SITE ANALYSIS

4

5,480m²
Class E
Floorspace

3%
Unit vacancy rate

Increasing Unit Variety
Class E occupancy fell from 77% (2013) to 68% today

Staple Hill high street is a well functioning and popular local centre, playing a vital role in serving the local community and businesses. The high street has a very low vacancy rate of 3%, compared to an average of 13.3% for other town centres and high streets in England. This reflects the resilience of the high street, considering increasing demand from online retailers and challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Currently, there is a strong mix of independent businesses with increasing unit variety alongside larger retailers, allowing the high street to function as a well-used local commercial centre. Data in the Local Plan 2025 indicates that businesses in Staple Hill are going against the trend of other South Gloucestershire town centre Class E units by reducing in unit size since 2016, but having a considerably higher number of units than other nearby commercial centres.

Businesses in Staple Hill are smaller though more diverse, giving the high street an independent character, alongside essential services such as an opticians, dentist and public library.

The combination of low vacancy, varied retail offer and strong community amenities positions the high street as a distinctive and resilient centre within South Gloucestershire, however change and investment are needed to keep the high street functioning to the best of its ability and celebrate the unique history of the area.

The public realm feels dated and lacks accessiblity for all. The greenery of Page Park is not reflected along the length of the high street, and high-quality meeting spaces for a diverse range of users are missing.

A detailed site analysis allows for better understanding of the existing issues and opportunities for enhancement, informing strategies to strengthen Staple Hill's role as a vibrant, sustainable community centre.

Nexus Autumn 2024 land use survey, South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2025

Location	Total Class E(a) Floorspace (gross.)	Total No. Class E(a) Units	2024 Average Class E(a) Unit Size	2016 Average Class E(a)/ A1 Unit Size
Staple Hill	5,480sqm	70	78 sqm	84 sqm
Downend	3,182 sqm	26	122 sqm	116 sqm
Kingswood	8,878 sqm	66	135 sqm	125 sqm

Nexus Autumn 2024 land use survey, from South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2025

Key facade improvement opportunities

The old Regal Cinema
Locally listed former picturehouse, now an International Church.



Pendennis Park Corner
Artwork to corner of key junction.



Staple Hill Methodist Church
Locally listed key community centre since 1874.



The Salvation Army
Key community centre.



Fountain Square
Key node of the high street with community events, requires reactivation.



Staple Hill Library
Important community centre.



WDM Depot
Key to the industrial history of Staple Hill, locally listed former tram depot.





The Staple Hill Oak
Popular pub set on key junction, with four large plane trees adjacent.



The Portcullis
Locally listed pub with a history of over 250 years.



The King William IV
Colourful, traditional Victorian-era pub, locally listed.



The Forge & Fern Pub
Popular locally listed gastropub, renovated and reopened in 2022.



Page Park
Key asset to local community and visitors to the area, marks the end of the high street.

Key buildings of the high street



Elevation A

Locally listed God's House International Centre (formerly the Regal Cinema) has high architectural quality and local significance- needs facade maintenance. Existing metal artwork to the corner of Pendennis Park residential building adds activity to key high street access route, however house facade is of low architectural quality and requires maintenance. Potential for improved quality spill out activity to bakery, restaurants and barbers. Diagonal crossing across Pendennis Road Junction recommended, and pavement rework required due to raised threshold and unused tactile paving by Pendennis Road bus stop.



Elevation B

Narrow pedestrian passages require improvements and present opportunity for artworks to flank wall. Higher quality heritage architecture taken away by poor quality of shopfronts and signage above the original cornice level with no coordination. Garage and hardware low-level shop spill out onto pavement flagged as obstructive and require permanent barrier to boundary to meet accessibility requirements.

Focus area - Fountain Square & Library



Elevation C

Poor architectural quality and activation of Fountain Square requires improvements. Obstruction of fruit shop spill out next to the Portcullis bus stop previously identified in accessibility audit- must be redesigned to keep the existing colour and activity but ensure pavement remains accessible for all. Introduction of more trees along Broad Street could improve overall image of this cluster, but must not obstruct existing highly-used on street parking in front of Fountain Square. Library facade requires maintenance. Opportunity for more seating, greening and spill out activity outside contemporary residential development beside the library. Introduction of new marked dropped kerb and tactile paving to crossing across residential entrance and Ducie Road recommended in accessibility audit.



