

THE WORKS

Swindon's home for heritage,
knowledge and big ideas

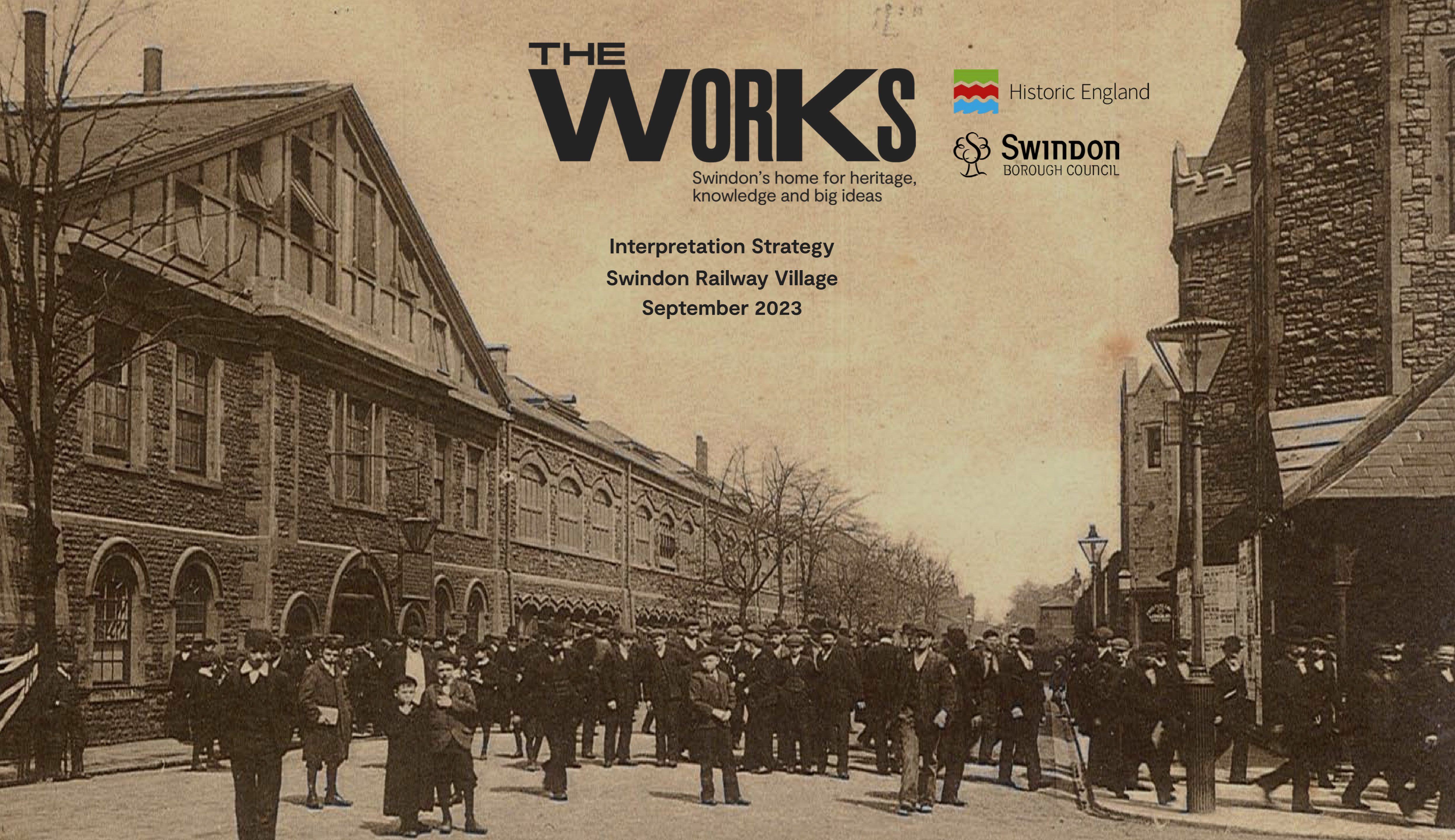


Historic England



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Interpretation Strategy Swindon Railway Village September 2023



INTRODUCTION

The strategy will help to create and promote a coherent narrative of Swindon's social history connected to its railway heritage.

This Interpretation Strategy aims to enable partners to develop a compelling and engaging interpretive offer that pays tribute to Swindon's railway heritage and its people.

The strategy is designed to be flexible, enabling it to adapt to changing circumstances and incorporate new ideas as they emerge. This approach means that the interpretive offer may remain relevant, providing an enduring and memorable experience for visitors and residents over time.

It has been prepared with considerable input from relevant stakeholders who took part in two consultation workshops on 20th and 21st March 2023, attended by 25 stakeholders.

It was developed with the support of CBA Studios.

What is interpretation?

Interpretation at its simplest is a form of communication. Heritage interpretation is a means by which aspects of culture, tradition and the historic environment can be meaningfully communicated to an audience through storytelling. Freeman Tilden, widely regarded as a pioneer of interpretation provided the following all-encompassing definition of heritage interpretation:

*'An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.'*¹

Successful interpretation is not aimed solely at imparting factual information to an audience, but aims to stimulate imaginations, evoke emotions and provoke certain feelings within the audience. In this sense, successful interpretation aims to transmit the deeper levels of meaning that lie behind facts.

Interpretation can be used as a tool to inspire connections between audiences, places, events and people of the past and present. It can enhance encounters that audiences have with objects, assets, places and stories. Interpretation can take various forms, including visual displays, exhibitions, installations and artwork. Websites, social media, applications, audio guides, podcasts and games can also come under this umbrella; as well as more personal encounters such as living history exhibits, events, performance, tours and guides.

¹ Tilden, F. (1957) *Interpreting Our Heritage*

Why is a strategy needed?

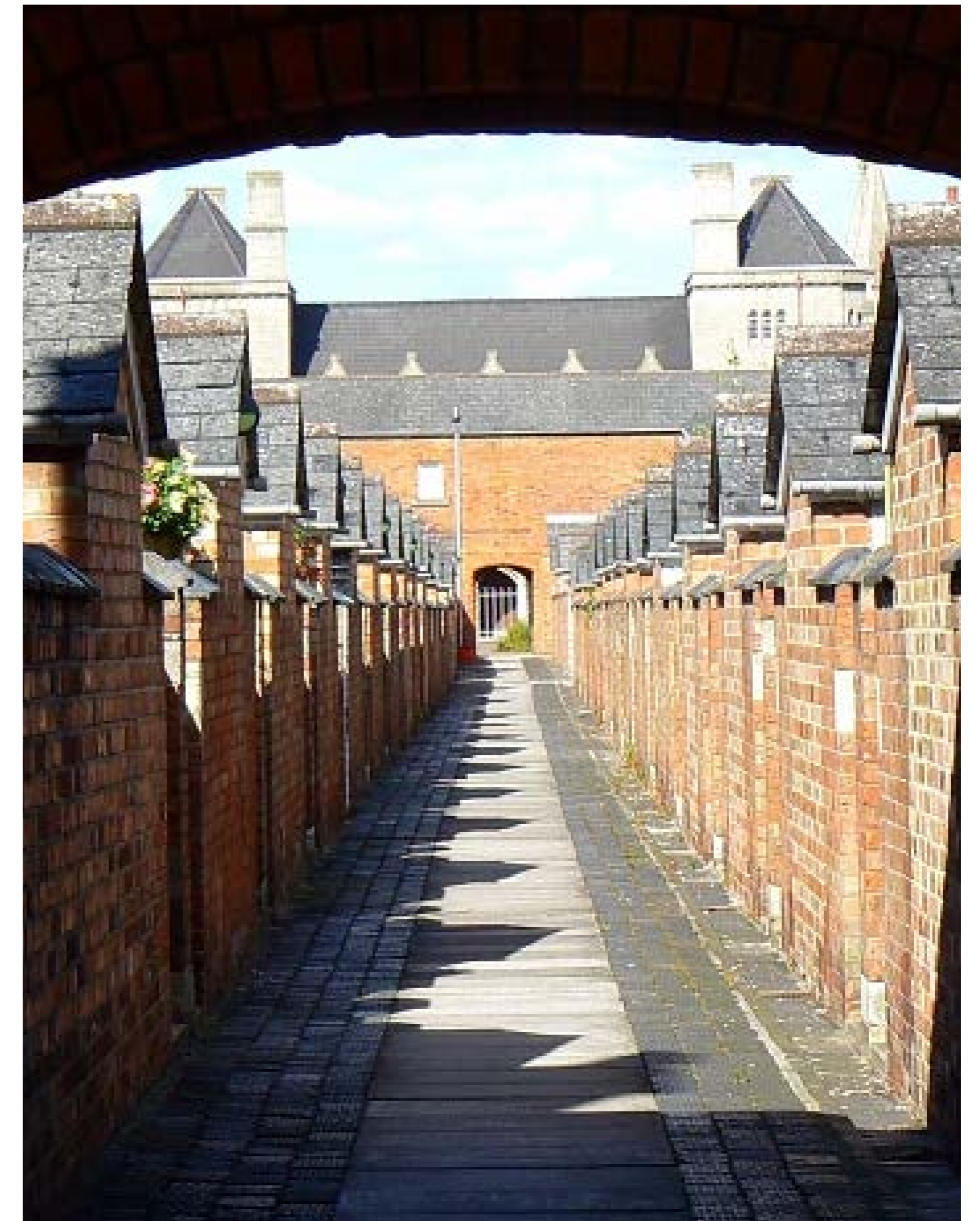
The Railway Village is currently being revitalised through the Heritage Action Zone which brings funding and support from Historic England and which has subsequently attracted additional funding from the Town Deal. The aim is to create an appealing, pedestrian neighbourhood with a historic atmosphere and enhanced cultural, leisure and employment facilities. The five-year HAZ Delivery Plan includes projects to improve heritage assets and the public spaces in which they are located. In order to change perceptions of Swindon and encourage further investment and activities, there is a need to promote Swindon as a place of historic interest worth visiting. Successful heritage interpretation will play a significant role in this task and the HAZ has provided an opportunity to produce an interpretation strategy that can guide commissioning and delivery.

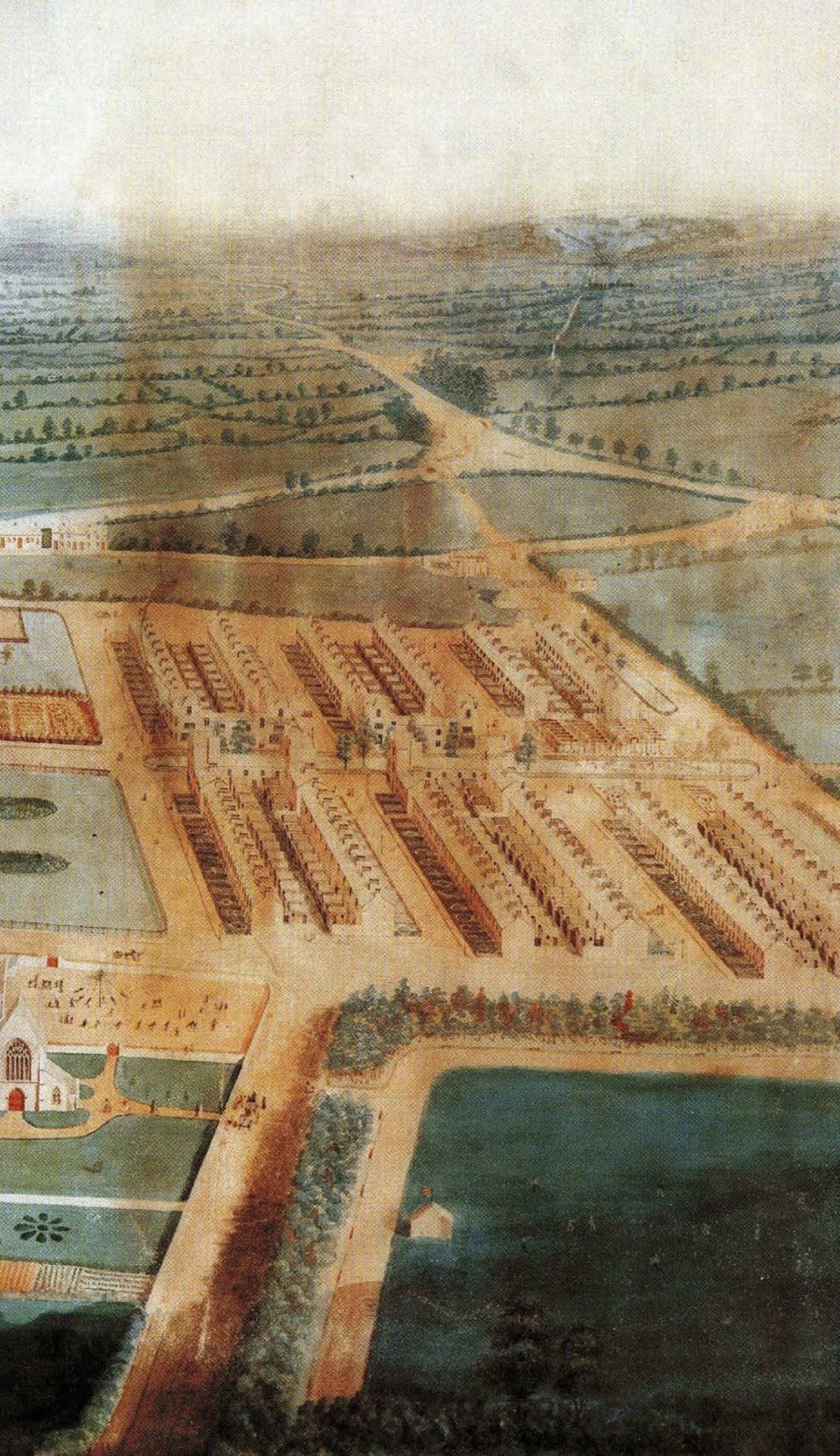
Currently the Railway Village is somewhat of a blank canvas in terms of interpretation. Whilst the stories of the railway itself, its pioneers and GWR are already well presented at STEAM museum, there is an opportunity to expand the narrative to include the social history of the Railway Village itself. The village is a 'time-capsule', fundamentally unchanged since the 19th century. It is a place where imaginations can travel back in time to the pioneering spirit of people as place-makers and innovators, something that continues today.

Interpretation can provide inspiring and engaging experiences and raise awareness of those who shaped the history of the Railway Village.

This strategy seeks to provide direction and help to guide storytelling across the Railway Village. It aims to help partners develop a cohesive, meaningful, and well-connected interpretation offer that harnesses heritage to create a dynamic and vibrant space that honours the past and inspires the future.

This Interpretation Strategy is not a detailed design guide to what future interpretation may look and feel like (although some inspiration is provided), but rather a high-level vision for what the interpretation should achieve.





Swindon's Railway Village

Home to the Great Western Railway, once one of the largest industrial sites in Europe that has supported communities up to the present, Swindon and its heritage is of national and local significance. It is largely made up of GWR's planned Railway Village and The Works, once the headquarters of railway operations surrounding the railway line. Much of the area is of architectural and historical interest, recognised by its designation as the Swindon's Railway Conservation Area, with almost all buildings also recognised through grade listings.

The surviving elements of the Railway Village provide an insight into one of the most significant and important railway establishments in the world. 'One of Britain's finest monuments to the early days of the railway age'² was in operation for almost 150 years. The decision by the GWR to locate their railway works here was essential to the success and development of Swindon. Since then, Swindon's cultural identity has been closely tied to the GWR. Isambard Kingdom Brunel chose the medieval market town of Swindon to be the location of the locomotive workshops of the new railway.

People from far and wide relocated to Swindon, with many living in the Railway Village. The village is one of the most significant industrial housing estates of its period, and an exemplar model village. Its historic character remains today. It has been described as '*an almost complete planned railway settlement of the 1840s and early 1850s, unrivalled in its state of preservation by Crewe, Wolverton and Derby, England's other surviving railway company settlements.*'³ This success transformed Swindon from a small market town into a settlement of 230,000 people.

Many aspects of the Railway Village were funded by the GWR company instigated by its workers, demonstrating their commitments to a holistic community, their pioneering spirit and contribution to future public lending libraries and the National Health Service. The village became a centre for civic pride and social activism, with people at the forefront of progress. This legacy of history, innovation, and collaboration continues to influence the town's identity, forming a solid foundation for both social and technological advancement.

² Cattell, J & Falconer, K. (1995) Swindon: the Legacy of a Railway Town. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

³ Cattell, J & Falconer, K. (1995) Swindon: the Legacy of a Railway Town. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

VISION FOR INTERPRETATION

Celebrate civic pride, social action and people as place makers and history makers.

