DESIGN STRATEGY

7

Alongside the site analysis, the community engagement process has shared what local people want for the future of Staple Hill high street. This chapter develops a holistic approach to improving the high street, identifying key projects and priorities.

The first step in developing the strategic vision is to establish a set of design principles that guide the entire process. These principles reflect what matters most to the local community, drawing on what makes a high street successful, and setting a clear brief for what the vision aims to achieve.

The next phase in developing the vision focuses on identifying key areas along the high street where improvements will have the greatest impact. By clustering interventions rather than spreading small changes across the entire length of the street, the project can deliver more meaningful, cost effective improvements.

The analysis and engagement has identified three key junctions that can act as gateways into the high street. Focussing improvements in these locations will strengthen legibility by creating a clearer sense of arrival, celebrating the surrounding buildings and spaces, and potential for improving accessibility and movement across each junction.

The vision also identifies key areas for public realm improvements that will create usable public spaces, strengthen local pride, provide opportunities for community events, and offer inviting places for people to stop and spend time.

Finally, the vision is supported by a set of plans that bring it all together; highlighting potential locations for improvements.



Street greening and a new place to sit, Milsom Street Parklets, Bath



Creative and colourful shelter, YOU&ME Architecture



Community-led shopfront improvements, Thornton Heath High Street, YOU&ME Architecture

A Playful, Connected and Regenerative High Street

The ambition is for Staple Hill to evolve from a functioning local high street into a vibrant, connected and inclusive neighbourhood centre, where everyday life, social interaction and local identity are embedded within the public realm. Building on its strong independent character and fine-grain urban fabric, the vision repositions Staple Hill not as a destination retail centre, but as a place of encounter, exchange and belonging—where streets, spaces and thresholds support social life.

Creating a Social Street

The High Street will transition from a predominantly vehicle-oriented corridor into a people-first environment, where walking, dwelling and informal interaction are prioritised.

A Network of Spaces, Not a Single Street

Staple Hill will be understood as a network of connected places, rather than a linear high street alone.

Key nodes—including Fountain Square, the High Street gateways, Page Road, and the lanes—are reimagined as distinctive yet interconnected environments, each contributing to the character of the place.

Reconnecting High Street and Nature

Page Park is recognised as Staple Hill's key green asset. The vision strengthens its relationship with the High Street by creating clear physical, visual and experiential connections. Greening strategies—including tree planting, in-ground planters and nature-inspired design—extend the presence of the park into the High Street. Playful and ecological interventions along Page Road and connecting routes create a green and social corridor, linking everyday urban life with nature.

Embedding Play in Everyday Life

Play is integrated not as a standalone function, but as part of the everyday urban experience. Steps, seating, edges and thresholds are reimagined as opportunities for interaction, rest and informal play. Elements such as multi-functional structures, adaptive pavements and flexible event spaces allow the High Street to support multiple uses—from markets and performances to casual social activity.

This approach creates an environment that is inclusive, adaptable over time and celebrates Identity and Heritage. Staple Hill's identity—shaped by its independent businesses, architecture, heritage and cultural memory—will be reinforced through carefully integrated design and storytelling. Together, these create a long-term regenerative framework, capable of responding to future change while maintaining local character.

Proposed Strategy

This diagram identifies the key design moves which are broadly categorised into:

Gateway improvements:
West, Central and East Gateways

Place improvements:
Fountain Square/Broad Street
High Street West

Streetscape improvements:
Throughout Broad St/High St & along key routes beyond the high street

Improve streetscape throughout with new trees, street furniture, public art, shopfront and heritage improvements

Create welcoming Gateways

Lane & safety improvements

Create a focus for the high street: Improve Fountain Sq

Draw people up from Page Park

Improve walking routes to and from the high street and key community buildings and parking on Page Road

Improve cycle links to Bristol & Bath railway path

PENDENNIS ROAD
PENDENNIS ESTATE
VICTORIA STREET
ACACIA ROAD
PAGE ROAD
SOUNDWELL ROAD
YOUTH CENTRE
COMMUNITY HALL
STAPLE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL
BROAD STREET
PARK ROAD
TEEWELL HILL
WHITE LODGE ROAD
SIGNAL ROAD
BRISTOL & BATH RAILWAY PATH

