

Emsworth - North Street Urban Design Considerations



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Introduction

Emsworth is located on the east side of Havant Borough at the boundary of West Sussex and Chichester District Councils. It's southern edge is adjacent to the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Emsworth is an historic coastal village. The town now is an important tourism and recreational destination, owing to its picturesque townscape and harbour, old mill ponds, and sailing and maritime activities. Emsworth currently has an ageing population perception, but projected demographic changes indicates an increase in the number of new young households which will further impact on health and education provision. There is already pressure on primary health services.

Emsworth is well connected to the surrounding towns and villages via railway and bus services. It is a busy and vibrant large village owing to a wide variety of specialist shops and independent retailers which enhance its unique local identity.

North Street is located to the north of the A259, the old coastal road and is connected to the High Street by a roundabout junction. It is an important routeway to Rowlands Castle, Horndean, Westbourne and to other towns and villages in Hampshire and West Sussex.

There are no site-specific policies for North Street in the Core Strategy or Local Plan Allocations. However, Policy CS4 Town, District and Local Centres in the Core Strategy indicates that planning permission will be granted for appropriate town centre development proposals within Emsworth District Centre. Additionally, The Borough Design Guide SPD supplements Policy CS16 of the Havant Borough Core Strategy aims to raise the standard

of design across the borough. It identifies the Emsworth Design Statement (2008) as a document to be referred with regard to new development to identify and define the distinctive character and qualities of the village that should be respectfully improved and enhanced through development. It was agreed with the group that whilst this is a sound document, it is more of a baseline statement of what they value, character areas and local vernacular and that it would be useful for the Neighbourhood Plan to move this on into something more via an urban design exercise which show how the Village Design Statement might be applied.

Furthermore, the retail frontages on North Street are identified as "Secondary Frontages" in Appendix 4: Policies Map in Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations), July 2014 and indicated in Policy AL3 Town, District and Local Centres - 4. *Retain at least 25% of the units in an unbroken run of secondary frontage as defined on the Policies Map in retail (A1) use.*

As part of the Supporting Communities Programme AECOM is funded to work with the Emsworth Neighbourhood Planning Forum, focusing on urban design issues, & site opportunities that will inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

This document provides guidance on how North Street can be improved to become a high-quality and vibrant destination and local amenity space. The brief will also follow the Forum's aspirations and policies for the North Street area.



Aerial view of Emsworth - North Street

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Site Analysis

North Street is located at the southern part of Emsworth Village and runs in a north-south direction between the railway line and the junction of the High Street and the A259. It became an important street in the middle of the 19th century within the village especially following the construction of St James Church and Emsworth Railway Station. The historic 19th century buildings fronting the street reflect the northward growth pattern of the village from the 19th century onwards.

The North Street area was historically directly connected to the High Street which is the primary shopping location of the village. However, with the arrival of the A259 short bypass in 1970s, North Street was separated from the old town. Today this separation severely effects the North Street area limiting easy north-south movements of the residents and visitors throughout the village.

