

St Albans Road Public Realm Proposals



Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 0. Introduction | 2 |
| 1. Analysis | 3 |
| 1.1 Context | |
| 1.2 Area extents | |
| 1.3 Consultation analysis | |
| 2. Constraints and Opportunities | 6 |
| 3. Long Term Vision | 8 |
| 4. Phase 1 | 9 |
| 4.1 De-cluttering Plans | |
| 4.2 Paving | |
| 4.3 Drainage | |
| 4.4 Street furniture | |
| 4.5 Green infrastructure | |
| 4.6 Cycle facilities | |
| 4.7 General Arrangement Plans | |

0. Introduction

Dallas-Pierce-Quintero has been commissioned by Watford Borough Council to propose Phase 1 streetscape improvements for St Albans Rd as part of a wider, long-term vision for the area.

The current scheme acknowledges the previous proposals developed by the Project Centre, but the reduced budget for Phase 1 has resulted in greater focus on addressing the most pressing issues related to the footways as raised by the public during recent consultation.

Amendments to the highway, including parking bays, kerblines, cycle paths are outside the scope of this commission. Thus the scale and scope of the improvements during Phase 1 primarily address the inconsistent footway materials, drainage and improvements to the look and feel of the streetscape.

This report reviews the existing site conditions, highlighting current constraints and potential opportunities, and outlines themes raised in consultation. The proposals outlined in Chapter 4 of this document identify proposed improvements for Phase 1 of the works, which is the initial implementation stage of a long-term vision.



View southbound on St Albans Rd

1.1 Existing context

St Albans Road lies to the north of Watford town centre and enroute to Colne Way, North Watford Station and St Albans. It effectively represents the northeastern gateway into Watford town centre.

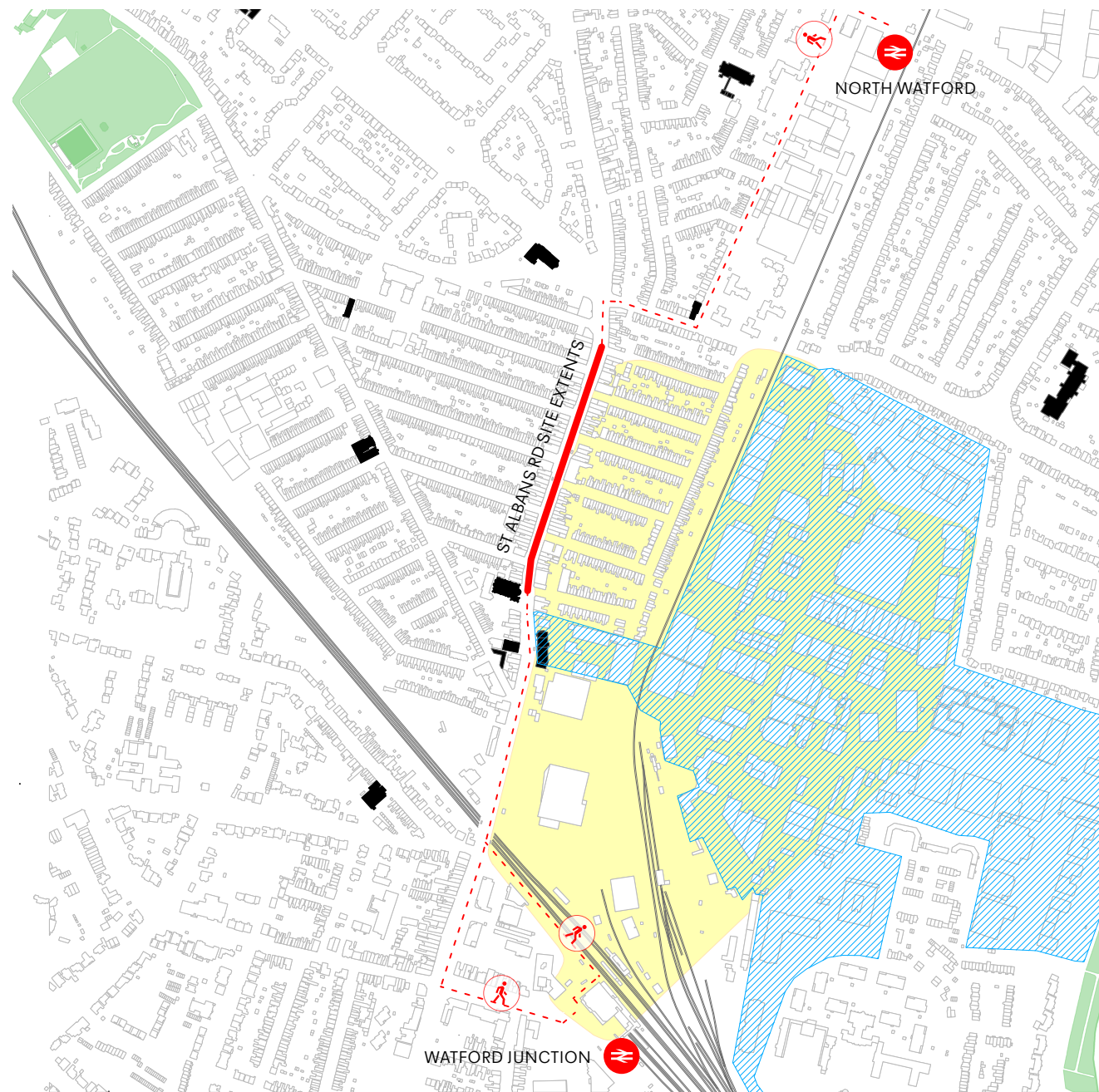
It is a short 7 minute walking distance from the Watford Junction Station with connections to London Euston between 16-25 minutes. It is located a 20 minutes' walk from the town centre where there are a wide range of facilities.

