

Hailsham Town Centre Retail Capacity Study



FINAL REPORT
HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 OCTOBER 2008

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. ANALYSIS
3. CAPACITY TESTING
4. PUBLIC REALM
5. CONCLUSIONS

Tibbalds Planning & Urban
Design
19 Maltings Place
169 Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3JB

T: 020 7089 2121
F: 020 7089 2120

mail@tibbalds.co.uk
www.tibbalds.co.uk



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design was appointed by Hailsham Town Council to undertake a study into the retail capacity of Hailsham Town Centre. The study:

- assesses the amount of additional retail floorspace that could physically be provided within the Town Centre by 2016 and by 2026 (the LDF end date) through changes of use of existing buildings, extensions to existing shops and new development;
- identifies opportunities for new retail to enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre through associated improvements to the quality and accessibility of the public realm for pedestrians, car users and those using public transport;
- ensures that future retail floorspace has the potential to contribute to the distinctive character of Hailsham as a Wealden Market Town.

These study objectives were set out in the Brief produced by Hailsham Town Council and are, in turn, derived from Planning Policy Statement 6: Positive Planning for Town Centres: A Plan-Led Approach (PPS6).

1.2 The study performs a number of functions, and provides:

- a Brief for the future development of the Town Centre;
- an evidence base for the preparation of the Wealden District Local Development Framework (LDF); and
- providing evidence to help support planning decisions and planning appeals in relation to retail proposals within Hailsham.

1.4 This Final Report sets out:

- an urban design analysis of the Town Centre that seeks to establish the key issues and priorities that should influence the location and nature of future retail development;
- capacity testing of the major development opportunities;
- principles for improving the pedestrian experience of the Town Centre; and
- conclusions to the study, which set out that there is capacity within the Town Centre for between approximately 5940 sq m and 8950 sq m gross floor area in locations that are able to positively reinforce the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 We have undertaken an urban design analysis of the Town Centre that addresses the following issues:

- historic development;
- vehicular access and circulation;
- pedestrian access and circulation;
- existing land use;
- building quality;
- character areas and gateways; and
- land ownership.

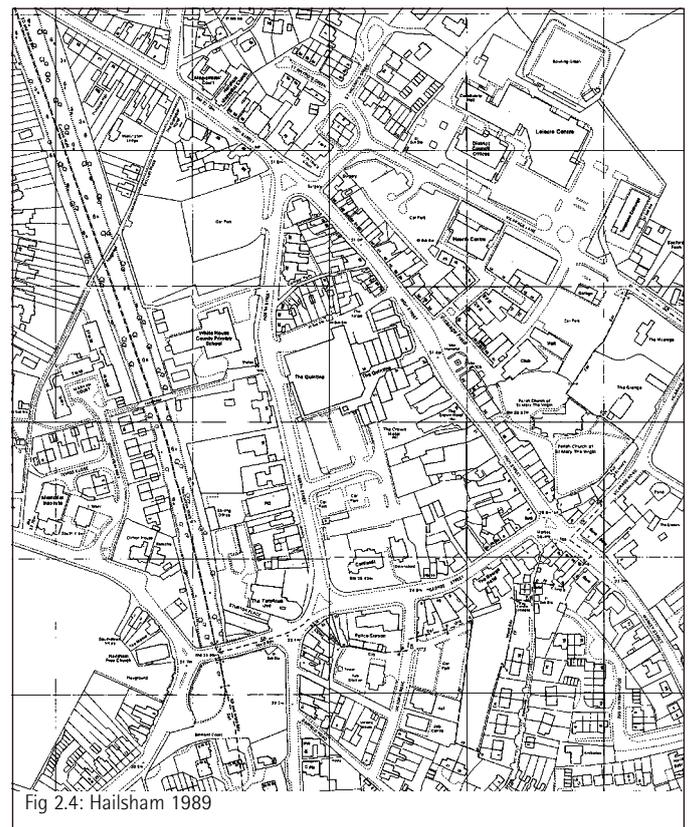
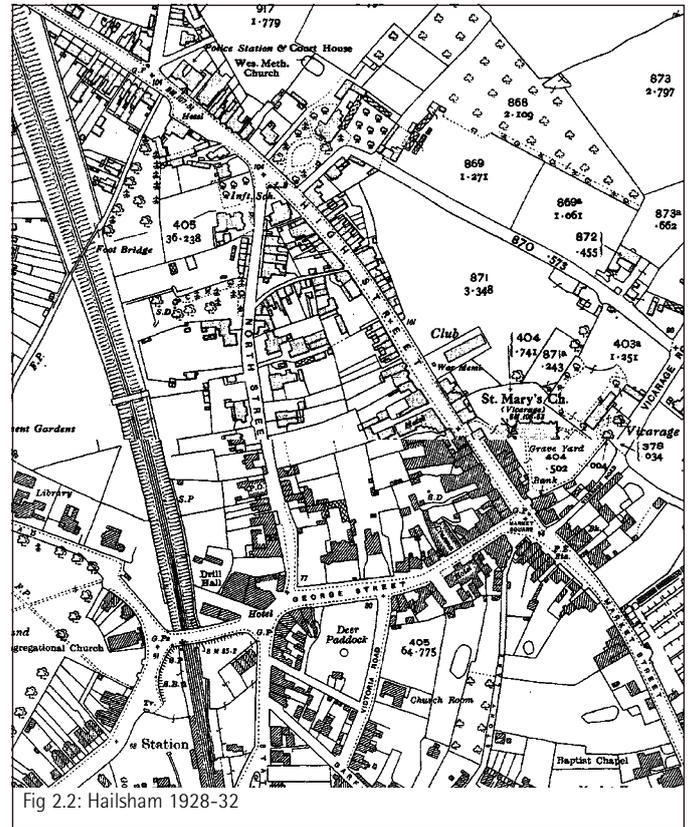
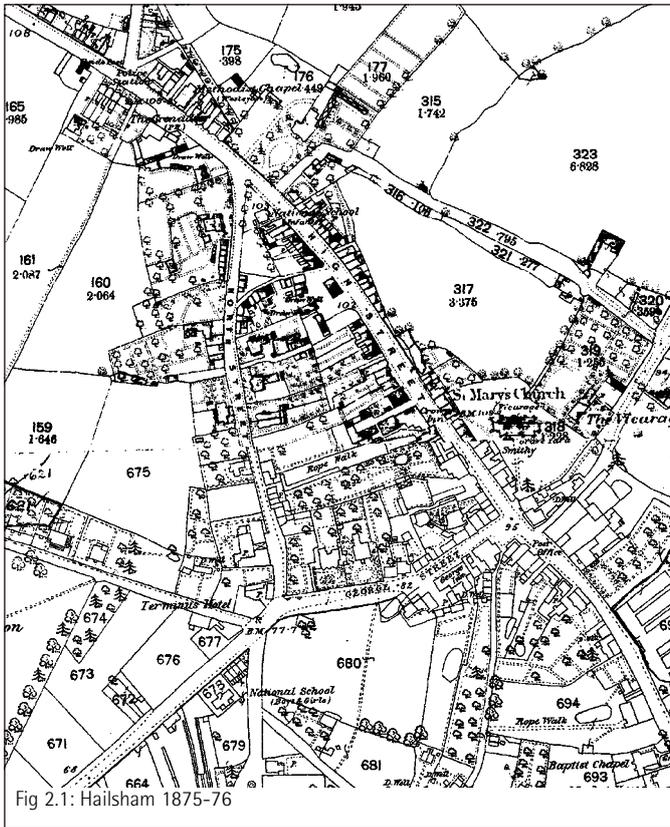
2.2 The following pages set out the analysis, and lead to the identification of development opportunities from the point of view of what will make Hailsham Town Centre work better as a place and *not* solely what development sites may be available.

Historic Development

2.3 As the plans opposite show, Hailsham initially developed along a High Street which runs north-west to south-east along a ridgeline. The focus for the emerging town was the intersection of streets that forms Market Square at the southern end of the High Street. This remains the visually most attractive part of Hailsham today, and is the location for many of the Town's listed buildings.

2.4 This historic structure of the Town continues to have an important influence over the way in which vehicles and pedestrians move around and access the Town Centre. In particular:

- Hailsham is typical of a 'market town' structure, with a main linear High Street running through the centre of the Town, linked to areas behind it by streets, alleyways and 'twittens' running perpendicular to the High Street. Thus the High Street is - and should remain - the focal point for activities that many people need to access and rely on footfall for their economic viability (retail, cafes and so on).
- As the High Street is an historic street, it is not designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic or to provide access to car parks. Many peoples' experience of arriving in the Town Centre is therefore arriving at the 'back' of the High Street (in one of the car parks) and walking through to the main shopping area. This is generally not a positive experience as one is exposed to the backs of buildings and service areas, but there are some good examples - e.g. St. Mary's Walk.



Vehicular Access and Circulation

2.5 Figure 2.8 opposite sets out the vehicular access and circulation in the core Town Centre as it will be once the new Tesco Store on North Street is open - i.e. two-way traffic flow on North Street.

2.6 As set out in the Historic Development analysis:

- The High Street provides the main focus for retail activity and it is heavily used by both cars and pedestrians. However, it is not the main route by which car drivers access the Town Centre - many arrive at the 'back' of the High Street, accessing the car parks that lie either side of the High Street from North Street and/or Vicarage Lane.
- The impact of the re-introduction of two-way traffic on North Street is uncertain until the Tesco store is open. However, it will be important to ensure that North Street does not act as a barrier to pedestrian movement between Tesco and the High Street.



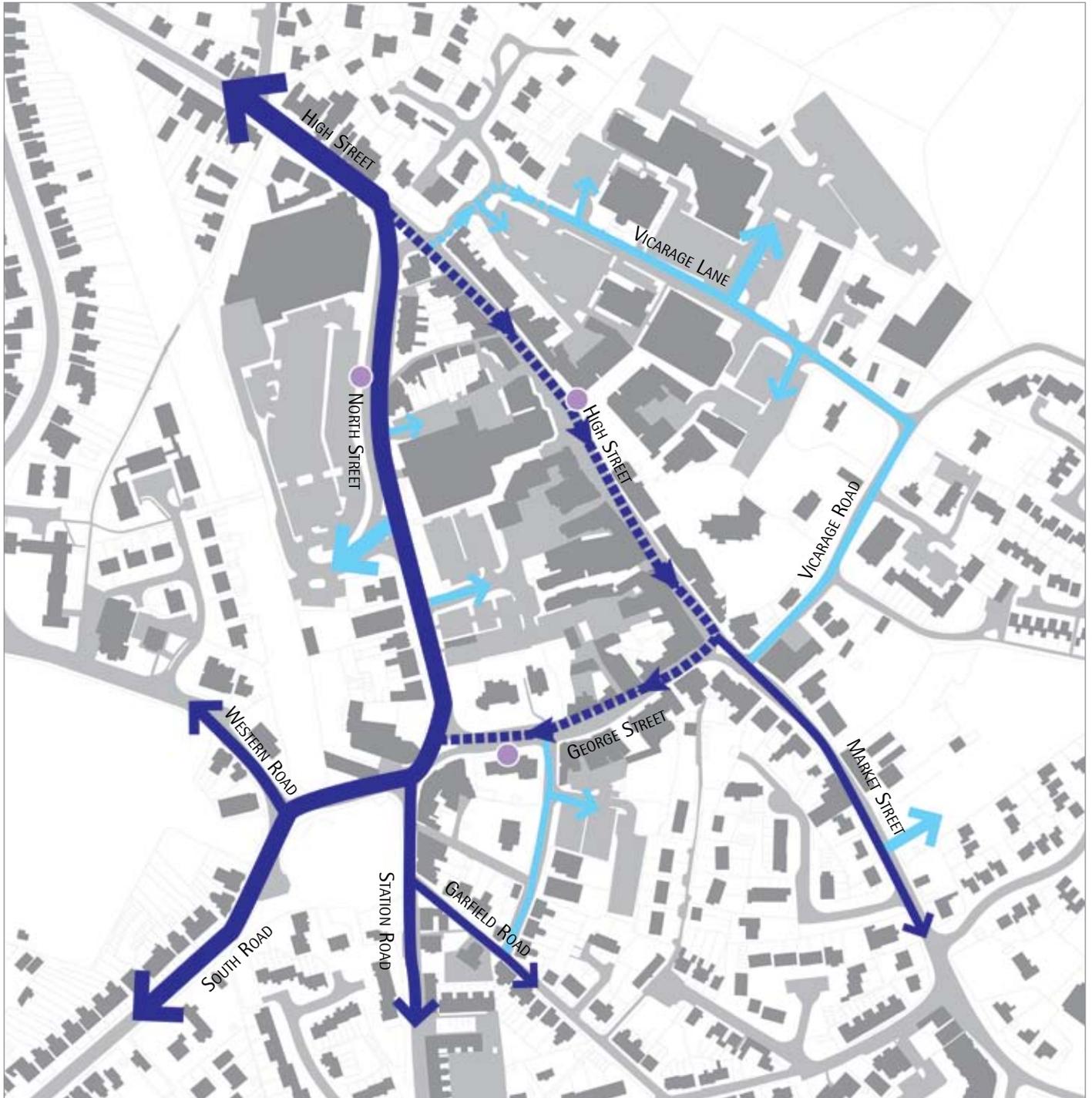
Fig 2.5: High Street



Fig 2.6: North Street



Fig 2.7: Major Carpark off Vicarage Lane



- Major street in wider transport network
- Town Centre Access (car parking and servicing)
- One Way Street
- Major town centre bus stop

Fig 2.8: Vehicular Access and Circulation

Pedestrian Access and Circulation

- 2.7 Pedestrians arrive in the Town Centre from two key origins: from the surrounding residential or employment areas, or from the various surface car parks encircling the High Street. Both of these involve using routes perpendicular to the High Street to access the retail areas, with the 'off-street retail' links through the Quintins, St. Mary's Walk and Vicarage Fields being particularly important to this movement.
- 2.8 However, the routes perpendicular to the High Street are not of good quality as:
- they are generally not very legible, as sight lines through to destinations are obscured; and
 - some of them pass blank facades, service yards or car parks.
- 2.9 The High Street is very much the focus of the retail area. However, pedestrian movement along and across the High Street is hampered by parked cars and moving vehicles, and restricted by narrow pavements. There is a sense that cars are more important than pedestrians. There are a number of secondary retail areas (such as George Street), where again the pedestrian experience is rather dominated by cars.
- 2.10 There are bus stops and a taxi rank within the High Street. However, neither of these provides pedestrians with a good experience as:
- they are not obvious to the uninitiated; and
 - they do not provide any shelter to those waiting for transport.
- 2.11 The photographs overleaf illustrate some of the issues relating to the pedestrian experience of the public realm.



Fig 2.9: Vicarage Field



Fig 2.10: The Cuckoo Trail



-  High Street Retail
-  On-street retail routes
-  Off-street retail
-  Cuckoo Trail
-  Other connecting paths

 Town Centre Car Parking

Fig 2.11: Pedestrian Access and Circulation



Fig 2.12: Visual clutter of street furniture detracts from the quality townscape in this part of Hailsham



Fig 2.13: Whilst the flowers are attractive, the poles clutter up the narrow footways



Fig 2.14: The southern half of the High Street contains a single lane of parked cars. The traffic carriageway is wide, but the pavement for pedestrians is narrow



Fig 2.15: The War Memorial is the main 'hard' open space within the Town Centre, however it is obscured by parked cars



Fig 2.16: This should be the 'heart' of the Town Centre, but the space is divided by walls so shops and space cannot 'connect' together



Fig 2.17: Pedestrian crossing at The Quintins - pedestrians are made to feel less important than cars.



