

**Castle Square
Preliminary Development, Public Realm and
Marketing Brief**

**Swansea Council
October 2017**

2.0 Background

Swansea is the regional capital of South West Wales. The city itself is uniquely located on the coastline of the eastern end of the 5 mile sweep of Swansea Bay and at the mouth of the River Tawe. Swansea, along with Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, is part of the Swansea Bay City Region. The vision for the region is for South West Wales as a confident, ambitious and connected European City Region, by 2030. To achieve this, the Swansea Bay City Region Board will focus on delivering their Economic Regeneration Strategy and continue to engage with business and other interested parties.

The City and County of Swansea has a population of approximately 240,300 people but a total of approximately 550,000 living within a 30 minute drive time of the city. An estimated 1.5 million people live within an hour's drive.

The natural environment in the area includes the highly attractive and distinctive character of the Gower Peninsula (the UK's First Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), and the wider catchment area of the city comprises rural areas of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, with a number of important local towns, such as Neath, Port Talbot, Llanelli and Carmarthen.

Swansea has recently benefitted from a number of key redevelopment projects in and around the city, which have significantly changed the urban environment and perceptions. These include High Street Urban Village, Castle Street Coastal development, significant growth in student accommodation projects and a number of grant funded refurbishment projects that bring vacant urban space back into use. There are a further series of landmark transformational projects underway including the Swansea Central development granted outline permission in 2017, along with a proposed Arena project and City Waterfront development. The Council is leading the regeneration of the Kingsway area, with a focus on creation of a Digital Village with good quality office space and housing. A transformational public realm scheme will simplify and rebalance the Central area's highway network, providing safer spaces for pedestrians set within a new greener environment presenting a high quality environment for living and working.

Castle Square lies at the heart of the Central Area being a stepping stone between the Kingsway, Swansea Central and the City's Waterfront. It is the focal point within the City centre, an important 'place' in the City, overlooked by the landmark Swansea castle. There is an important opportunity to enhance the Square, to raise its quality and to make it a contemporary new public space, in line with other investment taking place in the City. This will happen in partnership with the private sector to deliver a modern, functional and well maintained public space.



3.0 Site Description and Context

Castle Square is owned and maintained by the City and County of Swansea. It is a nodal space located between the City's historic Castle and Oxford Street, the City's main shopping street. It is located to the North of Wind Street, and has a pivotal position in the City centre linking High Street and the Castle to the Quadrant Shopping Centre, St Marys Square and the location of the proposed new Swansea Central development (Plan 1). However whilst there are positive levels of pedestrian flows around the edges of Castle Square, the public space itself is lightly used due to a lack of events, and the perceived hard and dated public realm.

The Square is built into a 4m slope between the Castle and Princess Way and dates from post war clearance when it was originally laid out as a floral garden. It was enhanced in the 1990's and the fall in gradient from NE to SW is accommodated by three levels of terraces linked by two banks of steps. Elevated grassed areas, and semi mature trees surround the space to the south and south west.

The 1990's scheme incorporates seating, a water feature with standing water pool, cascade and fountain, interpretation panels, a large TV screen and is often a focus for events. The Square is the largest public space in the City centre, and has a central location and a significant role as a place where the city comes together to demonstrate or celebrate is important. However, Castle Square has become tired and dated in its appearance and is not used always used positively or to its full potential.

Wind Street and Castle Street immediately to the East and South East of the Square have a vibrant night time economy. Local and national chains food and drink companies have outlets in these areas, and promote high levels of evening footfall. Outlets such as Turtle Bay, Pizza Express, Las Iguanas, Mc. Donald's face the Square and further investment proposals for café bar restaurants are being implemented in the area.

