

# Mitcham's Corner Opportunity Area Planning for Real Workshop Event Record



This document has been prepared by the Urban Design and Conservation Team at Cambridge City Council and provides a summary of the “planning for real workshop” held at Victoria Homes Pavilion on the evening of 23rd June 2015. It summarises the main findings of the event, which will be used to develop any future guidance produced by the City Council. A full copy of comments recorded on flip charts and annotated on plans can be found within the appendix of this document.

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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On the evening of 23rd June 2015 a 'planning for real' workshop took place at Victoria Homes Pavilion from 6pm - 9.30pm.

The event was well attended by 40 participants, representing a range of stakeholders with various interests and connections with Mitcham's Corner. A full list of attendees can be found within appendix 1 of this document.

The attendees were split into 6 groups each had an appointed facilitator, a nominated recorder and spokes to provide feedback at the end of the workshop.

The evening was divided into three parts. The first involved an overview presentation with the initial introduction from Glen Richardson, Urban Design and Conservation Manager (Cambridge City Council) explaining the reason why the event was being held, the format of the evening and how the results will help to shape the preparation of the masterplan for the area. Following this, Anne Cooper representing Friends of Mitcham's Corner gave a brief history of the area up to present day. Lastly Brian Stinton (Cambridgeshire County Council) explained the work currently being progressed by the County as part of City Deal. A full copy of the presentation is appended to this document. The second and third parts of the evening consisted of more hands on sessions where participants working in groups discussed two key questions. Group comments/suggestions were recorded on flip charts and annotated or sketched out on plans. These are set out in the Appendix.

The workshop concluded with a plenary feedback session from each group so that everyone could see what the other groups had been discussing. A feedback summary from each of the tasks is contained within the following sections and full details can be found in the appendix.

The City Council would like to express its thanks to all those who participated in planning and participating in the workshop.

## 2.0 Session 1 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Question 1:

*What improvements at Mitchams Corner do you feel are necessary to help deliver the aspirations as set out in the draft Cambridge Local Plan and to address concerns expressed by the local community?*

*At a more detailed level what changes are needed to existing roads, junctions, open space, etc. to make it both a welcoming place and efficient in transport terms?*

The first session was aimed at encouraging participants to think about the main improvements needed for the public realm within the study area and to put forward suggestions as to how and where these improvements could be made. Participants were encouraged to be creative and think about other places they have experienced as precedents, whilst being mindful of the objectives noted earlier within the presentations relating to the City Deal and Local Plan policy. The key suggestions and main points of discussion are summarised within the table below.

MAIN IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED WITHIN THE STUDY AREA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Many considered removal of the gyratory system to be critical.</li><li>■ A need for alternative ways of managing traffic flow through the area.</li><li>■ Simplify and rationalise the road system and cycle network to reduce confusion for all modes and improve the legibility of the area as a whole.</li><li>■ The need to increase predictability of public transport.</li><li>■ Slow and reduce dominance of traffic to create a safe, sociable and attractive area.</li><li>■ A need to reconnect four separate communities severed by the current road system.</li><li>■ Improve pedestrian and cycle safety (perception and actual).</li><li>■ Create a place for all – the area was felt by many participants to be unfriendly for children.</li><li>■ The desire for one large open space.</li><li>■ Create space for pavement culture or “sitting outability” as coined by one group.</li><li>■ A need to change the image of Mitcham’s Corner, create a clearer identity and better community cohesion.</li></ul>
HOW AND WHERE COULD THESE IMPROVEMENTS BE MADE?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Many felt the roundels concept to be worthy of further exploration and a way of ‘freeing up’ more space for public realm improvement.</li><li>■ Reinstate two way streets.</li><li>■ Closure of roads to facilitate a new large open space in front of the Portland Arms &amp; help “unlock the island” (Staples site) should be considered. Some groups felt the character of this new open space should be very green, others suggested an “urban plaza”. All agreed it should not be like Cambridge Leisure.</li><li>■ Some groups suggested that access over Victoria Bridge should be for bus and cycles only.</li><li>■ Increased area for pavements.</li><li>■ Improve gateways into the area to help reinforce identity. “Make sure the area is inviting from key routes”.</li><li>■ The river should be celebrated as the areas’ unique selling point. Better use of the river frontage and better connections down to the north side could be made. Improved wayfinding (signage/ branding) to assist.</li></ul>

- The need to create a destination and encourage visitors to the area rather than a place to pass through. Suggestions included regular community events and stalls, pop up markets, outdoor chess etc. to help create the expectation that “something will be going on in the area”.
- The need for better parking (not necessarily more parking) with careful consideration to visitors and traders. Improved on street parking along Chesterton Road and short-term parking along current “Milton Road East gyratory section” was suggested.
- Create a culture of good road behaviour and discourage parking on the footway by promoting considerate parking through design rather than lines and signs e.g. using planting to help delineate carriageway/footway and on street parking.
- Rationalising existing bus stops to simplify bus connections. Stops to be more legible and more logical in location.
- The idea of a bus hub/ interchange (end of Springfield Road) with a permanent Park and Ride stop within the area was suggested. A local economic benefit could result with more business for local shops.

## 3.0 Session 2 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Question 2:

What development principles would be appropriate for the two larger development sites in the Opportunity Area (Staples Site and Henry Giles House)? Groups should focus on possible development principles such as built form, access and how future proposals should integrate with their surroundings. Do you have any other suggestions for other sites/parts of Mitcham’s Corner that may help guide its future form of development?

The second task was mainly focussed on participants identifying possible development principles for two key proposal sites allocated within the Draft Local Plan. Participants were encouraged to imagine what a good development would be through four themes. Discussions were both positive and lively with thoughts and ideas plentiful. The key themes and suggestions area summarised below.

### Staples Site

Movement and Access	Built From	Landuse and Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Explore using the current staples car park for short stay parking for the shops/ facilities within Mitcham’s Corner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mixed views about how to guide heights: one group felt there was an opportunity for a dramatic, marker building. “Mitcham’s corner as the gateway to the city”. Another group felt height should not be greater than 3 storeys.</li> <li>■ Modern materials and design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some groups suggested the retention of the Lloyds Bank within the gyratory suggesting new options for use should be explored: e.g. restaurant to front and spill out onto the new open space (as suggested through question 1).</li> <li>■ Mixed Use – retail at ground floor with residential above</li> <li>■ Explore road closures to facilitate more family friendly housing</li> </ul>

## Henry Giles House Site

Movement	Built Form	Landuse and Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Opportunity to knit the site back into the Victorian street pattern.</li> <li>■ Opportunity for mews arrangement to rear.</li> <li>■ Explore access through Grasmere Gardens.</li> <li>■ Convenient bike access from Chesterton Road.</li> <li>■ Not gated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mixed views about how to guide building heights on the site: many groups felt a maximum needed to be set of no higher than the current 4 floors (4th floor within the roof). Other groups were more relaxed placing importance on the staggering of heights to avoid the current monolith form.</li> <li>■ Many groups suggested the tallest built form should front onto Chesterton Road, stepping down to the rear of the site.</li> <li>■ Key views from Jesus Green to the site are important and sensitive.</li> <li>■ Some groups mentioned the need to consider the scale of the existing buildings along Carlyle Road.</li> <li>■ Consider typography and the effect on heights.</li> <li>■ Mix of different homes/unit types: flats and family houses, mews forms etc. to help create a more varied form.</li> <li>■ Sympathetic to existing buildings.</li> <li>■ Complimentary character with a softer appearance than the current building.</li> <li>■ Want to encourage radical, high quality design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Most groups felt the site should be primarily residential, but felt there were opportunities to introduce some other uses: space for a public/cultural hub, inclusion of a community use/facility to relieve the pressure in local area e.g. Doctor's surgery.</li> <li>■ Important to utilise the frontage onto Chesterton Road.</li> <li>■ Avoid dormitory use e.g. student housing.</li> <li>■ Consider/explore car free scheme.</li> </ul>

## Barclays Bank, Chesterton Road

One group considered the existing Barclays bank as a development opportunity if removed and suggested:

- Parade of shops/cafes to the river. Mews style development.
- Create a vista from Milton Road to the river.
- Consider a new footbridge.