Fig 2.18: Bus stops provide passengers with a low quality experience of using public transport



Fig 2.19: A rare view of the High Street: almost free of vehicles



Fig 2.20: The northern half of the High Street is dominated by parked cars along both sides, creating a continuous obstacle for pedestrians and making the narrow pavements feel even more enclosed



Fig 2.21: The northern 'gateway' to the High Street will change as a result of the alterations to the street being made as part of the Tesco development



Fig 2.22: The taxi rank is not obvious to the uninitiated, and has no shelter for those waiting.



Fig 2.23: The wider pavements and absence of parked cars create a welcome 'breathing space' outside the Quintins

Land Use

2.8 Figure 2.27 maps the land uses found within the study area. These are ground floor uses - upper floors are used for a variety of purposes, ranging from storage to offices to residential. The plan shows that:

- Retail uses are clustered on the High Street, with the major food anchors of Tesco, Waitrose and Coop in the Quintins 'hanging' off either side of the High Street.
- There are some isolated pockets of retail and food and drink uses on Station Road and to the north and south of the High Street, but the Town Centre quickly gives way to predominantly residential uses.
- There are a number of charity shops and vacant units in prime Town Centre locations - not the sign of a healthy Town Centre.
- There are clusters of office and professional service uses at the 'gateways' to the High Street that act as a transition between the Town Centre and the surrounding residential area.



Fig 2.24: Leisure Centre



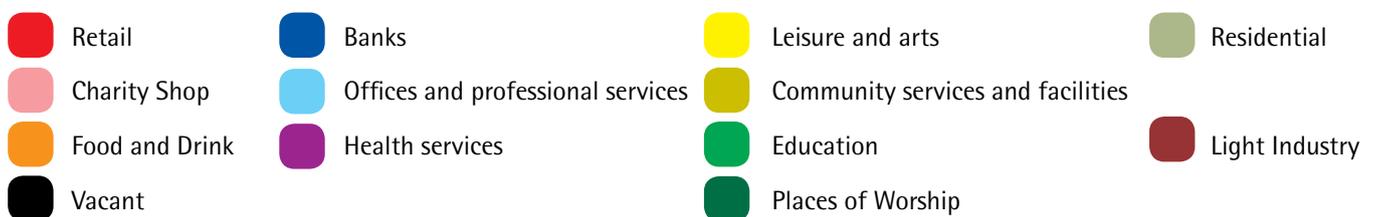
Fig 2.25: Large Tesco store under construction



Fig 2.26: Low rent uses and vacant shops in central locations



Fig 2.27: Land Use



Building Quality

- 2.9 We have assessed the contribution each building within the Town Centre makes to the townscape of Hailsham. The main categories are:
- Positive contribution - the building is of good quality, and is in keeping with the character and identity of the Town.
 - Neutral contribution - the building does not positively enhance or detract from Hailsham's townscape.
 - Negative contribution - the building detracts from Hailsham's townscape.
- 2.10 However, we found that many buildings within Hailsham have a negative impact on the townscape without being intrinsically poor quality buildings. They could - with appropriate upgrading - contribute positively to the townscape of Hailsham. We have therefore included two additional categories:
- Building with a significant potential to positively contribute to Hailsham's townscape.
 - Building with some potential to positively contribute to Hailsham's townscape, accepting that its not of the same urban design quality as buildings with significant potential to positively contribute.
- 2.11 The plan shows that:
- the area of highest townscape value is around Market Square;
 - many buildings on the High Street are underperforming, but have the potential to contribute positively to Hailsham's townscape; and
 - the most significant area of poor quality buildings runs diagonally across the High Street from the Quintins to the Leisure Centre.



Fig 2.28: Negative contribution to Hailsham's Townscape



Fig 2.29: Positive contribution to Hailsham's Townscape



Fig 2.30: Building Quality

- Positive contribution to townscape
- Neutral contribution to townscape
- Negative contribution to townscape
- Unassessed
- Building with significant potential to increase contribution to townscape
- Building with some potential to increase contribution to townscape

Hailsham Conservation Area

Character Areas

2.12 Bringing all the analysis together enables us to identify areas of different character within the Town Centre. These are shown on the plan opposite and are:

- Traditional High Street Character, where small scale buildings on individual plots define and enclose the linear High Street.
- Modern Retail Character, where larger floorplate buildings and smaller shops are organised perpendicular to the High Street with an internal mall (in the case of the Quintins) or an external pedestrianised street (as at Vicarage Fields).
- Secondary Retail Streets, which have a more varied character than the High Street with a mix of building types and uses.
- The Pavilion Building Zone, where large floorplate uses such as the leisure centre sit within open spaces or car parks. The character is open and fragmented, with no clear street structure. The steeply sloping topography provides long views out over the countryside.
- Historic Tight Grain Character, a pocket of residential and office uses with a traditional 'Twitten' connecting the High Street to North Street.
- College Approach, where the encircling residential area increases in scale and gives way to the pub, the new Tesco and other 'Town Centre' uses.
- Market Approach, where the offices, residential buildings and shops to the south of the High Street create a transition between the surrounding residential area and the Town Centre.
- Church and The Grange Character, which introduces a large area of green within the Town Centre.



Fig 2.31: Traditional High Street Character



Fig 2.32: Modern Retail Character



Fig 2.33: Historic Tight Grain Character



Fig 2.34: Market Approach



Fig 2.35: Character Areas

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  Traditional High Street Character |  College Approach |  Entrance Gateway |
|  Modern Retail Character |  Market Approach |  'Existing Retail Area' defined by Hailsham draft masterplan |
|  Secondary Retail Streets |  Church and The Grange Character |  'Extension of retail area' defined by Hailsham draft masterplan |
|  Pavilion Building Zone | | |
|  Historic Tight-Grain Character | | |

Analysis: Conclusions

2.13 The analysis shows that:

- the area that contributes least to the townscape quality of Hailsham Town Centre lies at the centre of the High Street, and this principally comprises the Quintins Shopping Centre, the Vicarage Fields Shopping Centre, Waitrose, and the area to the north-east of Vicarage Lane currently occupied by Wealden Offices and the Leisure Centre;
- there are other pockets where poor quality buildings are in prominent locations, and their redevelopment could help to support the retail core of Hailsham Town Centre. These include:
 - the Police Station and land to the rear on George Street; and
 - the three storey dentist's building on North Street.
- the pedestrian links from the car parks to the rear of the High Street and the surrounding residential area are predominantly perpendicular to the High Street, and these are important to the accessibility of the Town Centre. Reinforcing these links with new retail anchors and upgrading the pedestrian environment will help to improve the attractiveness of the Town Centre;
- retail uses are strongly focused on the High Street, although the large major food anchors of Tesco, Waitrose and Coop in the Quintins 'hang' off either side of the High Street. The High Street is - and should remain - the prime retail street within Hailsham.

2.14 The plan opposite identifies the main land ownerships within the Town Centre, along with the key retail opportunity sites. We understand that the majority of the remainder of the Town Centre is in multiple, fragmented land ownership. This plan shows that the areas giving rise to most urban design concern (the Quintins and Vicarage Fields area) are within single or relatively few land ownerships. Redevelopment of these two sites in particular have the potential to significantly change the quantum and the quality of the retail offer within Hailsham Town Centre.

2.15 The development sites that form the basis of the capacity testing are also identified in the plan opposite, and these are:

- ① The Quintins
- ② Vicarage Fields Area
- ③ Wealden Council Offices Site
- ④ Police Station, Fire Station and surrounds
- ⑤ Sorting Office and adjoining Dentist

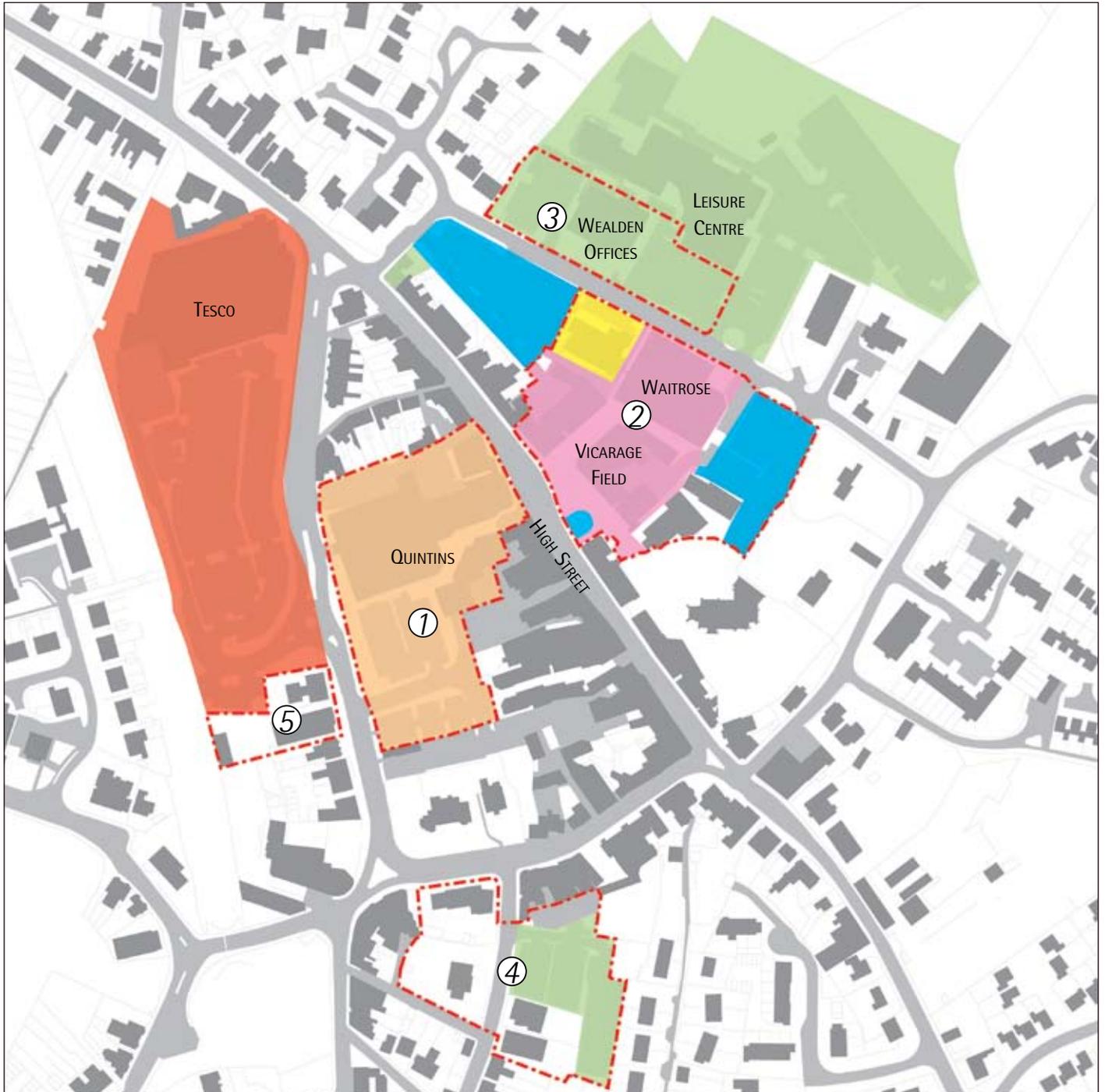


Fig 2.36: Land Ownership and Development Sites

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Wealden DC |  Tesco |
|  War Memorial Trust (Hailsham Town Council) |  Derbyshire CC Pension Fund |
|  Callender Development Ltd.. |  Development site |
|  Primary Care Trust | |

3. CAPACITY TESTING

3.1 We have undertaken capacity testing of the following sites:

- The Quintins
- Vicarage Fields Area
- Wealden Council Offices Site
- Police Station, Fire Station and surrounds
- Sorting Office and adjoining Dentist

3.2 Each capacity test consists of:

- a site plan as existing, along with an estimate of the existing gross retail floorspace and other relevant figures (such as car parking numbers). Estimates are based on a site visit and review of OS base information;
- a brief explanation of the capacity option;
- a table setting out approximate gross retail floor areas
- an annotated plan illustrating the capacity study; and
- simple three-dimensional models of the key options illustrating general massing.

3.3 These capacity tests are an initial exercise on what might be possible on the sites. They are not intended to be final designs. The three-dimensional models are intended to provide an overall indication of building mass: they are not intended to indicate a particular design approach (e.g. roof form, building articulation and so on)

The Quintins

Retail uses	
Existing convenience floorspace	2890 m ²
Existing comparison and service floorspace (including vacant)	1360 m ²
Overall existing retail floorspace	4250 m ²
Other uses	
Existing car parking numbers (outdoor - north of access road)	56
Existing car parking numbers (outdoor - south of access road)	35

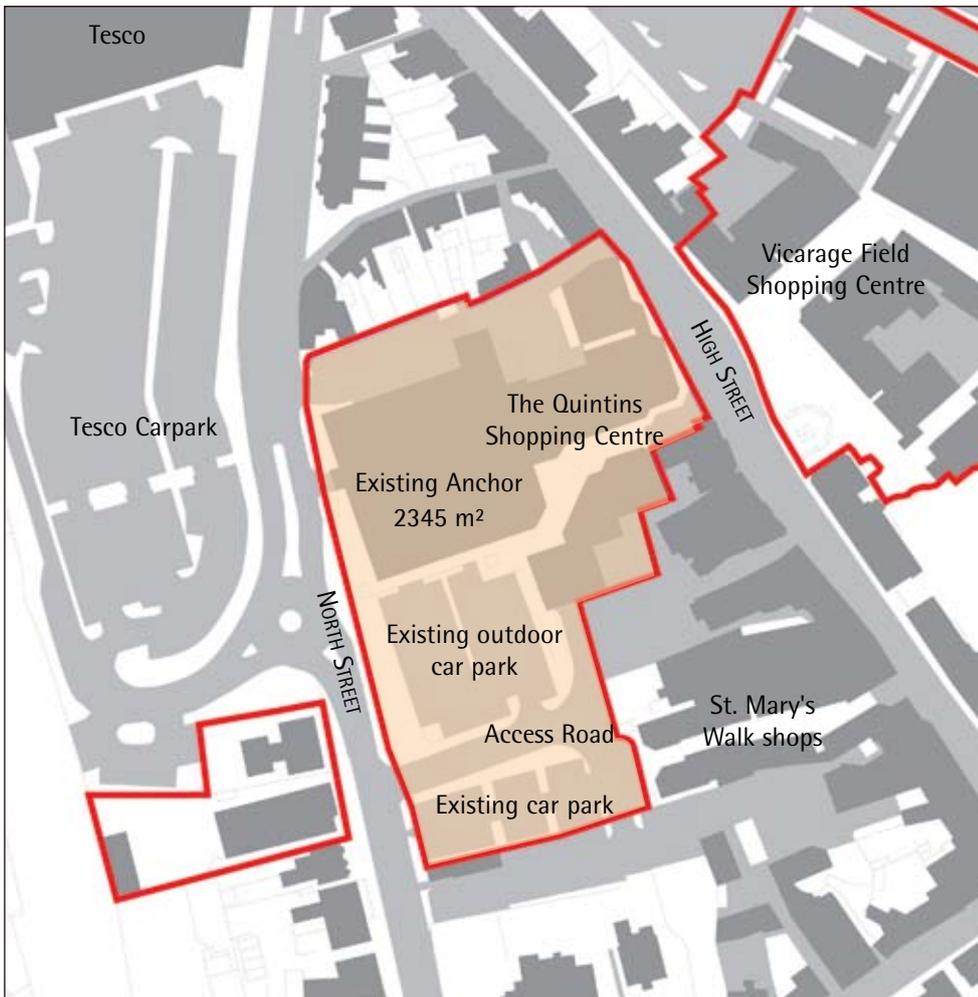


Fig 3.1: Existing Quintins Site



Fig 3.2: Existing car park looking towards St. Mary's Walk shops



Fig 3.3: Quintins frontage to High Street



Fig 3.4: Existing carpark and rear of Quintins

The Quintins: Option A

This option redevelops the Quintins Centre to provide:

- an internal mall linking through from the High Street to North Street;
- one anchor of the same size as the existing Co-op;
- the opportunity to provide additional residential development on upper floors; and
- an undercroft carpark

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	2890 m ²	0
Comparison floorspace	3060 m ²	1700 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	6050 m ²	1700 m ²
Other Uses		
Car parking	Total numbers as existing 56 spaces moved to undercroft	
Residential Flats	Approximately 18 on rooftop	
Upper Storey Uses	Provided along High Street	

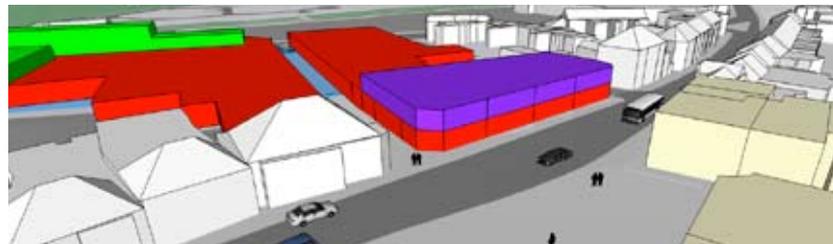


Fig 3.5: High Street Frontage



Fig 3.6: View from North Street facing south



- Retail
- Residential
- Undercroft Carpark
- Upper storey use

Fig 3.7: View from North Street facing north - two storeys of residential above retail on nearest edge

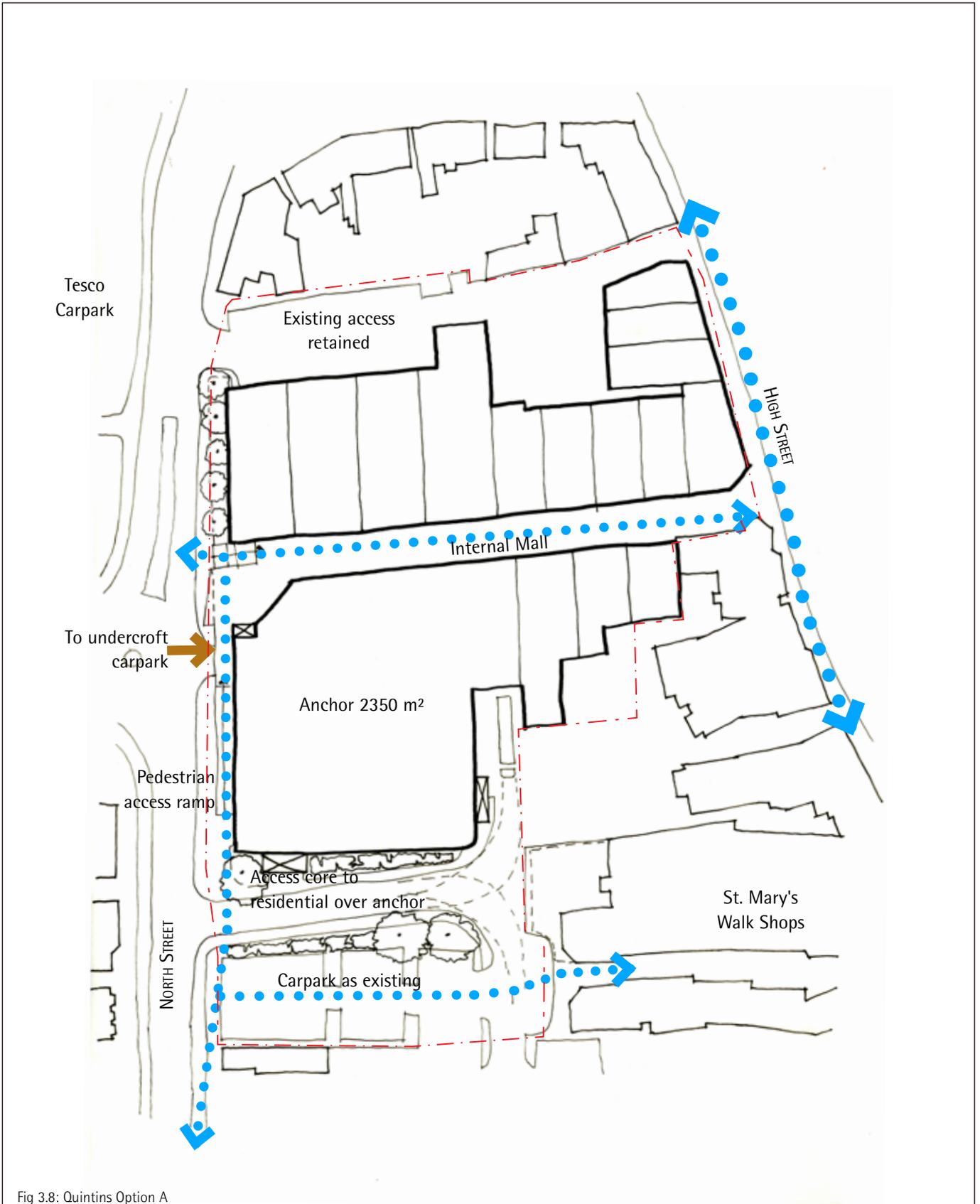


Fig 3.8: Quintins Option A

The Quintins: Option B

This option redevelops the Quintins Centre to provide:

- an internal mall linking through from the High Street to North Street;
- an enhanced path linking the St. Mary's Walk shops and North Street;
- two retail anchors of a similar gross size to the Lidl/Aldi applications
- a small amount of residential development facing the new path linking to St. Mary's Walk; and
- an undercroft car park

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	3700 m ²	810 m ²
Comparison floorspace	2015 m ²	655 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	5715 m ²	1465 m ²
Other Uses		
Car parking	4 spaces lost north of access road (others moved to undercroft) 15 spaces lost south of access road (for rearranged landscaped carpark)	
Residential Flats	18 (assuming three storey blocks)	
Upper storey uses	Provided along high street	

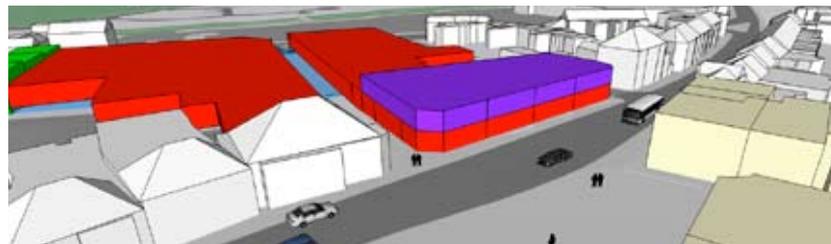


Fig 3.9: High Street Frontage



Fig 3.10: View from North Street facing south



Fig 3.11: View from North Street facing north - three storeys of residential flats

- Retail
- Residential
- Undercroft Carpark
- Upper storey use

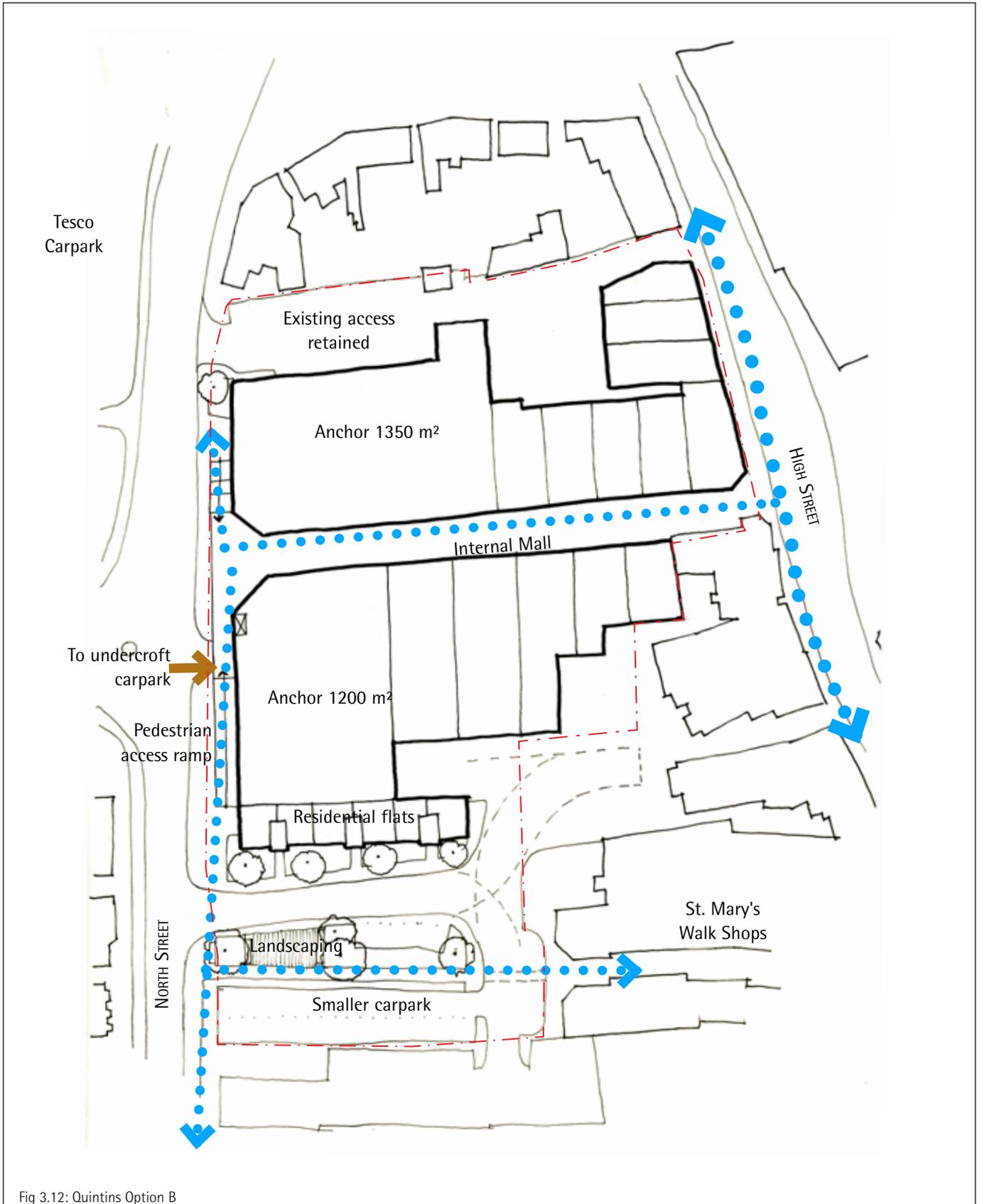


Fig 3.12: Quintins Option B

Vicarage Fields Area

Retail uses:	
Existing convenience floorspace	2110 m ²
Existing comparison and service floorspace (including vacant)	1875 m ²
Overall existing retail floorspace	3985 m ²
Other uses:	
Existing PCT Building (2 storeys of 575 m ²)	1150 m ²
Existing Club (single storey)	480 m ²
Existing Community Centre (single storey)	300 m ²
Car Parking	92 spaces

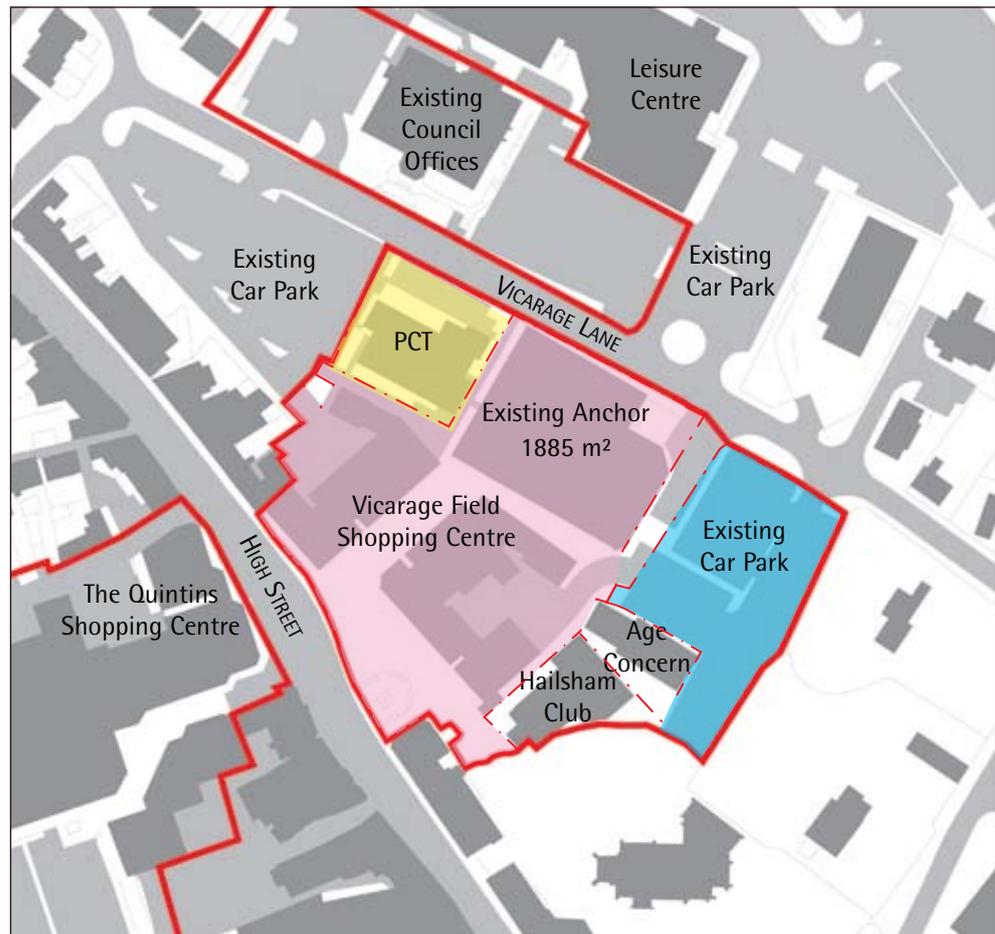


Fig 3.13: Existing Vicarage Fields Area Site



Fig 3.14: Existing frontage to High Street



Fig 3.15: Pedestrian link from High Street to Vicarage Lane. PCT building on left



Fig 3.16: Connection to Vicarage Lane is an important link to make, but is presently poor (between anchor and PCT).



Fig 3.17: Vicarage Field shops facing High Street (between anchor and PCT).