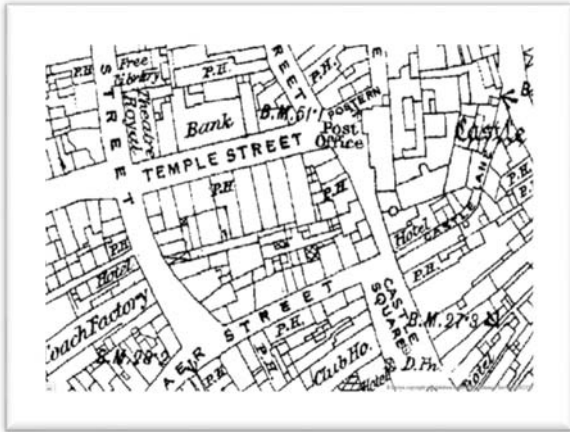


Plan 1: Location of Castle Square



Heritage Context

Castle Square falls predominantly within the historic Wind Street Conservation Area. The Square also forms the setting for Swansea Castle which is a grade I Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. Wind Street itself is also one of the City's best preserved historic streets where there are a number of buildings date from pre 1900.



This area was historically part of the Swansea Castle courtyard and was partially enclosed by defensive walls of which no trace remains in the space itself. Prior to the Second World War the Square was an urban block of Victorian buildings bounded by streets. In the post war period the buildings were cleared and a green space created known as Castle Gardens, a traditional urban landscaped park. This park was then remodelled and enhanced as a largely hard landscaped modern space with a large water feature to form Castle Square in 1994/5.

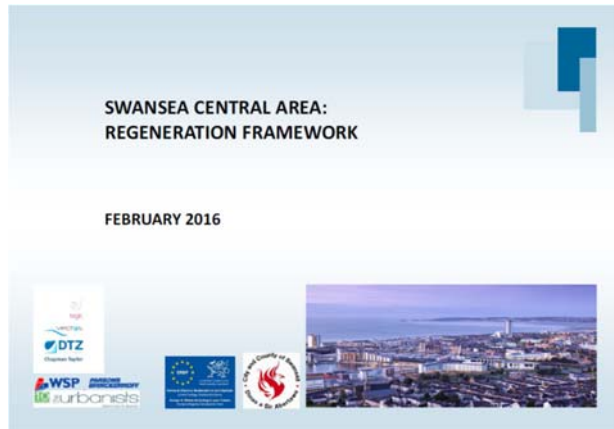


4.0 Planning Policy Context

Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (2016)

The Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (SCARF) was adopted by City and County of Swansea in February 2016. This indicates how consideration should be given to enhancing and refreshing Castle Square, and reconfiguring it to allow it to better integrate adjacent areas such as the space around the Castle and Princess Way.

It recognises that there is an opportunity to fundamentally change the environment of the Square to one which is more useable, supports activity and interest and responds positively to the setting of the Castle. As part of the Vision for the Central Area the creation of a 'Green Artery' and Green Infrastructure are key themes. The Framework highlights the importance of creating a network of high quality spaces forming 'stepping stones' that link together existing and proposed areas of activity.



Swansea Unitary Development Plan (2008)

Policies EV1 Design, indicates that new development shall accord with a range of specified objectives of good design

Policy EV3 Accessibility sets out requirements for meeting criteria relating to access for all, high quality public realm for a range of users

Policy EV4 Public Realm where development impacts on the public realm designs should ensure that schemes integrate with areas to produce spaces and sequences that result in quality townscape and building frontages that actively engage with the public, are of a human scale and provide effective surveillance resulting in spaces that are 'people friendly', and provide attractive detail through the use of high quality durable materials

Policy EV5 Art requires the provision of public works of art or other features to enhance the identity and interest of major new development or refurbishment schemes will be supported

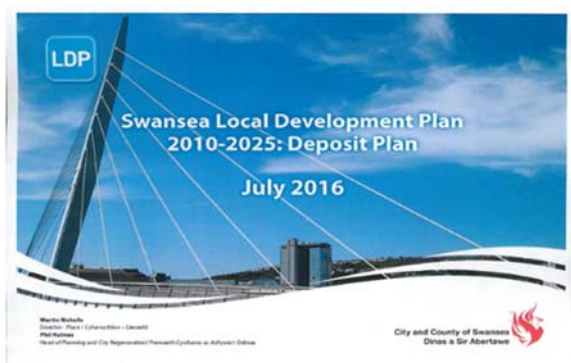
Policy EV6 seeks to protect, preserve and enhance Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings

Policy CC5 The design of all new development schemes will be required to make a positive contribution to enhancing the City centre's environment. A programme of improvements will be implemented and where appropriate developer contributions will be sought.