St Albans Road dissects an area characterised by residential terraced housing, largely developed between 1890 and 1910, previously farmland, now very urban in character.

The character of the street itself is as a local high street; the street benefits from a post-office, two national local supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and takeaways and numerous independent businesses, with a small number of vacant premises.

Future large-scale development to the south will provide circa 2000 new homes to the area and has the potential to significantly increase the footfall to this local street.

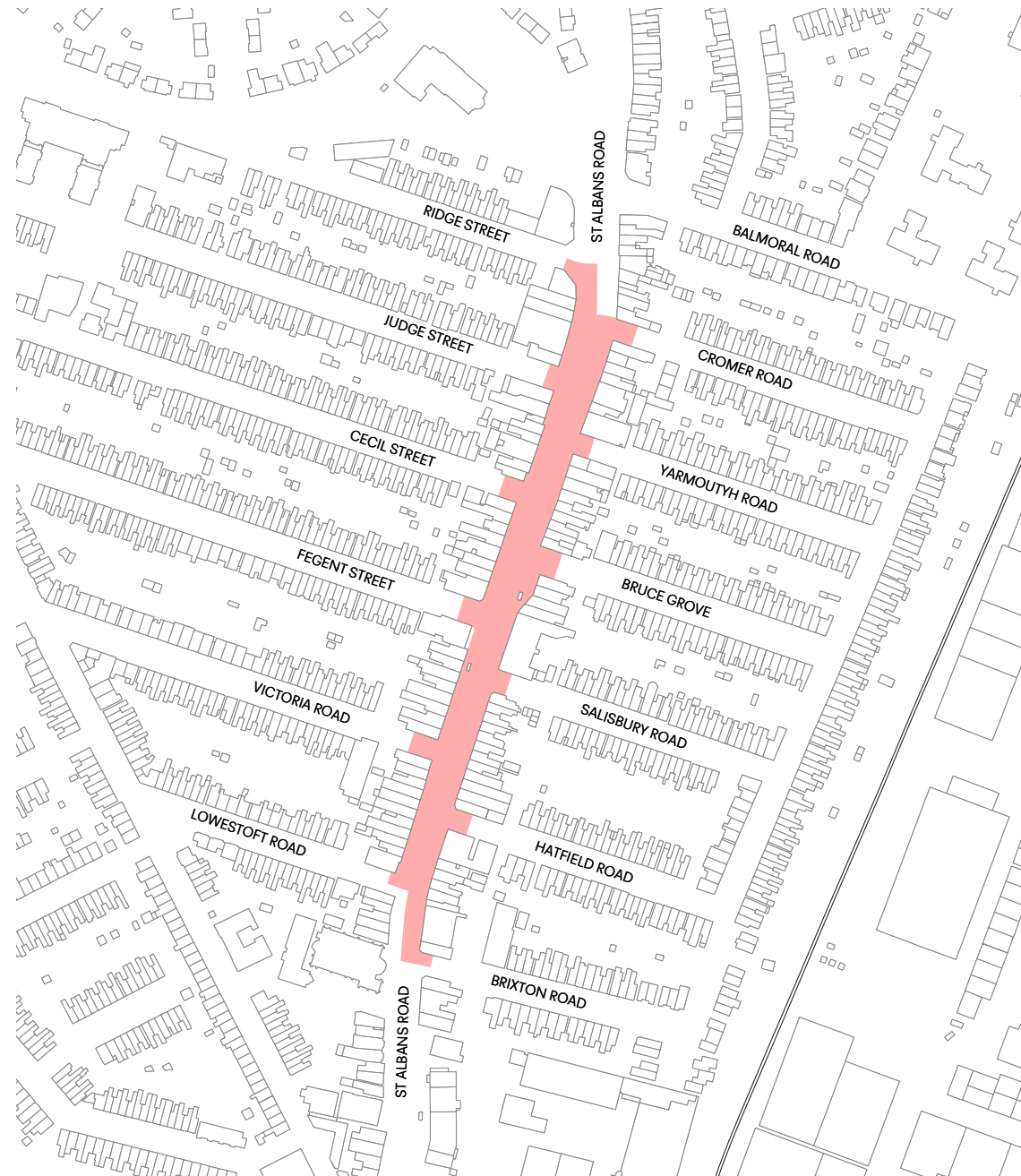
Plan showing site extents, walking route to rail stations and locally listed buildings.