Focus Areas



West Gateway

Acacia Road - Pendennis Road - High Street

Signify the start of Staple Hill high street

Draw out Old Regal Cinema + Old Mail House heritage

Mural opportunity, adding to the existing artwork



Central Gateway

Soundwell Road - Victoria Street - High Street - Broad Street

Destination signage opportunity

This is Staple Hill - heart of the high street



East Gateway

Teewell Hill - Park Road - Broad Street

Draw people up to the high street

Identify opportunity to link Staple Hill + Page Park

Shopfront, signage & mural opportunity



Fountain Square / Broad St

Civic heart with square and library

Wide south-facing pavements with spill-out activation and public realm opportunities





High Street

Victorian, smaller shop units with fine grain character

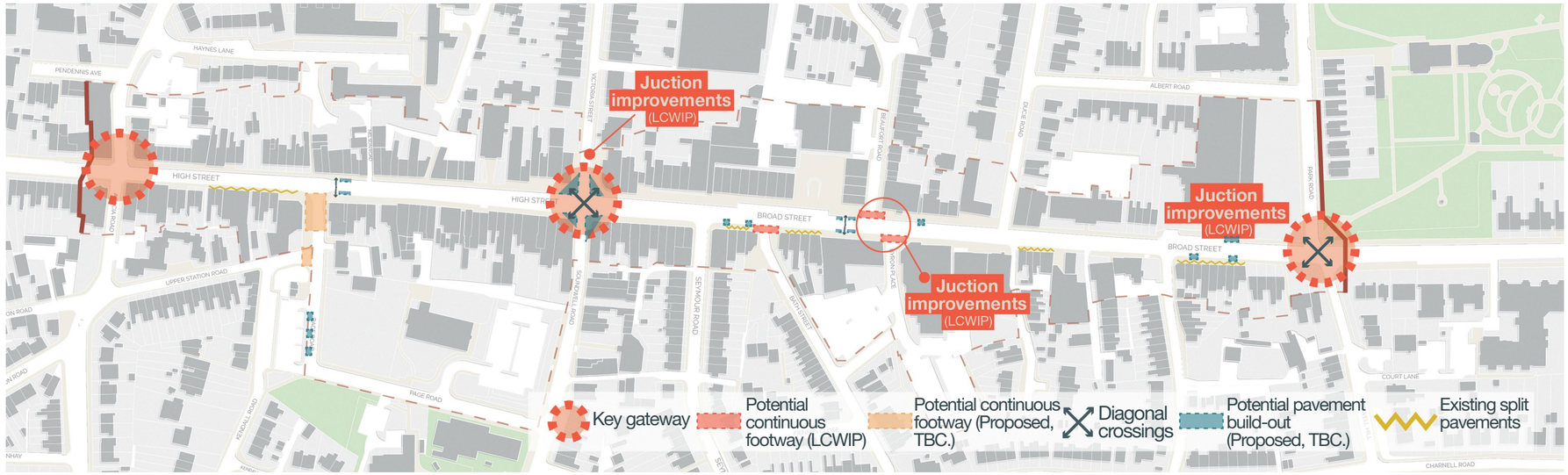
No dwelling spaces and poor public realm

Improve key links to residential and community buildings off the high street

Potential Highways Improvements

Proposals include recommendations as per Accessibility audit and West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

- Junction and crossing improvements: feasibility study has been commissioned to investigate and design the central crossing, as well as crossing points along the High Street and Soundwell Road
- Accessibility improvements
- Paving improvements: a further feasibility study will be commissioned to investigate split pavement issue
- Pavement build outs for trees & planting



