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Midsomer
Norton

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Historic England

MIDSOMER NORTON HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE CASE STUDY

MARKET SQUARE

MARCH 2024



INTRODUCTION

Midsomer Norton's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HS HAZ) is a four-year partnership programme between Historic England, B&NES and Midsomer Norton Town Council. Through this programme we have enhanced Midsomer Norton's conservation area to create a more attractive, engaging and vibrant High Street.

This scheme has seen a £3.7m investment in the High Street, with key work strands including:

- Restoration of the Grade II Listed Town Hall and reinstatement of the Market Hall;
- Creation of a Market Square through the 1,000sqm public realm scheme;
- Creation of a shopfront Design Guide for the Town Centre;
- Public Realm improvements to High Street;
- Shopfront Improvement to various properties;
- 3 year Local Cultural Programme.

Midsomer Norton was one of more than 60 high streets across the country that were successful in receiving funding from Historic England. It was awarded £888k as part of Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HS HAZ) Programme (2020 - 2024) with additional match funding from Midsomer Norton Town Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) and West of England Combined Authority (WECA).



MARKET SQUARE

How we got here

Midsomer Norton's historic town centre continues to be the focus of local shopping, services, and celebrations. However, the vitality of the high street, like many in the UK, has declined in recent years. The Midsomer Norton High Street Renewal Programme has been working to deliver public realm enhancements that will help to rejuvenate the town centre, one of which is the development a Market Square at The Island, Midsomer Norton High Street.

Although historically a key civic and commercial space adjacent to the Town Hall, the Island has suffered from underinvestment for many years. This is partly due to its heavy use as a car park, its irregular layout and narrow, uneven footways. This has resulted in an unattractive area which is unfriendly to pedestrians and unsuited to local businesses, public transport links and the function of the Grade II-listed Town Hall.



Reviving a market town

The Market Square improvements are one element of the Market Square scheme. The other is the redevelopment of the Town Hall, which is currently undergoing a multi-million-pound transformation project. Markets have been held in the Town Hall as long ago as 1242, so Market Square will work alongside this to allow indoor and outdoor events to take place at a key position on the High Street. This means that the Market Square project will not only deliver public realm improvements but will work to promote Midsomer Norton as a market town once again, giving local businesses and the town's identity a boost.

A FLEXIBLE SPACE

The new Market Square will create 1,000sqm of flexible and attractive public space with high quality surface which will support various civic, commercial and cultural events and activities (including markets), promote local businesses and community groups, and enhance the High Street and surrounding areas.

The designs were informed by precedents which combine flexible civic spaces and market spaces, incorporating car parking and creating squares which can be used for activities at a variety of scales - everyday and for special events or market days.

Early concept designs were developed by Nicholas Pearson Associates, which illustrate the different ways the space could be used.



'Everyday' use with parking



Full market use



'Everyday' use with parking and loading



Medium event use

Consultation

The proposed designs for the new Market Square were the result of partnership working between community stakeholders, public realm professionals and officers at Historic England and B&NES.

A community consultation on the concept designs for the new Market Square was held. These concept designs were positively received by the community and the constructive feedback was used to further refine the design work.



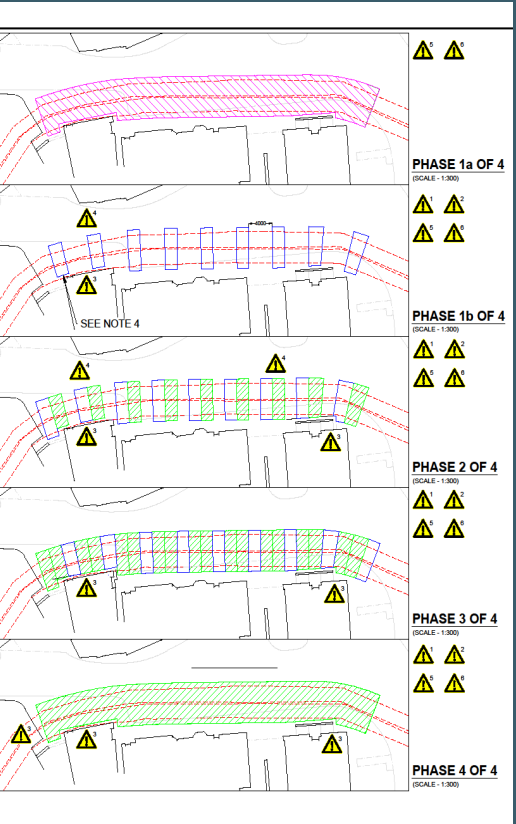
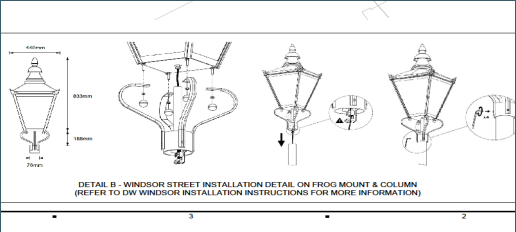
Technical design work

The designs were then refined to address the community consultation responses, improve pedestrian and road safety and develop the engineering solution required to strengthen the Victorian masonry arch culverts that run underneath the Island.

The technical design process has now been completed, with support from engineering consultancy AECOM and Highways Authority approval to proceed to construction. Works commence in the Spring of 2024 and are scheduled to take 10 months to complete.

MARKET SQUARE TECHNICAL DESIGNS

The follow images show an array of plans, sections and detailed drawings that were prepared as part of the technical design process. They included general arrangement plan, proposals for lamp column lanterns, proposals for the culvert and sections and plans for the entrance of the Town Hall.



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SUMMARY



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