



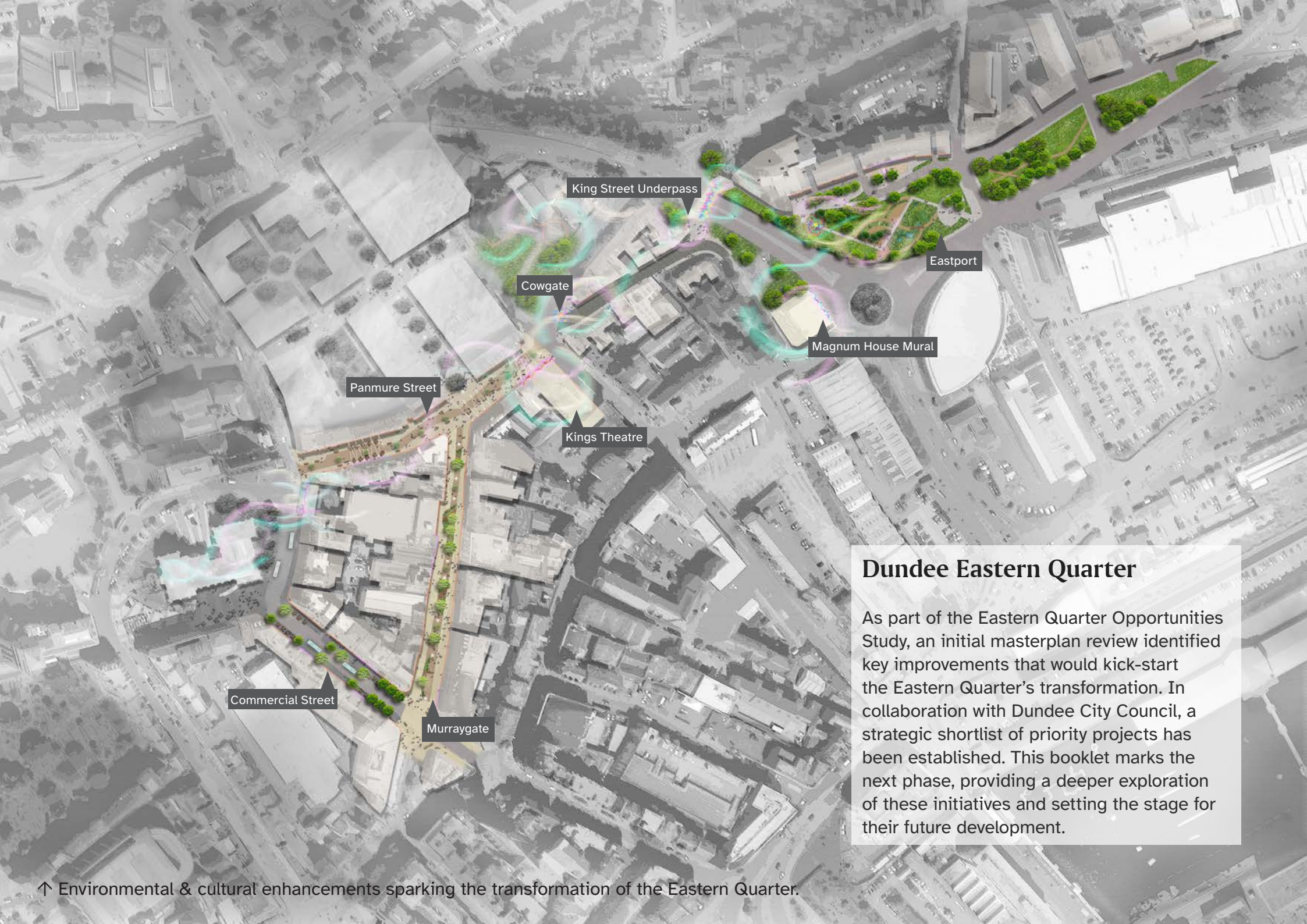
Dundee Eastern Quarter

Public Realm and Infrastructure Improvements

Final Report - April 2025
9566-LDA-XX-XX-RP-L-0003

LD Æ DESIGN

1.0 Introduction



Dundee Eastern Quarter

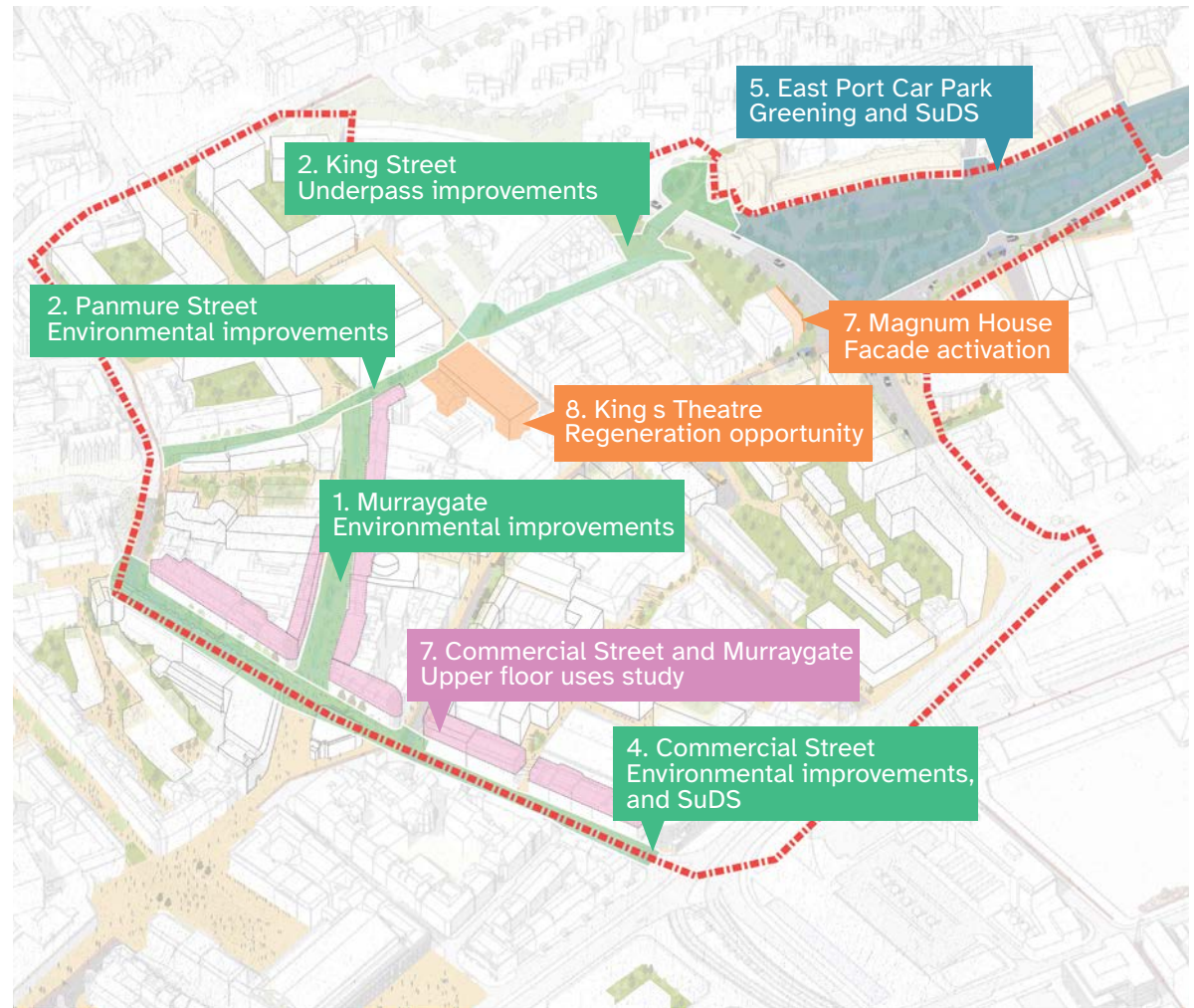
As part of the Eastern Quarter Opportunities Study, an initial masterplan review identified key improvements that would kick-start the Eastern Quarter's transformation. In collaboration with Dundee City Council, a strategic shortlist of priority projects has been established. This booklet marks the next phase, providing a deeper exploration of these initiatives and setting the stage for their future development.

Public realm and infrastructure improvements

As part of the Eastern Quarter Opportunities Study, Task 01 involved a comprehensive review of the masterplan, which highlighted a range of opportunities across the Eastern Quarter. Through collaborative consultation with Dundee City Council, a focused project shortlist has been identified. Commencing Task 02, this booklet serves to explore these priority projects in greater detail, laying the foundation for their development.

Project shortlist:

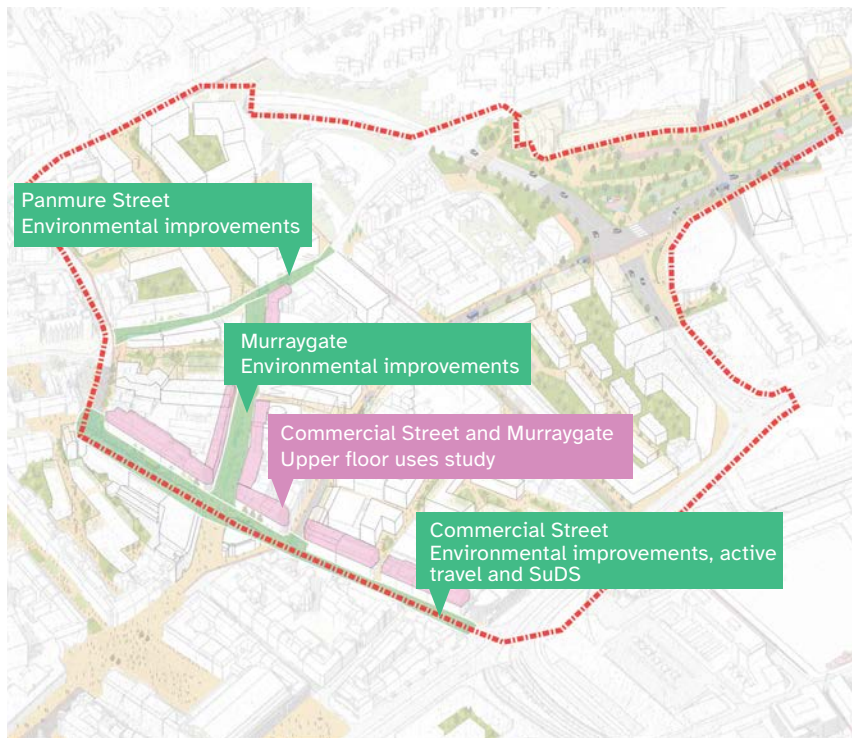
1. Murraygate: Environmental improvements
2. Panmure Street: Environmental improvements
3. King Street: Underpass improvements (including east/west Cowgate approaches)
4. Commercial Street: Environmental improvements and active travel
5. East Port Car Park: Greening and SuDS
6. Magnum House: Facade activation
7. Commercial Street and Murraygate: Upper floor uses study
8. King's Theatre: Regeneration opportunity



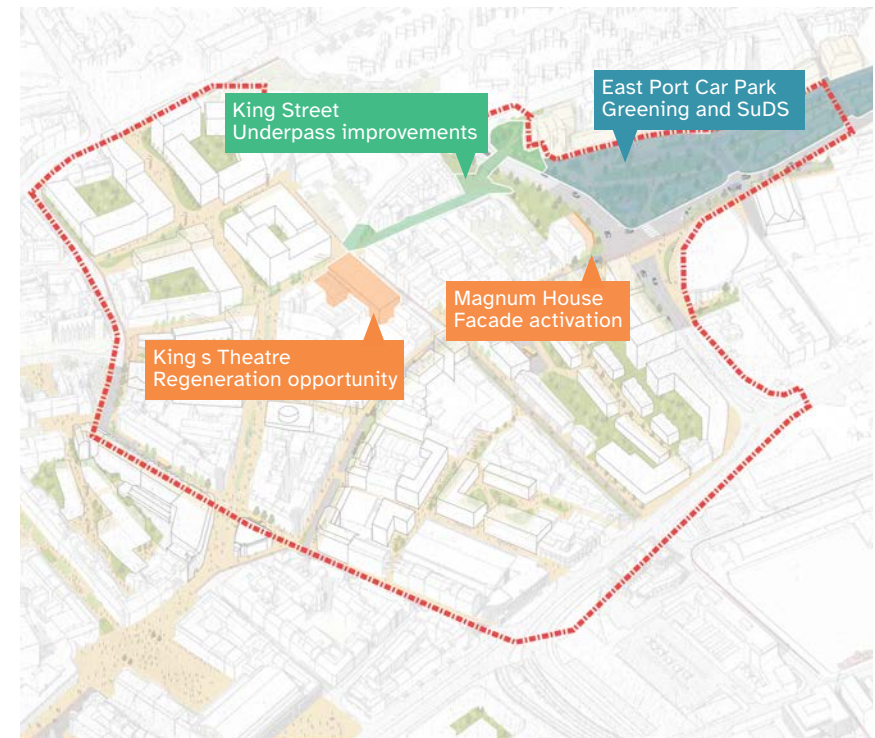
↑ Eight short-listed improvements within the Eastern Quarter to be explored further

Strategic revitalisation

The eight identified projects will work together to significantly enhance the Eastern Quarter of Dundee, demonstrating a clear commitment to revitalising this key area of the city. Collectively, they form two overarching, interlinked strategies that operate at a city-wide scale, while remaining flexible enough to be delivered through manageable, phased, and affordable interventions. This approach ensures that each project contributes meaningfully to the broader vision, while being practical and achievable within the context of available resources and timelines.



