ⑦ The New Town Centre

\*<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/dacorum-hemel-hempstead-town-ward-dacorum-hertfordshire#.YZTTIU7P2Uk>



TOWN CENTRE PARKS AND RIVERS

**3** DESTINATION PARKS IN HEMEL HEMPSTEAD:  
 - Gadebridge Park  
 - Bunkers Park  
 - Boxmoor

**1** GARDENS OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST FROM 2010  
 JELlicoe WATER GARDEN

**£3.5M** RESTORATION OF JELlicoe WATER GARDEN IN 2017

- key
- ① River Gade
  - ② Jellicoe Water Garden
  - ③ Riverside green area
  - ④ Waterhouse Street
  - ⑤ The Walled Garden
  - ⑥ Gadebridge Park
  - ⑦ Paradise Fields
  - ⑧ Heath Park



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - Parks and Rivers --- Town Centre boundary

TOWN CENTRE HEAT MAP

**479** CONTRIBUTIONS\*  
**187** RESPONDENTS\*



- key
- Red pin: Negative
  - Orange pin: Mostly negative
  - Yellow pin: Neutral
  - Light green pin: Mostly positive
  - Dark green pin: Positive

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - sentiment heat map\*

\*The information shown on this diagram is based on Commonplace interviews reported on the following website: <https://yourhemelhempstead.commonplace.is/>

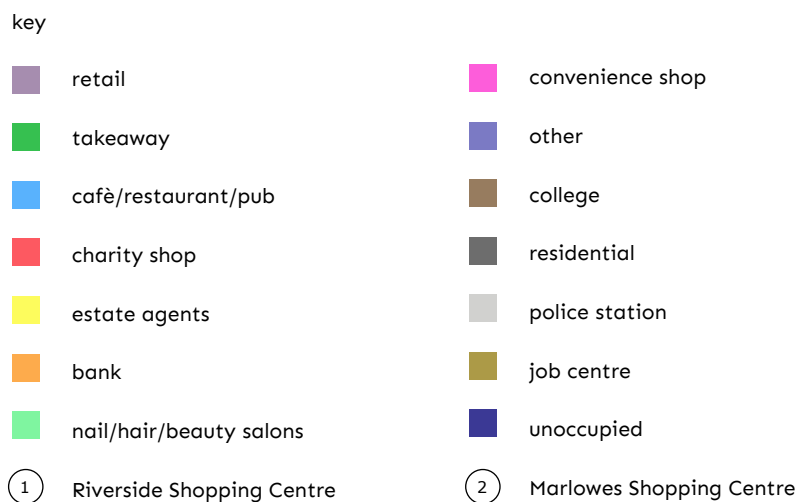


TOWN CENTRE GROUND FLOOR USES

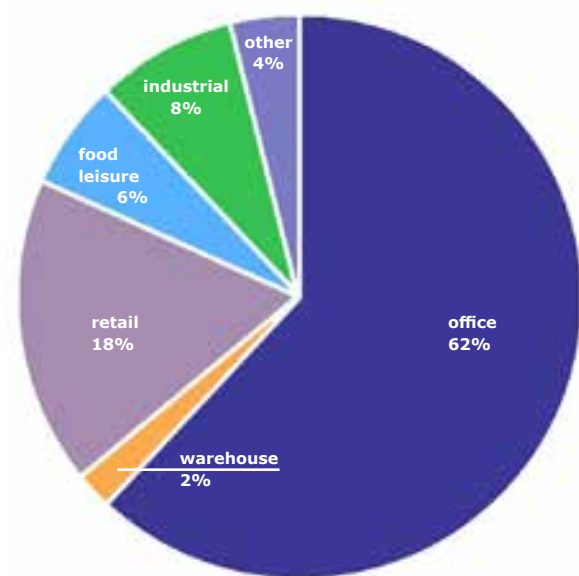
**LACK OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE FACILITIES IN TOWN CENTRE**

