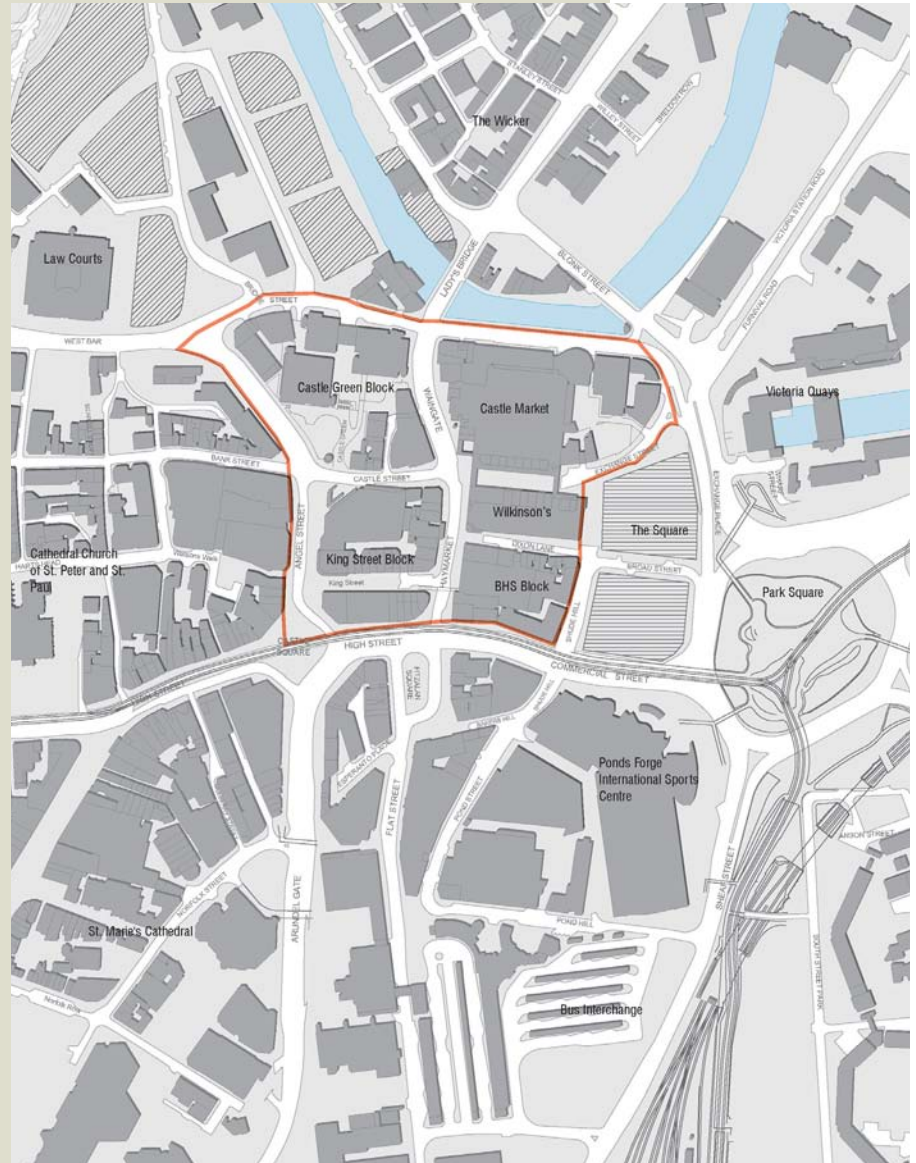

Rediscovery, transformation and development
within Sheffield City Centre.



Castlegate **A New Vision**

> Right: Site Context Plan



Castlegate A New Vision

September 2005

Prepared for: Sheffield City Council

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Introduction

This vision document defines the emerging role of the Castlegate Masterplan area within the new City Centre. It considers how the original historic core of the City can redevelop to become one of the most interesting, diverse and vibrant parts of Sheffield. The Castlegate Masterplan area has the opportunity to fulfill the potential of its strategic location in the north of the City Centre, uniting and focusing a number of existing and planned regeneration initiatives.

Castlegate, the site of the original Sheffield Castle on the confluence of the Rivers Don and Sheaf, was the birthplace of the City and has always been a key area in its development. Markets have existed on the site since 1297 culminating in the present buildings built in the 60s and 70s. Regeneration can help to rediscover and celebrate these great rivers, reveal the original castle site and for the first time connect the city centre back to its waterfront by creating important new public spaces and rescuing the historic streets from the burden of heavy traffic.

Sheffield City Centre overall is undergoing dramatic change. Extensive investment in cultural buildings, public space, the retail quarter and city living is having a marked and welcome impact on the City. This transformation, to a living, vibrant, high quality urban environment can be seen all over the City Centre.