## 4.0 NEXT STEPS

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The issues and ideas generated during the workshop will be fed into and used to assist the City Council with the preparation of a masterplan guidance document for the area. It is also envisaged that the results of this workshop will also help inform highway improvement options for Mitcham's Corner as a result of the City Deal.

Next steps will include:

- Prepare an event record
- Draft options for sharing with FoMC and City Deal project group
- Draft guidance for sharing with site owners
- Develop master plan document
- Share/present with Executive Councillors and North Area Committee as draft
- Consult on draft master plan
- Revise and finalise for "endorsement"
- Share with City Deal decision-makers
- Anticipated time line June 2015 – June 2016



## 5.0 Appendices



# Appendix 1: List of Attendees

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## Group 1

- Anne Cooper (facilitator)
- Catherine Linford
- Alison Lask
- James Cope-Brown
- Cllr Kevin Blencowe

## Group 2

- Glen Richardson (facilitator)
- Mary Rose Baugh
- Simon Baugh
- Cllr Damien Tunnacliffe
- Jan Ayton
- Matthew Boucher
- Mike Stothard

## Group 3

- Sarah Chubb (facilitator)
- Jason Wragg
- Jonathon Miles
- Richard Robertson
- Chris Noyes
- Alison Lask
- Y'sanne Austin

## Group 4

- Emma Thornton (facilitator)
- Donna Hanson
- Christine Houghton
- Mike Sargeant
- Alan Davies
- Hazel Davies

## Group 5

- Adrian Medd (facilitator)
- Luca Leone
- Katheryn Rowland
- Toby Williams
- Colin Campbell
- Nathan Jones

## Group 6

- Anil Malhotra (facilitator)
- Andrew Long
- Jim Chisholm
- Christian Brady
- Matthew Paul
- Alistair Boyles



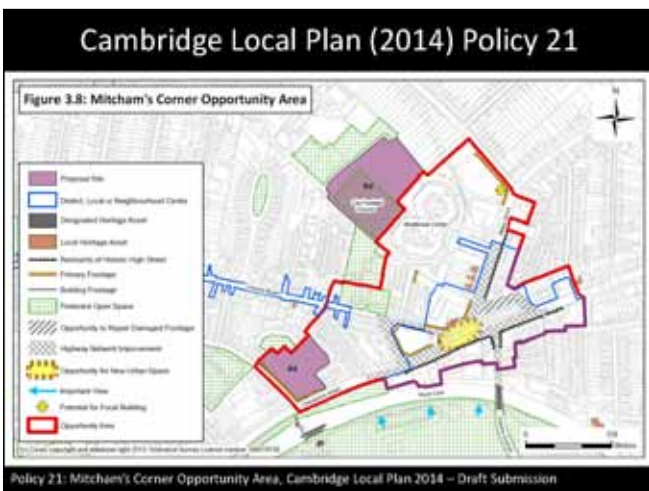
# Appendix 2: Presentation Slides



### Mitcham's Corner "need to know" information:

- Why are we here?
- City Deal – key driver for change
- Local Plan Policy – opportunities
- Key message: link City Deal work and Opportunity Area masterplan
- What is a "masterplan"?
- What do we need from you tonight?



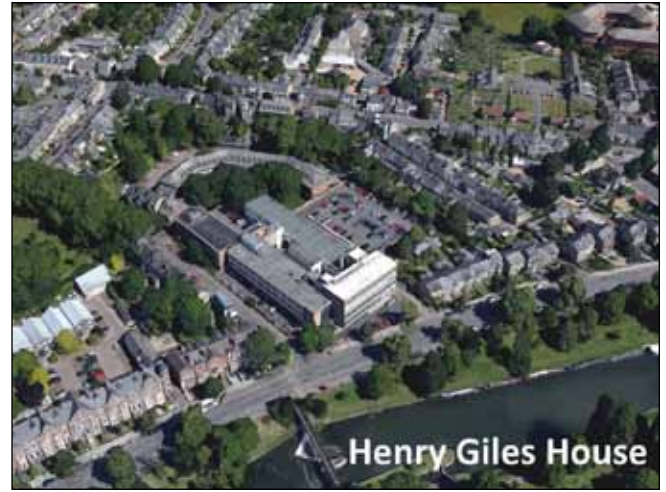


- ### Policy 21 Masterplan Objectives
- Development proposals will deliver a series of coordinated streetscape and public realm improvements to streets and junctions within the Mitcham's Corner area. These will be set out in a masterplan for the area, which must be approved before any application is submitted and will:
- Create a low-speed environment
  - Reduce the visual and physical width of carriageways
  - Reduce or remove road markings
  - Emphasise place-making
  - Remove or revise the existing gyratory
  - Create tighter junction geometries
  - Facilitate place making at junctions
  - Reinforce or re-establish historic routes

- ### Policy 21 Masterplan Objectives
- Create opportunities for new public spaces
  - Create a more comfortable and simplified pedestrian environment
  - Introduce wider pavements and more street trees
  - Remove pedestrian guard rails and unnecessary signage
  - Introduce more direct crossings aligned with pedestrian desire lines
  - Use a simple and durable palette of materials

- ### Developing a Masterplan for the area
- Findings from workshop event record
  - Way of tying public realm and site specific guidance together
  - Format of document to be determined (short/graphic based preferred)
  - Status – developed to support City Deal, informal guidance for sites
  - Develop draft and consult ahead of/parallel with City Deal
  - Timeline: Draft for consultation and completion 2016
  - Engagement with North Area Ctee., local stakeholders, CCC, site owners