1.2 Area Extents

The subject area of this study extends from the eastern side of St Albans Road with Brixton Road and Cromer Road junctions, and western side of St Albans Road with Lowestoft Road and Ridge Road junctions.

Parts of St Albans Rd excluded from this boundary will be included within future improvement works.



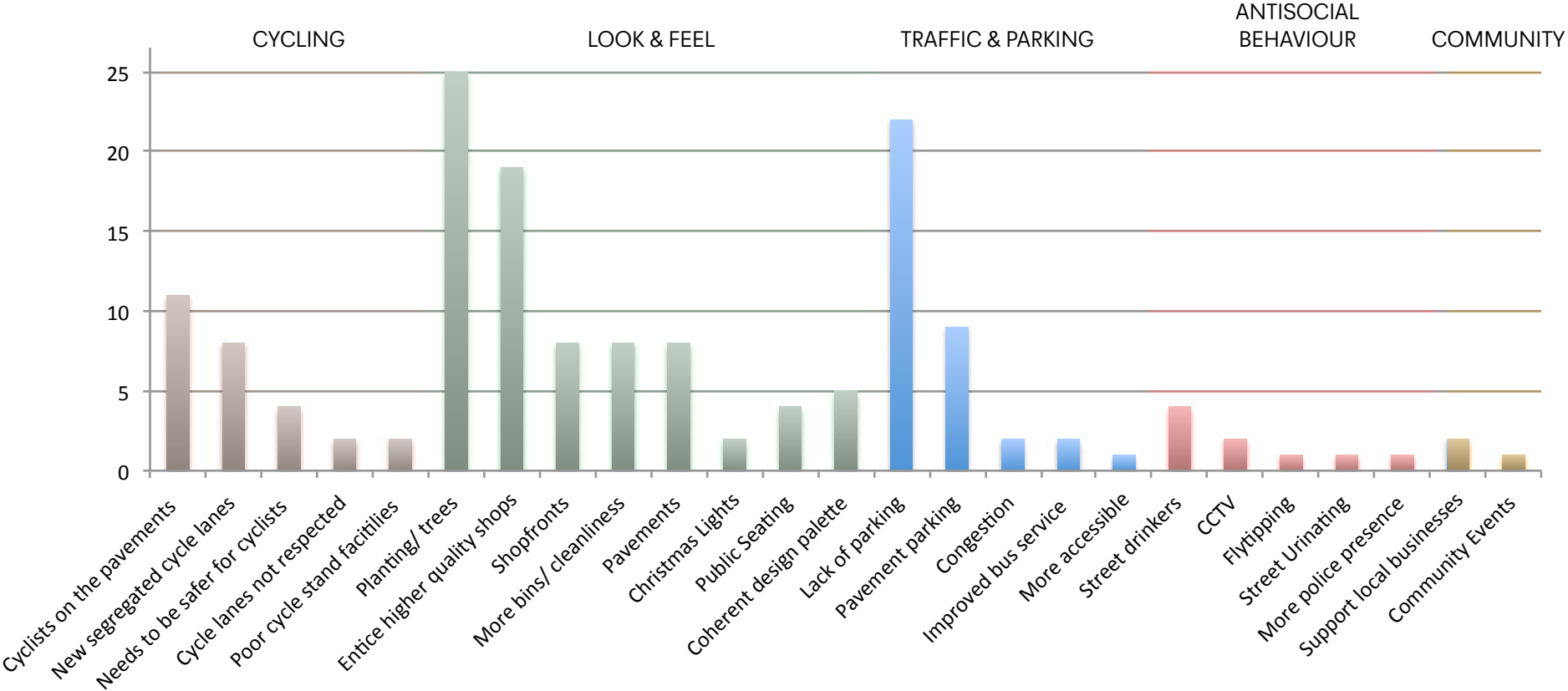
Plan showing site extents.

1.3 Consultation

In 2019 Watford Borough Council created a dedicated webpage setting out aspirations for revitalising St Albans Road and requesting the public’s feedback.

The key themes that emerged from the consultation were around the themes of cycling, the look and feel of the streetscape, traffic, parking and antisocial behaviour.

These themes have formed the basis of the aims and aspirations of Phase 1 improvements to the streetscape, and where suggested improvements are outside this scope for these works, we have suggested where these issues could be addressed in the wider vision.



2. Constraints & Opportunities

1. Decluttering

Existing constraint:

The existing street scape is negatively affected by instances of cluttered street furniture, of various designs and finishes, reducing accessibility and visibility.

Opportunity:

The opportunity is to create a unified experience, through the use of a consistent materials palette, and through the general de-cluttering the streetscape of unnecessary street furniture and signage, increasing legibility and strengthening the local identity.



2. Improve cycling experience

Existing constraint:

There is no cycle lane on St Albans Road and many cyclists avoid the road and instead cycle on the footway. Existing cycle parking is inconsistent and occasionally not fit for purpose.

Opportunity:

Whilst a new segregated cycle lane is outside the scope of this project, the opportunity is to signpost to the quiet way on Bradshaw and Sandringham Road. Also consideration of the removal of pedestrian guard railings to eliminate perceived pinch-points to cyclists on the road.



