

THE GATHERINGS

BAKEWELL Town Centre Public Realm Framework



BAKEWELL TOWN COUNCIL
PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL
DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
BAKEWELL TRADERS

MAXIM URBAN DESIGN
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FOREWORD

Omnia mutantur nos et mutamur in illis:
All things change, and we change with them.



PREFACE

The Peak District National Park Authority commissioned Maxim Urban Design and Evans Vettori Architects to prepare a Public Realm Framework for Bakewell town centre in January 2012. The purpose of this work is to review the performance of the public realm, and to formulate a deliverable plan that capitalises on the positive assets of Bakewell whilst minimising negative impacts.

This is not a one-off initiative, but the culmination of many years work in Bakewell by many people. This Public Realm Framework brings together all of this work, appraises it and presents a Vision and Programme as a focus for action. It is not a rigid masterplan, but a flexible framework designed to ensure that future actions by all stakeholders deliver positive outcomes. It is also the purpose of the Framework to provide a quality benchmark, a reference point for monitoring and a rationale against which funding bids can be made and supported.

The Framework is not intended to be adopted as planning policy. It is a tool to bring together key stakeholders working towards a common vision for the long term improvement of the town for the benefit of all.

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4.0 SUMMARY



The Task

Bakewell is the capital of the Peak District National Park, a thriving market town and an important visitor attraction in its own right. It is set in an outstanding natural landscape and appreciated as a great place to live by its community. It has the potential to be an outstanding town. The production of this Public Realm Framework has presented the community with an opportunity to thoroughly review Bakewell and co-ordinate their aspirations for its future through management and development of the public realm.

Bakewell has many high quality physical assets, but its greatest asset must be the number of agencies charged with its nurture and management: Bakewell Town Council; Peak District National Park Authority; Derbyshire Dales District Council; and, Derbyshire County Council. This is a unique scale of resource and expertise for a town the size of Bakewell, and in partnership with other key stakeholders in the town, have the capacity to produce an exemplar market town at the beginning of the 21st century.

Bakewell has undergone tremendous change over the past decade to cement its future as a market town. Now is the time to consolidate this achievement through the development of a public realm commensurate with this role. However, before generating ideas we need to understand what public realm is, what Bakewell offers and what the community aspire to.

What is Public Realm?

ODPM in Living Places: Caring for Quality (January 2004), defined the public realm as:

“Public Realm relates to all those parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses all streets, squares, and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or community/civic uses; the open spaces and parks; and the ‘public/private’ spaces where public access is unrestricted. It includes the interfaces with key internal and private spaces to which the public normally has free access.”

Although this describes where the public realm is, it explains nothing of its function, purpose, or value.

What is its purpose and function?

At its simplest, public realm is the focus of communal activity: of movement; meeting; trade; civic ceremony and, leisure. It comprises links (paths) and nodes (arrival / departure points), creating a complexity of activity that reflects the needs and preferences of individuals and groups. The best public realm is adaptable, balancing these sometimes-incompatible activities to create attractive, sustainable, and successful places.

Why is public realm important?

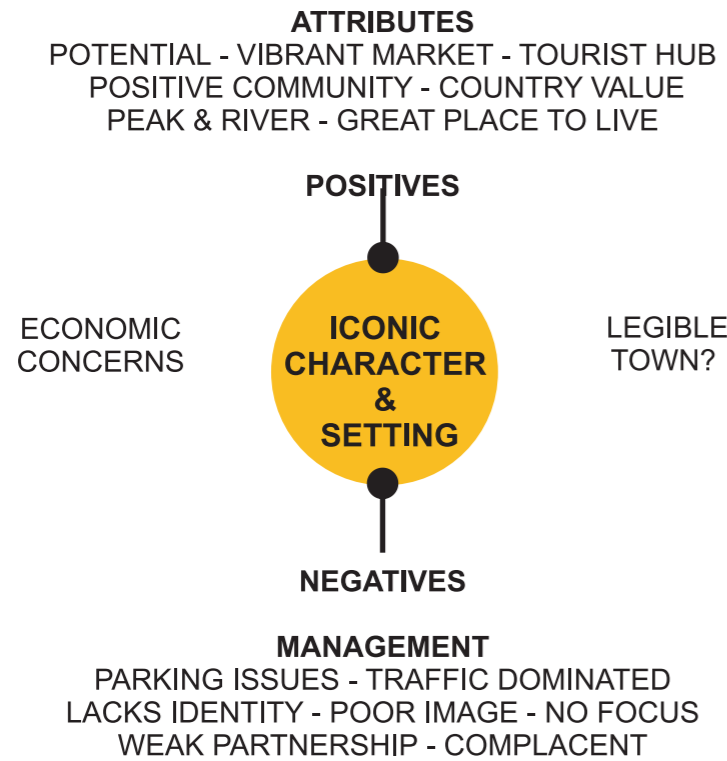
Placemaking fuels economic growth, social interaction, better health, and quality of life. Public realm defines place, and the best places are dynamic, not static. A highly functioning and adaptable public realm reflects the positive quality of a place and its community, which in turn determines people's attitudes and opinions. Quality of place is an essential constituent in the delivery of quality of life, and is particularly important where a town performs a hub function like Bakewell – it must remain attractive to inhabitants and visitors alike.