Fig 3.18: Existing service yard is used as a link by pedestrians

Vicarage Fields Area: Option A

This option:

- Respects existing ownership boundaries
- Improves the link adjacent to the PCT by making it wider than the existing path
- Achieves only a minor increase in retail floorspace

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	2050 m ²	-60 m ²
Comparison floorspace	2015 m ²	140 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	4065 m ²	80 m ²
Other Uses		
PCT	retained	
Club/Community Centre	retained	
Car Parking	Increase of 8 spaces (100 total)	

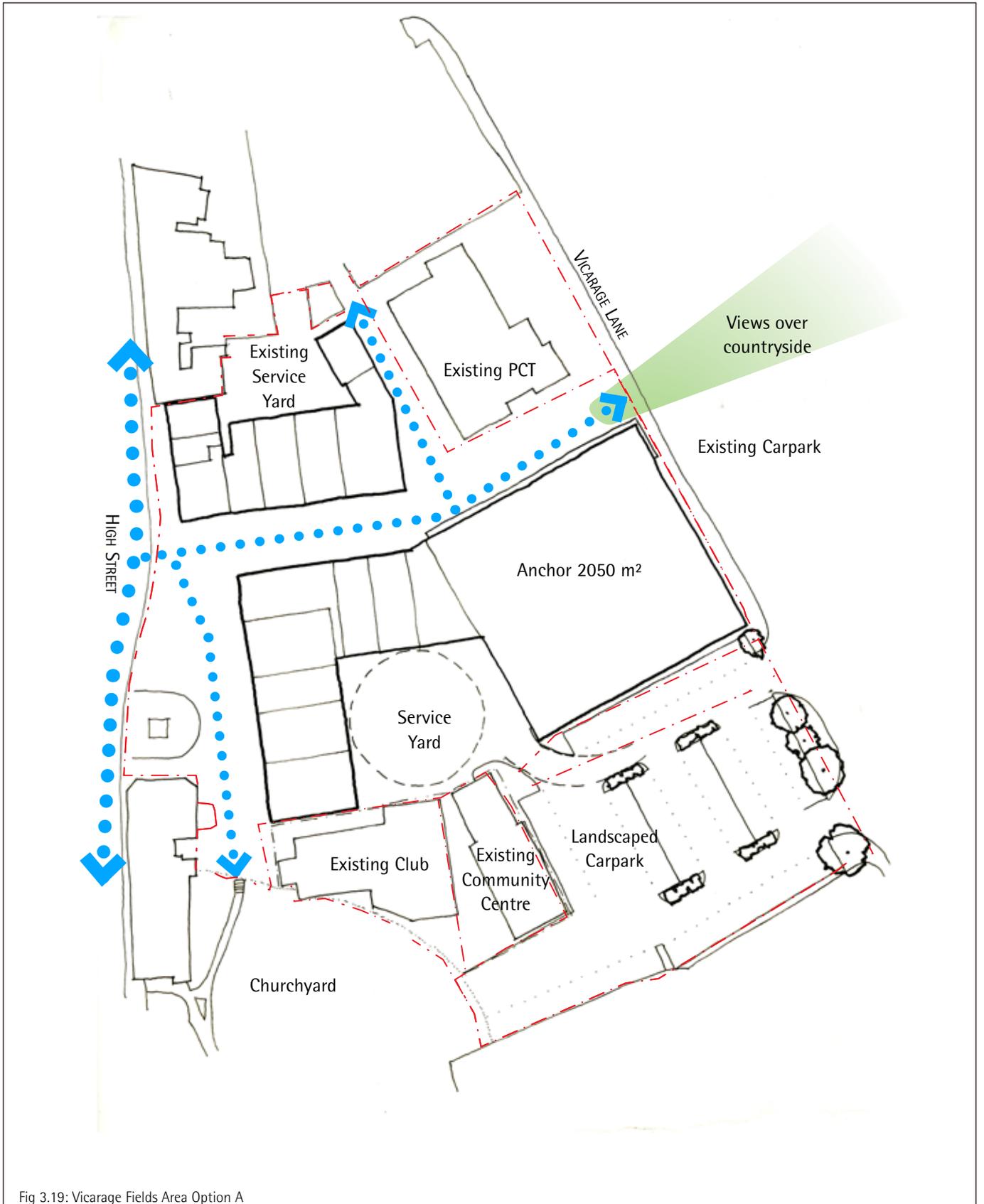


Fig 3.19: Vicarage Fields Area Option A

Vicarage Fields Area: Option B

This option:

- Respects the boundaries of the existing PCT and Club
- Incorporates a minimum number of adjacent land parcels (Vicarage Field, Carpark, Community Hall) in order to rearrange the Eastern edge of the site more coherently
- Achieves only a minor increase in retail floorspace
- Retains existing numbers of carparking on ground floor

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	1875 m ²	-235 m ²
Comparison floorspace	2185 m ²	310 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	4060 m ²	75 m ²
Other Uses		
PCT	Retained as existing	
Club/Community Centre	Club retained Community Centre provided (on upper floor)	
Car Parking	92 public spaces (as existing)	

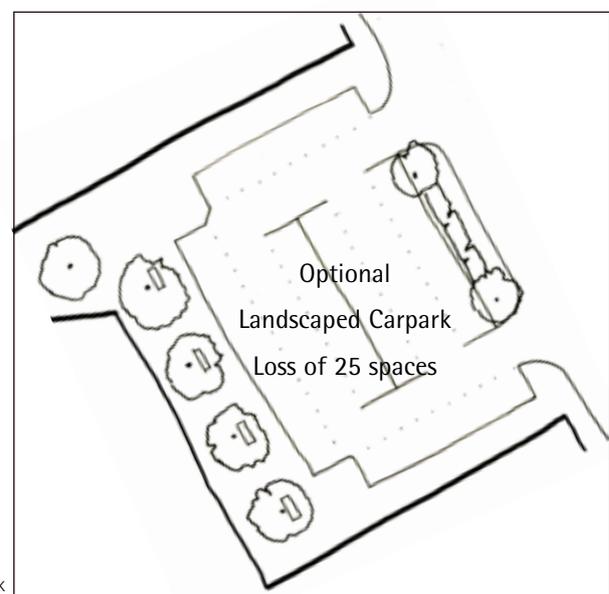


Fig 3.20: Optional Landscaped Carpark

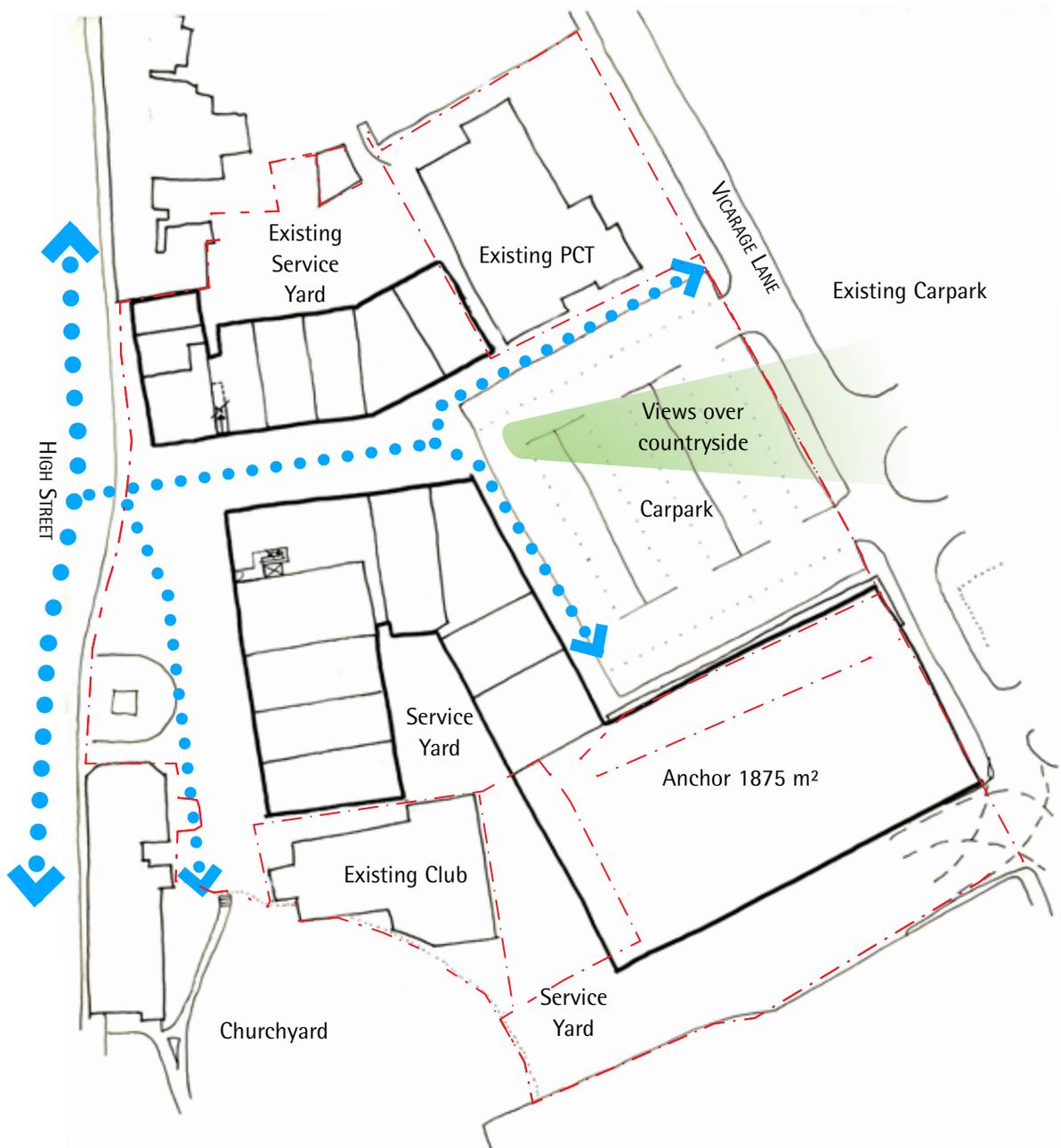


Fig 3.21: Vicarage Fields Area Option B

Vicarage Fields Area: Option C

This option:

- Like Option B, rearranges the Eastern edge of the site around a central carpark
- Increase retail floorspace by over 50%
- Provides two separate convenience anchors directly adjacent to car park
- Retains existing car parking numbers at ground level

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	2995 m ²	885 m ²
Comparison floorspace	3030 m ²	1155 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	6025 m ²	2040 m ²
Other Uses		
PCT	no	
Club/Community Centre	on upper floors	
Car Parking	As existing (92 public spaces)	

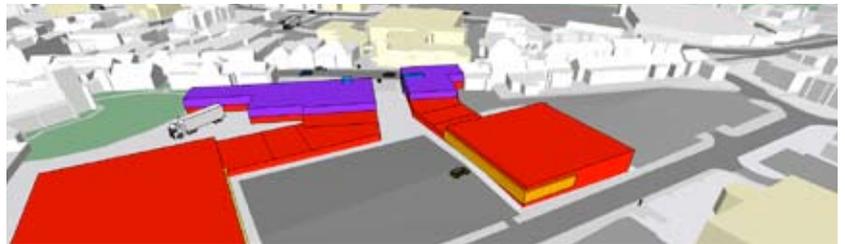


Fig 3.23: Connection from high street to Vicarage Lane

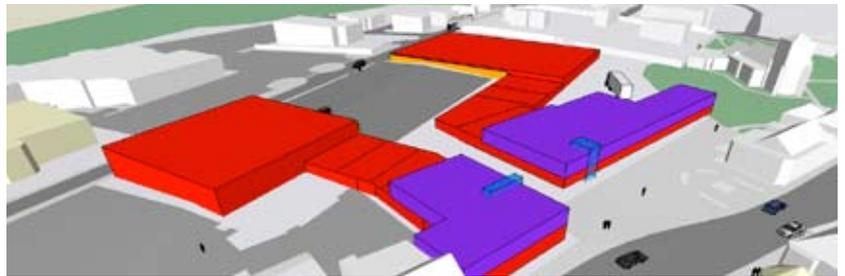


Fig 3.24: High street and open spaces

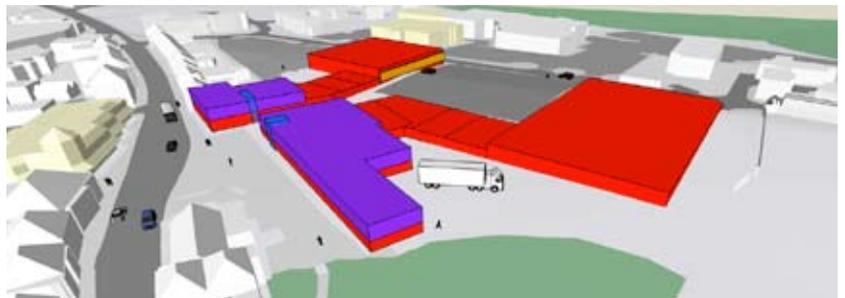


Fig 3.25: View along high street and connection to churchyard

- Retail ■
- Roads and Parking ■
- Access Core ■
- Upper storey use ■
- Anchor Store Frontage ■

Fig 3.22: Optional Landscaped Carpark

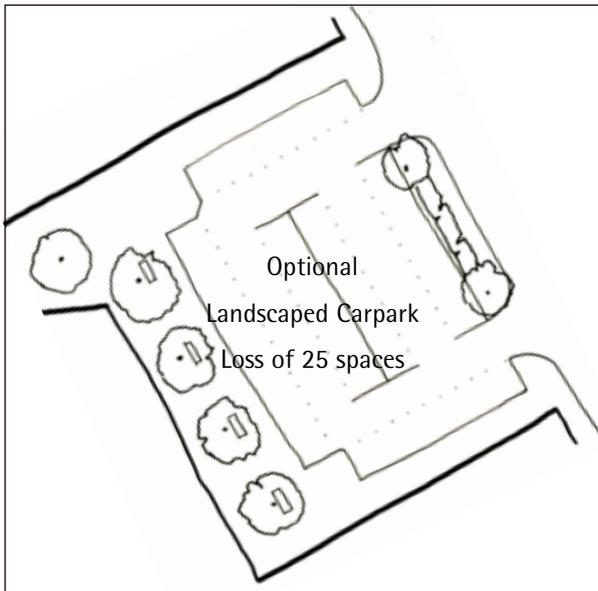




Fig 3.26: Vicarage Fields Area Option C

Vicarage Fields Area: Option D

This option:

- Maximises the potential for increasing retail floorspace by locating car parking at the upper level
- Includes two pedestrian links through to Vicarage Lane and the carparks
- Strengthens links to the churchyard as a public open space
- Incorporates new Club and Community Centre on the upper floor

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	3180 m ²	1070 m ²
Comparison floorspace	3530 m ²	1655 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	6710 m ²	2725 m ²
Other Uses		
PCT	no	
Club/Community Centre	on upper floors	
Car Parking	125 public spaces (33 more than existing)	

- Retail ■
- Roads and Parking ■
- Access Core ■
- Upper storey use ■
- Anchor Store Frontage ■