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

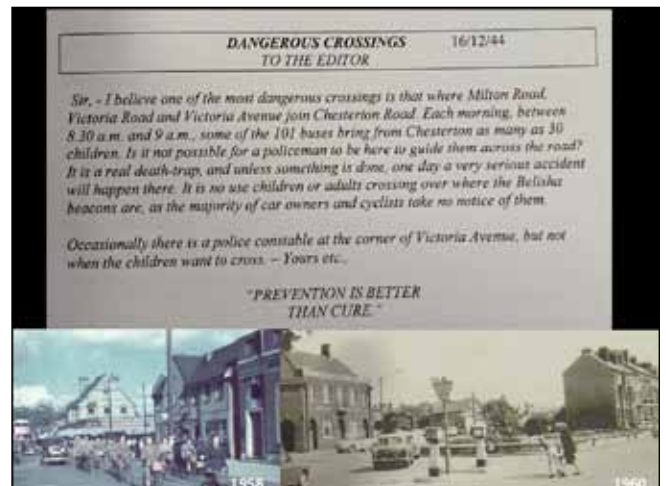
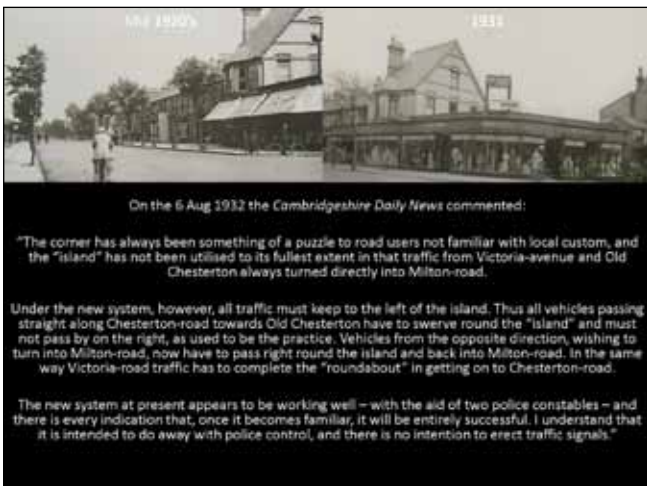
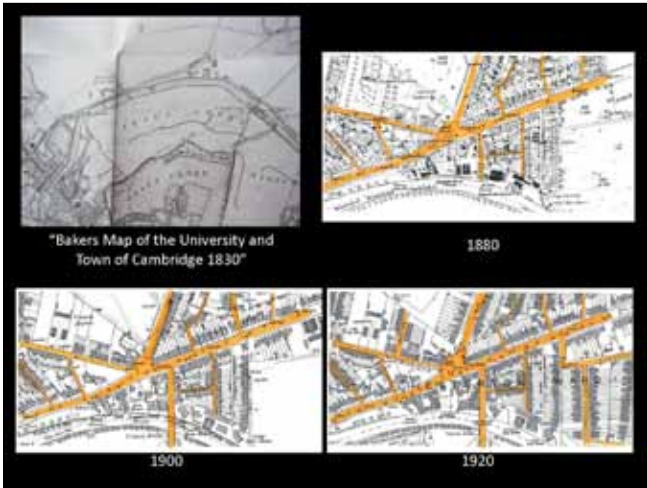
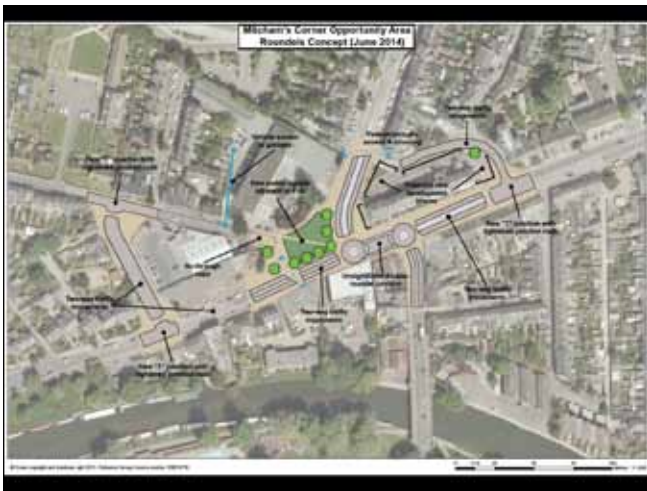


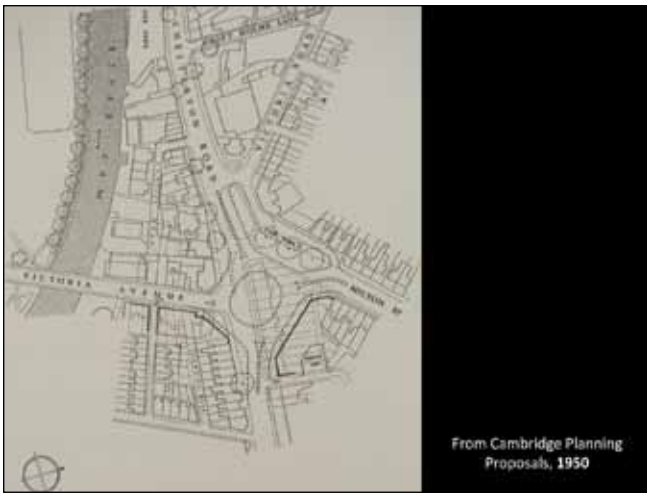
### Roundels - Poynton, Cheshire

This busy intersection at the heart of the town was formerly a hostile and congested traffic space, dominated by traffic signals and road markings. These have all been replaced with an informal junction involving two inter-connected roundels. The project was finished early in 2012.

Poynton, Images of Fountains Race and Park Lane High Street (2008), Hamilton Ballie Associates & ARUP (<http://www.hamilton-ballie.co.uk>)

Poynton twin Roundels, Hamilton Ballie Associates & ARUP (<http://www.hamilton-ballie.co.uk>)  
15 minute description of the project available via YouTube, Search: "Poynton Regenerated".





December 1963

**COUN. LISTER PLEASED WITH TRY-OUT AT ROAD ISLAND**

Mr. Lister, Chairman of the County Council, expressed his satisfaction with the trial of a road island at Mitcham's Corner, Cambridge, which was held for a week last week.

**Advice to Drivers**

Mr. Lister said that the trial had shown that the road island was a very effective means of controlling traffic at a busy junction.

**In Police Comment**

The trial had also shown that the road island was a very effective means of controlling traffic at a busy junction.

"Mr Bebbington who watched the traffic flow during the experiment said he thought only three policemen would be needed to help control the traffic if the scheme was put into full-time operation."

An attempt to improve the traffic flow at the Mitcham's Corner roundabout, CVN, 31/1/1963.

"It is impossible to reach our houses sometimes; the traffic just keeps coming and coming. What we want is a flyover so we can cross in safety."  
1966

## GREATER CAMBRIDGE CITY DEAL MILTON ROAD BUS PRIORITY

**Brian Stinton**  
Team Leader,  
Major Infrastructure Delivery- Highways

**23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015**

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Cambridge facts and figures

- Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire 2011 population = 275,000
- **33,000** extra homes by 2031  
+ population up 25% to **345,000**
- 40,000 extra jobs by 2031  
+ research jobs up 50% from 53,000 to **80,000**
- 4,500,000 visitors every year

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Greater Cambridge Vision

- To realise the economic potential of the area
- To unleash the next wave of the Cambridge Phenomenon
- Improve connectivity
- Enhance reliability of journeys

**Policy**

- Programme drawn from Local Plans & Transport Strategy

**Partners**

City Deal Partnership made of County, City and South Cambs District Councils  
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the University

### City Deal Funding Overview

- Up to £500m for transport infrastructure, payable in 3 tranches
  - Tranche 1: £100m 2015-20
  - Tranche 2: Potentially up to £200m 2020-25
  - Tranche 3: Potentially up to £200m 2025+
- Tranches 2 and 3 depend on meeting targets in tranche 1
- Aligns with other local capital investment from development and Councils

### City Deal Years 1 to 5 investment Aims

- Focus is on:
  - Maximising network benefits
  - Maximising economic benefits
  - Deliverability

Further funding dependent on meeting targets over the first 5 years

## Process of scheme development

- Iterative process, with significant public consultation and stakeholder engagement
  - Baseline survey, data gathering and preliminary options development
  - Options report and Outline Business Case
  - Decision on preferred option to develop
  - Full Business Case development
  - Decision to deliver scheme
  - Statutory processes as applicable
  - Construction

## Milton Road-Bus Priority

- On 28<sup>th</sup> January, the Executive Board approved the principle of improving bus priority on Milton Road between the A14 and Mitcham's Corner (and on to city centre).



- Also considered alongside is bus priority on Histon Road.

## Current work

Consultant engaged to:

- To provide options for comprehensive bus priority in both directions along Milton Road and Histon Road.
- To make provision for cyclists along Milton Road and Histon Road which is segregated from buses and general traffic wherever possible.
- To improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians in line with emerging public realm proposals at Mitcham's Corner – minimising delays to traffic at the junction.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

## OUTCOMES FROM BRIEF

- Additional sustainable transport capacity to provide for transport demands of economic and housing growth.
- Buses able to travel along Milton Road and Histon Road with minimal interruption from congestion and general traffic, making the journey time more reliable
- More journeys along the corridor being undertaken by bus (rather than car)
- More short journeys being undertaken by bicycle
- More short journeys being undertaken on foot.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk



- To develop options capable of maintaining traffic levels at today's levels (or lower) against projected growth.
- To consider the potential for enhancing the environment, streetscape and air quality in these corridors.
- To assess the impacts on existing residents and highway capacity for each option.
- To coordinate proposals with emerging requirements from other studies-notably the City Centre Access Study.