↑ 01. Environmental improvements - Commercial Street, Murraygate and Panmure Street, and upper floor use study



↑ 02. Environmental and cultural improvements - King Street underpass and Cowgate, East Port Car Park, Magnum House and King's Theatre

2.0

Shaping a sustainable future

Funding and sustaining green infrastructure, a lasting impact

Green and blue infrastructure plays a fundamental role in delivering Dundee's vision for a thriving city centre. Streets make up around 80% of the public realm, making them a priority for integrating nature-based solutions that support climate resilience, economic growth, and social wellbeing.

The shortlisted Eastern Quarter projects focus on areas of greatest need, ensuring investment delivers maximum benefits for both people and nature while also attracting private sector investment. The integration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and associated green and blue infrastructure is crucial for managing drainage requirements across major development sites within the Eastern Quarter and beyond. Unlocking these key sites for development is essential to the city centre's prosperity, generating revenue that can be reinvested into its continued growth and enhancement.

We acknowledge the revenue and resourcing challenges faced by local authorities and their departments particularly in managing above-ground infrastructure. To ensure long-term success, a realistic, holistic approach is needed—one that aligns with Dundee's prosperity and development objectives while embedding sustainable funding models and management strategies.

Winning Support: Collaboration and funding opportunities

Collaboration is key. Successful projects require strong partnerships with public bodies, businesses, major landowners, schools, community organisations, and utility companies. While building and maintaining these partnerships takes time, doing so from the outset helps leverage multi-layered funding and maximise benefits.

Projects that align with climate resilience, social equity, and major environmental goals—such as improving flood resilience or creating active travel routes—are more likely to attract external funding. Additionally, green infrastructure embedded within wider area strategies (e.g., public realm, active travel, or green networks) is often prioritised for investment and delivery.

Key considerations

Diversified revenue streams, including developer contributions, public-private partnerships, place based improvement programmes, community regeneration partnerships and targeted green infrastructure finance mechanisms.

Capitalising on multifunctional benefits, ensuring that SUDS and nature-based solutions deliver both environmental and economic value, such as mitigating extreme weather, improving air quality, and enhancing public space usability.

Exploring revenue-generating elements, such as flexible event spaces, pop-up power infrastructure, and mobile catering, with a portion of earnings allocated to ongoing maintenance.

Ensuring long-term maintenance and cost efficiencies

Too many greening schemes fail due to insufficient maintenance planning. To avoid this, we advocate a proactive approach:

Key considerations

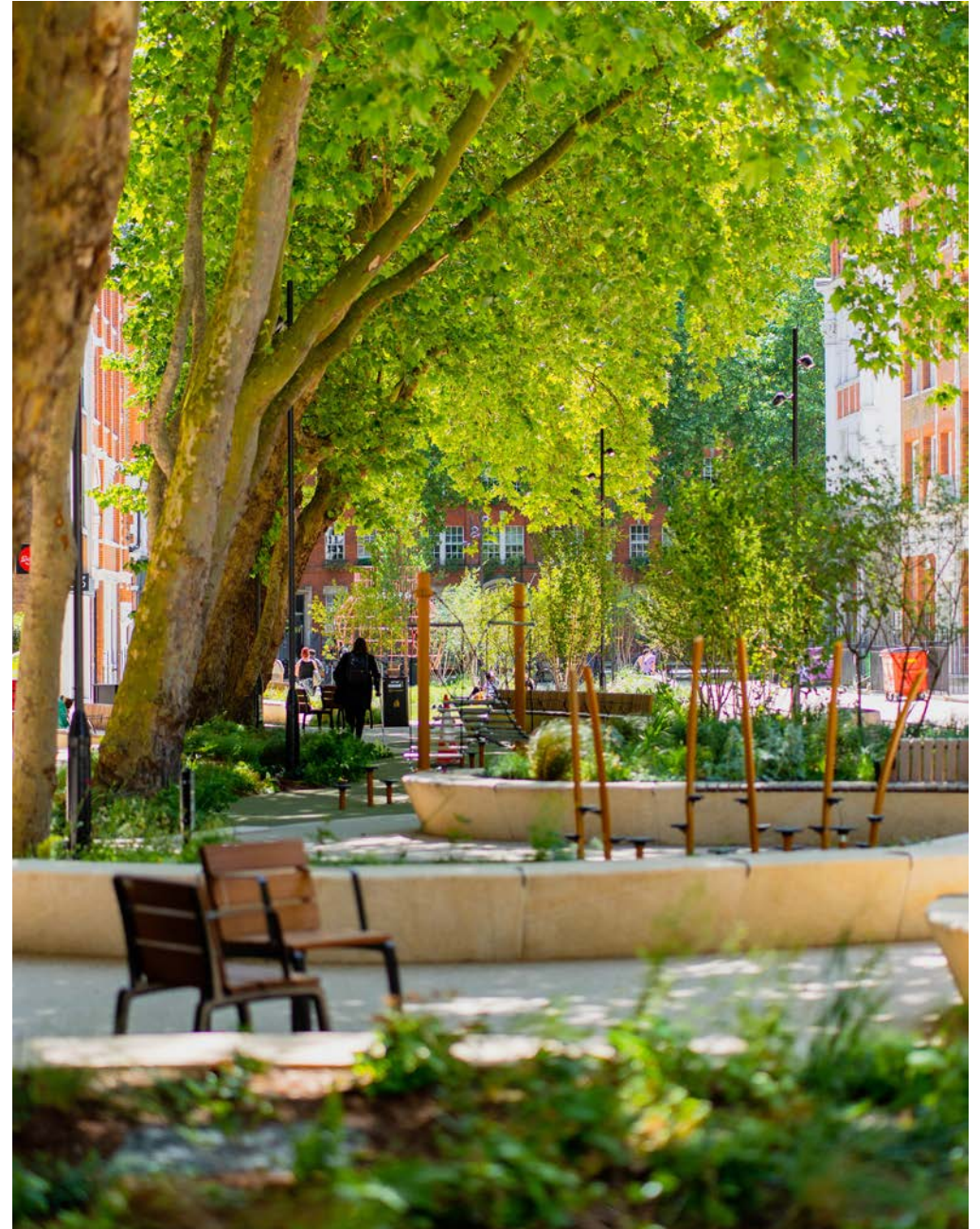
Early planning for maintenance, embedding realistic management strategies from the start, including securing committed funding for long-term upkeep.

Smart species selection and irrigation solutions, using resilient, drought-tolerant planting, self-sustaining ecosystems, and passive watering systems to reduce maintenance demands.

Practical maintenance logistics, factoring in specialist horticultural expertise, local composting, water management, equipment needs, and monitoring requirements.

Collaborative stewardship, involving businesses, community groups, and education institutions in the care and upkeep of green spaces.

By embedding these principles into project selection and design, we ensure Dundee's city centre remains a dynamic, climate-resilient, and economically vibrant place—where green and blue infrastructure is not just an asset, but a well-maintained, long-term driver of success.



3.0

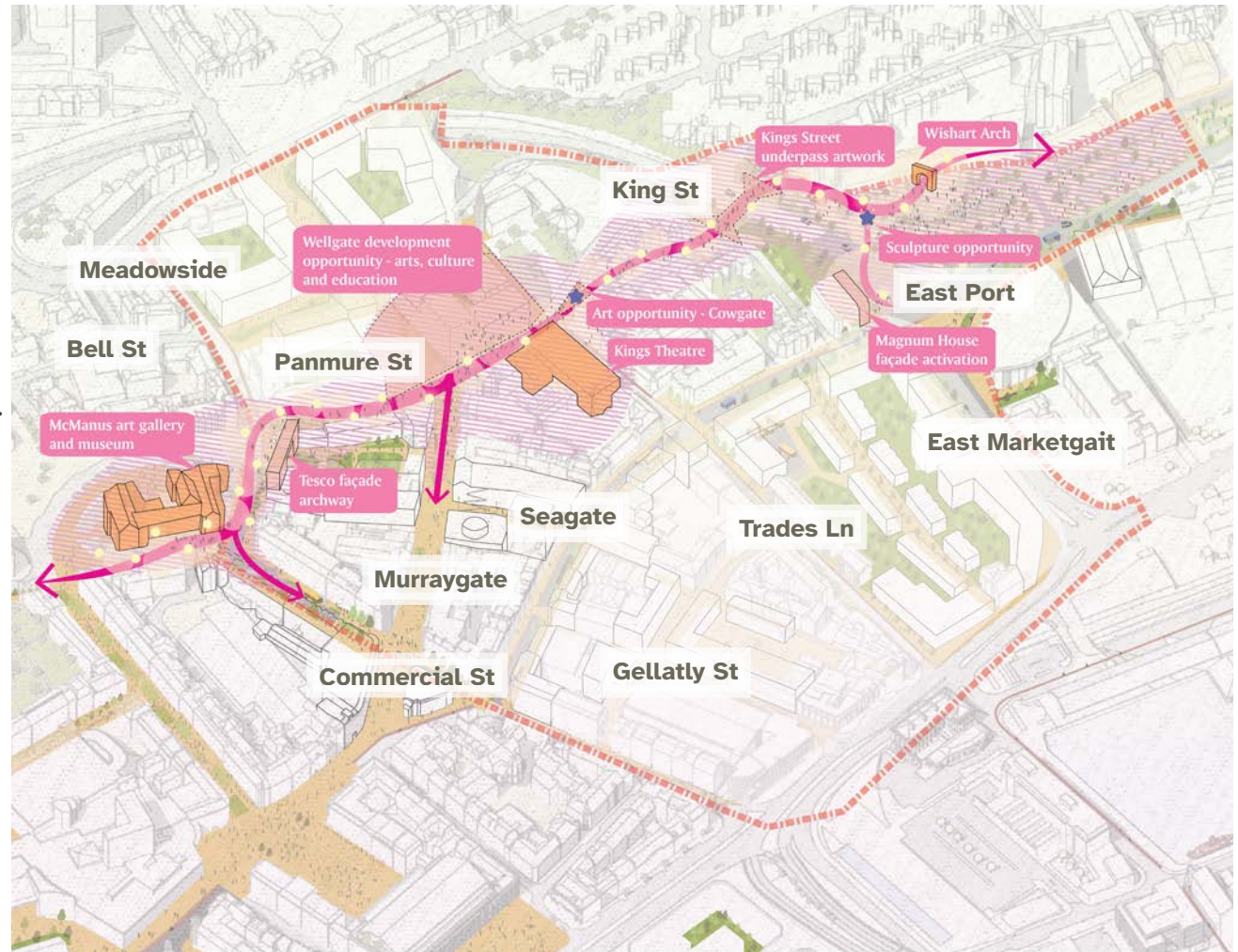
Short-listed project opportunities

The power of collective transformation

The transformation Murraygate, Commercial Street, Panmure Street, through Cowgate, to Eastport presents a significant opportunity to revitalise key movement corridors, creating a safer and more engaging route for residents and visitors. By harnessing the power of collective regeneration, and a strong focus on arts, culture, and education. A complementary suite of projects—including regeneration, renovation, environmental enhancements, and artistic interpretation—will work together to shape a vibrant and dynamic environment. At the same time, Dundee's rich historic assets will be woven into the vision, ensuring the past informs and strengthens the future.

The collective:

- 'The McManus' art gallery & museum
- Commercial Street - environmental improvements
- Albert Square facade - artistic mural
- Panmure Street - environmental improvements
- Wellgate Development Opportunity - education
- Murraygate - streetscape regeneration
- Kings Theatre - renovation & education
- Cowgate - artistic murals
- Kings Street underpass - artistic mural & lighting
- East Port - artistic sculpture
- Magnum House - artistic mural
- Wishart's Arch - existing historic asset



↑ Collective transformation through a number of opportunities, linked through arts, culture and education

Murraygate

Murraygate

Murraygate would benefit from a series of environmental upgrades aimed at enhancing its role as a key city centre destination. Interventions would be designed to improve the environmental performance of the street, while creating a more attractive space to visit, work or even live. Interventions would add to the amenity of the street and offer synergies with business.

Proposed interventions include:

- Rationalisation and reconsideration of all street furniture
- Seating improvements
- Integration of soft landscape, including the incorporation of embedded Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Improved and enhanced lighting
- Making good defective surfacing

Together, these improvements contribute to a more inviting, functional, climate resilient and attractive public space, aiming to boost footfall, promote user safety, and support seamless movement through this vibrant area.

The improved throughfare would support proposed developments on the current Wellgate site, offering outdoor amenity and a pleasant walking route to proposals here and beyond, helping to re-establish a direct connection with the Hilltown.



↑ Precedents - 'A green ribbon', wholly integrated SuDS and City Centre bio-diversity. Incidental play, seating accessible to all.