Active and creative management of the public realm to balance competing needs will deliver a vital and viable place. Positive outcomes that will follow include:

- Clear image and identity.
- Richness and diversity.
- Strong sense of place.
- Safe and secure environments.
- Strong sense of community
- Inward investment.

Most importantly, the public realm needs clarity, purpose, and meaning to be successful. It must also be recognised that quality public realm is more about the management of access, appropriate space and activity, than it is about pavings and furniture.

PERCEPTIONS



FUTURE ROLE



KEY TO IMPROVEMENTS



Aspiration

During intensive participation meetings, stakeholders identified their perceptions of Bakewell, opinions on its future role, and the key actions required to enable successful delivery of this role. Positive perceptions were centred on the quality attributes of the historic townscape, rural environment and community, its successful markets, and thus its attractiveness to visitors. Negative perceptions were focussed on the management of these positive attributes.

Throughout discussions, the idea of Bakewell as an important hub for this part of the Peak is unanimous, as is the idea that it can be an exemplar rural market town. The role as agricultural market town needs to maintain its authenticity; visitors need to fit with this way of the town. However, visitors are important too and need to find that tonic they seek from the Peaks. Bakewell needs to maintain and deliver tranquillity too.

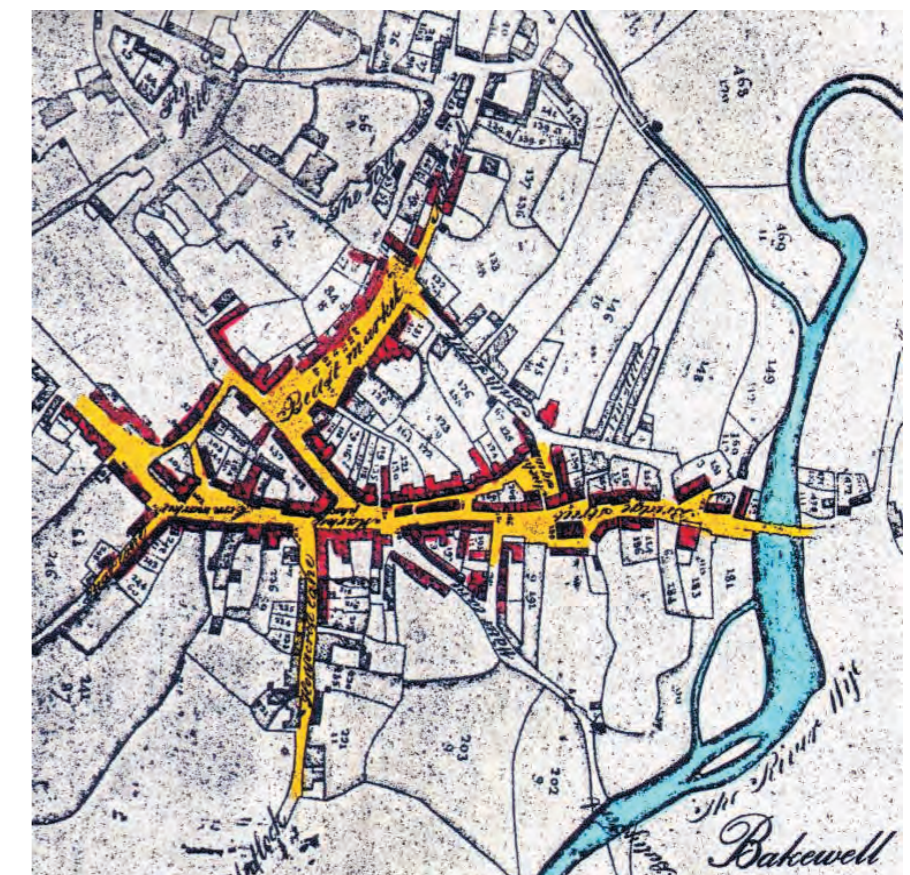
The resources required to deliver this exemplar place already exist. A successful community, important visitor attraction, thriving markets, and extensive professional expertise in the three key authorities. Complementing this is the experience and energy of the community, led by the Town Council. To harness and manage these enviable resources, all stakeholders need to be working with a shared Business Plan for Bakewell. This Framework aims to initiate that approach for the Public Realm.