Elevation D

Historical significance of the locally listed tram depot could be signposted. Signage towards Page Park at the end of the high street and creating a 'green pathway' along the high street towards the park could improve wayfinding. Introduction of new marked dropped kerb crossing across WDM entrance recommended in accessibility audit. Improvements to Teewell Hill bus stop signage and seating required to meet accessibility requirements. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2021 has granted funding for new diagonal crossing by Page Park.

Locally Listed Building
Accessibility Issue*
Spill out activity potential
Vacant unit

* Raised in CAE Audit





Elevation E

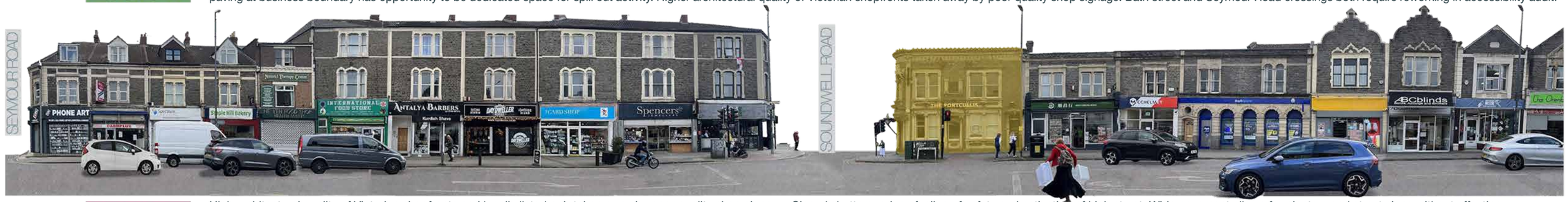
Existing raised paving at business boundary is uneven and unmarked- currently dominated by trade bins, but has opportunity for business spill out activity. Low architectural quality of shop cluster would benefit from high-level painting to improve setting of locally listed Forge & Fern pub. Step obstructing thoroughfare by Hodgson Kearney.

Focus area - Opposite Fountain Square & Library



Elevation F

York Road crossing requires dropped kerbs and tactile paving. High architectural quality of locally listed pub could be enhanced with outdoor seating spill out which is currently used as car parking. Pavement spill out from furniture shop is also vehicle dominated. Raised paving at business boundary has opportunity to be dedicated space for spill out activity. Higher architectural quality of Victorian shopfronts taken away by poor quality shop signage. Bath street and Seymour Road crossings both require reworking in accessibility audit.



Elevation G

High architectural quality of Victorian shopfronts and locally listed pub taken away by poor quality shop signage. Closed shutters reduce feeling of safety and activation of high street. Wide pavement allows for planters and street signs without affecting accessibility. Raised kerb outside 'Phone Art' is not accessible and obstructs pavement. Arrival from Soundwell Road is first impression of high street for those arriving by bus and important connection to Staple Hill Primary School.



Elevation H

Locally listed building with vacant unit and covered portico requires reactivation. Lower architectural quality of post-war unit would be enhanced by street planting in front. The Staple Hill Wetherspoons pub has busy and successful outdoor seating.

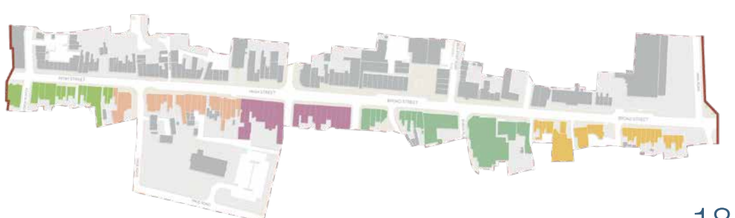


Elevation I

Raised unmarked kerb that splits the pavement from Wetherspoons along to Vaccentre is an important accessibility issue. Existing planter outside Staple Hill news obstructs thoroughfare minimum width. Existing historic ghostsign to side of 'Dollz' currently partially covered by advertisements but could become important part of identity narrative. Poorly maintained facade of Old Mail House pub needs improvement, with strong opportunity to have quality outdoor seating.