Key priorities on Murraygate

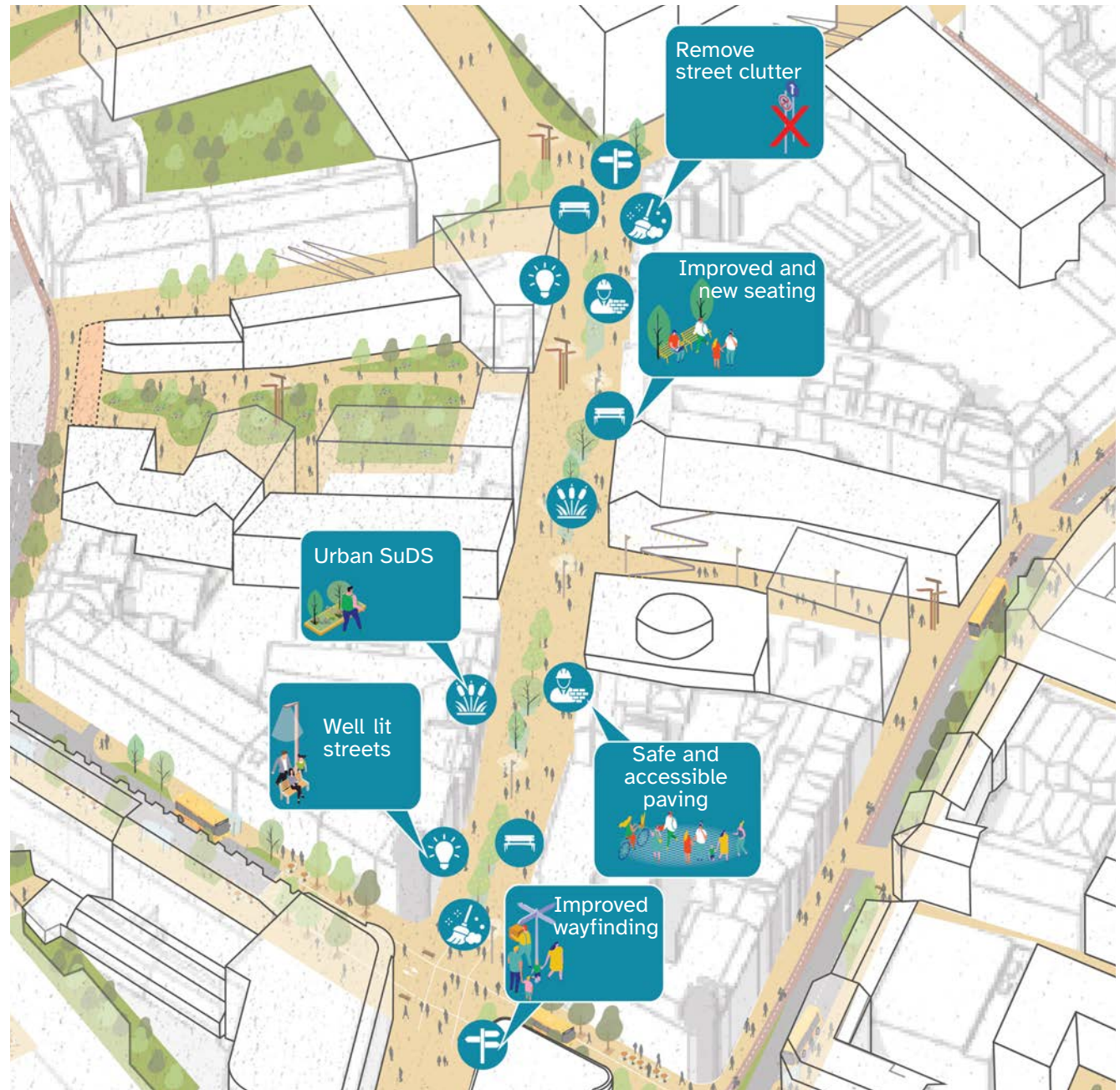
Legend

-  Improved wayfinding and signage
-  Improved lighting
-  Seating improvements
-  Declutter - removal of unnecessary street furniture
-  SuDS - integration of soft landscaping
-  Repairs to defective surfacing

Key partners

The success of these interventions will rely on close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a shared vision and effective implementation.




- Scottish Water- surface water drainage
- Arup- city centre lighting strategy
- Local businesses, landlords and groups

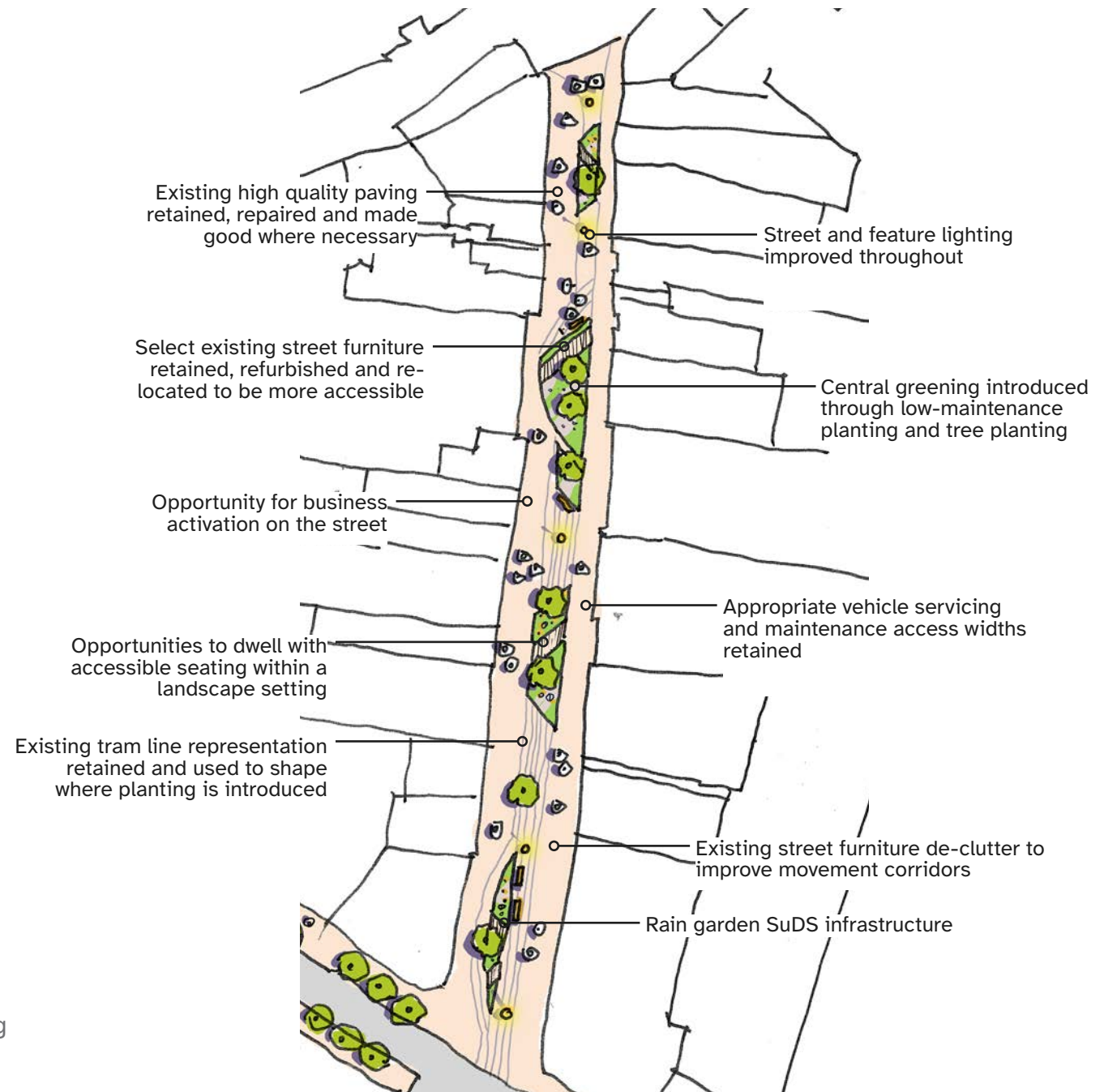


↑ Murraygate intervention aspirations

Murraygate - conceptual plan

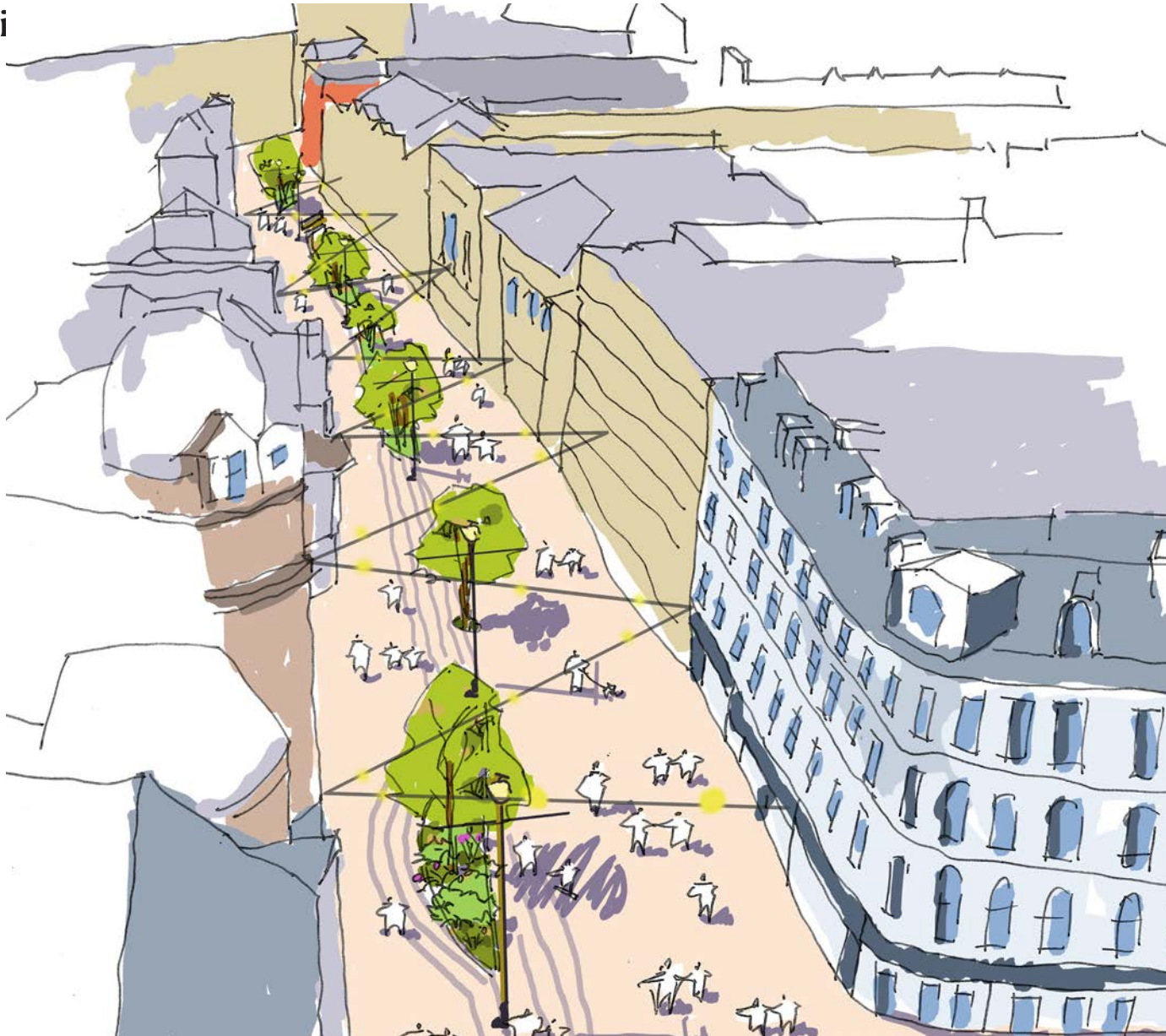
Legend

-  High quality paving surface
-  Shrub planting inc. rain gardens
-  Tree planting



→ The designs presented are conceptual and will be further refined through ongoing discussions, engagement, and detailed design studies.

Murraygate - arti



↑ An artistic impression showcasing planned environmental and lighting improvements to Murraygate, revitalising the street with enhanced public spaces, greenery, and a more inviting atmosphere.

Panmure Street

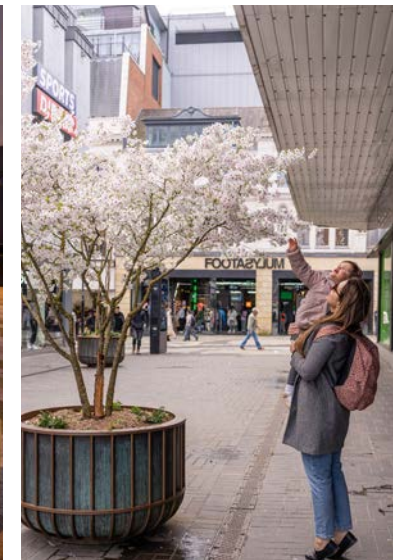
Panmure Street

Panmure Street requires sensitive enhancements that respect its historic setting, partnered with Murraygate, strengthening its role within the city centre, cognisant of potential future development.