Precedents

To deliver these aspirations successfully we must compliment and respects the history, culture, landscape, and local distinctiveness that is Bakewell. Movement patterns, relationships with the landscape and special elements such as the river, and the unique morphology of the existing townscape create the enduring structure and essential character of Bakewell. These elements provide the skeleton or foundation of place. Thus the public realm spaces in the 1799 map opposite still define Bakewell today.

Bakewell evolved as a market town from the time of Edward the Elder in the 10th century, focussed on the newly constructed fort and the emerging system of taxation and justice. Most importantly, Bakewell was the site of The Grand Gathering called by Edward to unite the warring factions in Britain; Edward was declared Father and Lord of the Anglo Saxon Lands. Four years later, Edward's son Athelstan became the first King of England.

Bakewell continues this tradition of gatherings for its close and dispersed communities. Today we can add the visitor community to the gatherings; be it for town facilities, markets, Bakewell Show, or other events. Historically, the markets were street based, but the development of the Agricultural Business Centre and the show ground have shifted the focus. For the future prosperity of Bakewell, the market function of the public realm needs to be reasserted to capture the full potential of this gathering role.



VISION STATEMENT

Today, Bakewell needs to capitalise upon the opportunities that it has available to create and maintain an exemplar market town worthy of the title Capital of the Peak. In addition to its role serving the local community, it possesses an opportunity to build upon its status as a visitor destination. And it has the prospect to become one of England's most beautiful towns.

This Framework sets a high but attainable Vision for Bakewell: rich in a public realm of high quality streets, squares and open spaces. It is a framework for persistent incremental improvement, of balancing competing needs and of doing the right thing for the greater good. Primarily it is a management plan, rather than a master plan. Flexible enough to make incremental progress, adaptable enough to capitalise upon unforeseen opportunities, and transparent enough to monitor progress.

The Framework is broken down into five distinct programmes for the purposes of focussing expertise and support from champions. However, all the programmes are interconnected and must be considered holistically. The Framework presents an ethical plan for Bakewell, with the concept of sustainability a central but unobtrusive theme.

PROGRAMMES

Better Bakewell

This first programme is about people, establishing a management team to drive the framework, and participation from the wider community.

Movement & Space

This second programme is about balancing the movement flows, taming the traffic, and establishing the spaces

Design Quality

This third programme is about creative identity, reinforcing the connections and the development of appropriate pavings and furniture.

Gardens & Landscape

This fourth programme is about Bakewell in Bloom, the agricultural landscape, the river valley and the influence of the English Landscape tradition.

Enabling the 'Gatherings'

This fifth programme is about celebrating the gatherings; the spaces and the events that represent the town and capitalise the Peak District National Park.



3.0 PROGRAMMES

3.1 Better Bakewell

PRIORITIES

NOW

Better Bakewell Committee

Establish Terms of Reference.

Identify programme champions.

Local Authorities

Agree Memorandum of Understanding.

Establish Officer Implementation Group - who is responsible for what?

Communication

Establish a communication strategy that gives information, encourages participation and raises profile.

Consider a 'Friends of Bakewell' association.

Establish a 'Better Bakewell' programme - a citizens charter.

Enable local expertise involvement.

SOONER

Monitor effectiveness of the committee and Officer Implementation Group.

Monitor community participation.

LATER

Review and develop group structures and Terms of Reference as appropriate..



Management

Successful delivery of the Framework over the next decade will depend on the consistency and focus of the management team charged with it. It is therefore essential that an appropriate management structure is established at the outset to ensure that the resources available are directed to the goals of the Framework.

It is recommended that Bakewell Town Council take the leading role, supported by other key stakeholders. A committee (Better Bakewell) should be established with 12-15 members. From these, 5 champions should be agreed who will assume responsibility for leading each of the Framework programmes. It is important that young people are represented on the committee to ensure their distinct needs are addressed. The committee will need to establish Terms of Reference for its operation. These should be of an executive 'directorial' nature, and not a management and delivery role.