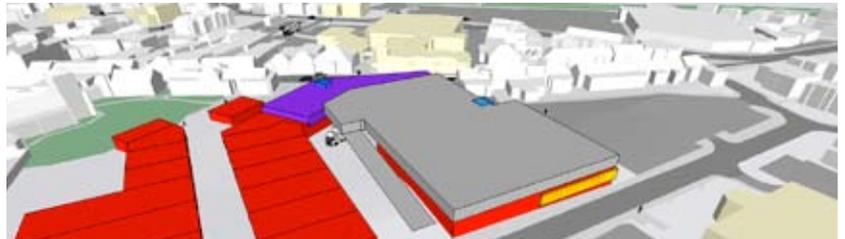


Fig 3.28: Connection from Vicarage Lane to High Street

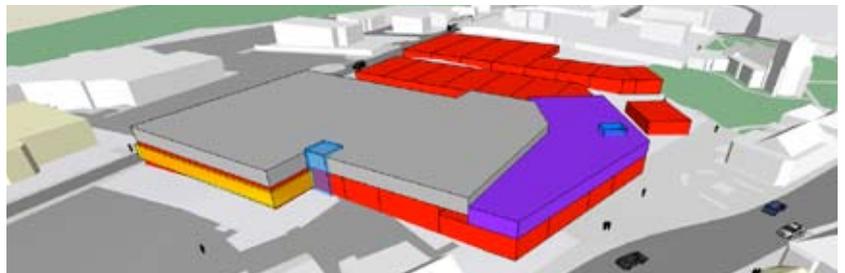


Fig 3.29: High street and open spaces

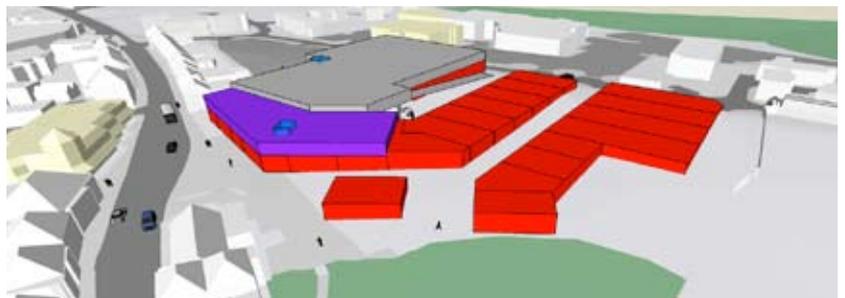
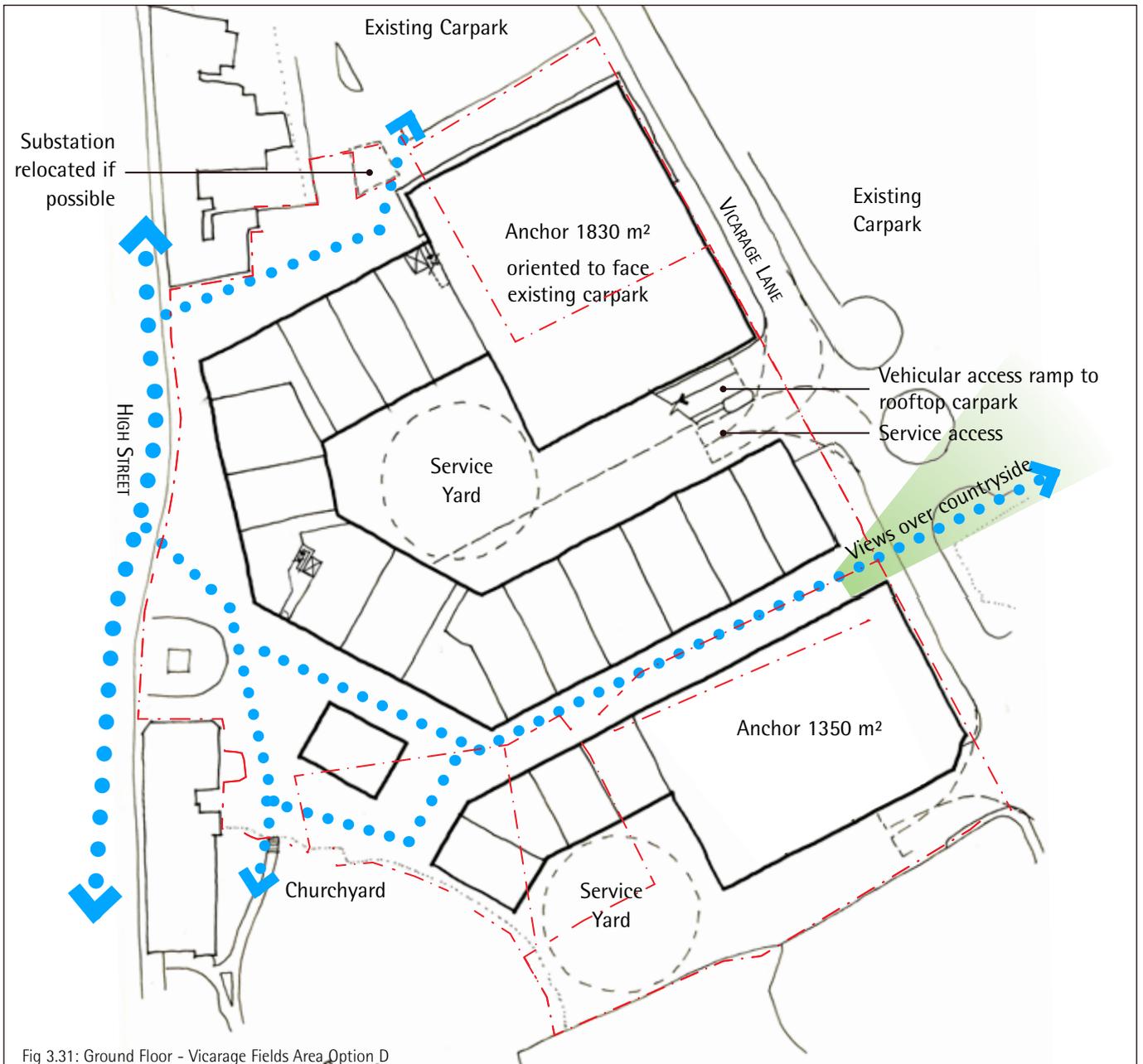
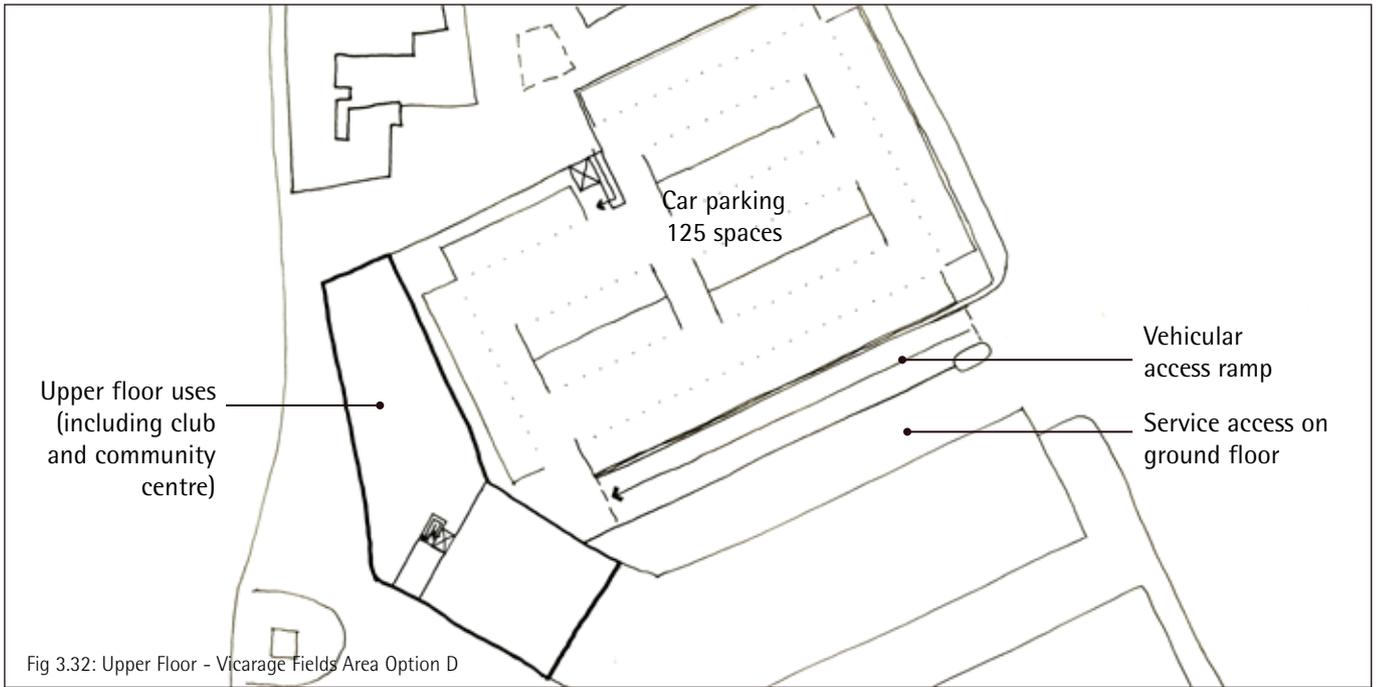


Fig 3.30: View along high street and connection to churchyard

Fig 3.27: Development in Boston, Lincolnshire that successfully integrates upper storey car parking into the elevations



Wealden Council Offices Site



Fig 3.33: Existing Wealden Council Offices Site



Fig 3.34: Existing Council Offices frontage to Vicarage Lane



Fig 3.35: Existing Council Offices frontage to Leisure Centre and car park

Wealden Council Offices Site

This option:

- Creates a new convenience anchor with a frontage wrapping around from Vicarage Lane to the existing car park
- Takes advantage of site topography by locating car parking below the building
- Allows for vehicular through access to the west of the site to any future development



Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	1980 m ²	1980 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	1980 m ²	1980 m ²
Other Uses		
Car Parking	71 spaces	

Fig 3.36: Developed council offices in relation to existing PCT and Vicarage Fields
■ Retail
■ Anchor Store Frontage

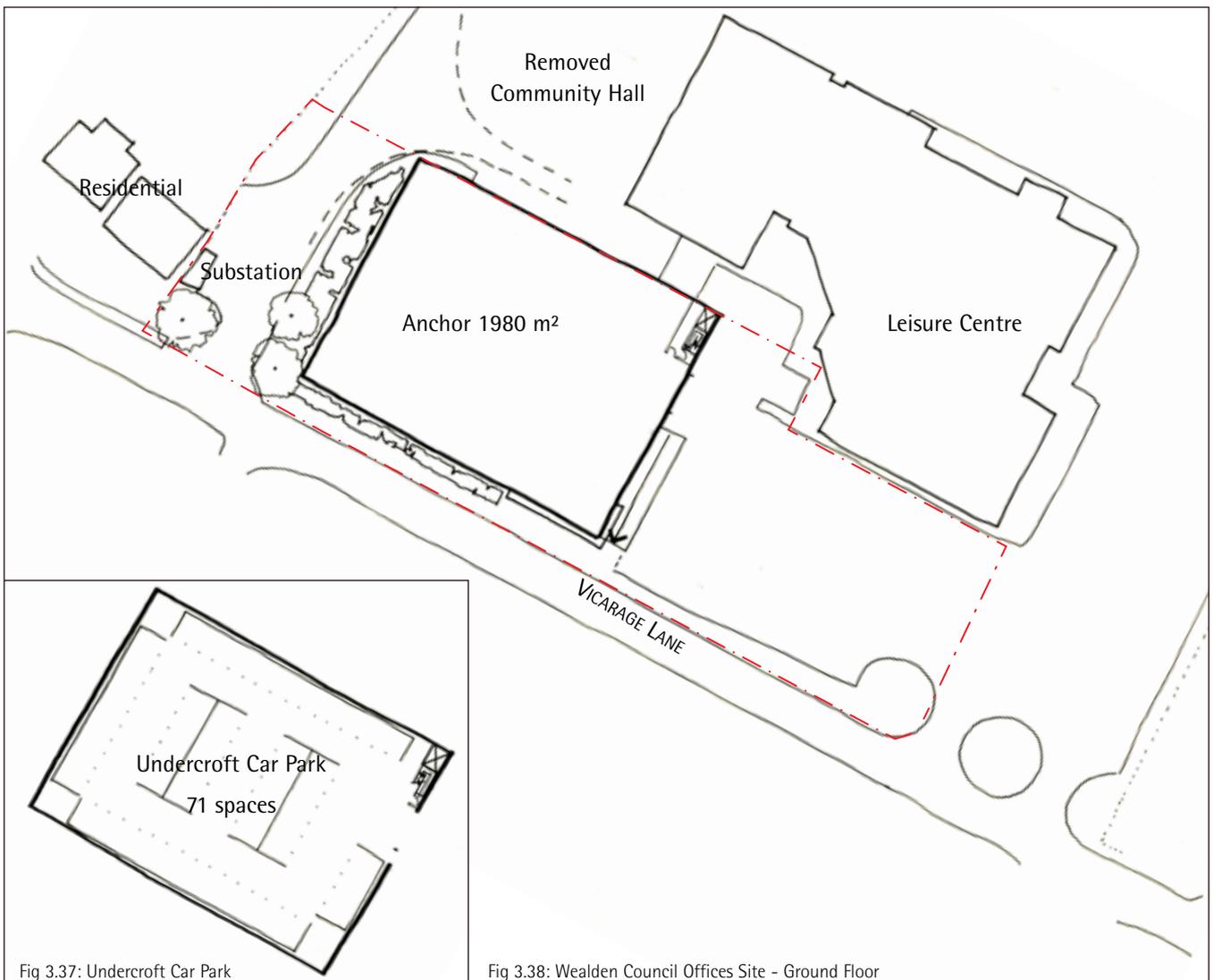


Fig 3.37: Undercroft Car Park

Fig 3.38: Wealden Council Offices Site - Ground Floor

Police Station, Fire Station, and Surrounds

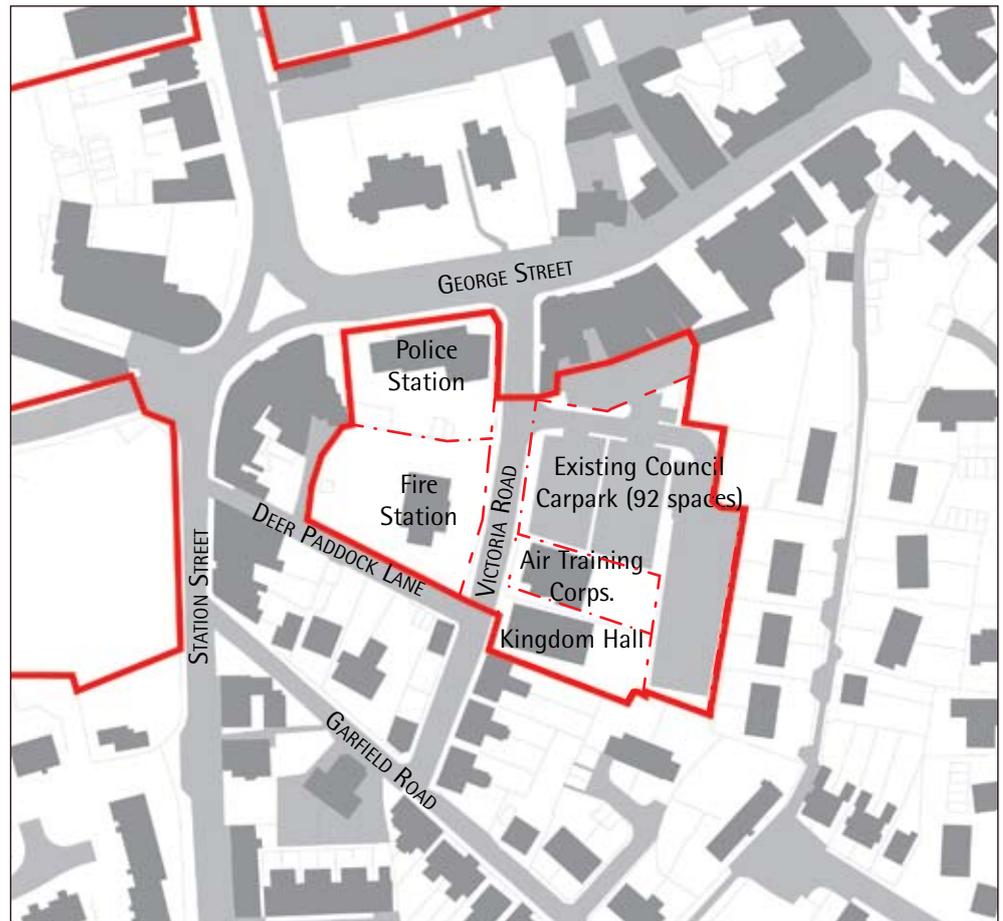


Fig 3.39: Existing Police Station, Fire Station, and Surrounds



Fig 3.40: Panorama from Victoria road of Fire Station, Police Station and Carpark

Police Station, Fire Station and Surrounds: Option A

This option:

- Works within the boundaries of the existing Police Station and Fire Station only
- Provides a series of comparison retail units (with residential uses above) along George Street and a small retail anchor behind, on Victoria Road
- Retains the existing car parking arrangement, Air Training Corps., and Kingdom Hall