Proposed interventions include:

- Removal of unnecessary street furniture
- Restoring existing street furniture while enhancing its setting
- Integration of soft landscaping - above ground
- Improved and enhanced lighting to streets and civic facades
- Seating improvements
- Making good defective surfacing

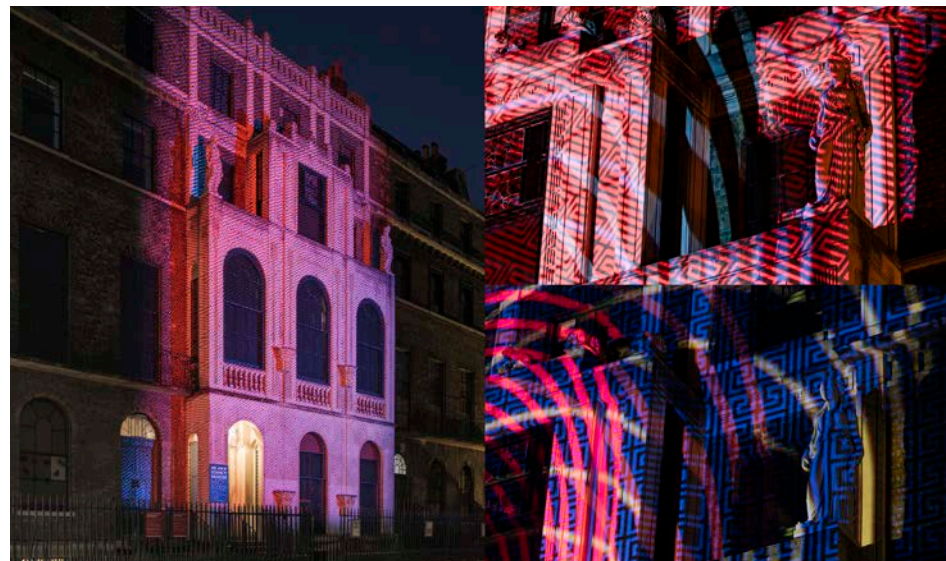
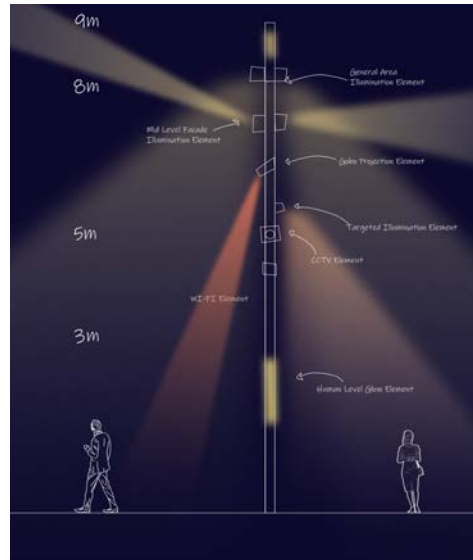
These changes will benefit the existing historic setting by preserving and enhancing its character, remaining mindful of potential neighbouring development opportunities they will create a more inviting, functional, and attractive public space, boosting footfall and enhance user safety.



↑ Precedents - Respecting and elevating existing historical assets through considered restoration, landscape setting and lighting.

The reimagination of Panmure Street as a key cultural and artistic artery within Dundee will see a layered lighting strategy—blending statutory, feature, and artistic elements—will transform the evening experience. Illuminated building façades, potential street murals, and carefully curated lighting interventions will enrich the street's atmosphere, reinforcing its identity as a vibrant cultural hub.

Future development opportunities will be encouraged to activate the ground floor, fostering a dynamic, people-focused environment where creativity and city life spill out onto the street.



↑ Precedents - A layered lighting approach will blend statutory, feature, and artistic elements to enhance Panmure Street's atmosphere and evening experience.g.

Key priorities on Panmure Street

Legend



Lighting to streets and features



Seating improvements



Declutter - removal of unnecessary street furniture



Integration of soft landscaping



Repairs to defective surfacing

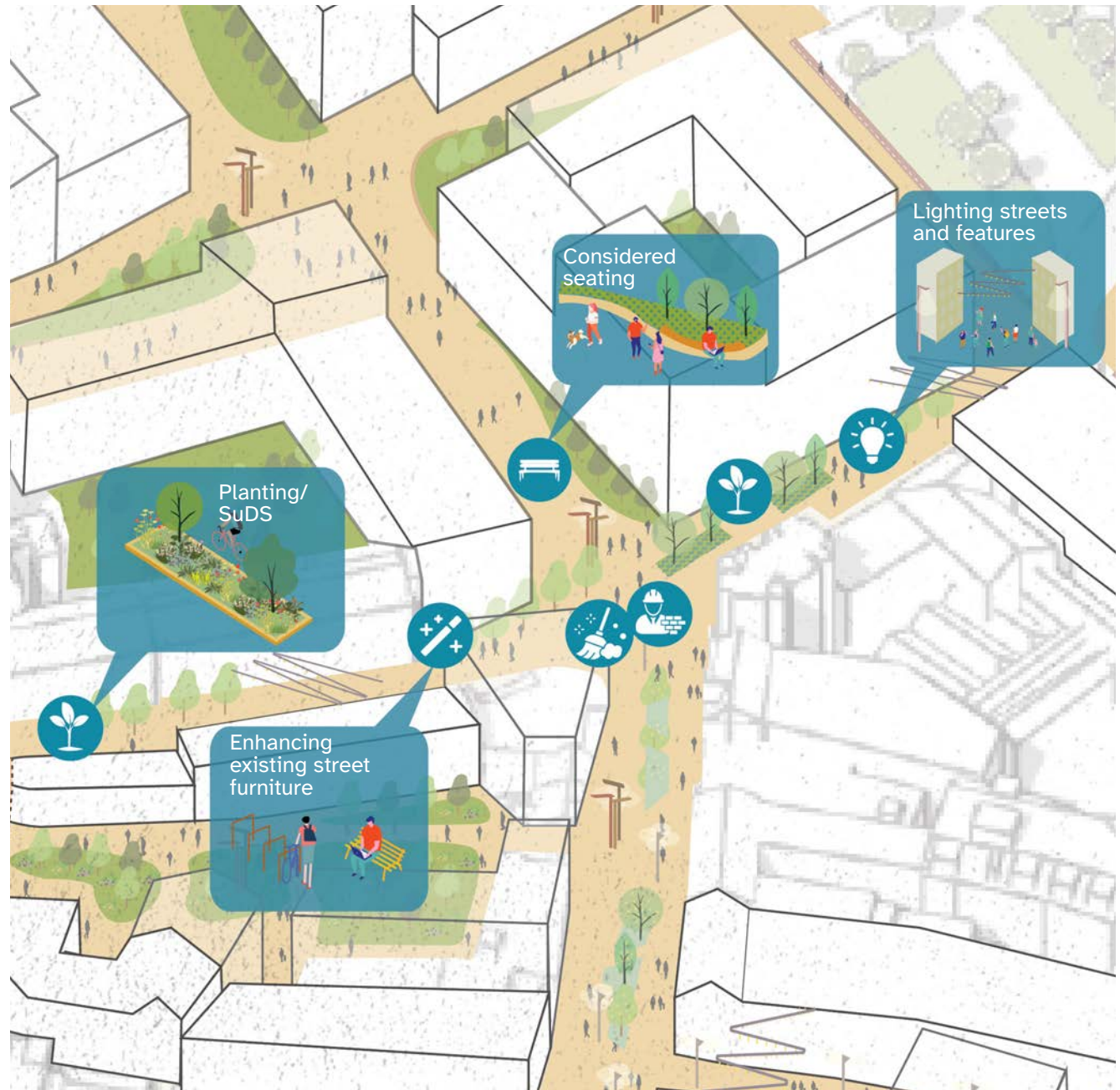


Enhancements and restorations to existing street furniture

Key partners

The success of these interventions will rely on close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a shared vision and effective implementation.

- Arup- city centre lighting strategy
- Potential development - Wellgate Shopping Centre/ King's Theatre
- Local businesses, landlords and groups



↑ Panmure Street intervention aspirations

Panmure - artists impression



↑ Enhancing Panmure Street through de-cluttering, scaled above-ground planting, and strategic lighting will create a more inviting streetscape that complements future regeneration efforts.

Retain and reclaim

A significant proportion of the street furniture within the study areas contributes to Dundee's public art offering. These items, including bollards, barriers, wall mounted light fittings, benches, and planter support structures, were predominantly funded and installed during the 1990s.

While their sculptural forms add character and interest to the streetscape, they are often overlooked, and in some cases, their placement contributes to visual clutter. Most remain in good structural condition; however, their current aesthetic finish and timber elements are in need of restoration and refinishing.

A commitment to preserving these features, combined with a carefully curated restoration programme in collaboration with local artists, would ensure these important streetscape elements are retained, restored, and, where necessary, re-located. This approach would enhance the street environment for both its users and the wider community.

LDA Design has collaborated with local authorities across numerous city centres to restore and re-purpose street furniture, preserving its heritage value while enhancing its functionality. By integrating restoration efforts into wider public realm strategies, the team has helped reinvigorate urban spaces, making them more inviting and visually cohesive for communities.



↑ Existing items of furniture



↑ Example restorative work to existing furniture

An approach to restoration and upkeep

The creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) could play a pivotal role in driving public realm improvements, particularly in the restoration and ongoing upkeep of existing street furniture. By leveraging collective investment from local businesses, a BID could fund the refurbishment of benches, lighting, and other key elements, enhancing the character and functionality of the city's streetscapes. Beyond initial restoration, long-term maintenance could be supported through a combination of sponsorship opportunities—where businesses or organisations take ownership of specific features—and structured volunteer initiatives, fostering community pride and ensuring that Dundee's public spaces remain welcoming, well-maintained, and fit for purpose.

Additionally, place-based improvement programmes and community regeneration partnerships could provide valuable funding streams to support these initiatives. By aligning with wider regeneration objectives, these funding sources could help unlock further investment, ensuring a holistic and sustainable approach to enhancing Dundee's public realm.

Restoration possibilities

- Bringing renewed emphasis and interest to existing heritage and public art assets
- Contributing to placemaking and distinguishing the Eastern Quarter
- Focussing use on the 'Key 'T'- Panmure Street along Cowgate and Murraygate
- Works to bring the secondary Panmure Street/ Cowgate together with Murraygate as an urban set-piece
- Consider finishes that are brighter and reflect light



↑ LDA Design furniture restorative works - Newcastle City Centre

King Street Underpass and Cowgate

King Street underpass and Cowgate

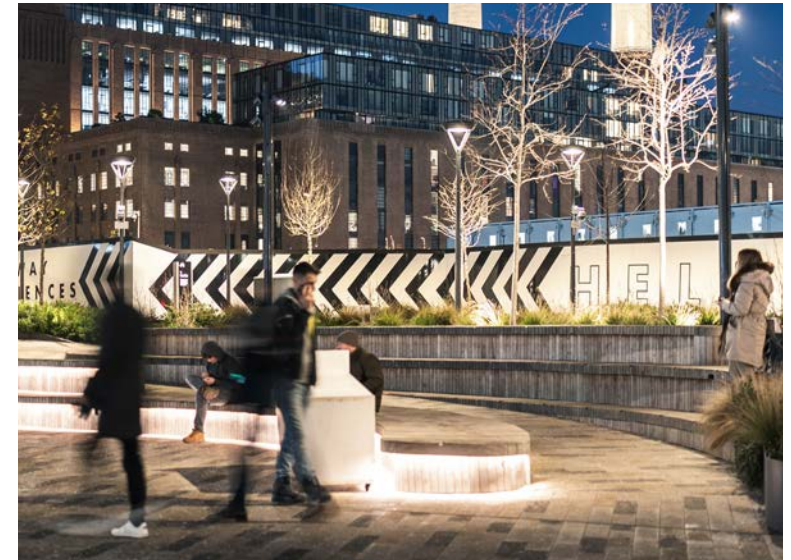
The King Street underpass needs a bold transformation into a striking, safe, and engaging gateway—an attraction in itself that connects east and west, enhances the play area experience, and boosts footfall to improve safety through passive surveillance

Proposed interventions include:

- Improved lighting- including artistic lighting
- Removal of existing scrub and bulky planters
- Use of reflective materials to enhance visibility
- Curation and implementation of an immersive and bold arts piece to walls, edges and structure. (Strategic connections with a wider Eastern Quarter strategy including Magnum House facade)

A vibrant, engaging underpass will connect to other arts-led opportunities, enhancing the public realm, cultural identity, and sense of place.

Interventions along Cowgate will encourage use of the underpass, highlighting the route and subtly signal the upcoming event of crossing from east to west. There is potential to utilise the pedestrian island at the Town House bar to highlight this corner and form a visual stepping stone towards the underpass route.



↑ Precedents - Artscape interventions, coupled with creative lighting opportunities and reflective materials, enhancing perception and safety for all

The art of the possible

Lighting has the potential to be the defining feature of the King Street Underpass, transforming it into a safer, more inviting, and visually engaging space.

Colour enhancements to the interior walls will soften contrasts and integrate the space more harmoniously with its surroundings.

Additionally, the underpass presents an opportunity for projection-based art installations, using gobos or digital displays to create an evolving, immersive experience that aligns with city-wide interventions, making the underpass not just a transition space but a destination in its own right.



↑ Precedents - Lighting interventions, coupled with creative projection opportunities, enhancing perception and safety whilst making a destination.

