



Drake Circus Shopping Centre



Victorian Residential Street



Plymouth Argyle FC Stadium



University Of Plymouth



University Of Plymouth

### Sport and Recreation

There are large areas designated for sport in Central Park and Victoria Park. The Plymouth Argyle FC stadium is a major congregational facility and stages large music events in the summer as well as football league fixtures. A connection through the park to the station will become increasingly important if uses are intensified. These green amenity spaces are a major resource and could be better utilised. The Central Park Area Action Plan addresses the future for the park and the proposed Life Centre initiative.

### Education

The neighbouring well-established University contains some new and exciting buildings. There is a dramatic new arts block, the Levinsky Building, which centralises satellite facilities unto the campus. The University is working to an ambitious masterplan and has a clear vision as to how the facilities are to be grown and intensified. Linkages to the station, parks and city centre are still disjointed however, and the need for better pedestrian movement is evident.

### Residential

The wider context includes well-established Victorian and Edwardian residential areas, largely in rows of terraces, laid out in a parallel arrangement running against the natural contour. These strongly contribute to the character of the area and provide good quality housing in walking distance from the city centre and recreational amenities. Scale varies from two to four storeys and present serried roofs on the skyline when viewed from the elevated parts of the site.

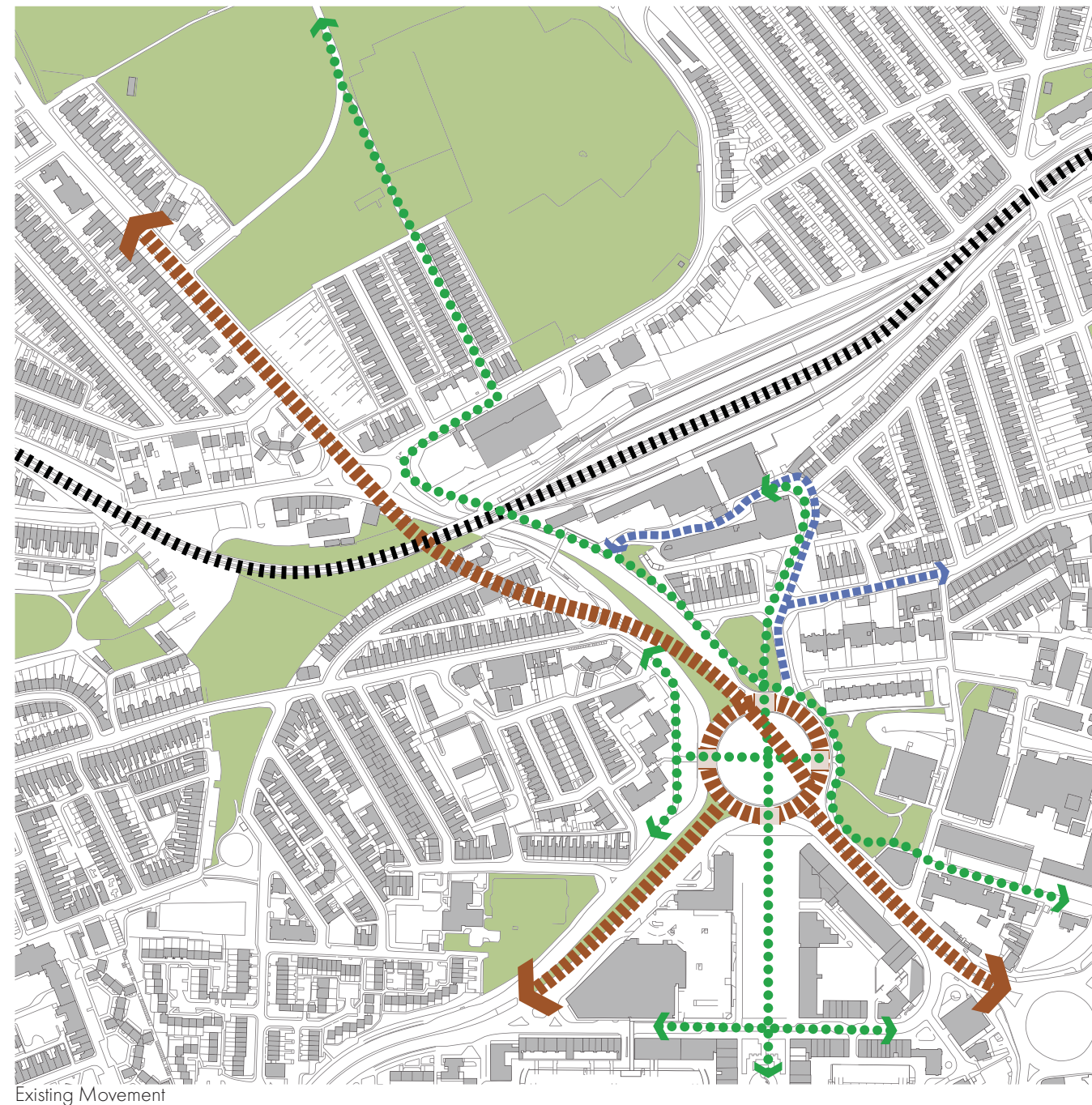


View Points

### 3.4 Visual Envelope

The most distinctive reference point is City House, located off the axis of Armada Way, which provides the most visible announcement for the railway station. The building is highly visible from Central Park. Caprera Terrace occupies a prominent skyline position in front of City House when viewed from the top of Armada Way. Visually there is little structure within the site itself and space is poorly defined. Views north from the station are open and expansive across Central Park and the outlying residential districts. In addition to Armada Way, there are important visual corridors along Western Approach and Cobourg Street.





Existing Movement

### 3.5 Movement

One of the main vehicular corridors into the city is via Outland Road, the A386. There is a park and ride service at Home Park which is well used. Pennycomequick roundabout is a traffic bottleneck. The A386 is duelled from Milehouse to Pennycomequick and from there to North Cross. This inner-city ring road is perhaps the greatest obstacle to a denser urban layout for the site. Vehicular access to the station is via North Road East, and is not an impressive or legible approach. Arrival is dominated by the concrete multi-storey car park. Taxis command the drop-off facilities along the one-way system exiting onto Saltash Road.

#### Bus Services

The station serves only as a collection point for some of the buses serving the city. Arguably, there is potential for it to become a more integrated part of the public transport system through an inter-modal exchange.

