

**Maidstone Town**  
**Centre Public Realm**  
**Regeneration**

Public Realm Design Brief  
North End of Week Street & Gabriel's Hill

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Maidstone Borough is situated in the heart of Kent, and the town itself is the county town of Kent.

Maidstone town is situated to the north-west of the borough and approx. 70% of the borough's population live in the urban area. Maidstone has a strong commercial and retail town centre, and is the largest traditional town centre retail area in Kent, with approx. 141,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floor-space within the town centre boundary.

- 1.2. The emerging Local Plan sets out the spatial vision and objectives for the town centre which include:

“By 2031 prosperity will be achieved through sustainable economic growth across the borough supported by the creation of employment opportunities, the regeneration of key sites, continued investment in the town centre and improvements to access. The town centre will be a first class traditional town centre that will enable Maidstone to retain its role in the retail hierarchy of Kent by the creation of a distinctive, accessible, safe high quality environment for the community to live, work and shop in. The town centre will be regenerated by encouraging a wide range of new development including shops, businesses, residential development, cultural and tourism facilities, and enhanced public spaces.”

- 1.3. Maidstone town centre is the primary traditional shopping town in Kent, with a good balance of major, national retailers alongside a strong independent offer. There are two main shopping centres
- The Mall which is an undercover shopping mall, built in the 1970s, and is currently undergoing investment and development; and
  - Fremlin Walk which was built in 2007. There are two smaller shopping centres – The Royal Star Arcade and Market Buildings both of which contain small independent businesses. In addition to these are the main shopping roads consisting of the High Street, Week Street, Gabriel's Hill, Union Street, Pudding Lane and Earl Street which is a particular focus for restaurants and cafés. Appendix 1a and 1b shows the primary and secondary retail frontages.
- 1.4. An opportunity has now arisen to significantly enhance the public realm along a section of Week Street, from Maidstone East Station to Fremlin Walk; and the entire length of Gabriel's Hill from Jubilee Square to Lower Stone Street. This brief has been developed by MBC, in consultation with KCC, who are the Highways Authority for the area in question.

## 2. Background

2.1. In 2012/13, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), in partnership with Kent County Council (KCC), implemented Phases 1 and 2 of the High Street Regeneration Project, to respond to the challenges of developments in retail provision in other areas of the town, which had left the High Street being overlooked by shoppers and visitors. MBC and KCC therefore invested £3.5m in enhancing the public realm around the High Street, and creating Jubilee Square at the upper end of the High Street, and Remembrance Square at the lower end towards the River Medway. Phase 1 was completed in June 2012, and Phase 2 in May 2013.

2.2. The main objectives of the High Street Regeneration Project were to:

- Reduce premises void/vacancy rates
- Increase land and property values
- Increase footfall
- Generate additional expenditure
- Create jobs and employment opportunities

2.3. Following the successful completion of Phases 1 and 2, MBC now has funding available to complete Phase 3 of the works. This brief sets out the urban design requirements for the North End of Week Street and Gabriel's Hill. It is envisaged that the design will follow best practice in urban design, taking into account the rich heritage of the area, and the already completed works in Phases 1 and 2, which set a standard for subsequent public realm works within Maidstone Town Centre.

2.4. The objectives for Phase 3 of the public realm are those covered in 2.2 above, but also the following:

- To raise the standard of the town centre to attract investors
- To improve the overall image of the town centre

## 3. Areas of Study

3.1. The extent of the Phase 3 works cover two roads in the town centre – Week Street and Gabriel's Hill.

### North End of Week Street

3.2. The plan at Appendix 2 shows the full area to be considered for this piece of work, which covers the North End of Week Street, from the entrance to Fremlin Walk, up to the junction with Station Road. Please note that there is an additional area on Station Road which will need to be taken into consideration – as per 3.5 below).

3.3. This section of Week Street is open to traffic before 10.30am, and after 5.30pm –to allow deliveries to the shops and businesses. Vehicles enter Week Street from the junction with Station Road, and exit down either down St Faiths Street, Earl Street, or at the junction with the High Street. During the day, Week Street is pedestrianised. See map appendix 3. Currently there is a gate located just after the junction with Brewer Street, which is closed at 10.30am – however in the new scheme, it has been agreed that this gate can be removed altogether.

- 3.4. Although most of Week Street is public highway, there are a few private forecourts on one section of the road. It is envisaged that the design will be able to continue onto these forecourts, however clearly agreement will be required from the owners.
- 3.5. The brief also includes a short length of Station Road leading off Week Street alongside Maidstone East Station. Maidstone East Station is due to undergo major refurbishment, and part of their works will include this section of road down the side of the station. Although this area will be designed by the project team for Maidstone East, it is essential that the end of Week Street ties in with their proposals. An indicative early drawing of the Maidstone East proposals can be found at Appendix 4. The project team for Phase 3 of the Public Realm will be put in contact with the project team for Maidstone East, to ensure this continuity.

#### Gabriel's Hill

- 3.6. The plan at Appendix 5 shows the full area to be considered. The section of Gabriel's Hill in question, is from the junction with Jubilee Square, down to Lower Stone Street and the junction with Palace Avenue.
- 3.7. Gabriel's Hill is open to traffic before 10.30am, and after 5.30pm –to allow deliveries to the shops and businesses. The road is one-way – vehicles enter from Lower Stone Street, and exit at the top of the hill, on to the High Street. During the day it is pedestrianised. Currently there is a gate at the bottom of Gabriel's Hill – it has been agreed that this can be removed. Appendix 6 shows the current traffic restrictions.
- 3.8. There may be private forecourts on Gabriel's Hill as well.