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## What Next?

- Prepare an event record
- Draft options for sharing with FoMC and City Deal project group
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## Appendix 3: Maps & Transcripts from Exercise 1

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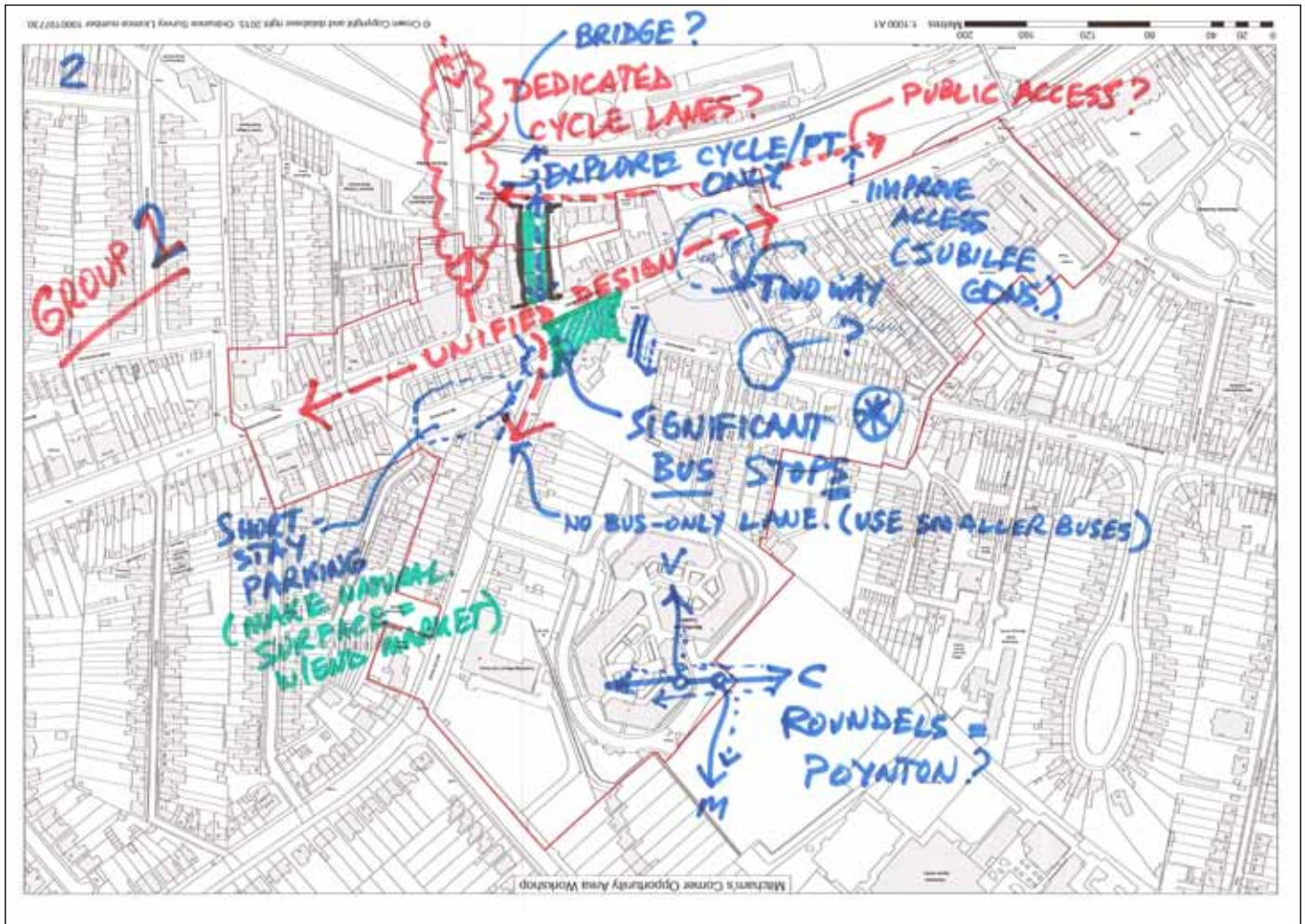
### Group 1

**See notes below**

- Remove traffic lights e.g. Arbury Road junction, Kings Hedges junction.
- Accidents??
- Shared space??
- One of our group has the view that the gyratory should be left alone or made smaller.
- Level the area at the front of the Portland Arms PH and create an 'urban plaza' with stalls, car parking etc – a flexible space.
- Park & Ride buses need to stop here – and the Guided Bus?
- Bus hub (at end of Springfield Road)
- Increase on-street parking on Chesterton Road.
- Smaller gyratory system – remove Staples from it and make Victoria Avenue bus/bikes only?