Key priorities on King Street and Cowgate

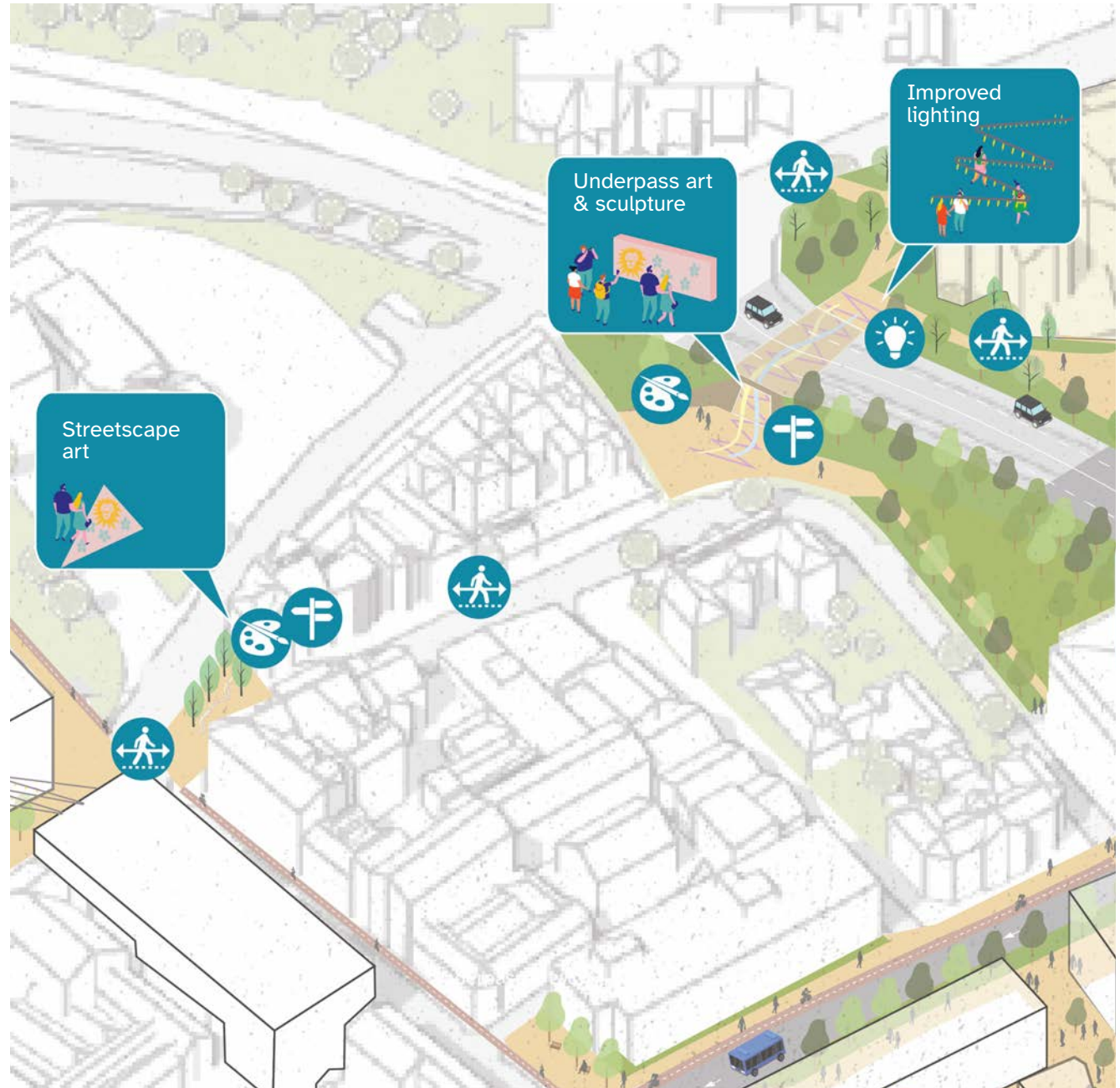
Legend

-  Improved pedestrian connectivity
-  Improved wayfinding and signage
-  Artwork and sculpture
-  Improved lighting

Key partners

The success of these interventions will rely on close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a shared vision and effective implementation:

- Arup- city centre lighting strategy
- Local curators/ artists/ community groups
- Local businesses, landlords and groups



King Street - artists impression



↑ An artistic impression showcasing how dynamic lighting could transform King Street Underpass into a safer, more vibrant, and visually engaging gateway.

East Port

East Port

Aligned with the SuDS strategy, enhanced greening and reduced car parking will boost biodiversity and deliver much needed green space, transforming this key east-west city edge corridor for existing, new and visiting city goers.

Proposed interventions include:

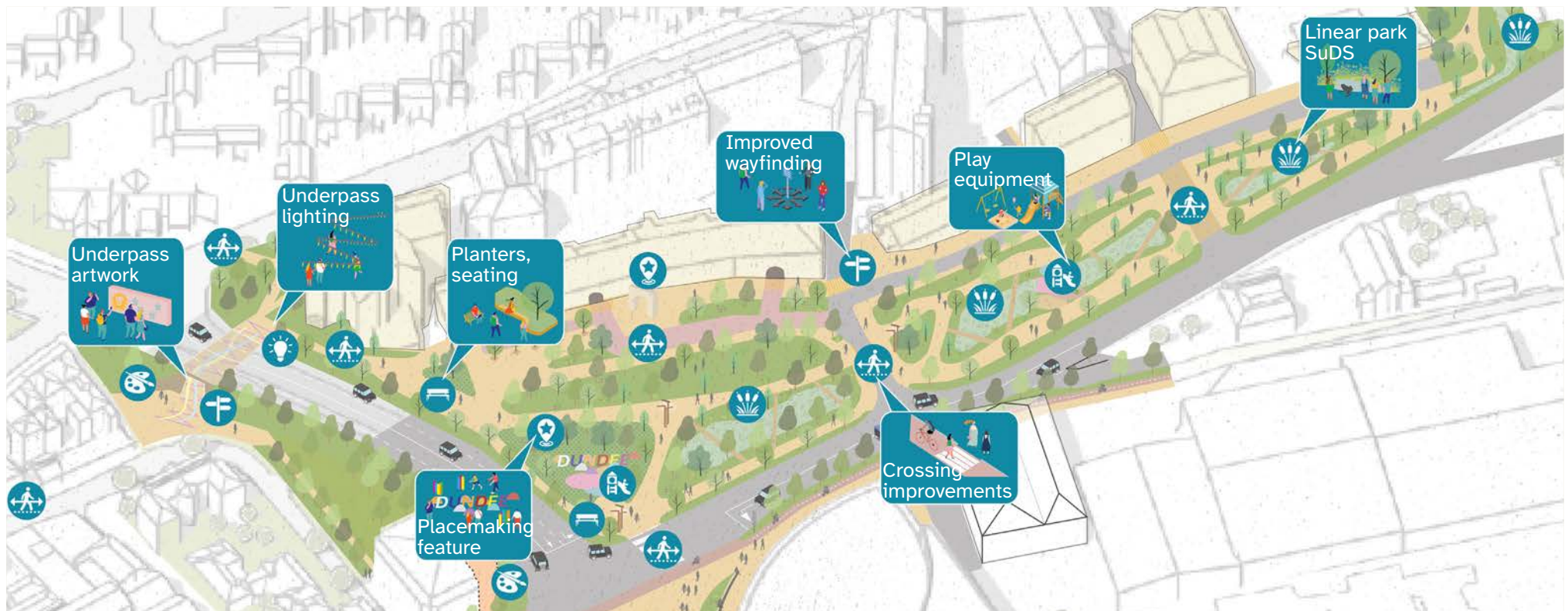
- Sustainable water management through SuDS in conjunction with Scottish Water
- Rationalisation of existing car park provision
- Instigating a gateway attraction:
 - sculptural
 - playful
 - artistic
- Introduction of green open space

These interventions will enhance city infrastructure by improving drainage through sustainable solutions, strengthen connectivity and create an attractive gateway threshold. This transformation will not only alleviate drainage issues but also support Dundee's play and arts attractions, enriching the public realm and reinforcing the city's identity as a vibrant, welcoming destination.



↑ Precedents - Landscape led placemaking, integrated SuDS, play and art

Key priorities at East Port



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Improved pedestrian connectivity |  | Improved wayfinding and signage |
|  | Placemaking and feature highlighting |  | Artwork and sculpture |
|  | SuDS |  | Seating opportunities |
|  | Play opportunities |  | Improved lighting |

Key partners

The success of these interventions will rely on close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a shared vision and effective implementation.

- DCC Roads Dept. - Highways
- Scottish Water- surface water drainage
- Local curators/ artists/ community groups
- Arup- city centre lighting

East Port - concept plan



↑ The designs presented are conceptual and will be further refined through ongoing discussions, engagement, and detailed design studies.

East Port - artists impression



↑ A conceptual sketch illustrating the re-imagined Kings Street underpass, East Port Car Park, and surrounding areas—showcasing enhanced connectivity, public realm improvements, and SuDS opportunities for vibrant urban activation.

A phased approach - Phase 01

As the project progresses, it must remain adaptable to wider regeneration opportunities. Neighbouring developments will significantly influence East Port's integration with the city, strengthening its role as a key component of the area's renewal.

The design concepts enhance both movement and placemaking while aligning with broader goals for investment, accessibility, and high-quality public space. A phased delivery approach will enable effective coordination of funding, stakeholder engagement, and infrastructure requirements—ensuring a cohesive and achievable transformation.

It is currently proposed that the works could be delivered in three phases, each capable of standing alone as a complete project.

Phase 01:

- Introduction of a new landscape space
- Creation of a safe, well-lit pedestrian friendly through route
- Facade mural to Magnum House
- Introduction of bio-diversity measures
- Sustainable urban drainage introduced
- Reduction of car parking provision



↑ Indicative extents of phase 01

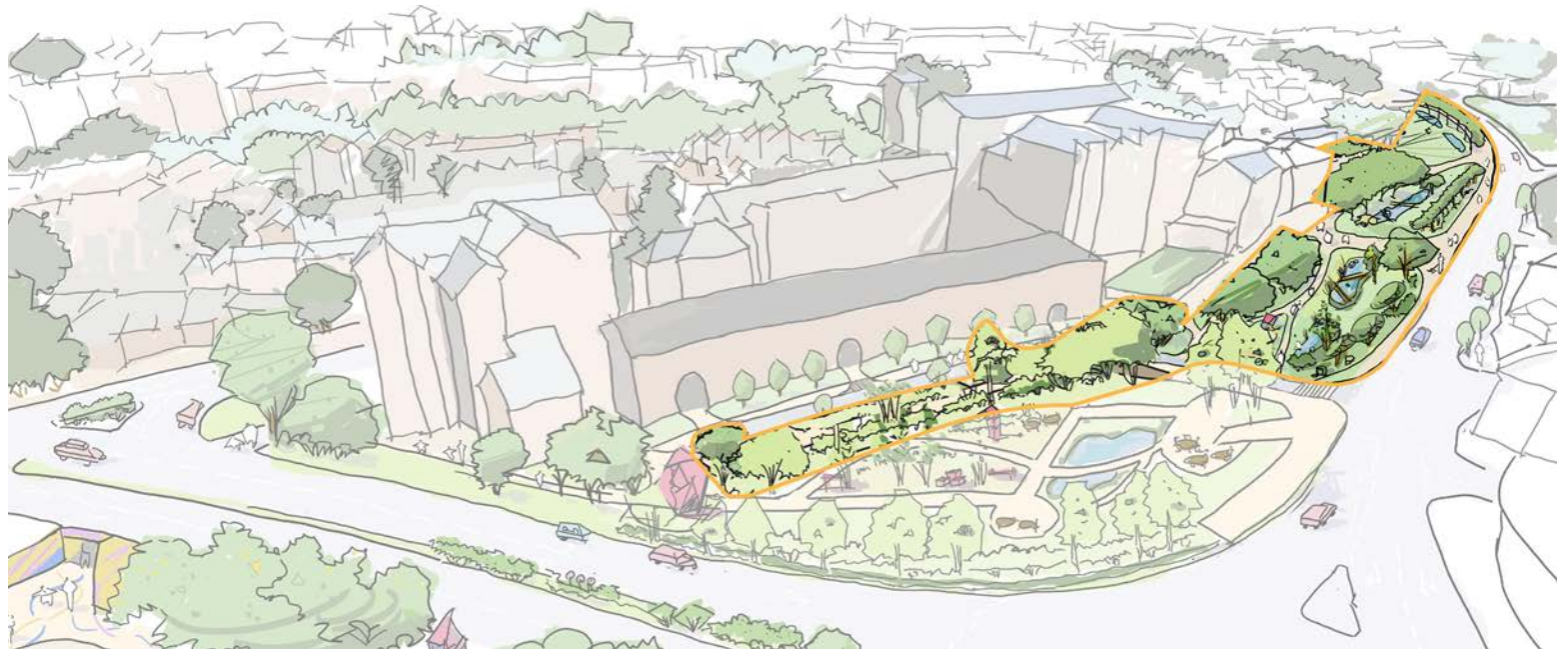
A phased approach - Phase 02

Building on the success of Phase 01, Phase 02 expands green infrastructure, enhances public space with playful and artistic elements, and completes the transition from car-dominated to people-focused environments.

These improvements will strengthen placemaking and improve connectivity, helping to knit East Port more closely into the fabric of the city.

Phase 02:

- Sustainable urban drainage extents increased
- The extent of new green space increased with opportunity to dwell, play on the way and traverse through a landscape environment
- Introduction of artistic sculpture
- Removal of remaining car park provision



↑ Indicative extents of phase 02

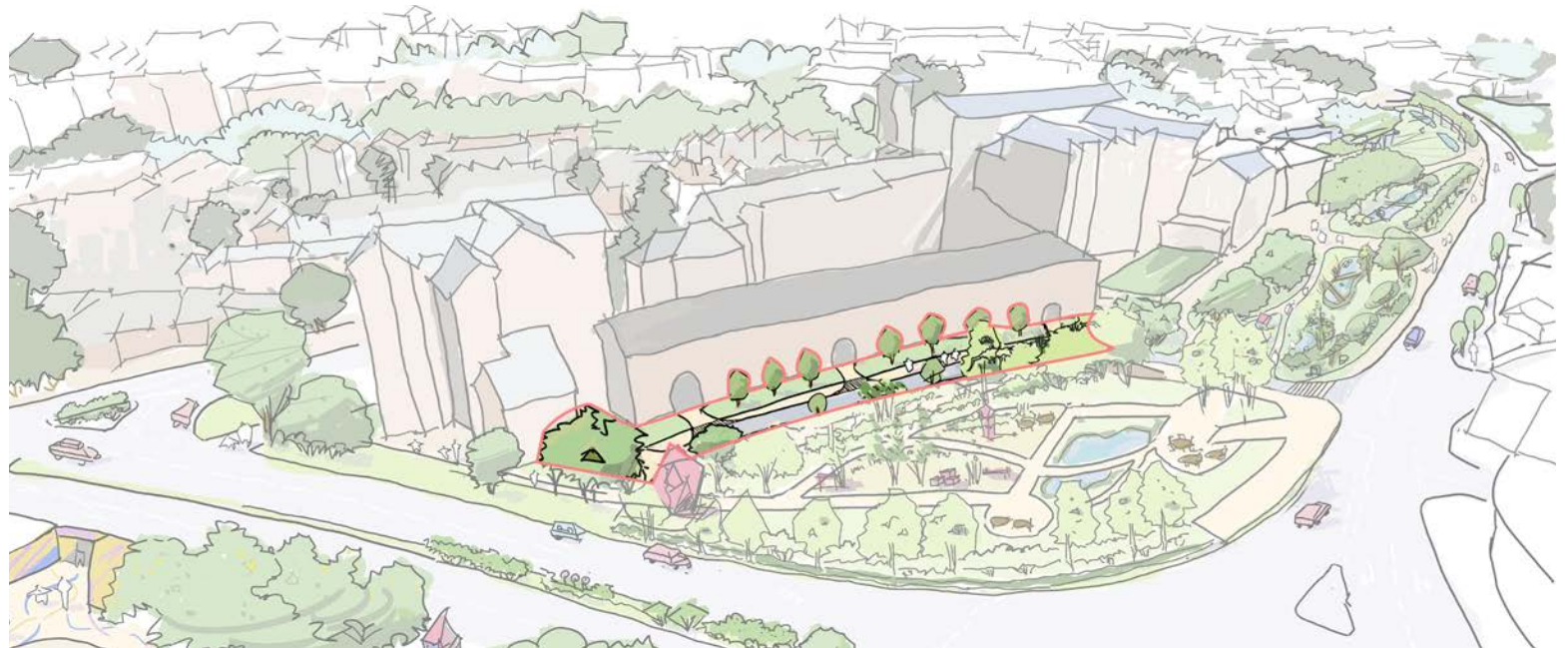
A phased approach - Phase 03

Phase 03 focuses on re-profiling the existing carriageway to seamlessly integrate it into the emerging 'East Port Park', creating a unified and accessible landscape.