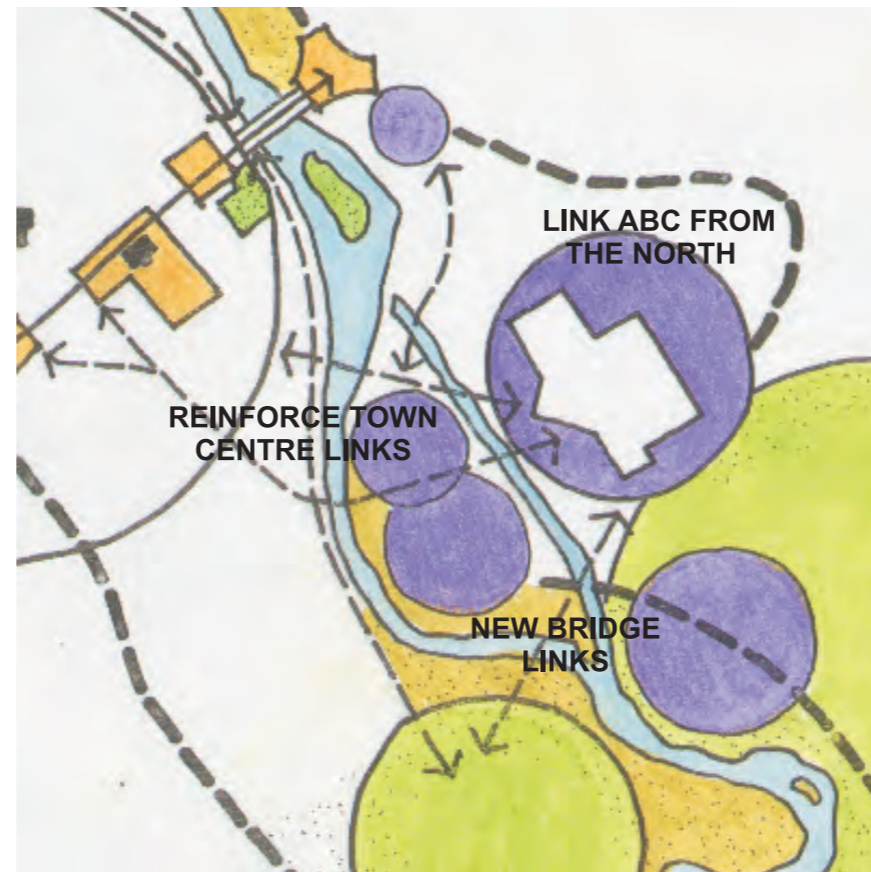
Management and delivery activities are the responsibility of the local authorities and other key stakeholder groups. It is recommended that the local authorities draft and embrace a Memorandum of Understanding in support of the Framework and the Better Bakewell Committee. This should clarify how they intend to pool and deliver resources, and which authority will lead the different areas.



Participation

The Bakewell community must be engaged in the Better Bakewell programme. Clear communication will make people aware of the Committee's intentions and activities with opportunities for participation made explicit. Many successful community groups already exist in the town and they should enthuse and lead community involvement in the development and delivery of the programmes. There should be ample opportunity to draw on the diverse skills available in the local area to engage in activities ranging from volunteering on physical projects to mentoring young people.

Over and above the community run activities, Better Bakewell should be about pride in the community and the place. For example local drivers should be encouraged to be courteous and to abide by speed limits. Such local standard-setting will quickly modify the behaviour of those passing through. Initiatives to discourage pavement parking, to shop locally, to pick up litter, to clean buildings and plant up frontages will deliver highly visible benefits to exemplify the Better Bakewell agenda.



Pedestrian Priority

Pedestrian movement and priority needs to be improved in Bakewell if the quality of place is to be realised and the economic potential of the town centre fully exploited. This is important in terms of quality of life for the community and the attractiveness of the town to visitors. Pedestrian links must be direct to maximise legibility and permeability throughout, not compromised by traffic needs - it is the vehicles that need taming not the pedestrians.

Spatially, pedestrian and vehicle space needs to be balanced, but in terms of priority, pedestrians must come first in the town centre. Again, this needs to be balanced against traffic flows; creating standing traffic has its own negative polluting impact on the public realm. In a confined medieval town like Bakewell, where there is no workable by-pass solution for all traffic, the approach must be one of creative management and ongoing monitoring, not a one-off master plan solution.

Before the pedestrian environment can be improved, traffic needs to be better managed so that we can see what is possible. However, this does not preclude having a vision of what we want to achieve. The historic routes and spaces through the town centre need to be directly connected and legible as a continuous place. Driver behaviour can be improved through changes in the environment, and destination traffic greatly reduced through parking management, signage and highway network legibility.

Parking Management

Parking management needs to be improved in the town centre to provide a better experience for visitors, to reduce unnecessary vehicle movements and to make ethical use of the land resource. Traffic audits indicate that circa 50% of vehicles entering Bakewell town centre stop here. If we could remove this traffic from the system, and stop it circulating in pursuit of a parking space, the opportunities for improving the public realm will become realistic.

Closing the town centre car parks will immediately remove the main traffic attractors. Disabled parking can be retained at kerbside in Market Street and Granby Road. Additional parking could be allowed along Haddon Road, which will narrow the A6 thus modifying traffic speeds. A new park and walk car park could be created at the northern gateway.