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	1200 m ²	1200 m ²
Comparison floorspace	700 m ²	700 m ²
Overall retail floorspace	1900 m ²	1900 m ²
Other Uses		
Car Parking	retained as existing	
Residential Flats	8	

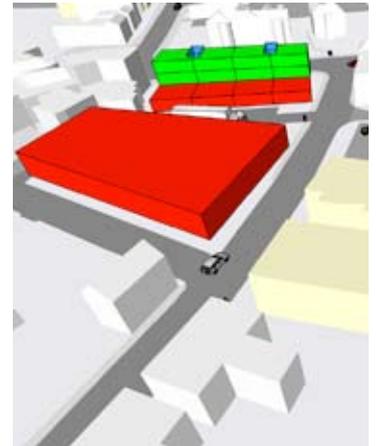


Fig 3.41: Massing of Option A

- Retail
- Residential
- Access Core

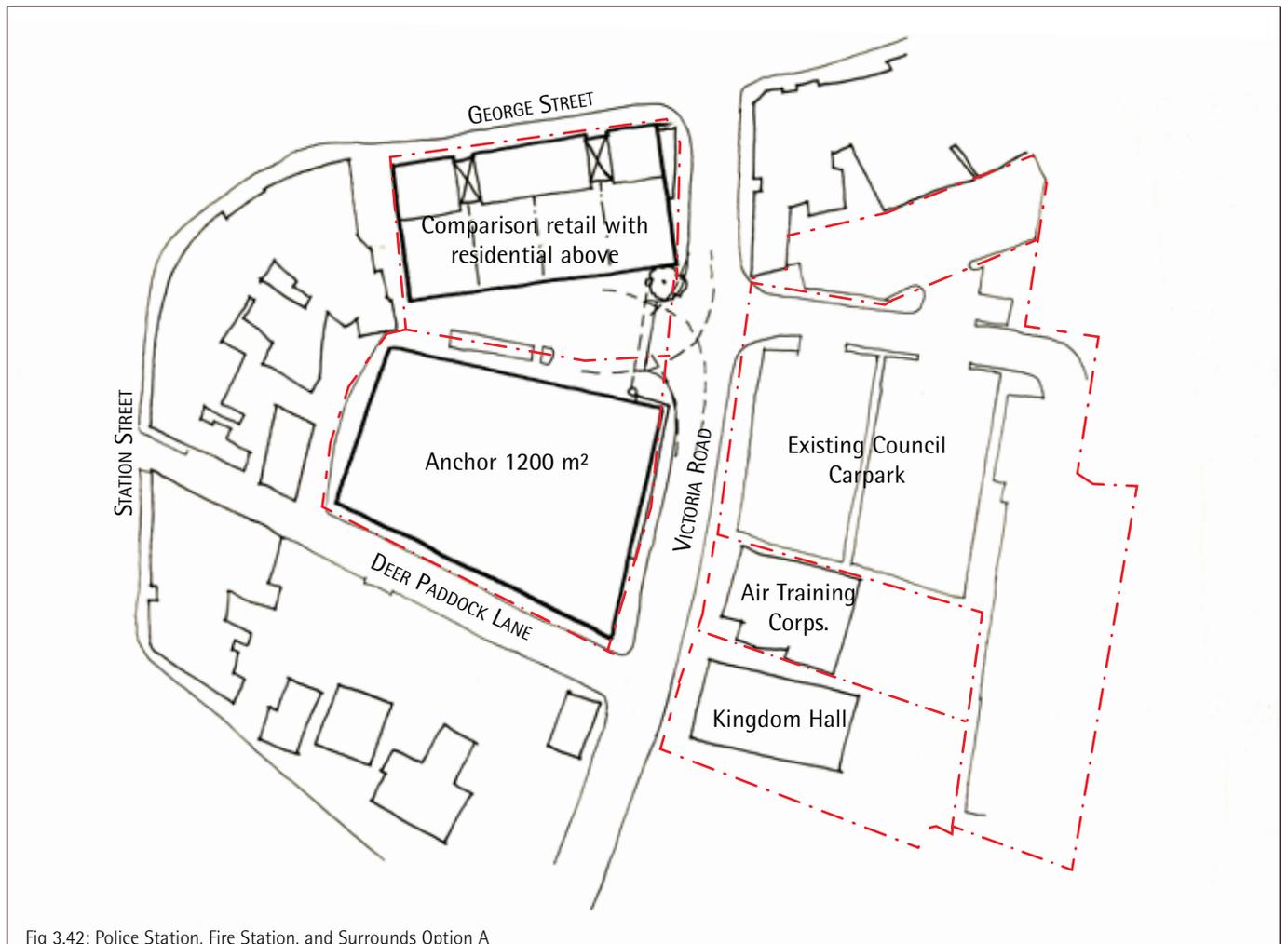


Fig 3.42: Police Station, Fire Station, and Surrounds Option A

Police Station, Fire Station and Surrounds: Option B

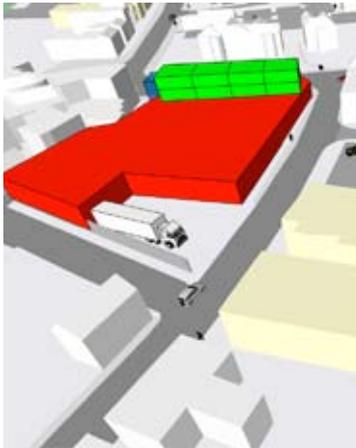


Fig 3.43: Massing of Option B

- Retail
- Residential
- Access Core

This option:

- Works within the boundaries of the existing Police Station and Fire Station only
- Provides a single large anchor on the two sites, with residential flats above
- Would require a sensitive frontage onto George Street to relate to the character of surrounding development
- Floorplan geometry must respond to adjacent streets to avoid 'left-over' space - therefore not a simple box
- Results in a service yard on the prominent corner of Deer Paddock Lane and Victoria Road

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Convenience floorspace	2100 m ²	2100 m ²
Other Uses		
Car Parking	retained as existing	
Residential Flats	4	

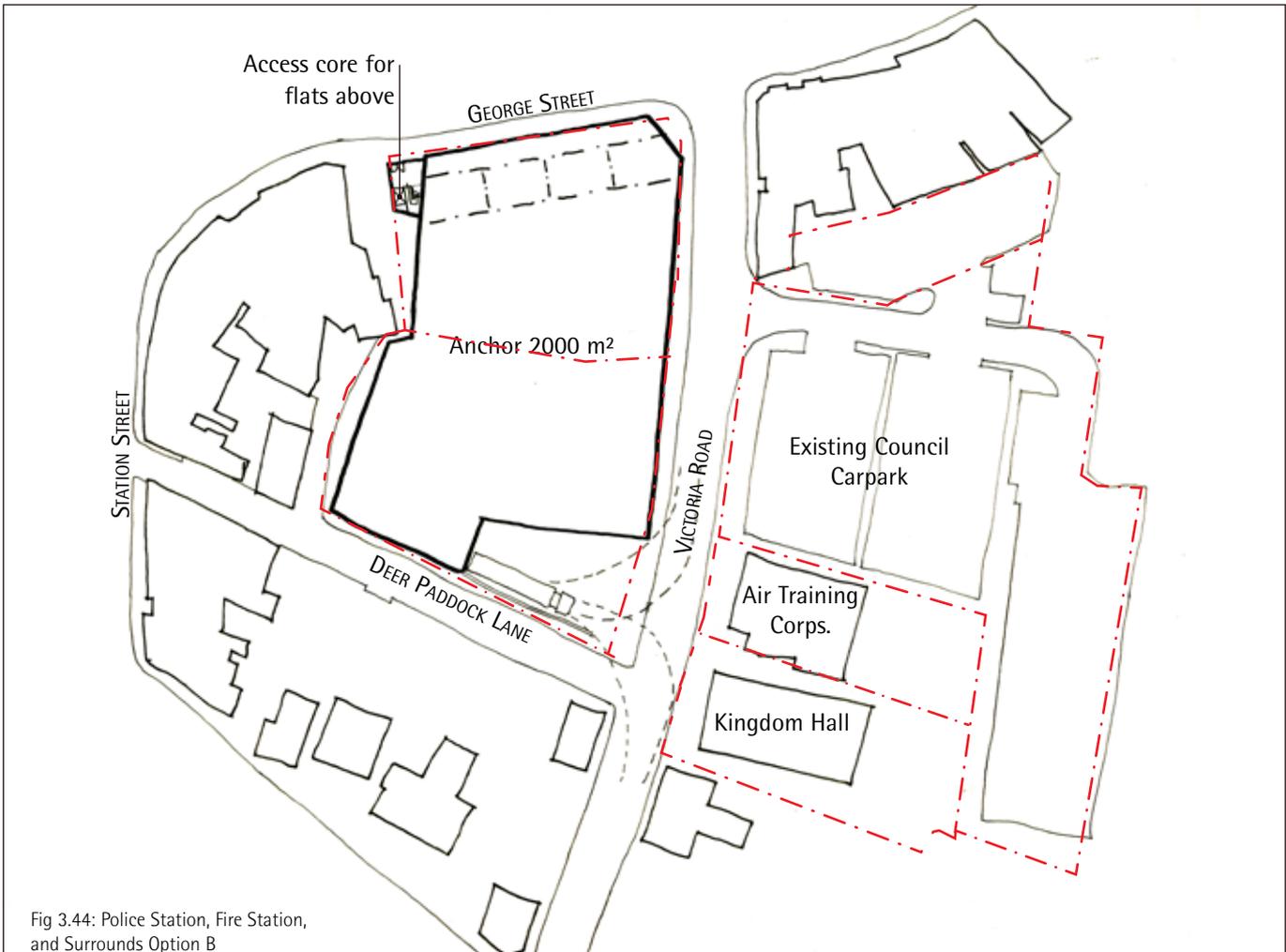


Fig 3.44: Police Station, Fire Station, and Surrounds Option B

Police Station, Fire Station and Surrounds: Option C

This option:

- Provides comparison retail units (with residential uses above) on George Street, and residential units behind on Victoria Road
- Moves the existing carpark to the Air Training Corps and Kingdom Hall current locations, and replaces part of the existing carpark with a small retail anchor

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Comparison floorspace	700 m ²	700 m ²
Convenience floorspace	1120 m ²	1120 m ²
Overall Retail Floorspace:	1820 m ²	1820 m ²
Other Uses		
Residential Flats	20	
Private Car Parking	27 private spaces (to serve flats)	
Public Car Parking	81 (11 spaces lost)	