By embedding Wishart Arch within a respectful setting of greenery and soft landscape buffers, these works enhance the public realm while celebrating the area's historic architectural facades in a dignified and complementary way.

Phase 03:

- Existing carriageway re-profiling, reduction in width and re-surfacing to become part of the wider 'East Port Park'
- Embedding Wishart's Arch in a respectful landscape setting
- Introducing trees and planting giving a buffer to the building edge



↑ Indicative extents of phase 03

Magnum House Mural

Magnum House facade activation

There is an opportunity to transform the east-facing façade of Magnum House with public art or murals, creating a striking backdrop and a distinctive gateway to the city centre. This intervention would serve as a key focal point within East Port, enhancing the sense of arrival and reinforcing the area's identity.

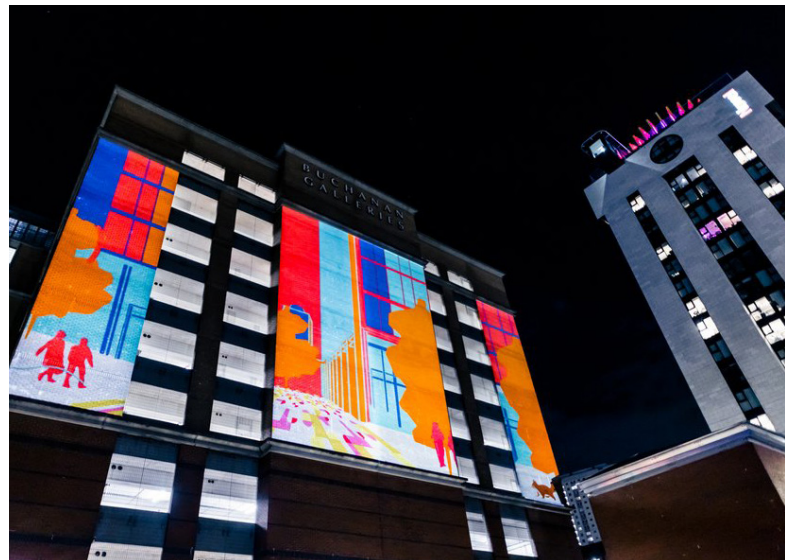
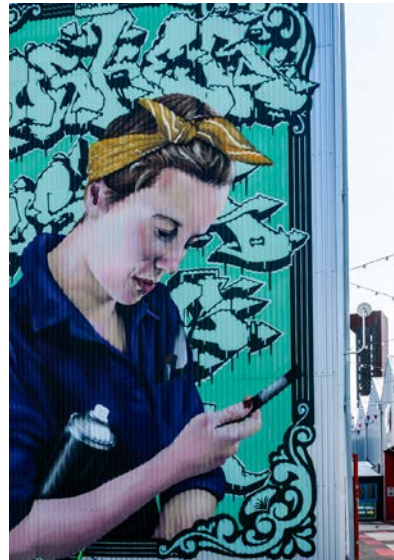
Proposed interventions include:

- painted mural through local artist groups
- a platform to showcase artists work, school projects, students work
- digital animation - complimentary to a mural - offering change & interest - seasonal, cultural events, engagement and the likes

The ability to adapt the artwork for different occasions and themes ensures that the facades remain fresh and relevant, continuously engaging both residents and visitors. This innovative use of space enriches the urban experience, driving foot traffic, supporting local culture, and contributing to a lively, ever-evolving cityscape.

Key partners

- Building landlord and occupants
- Local Curators/ Artists/ Community Groups/ Education
- Arup- city centre lighting strategy



↑ Precedents - Artistic intervention to building facades. Mural & Digital projection of student work from a local engagement event in Glasgow in collaboration with GSoA.

A methodology for delivery

Delivering a successful artistic intervention on Magnum House requires a structured approach, balancing creative ambition with practical considerations, statutory approvals, and long-term stewardship. The following methodology outlines key stages in the process:

1. Landlord & occupier engagement

Initiate discussions with the building's landlord and occupiers to secure approval and align objectives. .

2. Artist commission & curatorial brief

Develop a clear curatorial vision, ensuring alignment with the wider regeneration strategy. Commission a local artist through an open or invited call, providing a design brief that reflects community and stakeholder aspirations.

3. Funding & feasibility

Identify appropriate funding sources, which may include grants, public art funds, sponsorship, or Business Improvement District (BID) contributions. Establish cost estimates, considering both implementation and ongoing upkeep.

4. Procurement

Seek to ensure such commissions are part of a wider project scope for ease of procurement. Open tender of standalone artistic commissions can be difficult and to ensure the appropriate curators are reached an assigned budget allowing a contractor to commission works best.

5. Building condition assessment

Conduct a physical condition survey of the façade to assess suitability for a mural or digital installation. Identify any remedial works required.

6. Design development & community engagement

Develop design concepts, incorporating feedback from key stakeholders and the community.

7. Statutory consents & compliance

Secure necessary planning permissions, listed building consent (if applicable), and any other statutory approvals.

8. Implementation & site access

Determine access requirements, including scaffolding or specialist equipment for installation. Schedule works to minimise disruption.

9. Ownership, maintenance & aftercare

Establish clear ownership of the artwork and responsibilities for its long-term care. Develop a maintenance strategy, including protective coatings for murals or technical support for digital installations.

By following this structured approach, the Magnum House façade activation can be delivered effectively, ensuring artistic quality, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability within the broader East Port regeneration.

Magnum House Mural - artists impression



↑ An artistic impression showcasing how a facade mural on Magnum House could transform first impressions when arriving into Dundee City Centre from the east. A vibrant, and visually engaging gateway.

Commercial Street

Commercial Street

A joint initiative tackling city centre drainage challenges through blue infrastructure upgrades, integrating SuDS, public transport improvements, and public realm enhancements to support development and revitalisation.

Proposed interventions include:

- Sustainable water management through rain gardens in conjunction with Scottish Water
- Widened footpaths and bus stop rationalisation
- Opportunity for active ground floor spill out
- Improved seating and dwell space for those awaiting onward transport connections, drop off/ pick-up





The upgrades to Commercial Street will create a more connected and welcoming space for transit users and pedestrians, enhancing the wider city centre infrastructure through sustainable water management, widened footpaths, improved active travel links, and better seating and dwell spaces.



↑ Precedents - Integrated SuDS, widened footpaths for active ground floor spill out, street greening and interpretation with dwell opportunities

Key priorities on Commercial Street

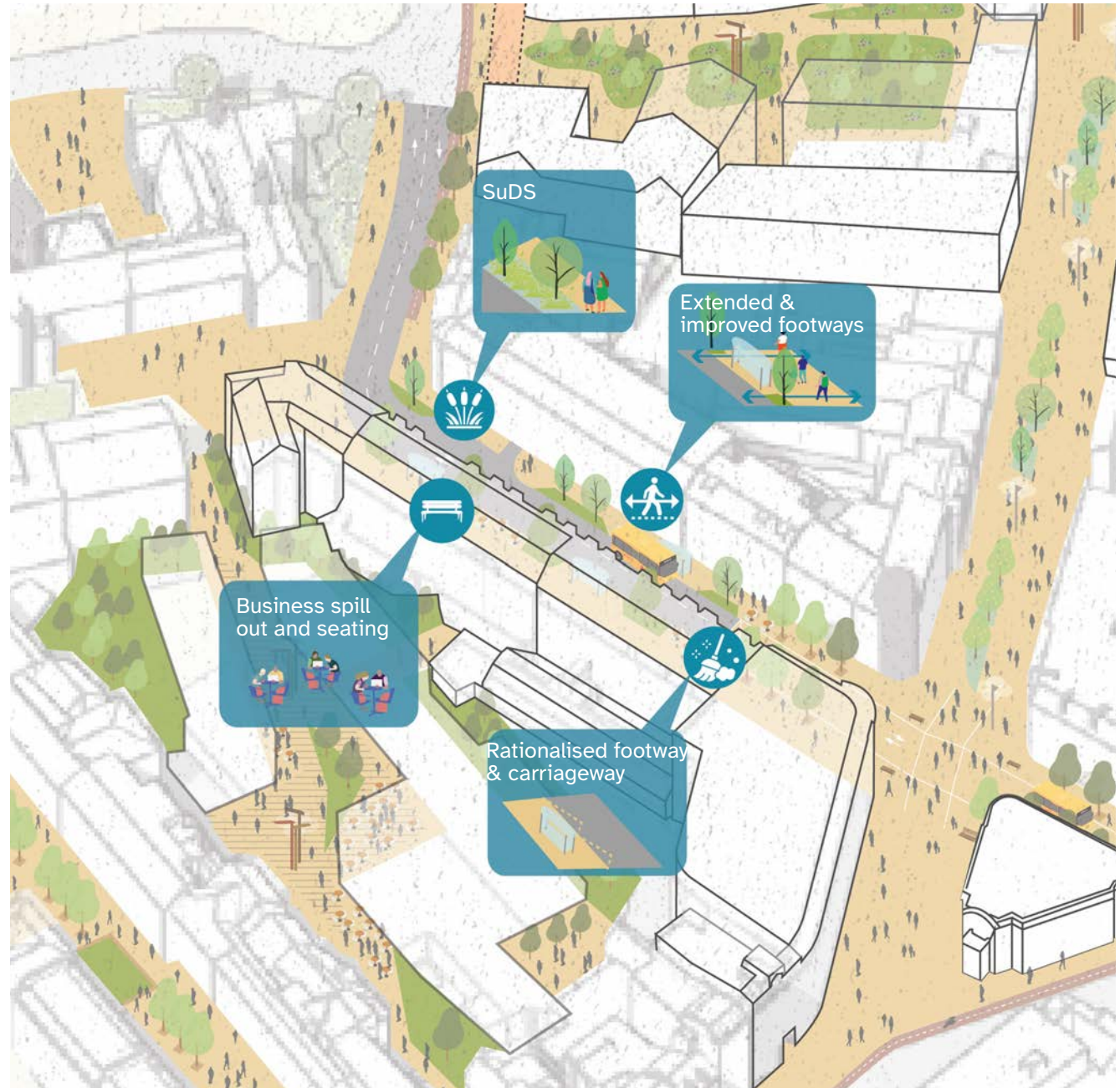
Legend

-  SuDS - integration of soft landscaping
-  Seating improvements/ business spill-out
-  Rationalised footway and carriageway/ removal of street clutter
-  Extended footways, improved pedestrian connectivity & safety

Key partners




The success of these interventions will rely on close collaboration with key stakeholders to ensure a shared vision and effective implementation.

