

Baker Lane Car Park

Existing Situation

The Baker Lane car park is surrounded by a mixture of valuable qualities. To the east is the High Street probably the key retail route in King's Lynn. Until the Vancouver Centre is completed, the pedestrianised High Street houses the majority of 'big name' shops in the town centre, and hosts a high level of activity during the day. To the south and west, along Queen Street are some of the most attractive and historically valuable buildings in King's Lynn. The 12th century Church of St. Margaret's at the Saturday Market Place is facing the Trinity Guild Hall, which is home to the Tales of the Old Gaol House, and to the Regalia Collection.

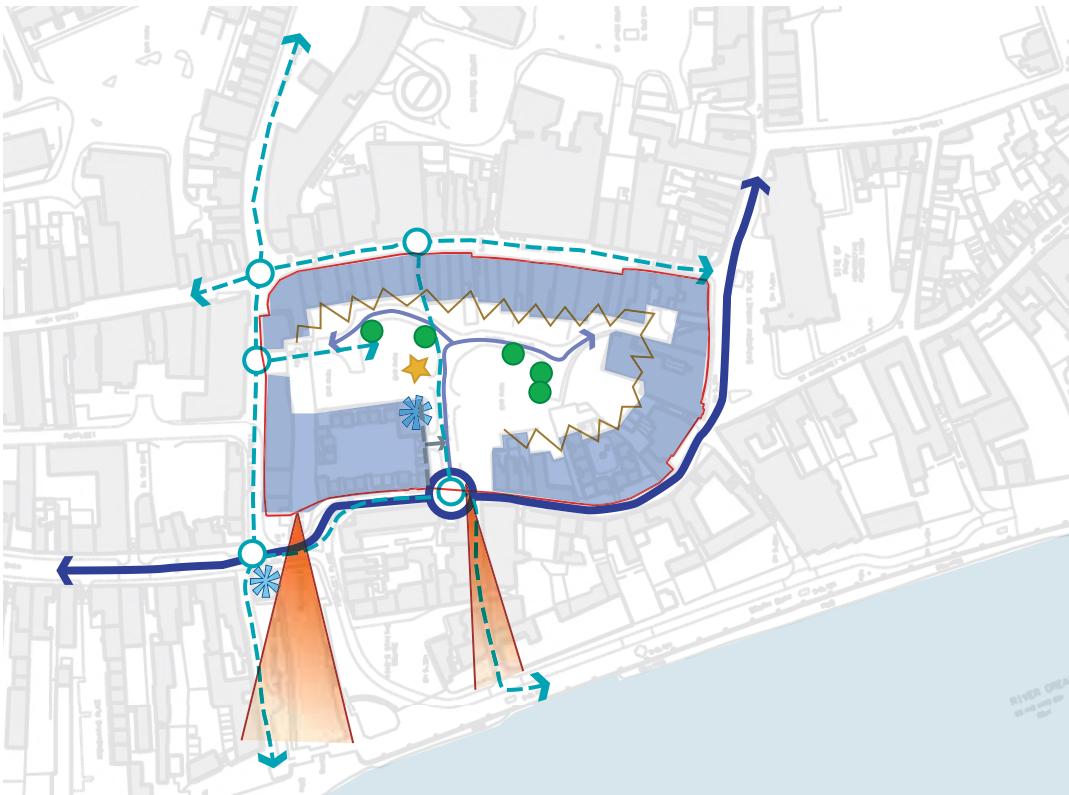
Purfleet Quay is situated a moment's walk to the west. Here, the 17th century Custom House overlooks the River Great Ouse and holds the tourist information centre and displays the maritime history of King's Lynn. The Purfleet Bridge, originally built in either the late 14th or early 15th century, now rebuilt, is now the only town centre vehicular route northwards towards the Tuesday Market Place. Pedestrian movement north is via a footbridge to New Conduit Street.