3. Greening

Existing constraint:

There is currently a lack of green infrastructure along the street; currently the only street greening is provided by several mature trees set back from the road and large square planters do not appear to be used.

Opportunity: :

The opportunity is to introduce new street trees and planters to create a more pleasant environment, and soften what is currently a road dominated by traffic. The location of the new street trees and planters can be used as barriers to parking on the pavement.



2. Constraints & Opportunities

4. Improved Footways

Existing constraint:

The existing footways present a mix of inconsistent footway materials, as a result of piecemeal improvements, with numerous areas in need of repair.

Opportunity:

The opportunity is to replace the existing hard-landscaping, retaining kerb lines, with a consistent and durable paving materials, with alongside proposed decluttering, will make it easier and more accessible for all.



5. Drainage

Existing constraint:

The existing footways present numerous areas of poor surface water drainage, which compromises the walking surface.

Opportunity:

The opportunity is to resolve localised levels on the footways to prevent standing water and provide drainage channels to take water from open rain water pipes to the street drains.



6. Under utilised spaces

Existing constraint:

Hatfield Road, Victoria Road and Bruce Grove are all closed to through traffic onto St Albans Road. These existing road closure spaces are currently in-active and cluttered and, in the case of Bruce Grove, are often illegally used for pavement parking.

Opportunity:

The opportunity is to create here 'pocket' squares of high quality public realm, which encourage community interaction, sense of place and potential spaces for gatherings and events.



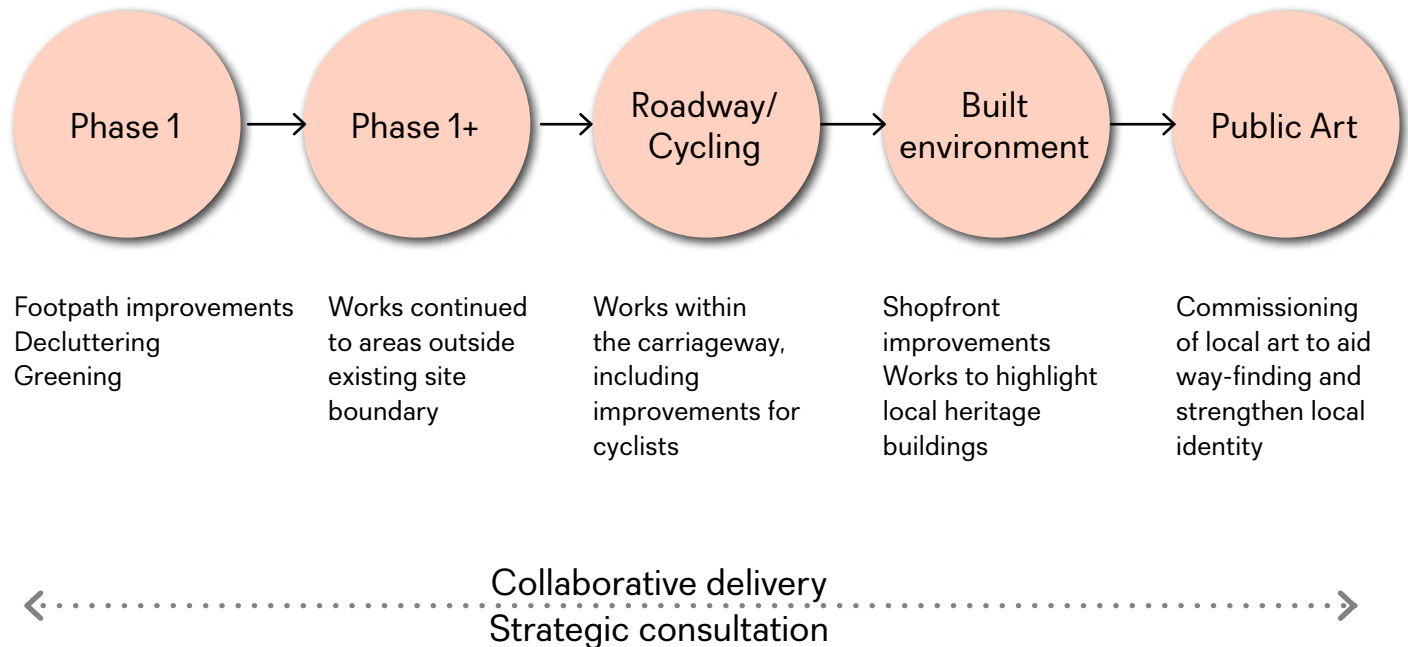
3. Long Term Vision

We believe that places are best shaped by the people who know them well. Each place has its own unique challenges and aspirations and our work is highly site-specific; exploring places, spaces and engaging the people that inhabit them through on-going dialogue to highlight existing assets and define a foundation from which to build a vision for the future.