**REAL OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

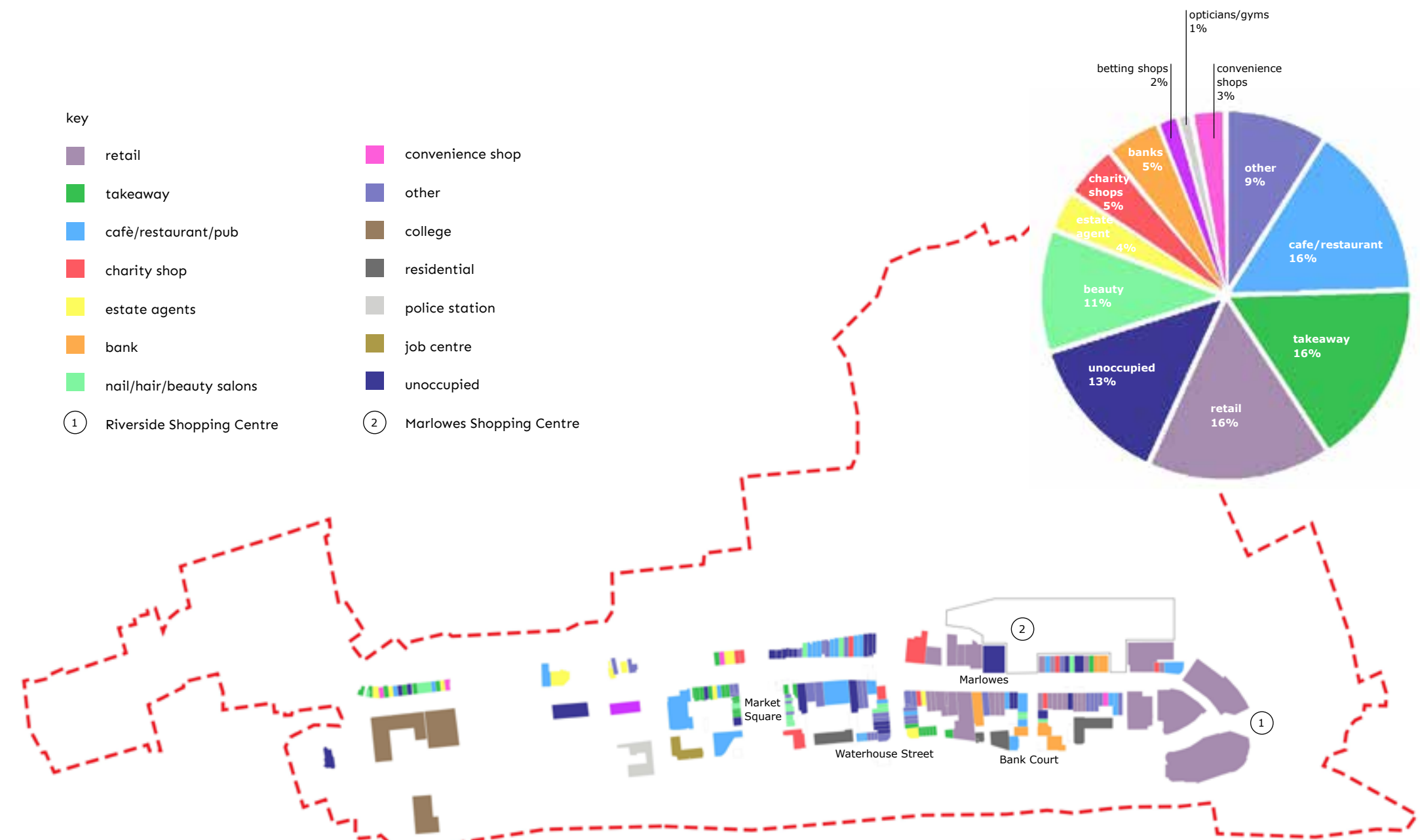
**BUSINESSES NEED SUPPORT AND A NEW PURPOSE FOR STREET LEVEL ACTIVITIES AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES NEED TO BE DEVELOPED**



① Riverside Shopping Centre      ② Marlowes Shopping Centre

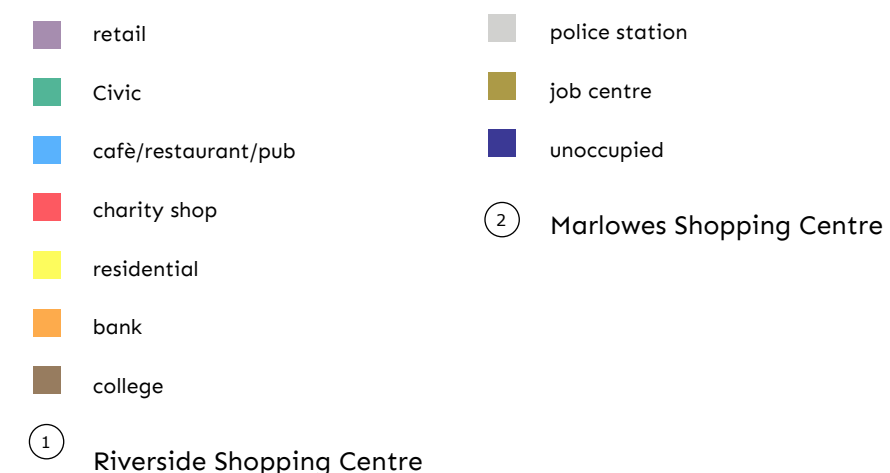


Recommended mix of uses in strong city centres as indicated in research report prepared by KPMG in 2021



--- Town Centre boundary

TOWN CENTRE FIRST FLOOR USES



--- Town Centre boundary

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - first floor uses (diagram dated January 2022)

# art.4

Recent changes in planning rules mean that a range of commercial premises could be converted to houses or flats without the need for planning permission.

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) consider that these changes could potentially have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of Hemel Hempstead town centre, by impacting its ability to retain and attract businesses and jobs, as well as impacting the level of services available locally for Dacorum's residents, workers and visitors.

Consequently, DBC have made an Article 4 Direction covering parts of Hemel Hempstead town centre that will require any changes of use to residential to require planning permission. This Direction came into force on Thursday 29 July 2021.

An Article 4 Direction is now in place across parts of Hemel Hempstead town centre. A consultation was held in August 2021. The Direction has now been confirmed by the Council and remains in effect until it is modified or cancelled.