Swansea Local Development Plan: Deposit Plan (2016)

The Swansea Local Development Deposit Plan (LDP) Policy SD J: Swansea Central Area makes specific reference also to the enhancement and reconfiguration of the Square. The LDP also highlights how Place Making is a cornerstone of the national planning agenda and sustainable development objectives.

Policy PS2- Placemaking and Place Management is of relevance to the consideration of future options for the Square and states that development must enhance the quality of places, and respond positively to aspects of local context and character that contribute towards a sense of place. The policy also highlights how the design, layout and orientation of spaces, must provide for an attractive, legible and safe environment and ensure no significant adverse impacts would be caused to people's amenity.



The City and County of Swansea Open Space Assessment Report was presented to Cabinet in January 2017 and provides a framework for well-located sport, recreation and leisure facilities. The outputs from this Assessment has directly informed the preparation of the Swansea Local Development Deposit Plan policies by identifying specific surpluses or deficiencies in open space provision. The study concludes that in areas of limited open space, the creation of new open space is encouraged and that existing spaces are retained and improved where possible. As an area of public realm, the Square fulfils an important role in the City Centre for incidental amenity and potentially activity, events, recreation and play.

5.0 KEY OBJECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCMENT

A preliminary public consultation exercise has been undertaken to publicise the potential disposal of public open space at Castle Square during 2016. A subsequent appraisal and an analysis of key themes led to the identification of a number of key objectives for a new development within part of Castle Square and the enhancement of its public realm.

- **There is an opportunity to introduce an element of commercial activity into the Square in the form of restaurant units/ food kiosks with external seating. The type, quantum and location of uses should complement the Central Area and the new Swansea Central development, and must not compromise the functionality of Castle Square as the focal public space for the City.**
- **Any new building/s and public realm enhancements must be of a high quality design and sustainable, and should complement Swansea's Central Area, and its heritage and create well designed linkages to the surrounding area including in particular the Castle. The scheme should also secure improvement of the connection and integration of St. Marys Square and Church areas.**
- **The Castle Square space needs to work as a destination throughout the year, and be practical for events, commercial, seasonal, cultural opportunities and play and activity. There should be no net loss of useable public space.**
- **The design of the scheme should adopt an overall principle of retaining and enhancing public access and contributing to a "greener Central Area", and any proposal should not result in the net loss of useable public open space.**
- **The development and public realm proposals must be designed and implemented comprehensively. Commercial development without public realm enhancement will not be acceptable.**

Development Principles

5. 1 Location and Form of the Development Opportunity

The Castle Square space presents a significant opportunity for the introduction of an element of commercial activity linked to public realm enhancements with the aim of increasing the feeling of vitality, create a destination and increase City centre dwell time. This should take the form of an appropriately designed and located commercial restaurant unit of approximately 200sqm footprint. with external seating.

There are a number of fundamental principles in terms of location of any new commercial units and their relationship with public space:

- It is important the proposed use and quantum of development at this location complements and does not compete with the Central area and proposed new developments at Swansea Central.
- The northern and eastern side of the Square are considered to be the most attractive locations for the restaurant as this location will benefit from the best south facing aspect. However, the current terrace arrangement requires substantial ground works to make best possible use of the space and in order to create units which have an aspect overlooking the Square. Given the historical setting of the site, archaeological investigations will be required to confirm the feasibility.
- Castle Square is the most important public space in Swansea City Centre, and any new units should complement the civic use of the space in terms of events, and not result in the net loss of public space. The development of new commercial units within Castle Square must ensure its continued role as an important public space in Swansea, and commercial activity should not dominate the public realm. Ideally a minimum area in the order of 1800 sqm should be retained for open useable space for events and activity.
- The units should benefit from external seating in the Square, but this should not detract from useable public space or free movement of pedestrians following desire lines through the space.
- Any new units should have 'active frontages' on all public elevations. The challenge is to avoid 'back' elevations to pavilion buildings that are public on all sides.
- Unit location and orientation should respect important views and vistas- There are key views to the Square along the approach streets especially Oxford Street and view from the square that give the location a distinct sense of place. These contextual views include the dramatic juxtaposition between the medieval Swansea Castle and the modern BT tower, plus the view to St Marys Square.