#### Pedestrian Movement

Pedestrian movement to the city centre is easier from Caprera Terrace heading south, although the route is through subways. Pedestrian movement north is impossible except along the A386, and east-west connection is again through subways. Despite the presence of the University Campus, there is no discernible gateway into it. Indeed Portland Terrace, a fine row of Georgian houses, is segregated from the site due to the imposition of the highway infrastructure.

The pedestrian has to negotiate the steep inclines and confusing pathways. This reduces the distance people are prepared to walk (400m 'ped shed' or the five minutes walking distance people would be willing to undertake to reach a centre).



800 metre 'ped shed'

There is an opportunity to examine the ways in which pedestrian movement can reconnect the site with its environs by understanding desire lines, the impact of gradients in all directions, and the quality of experience along the routes. If a direct pedestrian link could be created, access to Central Park from the City Centre could be much improved.

#### Cycle Routes

Sustrans, 'the UK's leading sustainable transport charity', shows no cycle routes within the site and its context, nor does it show any cycle routes within the city centre.

The Plymouth City Strategy and Action Plan's stated aim is to 'set a target of enabling 60% of journeys within the city to be undertaken by foot, bicycle or by public transport by 2010.' Future integration of cycle routes could help achieve this target.



Figure ground Study

### 3.6 Built Environment

A number of different character zones can be identified surrounding the site but the inherent quality of the site itself is one of dislocation and being largely open and exposed. People move through it but do not dwell; it is a transition zone. This is wasteful given its valuable central location. The railway, roads, and associated station buildings provide little enclosure or positive addition to the visual environment. The remnants of Caprera Terrace are prominent and could make a more positive townscape contribution if knitted into a repaired street scene.

The urban grain diagram illustrates the contrasting density of neighbouring Victorian terraces. Within these areas there was little destruction of the urban fabric, and hence most of the communities are well established, flourishing and successful. A large population lives in close proximity to the site and, given the right conditions, could use it to benefit.

Central Park is an attractive green lung, and can make a greater contribution to the life of the city. It does not currently act as a movement corridor for the pedestrian or cyclist as the railway lines and topography form a barrier to east-west connection. In the longer term, if this can be overcome, the park can enjoy a new lease of life as an attractive landscaped leisure amenity.

North Cross roundabout is effectively a traffic island. However, this area is not only an important pedestrian gateway to the city and the station, but also to the University campus. The spaces lack intimacy and appear insecure for the numbers of people currently using them and, with 33,000 people now occupying the campus, change is almost inevitable.

## 4.0 Strategic Appraisal



- PCC Green Space
- PCC Highways
- Network Rail
- Private Ownership
- University Campus