Making the large car parks east of the river more accessible and welcoming is essential. Accessing Smiths Island from Agricultural Way will stop destination traffic from Matlock passing through the town centre by offering an alternative access point. This will additionally relieve traffic congestion and pedestrian conflict within the Smiths Island parking areas and improve 'visibility' of the ABC parking. New bridges will also increase the pedestrian network.

Funding for improvements to these car parks could be derived from development on the town centre car park sites.

Realising the Spaces

Through the appropriate management of parking facilities and thus traffic flows, it becomes possible to re-establish the public realm through the establishment of spaces and a well connected system of streets and paths. It is also possible to increase connectivity and circuits through the wider landscape using the river and new bridging points at Smiths Island to link the Show Ground and Recreation Ground.

A key theme is the sequence of spaces from the bridge up to the church that represents the historic spine of Bakewell, holding all parts of the town centre together. We propose these themes become 'the gatherings', a concept that will hold these fragile but important spaces together in a single identity. This is particularly important as the spaces will emerge over time. Some will be more difficult to develop than others, but they are all capable of incremental movement forward - new paving, furniture, temporary uses and traffic closures.

The most important space to deliver is Market Square. It is easiest to deliver by simply closing it to parking, but also difficult as it has no live edges. This space needs active frontages. This can be achieved through new access into existing shops, or new appropriately managed 'pop-up' shops established around the square. In addition, the square needs to become a destination for meeting and relaxing as well as commerce.

3.0 PROGRAMMES

3.2 Movement & Space

PRIORITIES

NOW

De-clutter road signage and road markings.

Introduce appropriate pedestrian signage with indicative walking times to destination.

Close Granby Croft to through traffic.

Trial - close the town centre car parks and undertake traffic audits to assess the impact on town centre traffic movements.

Trial - close the bridge to HGV's - audit the impact.

Close Market Square to cars and manage as a public space.

Consider developing pop-up shops in Market Square.

Develop extensive cycle parking facilities on car park opposite police station.

Prepare development brief for Granby Road car park.

Provide on-street disabled parking in Market Street / Granby Road.

Increase parking bays in Haddon Road.

Produce master plan for parking areas to the east of the Wye. To include improved access and circulation via new river bridges.

SOONER

Market Granby Road car park and link development to main car park improvements (bridges etc)

Produce Action Plan for potential changes to highway structure. Actions in the plan to include incremental projects such as crossings, build outs etc; traffic audit studies with trigger points; major schemes with cost estimates; impact assessments to measure increased value of changes to the public realm; identify funding sources.

Consider park-and-walk project on Buxton Road.

Implement appropriate highway and public realm projects as and when funding becomes available.

LATER

Seek funding and implement appropriate schemes.





Reinforcing the Connections

To minimise traffic impacts in Bakewell it is important to direct people to the main car parks and turn them into pedestrians as soon as possible. To achieve this it is important that people can navigate around Bakewell easily and feel comfortable in the choice of route they take. Defining gateways and entrances, reinforcing routes, creating landmarks and making the town as legible and permeable as possible will create a welcoming and accessible place - this applies to both pedestrians and drivers.

The key gateways, entrances and routes that need reinforcing in Bakewell will best be served by public art, planting, public space, paving and enclosures. Signage should play a supportive role to the natural legibility of the town, but not be the only form of navigation. For example, arriving at Agricultural Way by car, people should feel confident that they should turn off here for town centre parking. Gateway features, narrowing of the highway, tree avenues along the road, should all indicate a change from country road to town streets - you are certain you have arrived in Bakewell.

Developing these devices throughout the town will signal to drivers that they should modify their driving behaviour. Minimising road signage, especially road markings, will create a need for greater concentration and thus care. Pedestrian signage should be in keeping with the town; traditional enamel with black writing on a white background is less utilitarian and timeless.

Creative Identity

There is a rustic richness in the buildings and shops of Bakewell that is missing from the public realm. The activities in the ABC and the products within the shops need to spill out into the streets, part literally and part through shop signs, window displays and public art contributions. The local crafts and artist communities should be encouraged to contribute to the cultural growth of Bakewell, directly through their presence and through work with and for other businesses and organisations. Perhaps designing furniture for the public realm.

The performing and literary arts also need space to perform, meet and display in the public realm. A raised platform in Market square, a cinema screen on the COOP wall, inscriptions in the pavements and walls.

How is the work on the farms represented in the town. The skill of the drystone waller interpreted with artists to create sheltered seating areas, boundary treatments and gateways. The expertise in local breeds, tributes to prize animals and characters that bred them. The use of locally sourced materials and construction techniques.