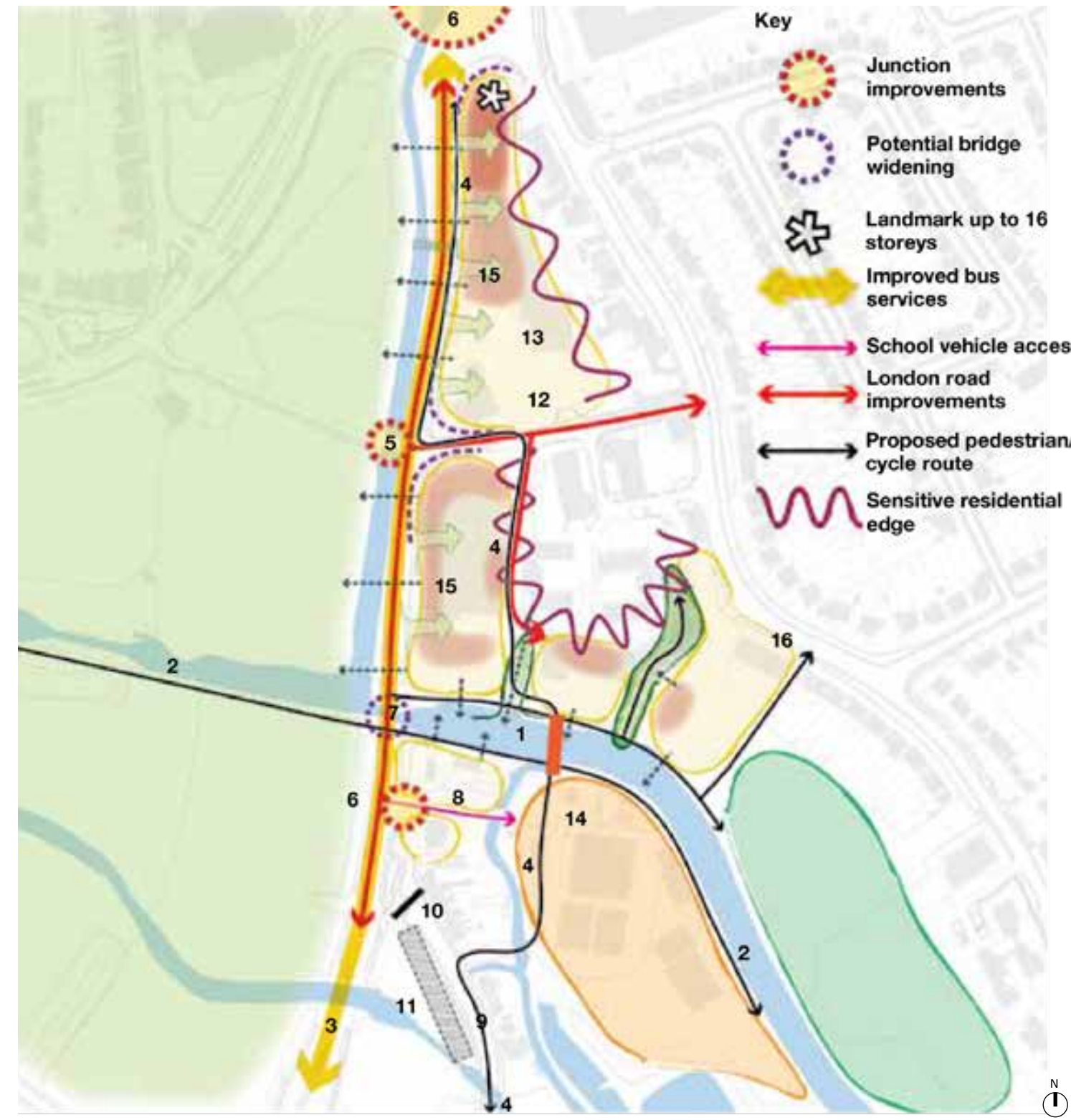
source: <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/article-4-directions>



- key
- G
  - G+1
  - G+2
  - G+3
  - G+4
  - G+5
  - G+6
  - G+7
  - G+8
  - G+9
  - G+21