Development Opportunity: Indicative location.

The space could also accommodate a limited number of smaller kiosk units. Currently there is a significant growth in street food as an event within the public realm and further creates activity and interest which can be rotated to provide regular variety in food experiences and a seasonal dimension. The proposed tenant mix should complement rather than directly compete with the existing and emerging provision. The street food kiosks could be a temporary or public art feature, but standard units should be resisted.

5.2 Building Design and Materials

The overall design for the new buildings /pavilion structure (s) must be high quality and contemporary in design whilst being sensitive to the Square's historic setting and links with the surrounding area. The design and materials should be sustainable, easily managed, effectively maintained and adaptable.

The proximity to the Wind Street Conservation area will mean that there are significant quality tests for any new development in terms of the 'preserve or enhance test'. However this does not mean that there is a requirement for traditional building designs. Castle Square is a modern public space next to modern shopping streets and any new building within the space should be contemporary yet sensitive to the areas' heritage aspects.

5.3 Public Space: Function and Role

Castle Square is Swansea's Civic Space; it is the focal point for events, celebrations and gatherings. It should remain as publically accessible open space, that is open to all, and be enhanced and adapted so that it remains flexible enough for a multitude of uses.

Castle Square needs to be practical for play, seating and informal activities throughout the year and supplemented by a programme of commercial, seasonal and cultural events.

The public realm must encourage people to use the space in a positive way, aim to increase dwell time and be inclusive and welcoming. The space must be of high quality, multigenerational and accessible for all.



Informal integrated public seating

There is potential for the current space to be far more user friendly, to have a wider appeal for families and young children work as a destination alongside the retail function and to be far more practical for

events. The enhancement of the space, increased footfall and usage in turn makes it more appealing to commercial and cultural opportunities.

Opportunities for play, activity, and public art can activate the space and provide animation. The space needs to work as a destination year round not just for events. Many cities are designing multi functioning civic spaces, with water features that can be switched on and off, where the space can be left dry and level allowing for play and events use in the space. A more intensive day to day management of the space such as an events programme and street performance pitches may also be required to support an enhanced range of activity and facilities.

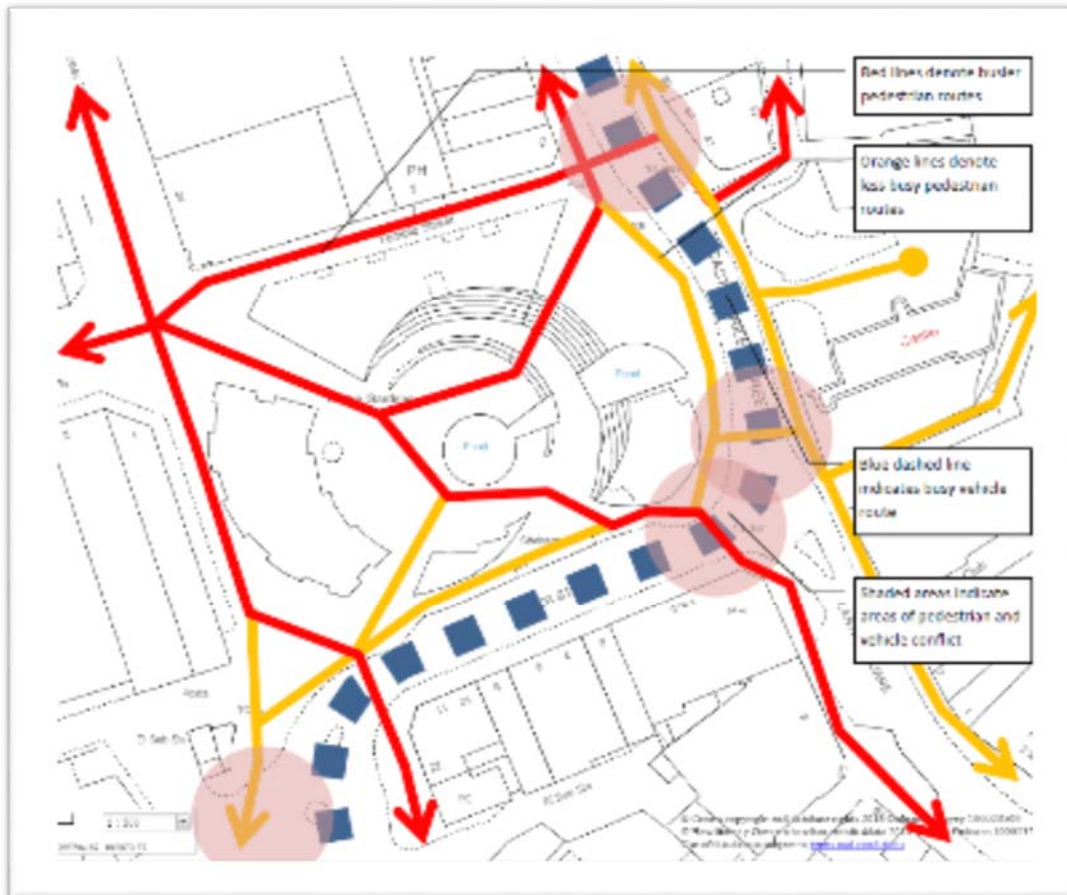
Specific requirements for the Public Realm:

- Minimum space requirements for events (1,800 sqm)
- Minimum capacity for public informal seating (3,000). Informal seating should be designed in a format which is integrated within the new public realm is preferred to free standing street furniture.
- Playful/interactive water feature.
- Provision of access for all between all levels.
- Greening no net loss of trees or useable greenspace.
- Power sockets.

5.4 Public Space: Design, Movement and Accessibility

Castle Square is a nodal space within the Central Area that performs an important linking function for pedestrians. The public realm enhancement of the Square needs to be designed in a way it is better integrated with its surroundings and the rest of the Central area, and must encourage people to use the space in a positive way and increase dwell time. Any re configuration of the Square should also retain the pattern of key perimeter streets which separate the Square from the surrounding buildings.

The Square is physically and functionally separated from adjacent areas and commercial frontages by busy vehicular traffic routes to the South (Caer Street) and East (Castle Bailey Street). The changes in level across the Square (from east to west) in some parts exceeds more than 4 metres, which means that accessibility for some is limited. Recent public realm improvements directly around the frontage of the Castle and adjacent courtyard have considerably enhanced its appearance and use as public space in recent years, and the improvement of the linkage between the Castle and Castle Square will be a particular challenge for an enhanced Castle Square.



Plan 2: Key Movement routes within and around the Square.

Castle Square is relatively close to St Marys Square and together they are two of the most significant areas of public space in the City Centre. They are also stepping stones on the route from the City Centre to the waterfront via the emerging Swansea central development. At present the link between Castle Square and St Marys Square are severely compromised by highway infrastructure, bus turning areas, taxis, Blue badge parking and a lack of active building frontage (the corner site of the electricity sub-station). With new proposed developments at Swansea Central, and the Arena the centre of gravity for footfall in Swansea changing, and the environment between Castle Square and St. Mary's Square will become important link to these key shopping and leisure destinations.

To facilitate the better integration of Castle Square and St Marys Square some significant changes need to be made to the infrastructure in this area by considering a more compact bus turning/roundabout, reducing street furniture clutter and more sensitively integrating or relocating some of the transport functions to other appropriate Central area locations. In the context of improving the integration between the respective public spaces, any new proposals in Castle Square should have regard to the emerging proposals for Swansea Central and its direct interface with St

Marys (see Public Realm Strategy outline planning application ref 2017/0648).



Plan 3: Indicative plan showing linkages between Castle Square and St. Marys Church

5.5 Public Space: Design and Materials/specification

The insertion of commercial units into Castle Square must form part of a comprehensive project that enhances the public space to provide an attractive and high quality destination that enhances the overall environment.

As the Square sits at the heart of the medieval city and part of the space lies within the historic former Castle courtyard, the design could reflect this strong historic association. The design and materials should be sustainable, easily managed, effectively maintained and adaptable.