Celebrate the historic legacy, innovative spirit and collaborative culture of the people who lived in the Railway Village, through meaningful, connected and varied storytelling across the area.

Promote a deeper understanding and connection with Swindon's railway heritage and the people who shaped it.

Help Swindon become better known for its Railway Village, heritage, culture and regeneration, encouraging visits to the area.

PRIORITY AUDIENCES

Who is the interpretation for?

Thinking about audiences is crucial for creating engaging, relevant, educational, and accessible experiences that meet the needs and interests of a diverse range of people. Different groups of visitors may have different backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge, and therefore may require different approaches to interpretation. The goal is to create a range of interpretation that is layered for different audience groups with different abilities, pre-existing knowledge and interests. The following **priority** audience groups have been devised based on consultation with locals and stakeholders, and reflect anticipated visitors to Swindon's Railway Village. They are based on shared values and interests and consider both visitors and residents:

Audience group	Who might they include?	What might drive their visit?	What feelings might be evoked?
Engaged community members	Local people, school children, college students, friends and family	Uncovering local and personal histories, learning	pride, nostalgia, ownership, curiosity
Nostalgic heritage fans / passionate specialists	Railways/model village enthusiasts, social history enthusiasts, specific interest groups, hobbyists	Discovery, education, revitalisation	pride, nostalgia, curiosity
Avid cultural consumers	Local people, residents within nearby counties, existing heritage subscribers/ members	Discovery, learning, revitalisation, nice day out	nostalgia, curiosity
Entertainment seekers	Shoppers, school children, college students, local people, friends and family	Sightseeing, relaxation, food and drink, cultural activities	nostalgia, curiosity

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

How do we do it well?

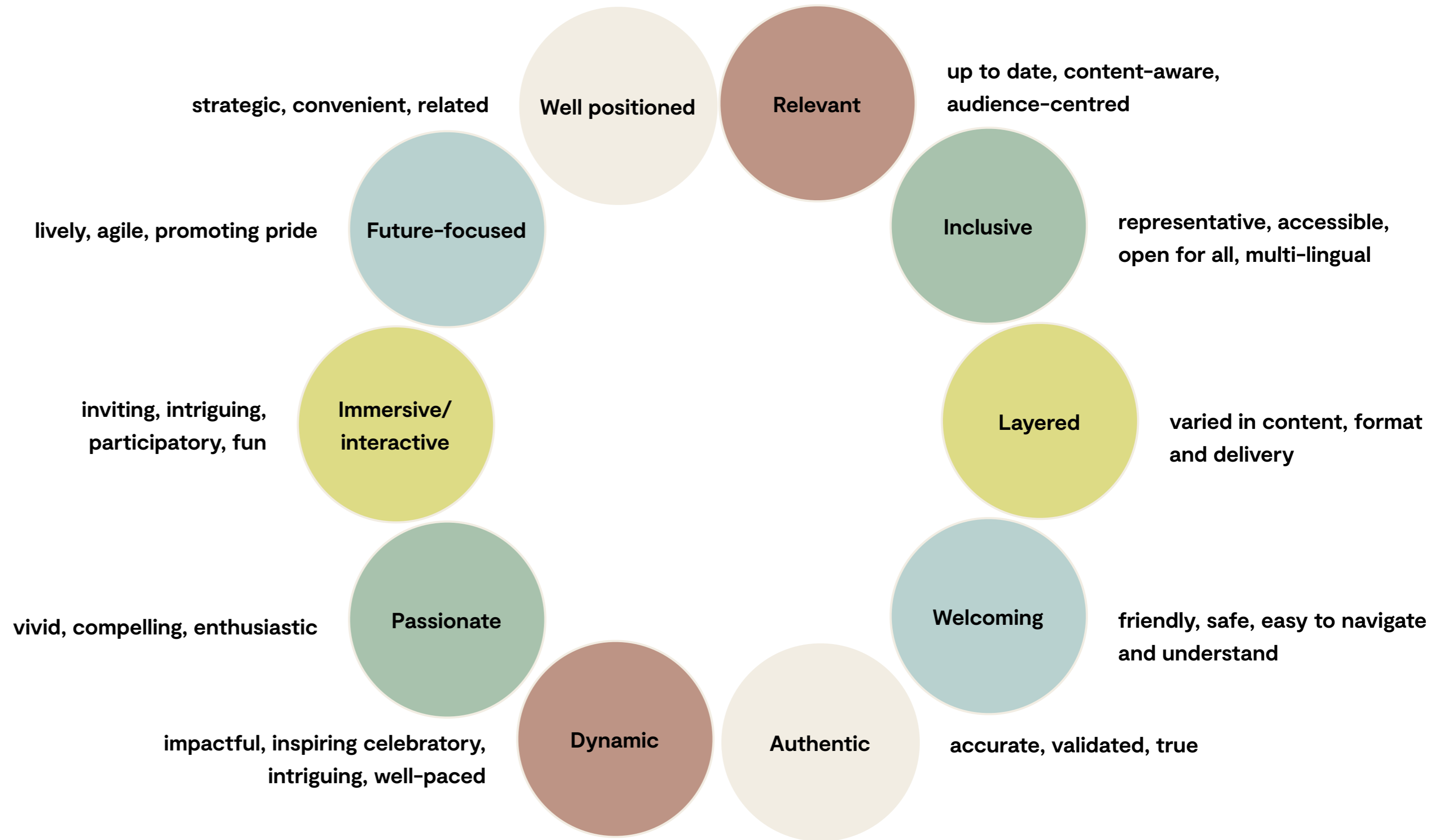
Guiding principles provide a clear framework for decision-making throughout the development process. They can also help to ensure that interpretation is consistent with the Vision for Interpretation and 'The Works' Place Values and Brand Identity Guide. Grounding interpretation in these principles can help it to contribute to a more authentic and meaningful experience for visitors, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the Railway Village and its history. Principles specific to interpretation in Swindon's Railway Village:

Principle	Why?
Express 'The Works' Place Values*	Using them to shape all interpretation will help to ensure alignment with other public facing material
Communicate who we are*	Cementing this through use of language, tone, graphics and imagery will help to ensure alignment with other public facing material
Promote connectivity and linkages	Cross-promoting places, spaces and assets through connected storytelling will help to encourage visitor exploration and enable wider storytelling
Work with local people	Not only are their insights highly valuable but conversations during the development process will help to continue the legacy of partnerships and cohesion, and help to ensure local aspirations of local people
Tell stories that evoke emotions, and don't just transmit facts	Fostering emotions in all interpretation will help to create meaningful and memorable encounters. See page 13 Storytelling with Emotions

*see Swindon HAZ Place Values (Appendix A)

Guiding Principles

All interpretation should be:



Principles ensure interpretation can contribute to a more authentic and meaningful experience for visitors

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

What stories do we want to tell?

Themes provide a unifying structure and sense of purpose. They allow the audience to make connections between seemingly disparate pieces of information, creating a more meaningful and engaging experience that encourages deeper understanding and retention of information. They help to guide the development of interpretive content and programming, ensuring that each element contributes to a cohesive and coherent whole.⁴

The Big Idea

The Big Idea represents an overarching theme. It's what the audience should go away remembering – the primary message to communicate. It's the foundation on which everything else sits and it's imperative that it's kept in mind when developing interpretation at any stage.

Swindon's Railway Village was a hub for civic pride and social action with people at the heart of progress as place makers and history makers. The historic legacy, innovative spirit and collaborative culture continues to shape the town's identity, providing a foundation for social and technological progress.

⁴ The themes for the Railway Village tie in with 'The Works' Place Values and Brand Identity Guide were established in 2022 to which all public facing interventions within the HAZ should adhere. See Appendix A.

Interpretive Themes

Whilst the Big idea encapsulates what the overall offer is about, Interpretive Themes help to organise key stories, grouping together related elements to provide a framework for guiding storytelling, and making sense of vast histories and ideas. They provide a way to distil complex information into an easily understood concept that connects with audiences on an emotional level, encouraging deeper engagement and a greater appreciation of significance. Themes can also help to differentiate a particular offer from another, providing variety, and a draw to different parts of the offer. Themes help to ensure messaging and content is aligned and focused on the Big Idea, enhancing the overall visitor experience and increasing the impact of the interpretive effort.

Three Interpretive Themes have been identified to guide storytelling around the Railway Village, and within each theme there are an initial list of key stories:

“Themes help to create meaning and engagement by providing a sense of purpose and coherence to our experiences. They give structure to our thoughts and emotions, allowing us to connect with others on a deeper level and find greater meaning in our lives.”
- Brené Brown, American research professor, storyteller, and author.

1. Community Life: Celebrating the vibrant community spirit of Swindon’s Railway Village, past and present

Swindon’s Railway Village is a shining example of a community coming together to create new places and spaces that reflected their needs as a working community. This Theme encompasses aspects of the Railway Village that reflect peoples’ daily lives, including social and recreational activities, communal worship, education, domestic and neighbourhood life. This Theme can extend to existing communities and how these are configured within the Railway Village. Many surviving tangible assets are considered to reflect the Theme of Community Life, including the Mechanic’s Institute, GWR cottages, former businesses and pubs, the GWR park, St Mark’s Church and the former GWR school buildings.

Key stories

Recreation, social activities, daily life, houses and streets, regeneration and reuse, transportation, activities at the Mechanic’s Institute (education, opera, library etc), The Trip, Children’s Fete, military action, community war efforts, social mobility, community organisations.



Interpretive Themes

2. Working Life: A 'day in the life' of a GWR worker and their family

The GWR transformed Swindon from a small rural settlement into the large industrial town it became. Being a worker at the Swindon Works was hard, physical and at times dangerous. However, working in such a vital industry as part of a close-knit community clearly inspired feelings of purpose, pride and belonging. Stories of working life, not just of GWR workers but also of their families in the home and community, can be used to highlight the connections between the Works and the Railway Village. It is important to emphasise that this theme is not focussed on the history of the GWR Works (which are already covered at STEAM Museum) but more on how working life and the Railway Village shaped one another and communities. Many surviving tangible assets relate to 'day in the life' stories, including the Mechanic's Institute, the The Tunnel, the Carriage Works and the Water Tower.

Key stories

Daily commute, The Works, GWR as an employer, connections with the wider world, women's work, apprentice's work, skills, economy, illness, risk, opportunities, promotion/advancement, working relationships, military action, connections to rest of UK



Interpretive Themes

3. Medical Legacy: Healthcare funded by the people for the people – a blueprint for our NHS

Swindon's pioneering of universal healthcare, as best embodied by the GWR Medical Fund Society, is a source of both immense civic pride and historical curiosity. This Theme aims to provide a focus for this pride by exploring New Swindon's trailblazing response to public health when faced with the serious health risks associated with dangerous working conditions, overcrowding and inadequate sanitation and water supply. Medical Legacy covers public sanitation, disease prevention, healthcare access, and medical innovation, as well as the organisations and ideologies which made this universally accessible. This Theme aims to highlight the Railway Village's key role in the national movement of universal healthcare and the pioneering role ordinary people played in building this system in New Swindon. Many surviving tangible assets are considered to embody and communicate Swindon's proud Medical Legacy, including the unique Health Hydro, Park House, the Medical Fund Hospital (Community Centre).

Key stories

Education, health and wellbeing, social action, Medical Fund, Medical Fund Society, healthcare services, volunteer doctors and nurses, NHS



Storytelling with Emotions

What might audiences feel?

Interpretation can help audiences become immersed in a story and respond emotionally. Whilst everyone is different, and everyone brings their own knowledge and experience with them, it is possible to elicit one or more universal emotions, fostering a deeper connection and more enjoyable and memorable experiences. A recent study by the Association of Independent Museums⁵, revealed that there are nine key emotions: pride, fulfilment, hope, belonging, nostalgia, ownership, curiosity, awe and excitement. Interpretation can encourage one or more of these responses in relation to the past, present and future, and in relation to ourselves.

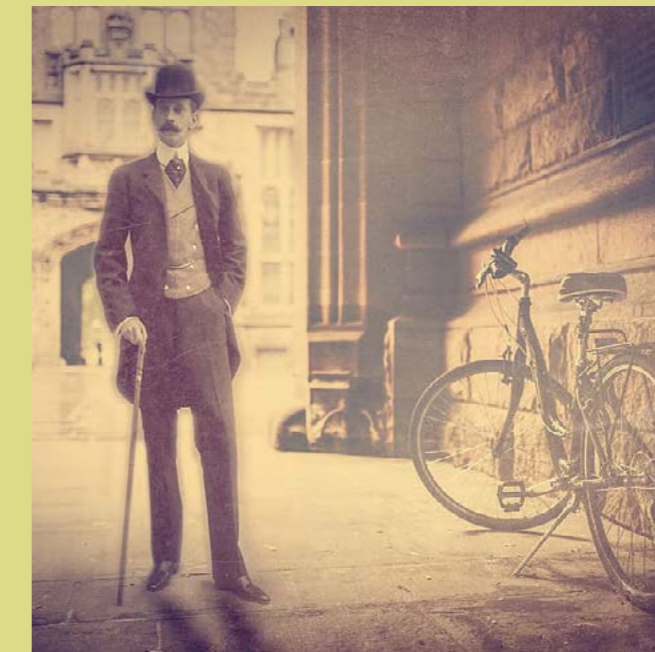
The following sets of key emotions are embedded in the Railway Village's past and present. Keeping them at the core of interpretation can provide a sense of continuity and connection with the past whilst bringing them into the future.



1. Pride & Fulfilment



2. Ownership & Belonging



3. Nostalgia



4. Curiosity & Excitement

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” – Maya Angelou

Storytelling with Emotions

Interpretation in the Railway Village might make people feel...

1. Pride & Fulfilment

Helping people feel proud: of their identity, of their heritage, of their community. Celebrating the collective achievements of past communities and the legacy of their actions, as well as current regeneration and progress.

Feelings of pride and fulfilment can help create a sense of **purpose**, feeling a part of something bigger than ourselves, giving experiences meaning and creating a sense of common ground. Making a positive difference and playing an important role in society, with a duty to preserve stories for future generations.

2. Ownership & Belonging

Enabling people to feel like collective owners: of their heritage, of their home and of their future. Promoting active ownership, investment, collaboration, participation, and the sharing of diverse perspectives and memories.

Feelings of ownership and belonging can help create a sense of **connection** with place, people and the past. It can connect us with historic owners and help us to think about future owners and their needs.

3. Nostalgia

Bringing the past to life through nostalgic experiences. Highlighting memories, longstanding places, spaces, objects and ideas. Transporting us to another world, showing us how those before us lived.