> Right: The River Don, with the existing Hancock & Lant building in the background.

With this change has come a shifting pattern of land use and character. Retailing is changing, the markets are relocating, the Inner Relief Road is well underway and there is a growing demand for city living. With these trends come increasing demands for high quality environments within the City Centre.

The Castlegate Masterplan provides the opportunity to establish a new vision for the area, in light of the proposed relocation of the markets, and critically examine the role of retailing and the movement networks of buses and road traffic.



▲ Above: Brindley Place, Birmingham. Outdoor cafés creating activity.





Context

Sheffield's retail changes are principally aimed at consolidating the retail core and improving the shopping experience. These moves are part of a major and deliberate restructuring of the City Centre, led by the City Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan identifies seven priority projects aimed at developing the economy & bringing substantial private sector investment into the area. The 'New Retail Quarter', sets out to redefine the retail area of the city centre, whilst the 'Heart of City Project', has set out proposals for the economic and physical regeneration of the City Centre.

The effect of these changes however, is to concentrate primary retailing away from the Castlegate area, breaking the link with its principal economic driver to date, and the activity most associated with the area. Castlegate's current dominant land use is secondary retail, which itself has been experiencing relative decline for some years. These factors, in combination with the closure of Castle Market in the next 5 to 10 years provide both the need and the opportunity to redefine the area's role in the City Centre. The present character of the area is associated with the activity created by the markets,

^ Above: Busy Haymarket, dominated by bus traffic yet bustling with activity.

v Below: Exchange Place looking toward Park Square, currently dominated by highways and traffic.



Wilkinson's, other retailers, and the buses. This also results in a public realm largely dominated by traffic during the day and largely unused and uninviting at night. Several of the major buildings in the area are vacant and many more are tired and unattractive.

The changing dynamics of the city are however, also working in Castlegate's favour. The areas to the north of Castlegate have for many years been physically and psychologically cut off from the city centre by traffic passing through the area. Park

Square is the gateway into Sheffield from the M1 and high levels of traffic currently move from here onto surrounding roads. Recently these areas have begun to be regenerated by the growth in residential, office and hotel development, particularly along the riverside and in Victoria Quays. Patterns of activity and demand are changing and the opportunity now exists to stitch back together and regenerate this area of the City, to form a cohesive and attractive city quarter, closely integrated with the rest of the City.



Transport

One of the key drivers for the regeneration of the Castlegate area will be the opening of the Inner Relief Road (IRR), due to be completed by mid 2007. The IRR is now well under way and will reduce traffic by up to 80% on many of the roads to the north and east of the site, which currently divide Castlegate from the riverside areas. This provides an opportunity to transform the character of the area from a congested and intimidating environment designed to keep high volumes of traffic flowing freely; to a more inviting destination and change the balance to a through-route for pedestrians and cyclists which connects easily with surrounding areas. The IRR will dramatically reduce the need for road space

The approach to highways engineering can be replaced by an attractive street environment

and some roads which are currently three lanes in each direction can be reduced to a single carriageway. This will also provide the opportunity to create dedicated cycle lanes and help develop the strategic and national cycle network in the City Centre.

The approach to highways engineering – guard railings, central reservations and staggered crossings - can be replaced by an attractive street environment designed for the pedestrian and cyclist at a more human scale. Areas of carriageway can be reclaimed to provide a vastly improved pedestrian and cyclist environments, with convenient and direct connections between adjoining areas. Outside of the masterplan area, on Park Square Roundabout and Exchange Street, the reductions in highways space could provide additional development opportunity sites exploiting improved connectivity between the Castlegate area and Victoria Quays.



< Left: A photomontage of the proposed pedestrianised Castlegate and suggestions for new mixed use development.

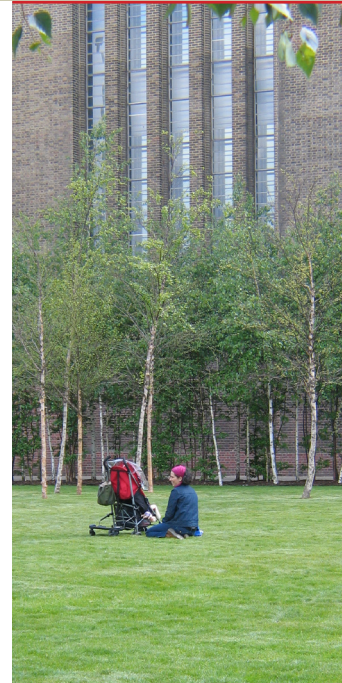
Redefining Castlegate's Role

As well as the significant consolidation and reinvestment in the retail market, the office market in Sheffield is also currently seeing significant growth. A recent study on Sheffield Central Area Activity concluded that over the next ten years, a further 1.5 million sq ft of office space will be required (Knight Frank, 2004). At present there is a potential risk of this target not being met and the economic success of the City being undermined, due to lack of suitable quality locations and increasing competition for sites from other land-uses, particularly residential development.