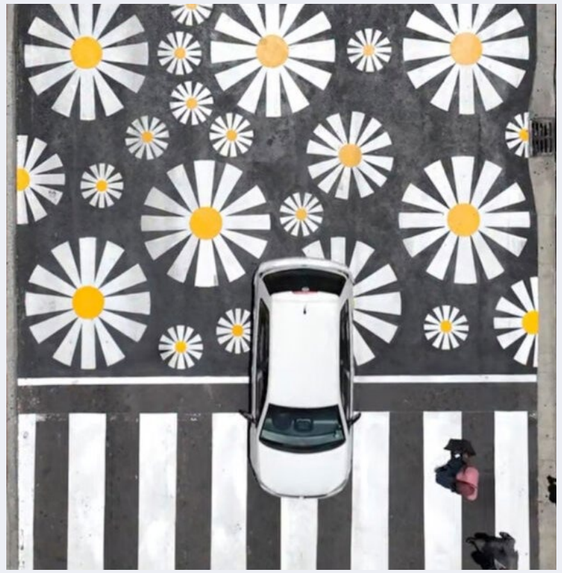
"People always cross the road diagonally at the Victoria Street junction, but there isn't enough time on the traffic lights to get across."

"Need more dropped kerbs"

"There are always cars parked on the yellow lines on Page Road, and on the pavement around there. It can make it difficult to cross safely or walk on the pavement."

Survey comments, online survey 2025

Examples:



Low maintenance floor art crossings using standard yellow and white durable highways paint, Heather Moore, Strand Street



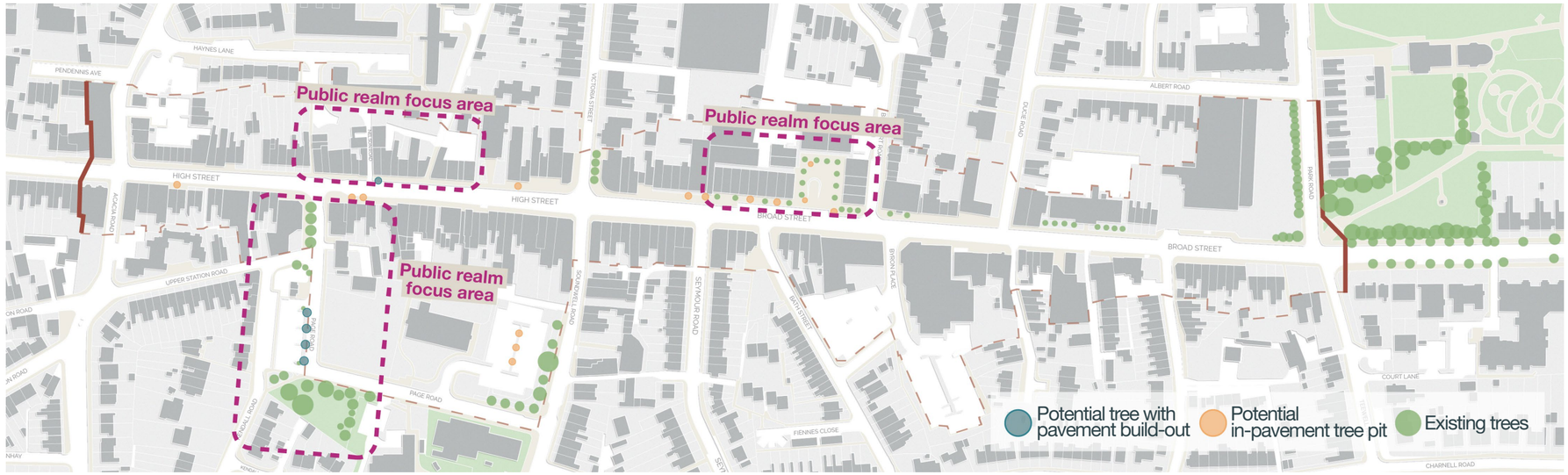
Marylebone High Street Sustainable Urban drainage SUDS 'Rain Garden', Urban Movement

Potential Public Realm Improvements

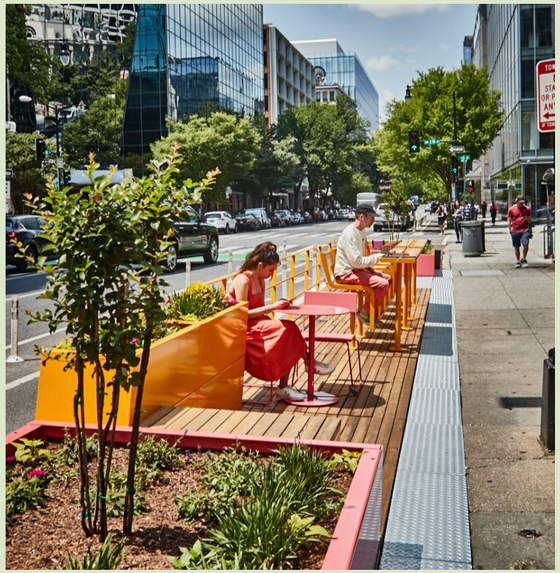
Improvements throughout the street and 3 focus areas:

- Fountain Square
- Staple Oak pub down to Staple Hill Field
- The lanes

- Greenery (trees, planters, green walls)
- Street furniture (seating, tables, shelters)
- Lighting & safety improvements
- Playful interventions
- Paving



Examples:



Colourful parklets, Washington D.C., Livable City Group and Vestre



Playful streets
Thorbjörn Andersson with Sweco architects, Stockholm



Lighting opportunities for lanes: low cost projections



Street furniture to pavements, Bath,
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Potential Building Frontage Improvements

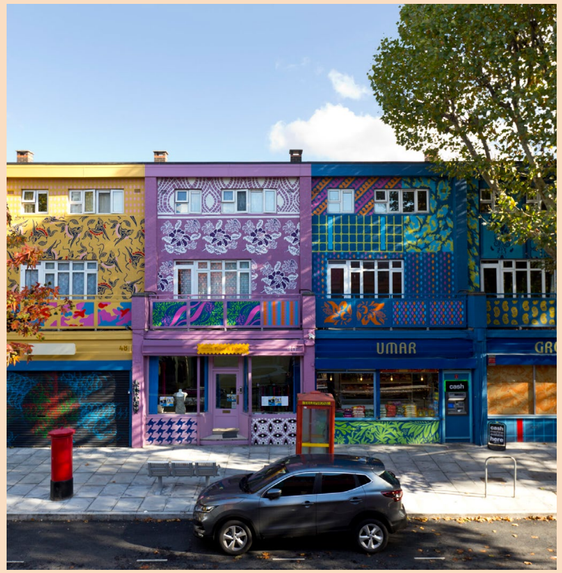
- Cluster improvements at gateways and within focus areas to maximise impact.
- Improve whole parades to maximise impact: balance holistic approach whilst maintaining shop individuality to celebrate diverse and independent Staple Hill shops.
- Focus on key special buildings as well as improving less loved ones.
- Draw out key community assets such as library, Salvation Army, post office.
- Feature lighting to buildings and windows.
- Shopfronts and shutters.
- Building frontages and uppers.



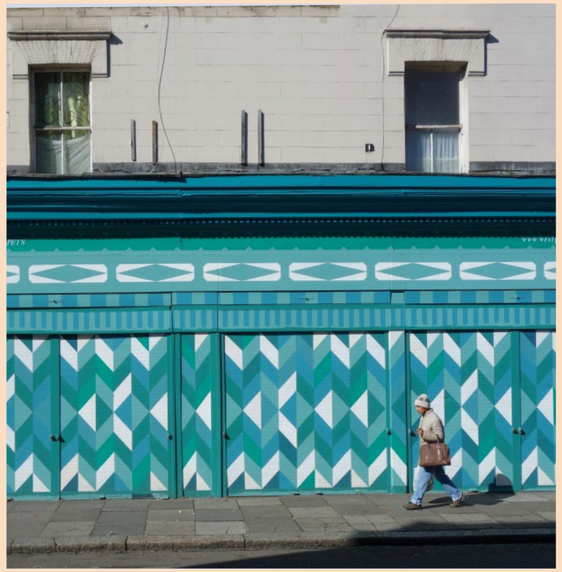
Examples:



Vacant unit exemplar pilot shop funded by Lewisham council within conservation area, YOU&ME Architecture



Lower & upper shopfront improvements, Aberfeldy Street, London, Jan Kattein architects



Welcoming and colourful shutter artworks deter graffiti, Tottenham, YOU&ME Architecture



High & low level shopfront improvements, Thornton Heath High Street, YOU&ME Architecture

Potential Heritage Improvements

- Victorian Shopfronts - high and low level improvements to reflect and restore the character of the Victorian high street
- Restore key heritage buildings
- Improve public realm setting of key heritage buildings
- Highlight key buildings in Staple Hill's history, telling their story through public art trail - industrial history of the WDM building, the old Regal cinema, Victorian pubs and coaching inns, etc.
- Explore options for removable public art installation for locally listed WDM wall, reflecting the history as Staple Hill's tram depot.