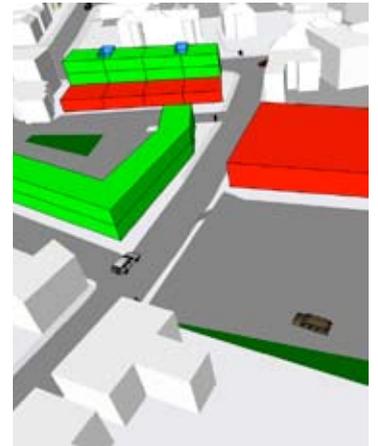


Fig 3.45: Massing of Option C

- Retail
- Residential
- Access Core

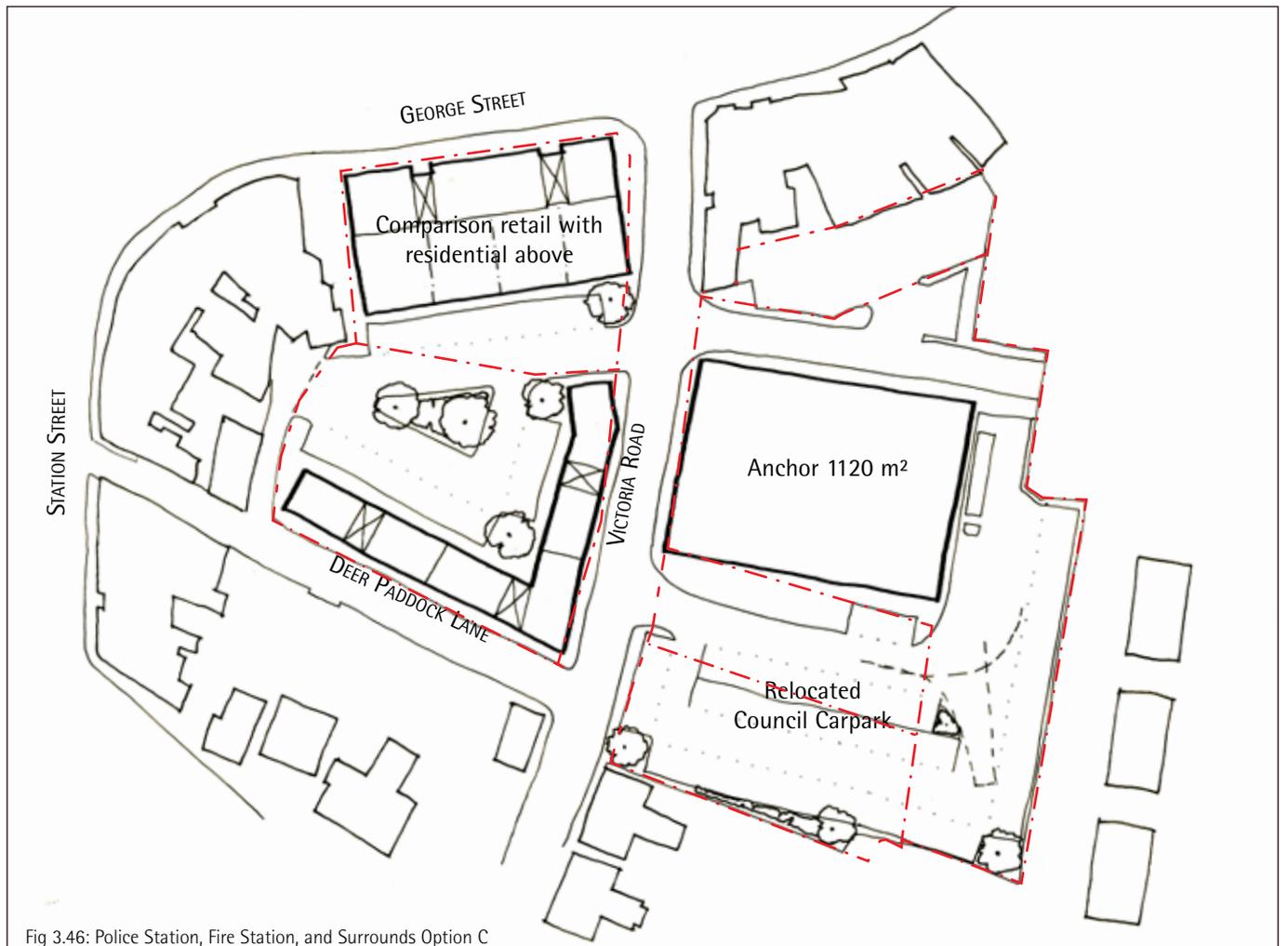


Fig 3.46: Police Station, Fire Station, and Surrounds Option C

Post Office and adjoining Dentist

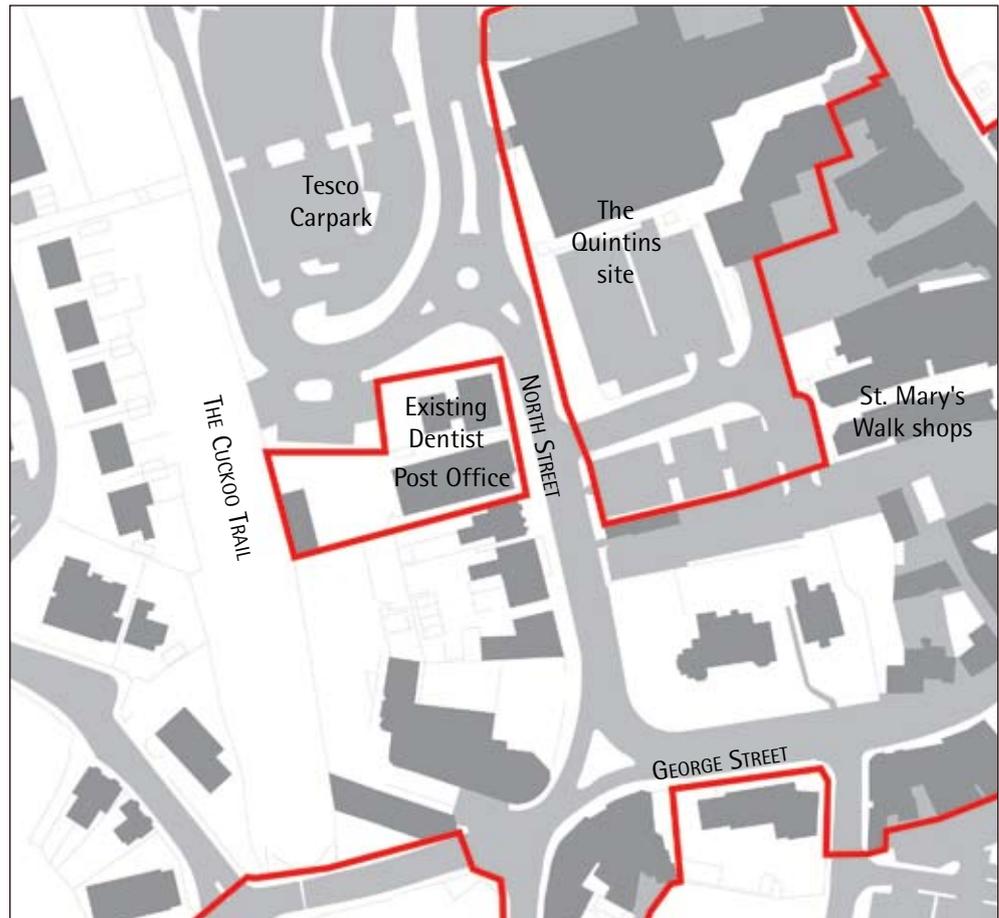


Fig 3.47: Existing Post Office and adjoining Dentist Site



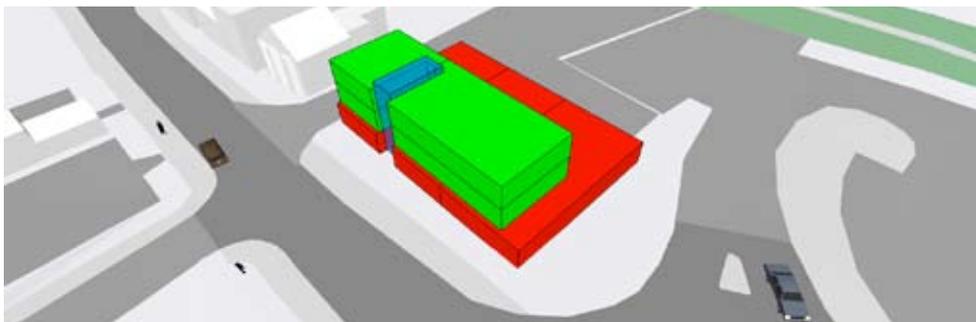
Fig 3.48: Panorama of building frontages, with adjacent retail, post office, dentist, and Tesco carpark

Post Office and adjoining Dentist

This option:

- Provides as much retail frontage as possible along North Street
- Allows access by articulated vehicles to a large rear service yard
- Would be enhanced as a retail destination by a sympathetic redevelopment of the Quintins site, providing a stronger and more attractive connection to St. Mary's Walk

Retail Uses	Total	Increase
Comparison floorspace	600 m ²	600 m ²
Other Uses		
Residential Flats	4	



- Retail
- Residential
- Access Core

Fig 3.50: Post office and adjoining dentist massing

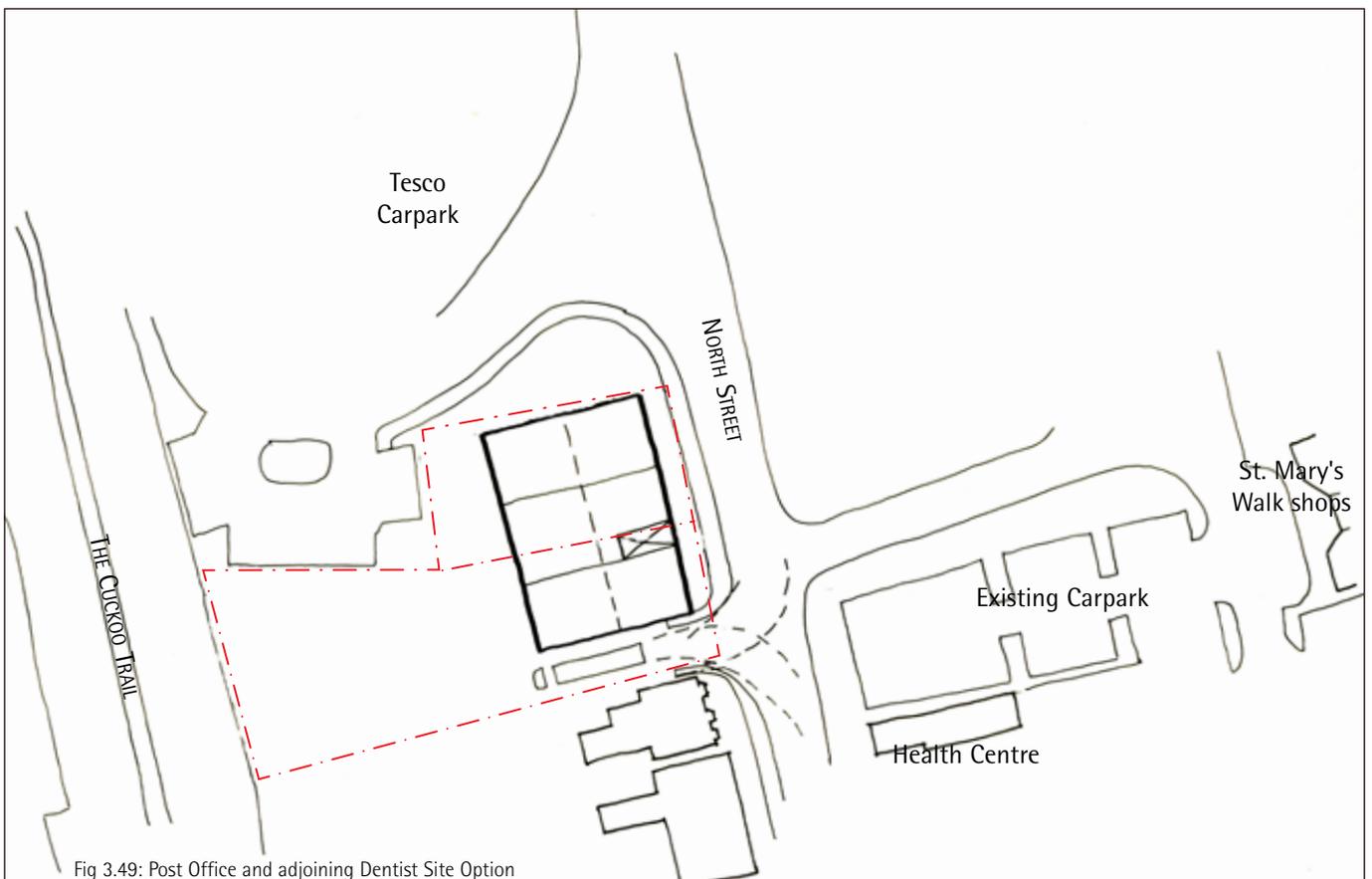


Fig 3.49: Post Office and adjoining Dentist Site Option

Comparison of Sites and Options

Site	Car Parking Change in existing	Additional Retail Space		
		Comparison	Convenience	Total
Quintins				
Option A	0	1700	0	1700
Option B	-19	655	810	1465
Vicarage Field				
Option A	+8	140	-60	80
Option B	0 (or -25*)	310	-235	75
Option C	0 (or -25*)	1155	885	2040
Option D	+33	1655	1070	2725
Wealden Council Offices	+71	0	1980	1980
Police Station, Fire Station and Surrounds				
Option A	0	700	1200	1900
Option B	0	0	2100	2100
Option C	-27	700	1120	1820
Post office and adjoining Dentist	0	600	0	600
Minimum Total (assuming all sites developed)		2265	3675	5940
Maximum Total (assuming all sites developed)		3955	5150	9105

* Loss of spaces as a result of improved landscape to carpark

Totals set out by Chase and Partners	Comparison	Convenience	Total
2007-2012	1890	388	2278
2012-2016	1510	730	2240
TOTAL TO 2016	3400	1118	4518

4. PUBLIC REALM

- 4.1 The redevelopment of two of the major sites within the Town Centre (The Quintins and the Vicarage Fields Area) has the potential to improve pedestrian links perpendicular to the High Street. We therefore recommend that the main focus of any public realm improvements should be within the High Street.
- 4.2 Figure 4.1 overleaf provides a plan showing the High Street as existing. The area north of The Quintins is particularly dominated by parked cars and this – combined with the narrow footways and poor building quality – makes for a low quality environment. South of The Quintins, parked cars continue to have a major impact on the High Street but their dominance is reduced as they are located along one side of the carriageway only. The focal point for public transport is, rightly, in the central part of the High Street at the confluence of pedestrian routes along the High Street and through The Quintins and the Vicarage Fields area. As identified in the analysis of pedestrian movement, east-west connections are especially difficult for pedestrians as their path is often blocked by parked cars.
- 4.3 Figure 4.2 sets out a strategy for improving the High Street. The principles underpinning this are:
- vehicular access for both parking and servicing is retained within the High Street – pedestrianisation is avoided as it tends to have a deadening effect, and the viability of the retail needs to be supported by short-term, on-street car parking;
 - kerb build outs are used at key pedestrian crossing points to (i) remove parked cars from sight lines into the High Street, so creating an environment less dominated by the car; and (ii) provide pedestrians with a safe place to cross directly on a key desire line;
 - traffic is slowed through the introduction of 'pinch points' at key locations, and a shared surface 'square' at the centre of the High Street; and
 - the shared surface 'square' could be implemented in the short term, and also works with the various options for the redevelopment of The Quintins and Vicarage Fields sites in the longer term, so creating a strong 'heart' to Hailsham.
- 4.4 This strategy would need to be supported by:
- the use of high quality materials sympathetic to the character of Hailsham;
 - a 'de-cluttering' strategy to coordinate street furniture and signage – for example, combining road signs and lamp columns, rather than having two separate columns for each; and
 - highway engineering solutions that create safety through reductions in vehicle speed rather than penning pedestrians in behind railings.