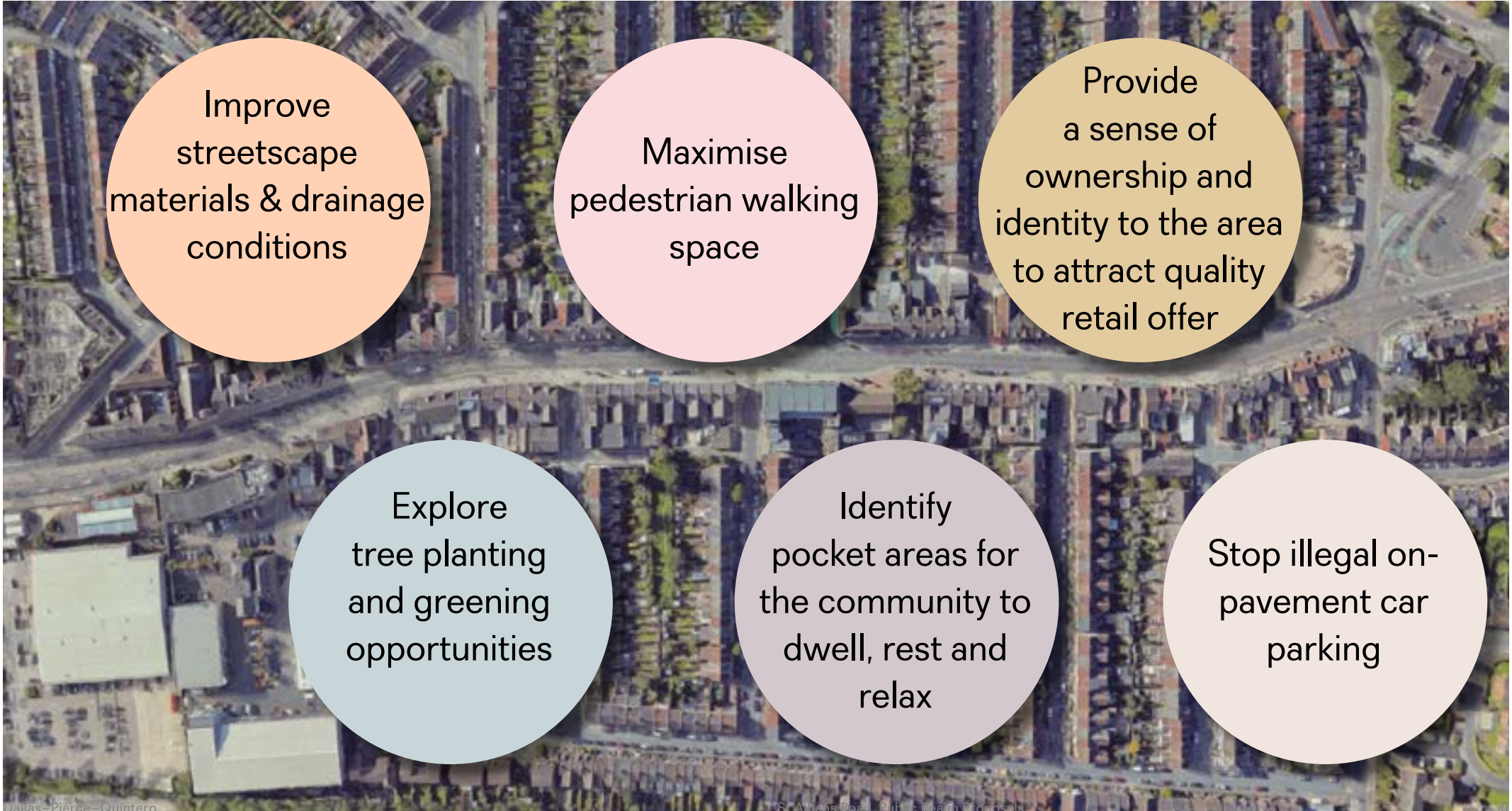
The consultation to date has revealed the public's appetite for ambitious change to unlock the potential of St Albans Road, as a gateway into Watford and as an important local district with a distinct identity.

Whilst the Phase 1 Works are limited in their scope and budget to addressing the immediate physical improvements of the footpaths, it is also an opportunity to begin the dialogue for future improvements.

“The aim is to develop a phased improvement plan for St Albans Road with the long-term ambition to cultivate a sustainable, unique and vibrant local high street where the community is well-represented and local businesses are supported.”



4. Phase 1 Aims



Improve
streetscape
materials & drainage
conditions

Maximise
pedestrian walking
space

Provide
a sense of
ownership and
identity to the area
to attract quality
retail offer