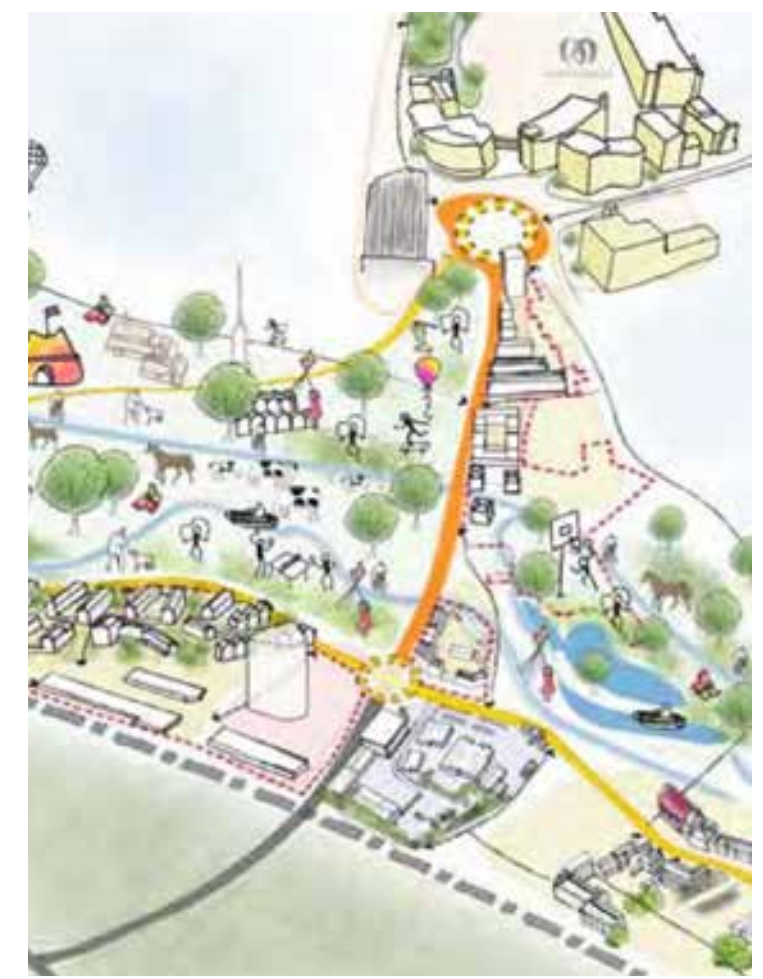


Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - building height in Town Centre --- Town Centre boundary



Site 4 design principle and development requirements - diagram extracted from 'Two Waters - Draft Masterplan Guidance, June 2017'

**G+15** LANDMARK BUILDING UP TO 16 STOREYS PROPOSED AROUND THE PLOUGH ROUNDABOUT GATEWAY

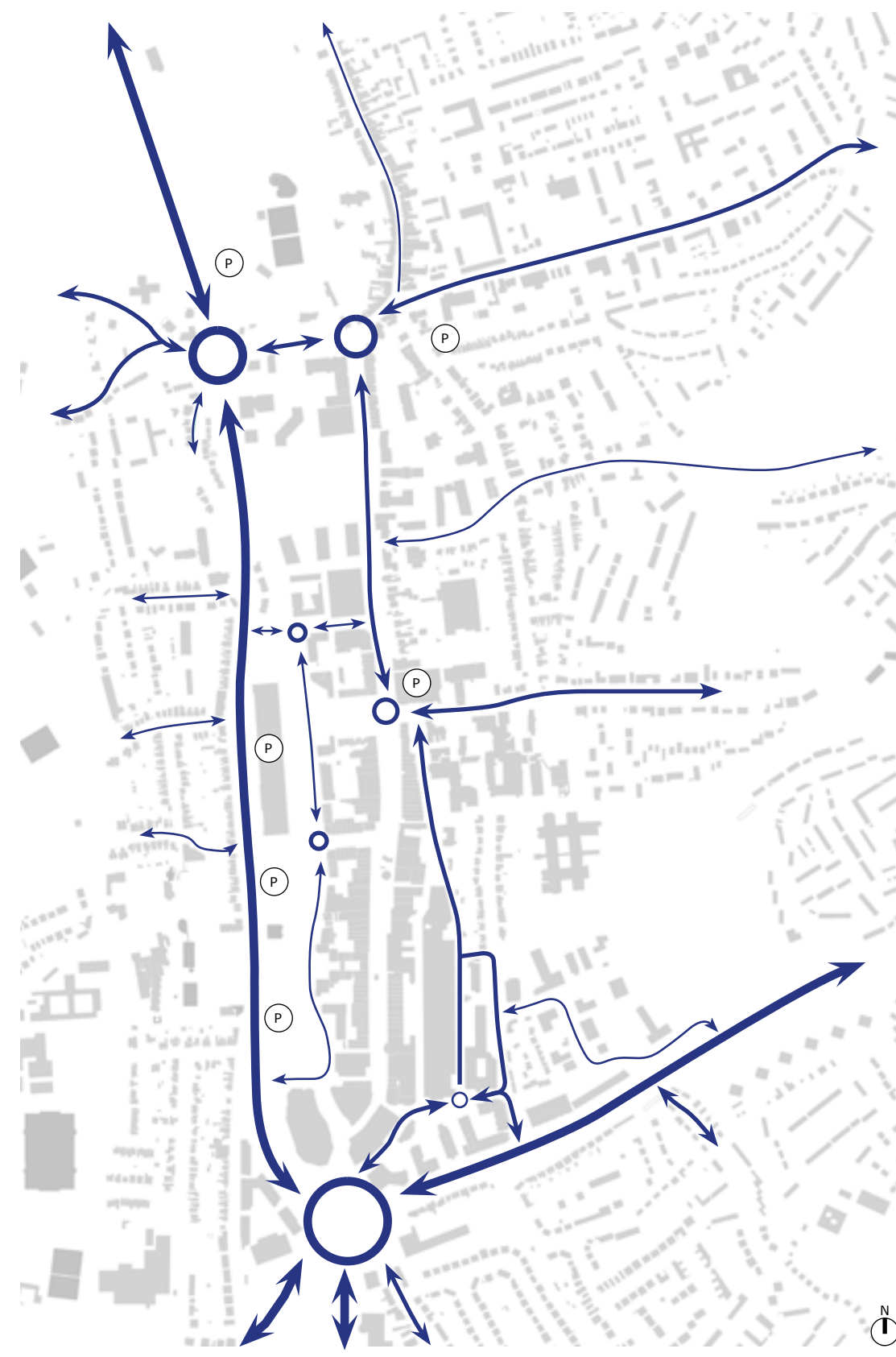


The Vision for the Two Waters Masterplan - diagram extracted from 'Two Waters - Draft Masterplan Guidance, June 2017'