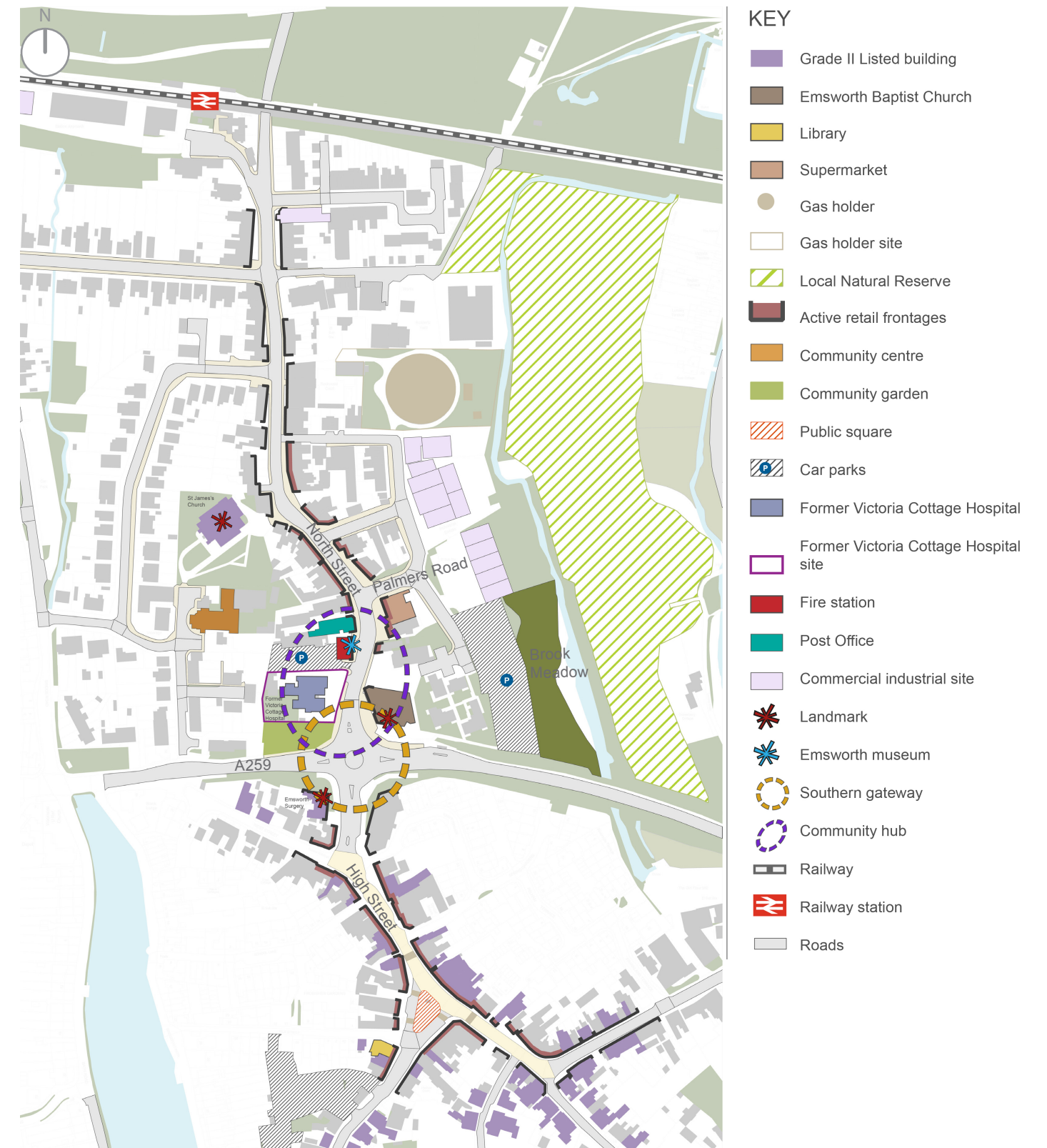
North Street has a strong mixed-use character accommodating a variety of shops, services and community uses. The majority of the important community buildings and spaces are mainly located at the southern part of the road creating a small-scale community 'hub'. The garden to the south of the former Victoria Cottage Hospital which is owned and maintained by the Friends of Emsworth Community Health is an important asset within the area. However currently it has a limited access and it is not regularly used by the residents. The recently-constructed Emsworth Baptist Church opposite the garden heavily dominates the character of the gateway. The fire station building is one of the most attractive historic buildings of the street and it is also visible from this gateway. Emsworth Museum which is another important community asset on North Street is located at the first floor of the fire station building.

The shops and services fronting North Street are mostly clustered at south to middle of the street. The independent shops on the ground floors of the historic cottages and buildings contribute positively to the street's unique character. There is a good variety in terms of types of shops and services which makes North Street a lively retail destination. The more recent arrival of new restaurants has started increasing the night time economy on the street.

North Street has a changing built character throughout its length. The northern section has an enclosed character where it is fronted primarily by two storeys Victorian Houses. The enclosed character of the street becomes stronger when the middle section of the street is approached from the north due to the curvature of the road. There are a number of old cottages at this section contributing to the unique historic character of North Street. Towards the south of the road especially starting from Palmer's Road junction, this sense of enclosure and character fades as the carriageway widens towards the roundabout.