The immediate views from the car park are of the backs of the High Street shops, backs of the southerly historic buildings, and of the recently converted granary. The public W.C. building is located within the site, but is a valuable amenity which should not be lost without consideration and replacement. This building is not visually unappealing and should be accommodated within any development.

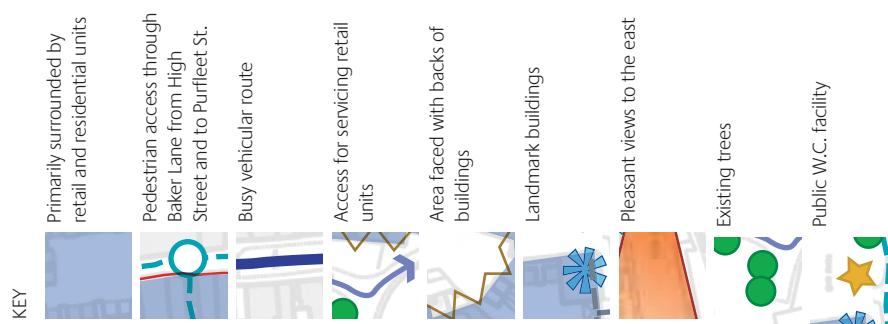
The site is ideally located a short walk from both the train station and the bus station. The shops and services of King's Lynn are immediately available, and the river can be easily accessed through either College Lane, King's Staith Lane or by the Purfleet Bridge.

Vehicular access is taken through Baker Lane, and returns the same way to leave to site. Service vehicles use this route to access the retail units and there is a small number of significant trees within the car park area.

Despite its location to the rear of so many shops and houses, the area is continually busy.