## Group 2

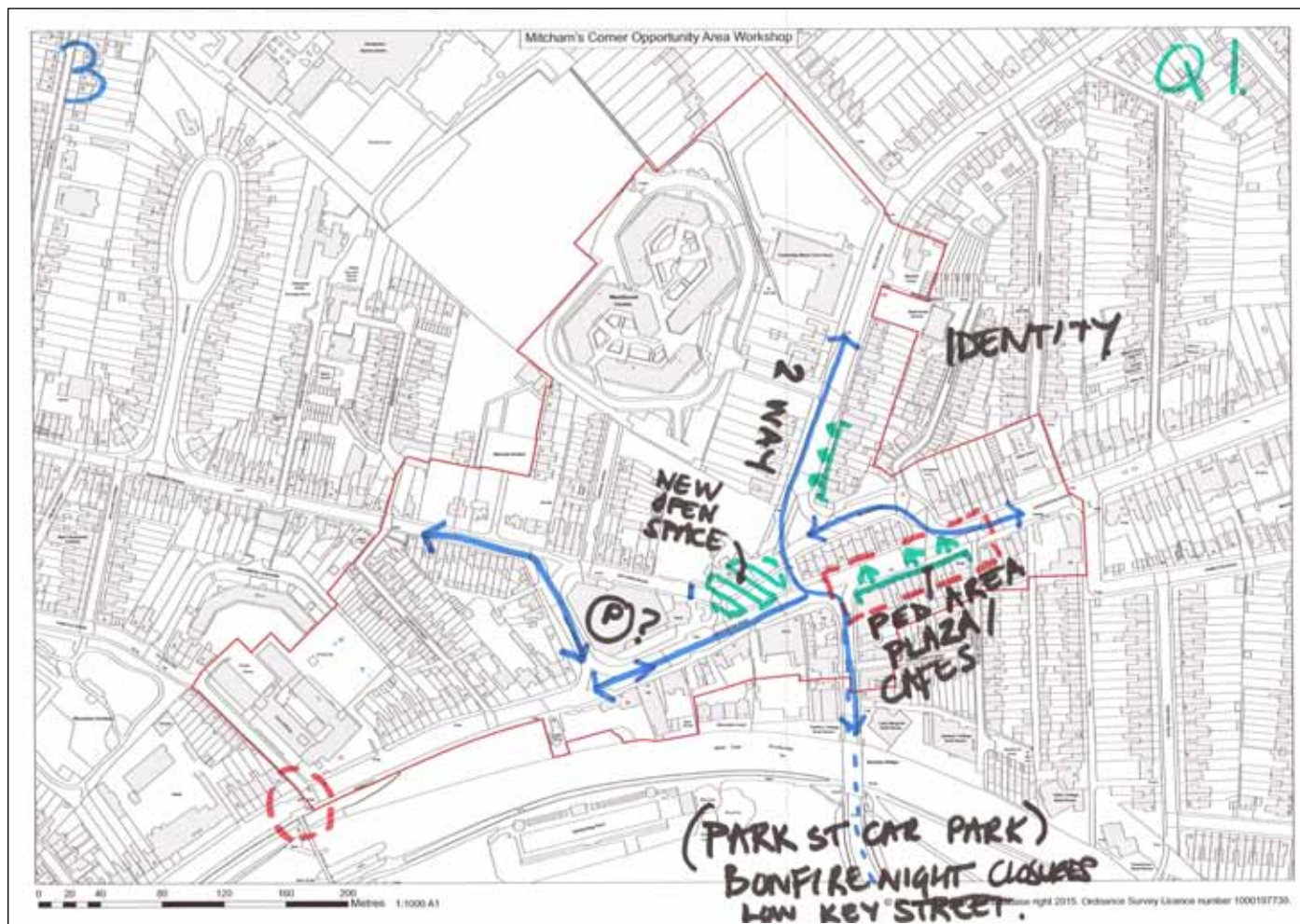


- REDUCE traffic (amount/speed)
  - Resulting air quality improvements
- Mindful of knock-on effects
- Understand/analyse journeys.
- Gyratory goes!
  - Much calmer/quieter
  - Small shops
  - Even more Mill Road?
  - Happy cyclists
  - Improved Park & Ride (free)
  - Better parking provision (more?)

### Solutions?

- Short-term parking – Milton Road East gyratory section
- Access to river
- Significant bus stop(s)
- Roundels worth exploring and /or part-time lights.
- On-street parking

### Group 3



Rationalise:

- 1-way system removed
- Pavement culture
- Road closures
- Open space
- Simplify
- Community identity/cohesion

Access:

- Parking
- Business owners/visitors
- Business sustainability
- Connected community space/businesses and houses

Environs problems:

- green height stops access - unusable space
- Confusion of traffic/cycle restrictions – needs simplification.
- Make parking on road difficult
- Slow cars
- Improve cycle & pedestrian safety
- Understanding the use of micro areas – Victoria Avenue

## Group 4

**See notes below**

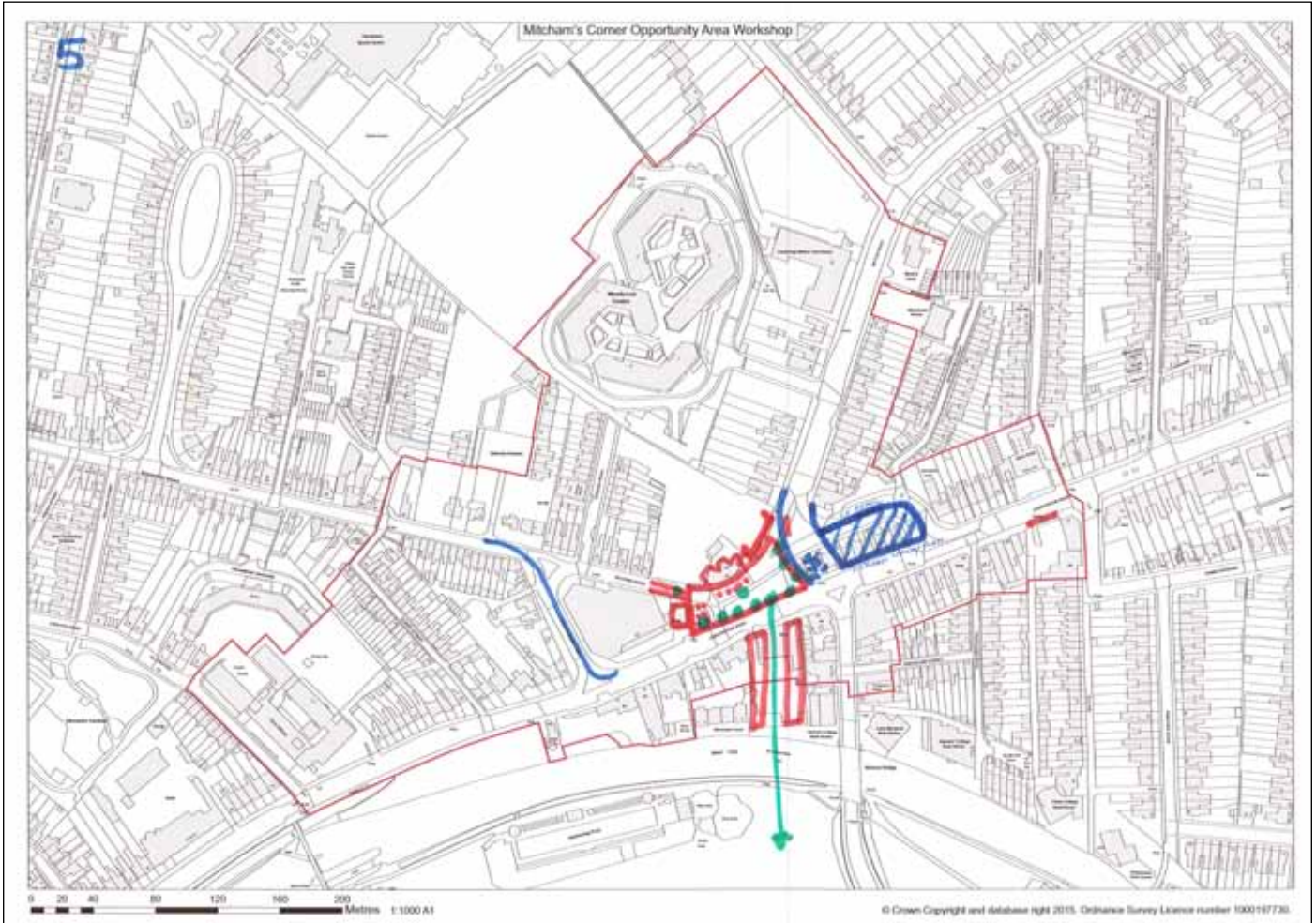
### Improvements to Mitcham's Corner

- Raise visibility – Mitcham's Corner = the river
- Reduce domination by traffic
- Easier for residents/cyclists
- Encourage visitors to area
- Sitting 'outability'
- Car parking
- Social space - leisure
- Design-out street drinking
- Access to and from the river (signage)
- Inviting area – green space, trees
- Character of its own – piazza
- Events
- Independent traders – bus interchange, Guided Bus, Park & Ride and X5
- More housing
- Child friendly - safer