The Floor of the Town

The organic street patterns and the shape of spaces in Bakewell suggest that the most appropriate approach to paving would be to use 'fluid' materials. This approach will fit visually with the townscape, reinforce movement patterns and provide a high quality finish. Fluid materials include asphalts that literally flow to the shape of paving areas, small unit pavings such as setts and cobbles, and random stone slabs.

The most important function of paving is to provide a hard, dry, non-slip, durable, easily maintainable surface that will carry the load of traffic asked of it. There should be no change in material or surface pattern without a practical purpose. This is supported by several less tangible functions:

- To reinforce character.
- To guide people by providing a sense of direction.
- To provide a sense of repose.
- To indicate a hazard by change of material or pattern.
- To reduce scale.

It is recommended that black asphalt is used for roads carrying all traffic, and coloured or treated asphalt for shared surface streets, and key pedestrian crossings. Where and when practical, natural stone should be used for pavements and paved crossovers at entrances to pedestrian priority areas - setts and random flags.

3.0 PROGRAMMES

3.3 Design Quality

PRIORITIES

NOW

Reinforcing the Connections - prepare an Action Plan to guide the development of gateways, routes and connections. This would ideally be contained within the Highways Action Plan.

Prepare a furniture and paving strategy - an appropriate palette of materials, details and products.

Incrementally update the town centre street lighting from sodium to white light.

Research agricultural heritage and contemporary expertise - to showcase, or inspire creative identity.

Prepare a shopfront design guide - focus on the creative involvement of local artists / artisans.

Prepare a management and maintenance plan for the public realm.

SOONER

Implement projects within the action plans, strategies and guides.

LATER

Ensure ongoing maintenance of all aspects of public realm are being delivered. Consider the establishment of a BID - Business Improvement District. This might include the engagement of a town centre manager - perhaps a shared resource with other market towns in Derbyshire.



Furniture

Seats will be the most important pieces of furniture in Bakewell and must be plentiful and appropriately positioned to attract use. In addition to being comfortable and ergonomically designed they must be accessible, particularly for elderly or disabled people and should comply with DDA. Where people are expected to dwell, timber slatted benches offer increased comfort. Where incidental sitting is anticipated, natural stone seats will provide a robust unifying link to the floor plane and are visually simple, reducing the appearance of street clutter. Opportunities to provide sitting areas on walls and steps should also be exploited. Finally, the seating arrangements should provide for sociability.

Opportunities should be taken to introduce the countryside to the town through the use of agricultural elements and materials (eg. railings / troughs / galvanised finishes etc) and natural materials (stone / timber bollards). Public art can also provide devices that replace the need for traditional furniture (eg. boundary treatments).

Generally, all steelwork on street furniture should be painted a neutral dark grey (R8050) to minimise visual impact. The cluttering effect of furniture must also be minimised through thoughtful siting, mounting lights and signs on buildings where practical and sharing posts and columns where necessary. No group should be independently putting furniture in the public realm.

Maintenance

To maintain the quality of the public realm, it is important to consider the following at the project design stage:

Paving – fit for purpose, easily cleaned and detailed to allow for ease of repair.

Furniture – sited where it can be serviced and cleaned around. Where vehicle access is required (bins; lamp columns), the paving leading up to it must be capable of carrying the vehicle weight.

Tree planting – consider the eventual size of the tree, maintenance access (watering; pruning) and seasonal impacts.

Planters – consider maintenance access and the impact of vehicles on pavings leading up to them. It is also important that planters do not 'leak' over pavings when watered.

Lighting – when specifying bespoke light fittings, consider long term maintenance using common parts.

Water – siting and design of features must consider safety, public health and maintenance issues, including access, overspill / spray.

For all the above, consideration must be given to the speedy repair and availability of materials following abuse or accidental damage.



The Value of Landscape

Improving the landscape setting of Bakewell is one of the easiest programmes to initiate and to deliver in an incremental manner. It is one of those programmes that can involve the whole town and build a sense of pride, and for this reason it is very valuable community building activity. Bakewell in Bloom is already established and it would be good to expand the programme to ensure that it is innovative and influencing the wider plan.

At the strategic level, there are two influences that should be developed in Bakewell to raise its profile and image. The first is development of a style of landscape that is unique to Bakewell. This should build off the natural landscape of the Wye valley, the historic land management techniques and the local agricultural traditions. This means managing the wilder parts of the Wye river corridor more appropriately, using more native plant species to reinforce the corridor - the planting on Smiths Island and around the ABC looks unloved and alien.

