



The landmark Betty's Tea Rooms



the point at which the Stray marries up to the edge of both Montpellier Quarter and the retail core and it is a stone's throw from, historic buildings, the Pump Houses, the Royal Baths and the Conference Centre.

In many respects it is a microcosm of what is quintessentially 'Harrogate' and the space unquestionably contributes to how the town is perceived.

Good & Bad Attributes

General

- The Cenotaph and the gardens are Harrogate's ceremonial focus, in a setting of civic, social and visual importance.
- The gardens provide a 'honey pot' location, linking retail, social, heritage, recreational and leisure activities; (Betty's, Montpellier Quarter, the retail core, Strays, boules court, floral displays), creating a unique Harrogate destination.

Architectural

- The architecturally rich buildings provide a high quality setting

Public Realm

- Paving materials are manmade, vehicles and roads an intrusion.

Opportunities to Enhance

- Closing vehicular access to Cambridge Crescent (pedestrianised space) and narrowing Cambridge Road, creating a new much enlarged civic space with quality paving and pedestrian priority.
- Creating safe clear pedestrian routes from James Street and Cambridge Street to Parliament Street/Montpellier Hill
- Providing additional space for seating and informal recreation.

CHARACTER AREA A – Odeon, Station Avenue & Bridge



Description & Character

This zone is a major bridging point linking the east and west of the town across the railway line. The roundabout serves as an important circulatory node, bounded by a mixture of uses including; residential, leisure (Odeon Cinema - above) and offices. It also links into the large Victoria multi-storey car park.

The area is devoid of real character, with unattractive rear elevations of properties facing onto Station Avenue and an open car parking area behind the Odeon clearly visible. The footpaths are generally wide, some with cycle routes marked, unfortunately these are poor quality. Pedestrian movement is restricted by the wide roads and the traffic using the roundabout. However, as the location of the iconic Art Deco style Odeon Cinema and as a gateway into the heart of the town, it is an important urban space, with significant potential for improvement.



Rear facades and a poorly defined car park provide little of amenity value at this gateway location



Poor quality cycle way demarcation

Good & Bad Attributes

General

- Though some provision for cyclists is in place it is piecemeal and poor quality.
- For a town which trades on its heritage and character this area has little to offer currently, the lighting is utilitarian and could be upgraded for safety and amenity, particularly as the cinema is used in the evening.



Buildings on Station Bridge

Architectural

- The zone accommodates the iconic Odeon building, however, the rear and side facades are large blank non-descript facades.
- Other buildings are reasonable, quality 3 to 4 storeys Georgian and Victorian style terraced residential properties, some converted into offices.

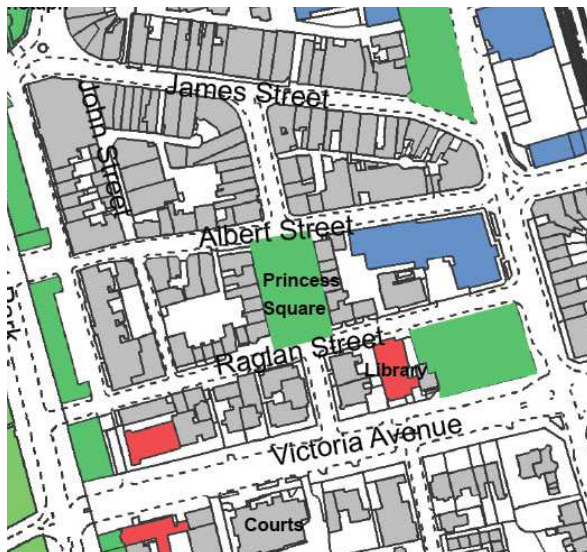
Public Realm

- Visually intrusive cinema car parking along the pedestrian footpath on Station Avenue and rear facades opposite present an unattractive route into town for pedestrians and motorists. The streetscape is more car orientated than visually attractive or pedestrian friendly.

Opportunities to Enhance

- Pedestrian/cyclist access could be improved at the roundabout creating an improved visual/physical 'gateway' connecting areas north of the rail line to the town centre.
- Introduce street trees.
- Improved pedestrian footpaths and provide a bus stop on both sides.

CHARACTER AREA B – Princes Square



Description & Character

Princes Square is an attractive, historic square, now unfortunately dominated by car parking and corporate advertising in the form a plethora of signage covering the windows and facades of the grand terraces, which enclose the space. The parked cars and signage undermine what could be a distinctive and most attractive space.