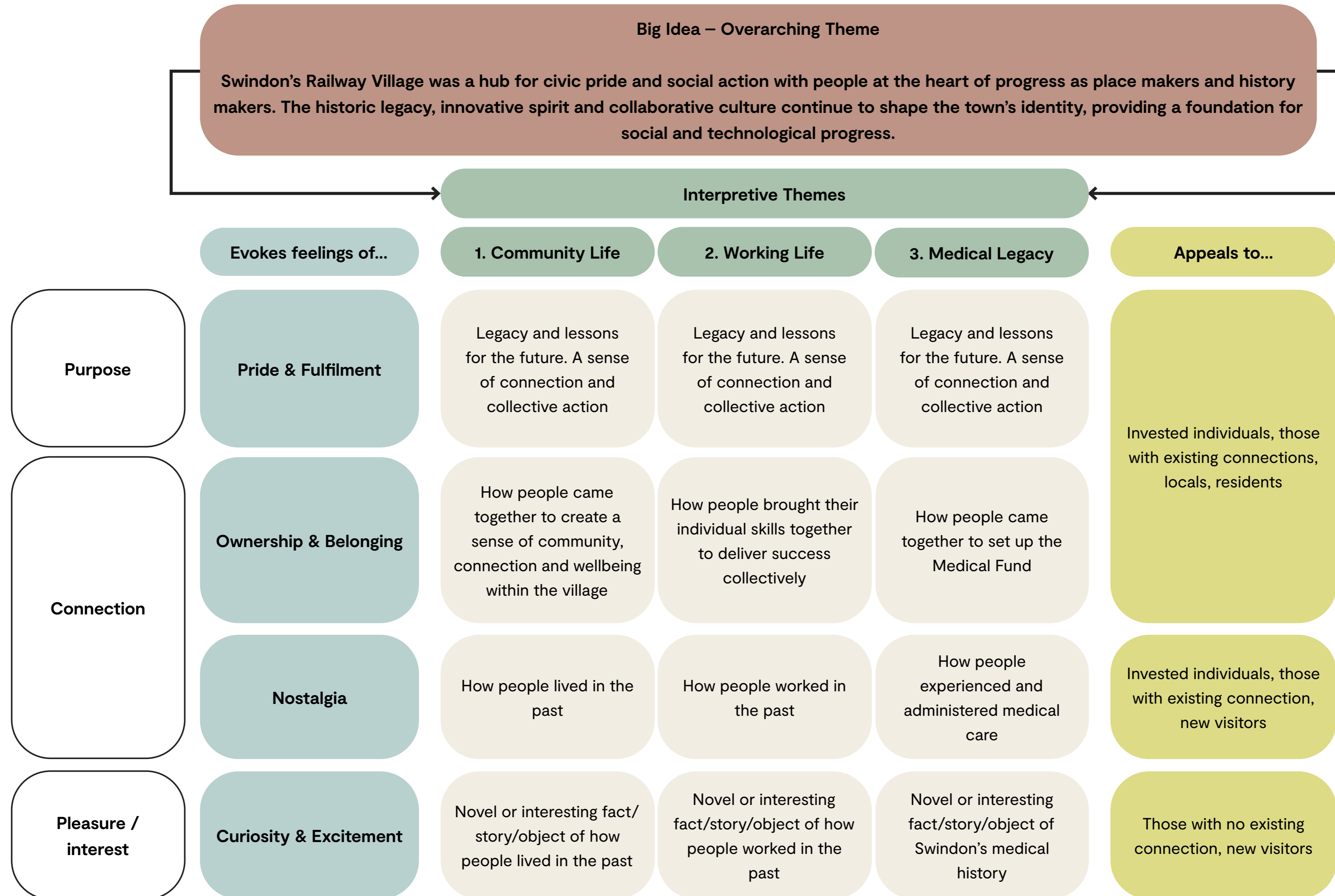
Nostalgia can help create a sense of **connection** with place, people and the past. It can connect us with our ancestors, and help us think about what we might leave behind for future generations.

4. Curiosity & Excitement

Helping people feel curious about themselves, the world before them, and the perspectives of others. Provoking people to ask themselves questions and to seek out answers. Providing surprising encounters and the discovery of intriguing and unusual stories.

Being curious can help drive feelings of **pleasure** and **interest** in place, people and the past, providing entertainment and enjoyment and provide a setting for activities and participation.

Storytelling with Emotions



Assets and Places

There are a number of key assets and places that play an important role in the character of the Railway Village. All key assets have the potential to be incorporated into, or form a part of, interpretation. Some assets will have the capacity to communicate particular stories more strongly than others, due to them having a direct connection to an interpretative theme, their location and accessibility, their current use and condition. There are a number of buildings and places that are not deemed suitable for incorporation, and therefore have been omitted.

- 1 GWR Park
- 2 St Mark's Church
- 3 Mechanics' Institute
- 4 Railway Village – Cottages and Streets
- 5 Emlyn Square
- 6 Carriage Works
- 7 The Tunnel
- 8 Water Tower
- 9 Railway Village Museum
- 10 Medical Fund Hospital
- 11 Health Hydro
- 12 Park House
- 13 Former Model Lodging House, later Wesleyan chapel
- 14 Western Flyer/underpass
- 15 The Queen's Tap and Great Western Hotel
- 16 Swindon Station Entrance
- 17 The Works (north of the tracks)



add asset names and street names !!

Assets and Places

1. GWR Park

The land of the GWR Park was originally purchased in 1844 for the use of workers and their families. The Park began to take shape in the second half of the 19th century with the laying out of formal gardens, the construction of gates, a cricket pavilion, a lodge, band stand and drinking fountain. The Park was used as the forum for numerous community events, including a children's fete which ran from 1866-1939. It was also essential in the health and wellbeing of residents, past and present, and is bordered by several assets relating to the village's medical history. The Park is the largest area of green space in the Railway Village and Town Centre. It provides key views towards other historical assets, particularly Park House, the Water Tower, St Mark's Church and the cottages and streets. The park is fully accessible from several sides and continues to be well used by locals.



2. St Mark's Church

The Church was established to serve the parishioners of the newly constructed Railway Village in the 1840s, following an appeal for public contributions. The Church, designed by George Gilbert Scott and William Moffatt, was dedicated to St Mark in 1845 and is located immediately south of the railway, west of the Railway Village cottages and north of the GWR Park. The Church and its grounds are visually connected to GWR Park, representing an extended area of green space and is a tall landmark building that is visible from several vantage points. The Church has direct links to the communities of the past and contains memorials to key figures in the development of the Works.



Theme 1: Community Life

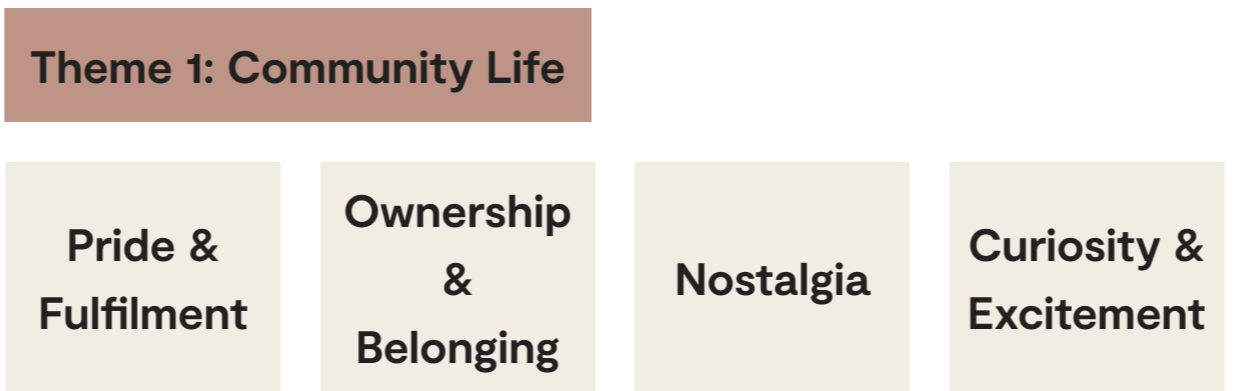
Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement



3. Mechanics' Institute

The New Swindon Mechanics' Institution was an organisation formed in 1844 by employees of the recently established Swindon Works. The group functioned as a social club for the railway workers that facilitated various social events, book loans, lectures and concerts. The group was originally headquartered in the Works before moving into their permanent meeting place on Emlyn Square in 1855. The Mechanic's Institute was also a centre for education and entertainments with a theatre, library, public baths and market stalls. It was the communal heart of Swindon for many years and was designated as a Listed building in 1970. This asset benefits from its central and accessible location, at the centre of the Railway Village and immediately opposite Bristol Street Tunnel.

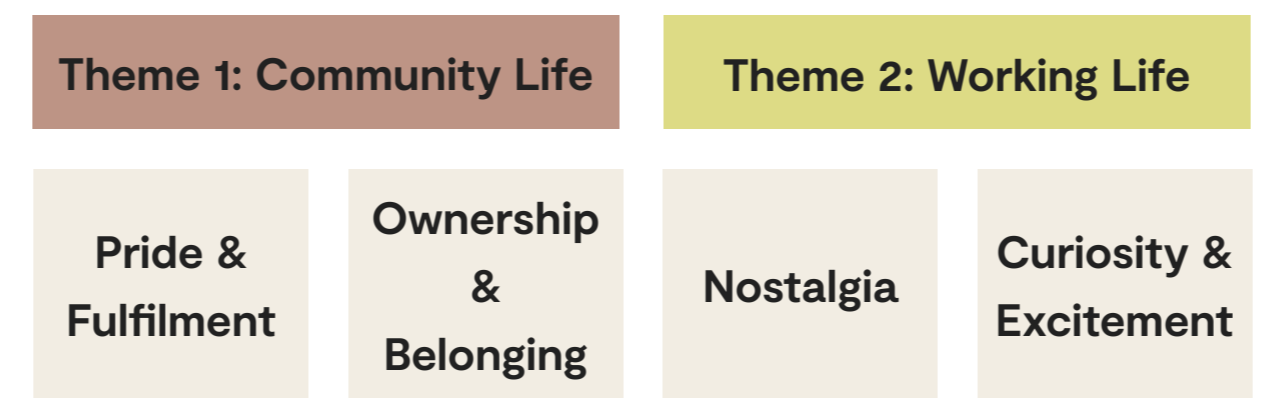


4. Railway Village – Cottages and Streets

The majority of the Railway Village itself comprises the terraced houses and associated buildings located south of the railway line which formed the historic core of New Swindon. Most of the village was constructed in tandem with the Works over the 1840s and 1850s. Construction was carried out in several phases, with the village forming two separate blocks either side of Emlyn Square. This was the natural choice to locate the Mechanic’s Institute, occupying a central role, which for many years played a central role in the civic life of Swindon, both physically and socially. The historic buildings were recognised for their significance in the 1960s, with Conservation Area status first applied in 1975.



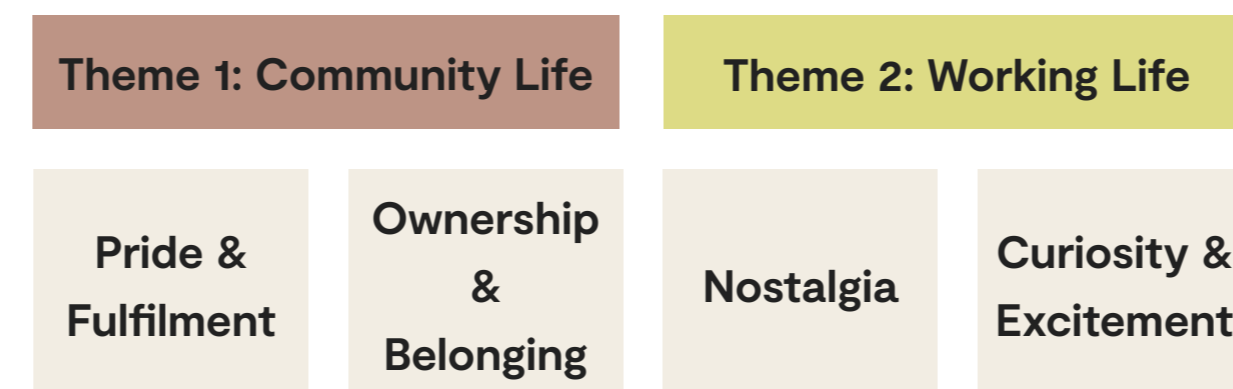
This asset also includes the Railway Village Museum located on Faringdon Road, which forms an important part of the area’s story, offering an insight into the lives of the Victorian Railway workers.



Assets and Places

5. Emlyn Square

Emlyn Square lies in the very centre of the Railway Village and bridges the gap between the east and west halves of the cottages and streets. The northern half contains the Mechanics Institute and entrance to The Tunnel, whilst the southern half backs on to Medical Fund Hospital. Originally, this wide promenade was sometimes used for covered markets, and is now a pedestrian and vehicular route from Faringdon Road to Bristol Street and London Street.



6. Carriage Works & Bristol St Car Park

The Carriage Works were established in an area of land immediately south of the railway from 1868-1880, and comprised workshops, a carriage trimming shop and an adjoining open-air sawmill. The Carriage Works surround the pedestrian tunnel which was opened in 1870. These structures represent a phase of transition in the development of the works, during which time the works became a major producer of GWR carriages.

Today, the Carriage Works are undergoing major refurbishment. Parts of the site already converted to contemporary offices, research and educational facilities, creating a modern business campus within the character and stature of these Grade II listed industrial buildings. The Works have high historical significance and have an increasingly important economic function.

Bristol Street Car Park is also a key location for arrival information and interpretation with plans for enhanced landscaping underway to enhance the offer.



Theme 2: Working Life

Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement

7. The Tunnel

The Tunnel located on Bristol Street was established in 1870 in order to provide safe access for workers between the Railway Village and works to the north, following a number of accidents on the line. The tunnel is incorporated into the structures of the Carriage Works and is still used as the main pedestrian access point between the northern and southern sections of the former Works and village. Its connection to the daily experiences of GWR workers, its spatial connection to the Mechanic's institute, and the convenience it offers in terms of access, make it a key location for an interpretive offer.



Theme 2: Working Life

Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement



8. Water Tower

The Water Tower was constructed in 1870 to provide a store of water for use in the Works. The tower itself is constructed of cast iron and located between the railway Village and St Mark's Church, immediately south of the railway line. The water tower is a local landmark that contributes to the distinct historic character of the Railway Village.



Theme 2: Working Life

Curiosity & Excitement

9. Railway Village Museum

The Railway Village Museum at 34 Faringdon Road is a museum housed within one of the the original worker's cottages at the south of the Railway Village. Now part of the Mechanic's Institute Trust, it is maintained as a typical worker's house of c.1900. Whilst the museum provides interpretation within itself, there is potential for it to be incorporated into interpretation outside of the building, potentially providing a draw to the wider Railway Village.



Theme 1: Community Life

Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement



10. Medical Fund Hospital

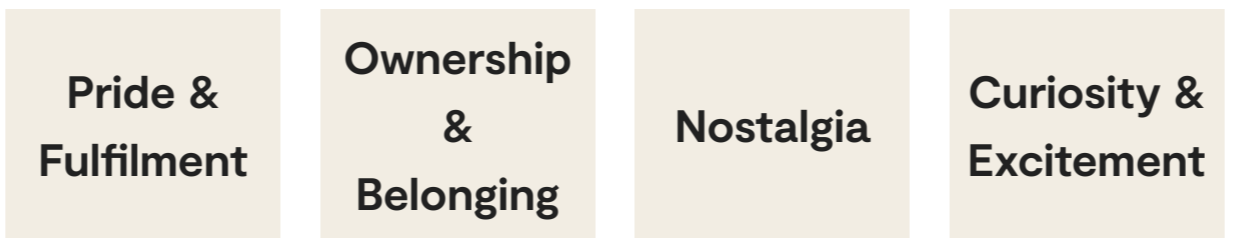
The Hospital was originally constructed as the Armoury of the Railway Village in 1862, before being converted to the Medical Fund Hospital in 1871, funded by the GWR Medical Fund Society. In 1960 the Hospital was repurposed as the Central Community Centre, and the structure was listed in 1970. The Hospital is thematically tied to the Health Hydro and its connection to Swindon's proud heritage of pioneering universal healthcare. Like the Health Hydro, the Hospital evokes feelings of pride for members of the community and could be a focus of historical interest in the ideological origins of our National Health Service.



11. Health Hydro

The Health Hydro was constructed in 1891 as the GWR Medical Fund Baths and Dispensary, with further additions carried out over the following two decades. Construction of the Baths was funded by the GWR Medical Fund Society, originally founded in 1847 as the Sick Club, in response to endemic health issues experienced by the working population. The Baths were first designated as a Listed Building in 2000, but upgraded to Grade II* in 2019 in recognition of their historical and architectural significance. The Health Hydro is relevant to themes of public health and the provision of universal healthcare, which was pioneered by the GWR workers and is symbolically embodied in the Hydro building. It evokes feelings of pride for members of the community and still plays an active role in public health through its continued leisure provision in the form of swimming pool and Turkish Baths.

Theme 3: Medical Legacy



10. Park House

Park House was constructed in 1877 on the south-western edge of the Railway Village as a practising surgery and home for the resident GWR doctor. Park House is an intrinsic part of New Swindon's story of universal healthcare, and conveniently forms part of a structural and thematic grouping with the health Hydro and the Medical Fund Hospital. The House is currently used as private office space, however, it forms an important visual component of the townscape, prominent in easterly views from the GWR park and defining the south-western edge of the Railway Village.



Theme 3: Medical Legacy

Curiosity & Excitement

13. Former Model Lodging House, later Wesleyan chapel

The Former Model Lodging House was constructed in 1847 to house single workers who were unable to be accommodated in the Railway Village. The House was unpopular, and little used by workers, resulting in it being converted into a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in 1869, which it would remain as until 1962 when the building became home to the GWR museum. Today, the building is used as an arts and performance centre. The House represents an early period in the development of the Railway Village, including planning to address housing shortages, and its bold gothic architectural style stands out from the surrounding cottages. The changing function of the building reflects the changing needs of the community and today, though no longer religious, is still a social hub.