Within the town centre, there is plenty of scope to dramatically increase planting displays to correspond with the richness of the traditional building materials, the shop

window displays and the busyness of the narrow streets. Planters can be used around the town to deliver these displays, but they must be unified and unique to Bakewell - not big boxes you could find in any town. It is recommended that a range of agricultural troughs are considered for this task, linking to the surrounding agricultural landscape, and the past market role of the town centre. It is also recommended that the plants used are of a robust scale in keeping with the planters and spaces.

The second landscape influence is the English Landscape Tradition - Repton, Capability Brown, Paxton, etc. Many visitors to this part of the Peak have come to view these landscapes, an influence worth exploiting. Chatsworth also hosts sculptural exhibitions within its grounds; artists could contribute to the development of the Bakewell landscape, combining arts with planting and local landscape elements.

Finally, the Royal Jubilee presents an opportunity for symbolic tree planting. These trees need to be placed in symbolic places; key nodes within the town. Six trees could be paired for the town gateways. Sixty trees could produce an impressive avenue - Jubilee instead of Agricultural Way!

3.0 PROGRAMMES

3.4 Gardens & Landscape

PRIORITIES

NOW

Celebrate the Jubilee with tree planting. Ensure that all groups are coordinated in this symbolic activity. Symbolism is important. Bakewell should choose an appropriate species and location for these trees - 6 or 60.

Produce an Action Plan to coordinate the landscape programme. To include the identification of an appropriate palette of planting and containers, locations, costs and funding.

Encourage community participation through frontage displays.

Involve artists and artisans in the developing and delivering the programme.

Introduce competition - within the town and with other Derbyshire towns.

Produce a management and maintenance plan for the town centre.

SOONER

Produce a wider landscape management plan for Bakewell.

Continue to develop and implement schemes. Monitor progress and success. Audit value change in the public realm - perception study.

LATER

Remember that plants are living things and change. Trees grow, casting shade etc which will affect other plants below them. Trees are also often longer lived than shrubs. Therefore future resources will be required to managed the maturing landscapes.



3.0 PROGRAMMES

3.5 Enabling The Gatherings

PRIORITIES

NOW

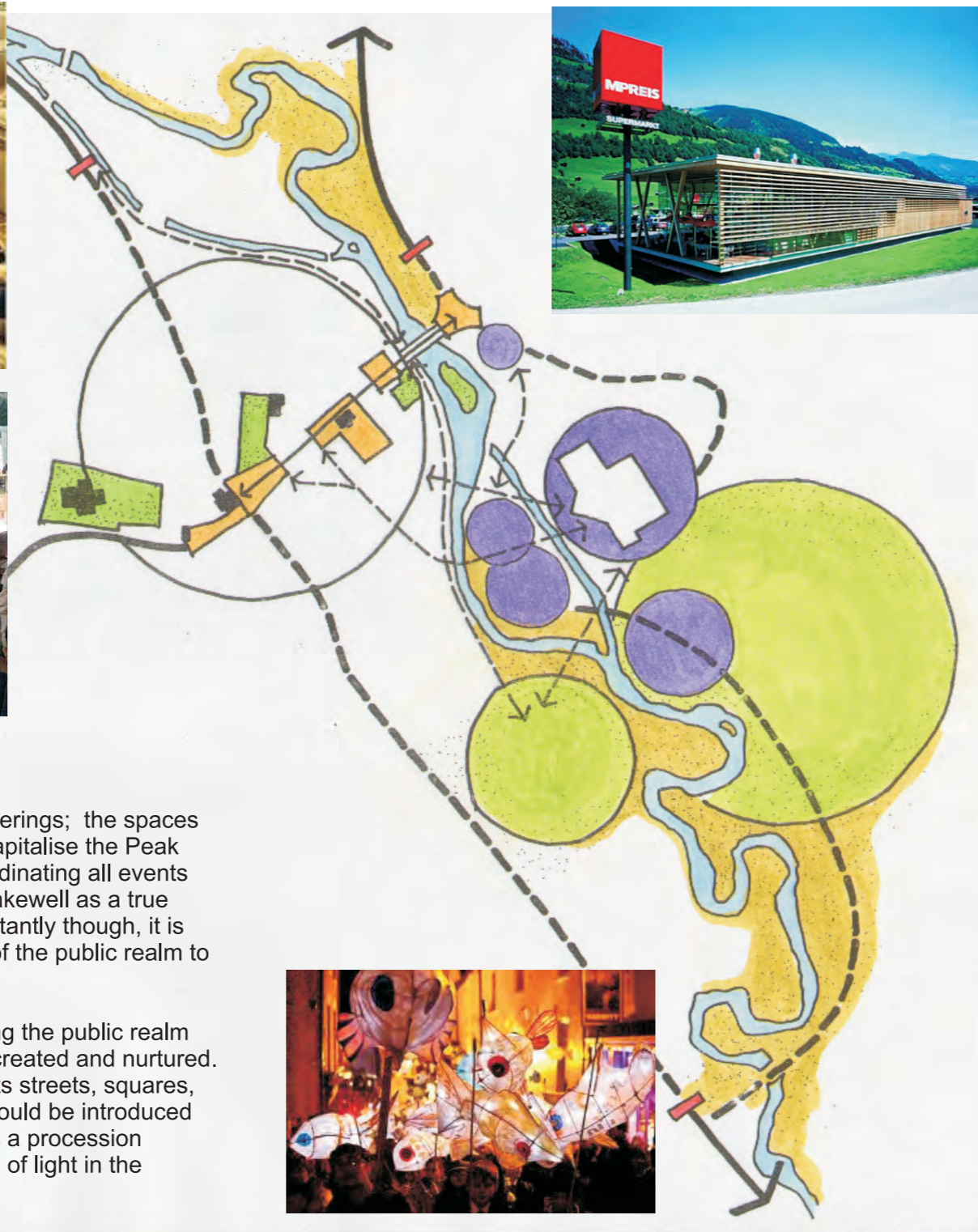
- Audit existing activities and events.
- Research potential activities and events.
- Coordinate and match spaces to the events.
- Engage appropriate community networks.
- Research the local skills base - best of Derbyshire - and match with other programmes.
- Twinning - join with other Derbyshire market towns to share experience and resources.