HEMEL TOWN CENTRE - EXISTING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

- key
- vehicular circulation
  - vehicular roundabout
  - parking area
  - bus route
  - bus stop
  - bus interchange



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - main vehicular circulation

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - public transport circulation

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

- key
- cycle path
  - cycle parking

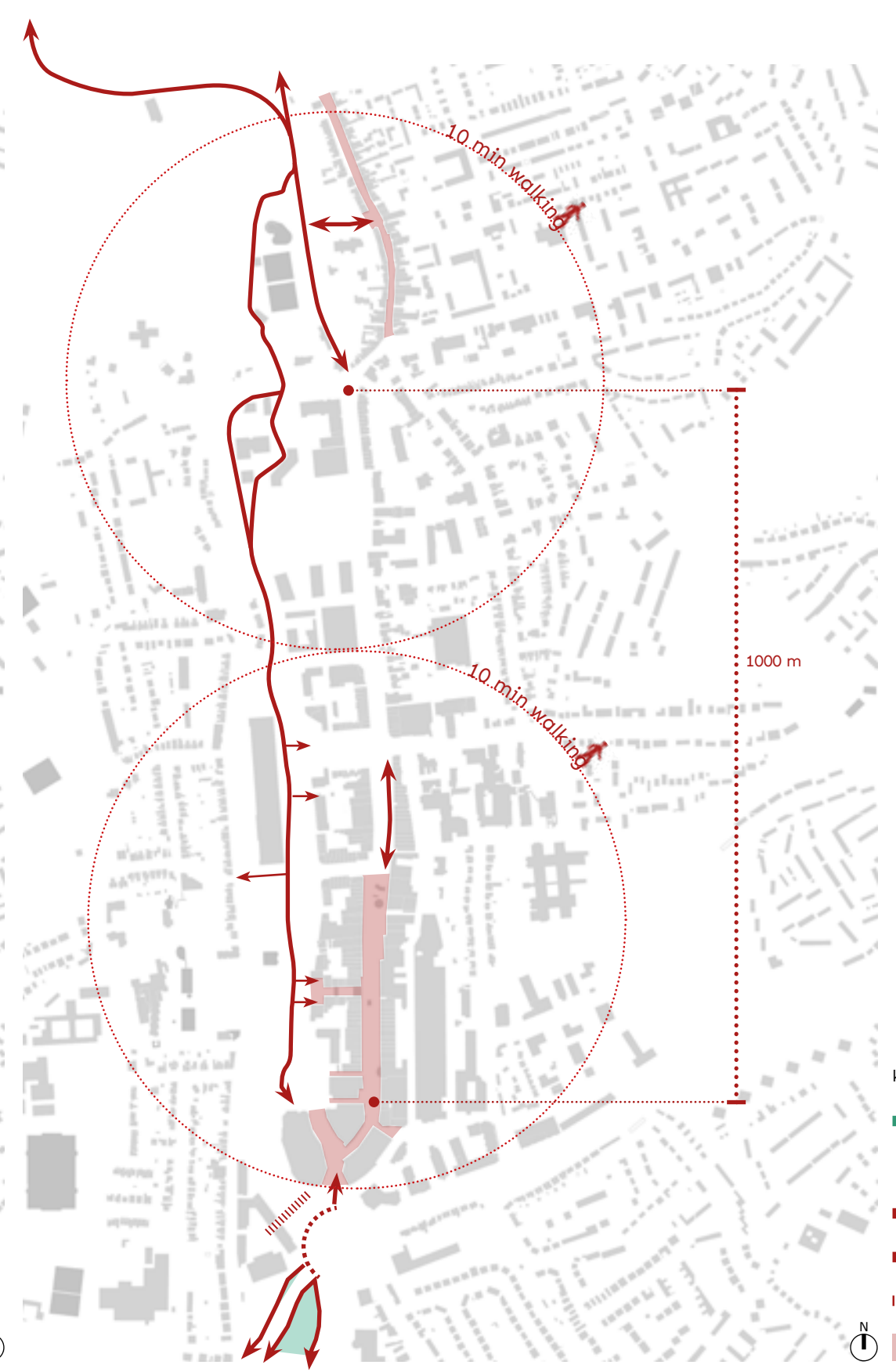


Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - cycle circulation

HEMEL TOWN CENTRE - TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**£30M+**  
 INVESTED IN IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC REALM IN OLD TOWN AND MARLOWES AND RESTORATION OF JELICOE WATER GARDENS

- key
- cycle path
  - cycle parking
  - pedestrian path
  - pedestrian underpass
  - pedestrian bridge
  - shared surface area



Hemel Hempstead Town Centre - pedestrian circulation



Although Hemel Hempstead is a “New Town”, the area has a past that goes back a long way. The origin of the word Hemel probably came from “Haemele” which was the name of this district in the eighth century. Also suggested is that Haemele means the confluence of two rivers, which in this case would be the Gade & the Bulbourne.