There is a small-scale industrial area located within North Street area between Palmers Road and Brook Meadow. There is also a gas holder within this area which is to be removed in the near future, allowing for likely regeneration to provide more housing which in turn will boost the local shops.

There is however currently no prominent and accessible public space provided along North Street apart from the pavements. There is a lack of clear pedestrian connections between the community centre, the garden, church and Brook Meadow, and the southern half of the village. The north-south traffic is usually busy and fast, and there is only one pedestrian crossing provided. At some sections the footpath is narrow and the general public realm quality is low.



Emsworth - North Street site analysis plan

Emsworth - North Street Urban Design Considerations

Opportunities

The North Street area is slowly reviving and attracting more businesses and visitors, and a neighbourhood plan could help to accelerate this process. The former Victoria Cottage Hospital site currently holds significant importance as the largest potential regeneration site fronting North Street. The site is in a dominant location and any new development on this site will strongly impact the character of the southern gateway. The derelict site is favoured by the local community to be redeveloped to accommodate the relocation of Emsworth Surgery. Keeping this site for community provision will help to preserve and enhance significantly the existing community hub function and provide the North Street Quarter with a new and important role vis-a-vis the wider community.

Former Victoria Cottage Hospital site covers approximately 1,650 square metre (sqm) land. The following options for the redevelopment of the land are created on the basis of a scenario to accommodate a 500 sqm footprint building, car-parking and landscaping on the site:

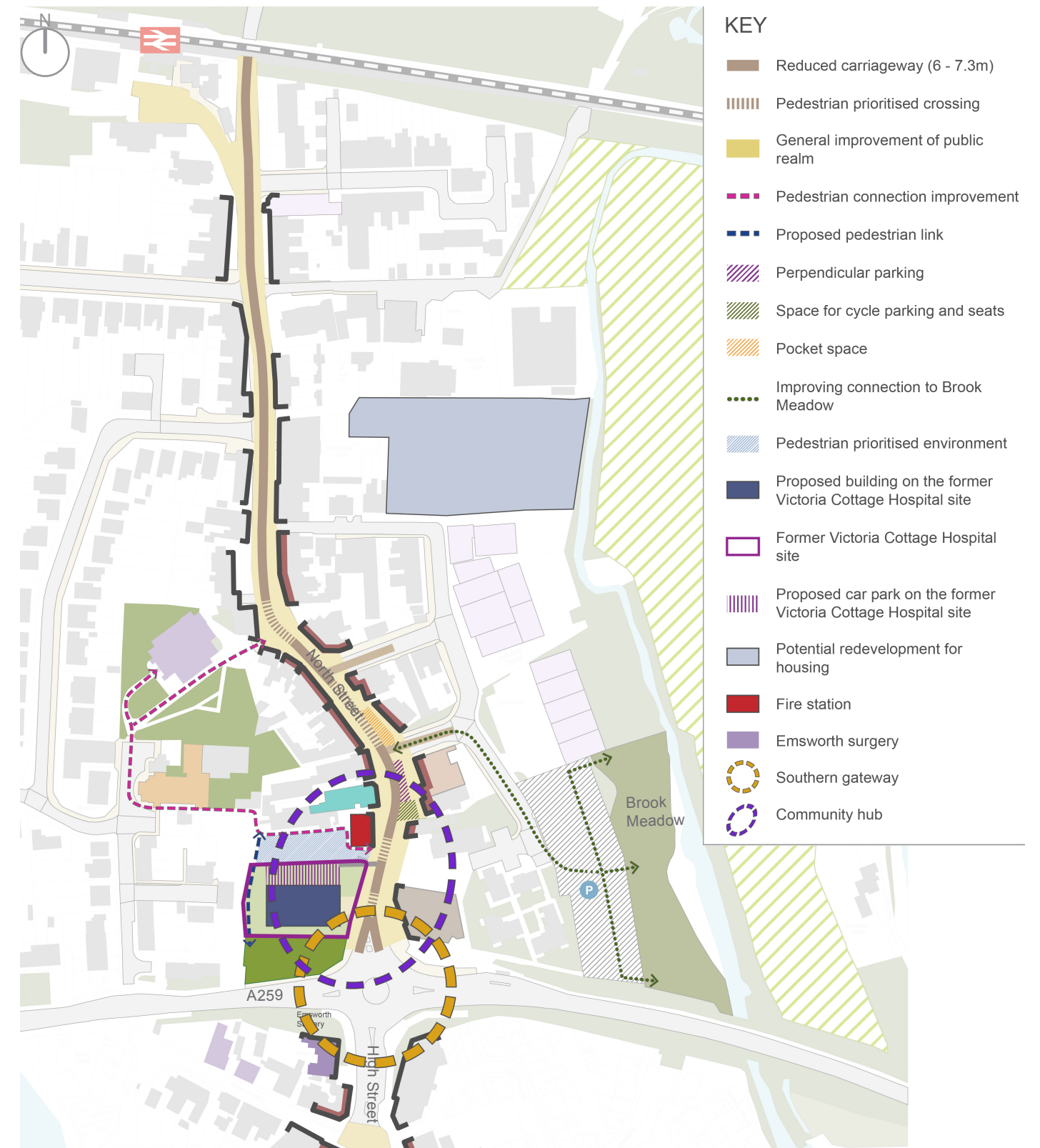
Option 1 - develop a 2.5 storey building to house Emsworth Surgery providing gross 1,250 sqm floor space.