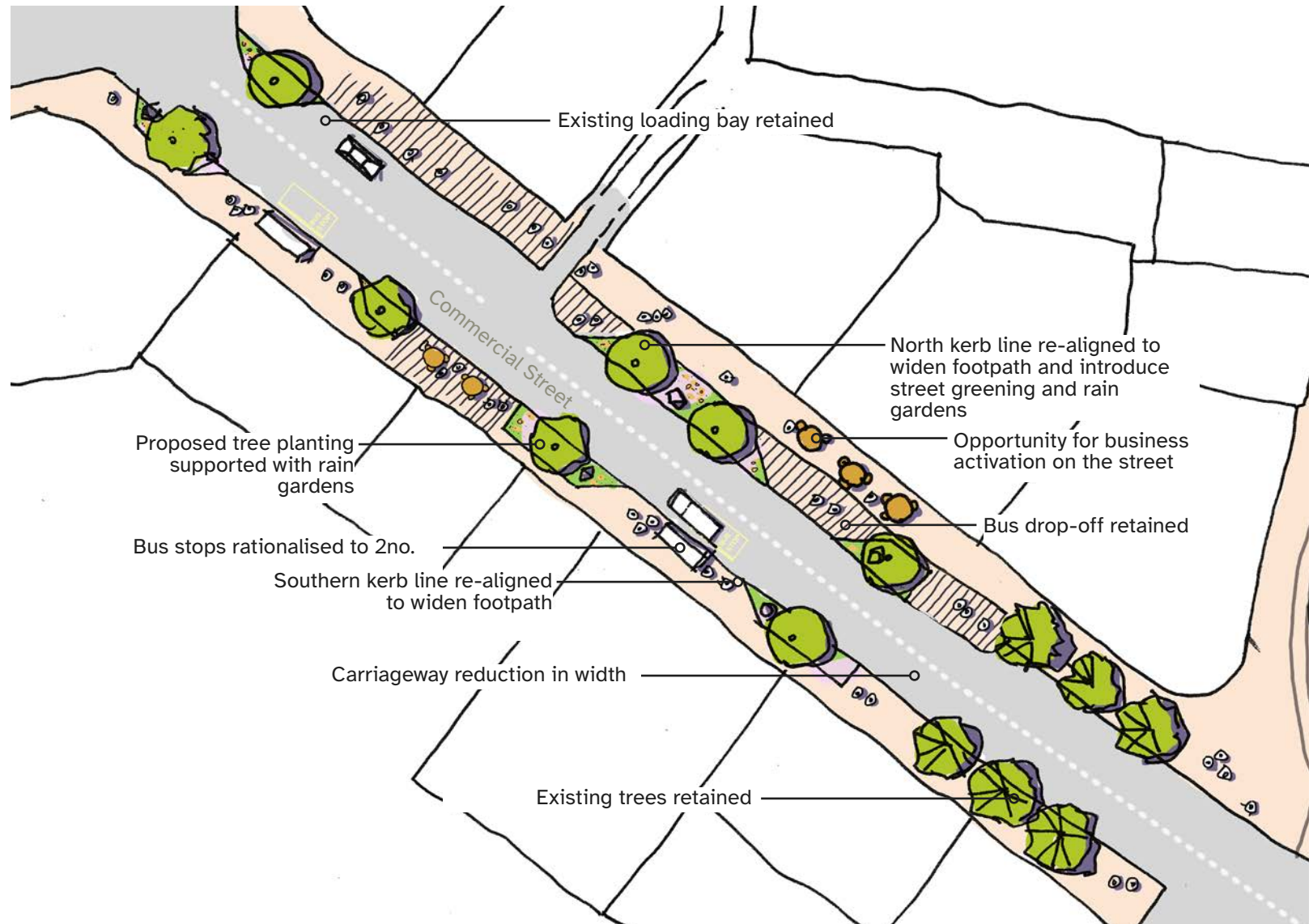
- Scottish Water- surface water drainage
- DCC Roads Dept. - Highways
- STANTEC
- Local businesses, landlords and groups



Commercial Street - conceptual plan

Legend

-  High quality paving surface
-  Shrub planting inc. rain gardens
-  Tree planting



↑ The designs presented are conceptual and will be further refined through ongoing discussions, engagement, and detailed design studies.

Commercial Street - artists impression



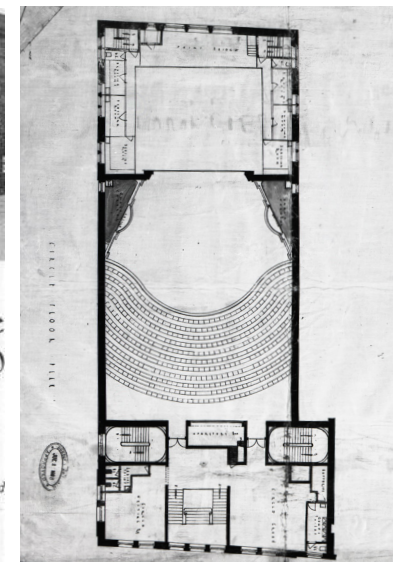
↑ A artistic vision showcasing the transformative potential of Commercial Street, highlighting key interventions that will enhance its character, climate resilience, accessibility, and public realm.

King's Theatre

King's Theatre

Dundee King's Theatre has been on the Theatres at Risk Register since 2016 and is also listed on Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage at Risk Register. While some ground-floor retail units remain in use, the nightclub operating from the auditorium closed in May 2024.

The theatre has the potential to become a key cultural and educational asset at the heart of the Eastern Quarter's regeneration. A project to modernise the theatre, alongside neighbouring properties at 21-23 Cowgate and the adjoining courtyard, presents an opportunity to blend public and private investment.



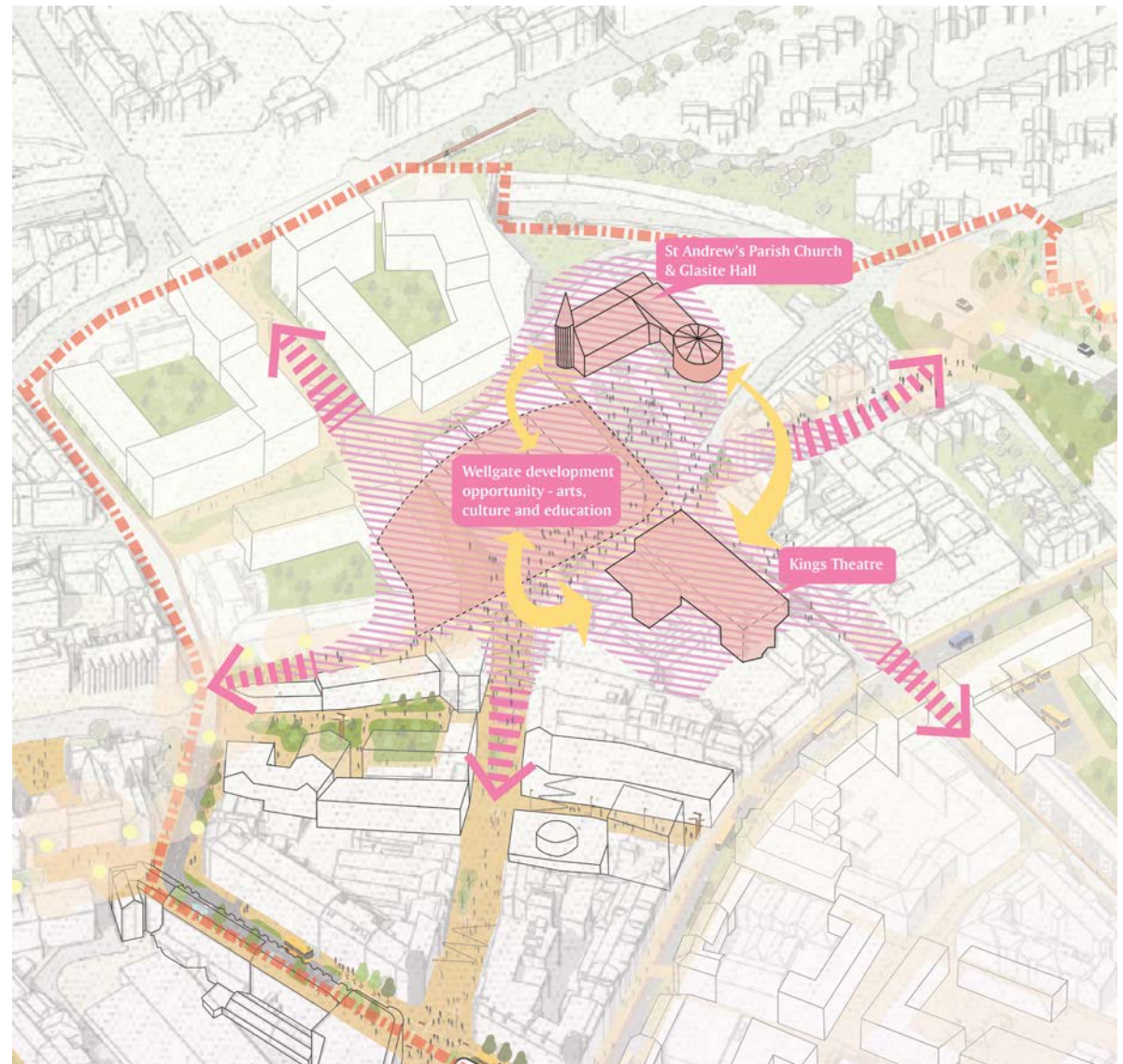
↑ Historic imagery and plans of Dundee's Kings Theatre

A cornerstone in regenerating and supporting the Eastern Quarter

The refurbishment of the Kings Theatre as a dedicated Arts & Culture venue presents a significant opportunity to support the wider regeneration of the Eastern Quarter. By fostering collaboration with neighbouring developments, the theatre can act as a cultural and economic asset, offering shared facilities and education opportunities that enhance the local creative ecosystem.

Through partnerships with education providers and industry professionals, the Kings Theatre could be part of training in theatre production, management, and backstage manufacturing—helping to up-skill local workforce and create new employment pathways into the creative industries.

The venue's revitalisation would also strengthen connections with existing community assets such as Glasite Hall, which could be utilised to accommodate the additional facilities required for touring productions. This symbiotic relationship would not only bolster the theatre's role within the city but also reinforce the Eastern Quarter transformation into a vibrant quarter.



↑ King's Theatre, Wellgate re-development and Glasite Hall acting together to as cultural and educational regenerative catalyst.

Key opportunities for the King's Theatre

The restoration of Dundee King's Theatre offers exciting opportunities to not only preserve its heritage but to enhance its role as a cultural beacon in the city.

Key possibilities include:

A new city landmark – Extending the height of the fly tower could reshape the city skyline, establishing the theatre as a prominent architectural landmark and symbol of creative ambition.

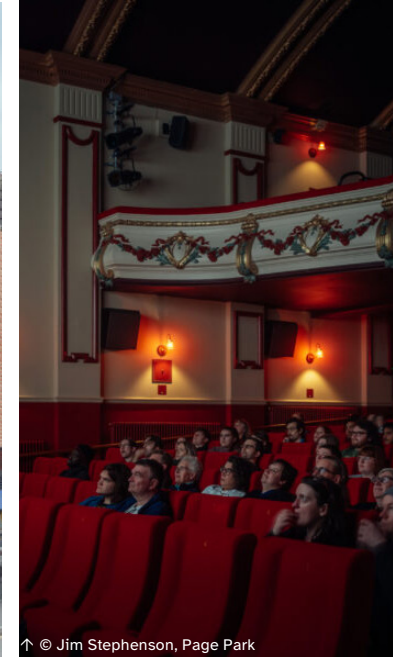
Revitalised façade – A thoughtfully restored exterior would restore the theatre's iconic street presence, improving accessibility and reinforcing its identity as a vibrant venue for both day and night-time activities.

Street-level café – A welcoming café at street level would create a lively public space, offering a social hub that connects theatre-goers and the local community.

Gallery Space for Local Artists – A dedicated street-level gallery, supported by educational institutions and city artist groups, would provide a platform for showcasing local art and fostering creative dialogue.

Community learning & participation studio – A flexible studio space for educational outreach and community projects would create valuable opportunities for local engagement and creative learning.

Enhanced circulation and navigation – Improvements to the theatre's circulation routes would make the venue more accessible and user-friendly, enhancing the overall visitor experience and ensuring smooth, intuitive navigation.



Support in diversification

To support the diversification of Dundee King's Theatre, several key options can be explored to expand its role as a cultural and educational hub:

Hosting touring theatre productions

The King's Theatre could become a prime venue for touring theatre companies, capitalizing on the growing demand for regional performances. With a strong appetite for touring productions in Dundee, the theatre could attract high-quality performances, providing both cultural enrichment and increased footfall to the city. This would also contribute to the theatre's financial sustainability, supporting its ongoing restoration and growth.

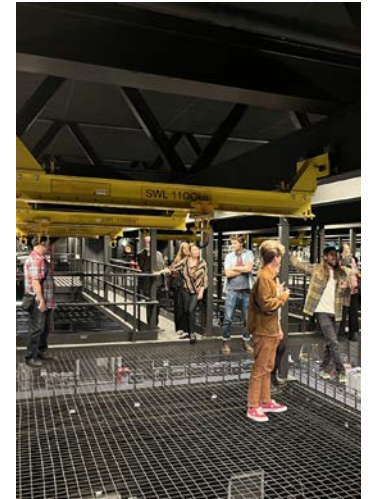
Partnerships with further education institutions

Dundee's universities and colleges, offering courses in performing arts, art and design, theatre production, and hospitality, could partner with the theatre to create a pipeline for talent development. This could include:

- **Apprenticeships and work placement programs:** Students could gain hands-on experience in a professional theatre environment, learning everything from stage management to front-of-house operations.
- **Collaborative education initiatives:** The King's Theatre could collaborate with local educational institutions to offer specialized workshops, masterclasses, and accredited courses, nurturing the next generation of theatre professionals.
- **Partnering for Events and Performances:** Students could stage performances at the King's Theatre, providing them with practical experience while enriching the theatre's programming.

Creating a cultural and creative learning hub

Drawing inspiration from successful models like The Backstage Centre in London, the King's Theatre could offer state-of-the-art facilities and training opportunities in areas like set design, lighting, sound, and costume production. This would make the theatre a key player in up-skilling the local workforce and fostering a diverse creative community.



Precedent: Theatres at the heart of regeneration

A working theatre is a vital part of its community, shaping local identity while driving employment and the economy. The following examples show how collaboration with local authorities, building owners, and community groups can ensure theatres have a viable path to restoration and reopening.

Kings Theatre, Edinburgh

The restoration of the King's Theatre aims to preserve this historic venue as a vibrant community hub while enhancing its status as a world-class cultural destination, reinforcing Edinburgh's reputation as the Festival City.

