

Case Study 2

Brierley Hill, Dudley Borough, West Midlands

Commissioned by:
Chelsfield plc
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Consultant:
David Lock Associates

Challenge:
Using graphic design to help convey and promote an ambitious vision for radical re-structuring of an urban area and translate that vision into a clear policy framework and supplementary planning guidance on implementation.

Since the mid-1990s, the owner of the Merry Hill Shopping Centre has been working in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council to transform the area around and including Merry Hill into a new town centre. The strategy is entirely without precedent within the UK and highly innovative in terms of both physical masterplanning and policy development.

Graphic design has played a vital role in conveying often complicated and challenging concepts to a range of different audiences in the early stages:

- Plan-based diagrams and concept plans were used to explain the area and opportunities.
- The initial masterplan and layered diagrams explained the approach to land use, transportation, character and public realm. (The graphic technique employed emphasised key principles without being too geographically specific or alluding to architectural form and mass).
- The aerial perspective demonstrated how the design principles might be applied, helping the public to understand the more abstract elements of the urban design agenda and raising aspirations about the quality of the place.

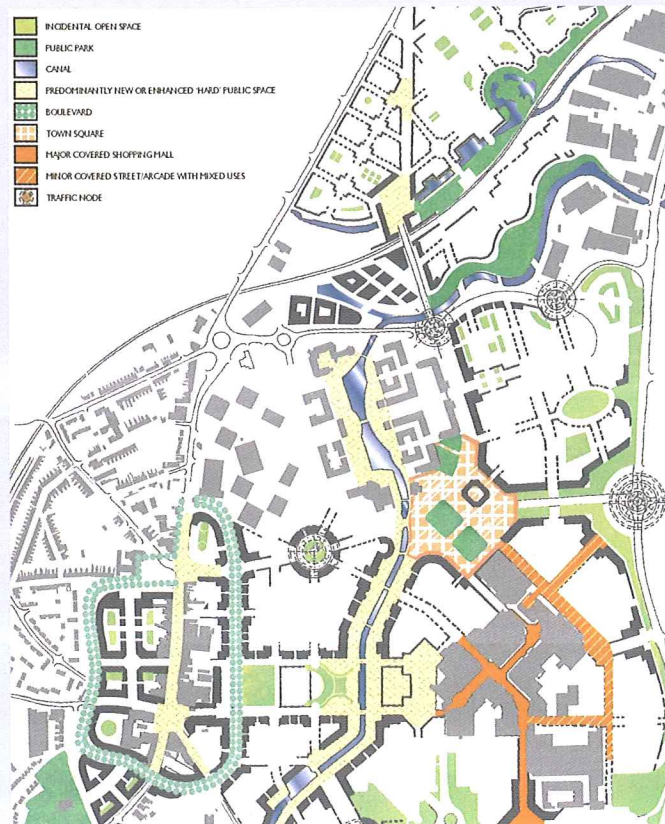
The Area Development Framework, which set out the initial strategy for change, won a Royal Town Planning Institute award for Urban Design in 1999. The graphic content was particularly commended.

Translation of the strategy into policy demanded a very different graphic interpretation; the essential elements of the masterplan were translated into a Development Plan proposals map.

As the project progressed, the masterplan was refined to serve a number of different purposes. Commercial land use proposals emerged for many of the available development opportunities across the study area. The revised masterplan brought these together to give a complete picture of the development potential through accurate representation of built form and the public realm. The level of precision allowed built development to be quantified, individual projects defined and infrastructure costs apportioned. In this way the plan formed the basis of an implementation strategy.



Aerial perspective showing the initial impression of the new town centre



Initial masterplan – public realm diagram showing key development principles