### How?

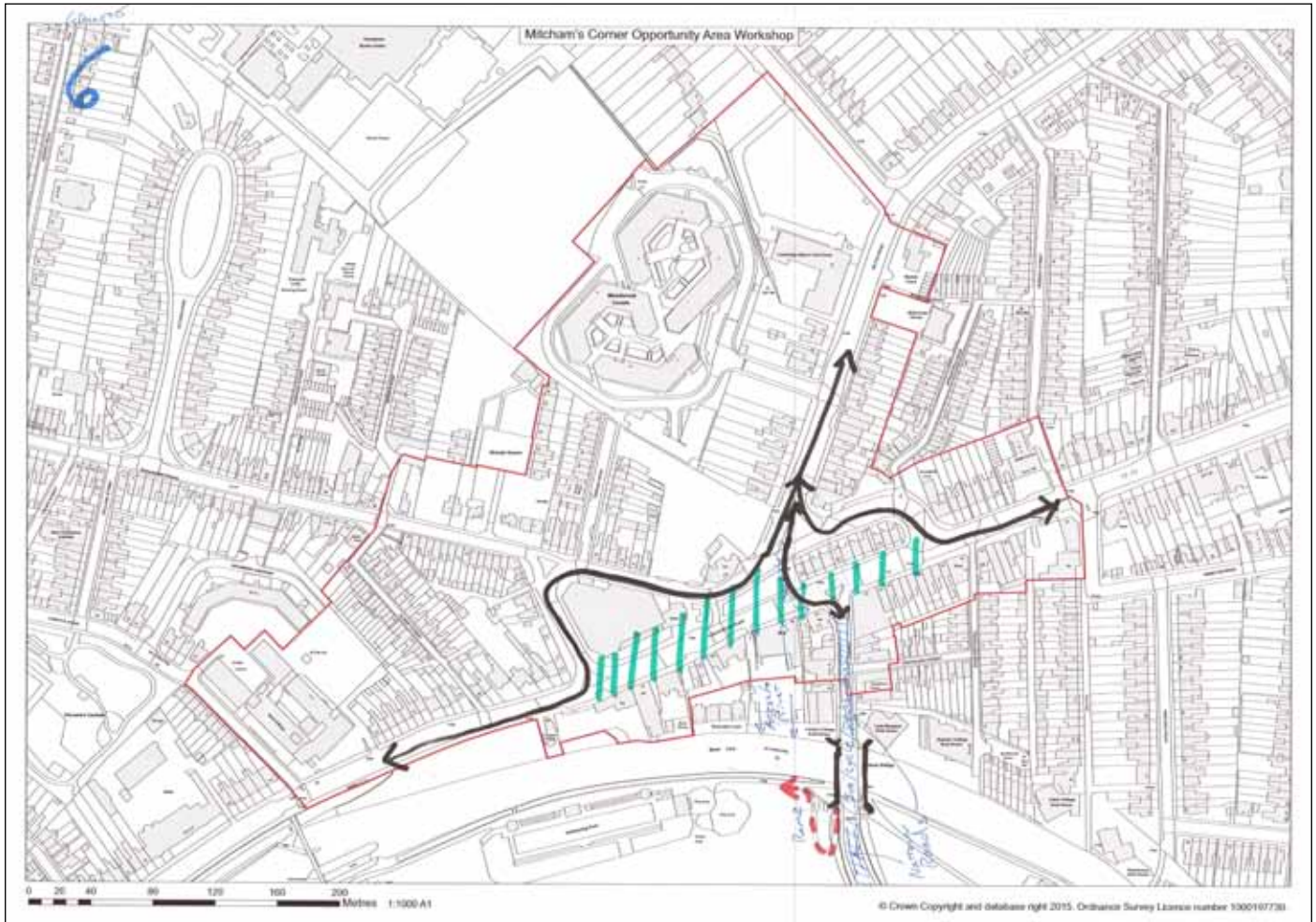
- Less roads
- No gyratory
- Shared space
- Public space in front of Portland Arms PH – green, seating, tables & chairs, kiosk
- Vistas – wayfinding, inviting
- USP – Unique Selling Point
- Connect to river

## Group 5

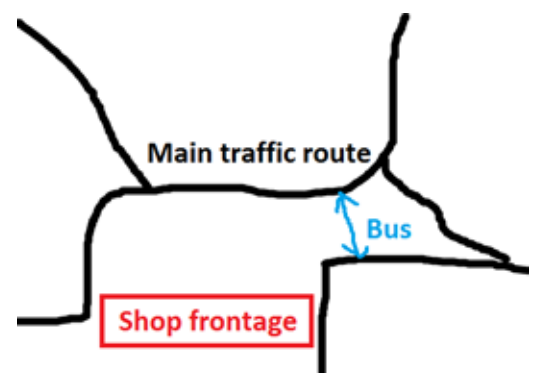


- Central open space
- Pop up market/chess square
- Alignment of Milton Road – Victoria Avenue IDBE Concept (cost) (return new retail ground floor)
- Test 3 alternative (less public realm)
- Staggered cross-road
- Controlled roundabout/ junction safety
- Bus/cycle gate
- Close off first part of Victoria Road to through traffic
- Croft Holme Road two way
- Underground car park?
- Pedestrian underpass?
- Barclay's bridge and mews development
- Chesterton Road two lanes
- Increased pavement
- Cycleways

## Group 6



- Traffic calming
- Reduce traffic volume
- Simplify road layout
- Open up public space by unlocking the 'island'
- Increase speed and predictability of public transport movements
- Reduce traffic flow management "clutter" – traffic lights, signage etc
- But... must ensure vulnerable users are always safe, including cyclists.
- Kill private car use of Victoria Avenue
- Rationalising bus stops to simplify bus connections. Place closer to the centre of Mitcham's Corner
- P&R to stop
- Use public space for improved shop frontage
- The public realm
- No building
- A plaza concept
- Very green (not inspired by Cambridge Leisure Park)
- Access to river frontage
- Opportunity to make better use of the frontage.
- More intensive planting in public places, and to delineate public space.