Investment in the theatre will deliver key improvements, including:

- Full accessibility from street to seat and street to stage
- Greater flexibility in programming, enabled by the removal of the rake from the stage and the raising of the fly tower
- A brand-new creative engagement suite for schools and community use, incorporating a Changing Places facility.
- A dementia-friendly environment
- Enhanced hospitality spaces, including improved bar areas and a new street-level café open throughout the day and evening
- Interpretation exhibitions and displays that celebrate and share the theatre's architectural and cultural heritage

Key partners & funding

- Scottish Government
- UK Government Community Ownership Fund
- City of Edinburgh Council
- National Lottery Funding
- Corporate sponsorship, local trusts and individuals



Precedent: Theatres at the heart of regeneration

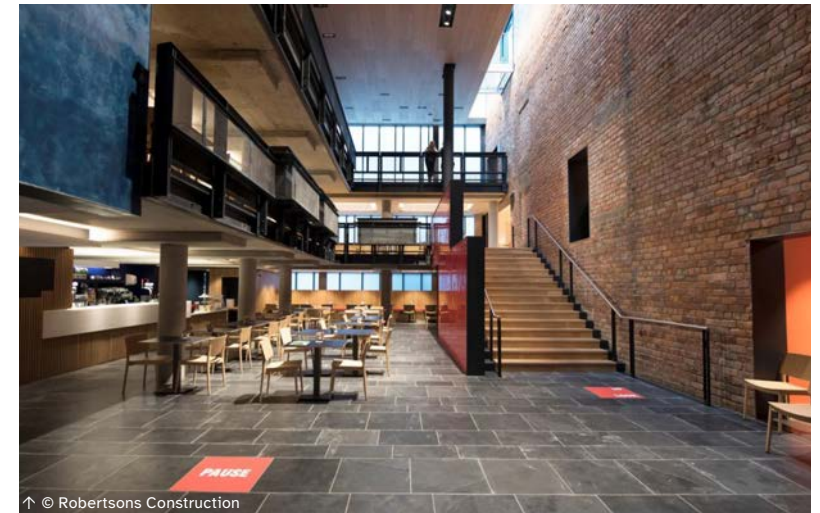
Perth Theatre, Perth

The need to repair and restore the theatre served as a catalyst for a more ambitious plan—not only to address modern accessibility and operational requirements but also to enhance its role as a vibrant producing theatre with a dynamic community programme. The design incorporates new performance, social, and workshop spaces, ensuring the venue meets the evolving needs of both performers and audiences.

The new entrance on Mill Street aligns with a wider Perth masterplan to establish the street as a cultural hub, with the theatre at one end and the concert hall at the other.

The back-of-house wing was enhanced with refurbished dressing rooms, a new green room, rehearsal space, and a production workshop. A new dock area, discreetly located at the side of the entrance, includes a stage lift serving the theatre's principal spaces, improving accessibility and operational efficiency.

This comprehensive redevelopment secures the theatre's future as a cultural landmark, blending historic preservation with contemporary design to create a venue that is both functional and inspiring.



Key partners & funding

- Scottish Government
- Perth & Kinross Council
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Gannochy Trust/ Creative Scotland
- Corporate sponsorship, local trusts and individuals

Next steps and funding opportunities

Next steps

Define vision & objectives – Establish the theatre as a key community asset supporting city centre living and regeneration. Promote its potential seeking joint venture or private investment.

Stakeholder engagement – Engage with key creative industry groups, theatres trust, property owners, local authority depts, funding bodies, and community groups to build support and partnerships.

Feasibility study – Commission a detailed internal/external building condition survey, understand ownership complexities, explore development potential, and financial viability.

Funding strategy – Identify public and private funding sources, explore governance models, and develop a business case.

Design & planning – Develop concept proposals, secure statutory consents (planning, listed building, building warrants).

Phased delivery – Prioritise early interventions, align with wider regeneration efforts, and establish long-term operational strategy.

Potential funding opportunities

As of 2025, Scottish local authorities have access to several funding streams to support projects like the modernisation of the Kings Theatre. Key opportunities include:

1. National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund offers grants ranging from £250,000 to £10 million for heritage projects. Recent allocations include £4.5 million to Leith Theatre in Edinburgh, demonstrating support for cultural venue restorations.

2. Creative Scotland's Multi-Year Funding Programme

Creative Scotland has implemented a Multi-Year Funding Programme to support creative and cultural organisations. This programme offers funding for core costs and work programmes for the period from April 2025 to March 2028.

3. Scottish Government's increased cultural investment

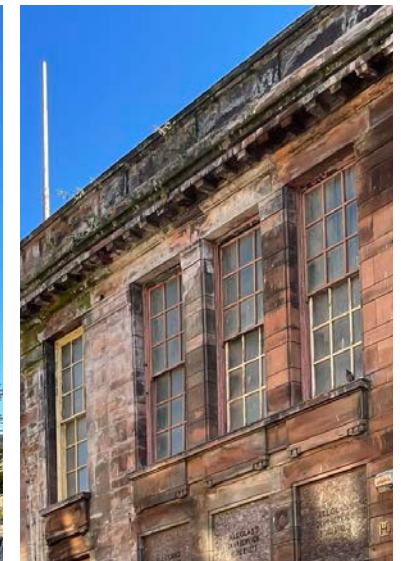
The Scottish Government has committed to increasing funding for the culture sector by £15.8 million in 2024-2025, as part of a plan to invest an additional £100 million over five years. This initiative aims to support cultural infrastructure projects across Scotland.

Upper floor use study

Upper floor use study

The Upper Floor Use Study would seek to evaluate the current use, occupation, and condition of upper floors within the Eastern Quarter to unlock their potential for re-purposing, particularly for residential use. Increasing city centre living is a key driver for economic growth, supporting local businesses, generating council tax and business rates, and strengthening the case for continued investment in public realm improvements and local authority services. To achieve this, the study would not only assess the physical and regulatory constraints of upper floors but also explore their role in creating vibrant, active streets that complement wider environmental and infrastructure enhancements.

By demonstrating the demand and capacity for upper floor re-use, the study would reinforce the need for high-quality placemaking, improved public spaces, and sustainable infrastructure solutions, all of which contribute to a more liveable, attractive, and economically resilient city centre. Additionally, funding opportunities such as place-based improvement programmes and community regeneration partnerships could support these efforts, helping to unlock investment and deliver meaningful change. The Fabric First grant, aimed at revitalising vacant and deteriorating business and shopfront facades, could also play a key role in restoring the character and appeal of the Eastern Quarter, further enhancing the area's potential for regeneration.



↑ Vacant and underutilised upper floors throughout the Eastern Quarter

A methodology for delivery

Conducting a comprehensive Upper floor use study would require a structured approach, balancing the potential for re-use with practical considerations, regulatory requirements, and long-term viability. The following methodology outlines possible key stages in the process:

1. Data gathering & building audit

Identify and map buildings with underutilised or vacant upper floors. Conduct site visits and desk-based research to assess current occupancy, condition, and potential constraints (e.g., access, servicing, heritage status).

Engage with building owners, occupiers, and key stakeholders to gather insights on usage and barriers to re-use.

2. Policy & market analysis

Review local and national planning policy frameworks supporting upper floor conversion.

Analyse demand for city centre living, including rental and ownership market trends.

Benchmark successful upper floor re-use projects from comparable urban areas.

3. Technical & infrastructure assessment

Evaluate building condition, structural feasibility, and required upgrades for re-use.

Assess servicing, access, fire safety, and compliance with building

regulations.

Consider integration with environmental infrastructure (e.g., SUDS, energy efficiency improvements).

4. Development potential & justification

Identify priority buildings or clusters with the highest potential for re-use.

Quantify the economic and social benefits of increased city centre living, including its role in justifying public realm investment.

5. Recommendations & next steps

Develop strategic recommendations for enabling upper floor re-use, including policy interventions, funding mechanisms, and partnership opportunities.

Outline potential pilot projects or phased approaches for targeted building conversions.

Integrate findings with wider Eastern Quarter regeneration proposals to ensure a coordinated approach to city centre revitalisation.

By taking a structured approach, an Upper floor use study would provide a robust evidence base to support the case for city centre transformation—ensuring that environmental and infrastructure improvements go hand in hand with unlocking new opportunities for living and working in Dundee’s Eastern Quarter.

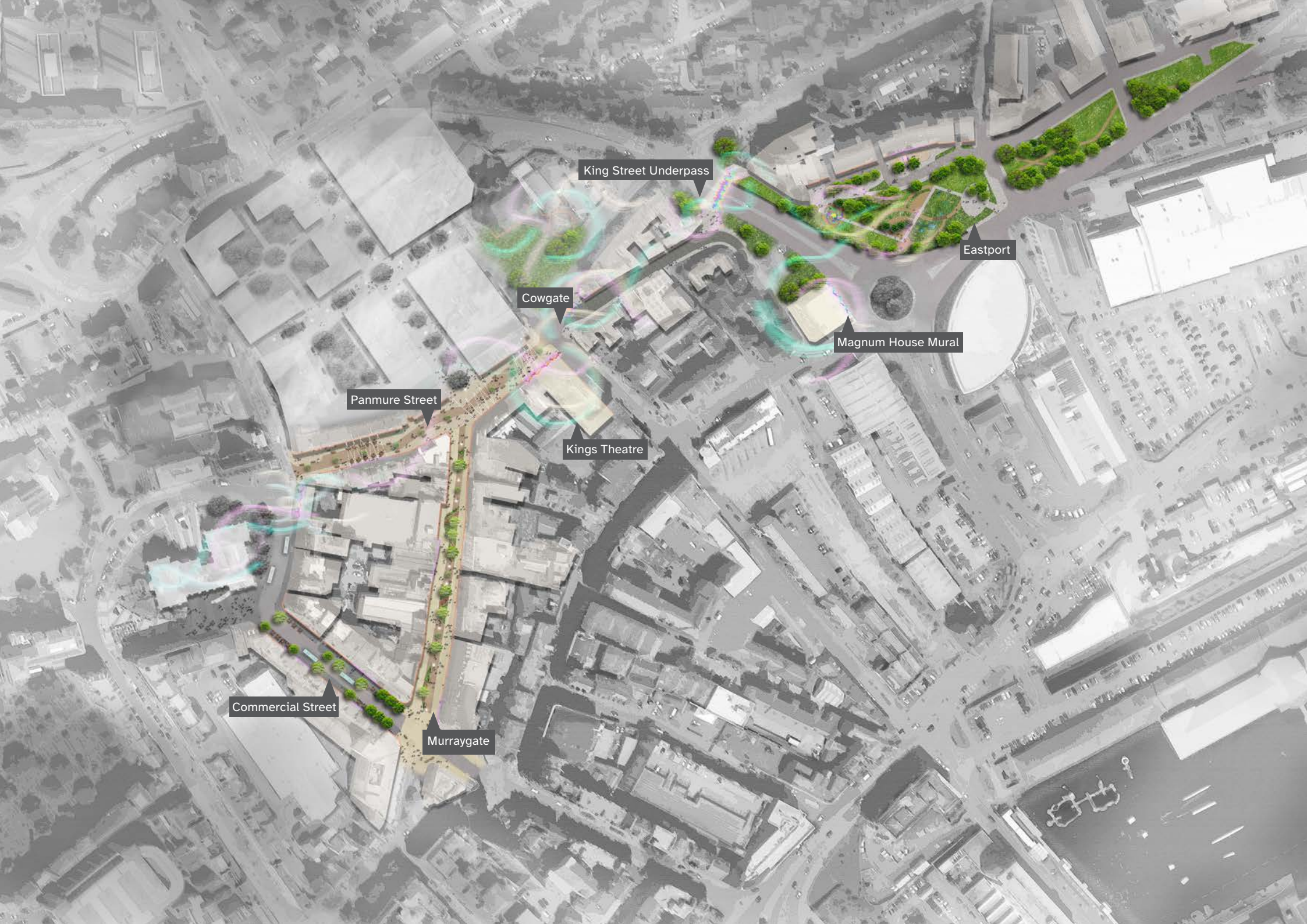
4.0

Conclusion

Conclusion

The transformation of Dundee's Eastern Quarter presents a significant opportunity to enhance the city's cultural, environmental, and economic landscape. Through a strategic blend of heritage restoration, public realm improvements, and new cultural initiatives, this vision aims to create a more vibrant, connected, and resilient urban environment.

The projects outlined in this study not only unlock development potential but also foster community engagement, attract investment, and strengthen Dundee's reputation as a dynamic city. This material will play a key role in guiding budget and funding allocations, ensuring that resources are directed towards impactful, sustainable interventions that will shape the future of the Eastern Quarter.



King Street Underpass

Eastport

Cowgate

Magnum House Mural

Panmure Street

Kings Theatre

Commercial Street

Murraygate

L D A DESIGN

London

209 – 215 Blackfriars Road
 London SE1 8NL
 +44 (0) 20 7467 1470

Bristol

First Floor, Hanover House
 Queen Charlotte Street
 Bristol BS1 4EX
 +44 (0) 117 203 3628

Cambridge

The Courtyard
 17A Sturton Street
 Cambridge CB1 2SN
 +44 (0) 1223 949054

Exeter

Kings Wharf, The Quay
 Exeter EX2 4AN
 +44 (0) 1392 260 430

Glasgow

Sovereign House
 158 West Regent Street
 Glasgow G2 4RL
 +44 (0) 1412 229 780

Manchester

Ducie House
 37 Ducie Street
 Manchester M1 2JW
 +44 (0)161 359 5684

Oxford

Worton Rectory Park
 Oxford OX29 4SX
 +44 (0) 1865 887050

Peterborough

17 Minster Precincts
 Peterborough PE1 1XX
 +44 (0) 1733 310 471

www.lda-design.co.uk

LDA Design Consulting Ltd
 Registered No: 09312403
 17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough PE1 1XX

LDA Design is a ISO 9001 / ISO 14001 accredited company