

Placemaking Strategy for Nailsea

Site Opportunities Workshop 2

Thursday, 16th December 2021 by Zoom

This was the second of two workshops to explore the potential of some key sites in Nailsea, taking on board initial responses given a month previously. Here is a summary of the key points from the workshop (bring these together with points from the first site workshop) to inform briefs for the site proposals:

Regeneration of Crown Glass and Colliers Walk

How can the Crown Glass buildings be regenerated? Can retail uses be refocused and enhanced, can building be repurposed, can they be extended upwards and/or can underused service yards be better used to provide more town centre homes?

Opportunities:

- Acknowledged that generous arcaded public space is unusual/distinctive and could be redefined/revalued stakeholders appreciated the describing of the building as elegant and distinctive .
- Meet need of growing population for leisure destinations sustainably/locally.
- Develop USP for Nailsea as a shopping destination bringing economic and architectural vision together.
 - Niche shopping TBD e.g. [Alice Temperley](#)
 - Flexible spaces, smaller shop units for local start-ups and businesses, incubator space (with room for growth).
 - Need to develop options for appropriate retail offer for town?
- Create quality outside spaces as destinations/amenities for residents and visitors:
 - More well defined, intimate spaces – consider covered arcades.
 - More inviting public spaces with better lighting,
 - Better green spaces/play space, green roofs
 - Improve legibility of vertical access.
- Intensify residential use – place modular on top of existing (good rooftop views of the countryside). Consider possibility of live/work uses in some areas?
- Work with partners to enable economic diversity/richness.

Challenges:

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- Lacks pull as a destination - people drawn to favourite cafes (like nearby [Coates House](#)) but less keen on concrete/Crown Glass as it is.
 - Footfall varies – deadtimes late morning.
 - High rents and rates lead to empty units. Only charity shops viable, mostly larger units available.
 - Demolition is complicated, a 'no go' – better to reuse land and structures as more carbon efficient.
 - Generate more outward facing buildings, improving attractiveness/pull and improving identity/safety of town centre – linking to neighbourhoods.
 - Bring more residential uses into town centre to intensify daytime and evening.
 - **Colliers Walk**

The Colliers Walk proposal is an example of the regeneration of Crown Glass where the land use is partly shifted towards live work as this is a quieter area of Crown Glass.

Feedback on proposals as follows:

- Concept of flexible spaces that can adapt is useful.
- Could be delivered as self-build where existing homeowners could extend into ground floor.
- Not sure about ground floor living in this location – what is impact on footfall overall as important link between to the south of Colliers' Walk' and Somerset Square.
- Would need to be choreographed or managed as a space for artists or designer-makers as at Spike Island, Bristol or the Oxo Tower, London
- Enjoyed visualisation of intensely animated public space with ping pong tables etc. good to be creative about how to use the town centre.
- Need to understand the demand for retail and what the strategy should be for focusing retail – NS will provide vacancy data from October 2021.

Regeneration of Former College and Library

The workshop considered three options for the site each increasing residential use and exploring different options for repurposing or replacing the library building.

Partial demolition

- Library octagon could be repurposed as a café/restaurant with library elsewhere.
 - Valued building qualities are that it is iconic, quirky and 'brutalist'.
 - Challenging option as needs a lot of investment, building needs to be made more accessible and energy efficient. Also need to be certain of durability of building and its longevity. A condition survey was made two years ago and is currently being updated.
 - Priorities (if retained) are to;
 - Make the building more inviting with a clear/bold entrance point;
 - Open up the opaque façade and make glazed.
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- Create better interior exterior links and useful outside space. E.g. small market stalls for craft.
- Include a greener community garden.
- Could part of the ground floor be made into an adaptable performance space to use as a community hub?