Theme 1: Community Life

Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement

14. Western Flyer/underpass

The former route of the Wilts and Berks Canal passes through the Railway Village along Canal Walk and Bridge Street, adjoining Fleming Way and passing under the railway line along what is now Western Flyer footpath, located to the east of the Railway Village. The Canal represents a phase of Swindon's industrialisation prior to the arrival of the railway, and was used as a means to transport materials during construction of the Works. However there is no interpretation in place to communicate the route's legible link to the Canal. The Western Flyer underpass is surrounded by open car park space. It currently isn't well used but is being refurbished in 2023/24 with the aim of encouraging greater use by pedestrians and cyclists.



Theme 2: Working Life

Pride & Fulfilment	Curiosity & Excitement
--------------------	------------------------

15. The Queen's Tap and Great Western Hotel

The Queen's Tap was constructed around 1840-1850, while the Great Western Hotel was built around 1870. Both establishments served as hotels and are located opposite the train station, long offering accommodation to visitors to New Swindon since the establishment of the Works. The location and function of the hotels ties them thematically with Swindon Station. Despite their distance from the Railway Village centre, the hotels form a part of the broader story of New Swindon.



Theme 1: Community Life

Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement



16. Swindon Station Entrance

Swindon Station was originally opened in 1842 to Brunel's designs, during construction of the Railway Village and the Works. The station is located to the east of both the Works and village and still comprises original elements which have been designated in recognition of their historic and architectural interest. The Station is a major transportation link for the town and a primary access point to the Railway Village.

For visitors arriving by train, the Station and surrounding area, including assets such as the two original hotels opposite, is their first experience of Swindon. There is currently no interpretation but ample space which could provide a tangible focal point for stories of Swindon as a railway town, heritage interpretation, mapping and direction to the Railway Village.



Theme 2: Working Life

Nostalgia

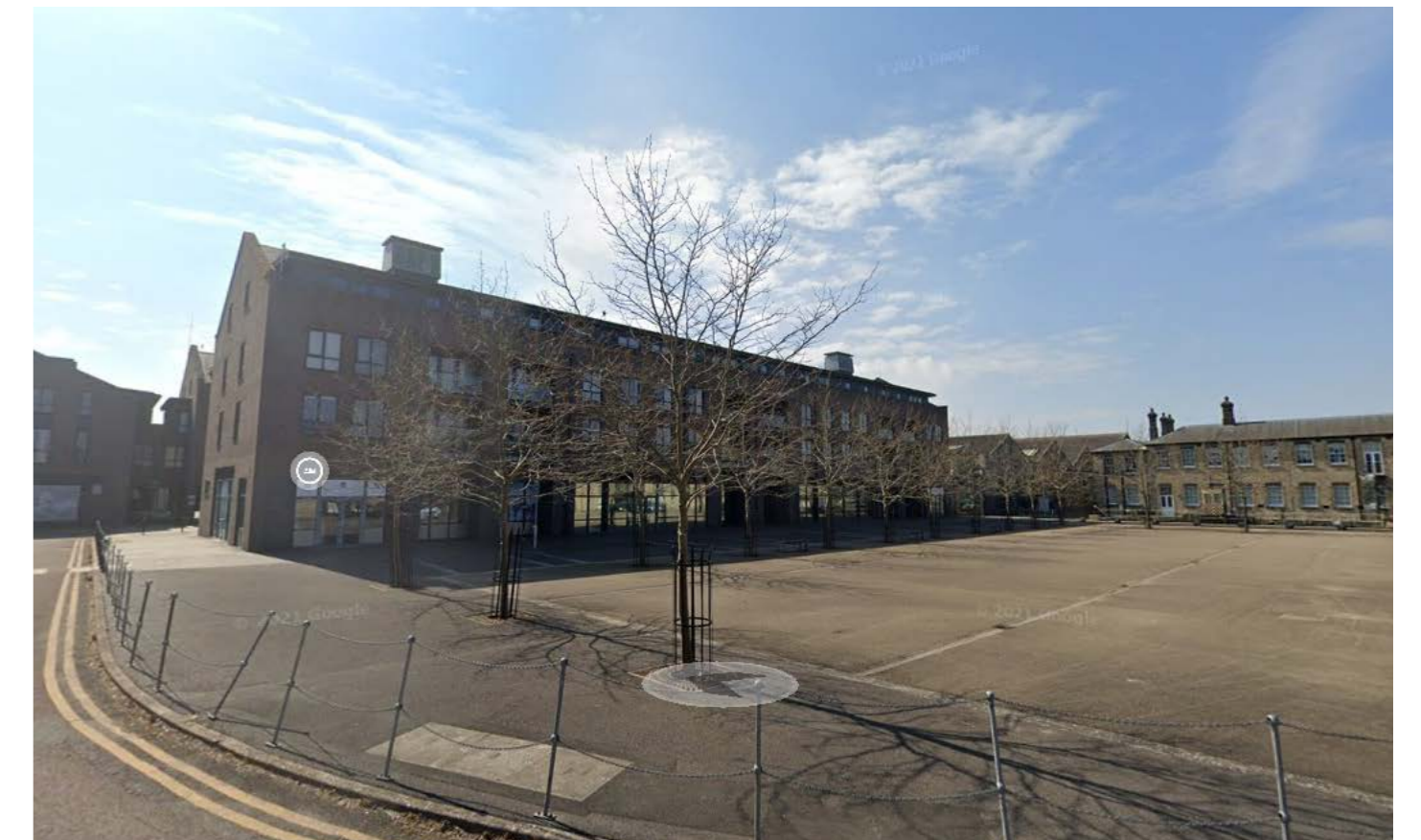
Curiosity & Excitement

17. The Works (north of the tracks)

The majority of the railway works were located north of the railway line and used for manufacturing, maintaining and repairing locomotives and carriages throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Today, the layout of the area is a reminder of its former use in manufacturing and moving large locomotives and carriages. This traditional use of the site has been replaced by a variety of uses. Retail, leisure, office and residential spaces now make up the Swindon Works area in a mixture of new and original buildings.

Assets in the area are owned by multiple parties and opportunities for interpretation depend on the agreement of those parties.



Theme 2: Working Life

Nostalgia

Curiosity & Excitement

Intangible assets

There are a number of non-physical assets that can be incorporated into interpretation or be used to inform it. Swindon is a place with a history of having a strong community, something which it still has in abundance. There are multiple organisations, societies and members of the community whose knowledge and experience would have an invaluable effect on the quality and accuracy of interpretation. These are:

- Swindon Civic Voice
- Mechanics Institution Trust
- Swindon Railway Village Museum
- STEAM Museum
- Swindon Local Studies Library
- Members of the Swindon & District Heritage Network
- Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre
- Wiltshire Family History Society
- Swindon Society
- Swindon Museum and Art Gallery
- Friends of the Railway Village Museum
- Swindon Central Community Centre
- Swindon Civic Trust
- Rodbourne Community History Group
- Friends of the Health Hydro
- A number of local artists, authors and tour guides

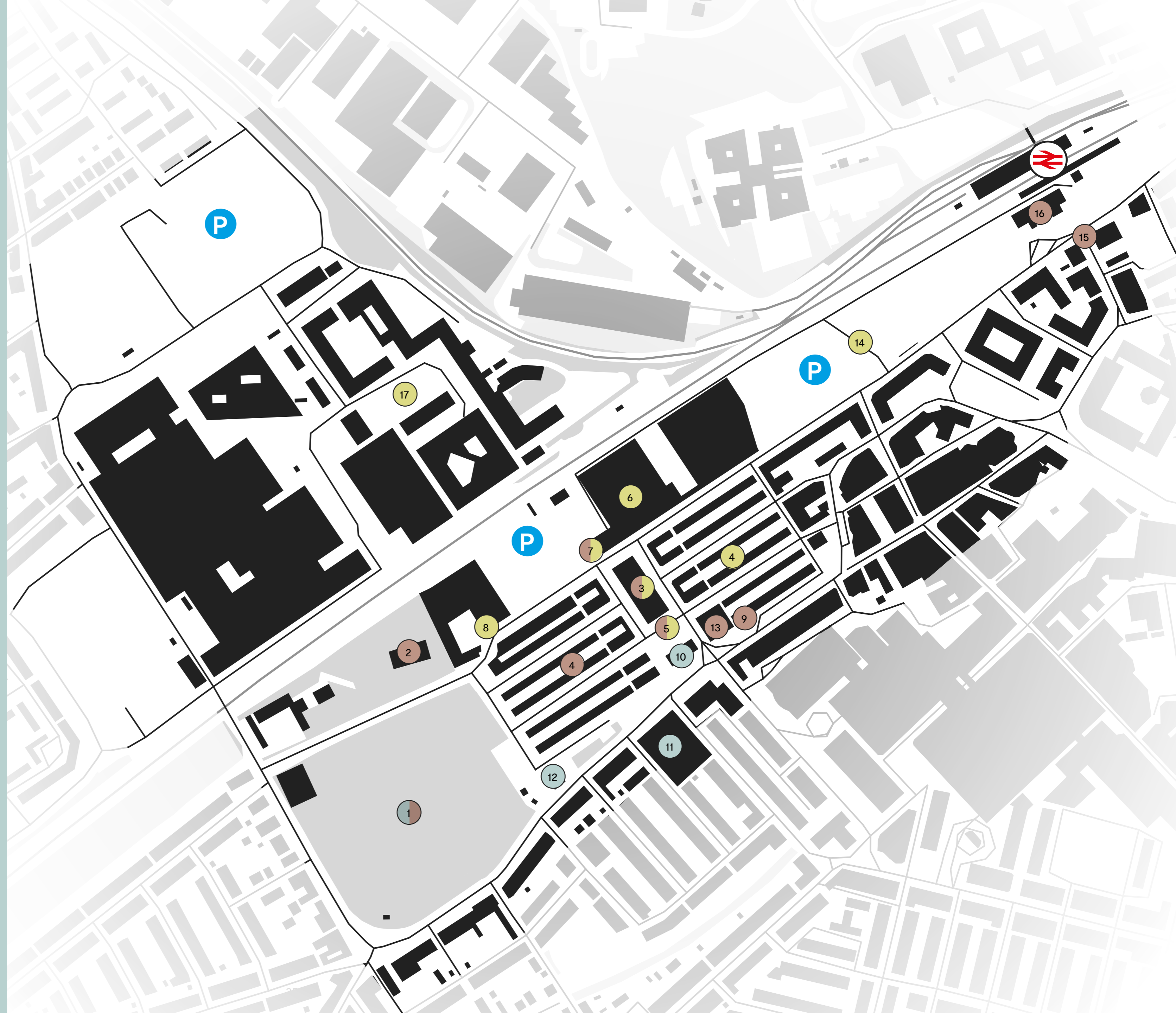
Assets and Places

Theme 1: Community Life

Theme 2: Working Life

Theme 3: Medical Legacy

- 1 GWR Park
- 2 St Mark's Church
- 3 Mechanics' Institute
- 4 Railway Village – Cottages and Streets
- 5 Emlyn Square
- 6 Carriage Works
- 7 The Tunnel
- 8 Water Tower
- 9 Railway Village Museum
- 10 Medical Fund Hospital
- 11 Health Hydro
- 12 Park House
- 13 Former Model Lodging House, later Wesleyan chapel
- 14 Western Flyer/underpass
- 15 The Queen's Tap and Great Western Hotel
- 16 Swindon Station Entrance
- 17 The Works (north of the tracks)



SPATIAL STRATEGY

Where will interpretive encounters take place?

A spatial strategy helps to ensure that the right stories are told in the right places, and in the best ways. Interpretive themes and stories can be strategically placed to enhance the experience and create a cohesive narrative, although all interpretation needn't be consumed in one visit and should work as a stand-alone experience. The development of a spatial strategy depends on three considerations:

- The interpretive themes and stories – Where are they best told? Where are the assets that form part of the story?
- The assets, areas and places – Can they accommodate interpretive interventions? Will people be able to engage comfortably and safely?
- Connectivity and cohesion – How do the above work together? Do they connect spatially and/or thematically?

The spatial strategy is about bringing together all former parts of the interpretation strategy and presenting ideas for 'on the ground' and/or digital and live interpretation to provide the best visitor experience and achieve the interpretive vision. Beginning with what's already there, including buildings, spaces, key entry points etc, a picture begins to emerge about how people may use the space and how elements work together.

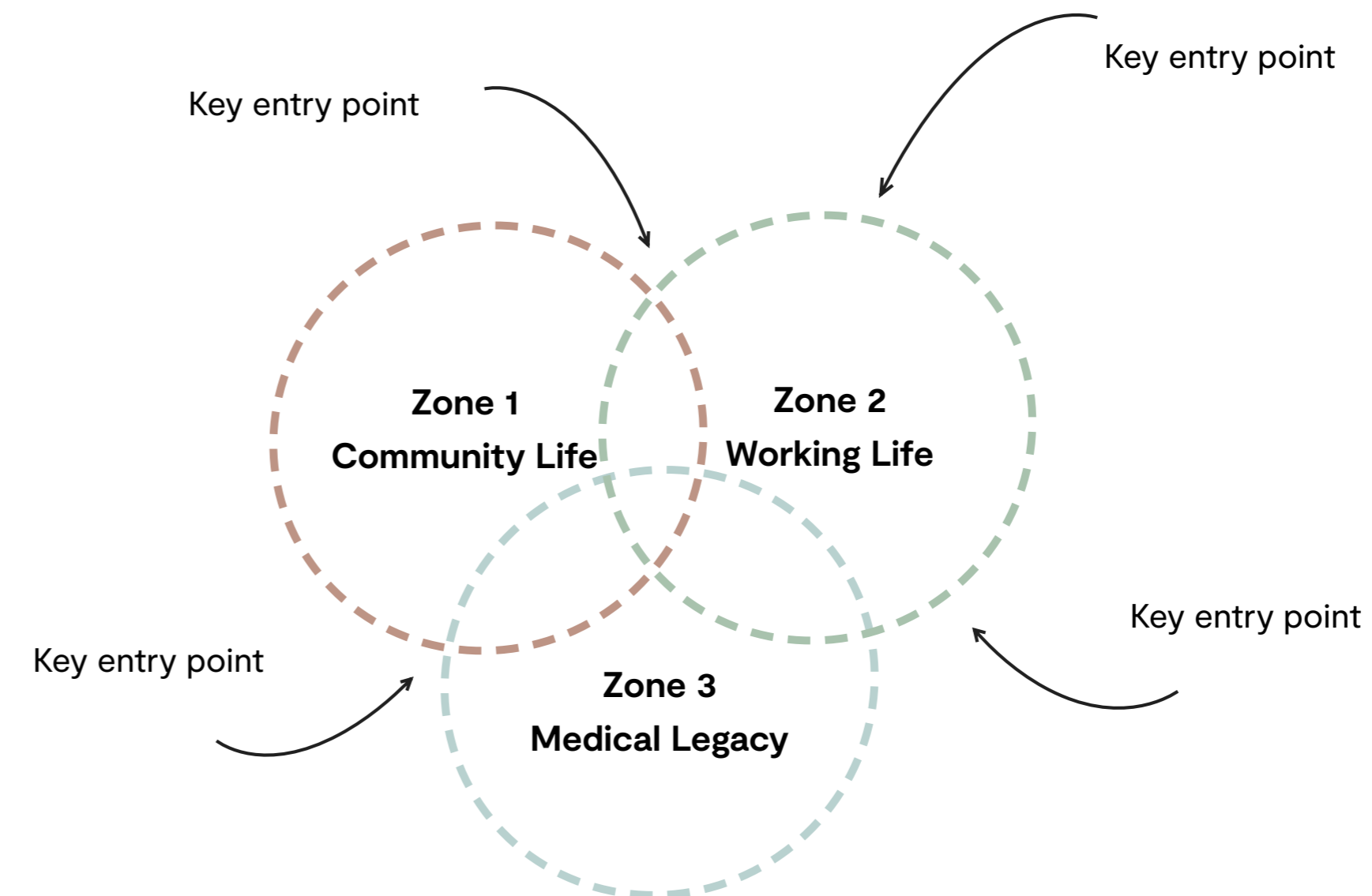
The following serves to illustrate *where* interpretive interventions may be located and *why*. Three Thematic Zones provide a framework, followed by initial proposals of the form that interpretation might take (presented in the Interpretive Projects section that follows).