SOONER

- Showcasing the PeakDistrict National Park.
- Link the spaces and celebrate the emerging public realm.

LATER

- Develop unique 'supermarket' for local produce - food, plants, crafts, clothing etc.



Enabling The Gatherings

This programme is about celebrating the gatherings; the spaces and the events that represent the town and capitalise the Peak District National Park. In part, it is about coordinating all events under the one banner, raising the profile of Bakewell as a true market town fulfilling its purpose. More importantly though, it is about recognising the value and importance of the public realm to the heath and vitality of Bakewell.

Enabling The Gatherings is about championing the public realm and ensuring that the spaces are reclaimed, created and nurtured. That the whole town is reconnected through its streets, squares, spaces and river. Perhaps an annual event could be introduced similar to 'beating-the-bounds', where there is a procession through the towns spaces. Perhaps a festival of light in the autumn.

It is also important that the Peak District National Park is capitalised in Bakewell. All that is good about the natural Park should be represented here. Land management should be exemplary, displaying the best of local skills, local produce on sale in a more regular Farmers Market for example, local craft and art skills showcased. A 'supermarket' for local produce may be appropriate near the ABC, to reinforce links between the town and its landscape.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stakeholders

Sue Smethurst – Bakewell Events
 David Clark – Bakewell at Work
 Janet Bailey – Bakewell Show
 George Challenger – BCIG & Civic Society
 Julia Zamoyski – Bakewell in Bloom
 Dan Zamoyski – Sustainable Bakewell
 Lorraine Cross – Bakewell Market
 Ian Green - Bakewell at Work
 Helen Yates - Litton Properties
 Gill Chapman - Visit Peak District/DDDC
 Pauline Beswick - PDNPA SoS Member
 John Boyle - Bakewell & Eyam Community Transport
 Colin Bateman - Lumford & Holme Lane Residents' Association
 Pat Lunn - Bakewell & District Civic Society
 Don Symonds - Tourist Information Centre Manger
 Richard Young – Bakewell Farm Shop
 PC Philip Maycock
 PCSO Jonathan Taylor
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SUMMARY

The preparation of any urban design strategy is a journey of discovery, and to be of value it must be as unique as the place and its community. Through our work we have discovered that Bakewell has surrendered its public realm to the detriment of both its social and economic health. This has been an incremental process, and often for good reason to solve an immediate problem. However, a problem solving approach often promotes a short agenda.

This Framework presents an opportunities led approach that engages with a wider agenda to ensure that we do not create future problems whilst solving current ones. It is a sustainable approach based on incremental improvement to the quality of life in Bakewell. It is not a master plan, but a vision and action plan that allows the whole community to work together on developing and delivering positive changes.

The concept of 'The Gatherings' is an important one. For every place there is a *genius loci* - spirit of the place - and in Bakewell we believe this spirit is the gathering of people. From Edward the Elder in 920 to the present day, gathering is the most important function in Bakewell. This is more so that most other market towns as they have been allowed to expand and to some extent become clone towns. Bakewell remains authentic.

The challenge now is to capitalise upon this authenticity, to maintain and champion the vision, and to keep focussed on this concept of 'The Gatherings'. It is not branding, but meaning.

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The Gathering
 Artist: Lynne Wilkinson