## Appendix 4: Maps & Transcripts from Exercise 2

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### Group 1

**See notes below**

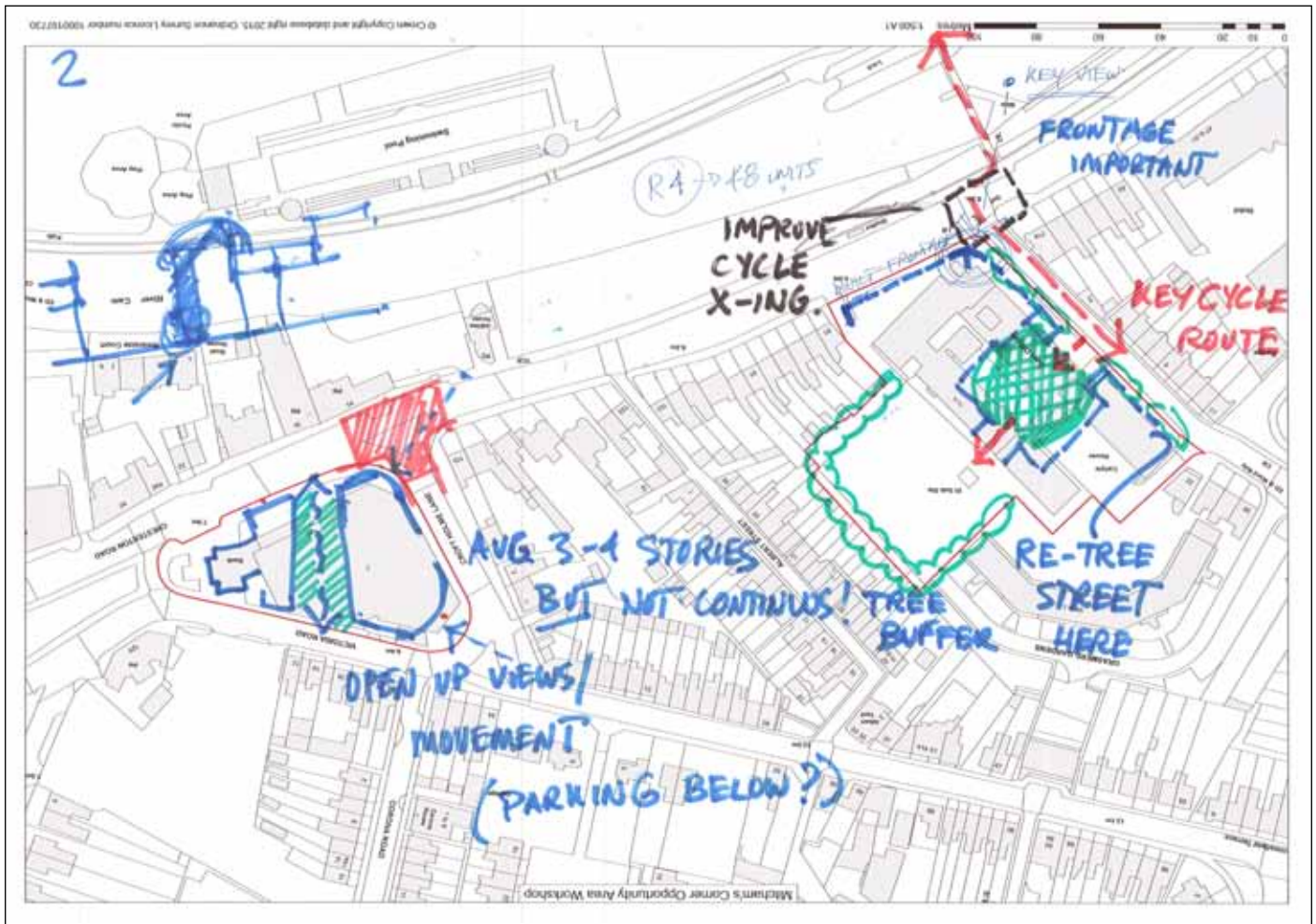
#### Staples Site

- Landmark building?
- Hotel?

#### Henry Giles House Site

- Mixed use with cultural/community – top floor?
- Same height as existing building.
- Build on car park but not as tall as frontage
- Mixed development – houses and flats
- Public use of frontage – valuable frontage
- Cultural hub

## Group 2



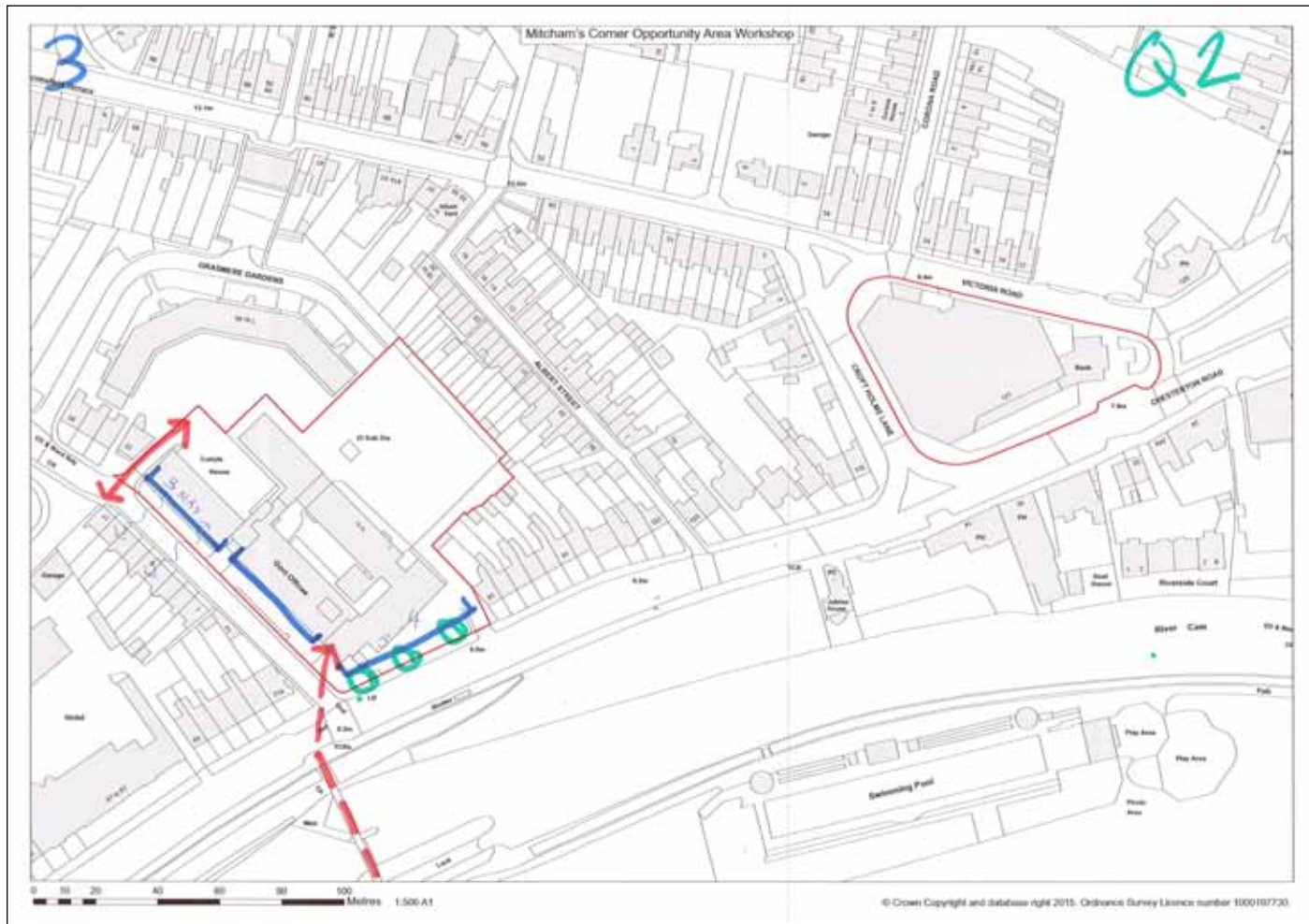
### Staples Site

- No monoliths.
- Consider retaining bank – new options for use (restaurant)
- Small unit – retail at ground floor (start-ups) with residential above.

### Henry Giles House Site

- Key views to site
- Resi-only
- Parking on-site
- Car-free?

## Group 3



### Henry Giles House Site

#### SCALE:

- Re-use height
- Complement character
- Softer look & feel
- Consider typography
- Consider scale of the other side of the street.

#### LANDSCAPE:

- Maximise river frontage
- Try and get river view to scale
- Trees
- Open

#### ACCESS/MOVEMENT:

- Access through Grasmere Gardens
- Concern for capacity of bridge
- Make bike access preferable
- Not gated

#### LAND USE/FACILITIES:

- Primarily residential
- Community use e.g. surgery, nursery, community centre.
- Mixture of houses (family) flats



## Group 4

**See notes below**

### Staples Site

- Keep the bank building?
- Residential - 3 storey
- Retail - small traders Indoor market

### Henry Giles House Site

- Sympathetic/in keeping – reflecting Alexandra Gardens and river
- High quality
- 2 storey fronting Chesterton Road like Alpha Road to 3-4 storeys at Grasmere.
- Porous site – green space