The conversion of many of the terraced properties into estate agents, who require maximum exposure for their advertising has resulted in a significant visual intrusion upon the elevational quality of the buildings.



Princes Square with car parking

Several of the ground and basement floors have now been converted into restaurant/cafe use, some of which benefit from the use of small garden areas. This has improved amenity and brought life and activity to the space and the street. Though the square is very much a focus for estate agents and parking, it is a most important linkage space, connecting to some interesting spaces, building and streets, including the Library and adjacent gardens, Albert Street, which contains one of the few potential development sites in the Town centre, (Beales). Further west are Prospect Place, the Strays, and the tree lined Victoria Avenue is to the south. Around the corner, John Street is a relatively hidden enclave of lively bars and restaurants.



Predominantly with estate agents offices & basement cafe usage

Good & Bad Attributes

General

- The majority of properties within Princes Square are converted into offices, some with bar/restaurant use at the ground and basement level, creating life and vibrancy. Many of the premises have been adapted to estate/solicitors offices with a plethora of adverts and property display boards.
- The square itself is laid out as a car park with no soft landscaping.



The Architecturally impressive facade of the Hooper's building is a dramatic focal point when viewed from the Princes Square but the street scene is unfortunately dominated by parked cars.

- The large, vacant Beales store is currently inactive with unattractive facades. This site is an excellent infill development opportunity.
- Vehicle & pedestrian conflicts throughout the area.

Architectural

- Good quality 3 to 4 storey Georgian and Victorian style terraced street with stone facades reflecting vernacular architecture.
- Very few modern infill buildings.
- Elevations completely spoilt by signage on windows, gables, bays, doors and freestanding sign boards in front of properties.



Example of unattractive advertising

Public Realm

- Princes Square has the potential to be a most attractive public space. However the concrete paving slabs and asphalt surfacing do not reflect the quality of the buildings and the space is dominated by car parking.
- Adjacent streets within the zone also have end to end parking which dominates the street scene and obstructs pedestrian movement.
- The formal landscaped square in front of the Library is well maintained with good public facilities.
- Limited street trees.



John Street a lively and vibrant restaurant enclave

Opportunity to Enhance

- Develop a restrictive signage strategy to reveal the original building facades.
- Remove car parking from the square if possible and return to a hard surfaced space utilising natural materials and punctuated by a limited number of street trees.
- Redevelopment of the Beales site provides an excellent opportunity for a sensitive and important infill scheme, which can significantly contribute to enhancing the south eastern corner of this area at a visual very significant



Former Beales store

location. The new building should be in proportion with and sympathetic to local vernacular, while providing active frontages particularly to the south.

CHARACTER AREA C – Retail Core



The retail core



Pedestrianised retail streets



James Street dominated by vehicular traffic & parked cars

Description & Character

This is the retail core of the town, about 50 per cent pedestrianised and the focus for the majority of people visiting Harrogate. The zone contains a wide range of retail outlets from relatively small independents to the large national high street chains, such as M&S, which have large footprint stores. The area essentially comprises, 4 east/west orientated streets and 2 north/south orientated streets, each with a different character. The streets are:

Cheltenham Parade

Cheltenham Parade contains a large proportion of restaurants, several independent shops and the rear facade of the red brick Harrogate Theatre. The road is a key city centre circulatory access road (A61) and as such heavily used by public transport, taxis and other vehicles. Generally the buildings are very well maintained, three storeys, stone residential terraces, converted to a variety of new uses. The streetscape is punctuated by a small but significant number of street trees and planted frontages/garden patios to restaurants, which add welcome relief to the standard concrete slab paved footways.

Oxford Street

This is one of the three pedestrianised streets in the town centre, a little barren in feel when not full of people, it contains the main entrance to the Harrogate Theatre. Though the entrance is not particularly visible the theatre is a relatively large red brick building, quite different to the stone buildings more associated with the town. This street has a very different character to Cheltenham Parade, partly because it is pedestrianised, but largely because to one side the original buildings have all been replaced by buildings of recent construction, large in scale and with mediocre quality facades. The paving is rather dull in colour, dark, concrete set paving, which 'carpets' the space rather than providing any interest, or linkage to the building facades, which doesn't create the 'street feel', so prevalent in the unchanged historic streets.

