

Metrobus at the heart of The Centre

Introduction

The integration of Metrobus within The Centre presents the opportunity and funding stream to create a high quality public transport interchange and enhanced public realm, placing Metrobus at the heart of the city. It will also:

- simplify the current traffic movements to reduce through traffic and prioritise public transport, walking and cycling
- provide a more coherent and people-friendly public realm, connecting pedestrian routes and integrating new elements into the existing townscape
- unite the Cenotaph with the Old City to create a new events space that both supports the important Remembrance Day ceremony but also promotes activity throughout the year

Design Proposals

The design for the City Centre is divided into five distinct zones:

City Centre Promenade south

No works are proposed to the existing fountains and associated planted areas. Works will be limited to:

- knitting the new pedestrian crossings and movement patterns into the existing public realm
- remedying existing problems, such as resurfacing the failing Imprint carriageway on Broad Quay and St Augustines Parade
- improving cycling facilities to reduce conflict with pedestrians in this busy area



Baldwin Street link

Works will include new trees, planting and seating to complement the new road layout and frame views to and from Corn Street and Baldwin Street

St Augustines Parade and Colston Street

The removal of northbound traffic into Colston Street creates the opportunity for a new high quality promenade uniting the two major cultural centres of Colston Hall and The Hippodrome. Works will include:

- tiered planting beds and a single tree will enhance the view to the golden form of Colston Hall and provide informal seating near the bus stop
- new paving and tree planting fronting The Hippodrome, removing the current medley of materials and reinforcing the new axis and views to Baldwin Street



Centre North Promenade

This area contains a large number of well established trees, almost all of which will be retained, and a popular coffee kiosk that provides a useful service and welcome activity in the space. The new Metrobus stops will be located in this central zone, displacing the existing taxi rank. This area will be the focus of the main pedestrian flows both across and along The Centre. Works will include:

- reworking of the existing public realm to increase capacity for pedestrians and cyclists
- widening the existing steps to facilitate pedestrian movements to the Metrobus stop
- removal of most of the northern planted area to create informal seating steps and allow a gathering space behind the Metrobus stop
- relocation of the listed statue of Edmund Burke to create a focal point, balancing Neptune, on the new Baldwin Street axis

Magpie Park and the Cenotaph

The removal of general traffic from Colston Avenue (east) creates a major opportunity to unite the Cenotaph with the Old City and create a new and dynamic destination in the city. This northern space contains the Cenotaph and is dominated by two magnificent plane trees, but is currently isolated by busy traffic and little used by pedestrians. The relocation of the taxi rank into this area provides a new focus for activity in the space, particularly at night.



The design has been developed to facilitate movement patterns through the area whilst creating a range of experiences and opportunities to rest and enjoy this sunny and flat space, which is a precious resource in the city centre. Flowing lines in the seating and paving patterns reflect the water in the underlying River Frome; robust materials and detailing allude to the historic quayside environment, and the geometric forms are influenced by the unique grouping of the surrounding Art Deco buildings: Electricity House, Colston 33, and the Cenotaph itself.



Traffic will be limited to taxis, service vehicles and cycles, thus much of the area will be a shared surface to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movements and events. Cycling will be accommodated in a dedicated two-way route parallel to the taxi/service route to link with the existing cycle network on St Stephens St and Quay St.



The design divides into three distinct character areas:

- **Magpie Park** – the existing listed monuments will remain to form the focus of a wide processional route to the Cenotaph and Electricity House. Lush planting and grass areas, fronted by a long timber seat, will create a green oasis under the mature plane trees. The monument to the 14th ‘Forgotten’ Army will be relocated to have a better relationship with the Cenotaph.
- **Cenotaph** – a new square, surrounded by formal trees, seating and flag poles and focussed on the Cenotaph provides a more appropriate setting for this important civic monument and the Remembrance Sunday ceremony

- **The Quay Head** – a new, flexible, sunny, public space, surrounded by tiered seating, planting and trees, will provide a new focus for events and activity in the city centre. Reflecting the rounded end of Electricity House the design flows under the trees into the Cenotaph square, allowing the spaces to work together for ceremonial occasions but also to function independently. A broad footway along Colston Avenue(east) and the Quay Head will allow the frontage businesses to spill outside onto this sunny edge, animating the space. Lighting will be used creatively to enhance the night time activity of the new Quay Head space.

City Design Group 3.12.13