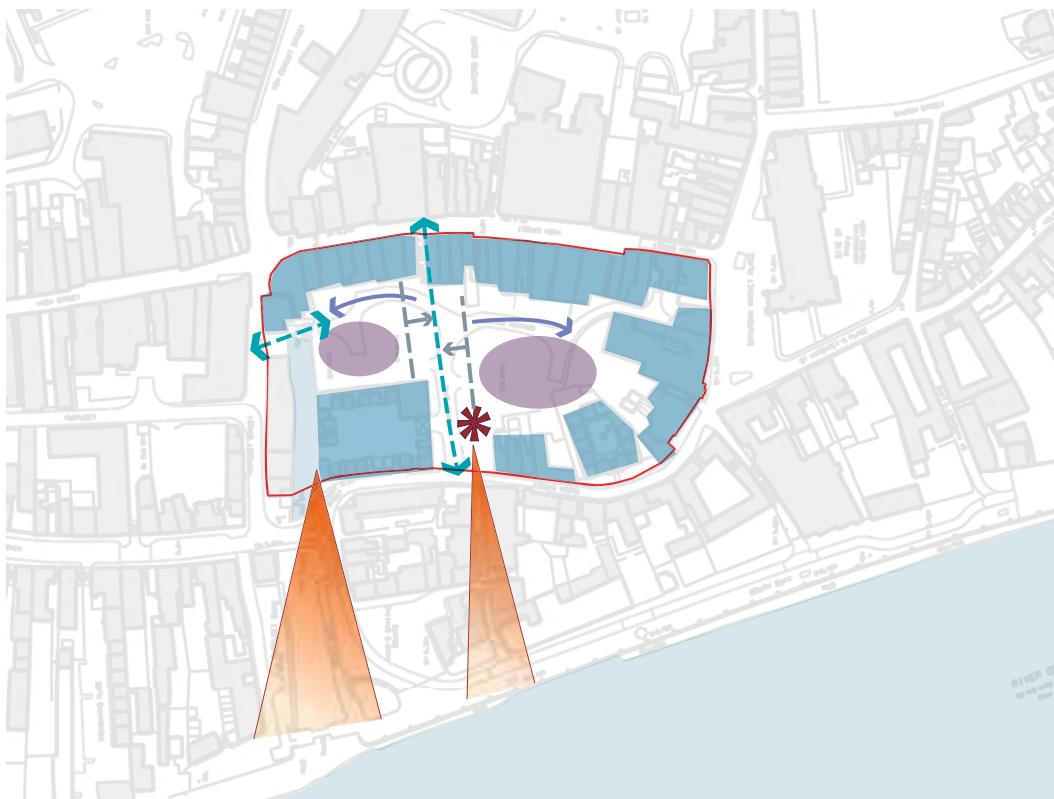


Baker Lane Car Park Analysis



Baker Lane Car Park Appropriate Development Responses

Concept



1. Retain and encourage access through the pedestrian section of Baker Lane by maintaining this as a convenient pedestrian route to the High Street.
2. The site is appropriate for high density residential use as neighbouring buildings are currently residential. Both with access to the town centre facilities and public transport, this is an ideal site for high density dwellings with low parking ratios. This parking ratio may be as low as zero, with some impaired mobility provision.

3. Retain the existing access for servicing the retail units on the High Street on Granary Court.