Examples:



Staple Hill's Victorian high street, c. 1904, image credit: Ian Bishop



Improving heritage pub settings with new public realm, South End, Croydon, We Made That architects



Enamel hat pin artwork reflecting the area's hat making history, Luton, Tom Pearman and YOU&ME Architecture

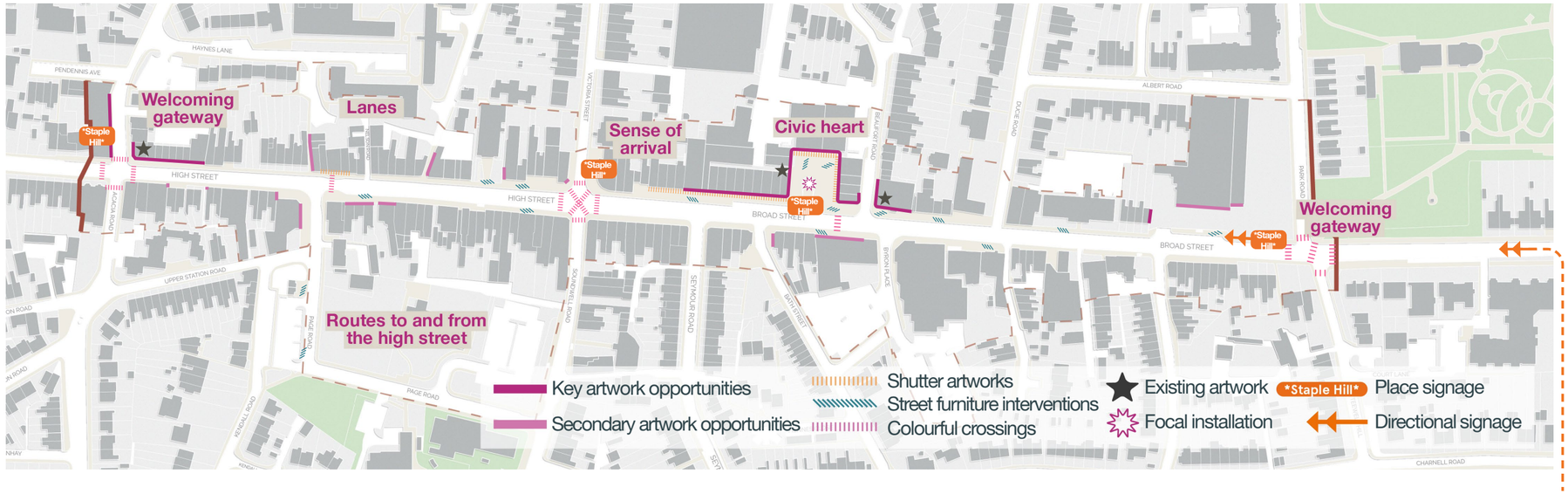


Restoring the character of Victorian Shopfronts Woolwich Heritage Action Zone, YOU&ME Architecture and Turner.Works

Potential Place-making, Local Identity, Public Art & Signage

- Public art (murals, floor graphics, shutter artworks)
- Signage and wayfinding
- Artwork themes to draw on heritage, past and present dynamic to celebrate what makes Staple Hill special
- Add to successful artworks on the high street e.g. Hedgehog mural
- Tap into existing mural festivals, arts trails and public art initiatives

A Public Art Strategy has been developed alongside the Place Plan.