The specification for the public realm will need to include the infrastructure to enable events, such as power sockets, water supply and potentially a big screen. The big screen is currently situated in the south west corner of the square but could potentially be relocated within the square or elsewhere in the city centre if required.

The current water feature incorporating pools, cascade and fountain cannot be used interactively, and its current format precludes the use of much of the space for events. Therefore the insertion of

commercial units should ensure that the water feature is re configured potentially in a similar manner to the Bradford Mirror pool where water jets can be used for play and switched off for use as an events space.

There is a lack of play provision within Swansea's Central Area for both visitors and residents. Whilst an equipped play area may not be appropriate in Castle Square, the public realm design must encourage playful /interactive use of the space whilst discouraging inappropriate anti-social behaviour.

Street furniture should be of a contemporary design, stainless steel and consistent with existing street furniture design and formats in accordance with current guidance and best practice. Informal seating in particular should be incorporated and integrated within the design of the public realm where possible, though there will also be opportunities for freestanding seating within the public space.

Public Art- Proposals should allow for the integration of appropriate permanent and temporary display of public art. These might include feature lighting, sculptural shelters, signage and way finding. Further consideration will need to be given to the best mechanism for implementing public art.

5.6 Contributing towards a Greener City Centre- Proposals for new development and public realm enhancement should not result in the net loss of useable greenspace and any proposals for the Square should contribute to a greener City centre.

The Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (SCARF, 2016) promotes the theme of a connecting green artery through the Central Area. A network of spaces within the Central Area improves the amenity value and quality of life for residents and contribute positively to creating an attractive destination space for visitors. This will be achieved through proposals to provide new space, but also for enhancing existing areas of public space such as Castle Square.

Castle Square contains a number of mature and semi mature trees which make a significant contribution to the visual softening of the hard landscaped Square, and provide a sense of enclosure to the large space. Trees add shade shelter, colour character and distinctiveness to the public space as well as providing air quality mitigation benefits in urban areas. There is scope for some selective removal, thinning and crown raising for existing trees around the Temple Street and Princess Way frontages to the Square. Appropriate new planting should be undertaken to ensure that there is no net loss of trees and appropriate species should be used and should accord with relevant guidance (CIRIA).



Plan 4: Existing trees and greenspace

Large areas of Castle Square currently comprise of lawned grass but the grass areas are very rarely used because they are slightly elevated above street level, enclosed by low walls, and not very visible nor accessible. These areas have considerable potential to increase the usable space and change perceptions of the Square, especially if they can be lowered to ground level and be made accessible for all.

Lawned level grass can provide opportunities for informal seating and activity. Areas of informal planting wildflowers can also provide opportunity for biodiversity and visual interest. The use of native species can add to biodiversity value and reduce maintenance.

6.0 Servicing, Infrastructure and Maintenance Considerations

6.1 Service Utilities.-The developer will need to obtain information from the appropriate statutory undertakers in respect of existing service routes and to establish that the appropriate service levels can be made available to meet the requirements of any particular development scheme. It is also important to ensure that there are no existing service arrangements which could cause an impediment to the development or enhancement scheme.

6.2 Servicing- The units will need to receive deliveries and also accommodate maintenance visits. Deliveries should take place overnight or early morning, and daytime and evening deliveries should be avoided as they will be disruptive to users of the square and the restaurants' customers. These conditions will need to be inserted into the leases with the operators.

Vehicular access to the square should be limited by a controlled barrier, either be powered or manual but the intention would be to only have it lowered to permit deliveries. Hostile vehicle mitigation measures will need to be appropriately sited, designed and integrated.

The choice of paving materials and the square layout needs to take account of heavy delivery vehicles. Alternatively the units could be located close to a road side servicing bay, at side of the square, with no vehicular access permitted except in emergencies.

Within the actual units, tenants will want a service entrance separate to the customer entrance so that supplies and waste are not transported through the front of house. This dictates that one façade of the units should be either non-trading or have limited customer frontage.

7.0 Additional Information

7.1 Design submissions and Supporting Information

- Draft Design and Access Statement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Drawings and Sections

7.2 Relevant guidance and best practice

- Planning for Community Safety
- Manual for Streets (2007) (2010)
- Active Travel Plan (2009)
- Pavements are for People