4. Build to maximise views to Purfleet Quay and to the River Great Ouse, whilst also respecting the proximity of historic core. Views through King's Staith Lane are attractive and also provide immediate riverside access.

5. The scale of proposed buildings should complement the 9 storey Granary building fronting Baker Lane. A building of a similar height could be suitable although generally, the buildings should aim to blend with those in the vicinity on Queen Street. 3 and 4 storey buildings are more suitable towards the edges of the site.

6. Retain the existing trees on site, this could be a prompt for further planting.

7. Choose appropriate, high quality materials, and architecture should be of a high standard to meet the current high value of the historic core.

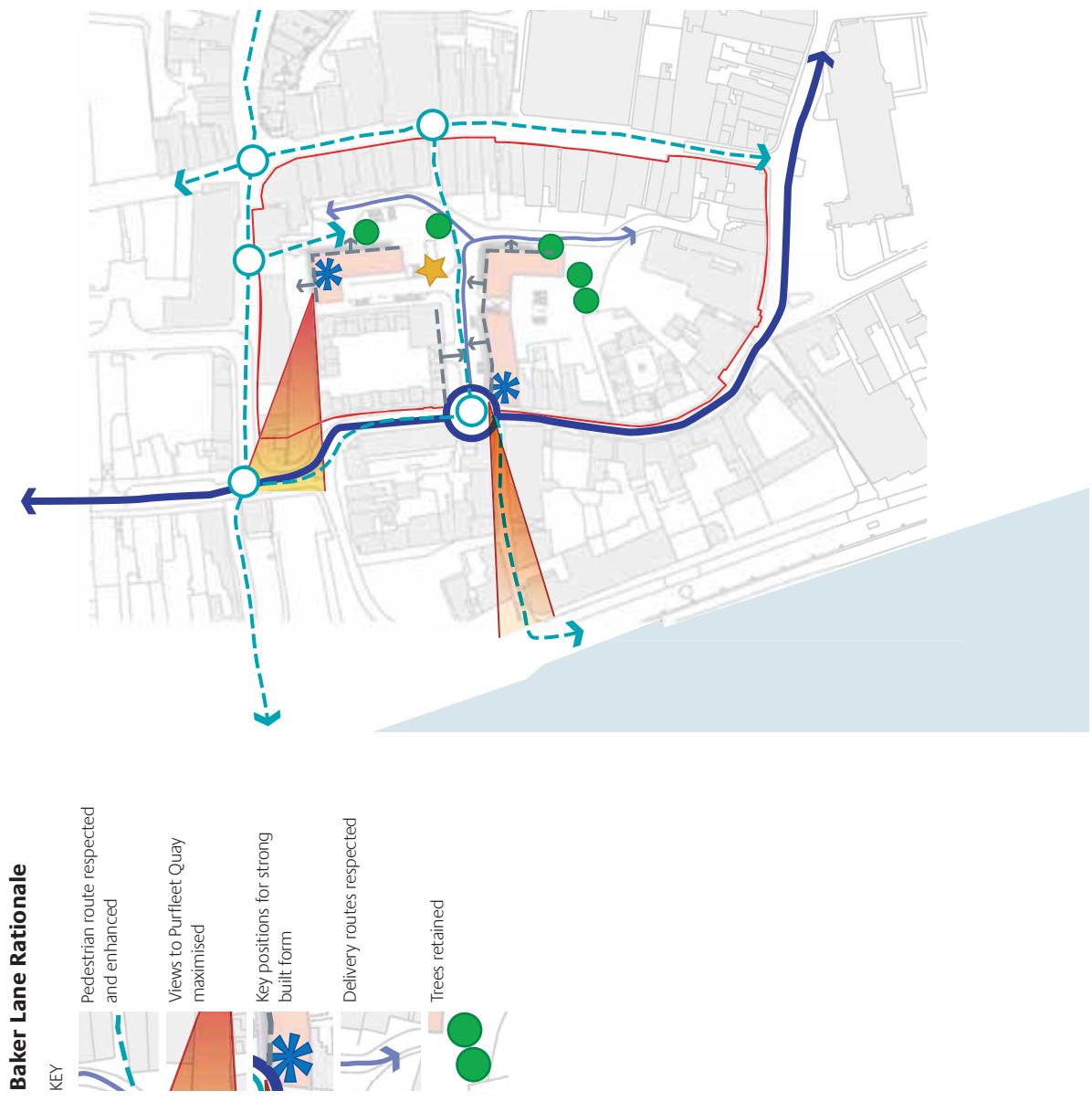
8. Create small area of gardens to compliment existing open space and to improve the current car dominated environment.