Explore
tree planting
and greening
opportunities

Identify
pocket areas for
the community to
dwell, rest and
relax

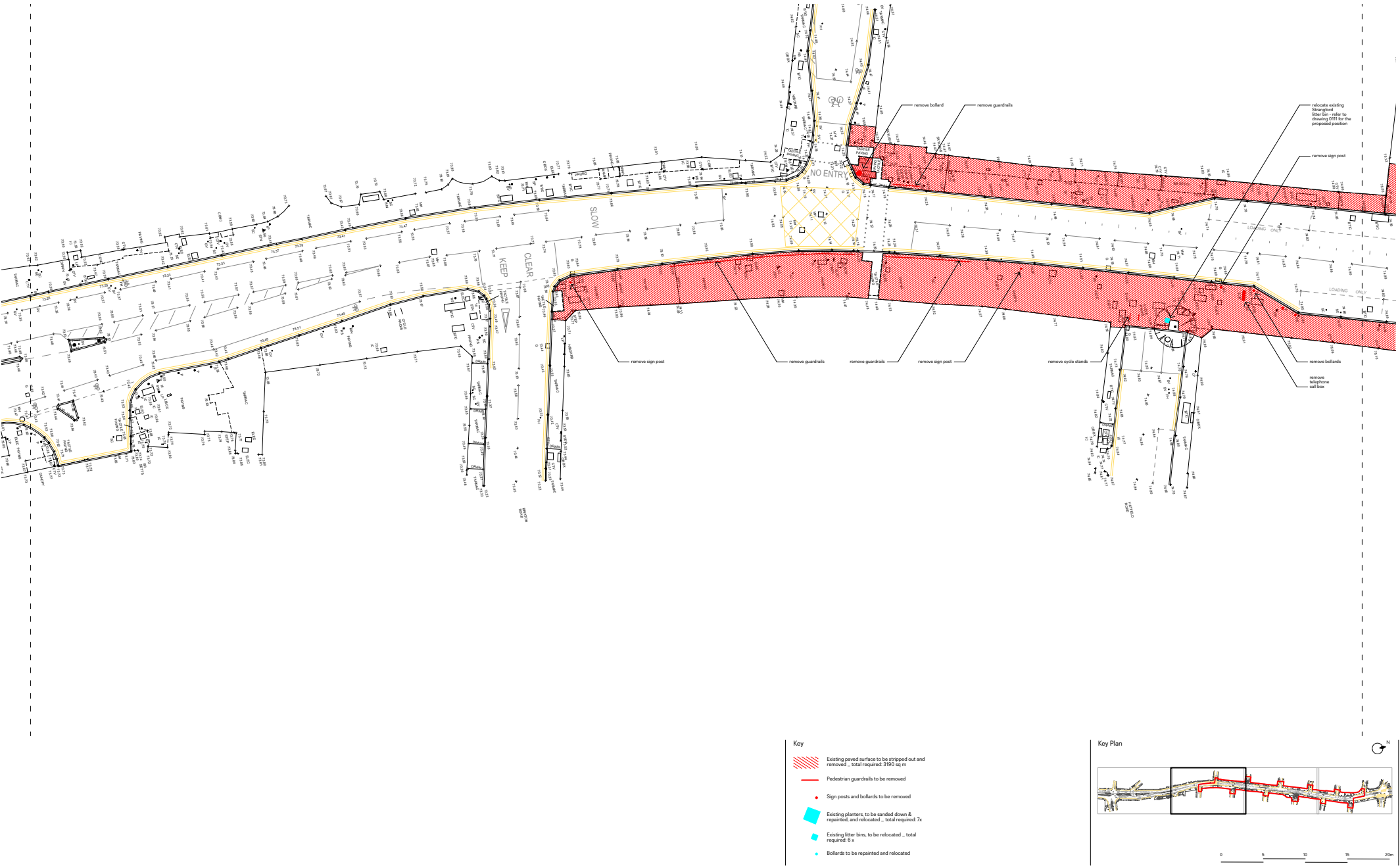
Stop illegal on-
pavement car
parking

4.1 De-cluttering

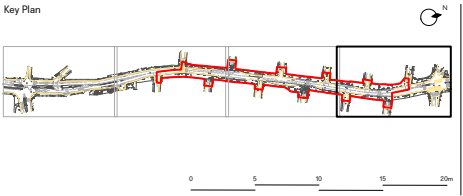
De-cluttering street scene:

- Removing broken and redundant street furniture;
- Removing unnecessary signage, to remedy the clutter generated through over provision and poor sighting of sign posts and traffic signs;
- Removing guard-railings, which cage in Pedestrians and Cyclists at pinch points, and reinforces vehicular priority;
- Relocate strategically placed street furniture.