Analysis of existing public realm

Relentless parking and narrow footpaths create a poor pedestrian experience

Central taxi rank

Road enlarges to form second lane in central square before narrowing again

Awkward corner for pedestrians behind bus stop

Bus stop in main square

Single lane of parking, with wider footpaths at Southern end of High Street

Road widens to two moving lanes of traffic

Market Square is a car dominated junction with poor pedestrian amenity

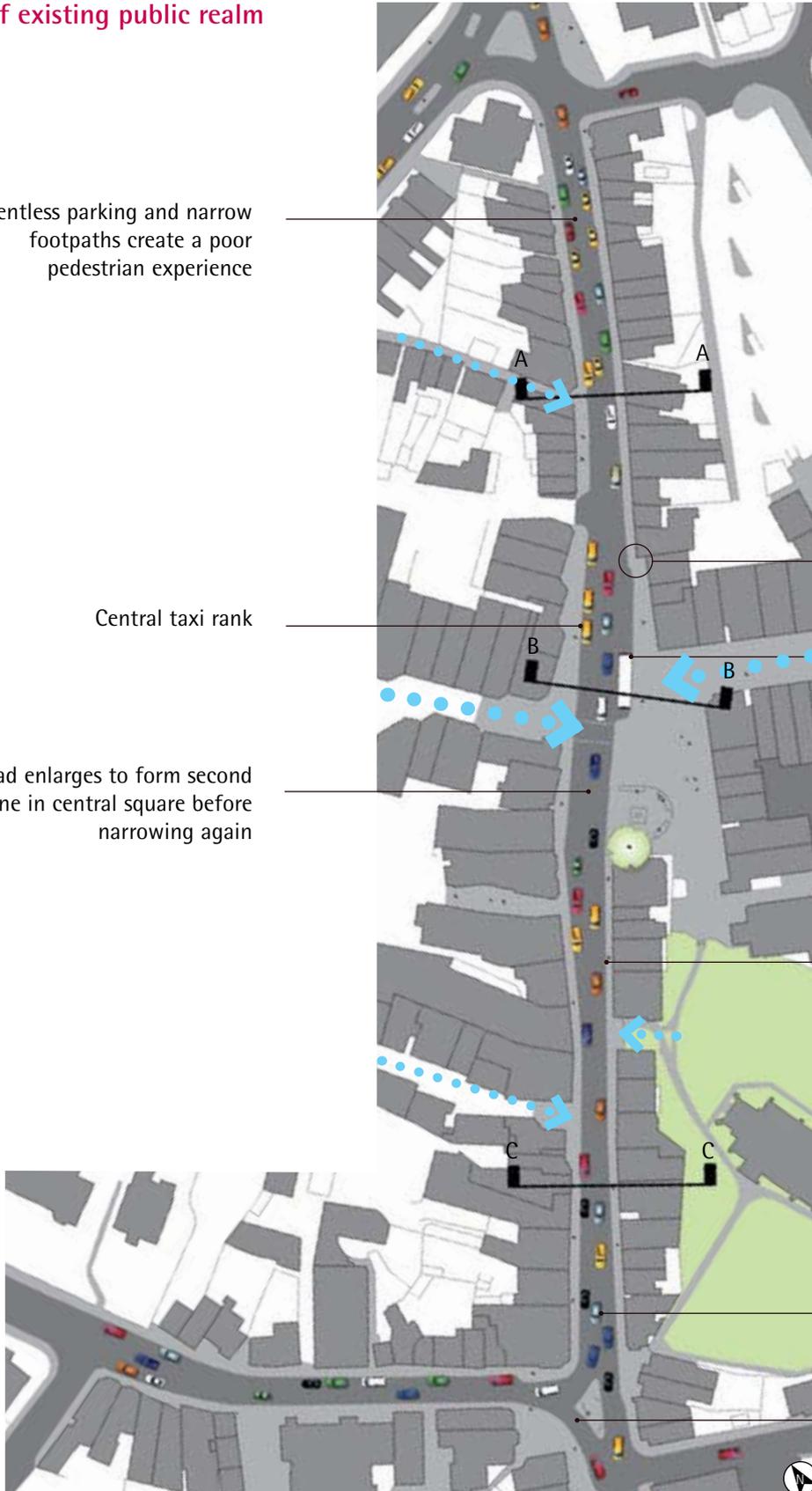


Fig 4.1: Existing High Street Public Realm

Public Realm Strategy

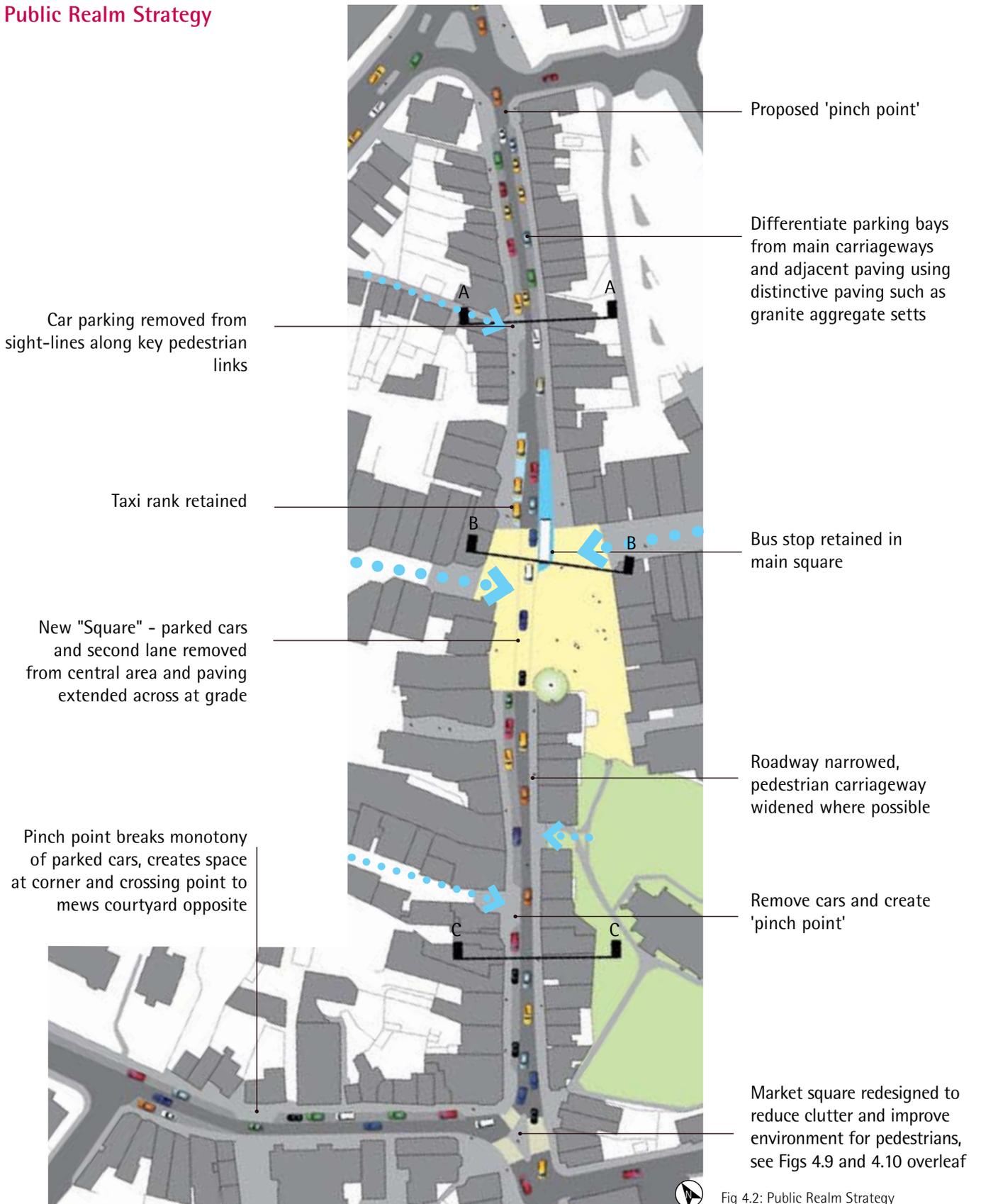


Fig 4.2: Public Realm Strategy

Street Sections

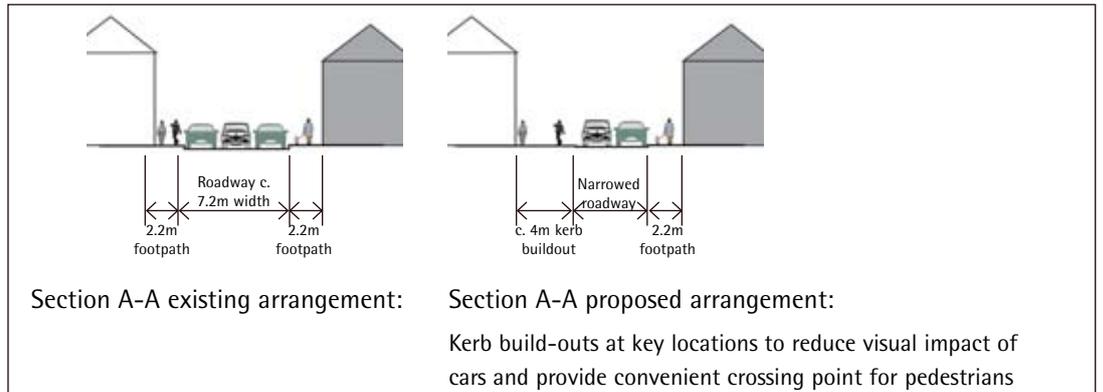


Fig 4.3

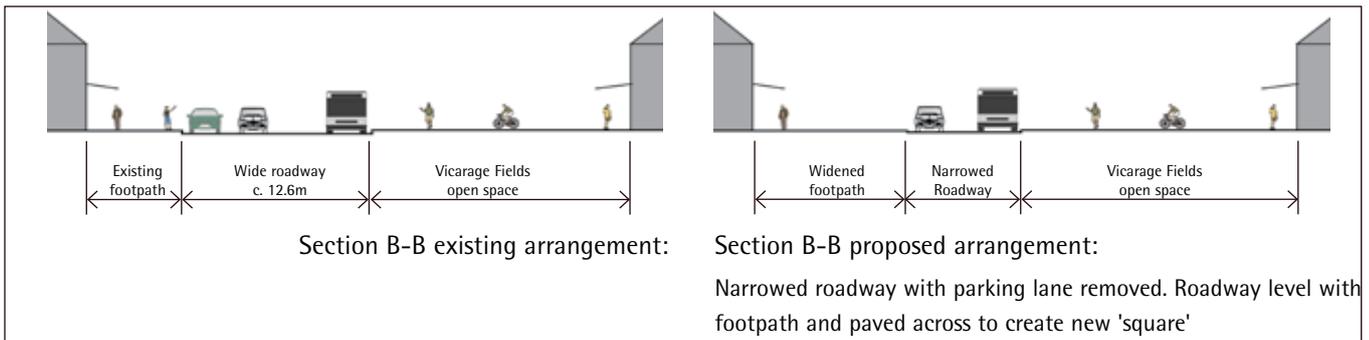


Fig 4.4

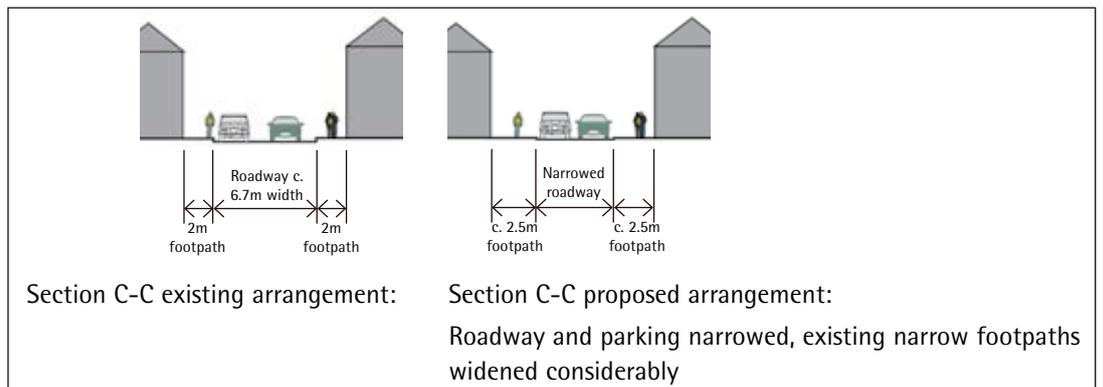


Fig 4.5

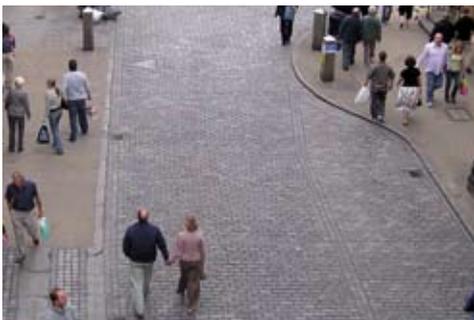


Fig 4.6: Simple, high quality paving material could transform the image of Hailsham



Fig 4.7: A much more urban and larger scale street than Hailsham High Street, but some useful lessons in what is possible. Removing barriers and creating a calm, simple public realm has transformed Kensington High Street. The accident rate has dropped.



Fig 4.8: On-street servicing can be designed into pavement extensions, so that it shops can continue to function as at present but pavements are wider when service vehicles are absent.



Street clutter impedes movement and creates untidy, uncoordinated environment

Barriers block a large proportion of the space. Pedestrian movement is impeded

Narrow, car dominated crossings

Fig 4.9: Crossing to market square - as existing



Retailers benefit from higher visibility, and a better public realm adjacent to their shops

Signage simplified in small area, barriers removed

Widened pedestrian crossings, signified by change in material

Fig 4.10: Crossing to market square - proposed

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Overall, the study indicates that there is capacity for the expansion of retail within Hailsham Town Centre that exceeds the guideline figures set out by the Chase and Partners Study. It is important to reiterate Chase and Partner's comments, that their figures should not be seen either as ceilings or as targets for what should be achieved within the Town Centre. It is also important to recognise the various constraints that may affect the ability of the various sites to be developed, and we set out some of these issues below.
- 5.2 **SITE ONE: THE QUINTINS** The Quintins Centre is dated, and we understand that its owners have had initial discussions with Wealden District Council on the potential redevelopment of this site. As it is in a single land ownership, it is relatively straightforward to bring forward. However, it is important that any development is sensitive to the character of Hailsham in general and North Street in particular. North Street – and pedestrian connections to it – must be treated as a positive 'gateway' to the town centre, and not merely a rear service access. It is therefore important that any redevelopment scheme for the Quintins:
- creates a positive edge to North Street, ideally through active building frontages that contribute to the street scene – e.g. windows overlooking North Street;
 - integrates a mix of uses, so ensuring that there is activity in the area out of shopping hours – e.g. residential on upper floors and/or overlooking the route to St. Mary's Walk – and the building scale to the High Street is appropriate; and
 - draws on the rhythm, form and massing of buildings on the High Street for architectural inspiration, so creating a new development that supports Hailsham's character rather than introducing an alien form.
- 5.3 **SITE TWO: VICARAGE FIELDS AREA** We have examined a range of development options for the Vicarage Fields area. These start with an option of redevelopment within existing ownership boundaries, and progressively add in further land ownerships. As such, the options draw out the benefits of coordinated versus site-by-site redevelopment, and demonstrate that significantly greater additional retail floorspace can be secured from Options C and D – i.e. those options that require the cooperation of all landowners. Therefore, such redevelopment of the Vicarage Fields area is likely to be rather more complex than sites in a single land ownership. However, the potential benefits to Hailsham Town Centre are significant – not only in terms of replacing some very unattractive buildings, but also in terms of improving pedestrian connections to the wider area and drawing the Leisure Centre / Wealden Offices area more positively into the Town Centre.
- 5.4 Any redevelopment of the Vicarage Fields Area should, like the redevelopment of the Quintins:
- create a positive edge to Vicarage Lane, ideally through active building frontages that contribute to the street scene – e.g. windows overlooking the lane;
 - incorporate upper floor uses (especially onto the High Street), so ensuring an appropriate building scale and providing opportunities for mixed-uses; and
 - draw on the rhythm, form and massing of buildings on the High Street for architectural inspiration, so creating a new development that supports Hailsham's character rather than introducing an alien form.

- 5.5 **SITE THREE: WEALDEN COUNCIL OFFICES.** There are plans to bring together Wealden District Council's two offices in a single, new building to the rear of the existing Leisure Centre. This would enable the site fronting Vicarage Lane to be redeveloped as part of the Town Centre. We understand that the earliest date that this site could be released for development is 2011/12. This site can best contribute to the overall Town Centre if it:
- is connected to the High Street via a new, high quality pedestrian route through the Vicarage Fields area; and
 - provides a 'destination' shop or shops that help to draw people through the Vicarage Fields area, so increasing footfall in this area.
- 5.6 **SITE FOUR: POLICE STATION, FIRE STATION AND SURROUNDS.** George Street provides a range of secondary retail units. There is an opportunity for new retail development in this location to reinforce this existing function of the Street, and to also provide a destination shop to draw people along George Street. The character of the streetscape is generally positive in this area, and it is important that any new development enhances the area. For this reason, it is essential that any new development includes upper floor uses such as residential or offices onto George Street so that the building is capable of responding appropriately to Hailsham's character.
- 5.7 Options A and B require the redevelopment of two land ownerships, and the relocation of the existing police and fire stations. Option C additionally requires the redevelopment of the Council car park, the Air Training Corps Site and the Kingdom Hall, and so requires the comprehensive redevelopment of five different land ownerships. Options A and B are therefore likely to be easier to bring forward. However, Option A results in a prominent service access on Victoria Road that will require highly sensitive design to secure an acceptable edge to the street. Option C has the potential to create a much more positive street scene, and also bring new residents into the Town Centre.
- 5.8 **SITE FIVE: POST OFFICE AND ADJOINING DENTIST.** The Tesco redevelopment on the west side of North Street introduces a large car park along much of the length of the street. Combined with the rather blank edges to The Quintins, this gives North Street the feeling of a rear service access and there are few opportunities to transform North Street into a retail focus along its length. One of the few opportunities may be the relocation of the Sorting Office, and the change of use of this building to retail. Alternatively – as set out in our option – this site could potentially be combined with the adjacent dentist's practice to create a larger redevelopment opportunity. However, in such an isolated location, we believe that such a redevelopment has little to offer Hailsham in terms of extending its retail offer.

- 5.9 Tibbalds was also asked by members to consider the potential for the Station Road / South Road car park for retail development. Whilst this is undoubtedly an important gateway to Hailsham and would benefit from upgrading, we do not believe it is a suitable location for retail development as:
- it falls outside the area that our urban design analysis would consider as 'Town Centre', and any retail development in this location would not support Hailsham as a whole; and
 - our assumption in the redevelopment of all sites is that any existing car parking should be retained. There is insufficient flexibility within this site to decant car parking elsewhere, and decking over the existing area would make it difficult to relate the development positively to the area around it; and
 - vehicular access for servicing is difficult.
- 5.9 We therefore recommend that any redevelopment of this area is for residential and/or employment uses that would:
- reflect the pattern of land uses with Hailsham – i.e. a retail core encircled by residential and employment uses;
 - provide a high quality building that could act as a positive gateway to the Town Centre.
- 5.10 This study addresses the physical capacity for additional retail floorspace within Hailsham Town Centre. It has not considered the transport implications of such an expansion of retail capacity - i.e. is more car parking needed, how might existing car parking be affected, how could public transport be improved (particularly from the proposed new residential areas) and so on. It is likely that transport improvements would be required for all modes, and a coordinated approach for such improvements would be needed to support the expansion of the Town's retail. A key next step would therefore be to study the transport implications of the various development scenarios set out in this report.
- 5.11 Overall, therefore, there is scope for significant retail development within Hailsham Town Centre up to and beyond 2016. This development can be located within the defined retail area and connect well into the existing network of streets and spaces - as such, it has the potential to enhance the viability and vitality of the Town Centre. In addition, with appropriate architectural responses, the development sites have the potential to enhance the character and appearance of the Town Centre through the replacement of buildings that currently detract from Hailsham.

Tibbalds Planning & Urban
Design
19 Maltings Place
169 Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3JB

T: 020 7089 2121
F: 020 7089 2120

mail@tibbalds.co.uk
www.tibbalds.co.uk