The first recorded mention of the town is the grant of land at Hamale by Offa, King of Essex, to the Saxon Bishop of London in AD 705. The Hemel Old Town is part of the story of historic settlement along the Gade Valley which extends back to at least the Roman period where there is extensive evidence for settlement. The area also appears to be the location of an important Saxon estate centre with a possible minster church associated with a high status manorial complex at The Bury. The medieval period, from which much of the present form of the Old Town is thought to date, sees planned development along the High Street with a number of long, deep plots still retaining their historic boundaries from this period. The early 16th century granting of a borough charter together with the right to hold a weekly market and yearly fair secured the continued development of the town to what is seen today.



St Mary's Church and the High Street, Hemel Hempstead, 1927



John Dickinsons Paper Mill, Apsley, 1920



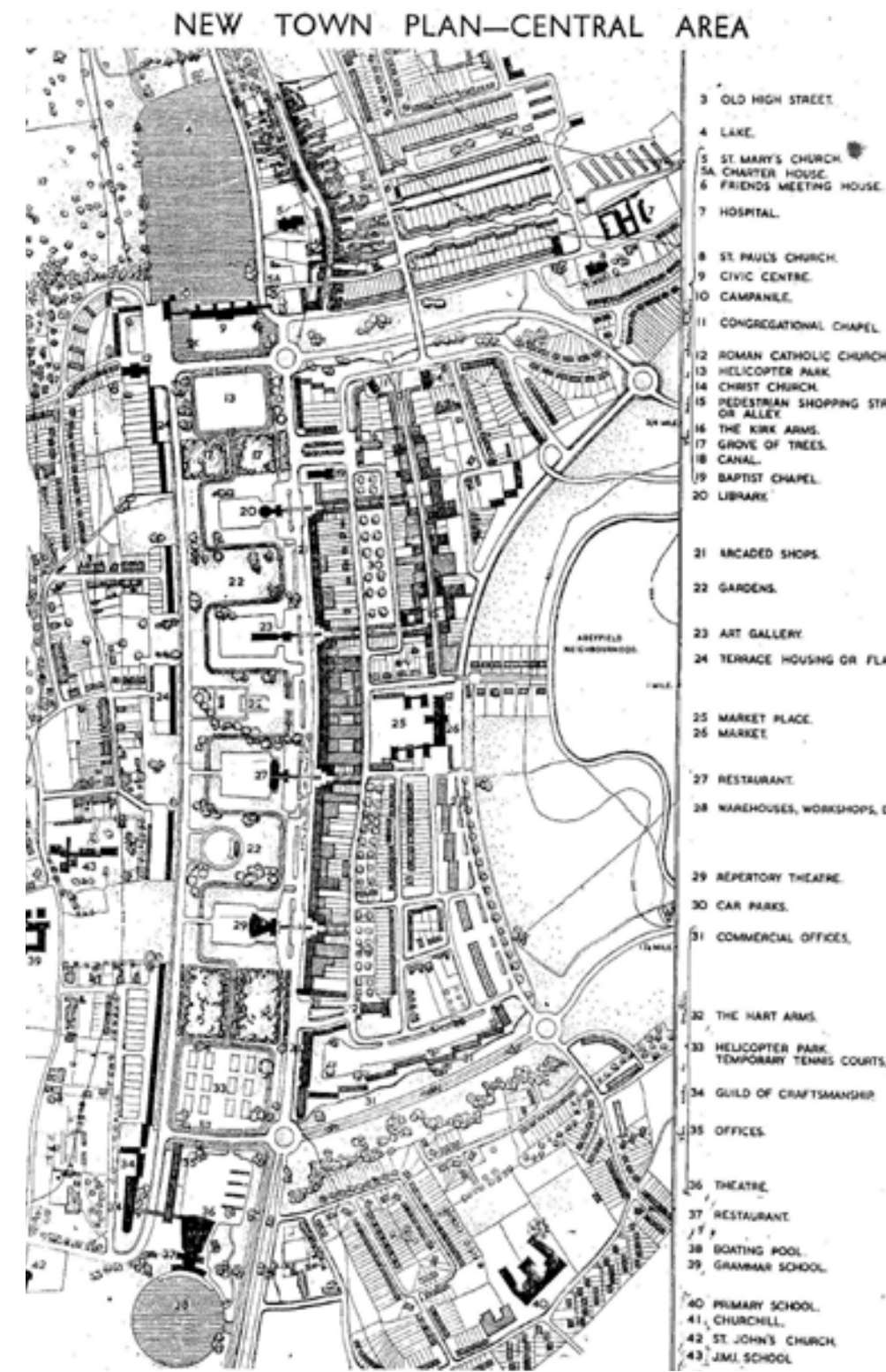
Pump in the Old High Street



The Old Town High Street in 1957



The Marlowes in 1956



The initial plan of the new town centre designed by the architect Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe



The new town centre in 1960s



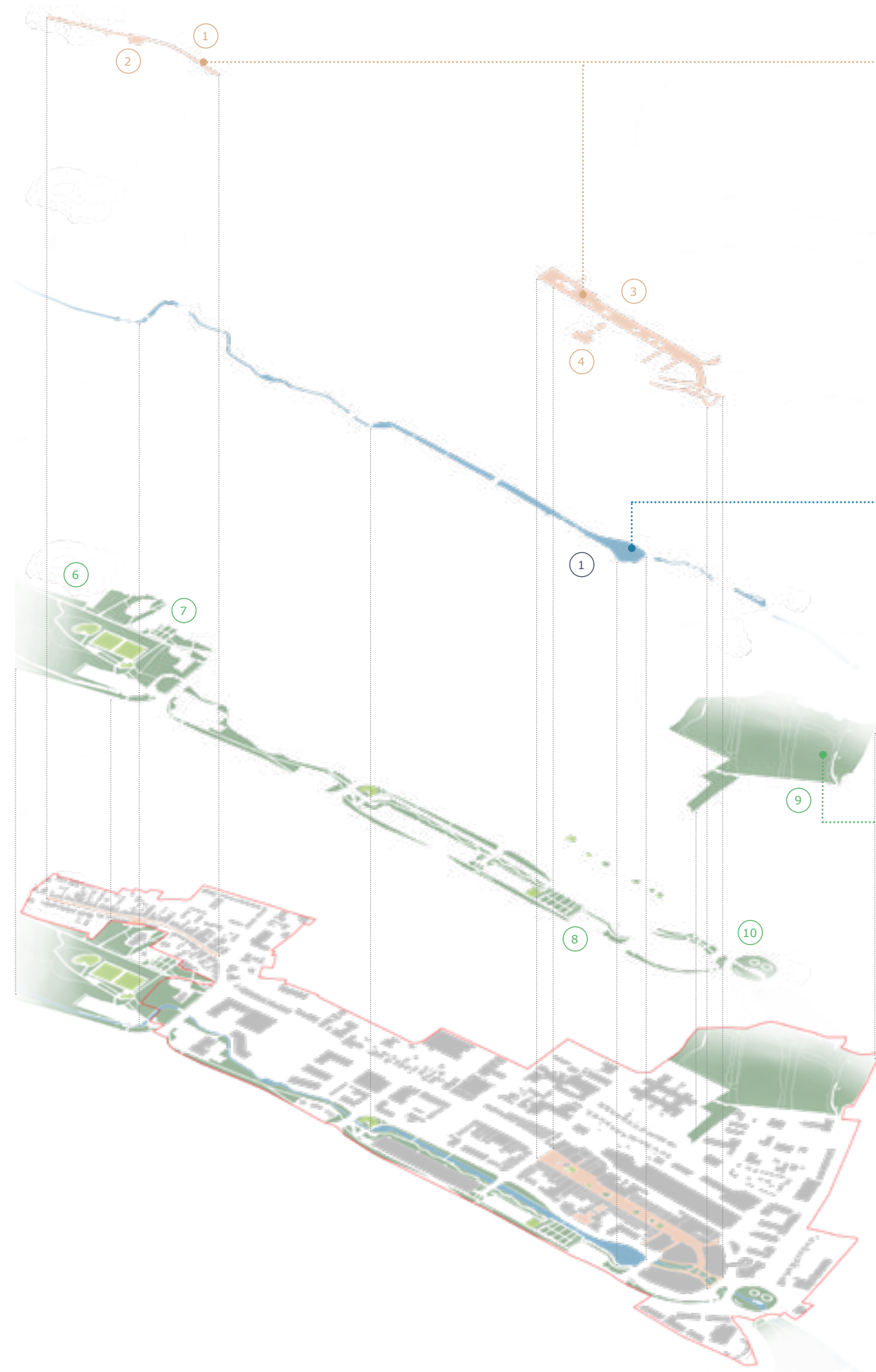
Waterhouse Street in 1960

After the Second World War, in 1946, the government designated Hemel Hempstead as the site of one of its proposed new towns to house the population displaced by the London Blitz, since slums and bomb sites were being cleared in London.

The initial plans for the New Town were drawn up by architect Geoffrey Jellicoe. His view of Hemel Hempstead, was “not a city in a garden, but a city in a park”. Jellicoe’s original 1947 masterplan for Hemel Hempstead New Town was never to be fully implemented, rejected by the government as being too expensive and impractical. However, the structure of Jellicoe’s town centre masterplan was largely retained by the Corporation; the relocation of the main shopping area to the Marlowes, the arrangement of a central park flanked by a road running north-south, with residential housing to the west, and shops and commerce to the east are all key elements of Jellicoe’s Masterplan and what we see in the Town Centre today.

The development of the town centre was started in 1952, with a new centre based on Marlowes south of the old town. This was alongside a green area called the Water Gardens, designed by Jellicoe, formed by ponding back the River Gade. By 1962, the redevelopment of the new town as originally envisaged was largely complete, though further expansion plans were then put forward. A campus of West Herts College, the library, new police station and the Cinema were all built during the 1960s.