Locally Listed Building
Accessibility Issue*
Spill out activity potential
Vacant unit

* Raised in CAE Audit





Existing street spill out activity and street furniture



1 The Old Mail House- opportunity to improve outdoor space & seating.



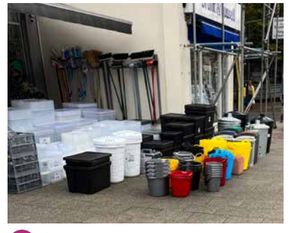
2 Covered seating outside bakery has potential for more activation.



3 Successful pub spill-out space and seating.



4 Unused spill-out space outside barbers.



5 Spill-out onto pavement of hardware shop.



6 Fruit shop & cafe spill out creates activity/activation along Broad Street.



7 Opportunity to improve cafe seating and increase spill-out into the square.



8 Good quality pavement signage.



9 Vehicles and trade bins dominate pavement space outside pub and furniture shop.



10 Good quality outdoor seating of the Forge & Fern pub.

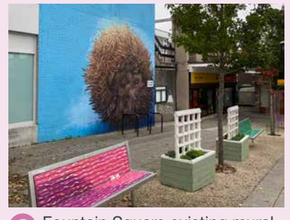
Existing Public Art



A Installation to the corner of Pendennis Park House.



B Historic ghostsign to the side of building.



C Fountain Square existing mural and colourful benches.



D Fountain Square painted steps.



E Facade decoration of library.



Existing night activity & lighting



1 Standard street lights on the high street



2 Successful festoon lighting by Staple Hill Oak pub



3 Prattens lane with single overhead light



4 Nelson Road lane has only a single light at residential entrance



5 Passage through from Berkeley Road only lit by overlooking windows



6 Illuminated signs and open shops add life and light to the high street



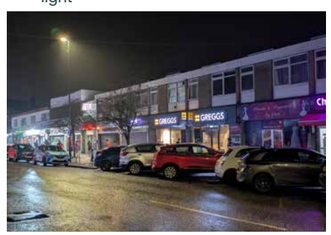
7 Closed shutters and unlit Victorian portico