Examples:



Public art celebrating local heritage & wildlife
William Morris mural, Walthamstow, ATMA

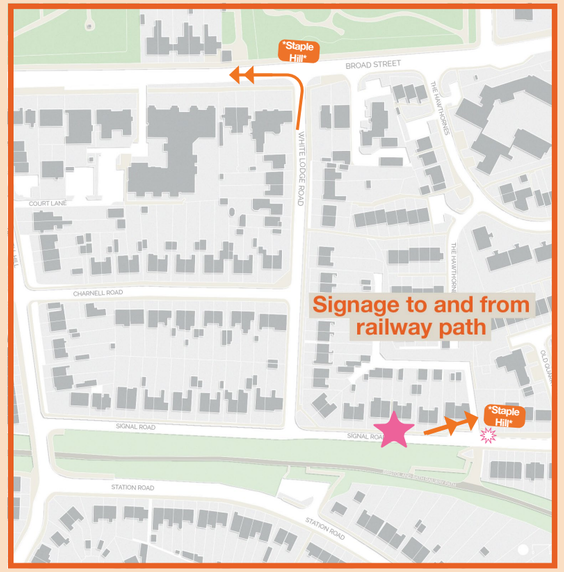


Public art, seating and planting installation,
Bromley High Street, YOU&ME Architecture



Directional signage to high street,
2020 Taiwan Design Expo, Yeh graphic design

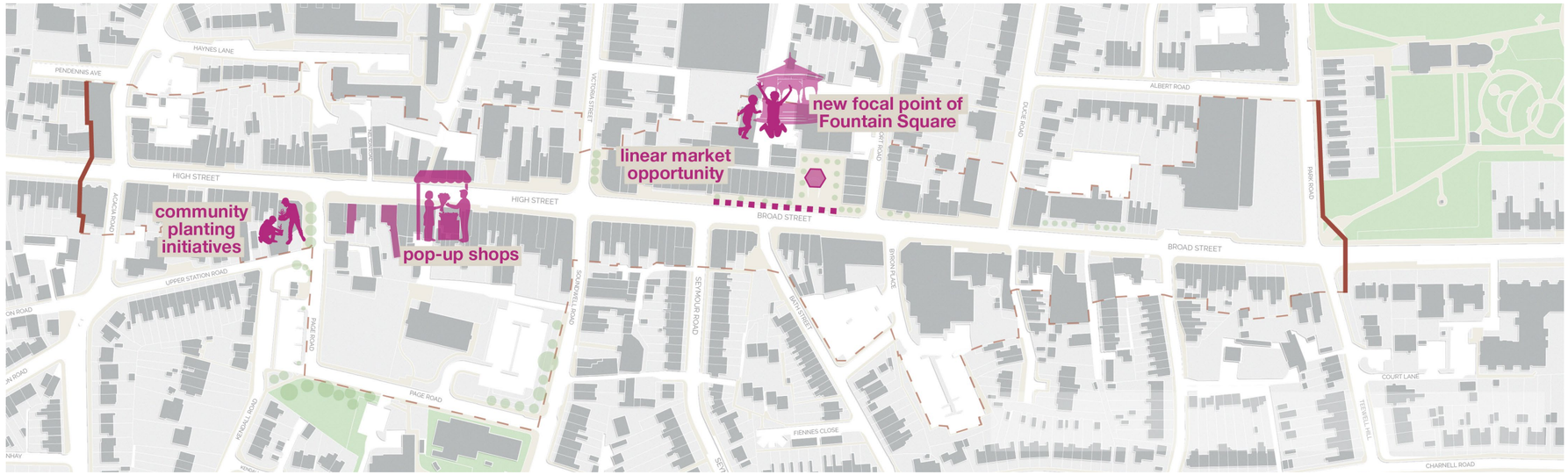
Cycle arrival vision:



Existing standard highways signage to be supplemented with more colourful/creative place signage at key arrival points

Potential Cultural Activation

- Create space for existing and future music and cultural events.
- Link existing local partners and groups to the community through provision of space.Opportunities for community participation in planting or public art, including engaging young people in creative opportunities.
- Pop-up spaces and uses on the high street to encourage repeat visits.
- Opportunity to test ideas through quick win low-cost pop-ups before committing to permanent changes. Use as way to secure future funding.



Examples:



Pavilion on The Green, Edmonton Green, London, Fisher Cheng architects



Linear market opportunity to wider pavements
The Great Bath Feast, Milsom Street, Bath



Playful shelter and focal point
Belonging Bandstand, Morag Myerscough



Community street planting, Derbyshire Street, London, London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council