Option 2 - develop a 3 storey building providing 1,000 sqm floor space for Emsworth Surgery and 500 sqm floor space for community healthcare provision.

Option 3 - develop a 3.5 storey building providing 1,000 sqm floor space for Emsworth Surgery and 750 sqm floor space for housing.

Additionally, the following opportunities are identified to improve North Street and its environs:

- Re-model North Street, High Street and the A259 junction to provide a prominent pedestrian and cyclist crossing to improve to the north-south pedestrian and cyclist movement.
- Any new development within the area should be of a scale and massing in keeping with the historic precedent.
- Any new development on former Victoria Cottage Hospital site should help to create an identified gateway by introducing high quality architecture and public realm.
- Improve access to the community garden and encourage its use by the local people. This, for example could also be integrated into Options 1-3 above with funded provided through the Clinical Commissioning Group, but still looked after by the Friends.
- Seek opportunities to improve the environs of Emsworth Museum. Should the fire station by relocated at any time in the future, seek for an opportunity to introduce a community use for the current fire station building, such as relocating the local library.
- Improve and enhance existing pedestrian connections between the church, community centre, museum, and Brook Meadow, and seek for an opportunity to provide a new connection between the community centre and the community garden.
- Reduce the width of the carriageway and widen the footpath where it is possible to do so without disproportionately impacting on traffic flows.
- Create a new pocket space and introduce landscape features to provide a place where people can sit and spend time.
- Seek for an opportunity to provide perpendicular parking in front of the super market and create space to the south to relocate the existing street furniture.
- Introduce traffic-calming interventions to reduce the traffic speed along the retail hubs and at the key pedestrian connection points.
- Encourage face-lifting and de-cluttering of building facades through public-private partnership.
- Improve the public realm quality throughout North Street to create a more attractive and pleasant environment. Introduce a way-finding system to mark the key destinations.



Emsworth - North Street opportunities plan

Emsworth - North Street Urban Design Considerations

Project Role	Name	Position	Actions Summary	Signature	Date
Researcher(s)	Giuseppe Verdone Urban Designer				
Project Manager / Technical Specialist	Niltay Tosun	Senior Urban Designer	Revisions made following Emsworth Forums feedback		20.08.2015
Director/QA	Stuart Woodin	Head of Neighbourhood Planning	Further draft required, more links to map and next steps added		18.08.2015
Qualifying Body	Emsworth Forum				
Technical Specialist	Niltay Tosun Giuseppe Verdone	Senior Urban Designer Urban Designer			
Project Coordinator	Rob Kyle	Neighbourhood Planning Coordinator			