8 Page Road has very dark areas around the WC and car park



9 Standard street lighting on the high street



10 Broad St parade has many closed shutters and standard lighting



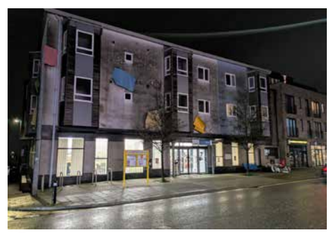
11 Dark Fountain Square



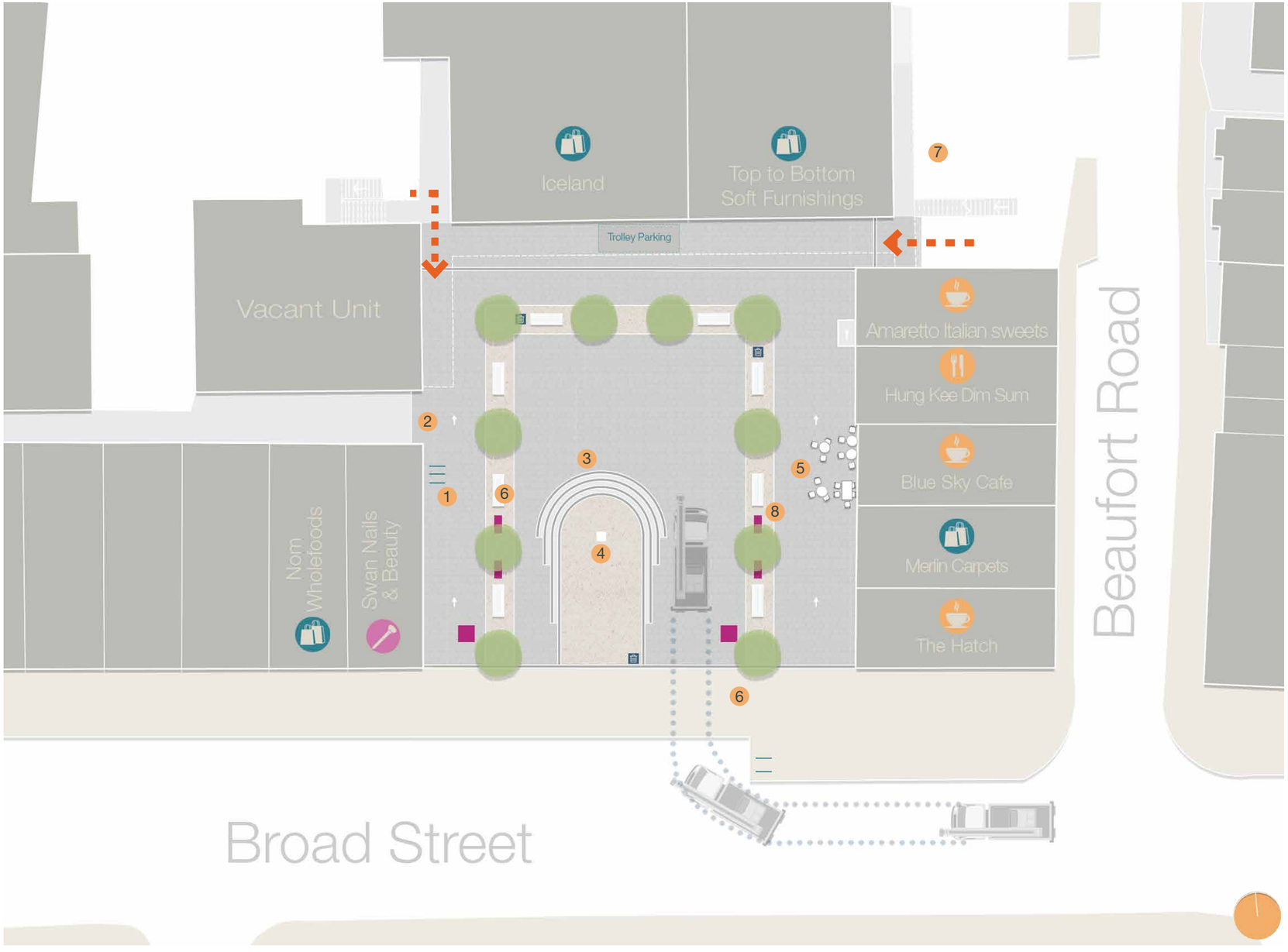
12 Dark passages to Fountain Square and closed shutters



13 Gym provides some light for the street



14 The library provides light only at ground floor level

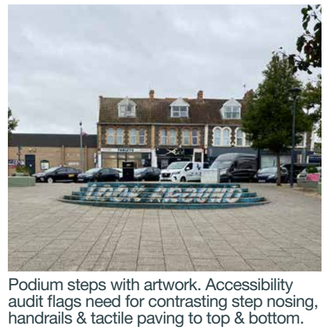


1

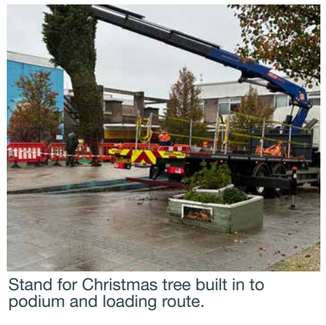

Existing cycle parking- no provision for accessible cycles and flagged as obstructing pedestrian thoroughfare in audit.

2

Hedgehog mural commissioned 2021, by artist 'Whoamirony' as part of Upfest Urban Paint Festival.

3


Podium steps with artwork. Accessibility audit flags need for contrasting step nosing, handrails & tactile paving to top & bottom.

4

Stand for Christmas tree built in to podium and loading route.

5

Poor quality seating and low activation of cafe spill out.

6


Existing signage on Fountain Square.

7


Site for development of 3 HMO units to existing private parking/loading area. Square access to be retained but lower levels of passive surveillance.

8

Existing colourful benches good quality and valued, wooden planters in need of repair.

Fountain Square analysis

Fountain Square currently lacks identity and activation, leaving it feeling underused and empty. The square currently has efforts to increase greening and the ability to host community events, however redevelopment could increase the popularity and use of Fountain Square.