Approximate Land Ownership



PCC Land Ownership Diagram

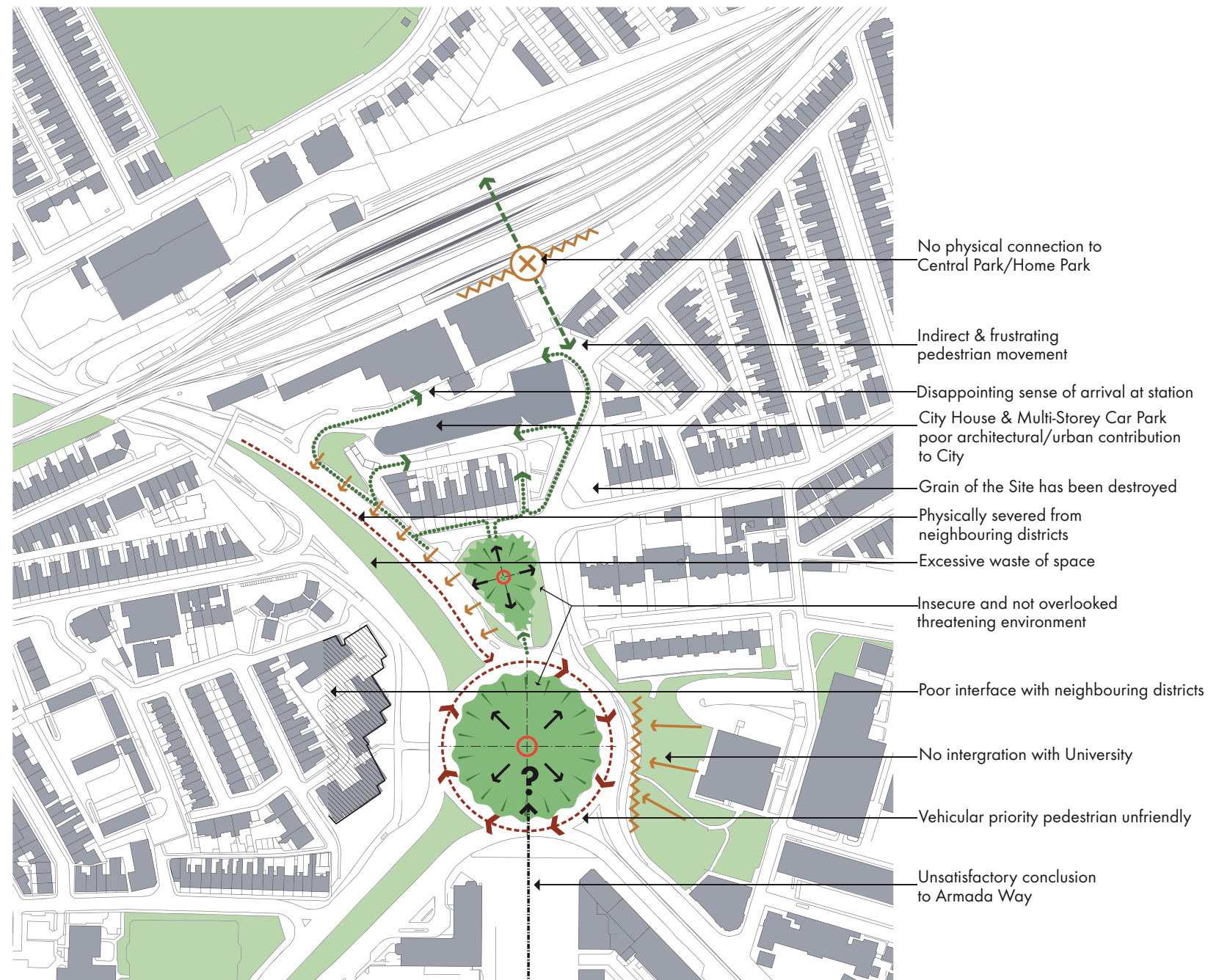
#### 4.1 Assets

The pivotal location of the site within the city is a great strength. When it is considered in relation to surrounding land uses then the potential to create a new sustainable city quarter is enormous.

Its aspect and elevation is also advantageous. It offers panoramic views, especially to the south over the city. With height these views could encompass the Tamar Valley and beyond.

The location of the railway station is pivotal. It is close to the civic core and shopping district, the University and the football stadium. With rail travel increasing and the growing demand to reduce carbon pollution, there must be a drive to make public transport more attractive and help deliver a well-connected city.

The poor linkages can be overcome, especially if the gradients are eased. The Abercrombie Plan saw the station as the formal termination of Armada Way. Although not fully realised, the concept can be reinterpreted and a bold approach can reinvigorate the city for the 21st century.



## 4.2 Weaknesses and Constraints

As previously discussed the topographical constraint has to be addressed to allow development to flourish. The principle weaknesses of the site can be summarised as follows:-

The weaknesses can be summarised as:-

- Profligate highway land use for inner city needs
- Disconnected and confused movement patterns
- Poor connection and interface with neighbouring districts
- Open and exposed
- Insecure and not overlooked
- Poor arrival at the station
- No direct connection to Central Park/Home Park/The Hoe
- Weak visual connection to city centre
- Under utilised
- Weak townscape contribution

The scale and complexity of the issues seem daunting and there is no doubt that stakeholders are apprehensive in regard to realistic delivery. However, if an inspirational vision can be created and an implementation strategy developed, a great opportunity exists to positively reconfigure this part of the city.