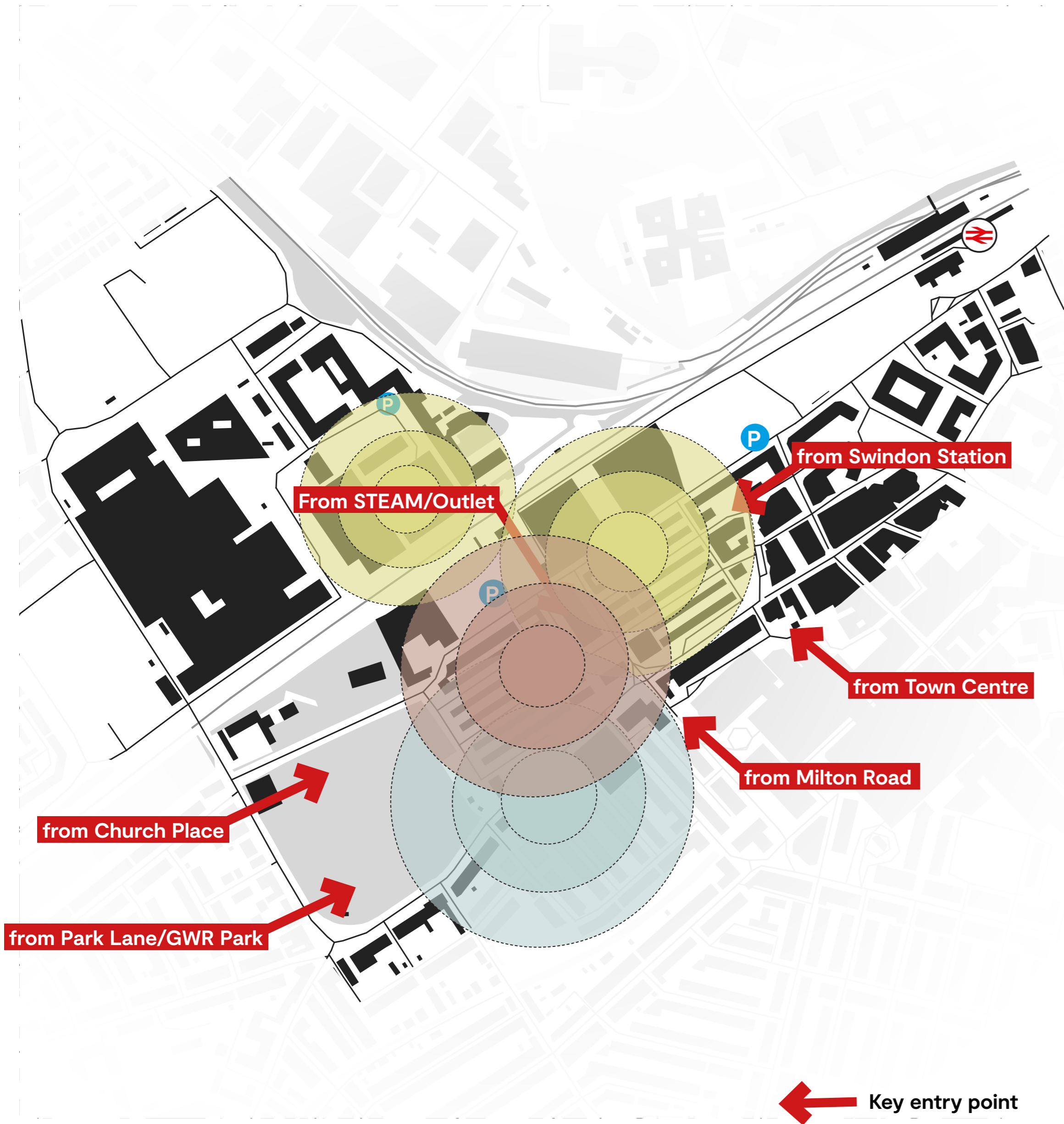
Thematic Zones

The interpretative themes outlined above can be translated into thematic 'zones', which are spatially configured within the Railway Village townscape. Whilst these thematic zones do not need to be too rigidly prescriptive, they have been organised and defined in this way as the assets that fall within the zones most strongly connect to one of the three interpretive themes and can accommodate interpretation related to each theme.

While each zone will operate in a different area of the Railway Village, all of them converge around the Mechanic's Institute, which is conveniently located in the centre of the Railway Village and epitomises all three identified Themes: Community Life; Working Life; and Medical Legacy. Although it is not currently accessible, The Mechanic's Institute benefits from being visible from most directions and is the first encounter upon emerging from The Tunnel at Bristol Street.



Thematic Zones



Zone 1

Theme 1: Community Life – Celebrating the vibrant community spirit of Swindon’s Railway Village, past and present

Assets within this zone contribute to stories of Community Life. They lie throughout the western half of the Railway Village and can either incorporate interpretation themselves or be viewed from a number of key locations across this part of the village.

Assets include:

- Cottages and streets in the western half of the Railway Village (Bristol Street, Bathampton Street, Exeter Street, Church Place, Emlyn Square)
- Mechanics Institute
- St Mark’s Church
- GWR Park
- Railway Village Museum (although technically in the east half of the Railway Village, it contributes the most strongly to Community Life)
- The Tunnel entrance at Bristol Street
- Taunton Street

Key entry points:

- Church Place (west)
- Park Lane
- GWR Park
- The Tunnel at Bristol Street

Zone 2

Theme 2: Working Life – A ‘day in the life’ of a GWR worker and their family

Assets within this zone contribute primarily to stories of Working Life. They lie throughout the eastern half of the Railway Village and can either incorporate interpretation themselves or be viewed from a number of key locations across this part of the village.

Assets include:

- Cottages and streets in the eastern half of the Railway Village (London Street, Oxford Street, Reading Street, East Street, Emlyn Square)
- Mechanics Institute
- Carriage Works
- The Glue Pot
- Former Model Lodging House
- The Tunnel at Bristol Street
- Faringdon Road

Key entry points:

- Shepperd Street from Swindon Station
- East Street from Town Centre
- Faringdon Road
- The Tunnel entrance at Bristol Street

Zone 3

Theme 3: Medical Legacy – Healthcare funded by the people for the people – a blueprint for our NHS

Assets within this zone contribute primarily to stories of Medical Legacy. They lie throughout the south/south-western part of the Railway Village and can either incorporate interpretation at key locations, or be viewed from a number of key locations across this area of the village.

Assets include:

- Taunton Street
- Heath Hydro
- Medical Fund Hospital
- Park House
- GWR Park
- Taunton Street

Key entry points:

- Park Lane
- GWR Park
- Church Place
- Faringdon Road
- Farnsby Street

INTERPRETIVE PROJECTS

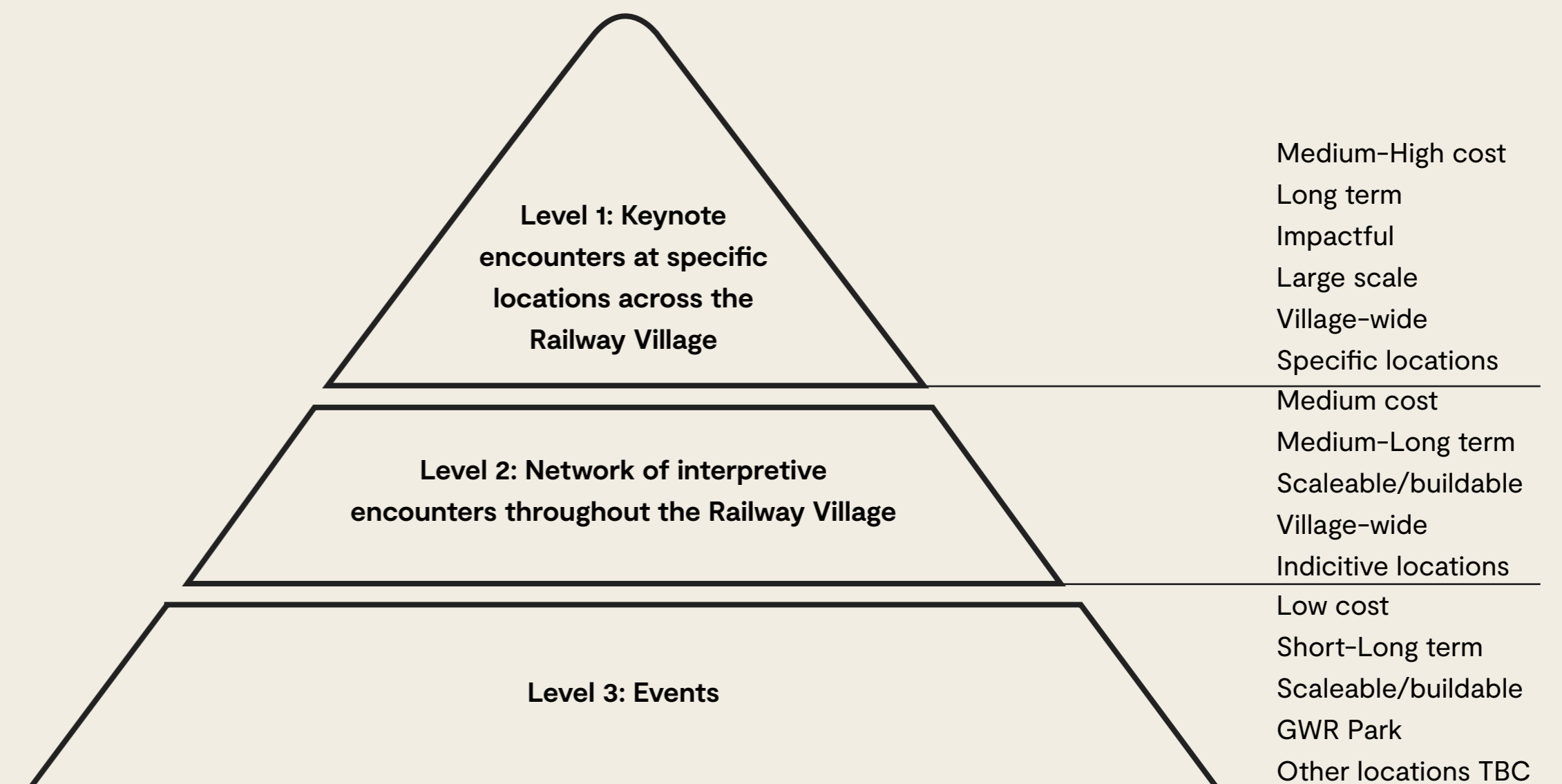
What will the interpretive projects be?

Based on the Interpretive Themes, Key Assets and Thematic Zones, the following project proposals have been devised. They work as either stand alone individual projects, but can also work together, in any combination, to form a Village-wide offer. The projects can be delivered in stages and can be built upon over time, and can be prioritised based on their potential impact and deliverability. There are three levels of projects ranging from specific 'keynote' encounters at specific locations (Level 1) to the more broad reaching village-wide programming and events (Level 3), supported by a network of interpretation across the village (Level 2).

A sense of cost has been identified on a scale of Low cost: Under £10K (capital cost and/or low operational cost); Medium cost: £10-50K (capital cost and/or minimal operational cost); High cost: £50K+ (capital cost and/or high operational cost).

A sense of timescale has been identified on a scale of Short term: 1-2 years to completion; Medium term: 3-5 years to completion; Long term: 6+ years to completion/ongoing project.

The proposals presented are indicative and for illustrated purposes. The exact content and design would depend on interpretive designers, developers and artists involved. It should also be noted that projects are scalable, buildable and can be developed in any order or combination over time. This Strategy doesn't suggest that all projects should be undertaken, but provides options and ideas.



Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village

Project 1a

Community Echoes: The Tunnel through time

An immersive sound installation within The Tunnel celebrating community life through time.

Engaging communities during the development process by enabling them to share their memories, stories and diverse perspectives, all to be included in the sound landscape within the tunnel.

Looped audio will be played through hidden speakers within The Tunnel and refreshed throughout the day, week, or month.

The catalogue of recordings can be built upon over time, reflecting the evolving narratives of the community and new historical discoveries. It might also project sounds of the workers' footsteps travelling too and from the Works.

This project will serve as a vibrant representation of community life and provide a shared space for residents and visitors to connect and appreciate the rich heritage of the area.

Location: The Tunnel, Bristol Street

Timescale: Medium-Long term

Cost: High

Related to existing project: Murals and decals for Tunnel HAZ Streets & Spaces

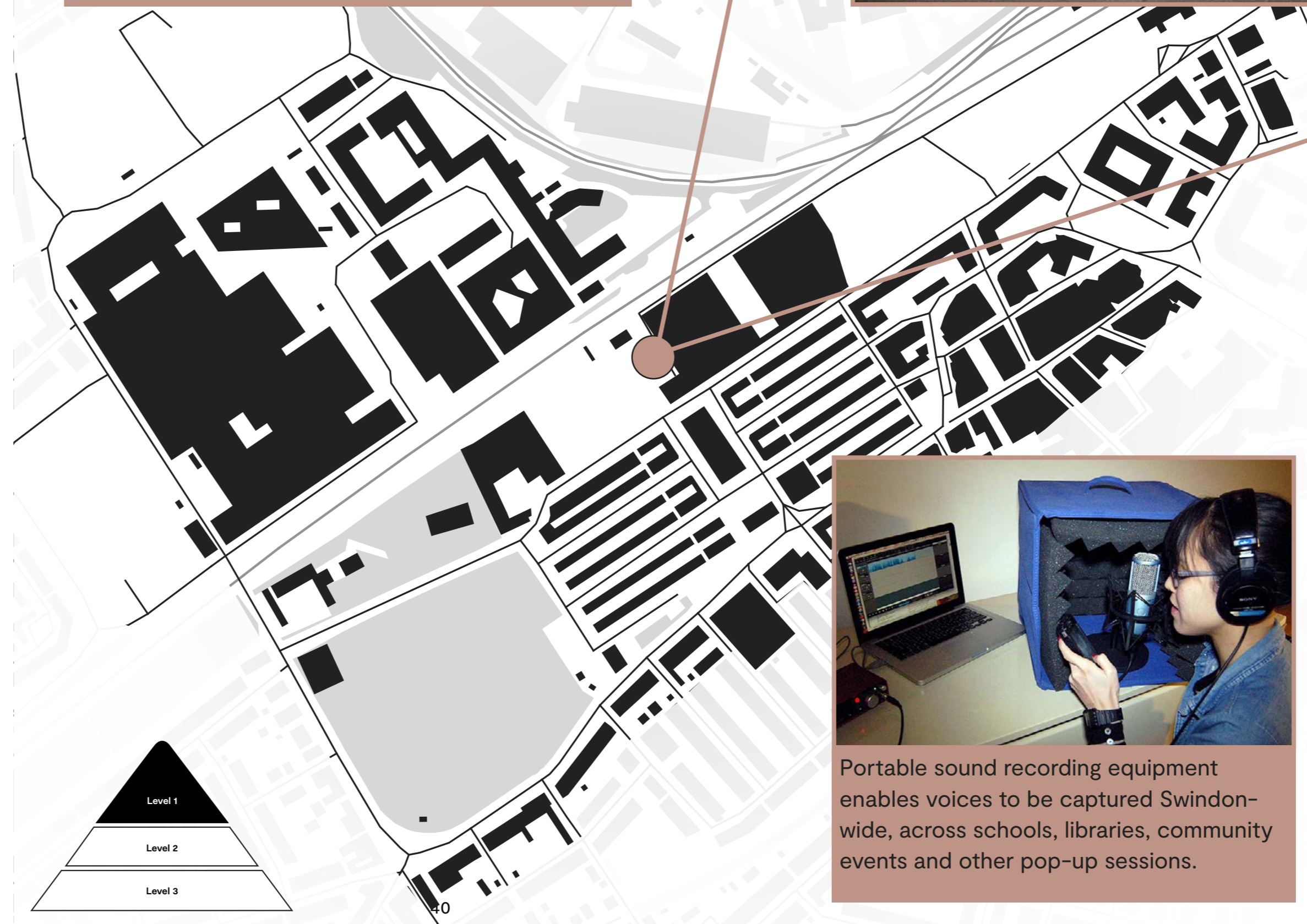
Precedent project: Birmingham Aural Station Clock

Contributes to theme:

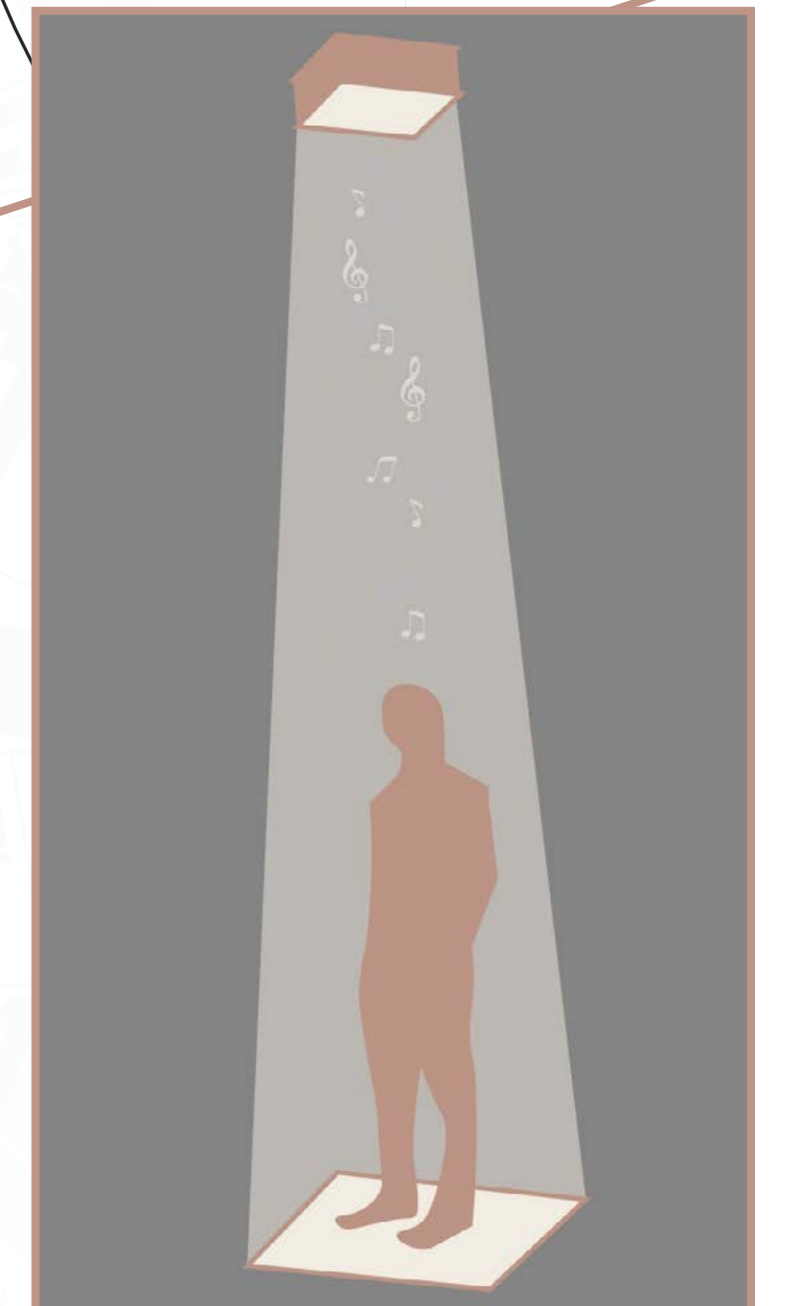
Theme 1: Community Life



The sound installation would work alongside other interventions within The Tunnel such as the existing light installations and mural and decals along the walls.



Portable sound recording equipment enables voices to be captured Swindon-wide, across schools, libraries, community events and other pop-up sessions.



The speakers would be hidden, perhaps within the existing light installations. Directional beam speakers are also an option, providing sound only upon one spot.

Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village

Project 1b Timekeepers of the Railway Village

A classic steel sculpture paying homage to the theme of working life in Swindon's Railway Village bringing to life the rhythmic pulse of the community's past. Encapsulating the essence of the working day drawing inspiration from the railways' promotion of standardised time, serving as a reminder of how time structured the day-to-day lives of the hardworking individuals who shaped the village's history. The sculpture would demonstrate a more human side to engineering, showing how it influenced peoples' lives and could take the form of a clock or more aptly, draw influence from The Hooter which acted as a reminder to GWR workers to return to work. A bolder approach would be a captivating automaton clockwork sculpture. Either approach would harness the talents of local artists in their development.

Location: Positioned outside the entrance to the Mechanic's Institute as part of its future redevelopment when underway.

Timescale: Long term

Cost: High

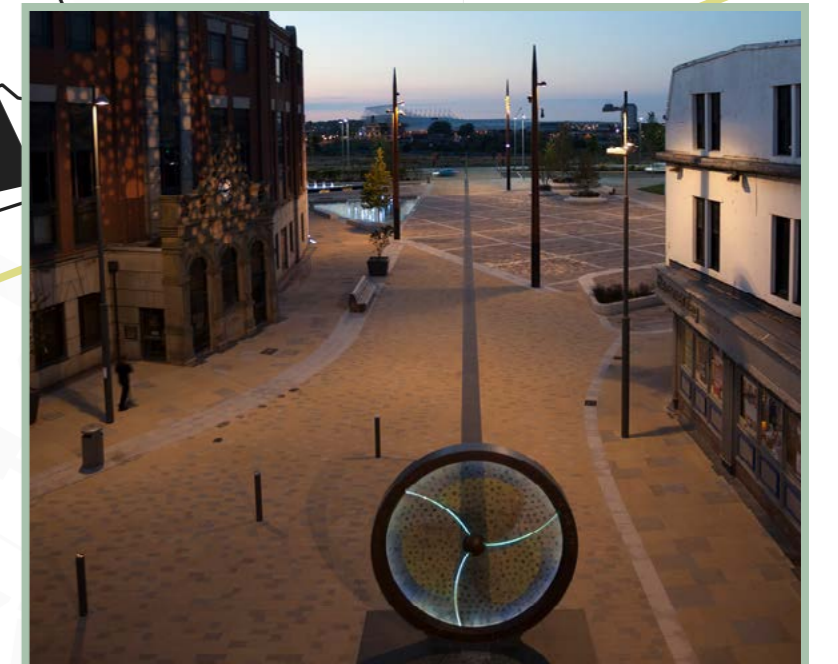
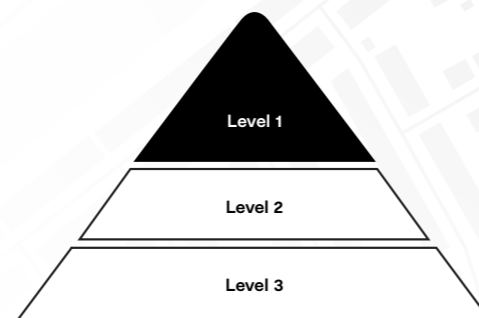
Precedent projects: Alauna Aura, Maryport; Stockton Flyer, Stockton on Tees; Propellers of the City, Sunderland

Contributes to theme:

Theme 2: Working Life



A bold intervention taking inspiration from the engineering accomplishments and the people who made them possible. Moving parts provide interest and inspire wonder.



Combining media that both provides a contemporary feel whilst alluding to materials of the past provides a link between the past and present.

Providing a different offer day and night. A sculptural light installation at night, and an interactive kinetic piece in the day.

Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village

Project 1c Pioneers of Care

A more traditional sculpture celebrating Swindon's medical achievements and legacy. Acting as a tribute to the pioneering advancements people who have played a vital role in the community's health and well-being. Embodying the essence of Swindon's healthcare heritage and capturing the spirit of care through masterful craftsmanship of traditional sculpture.

The sculpture might showcase key objects and other design elements associated with healthcare past and present, including the medical fund, NHS and the people that made it. This timeless and captivating sculpture will become a landmark, representing the deep-rooted medical legacy of Swindon. A symbol of gratitude and admiration for the past, present, and future communities and medical professionals who continue to serve with dedication and compassion.

Location: The centre of Taunton Street opposite and adjacent to the Health Hydro.

Timescale: Medium-Long term

Cost: High

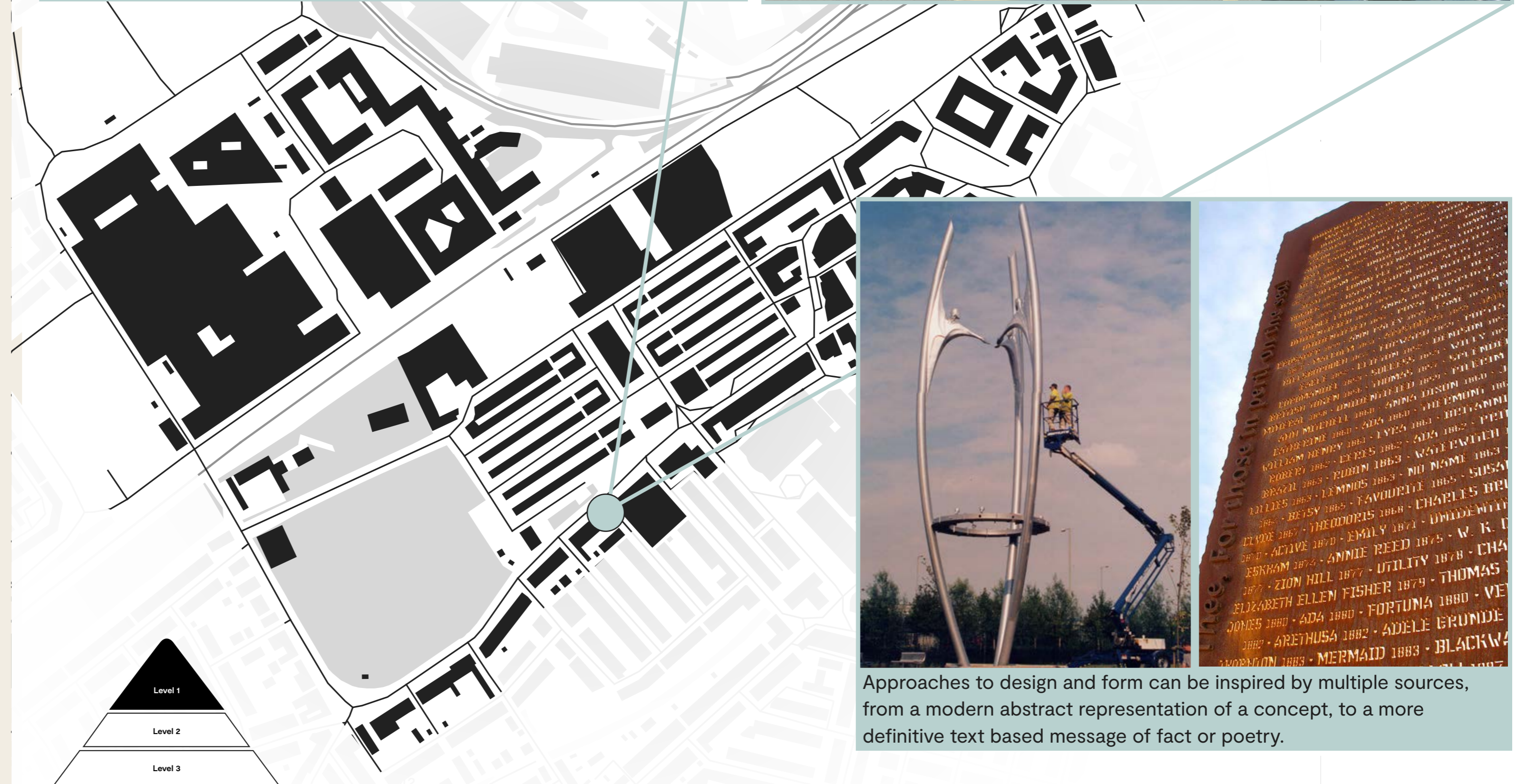
Precedent projects: The Gift of Life Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust; We Stand on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before Us; New Orleans

Contributes to theme:

Theme 3: Medical Legacy



Depicting figures helps to bring the focus back to stories of people and their legacy, rather than fact or place.



Approaches to design and form can be inspired by multiple sources, from a modern abstract representation of a concept, to a more definitive text based message of fact or poetry.

Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village

Project 1d Street Art Trail

A street art trail at set locations inspired by various aspects of the Railway Village and the three interpretive themes. Key locations include Western Flyer path and tunnel (Shepherd Street Underpass), Mechanics Institute (the hoardings surrounding already contribute to this intervention), The Tunnel, and the brick built substation in the southwest corner of GWR Park, bringing people through the Railway Village to encounter interpretation along their journey.

To be developed in partnership with local artists and school groups and each contributing to a different interpretive theme. Information accessed either by paper map guide or QR codes as part of Project 2.

Suggested topics: Western Flyer underpass: North Wilts Canal; Mechanics Institute Hoardings: Education, Culture Community; The Tunnel: The journey to work (also relating to Project 1a Community Echoes); Substation GWR Park: Health & Wellbeing through time

Location: Western Flyer underpass, Mechanics Institute, The Tunnel, substation in GWR Park. Other locations include the Railway Station Building and the southwest corner of Sir Daniel Arms

Timescale: Short term

Cost: Medium (8-9K per mural, plus guide)

Related to existing project: Mural of Sheppard Street Underpass/Western Flyer; Mural of The Tunnel

Contributes to theme:

Theme 1: Community Life

Theme 2: Working Life

Theme 3: Medical Legacy



Mural complimenting the existing light installations, exploring the role that The Tunnel played in stories of Working Life



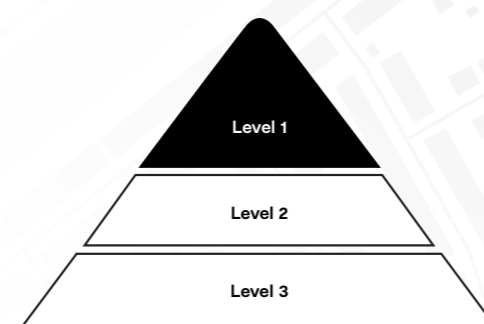
Mural and light installation within the Western Flyer/Shepherd Street underpass, evoking stories of the canal history in relation to the Railway Village



Continued street art and mural around the Mechanic's Institute reflecting the stories of continuing Community Life



Mural developed with local communities reflecting health and wellbeing benefits of GWR Park relation to Swindon's Medical Legacy



Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village

Project 1e Sculpture at the Station

An eye-catching focal point at the entrance of Swindon Railway Station, the intervention will serve as a beacon encouraging travel towards the Railway Village.

It could take the form of a 'model' of the village, or a sculpture of past residents on their way to the station for their annual community holiday 'The Trip', merging the buzz outside the station with that of the past.

Also has the potential to take the form of pavement installations for a more subtle and cost effective option, perhaps representing footprints or the route to and from the Station from the Railway Village.

Location: Forecourt/entrance to Swindon Station

Timescale: Medium-Long term

Cost: High

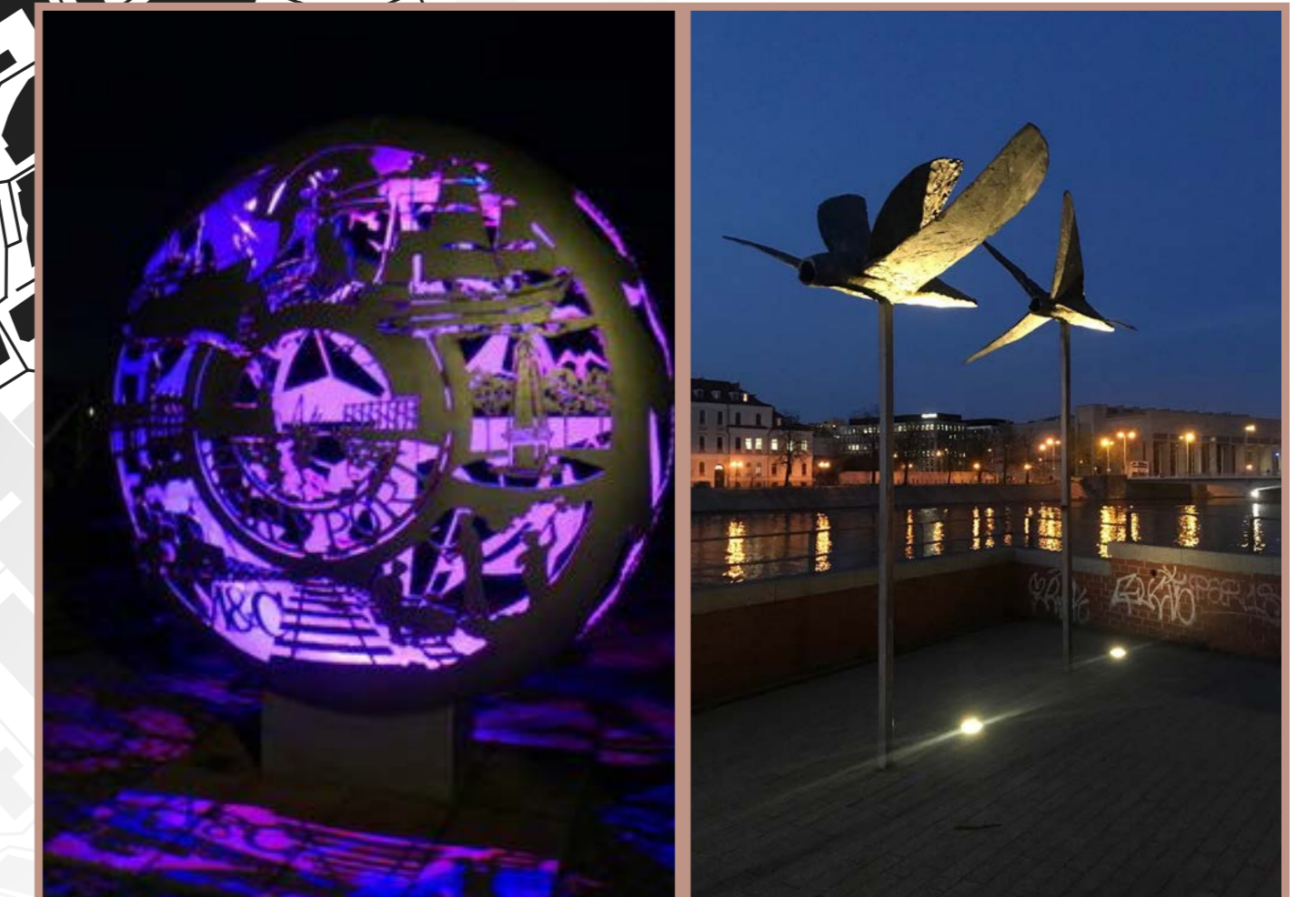
Precedent projects: Dublin Millennium Footprints; Railway Station and waterside, Wroclaw; Aluna Aura, Maryport

Contributes to theme:

Theme 1: Community Life



Cast metal is durable, tactile and can provide either an overview of the Railway Village, or can be more conceptual representing an item or aspect relating to Community Life and the Station



internal lighting and uplighting can bring a sculpture to light at night doubling the appeal for relatively low cost

Level 2: Background network of interpretive encounters

Project 2 Physical & Digital Encounters

A village-wide set of interpretive encounters across the Railway Village. Although the encounters will flow across the village, depending on their location they will relate to one of the three Interpretive Themes (see Thematic Zones above).

