Three

Public Realm Framework

Summary and Guide to Part 3: ...

Part 3 should be referred to by any individual involved in public realm design within the study area, in order to gain an understanding of the context of their work in relation to the overall vision for the future of Chester's public realm.

Section 3.1 - The Overarching Vision and Public Realm Framework.
Sets out the vision for Chester city centre's public realm, overarching design principles and an aspirational public realm framework. The elements of the public realm framework are explained, with particular attention paid to vistas and links that need to be protected, enhanced, strengthened and developed.

Section 3.2 - Spaces and Gateways
Provides further detail on the proposed gateways and spaces. Outline design brief criteria and principles are given for each of the spaces and overarching design principles are listed for the two types of city gateways. This information should be referred to before embarking on their design and development.

Section 3.3 - Street Hierarchy
Section 3.3 presents a street hierarchy for the city centre based on what currently is, and what could be achieved on Chester's existing streets given the existing vehicle access arrangement. This is followed by an aspirational street hierarchy to show how the hierarchy could be developed over time as the city centre moves towards pedestrian priority. Any individual approaching the design of a city centre street should refer to section 3.3 to help identify the relevant street type. Flexibility has deliberately been allowed in the PRDG's street hierarchies and discussion will be needed with the council's Highway, planning and Conservation representatives to agree the relevant street type.

Sections 3.4 – 3.8 - Street Types 1 to 4 and Other Pedestrian Links
Offer a more detailed explanation of each of the street types. Each section includes key design principles which should be referred to in the design of streets, along with an illustrative layout and outline materials palette to inform designs. Further design guidance on material specification and construction is provided in Part 7.

Sections 3.9 - Street Design
Part 3 concludes with general guidance on street design, relevant to all street types. This includes information on target speeds and general street design principles. In addition, indicative designs and design examples for junctions, courtesy crossings and controlled crossings are provided.

As has been previously identified, it is important to note that strategies and design guides by their very nature offer broad principles and often bold approaches, which cannot address the subtleties of design required for every specific location. Part of Chester's appeal is its distinctive character and idiosyncrasies, which vary on a street-by-street basis and should be celebrated. It is not the intention that this design guide stifles site specific design solutions which respond to the history and character of place. Rather, the aim is to provide initial parameters and guidance which set a high quality standard and future aspiration for Chester's public realm and should form the basis for the preparation of more detailed designs. To this end, the design principles provided in Part 3 should act as a guide, rather than dictating the exact design of every street and space.

As in other parts of the PRDG, Part 3 recommends that in the future a greater emphasis be placed on public realm design for pedestrians and cyclists. However, it is important to recognise the legitimate needs of vehicles, such as buses and service vehicles, that are a necessary part of the functioning of any city centre.

Eastgate Street, Chester