CHAPTER 13: PUBLIC REALM AND PERMEABILITY

Introduction

13.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement examines the impact of the development on the public realm within the vicinity of the site and concentrates particularly on the existing and proposed level of public permeability (mainly at ground floor level) from various points on the edge of and through the Barnsley Markets site. The issue of public accessibility and the effect the development has in terms of improving the public realm in Barnsley town centre was the subject of considerable discussions during the evolution of the scheme, now shown on the assessment plans.

Methodology

13.2 This chapter considers, firstly, the existing level of permeability within and adjacent to the application site and establishes the baseline position with which to compare the impact of the development. The impact is then assessed in terms of the established system of grading of impact set out in other chapters ranging from major adverse impact to major positive impact.

Planning Policy Context

13.3 There are issues identified in relation to the enhancement of the public realm that have been raised in the background documents to the tender process for the Barnsley Markets' site, dating back to November 2003 Initial Development Brief; the May 2004 Stage 2 Development Brief Pack and the 2003 – 2033 Strategic Development Framework "Remaking Barnsley". In policy terms, however, the current relevant document is the 2000 Barnsley UDP in the background of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Plan (2008) and national planning guidance. The UDP will gradually be phased out and replaced by the Local Development Framework. The draft Core Strategy DPD was the subject of an Examination in Public in March 2011. The draft Town Centre Action Plan (2005) also is also relevant in the context of the proposals for the development of the site in that document.

13.4 Additional commentary on these documents is included in Chapter 4 (Planning Policy Context). Principally, however, paragraph 5.7 of Volume 3 of the UDP sets out a number of objectives for the town centre, including: -

> **"... contributing to environmental improvements and protection particularly the development of a pedestrian environment in the centre".**

whilst Policy TC31 seeks to give precedence to pedestrians in the defined pedestrian zone including those routes around the application site.

Existing Baseline Position

13.5 The extent of surface level public accessibility through the application site (including from the CEAG site) is reflected in Figure 13.1 which is a plan of the existing urban grain including the application site. This shows that at surface level there is access around the edge of the application site through Kendray Street to the north and May Day Green on the western and south western sides of the site. There is a principal retail frontage being available along Cheapside on the south/south western side. Whilst there is pedestrian access through the existing Metropolitan Shopping Centre/market building from the car park and market the access routes are somewhat convoluted. The May Day Green Arcade and Charter Arcade are mainly internal routes with no reflection on the existing urban grain. As part of the preparation of the scheme, a survey was carried out of pedestrian movements on a market day with Figure 13.2 showing the outcome by means of a dot matrix analysis. This showed the following: -

- The greatest concentration of people is in the market aisle closest to the May Day Green and Albert Street East entrances.

- There is a bunching at the rail crossing because of barriers coming down at the pelican crossing on Kendray Street.

- Pedestrians cross the service yard at the rear of the market and the Alhambra.

- Few people walk on the western section of Kendray Street, more people walk on the north side than the south side of Eldon Street.

- May Day Green is a more popular route from The Lanes than Burlington Arcade.

- There is a bunch of pedestrians at the bus stops at the bottom of Market Hill.

- More people walk on the north section of Market Street, rather than the south.

- More people travel on the north side than the south side of Peel Square.

- More people walk on the south side than the north side of Queen Street.

- Most people approach the town on the north side of New Street, not the south.

- The route between the Alhambra and the market on the ground floor is very little used.

13.6 In addition to the observed pedestrian access through the site on market day, the degree of accessibility from the Metropolitan Shopping Centre car park through the scheme through the existing centre to other parts of the town centre is also convoluted. Access to the CEAG site from the shopping centre is only obtained from existing routes on Kendray Street and Lambra Road via Harborough Hill Road and there is no other linkage.

13.7 Pedestrians therefore have reasonably good access around the fringes of the application site through particularly the pedestrianised May Day Green/Cheapside but a convoluted access through the existing Metropolitan Shopping Centre through internal routes both from the car park and various entrances of the shopping centre for pedestrians, particularly those using the market.

Impact of Development

Proposed Strategy

13.8 The proposed pedestrian access strategy is set out on Figure 13.3 attached and proposes enhancements to the existing peripheral routes and far better ground level access through the shopping area on well-defined pedestrian friendly spaces.

13.9 The key element of the movement strategy is to provide a main access into the centre from a new 'Market Square', including an amphitheatre feature, on Kendray Street through a pedestrian street 'Market Parade' leading south west to the open market and a new public space, May Day Green, connecting to Cheapside and Queen Street. 'May Day Green' will be available for informal performances. The proposed character of May Day Green and the open market area is described in the design statement accompanying the application but will clearly provide an attractive pedestrian environment, particularly when the market is in operation.

13.10 A further pedestrian route runs due south from Kendray Street, through the Open Market onto May Day Green and Cheapside. This also connects to Market parade a new route which runs roughly parallel with Kendray Street leading into Market Square

13.11 In addition to the provision of routes through the scheme at surface level, there are proposed to be improvements in the treatment of Cheapside and May Day Green as described in the landscape impact section of this statement.

13.12 The Cheapside level of the Market Building will be accessed from four locations two along Kendray Street and two off Market Parade. At interchange level access will be via Market Square.

13.13 A new street, Midland Street is created leading from Market Square to Cheapside. Access to the main department store in the south eastern corner of the scheme will be ground level. Access to the Cinema will be from two locations:

- At ground floor level floor level form Market Parade via escalators or lift.
- At Cinema level via a link bridge, across Midland Street, to the car park over the eastern retail buildings.

13.14 The landscape and surfacing treatment of the access ways are fully described within the landscape section of the Design and Access statement.

Evaluation of Impact

13.15 The creation of the Market Square access from Kendray Street, results in **major benefits** in the nature and quality of the public accessibility in the town centre that have a wider than local significance.

13.16 The provision of an additional pedestrian route at surface level Midland Street running from Market Square to Cheapside is considered a modest benefit, ie, important at a local scale.

13.17 The provision of a pedestrian link from the car park above part of the retail linked to the proposed shops is regarded as a **moderate benefit**, again important at a local scale.

13.18 The linkage from the scheme to other parts of the town centre, is considered to be a **minor benefit**.

13.19 The improvements to Cheapside and May Day Green through surfacing and landscaping (see Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact) have the potential to be **moderate benefits** in the local public realm.

Summary

13.20 In these terms, therefore, there are considerable improvements to public realm arising from the scheme and these can overall be considered to be of **moderate** significance (ie, of importance locally). The proposals for the amphitheatre linking to May Day Green have the most benefit and given the focal, point of the development can perform a wider role than purely local, so are judged to have a **major benefit**.