To the east and north-east of the City Centre are Castlegate, Victoria Quays and the Riverside Quarter which together highlight the potential for a major new office / business district with an outstandingly rich urban setting. Harnessing this demand presents the best opportunities for environmental and economic change within the Castlegate Masterplan area.

The Knight Frank study (2004) identified Castlegate as one of several potential strategic office space locations within the City Centre which could, in part, help address this demand. Already, part of the Castlegate area will see the development of 250,000sqft of new office space as part of 'The Square' development. Other sites within the Castlegate area are seen by the City Council and Sheffield One as strategic locations for office development.

Notwithstanding this need for office space in Sheffield City Centre, there is also a strong, and growing, demand for City Centre Living. Given Castlegate's strategic location within the heart of the City Centre it is expected that residential elements will form a significant part of development proposals. If residential development is to be successful and sustainable in the long-term, it would also be desirable to diversify the existing mix-of-uses in the area, to further promote real City Centre Living, as set out in the Urban Design Compendium and emerging Planning Policy. Successful City Centre living requires high quality environments and local amenities including local shops, bars, hotels, restaurants, community facilities appropriate for local residents, good lighting and an atmosphere of safety and well being. All of these elements can be brought together in the new Castlegate.



^ Above: Riverside public open space at the Tate Modern, in London.

↳ Below: Gainsborough Studios, London. A high quality, high density waterside residential development.

Vision - The Key Components

- **Reconnecting the Castle and the Riverside**
- **Introducing new uses**
- **Transformational project around the Castle**
- **Managing public transport**
- **Building on Strengths**



▲ Above: Flower Market, Manchester.

▼ Below right: Cafe at the Greater London Authority, London.



Reconnecting the Castle and the Riverside

The uncovering of the castle remains and part of the River Sheaf will create a new focus for Castlegate which provides a direct link with the historic roots of Sheffield. Opening up a relationship between the City Centre and the River Don for the first time will also cement the sense of place and character for the new Castlegate and help strengthen the City Centre's vitality. New residential developments can be intertwined with the area's strong cultural history, providing an area of unique character as a setting for City Centre living. By closing Castlegate to all traffic (except for access) a new riverside terrace will be created which is also linked to the castle ruins to form a sequence of new open spaces for this part of the city. The creation of this attractive area, next to the river will encourage connections to the Riverside

Business Crescent and the rest of the City Centre. Adjoining the river there is scope for a concentration of leisure uses – bars, cafes, restaurants and hotels with residential and office use above. Edging the castle remains along Waingate and Exchange Street will be a similar mix of uses but with a retail emphasis at ground floor level. This will create more activity throughout the day and create a safe and vibrant City Centre Quarter at night.

A new and vibrant riverside space will be created.



^ Above: Riverside activity on Southbank, London.

< Right: Outdoor cafes on a pedestrian street in Nyhavn, Copenhagen.



▲ Above: Residential development with roof gardens.

▼ Below: Theatre district, Milton Keynes.

Introducing New Uses

The vision for the new Castlegate is partly an evolution of the existing pattern of uses and partly represents radical change. This split occurs either side of Haymarket. West of Haymarket, towards the City Centre, it is likely that the existing pattern of land-uses will remain broadly similar for the foreseeable future. The King Street block is predominantly made up of retail uses and all indications are that this will remain, adapting to a new customer base as the area evolves. To some extent this is happening already and retailers remain confident of the future.

East of Haymarket the removal of the Castle Market and the completion of the IRR will precipitate major change in this area and unlocks the ability to reveal the castle remains and part of the River Sheaf. This area will have a mix of residential, office, leisure, retail and hotel uses. The east-west route through the heart of the site will be made far more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists through the narrowing of roads, reduction in road traffic, the introduction of cycle lanes, new active frontages and



new buildings which close down previous large gaps in the urban fabric created by the existing road pattern.

Castlegate will remain a destination in its own right, whilst being based on new activities; and also providing strong pedestrian and cycle links to the north of the City Centre, to the Wicker and Victoria Quays. A mixture of large employment and civic uses and new and existing retail outlets will be complemented by residential communities, hotel guests and visitors to the leisure and entertainment activities. The area will be a focus for daytime and evening activity.

Castlegate will include a significant proportion of Office (B1) space, which will help strengthen the Riverside Business Crescent, establish the area as a strategic office location and help address the projected shortfall of office space.

The Castle Green block currently houses the police and magistrates court. The Masterplan accommodates the proposed consolidation of the Police Station and also introduces new office and residential development and small scale leisure uses, as well as enhancing the quality of the public realm.

The net effect of this introduction of new uses is a continual presence of people, creating a safer environment, and the associated economic activity.