Interventions can act as a heritage trail but also work as standalone pieces, and can therefore be developed incrementally over the coming years.

Strategic locations have been provided for these on the map opposite, based on assets within the view of these locations and to align with the Swindon Town Centre Pedestrian Wayfinding Strategy (2023 draft), and HAZ Public Realm Strategy (2023) whether working alongside future wayfinding and public realm or contributing positively elsewhere.

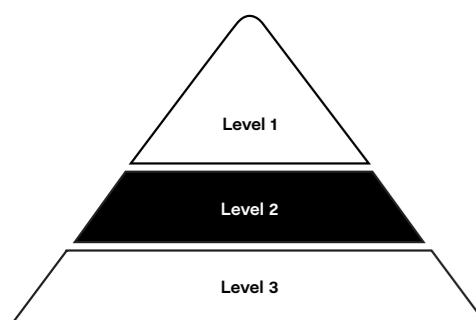
Specific Projects within each zone are presented overleaf.

Location: Village-wide

Timescale: Medium-Long term (scaleable)

Cost: Medium

Precedent projects: The Keel Line, Sunderland; Dublin Millennium Footprints; Wroclaw Gnomes



Zone 1: Theme 1: Community Life – A primarily physical offer focused on the west half of the Railway Village, with potential for interpretive trails, free standing interpretation, art/sculpture, subtle pavement installations such as decorative drain covers, and decorative paving.

Zone 2: Theme 2: Working Life – A primarily digital offer focused around the eastern half of the Railway Village, with audio guide/oral histories guides (particularly in more sensitive places such as residential streets). Potential for subtle pavement installations such as decorative drain covers, and decorative paving. Potential permanent sculpture/art intervention within Bristol Street Tunnel and at outside the southern entrance.

Zone 3: Theme 3: Medical Legacy – A combination of a physical and digital offer across the southern end of GWR Park and the assets along Farringdon Road/Taunton Street. Combining interpretive trails, free standing interpretation, art/sculpture at key locations, with subtle pavement such as decorative drain covers, and decorative paving, with audio guide/oral histories guide (particularly in more sensitive places such as residential streets).



●—● Swindon Town Centre Pedestrian Wayfinding Strategy routes and locations

Level 2: Background network of interpretive encounters

Project 2 Physical & Digital Encounters

Some interventions are applicable to particular areas and particular themes. Others however, are village-wide. For example, pavement installations, decorative drain covers digital trails etc, are applicable to the entire village.

The interventions have been colour coded depending on which Interpretive Theme they most would strongly communicate at each location, with the addition of black to represent where all/any theme.

Where possible, the interventions would include QR codes to support interpretation in additional languages, specifically for children, and for accessibility.

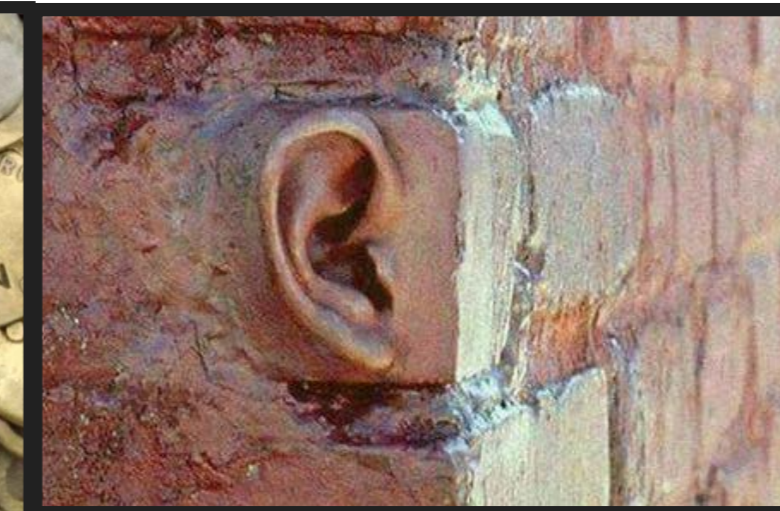
The proposals presented are indicative and for illustrative purposes. The exact content and design would be developed at the development stage.



Footprints embedded in the pavement across the village, becoming more concentrated towards and within The Tunnel to reflect the daily commute. They might appear alongside castings of current residents' footprints bridging the gap between past and present.



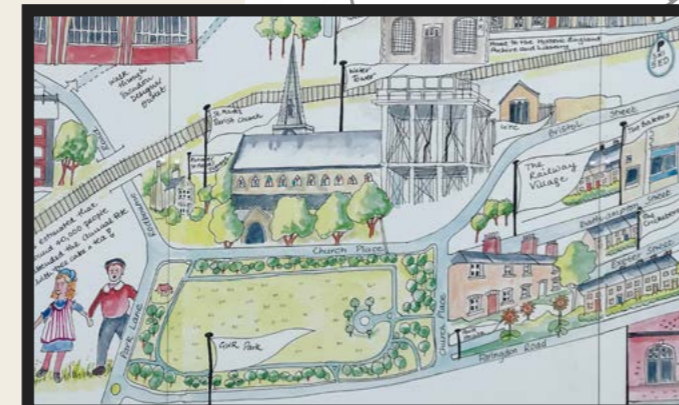
Timechecks incorporated into the installations alluding to workers clocking in and out of work.



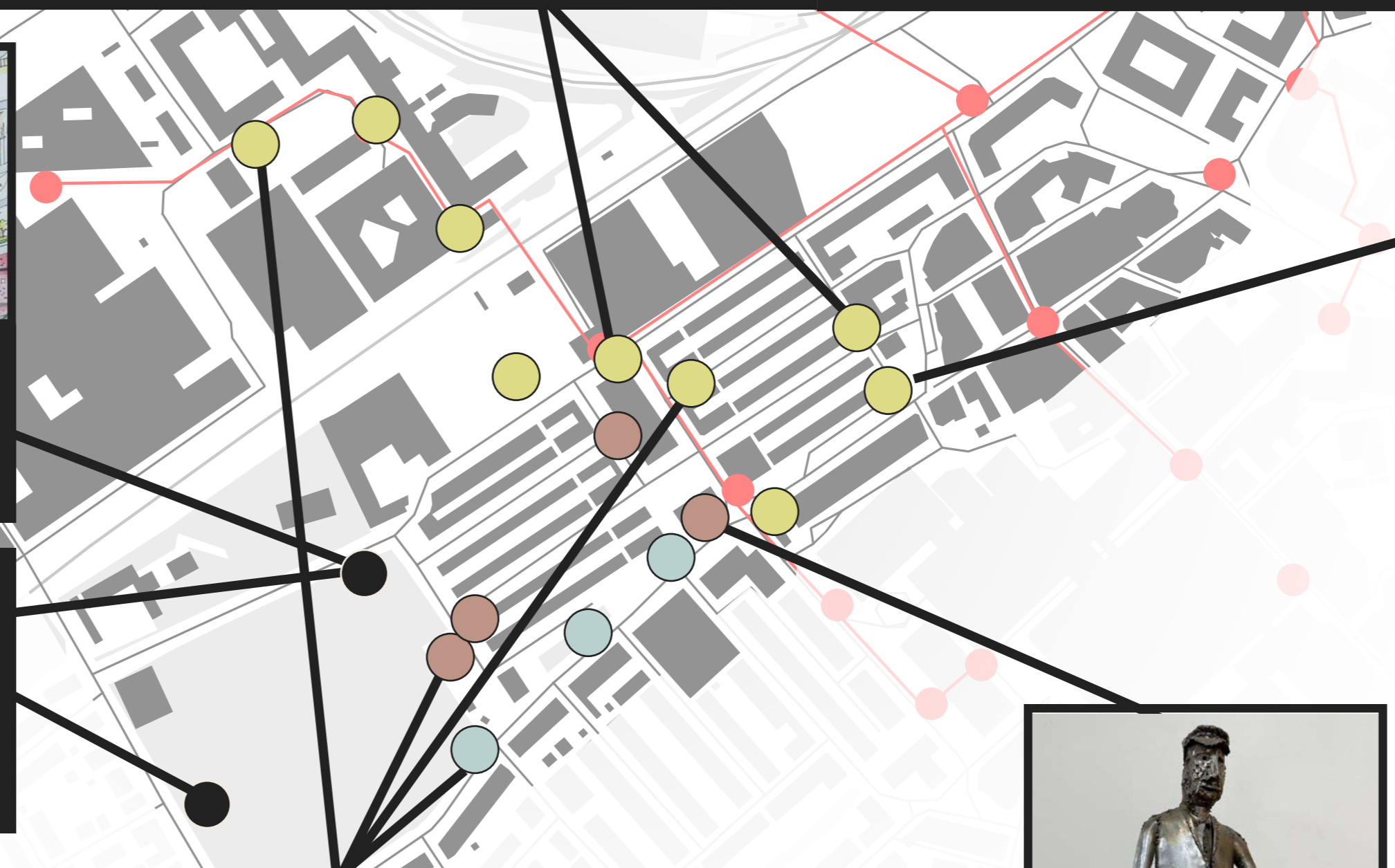
Other more personal aspects inviting viewers to reflect upon the stories that were witnessed by the walls and buildings of the village. Accompanied by a plaque/QR code presenting different stories in different locations.



Subtle sculptures of tools and everyday items around the village perhaps sitting on top of walls and pavements enabling viewers to feel as if they are almost directly connected with residents of the past.



A 180 degree panel/display at the north east corner of the park illustrating the visible buildings and landmarks, illustrated by local artist Marilyn Trew.



Interpretive panels, viewfinders or benches, presenting the different landmarks and buildings visible from GWR Park and telling stories of all themes as appropriate to visible buildings and landmarks.

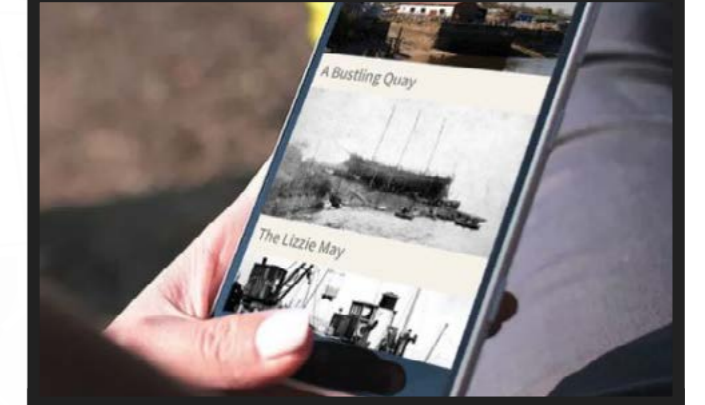


Image based digital trail showing the Railway Village of the past, accessed via QR codes. Village-wide but focused around the eastern half of the cottages and streets.



Pavement installations and decorative drain covers as a subtle and unobtrusive form on interpretation across the entire village. Locations near car parks and places of arrival will encourage exploration of the wider area.



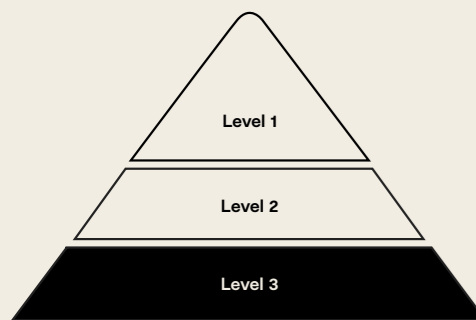
Cluster of three statues depicting two workers and one boy in Emlyn Square.

Level 3: Events

Project 3 Programme of Events

The Railway Village will play a vital role in the Swindon's programme of festivals and events. Building upon interpretation and storytelling across the site, events within the Railway Village can serve as a captivating storyteller, offering something new and engaging to both local residents and visitors who return time and again. By aligning the event program with interpretive themes, significant commemorative events, anniversaries, and national initiatives the Railway Village and its history can become a better known to residents and visitors, helping to achieve the overall vision to celebrate civic pride, historic legacy, collaborative culture and promote deeper understanding and connection.

Events will need to be curated to correspond with seasonal changes and introduce fresh interpretive experiences year round.



Starting from scratch isn't always an easy option, so working alongside existing events and festivals can help heritage to become an established part of existing activities. A number of events already take place in Swindon:

- Swindon Festival of Literature
- Swindon Open Studios
- Swindon & Wiltshire Pride
- Swindon Old Town Festival
- Swindon Shuffle
- Swindon Half Marathon
- Swindon Winter Image
- Swindon Mela
- Swindon Film Festival
- Swindon Railway Festival
- Swindon Children's Fete

For any new events and programming, it's likely that seed funding will be required. Sources include:

- Grants from Government or Nonprofit Organizations
- Corporate Sponsorship
- Crowdfunding
- Community Fundraising
- Partnerships with Local Organizations
- Ticket Sales and Registration Fees
- In-kind Sponsorships
- Fundraising Events
- Individual Donations
- Local Government Funding



DELIVERY

Costings and Resources

Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village						
PROJECT	INTERPRETIVE THEME	LOCATION	COST ESTIMATE	FUNDING SOURCE	TIMESCALE / PRIORITY	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
1a Community Echoes: The Tunnel through time	1: COMMUNITY LIFE	THE TUNNEL	£40-£150K SCALE AND DESIGN DEPENDENT	HLF, RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, ARTS COUNCIL, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT OF THE ARTS (NEA), LOCAL BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP, FOYLE FOUNDATION, ART FUND, PAUL HAMLIN, ESMEE FAIRBAIRN, SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP, GARFIELD WESTON	MED-LONG TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST
1b Timekeepers of the Railway Village	2: WORKING LIFE	BRISTOL STREET / THE TUNNEL	£40-300K SCALE AND DESIGN DEPENDENT	AS ABOVE	LONG TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, STEAM, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST
1c Pioneers of Care	3: MEDICAL LEGACY	TAUNTON STREET	£40-£150K SCALE AND DESIGN DEPENDENT	AS ABOVE	MED-LONG TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, NHS,
1d Street Art Trail	ALL THEMES	WESTERN FLYER, MECHANICS INSTITUTE, THE TUNNEL, GWR PARK	£8-9K PER PROJECT	AS ABOVE	SHORT TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES
1e Sculpture at the Station	1: COMMUNITY LIFE	SWINDON RAILWAY STATION	£40-300K SCALE AND DESIGN DEPENDENT	AS ABOVE	MED-LONG TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, BRITISH RAIL
Level 2: Background network of interpretive encounters						
Pavement installations	ALL THEMES	VILLAGE STREETS, GWR PARK	£1-5K PER ITEM EXCLUDING DESIGN AND INSTALLATION	AS ABOVE	MED-LONG TERM (BUILDABLE)	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, NHS
Sculpture and public art	ALL THEMES	VILLAGE STREETS	£1-5K PER ITEM EXCLUDING DESIGN AND INSTALLATION	AS ABOVE	MED-LONG TERM (BUILDABLE)	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, NHS
Viewfinders, benches and panels	ALL THEMES	GWR PARK	£1-5K PER ITEM EXCLUDING DESIGN AND INSTALLATION	AS ABOVE	SHORT-LONG TERM (BUILDABLE)	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, NHS
Digital Trail / QR codes	ALL THEMES	VILLAGE STREETS, GWR PARK	£8-10K	AS ABOVE	SHORT-MED TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, NHS, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES
Statue at Emlyn Square	1: COMMUNITY LIFE, 2: WORKING LIFE	EMLYN SQUARE	£40-£150K SCALE AND DESIGN DEPENDENT	AS ABOVE	MED-LONG TERM	RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST, LOCAL ARTISTS, LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, MECHANICS INSTITUTE TRUST, SWINDON CIVIC VOICE, HE, NATIONAL TRUST, NHS
Level 3: Events						
TBC	ALL THEMES	GWR PARK, VILLAGE STREETS	SCALE AND PARTNER DEPENDENT	SEED FUNDING, KICKSTARTER, GOFUNDME, PRINCES TRUST	SHORT - LONG	LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS, EXISTING FESTIVALS/ EVENTS (SEE PAGE 45)

DELIVERY

Project Prioritisation

Project have been prioritised based on the following criteria and are scored overleaf:

Project Goals

Each project should align with the overall goals and objectives of your organization or site. Projects that directly contribute to this are given higher priority.