Full demolition Option 01 (3/4 storey at current library site)

Full demolition Option 02 (single storey at current library site)

- Concerns that Option 1 would overshadow Somerset Square too much. Second courtyard option preferred and potential for dual aspect appreciated.
- New building should also be an iconic building – retaining some of the qualities of existing. Distinctive form/space and top lighting and defining contributing to Somerset Square in urban design terms.
- Needs to be part of a strategy for active ground floor uses as shouldn't be too many or too many in wrong places. Could have residential uses on the ground floor in part.
- Could include:
 - Bigger library or same space better laid out.
 - Café/cafés – food hall/market
 - Mixed use – including flexible community space, workspace and small workshops (ref [Engine Shed](#) Bristol)
 - Flexible spaces community groups can use.
 - High quality residential – supporting healthy living
 - Balconies to make an animated façade.
 - Dwellings above (starter flats 1&2bed).
- Should be distinctive design, visibly green and sustainable (to compensate for demolition) – soften concrete with greenery – pockets of wildlife and green roofs.
- Room for undercroft parking as site levels vary.
- Better sightlines to outside spaces to reduce antisocial behaviour.
- Interest in meanwhile strategy for library octagon over the next five years.

Landowner/leaseholder engagement

- Need to engage with landowners; Praxis and Bristol Developments.
- Need to work with owners, leaseholders and management company, other nearby landowners stakeholders - what do they want?
- Tower House [Tyntesfield Medical Group](#) – consider plans and future use.
- Wessex Water – major employer.

Car Parking Survey and Strategy

Could some areas of parking be better used to improve public space and landscape amenity or to provide housing? Initial Priorities – of the car parking sites those that might be repurposed in order of priority are Clevedon Road, Station Road, Waitrose and Tower House. Tower House needs to retain parking for access to the GP surgery and disabled access generally. Note: a proposal is being developed for the former petrol station site.

Test Option for Clevedon Road

The Clevedon Road proposal is an example of the reuse of a car park site where the land use is shifted towards residential use bringing new homes close to the town centre. This explores how to place the buildings to reframe and improve streets and public spaces.

The feedback was as follows:

- More housing of the right sort is desirable. Agreed is important to diversify housing available in the town Affordable housing to suit young people starting out in life is needed – studios and 1&2 bed apartments.
- Ground floor spaces with generous ceiling heights could be retail or live/work to contribute to the nighttime economy.
- Accepted the site is an eyesore and would be valuable to improve.
- Enjoyed the use/retention of green infrastructure.
- Good to see improved public realm and the opportunity to connect Clevedon Road area to the town.
- Could include public art and/or a sculpture garden.

Parking Needs Assessment - The strategy for access to parking should be informed by an assessment taking into account the planned growth of Nailsea.

- How much car parking is needed to support the economic vitality of the town?
- Who is using parking, for what purpose and when? For example, to pick up groceries or other buy other things or to work in the town centre.
- Which spaces are most used, feel safe and provide the best access?
- Can parking amenity be improved – should more electric charging points be provided.
- Can parking be used differently at different times of the day – ‘mixed-use’ parking.

Reducing Parking Demand - Parking has been free in the town centre for a long time and this is difficult to change.

- Could a charge be introduced for long-stay parking to generate income to reinvest and to encourage more visitors using short-stay parking?
- North Somerset should reopen discussions with employers in the town like Wessex Water who also have ambitious zero carbon targets to achieve.
- Are there users of car parking who might be persuaded to visit the town on foot and by bike instead?
- Could trial closures for events be organised to test how use could be adjusted.
- Concerns around parking demand spilling out into neighbouring streets.

Integrated Travel - Parking provision should be part of an integrated travel strategy. This should also include safe and secure cycle parking. Note there is a local by-law preventing cycling in the town centre.

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Attendees (Workshop 2):

Alex Hearn

Ast Director, Placemaking North Somerset

Cllr James Tonkin

North Somerset Council

Jo Duffy	Nailsea Town Clerk
Cllr Jeremy Blatchford	Nailsea Town Council
Emma Wellard	Head of Libraries and Community
Cllr Mike Bird	North Somerset Council
David Francis	Nailsea Memory Club
Cllr Claire Hunt	Nailsea Town Council
Jules Richardson	Nailsea Community Group
Rachel Lewis	North Somerset Council
Cllr Jeremy Blatchford	Nailsea Town Council
Emma Wellard	Head of Libraries and Community

Juliet Bidgood	Design West
George Mathews	AHMM Architects
James Howard	Studio Hive
Jason Ramlugon	AHMM Architects
Anna Rutherford	Design West
Daniel Widdowson	Design West