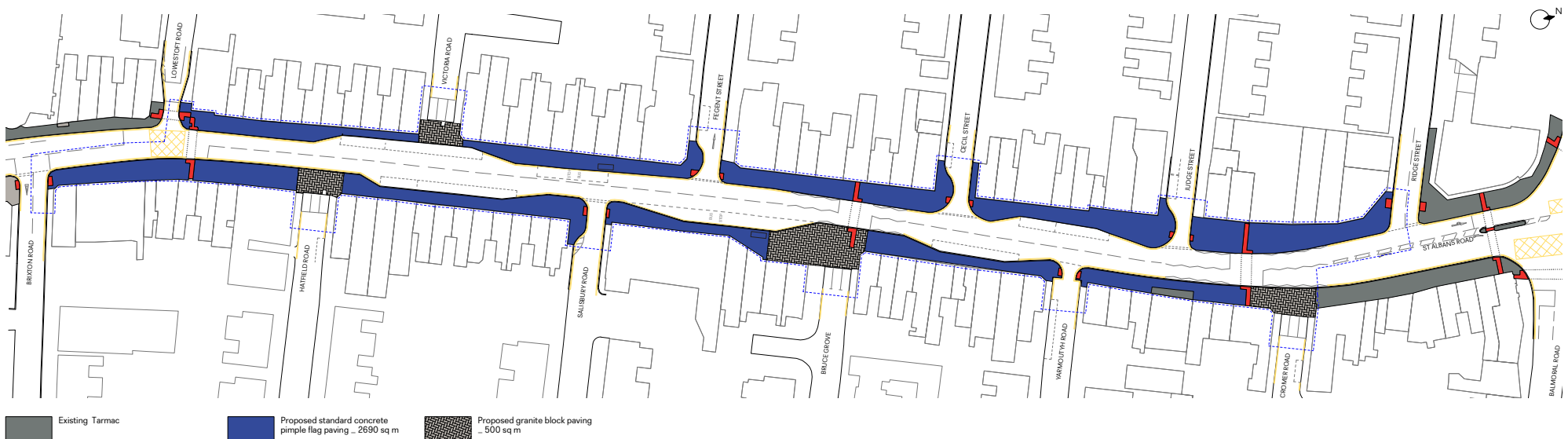




4.2 Paving

Updating paving materials:

- New materials used to delineate pocket parks, providing interest along the retail stretch of the road;
- Consistent paving treatment along the road corridor bringing a unified materials palette;
- New paving laid to building edge.



4.2 - Paving - Existing footway treatment

Poor quality / inconsistent existing footway treatment

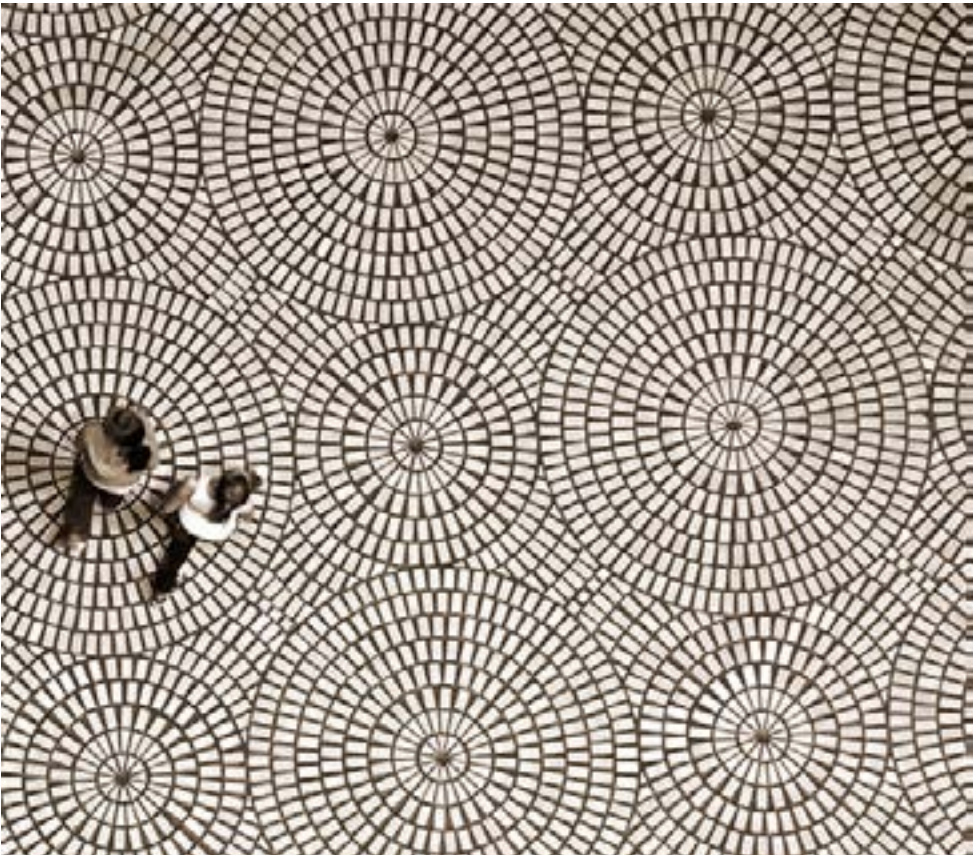


4.2 - Paving - Proposed Paving

Proposed standard concrete pimple flag paving on 25mm mortar bed _ total required: 2690 sq m



Proposed granite block paving in pocket parks _ total required: 500 sq m



4.3 Drainage

Upgrading the surface drainage system:

- New polymer concrete fluted drainage channel, to remedy the current poor surface water drainage, which compromises the walking surface and space;
- KBI Flexistone to the tree pits provides Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to help with irrigating the trees and alleviating some of the drainage issues on the street.