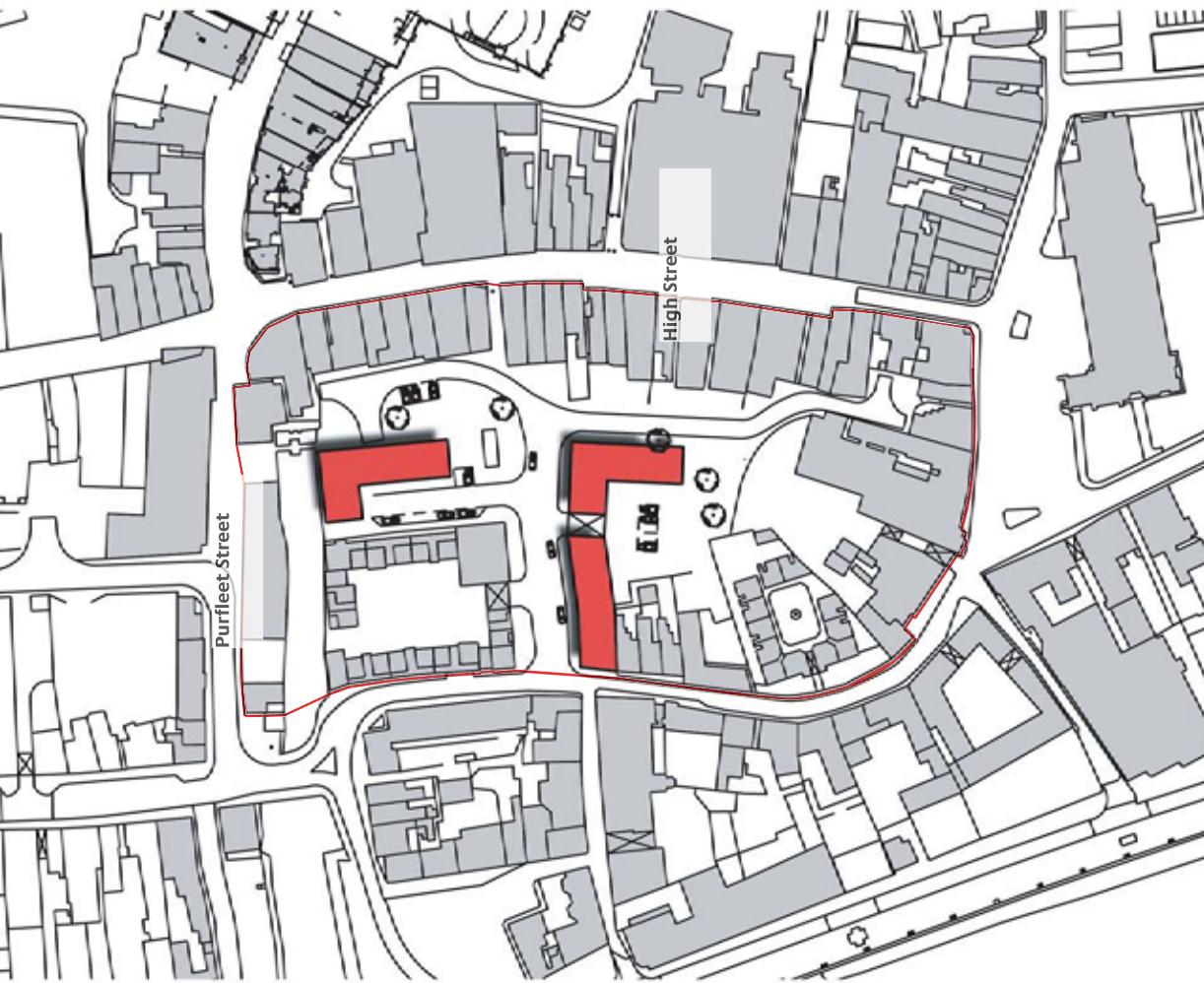
9. Retain the existing public W.C. This is a valuable town centre facility located near to the High Street.