**KEY ISSUES:**

- Unpleasant pedestrian connection between the Marlowes Shopping Centre Area and the Old Town

**KEY ASSETS:**

- The Old Town shared surface
- The market shared surface
- The Marlowes shared surface
- The Bank Court shared surface



**KEY ISSUES:**

- Lack of active frontages and activities along the River Gade
- Presence of cars and delivery bays undervalue the walking experience along the canal

**KEY ASSETS:**

- The River Gade

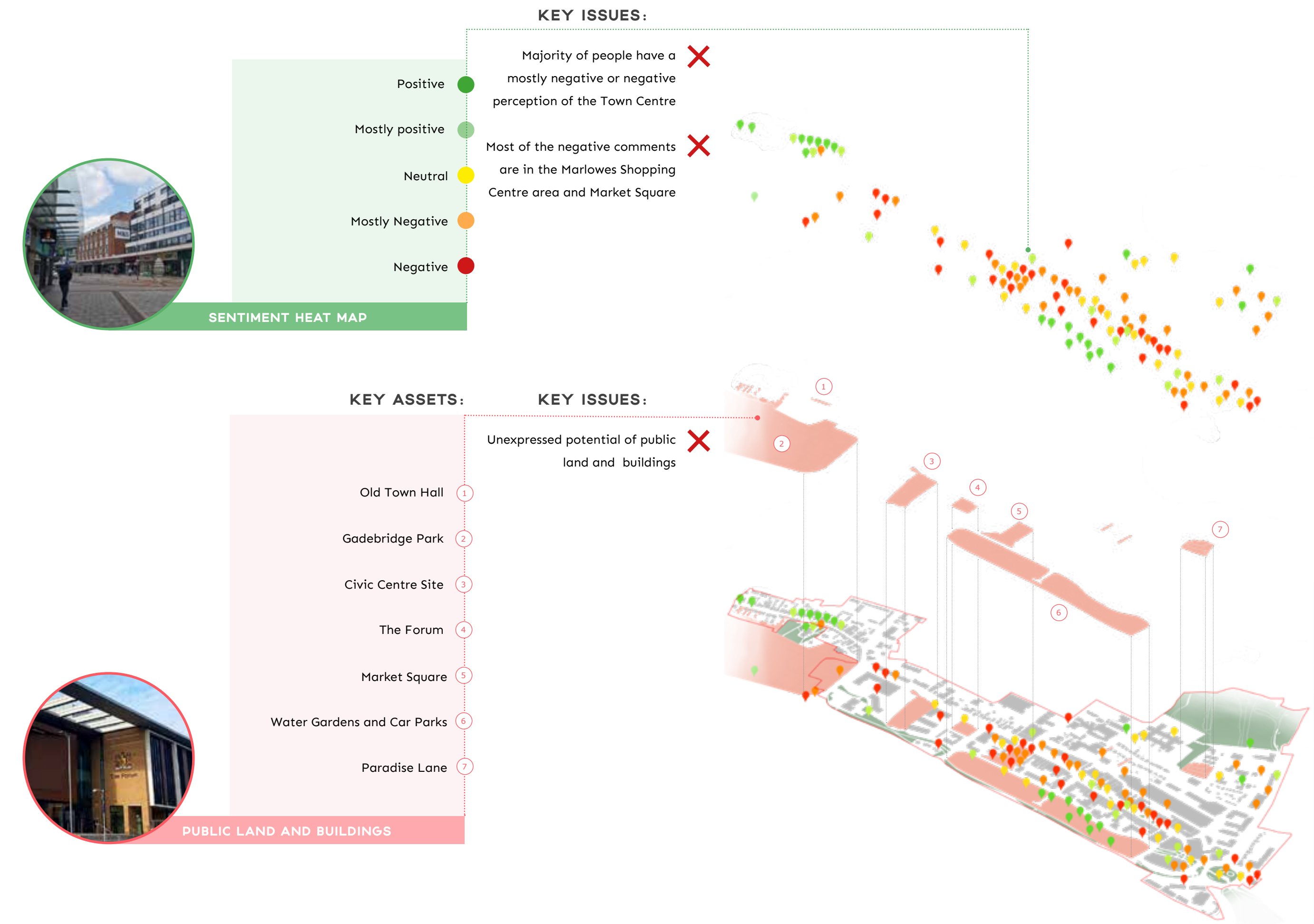


**KEY ISSUES:**

- Lack of east-west green permeability through the Town Centre
- Lack of well designed green spaces in the Marlowes Shopping Centre area

**KEY ASSETS:**

- Gadebridge Park
- The Walled Garden
- Jellicoe Water Garden
- Paradise Fields
- The Plough Roundabout



**KEY ISSUES:**

- Majority of people have a mostly negative or negative perception of the Town Centre
- Most of the negative comments are in the Marlowes Shopping Centre area and Market Square

- Positive
- Mostly positive
- Neutral
- Mostly Negative
- Negative

SENTIMENT HEAT MAP

**KEY ASSETS:**

- Old Town Hall
- Gadebridge Park
- Civic Centre Site
- The Forum
- Market Square
- Water Gardens and Car Parks
- Paradise Lane

**KEY ISSUES:**

- Unexpressed potential of public land and buildings

PUBLIC LAND AND BUILDINGS





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