Impact and Audience

Considering the potential impact and reach of each project. Projects have the potential to engage a larger audience or provide significant educational or experiential value are prioritised over others.

Integration and Synergy

Evaluating how each project aligns and integrates with existing interpretive infrastructure, programs, future aspirational projects. Prioritising projects that complement and enhance the overall interpretive experience, interpretive theme or contribute to a cohesive narrative.

Urgency

Assessing the urgency or time sensitivity of each project. Some projects are time-critical. Projects are prioritised that have impending deadlines or time-bound opportunities.

Funding Availability

Considering the availability of funding and financial resources for each project. Projects with secured or potential funding are prioritized to ensure their successful implementation.

Stakeholder Preferences

Taking into account the preferences and priorities of key stakeholders to date such as steering group members, local councillors, funders, local community groups, and visitors. Projects that align with the interests and aspirations of stakeholders warrant higher priority.

Feasibility and Deliverability

Assessing the feasibility and deliverability of each project. Considering factors such as available resources (staff, expertise, facilities), technical requirements, and logistical challenges. Projects that are more achievable within the given constraints are prioritised.

Long-Term Sustainability

Considering the long-term sustainability and maintenance requirements of each project. Projects that have a higher potential for long-lasting impact and minimal ongoing costs are prioritised.

Evaluation and Measurement

Assessing the potential for evaluating and measuring the impact and success of each project. Prioritising projects that can be effectively evaluated to gather data and insights for future improvements.

DELIVERY

Project Prioritisation

Each project is scored out of a possible 5 per criterion. The total scores are presented and the those scoring over 40 are taken forward as priorities for delivery as part of the HAZ programme. All other projects should be taken forward as part of further work following the HAZ programme. The scores have been allocated based on research, workshops and conversations with steering group members, and following consultations with the wider public in March 2023. Scoring as based on information as of July 2023 and will require updating as wider contexts and project develop.

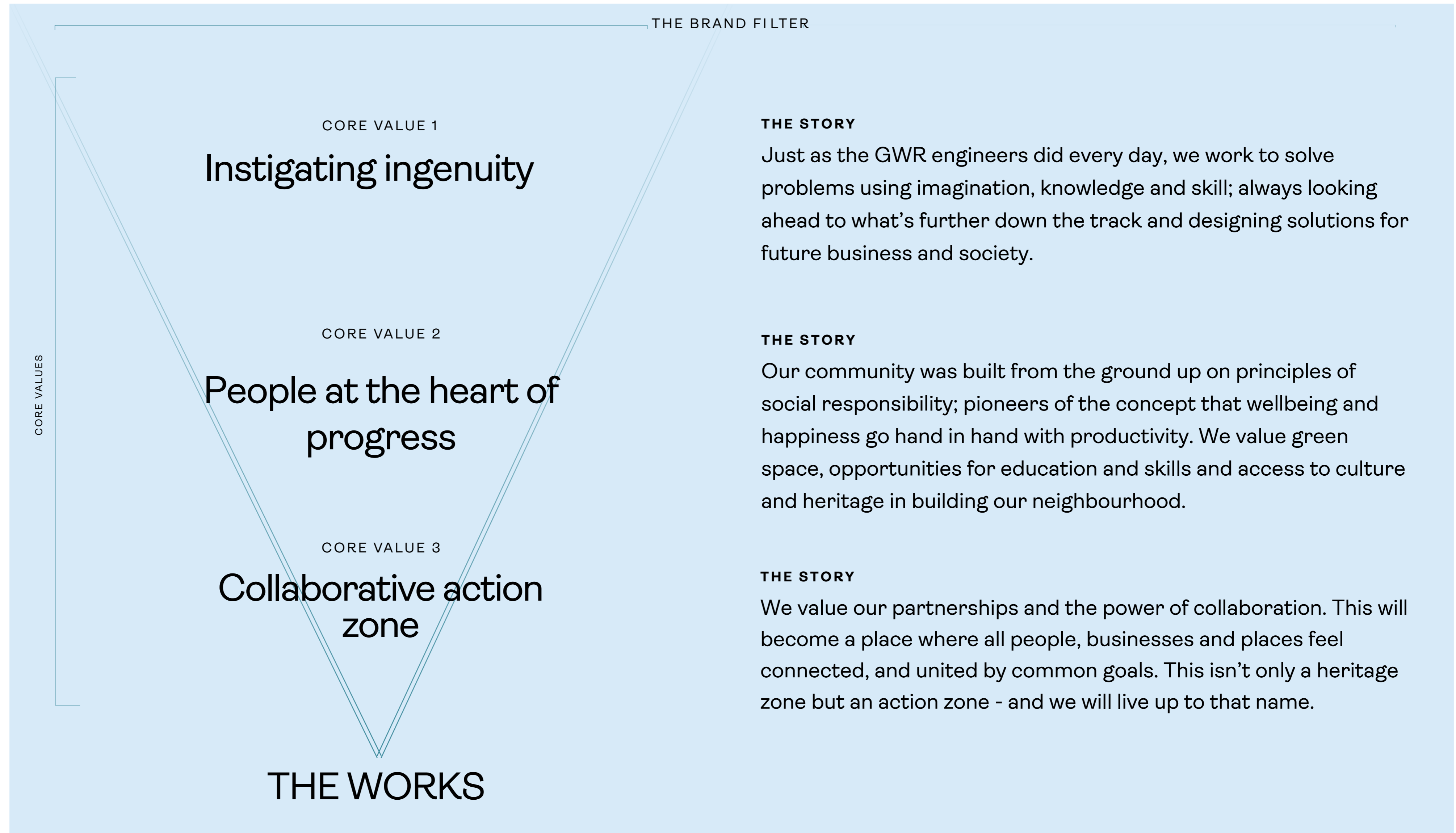
PROJECT	Project Goals	Impact and Audience	Integration and Synergy	Urgency	Funding Availability	Stakeholder Preferences	Feasibility and Deliverability	Long-Term Sustainability	Evaluation and Measurement	SCORE out of 45
Level 1: Keynote encounters at specific locations across the Railway Village										
1a Community Echoes: The Tunnel through time	5	5	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	33
1b Timekeepers of the Railway Village	4	3	2	1	3	3	0	3	1	20
1c Pioneers of Care	4	3	3	2	3	3	5	3	1	27
1d Street Art Trail	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	42
1e Sculpture at the Station	3	4	5	3	3	5	3	3	3	32
Level 2: Background network of interpretive encounters										
Pavement installations	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	3	39
Sculpture and public art	5	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	27
Viewfinders, benches and panels	5	4	3	3	5	4	4	3	2	33
Digital Trail / QR codes	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	42
Statue at Emlyn Square	5	3	3	3	2	5	3	3	2	29
Level 3: Events										
TBC	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

SCORING MATRIX

	5	4	3	2	1	0
Project Goals	Highly contributes to project goals		Moderately contributes to project goals			Little/no contribution to project goals
Impact and Audience	High impact and potential audience interest		Moderate impact and potential audience interest			Little/no impact and potential audience interest
Integration and Synergy	Highly integrated with other projects/ existing interpretation		Moderately integrated with other projects/ existing interpretation			Not integrated with other projects/ existing interpretation
Urgency	Urgent		Moderately urgent			Not urgent
Funding Availability	Funding readily available		Funding acquisition challenging			Little/no funding options
Stakeholder Preferences	High Stakeholder Preference		Moderate Stakeholder Preference			Little/no stakeholder preference
Feasibility and Deliverability	Highly deliverable		Moderately deliverable			Currently Undeliverable
Long-Term Sustainability	Highly sustainable Low maintenance requirements		Moderately sustainable Moderate maintenance requirements			Not sustainable High maintenance requirements
Evaluation and Measurement	Easily evaluated against meaningful measures		Somewhat easily evaluated against meaningful measures			Difficult to evaluate and measure

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 HAZ Brand Values



Appendix 2 Consultation Outcomes



During March 2023, two consultation workshops were carried out to gather local stakeholders' feedback on Swindon's Railway Village, its significance, histories, buildings and places, and future opportunities relating to interpretation. Approximately 25 attendees gave their time both in person and online. The key messages from these sessions strongly influenced the Interpretation Strategy.

Specialness and significance

Swindon's railway heritage is of national and local importance. The decision by the GWR to locate their railway works here was essential to the success and development of Swindon. People, both past and present, are place makers and history makers. Stories of Swindon's ingenuity, influence and strength deserve to be celebrated and shared more widely.

What aspects of the Railway Village do you value the most?

What do you think residents (or those with personal links to the area) would be most proud of?

What should visitors go away knowing?

What should they go away and tell others about their visit?



Swindon Railway Village - Interpretation Strategy

CBA is working with the Swindon Borough Council to develop an Interpretation Strategy for the Railway Village as part of the Heritage Action Zone programme.

The Strategy will bring together information that helps to understand what is important its social history in particular, and uncover opportunities for a range of interpretation designed for both residents and visitors. It will help **create a meaningful and connected interpretive offer that celebrates Swindon's railway heritage and its people.**

The strategy will help to...

Celebrate **civic pride, social action** and **people as place makers** and **history makers.**

Celebrate the **historic legacy, innovative spirit** and **collaborative culture** of the people who lived in the Railway Village, through meaningful and connected **storytelling** across the area, in a variety of ways.

Promote a **deeper understanding** of Swindon's railway heritage and the people who shaped it.

Help Swindon become more **well known** for heritage, culture and regeneration, and **encourage visits.**

As part of this process, we would greatly appreciate your input on what you value about the Railway Village today and in the past, as well as what you think about current issues and opportunities for the future. This will help to inform the Interpretation Strategy.

*All responses are anonymous.
Thank you*



Histories and personal stories

People from far and wide relocated to Swindon, with many living in the Railway Village. From the past, there was a strong sense of community spirit, innovation and collaboration. The area continues to adapt and change with the times. There are some fascinating stories that deserve the opportunity to be shared and celebrated.

Which stories / parts of the Railway Villages' history do you value the most?

Who are the individuals or groups that should be celebrated and why? Both past and present.

How did people come together in the past? What are the success stories?

Buildings and spaces

Surviving elements of the Railway Village such as the streets and spaces, railway cottages, Carriageworks, GWR Park, Mechanics Institute, (plus many more!) provide a tangible link to the past and the people who made it what it is, and how they used to live and work. They provide an insight into one of the most significant railway establishments in the world. The area is loaded with buildings, places and spaces that all help to tell the story of the Railway Village and its people.

What buildings and spaces do you value the most?

What stories can they tell?

How might they relate to one another through stories?



Future opportunities

The Railway Village continues to adapt for modern needs. Ongoing regeneration with heritage at its centre helps to celebrate the past whilst safeguarding the important assets for the future. Interpretation can also play a big part in the future of the Railway Village.

Do you have any specific ideas for interpretation and experiences within the Railway Village (physical, digital and live i.e. events and tours)?

Are there any examples of interpretation or experiences already happening elsewhere that might work well here?

In an ideal world, how would you imagine the Railway Village in 10 years time? How would people experience it?

Are there any particular challenges?

How might you, or people you know, wish to be included in the development of interpretation in future? Focus groups? surveys? sharing stories and images?



Specialness and significance

Heritage railway heritage is of national and local importance. The decision by the DfT to locate their railway works here was essential to the success of the development of London. People both past and present, see their makers and history makers. Shows of Sandford's ingenuity, influence and strength deserve to be celebrated and shared more widely.

What aspects of the Railway Village do you value the most?
 What do you think residents (or those with personal links to the area) would be most proud of?
 What should visitors go away knowing?
 What should they go away and tell others about their visit?

WORKS Sanderson

Handwritten notes on a large sheet of paper below the header, organized in a grid of approximately 4 columns and 6 rows. The notes are written in blue and black ink and cover various topics related to the railway village's history and significance.

Buildings and spaces

Working economy of the Railway Village such as the premises and spaces, railway cottages (Carnegie Works, Green Park, Blackmore Road), open many streets provide a unique link to the past and the people who made it so, and how they used to live and work. They provide an insight into one of the most significant railway establishments in the world. The area is linked with buildings, streets and spaces that all help to tell the story of the Railway Village and its people.

What buildings and spaces do you value the most?
 What stories can they tell?
 How might they relate to one another through stories?

WORKS Sanderson

Handwritten notes on a large sheet of paper below the header, organized in a grid of approximately 4 columns and 6 rows. The notes are written in blue and black ink and cover various topics related to the railway village's buildings and spaces.

Histories and personal stories

People from far and wide relocated to Sandford, with many living with Railway Village from the past, there was a strong sense of community spirit, innovation and collaboration. The area continues to adapt and change with the times, there are some fascinating stories that deserve the opportunity to be shared and celebrated.

Which stories / parts of the Railway Village's history do you value the most?
 Who are the individuals or groups that should be celebrated and why? Both past and present.
 How did people come together in the past? What are the success stories?
 How did people come together in the past? What are the success stories?

WORKS Sanderson

Handwritten notes on a large sheet of paper below the header, organized in a grid of approximately 4 columns and 6 rows. The notes are written in blue and black ink and cover various topics related to the railway village's histories and personal stories.

Future opportunities

The Railway Village continues to adapt for modern needs. Ongoing engagement with heritage as it comes helps to celebrate the past whilst embracing the important assets for the future. Interpretation can also play a key part in the future of the Railway Village.

Do you have any specific ideas for interpretation and experiences within the Railway Village (physical, digital and live L.A. events and tours)?
 Are there any examples of interpretation or experiences already happening elsewhere that might work well here?
 In an ideal world, how would you imagine the Railway Village in 10 years time? How would people experience it?
 Are there any particular challenges?
 How might you, or people you know, wish to be included in the development of interpretation in future? (Focus groups? surveys? sharing stories and images?)

WORKS Sanderson

Handwritten notes on a large sheet of paper below the header, organized in a grid of approximately 4 columns and 6 rows. The notes are written in blue and black ink and cover various topics related to the railway village's future opportunities.

THE WORKS

Swindon's home for heritage,
knowledge and big ideas



Historic England



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Nottingham Studio Third Floor, The Birkin Building, 2 Broadway, Nottingham NG1 1PS
London Studio Unit CF 305, Cannon Wharf, Pell Street, London SE8 5EN
Contact +44 (0)115 8386737 mail@cbastudios.com www.cbastudios.com
Directors D Watkins BSc MSc MRTPI FRGS FLI • A Croft BA MA MCIFA

CBA is the trading name of Chris Blandford Associates Ltd Registered in England No 03741865. Registered Office: Third Floor, The Birkin Building, 2 Broadway, Nottingham NG1 1PS