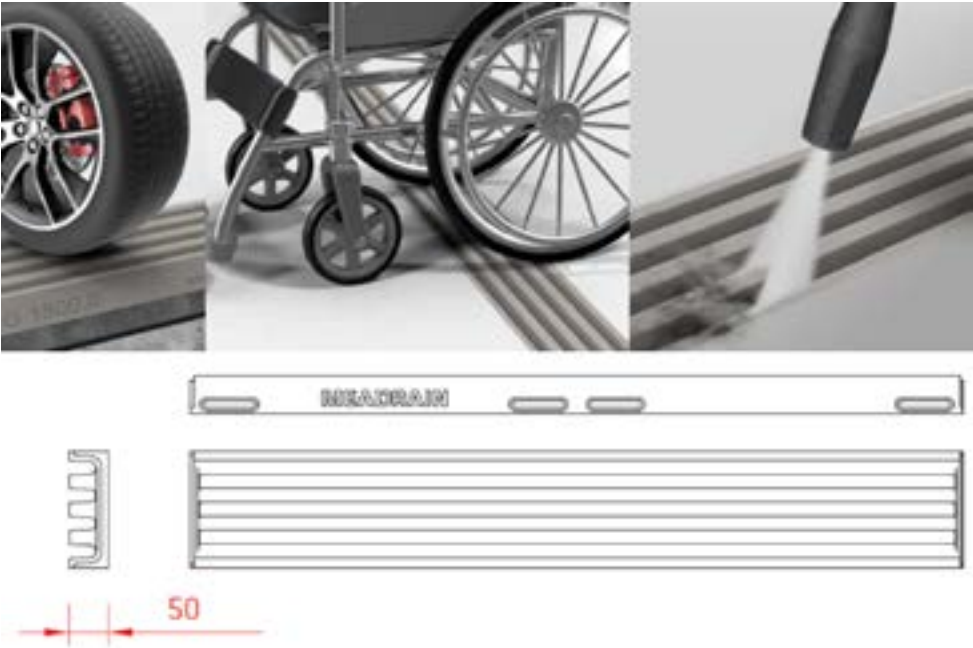


4.3 - Drainage - Proposed

Proposed slotted kerb treatment and permeable Flexistone to tree pits



Proposed polymer concrete channel



4.4 Street Furniture

Consolidating the street furniture:

- Install strategically placed new street furniture, to avoid cluttered appearance whilst helping stop illegal on-pavement parking;
- The street furniture updated to a consistent palette

"Strangford 120L Litter Bins"



Marshalls' Monoscape Strada Circular Concrete Planter, boulevard black exposed finish



Cyclehoop "M Cycle Stand", black nylon finish



Marshalls' Optima Single Seat, black finish frame, armrests on both sides



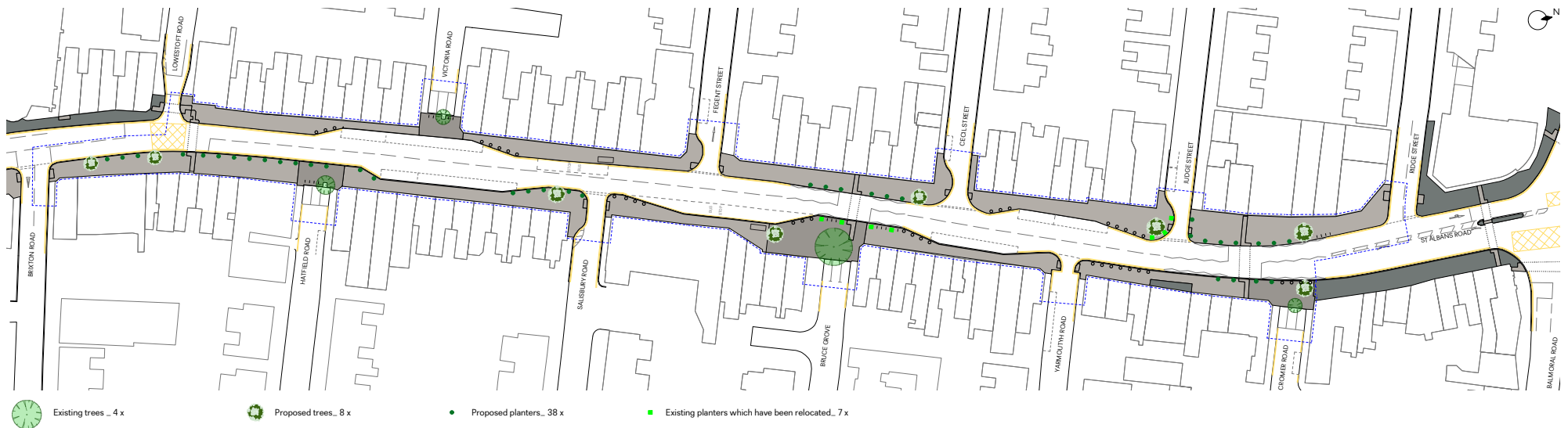
Cyclehoop "Phi Bollard Cycle Stand",



4.5 Green Infrastructure

Enhance the green infrastructure:

- Reusing existing planters, and adding new planters along the street corridor to help prevent illegal planting whilst providing soft landscaping;
- Soft landscaping has a significant impact on the feel of an area and can improve air quality. Areas for new trees are also proposed within the scope of design.



4.6 Cycle Facilities

Improved cycle facilities during Phase 1:

- Consider and address the opportunity to create a cycle quiet way to the west of St Albans road, running parallel to it between Brixton Road and Balmoral Road;
- Cycle facilities encourage the use of bicycles over vehicles for shorter journeys;
- Rationalised cycle parking to create de-cluttered appearance and allow a clear flow of movement for users of the pavement;
- Two types of cycle stands are proposed, one of which also helps prevent illegal parking.