10. New development should also have excellent soundproofing on elevations facing servicing routes to maximise the length of the delivery slot available for the stores (thus retaining commercial attractiveness of the units without detriment to residential amenity).

11. This area whilst not suitable for retail, could accommodate a small

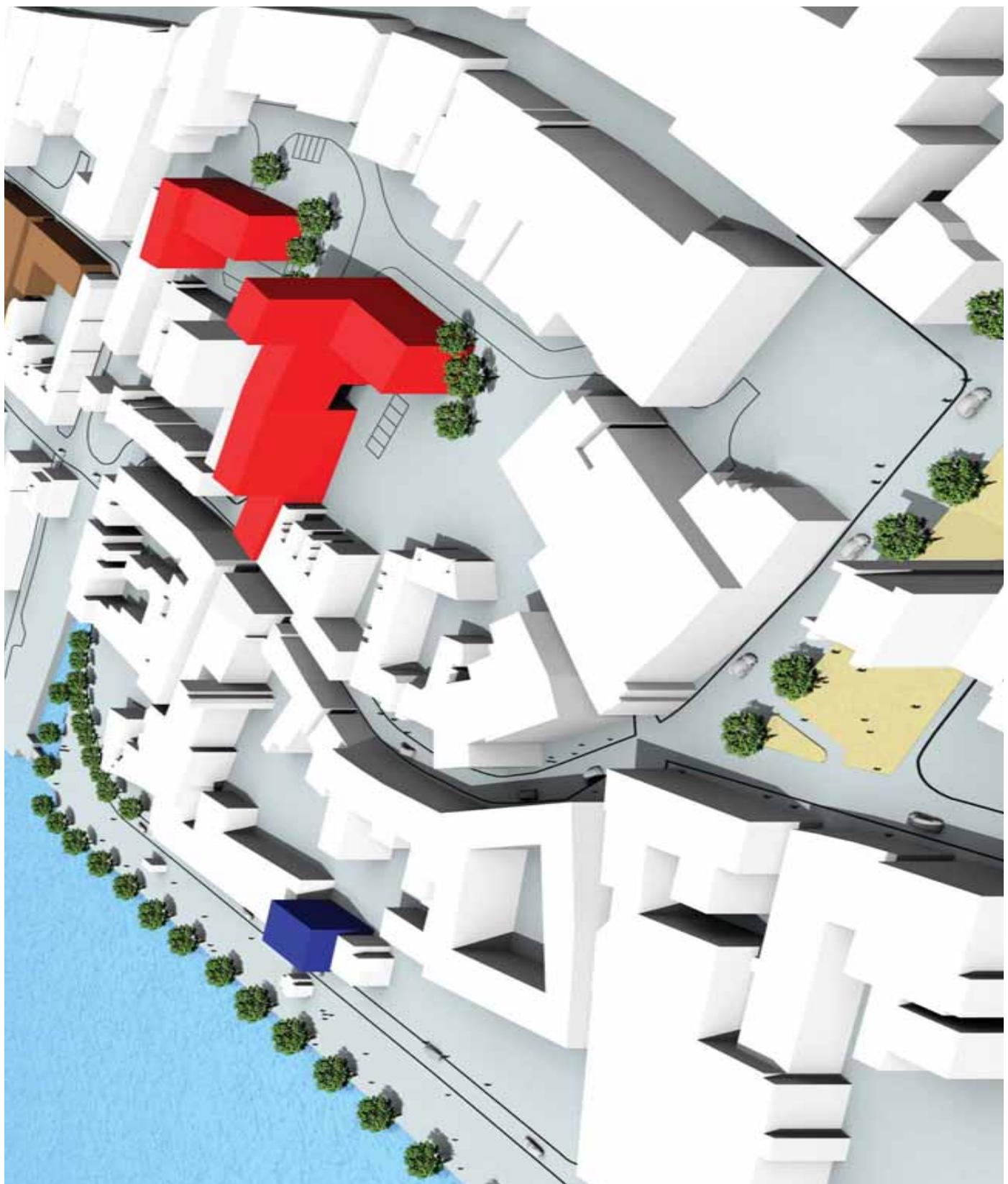
amount of uses other than residential. Uses that would benefit from the central location such as tourist information or tour centre may be appropriate.





Baker Lane Example Response





Implementation and delivery

This site has been identified as entirely in the ownership of KL&WN BC, which, combined with the fact that it is undeveloped at present and does not have any tenancies on site should make it an early delivery.

However, there may be access rights to the High Street and Baker Lane which need preserving and therefore title on and around the site should be assessed to identify limits of the developable area. Again, being a town centre site, there is a likelihood of there being archaeological material present. Its proximity to Conservation Areas and buildings of historic interest further mean its historic value should be assessed at an early stage to overcome potential concerns about suitability for development, and work up layouts which are appropriate. Planning policy and other strategies, such as transport, may also not currently support development of this site, so to encourage developer interest, policy in relation to this site should be reviewed at an early stage and adopted as SPG.

Development here should be essentially residential, as creating active frontages at ground level is prohibited by the backland nature of the site and service road requirements. A strong marketing concept for this site should be developed in conjunction with any residential developer, to support the idea of mews-style backland developments, and encourage further such development where appropriate. The low parking ratios suggested on this site could be underpinned by the concept of a residents car pool, which would help in widening the market appeal of the development, particularly as most residents of King's Lynn would expect to have access to a car. The tight nature of the site, and the likelihood that this will necessarily mean relatively small residential units could be promoted as a selling point, in providing affordable first-time buyer flats or manageable elderly accommodation with good access to town centre services. High quality and imaginative design should be employed to ensure that a charming community development is created which relates to the valued aspects of the historic centre, and is therefore highly marketable, rather than something which might be perceived as a hidden compound.

Consultation should be undertaken at an early opportunity with the businesses backing onto the Baker Lane car park, to identify potential issues such as security, overlooking, access and delivery arrangements, which could generate objections to any residential applications later on. Commitment should be made by KL&WN BC development control to insist on measures to avoid user conflicts in any new development.