Cambridge Street

Cambridge Street is undoubtedly the main thoroughfare for many pedestrians, a relatively broad pedestrianised street, it directly links attractions such as; major high street retailers, The Stray, Montpellier Quarter and Betty's Tea Rooms with the bus station, train station, car parks and taxi ranks. This is the retail/pedestrian spine at the centre of the town.



Attractive shop front and canopies. Enhancements to linking ginells.

Though like Oxford Street many of the buildings and facades are relatively recent, the paving used and architectural treatments are much more successful. The rhythm of the architecture is more in keeping with the terraces found elsewhere in the town. Even the large Victoria Shopping Centre is broken up with a repetitive facade, which mimics the terraces found elsewhere. The street surfacing is a mixture of concrete slab paving, concrete-set paving and clay pavers, but unlike Oxford Street the edges are defined with slabs to create a 'footpath' and therefore a more traditional 'street' feel, rather than a bland 'carpeting' of the space between buildings. Though the paving difference may be subtle, this treatment, together with street trees and the repetitive rhythm and 'active' facades, creates a much more attractive street. However, it is a pity no natural materials have been used and the paving is beginning to show significant signs of wear and tear.



James Street

James Street to the southern edge of the centre is not pedestrianised, but provides one way vehicular access with parking to both sides of the road. The street is home to some fine architecture, essentially unspoilt by modern insertions, both sides of the road present a variety of architectural fenestrations, three storeys in height, mainly stone, but with some first floor brick facades, half timber treatments and ground level glazed canopies. The street contains generally higher value, up market retailers, and banks. Though the street is architecturally attractive and relatively broad, it feels crowded and there is a definite vehicular/pedestrian conflict, with parked cars crammed along both sides of the road.

It links to Princess Square which has similar vehicular issues and it also links into John Street, an oasis for

those in search of in/outdoor food and refreshment away from cars. In this respect John Street is particularly successful, a vibrant, social pedestrianised street, full of bars and restaurants.



Cambridge Road

Cambridge Road links Cambridge Street, Oxford Street and Cheltenham Parade. Comprising two separate sections of one way street, it does not have a particularly distinct architectural character though it does contain two landmark church buildings. It does not appear to be particularly heavily used by traffic though it does provide Blue Badge parking very close to the town centre shopping and the Cenotaph.



Beulah Street

Located directly across the road from the bus station Beulah Street is a short length of pedestrianised street linking Cheltenham Parade and Cambridge Street. It has an attractive entrance with a wrought iron arch on Cheltenham Parade. The general quality / 'feel' of the street are not on a par with others in the retail core, the shops are generally lower value retailers, with a scattering of budget cafes.

The paving design mimics footpaths with paving slabs to each side.



This pedestrianised link with a 'carpeting' of paviors and a lack of fenestration or activity leads to a bland, unattractive streetscape.

Good & Bad Attributes

General

- Links to car parks train station bus station severed by road and vehicular traffic.
- Car access and parking a problem on unpedestrianised streets as streets most heavily used in Harrogate town centre by pedestrians.
- Signage is variable – but a new signage strategy has just been completed ready for implementation.
- Poor sense of place on Oxford Street.
- Poor setting for Theatre incl. signage.
- Side alleys and linking routes are visually blighted by refuse storage and unattractive rear / side building elevations.



Refuse collection is an unsightly issue



Architectural

- Older architecture provides the best streetscape, new larger developments lack rhythm and activity.
- Rear facades on Cheltenham Parade are poor.

Public Realm

- The pedestrianised streets are pleasant enough, but the landscape treatment of spaces could be improved as the artificial materials (predominantly dark concrete) do little to compliment buildings or enhance the amenity of the area.
- Cafes & restaurants to the eastern end of James Street adjacent Station Square have no 'spill out' pavement space for dining.

Opportunities to Enhance

- Prepare an ongoing strategy of streetscape improvement to include natural/local surfacing materials.
- Introduce additional planting & street furniture along Oxford Street. Resurface street in natural materials and redefine paving patterns.
- Repave pedestrianised streets and introduce natural/local stone.
- Encourage street market & seasonal events.
- Remove on-street parking from one or both side of the James Street, widening pavements, and/or create shared surfaces.
- Cosmetic improvement to some of the poorly maintained & designed shop fronts.
- Improvements to the street signage & furniture.