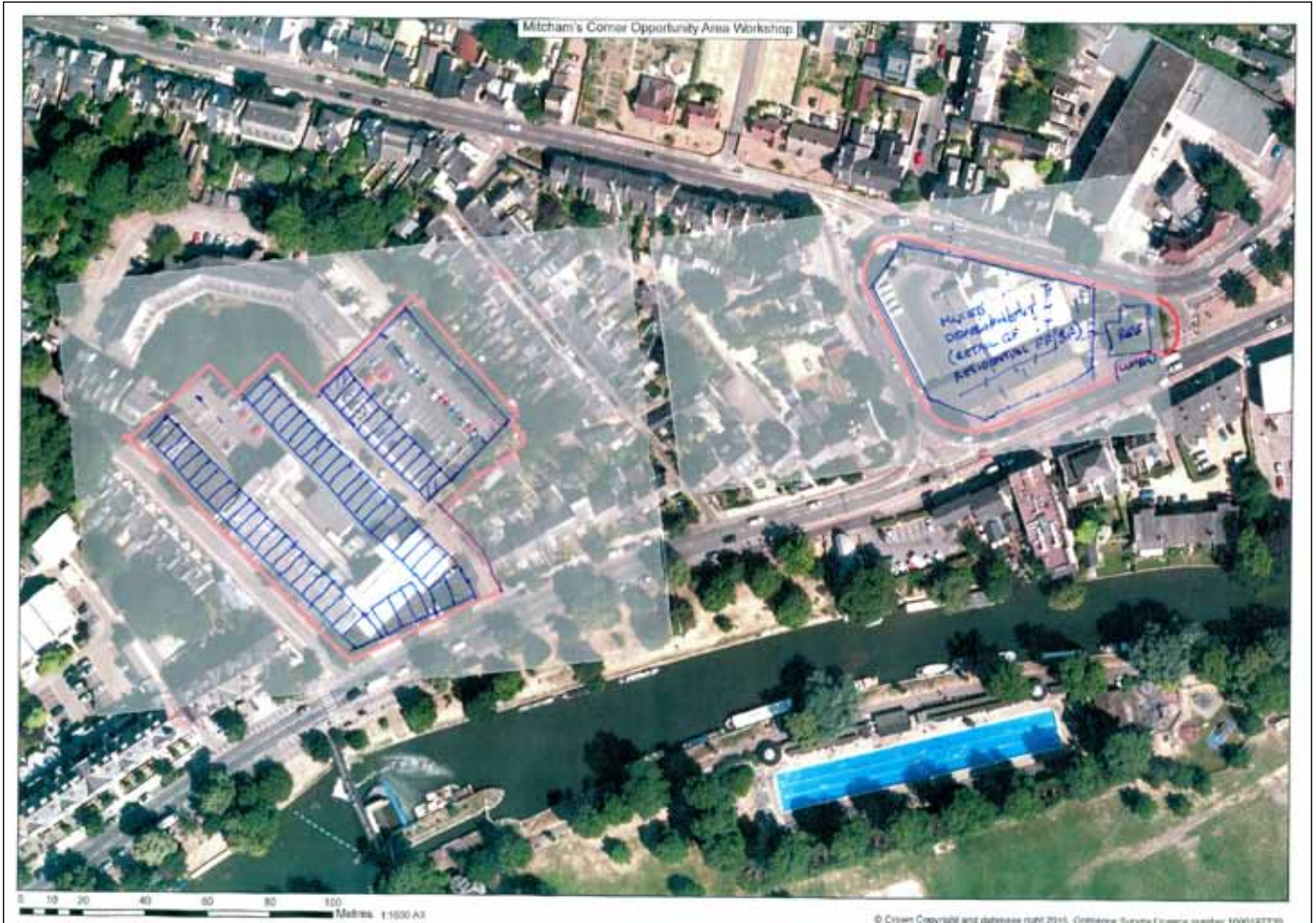
### Central Green Space

- Parking
- Connect to piazza
- Trade land – redundant road – with landowners

### Barclays Bank Site

- Parade of shops/cafes to the river
- Vista from Milton Road to the river, footbridge.

## Group 5



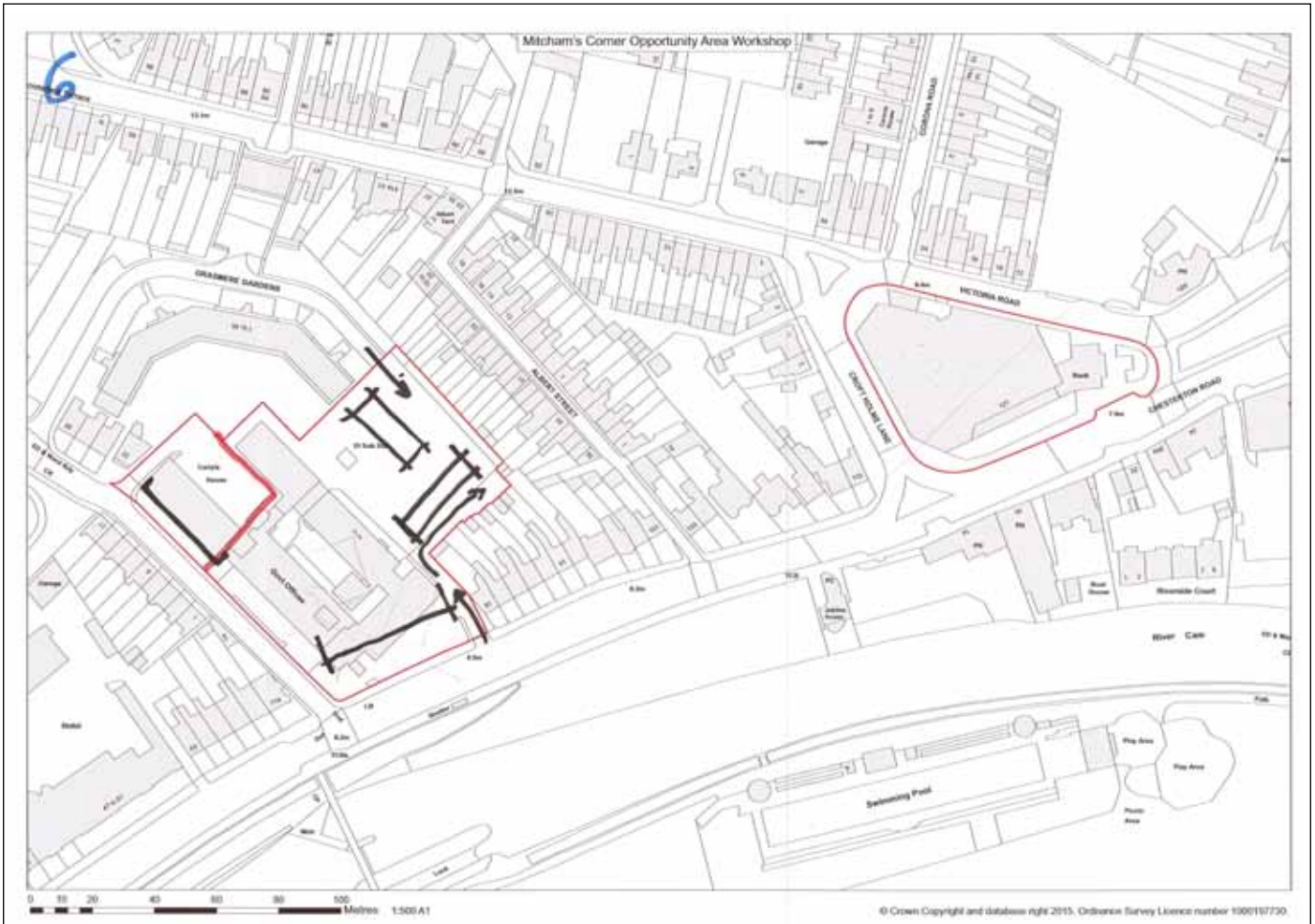
### Staples Site

- Maintain Lloyds (restaurant onto square)
- Housing opposite
- Victoria Road housing
- Croft Holme Road (residential/student)
- Front retail
- Chesterton Road (Ground floor retail upper floors residential)
- 3 storey
- Entrance residential from square

### Henry Giles House Site

- Re-establish terraced streets pattern
- Residential
- 4 storey onto Cheterton Road (4th within roof)
- Rear 2.5 storey & mews
- Approx 61 Dwellings subject to car turning/ refuse
- Car free? Henry Giles Street

## Group 6



### Staples Site

- We assume there will not be traffic on 3 sides
- This is the best opportunity for significantly increased height
- Ground floor offered as retail concessions
- Again, greater height could be achieved
- Opportunity for landmark building
- Modern building materials and exterior

### Henry Giles House Site

- Iconic design/ landmark buildings
- HGH – make better use of frontage
- Stagger height from street
- Interest in allocation some space to a public/cultural centre
- South facing offers great possibilities for greening development