Transformational Project Around The Castle

Uncovering the Castle remains and the creation of a new urban park will strengthen the area as a cultural and leisure destination in Sheffield and the wider sub-region. Castlegate will become much more of a mixed use area accommodating some existing large floorspace commercial and retail buildings and interspersing with finer grain elements. Within this expected mix of uses, there will be a significant proportion of business (B1 Office) floorspace within the area. Redevelopment will also remove several of the area's less attractive buildings, such as the Castle Market, creating a better setting for the retained historic elements; such as the Old Courthouse. New development must be of exemplar quality.

New development is subject to archaeological constraints but will be generally four to six storeys high, with the potential for a series of slender residential towers rising above this level to a height of 10 to 14 storeys. These buildings must be striking in their architectural quality, incorporating green balconies, roof gardens and giving spectacular views over the River Don and beyond. This will create a series of new landmarks for the area, replacing the dominant Castle Market building.

Equally importantly, the public realm within the area and connecting to adjoining areas will be radically transformed. Less traffic and a more evenly dispersed bus network to serve the proposed development will create an environment

which reduces conflict and improves safety. Larger areas of pedestrian space and cycle lanes reclaimed from redundant road space will connect easily with adjoining areas. The very extensive network of trams and buses within and around the site gives excellent connections to a wider area.

The character of the area as a whole will be transformed from a rather run-down low value and sometimes threatening retail area to a vibrant and truly mixed use community.

▼ Below: Castle Market Site. Illustration of the proposed mixed use development and open space.



Managing Public Transport

At present Waingate is the main bus route into the City centre from the northern part of the City and many of these buses serve the Castle Market. When the market moves and the IRR has been completed it will provide the opportunity to reassess the management of the buses and some of their routes. The proposed development, set out in the Castlegate Masterplan, will create a different trip generation pattern, and hence some routes may be suitable for rerouting to reflect this.

Clearly, the aim is not to compromise the efficiency of the many City-wide bus-routes which pass through this important conduit. However it is widely accepted that the present concentration of routes is creating adverse environmental conditions that could hinder the regeneration of the Castlegate area. The structural changes outlined above should be taken as an opportunity to completely rethink the management and distribution at the very local level of the public transport routes and facilities.

▼ Below: Illustration of proposed pedestrianisation of Castlegate.



Building on Strengths

The Castlegate Masterplan area contains a number of businesses which continue to be successful and the proposals will build upon this. Importantly, the combination of mix-used development in the area and the proposed range of environmental improvements will create a suitable setting for the listed Old Courthouse and Old Police Station to be brought back into beneficial use.

Three quarters of the street block housing the large vacant BHS store is likely to remain in its current use of retail or as a hotel. The prominent former Sheffield Gas Light Company building may have a number of possible future uses, possibly leisure or hotel related. The important factor, as with the vacant Old Court house is to provide a positive regeneration setting within which bespoke solutions and uses for these historic buildings can be found.

Wilkinson's despite its redundant balcony decks remains an important focus for retail activity in the area and will remain for the foreseeable future. However, if it does move the site should be developed as a mix of smaller scale retail units facing Haymarket with office, residential and leisure uses above.

This principle also applies to the reuse or redevelopment of the BHS building. The ownership and leasing structure of the building may require major changes to enable its redevelopment.

▼ Below: Illustration of proposed public realm improvements on Waingate / Haymarket.



Summary

The historic role of Castlegate as the birthplace of Sheffield has for recent generations been quite literally buried beneath the frenetic activities of the markets, which themselves have existed in this part of the City for over 700 years. The hustle and bustle of the markets and shops have given the area its character and masked the somewhat run-down buildings and public realm, cut off from surrounding areas by large tracts of major highways carrying large volumes of traffic.

This situation is however changing in Sheffield. The markets are moving, and the collar of roads can be radically downgraded. Sheffield is rediscovering its riverside and Castlegate can play the pivotal role in uniting the city centre with the riverside regeneration already well underway. Our vision for Castlegate is to positively harness the wave of change that is moving through Sheffield City Centre.

Transformational projects that uncover the castle remains, uncover the lost River Sheaf and reunite these with the River Don will give a truly unique, historic sense of place to the new Castlegate.

A new setting for offices, homes, leisure, entertainment and retail uses can be created with a spectacular public realm of riverside terraces, public spaces celebrating Sheffield's history and new easy connections to surrounding areas.

Castlegate will be an important crossroads in the emerging structure of Sheffield, a place of transition making vital connections from the city centre to the riverside and surrounding districts. It will continue to be a destination in its own right, but with a new character and purpose facing to the future of Sheffield; whilst at the same time being a cultural focus celebrating the city's past.



▼ Below: Proposed Hancock & Lant development, view from Blonk Bridge



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