#### 4. Current Issues and Opportunities

##### Week Street

- 4.1. The section of Week Street from Fremlin Walk to Maidstone East, currently has a mixture of surface materials, ranging from red blocks, to paving slabs and tarmac – each in varying degrees of quality and age. Parts of Week Street are level, while other sections have a kerb. As mentioned in 3.4, there are also some private forecourts. The width from building to building varies, as does the width of sections of tarmac demarcating the road, and the pavements (with and without kerbs). There is a mixture of street furniture and clutter along this section, ranging from telecoms boxes, lamp columns, signage, bins and trees in planters etc. There is also a strong likelihood that many of the retail premises will have basements extending under Week Street.
- 4.2. A key opportunity is the redevelopment of Maidstone East which is a key project to reinvigorate this end of town. Despite the poor quality of the existing public realm, the entrance to Week Street from the station is a key gateway into the town – however it currently does not give a very good 'first impression'.

## Gabriel's Hill

- 4.3. Gabriel's Hill currently has a tarmac road surface and pavements of varying width on either side, with standard paving slabs, all of a reasonable overall quality. There is a mixture of street furniture and clutter along this section, ranging from telecoms boxes, lamp columns, signage, bins and trees etc. There is also a strong likelihood that many of the retail premises will have basements extending under Gabriel's Hill.
- 4.4. A key opportunity is the potential redevelopment of The Mall shopping centre. In addition, MBC is currently investigating the possibility of submitting a bid to the Heritage Lottery Foundation for their Townscape Heritage grant scheme.

## 5. Planning Status

### Week Street

- 5.1. A small section of Week Street is within a conservation zone. Appendix 7a shows the area of the conservation zone.
- 5.2. There are two listed buildings on Week Street:
- 55, 55A and 57 Week Street – Grade II listed (currently occupied by Tiger)
  - 108 Week Street – Grade II Listed (currently occupied by Mumu)

### Gabriel's Hill

- 5.3. The entire length of Gabriel's Hill is in a conservation zone. Appendix 7b shows the area of the conservation zone, and there are several listed buildings along its length.

## 6. Related Initiatives

- 6.1. Network Rail and South Eastern are carrying out a programme of improvements at Maidstone East Station. It is essential that the improvements to Week Street tie-in with the works at the station. Network Rail and South eastern are working closely with MBC on their plans, and designs will be shared as soon as possible. The current programme states that design approval will be in Aug/Sep 2016, construction to start winter 2016, and completion spring 2017.
- 6.2. MBC is currently aware of 2 private investment plans on this section of Week Street:
- McDonalds is proposing to carry out a major refurbishment this year.
  - MuMu's has recently submitted planning permission for a change of use, and extensions to create a Spa Hotel – the frontage of which will be on Brewer Street. Decision on the planning permission is due June 2016.
- 6.3. MBC have recently appointed FrancisKnight to create a Public Realm Plan incorporating Public Art Policy. This is an emerging piece of work, which is intended to ensure that all future public realm works in the town centre are designed in a more 'strategic' way. The design team will need to take into account the findings of this piece of work, which is due to be completed in August 2016.

## 7. Budget

- 7.1. The proposed budget for the entire scheme is £3million including professional fees, but excluding VAT.

## 8. Scope of Services

- 8.1. MBC wish to appoint a multi-disciplinary consultant team, with a proven track record in public realm design. Professional services are required from urban design and landscape architects, with appropriate technical support from transport planners, highway designers, and civil engineers as well as any other areas of expertise as the consultant sees fit. It is envisaged that there will be a separate appointment for a Quantity Surveyor/Cost Consultant.
- 8.2. MBC envisages that this project will be broken down into stages. An early stage will be for the consultants to produce some early rough sketches and ideas to be presented to Members. This will allow Members to choose and agree the style of the public realm (e.g. a modern approach or a more traditional style). The first stage will relate to RIBA stages 0 – 2, and the second stage will relate to RIBA stages 3-4. MBC would like the fee proposal to be broken down into the two stages mentioned above. The construction phase (RIBA stages 5-6) will be procured under a separate brief, however it will be expected that the design consultant will have involvement in this phase of the project as well. An indication of the cost for the consultant to be involved in the construction phase should be provided.
- 8.3. Whilst drawing up the outline designs it is expected that the consultants will work with officers from MBC and KCC as well as the retailers affected, and any other stakeholder and access groups. At the end of stage 1 (RIBA stage 2) MBC will then go out to public consultation on the outline designs proposed by the consultants. It is therefore essential that the design team have the ability to show what the public realm areas *could* look like. High quality visuals are required to 'sell' the designs to all stakeholders. In particular officers and council Members will need to be able to see the benefits. Following public consultation the chosen option for each area will be presented to Committee, for approval to progress to the detailed design phase.

## 9. Objectives of Brief

- 9.1. To produce two different outline designs for each road i.e. two options for the design of Week Street from Fremlin Walk to Station Road; and two options for the design of Gabriel's Hill. To create a high quality public realm, that provides a distinct sense of place. Specifically options for each road should:
  - show the entire length as a level, shared surface
  - rationalise street furniture and clutter
  - provide additional seating where appropriate

- create a sense of place to each area
- create a 'gateway' at the Station Road junction on Week St, and at the bottom of Gabriel's Hill, to provide a sense of welcome to visitors
- show an increase in the quality and functionality of the public space, particularly for pedestrian use
- use high quality materials which are suitable for daily (albeit restricted) use by large delivery vehicles
- maintenance – provide a scheme which is low-cost and easy to maintain – in terms of daily cleansing schedules, as well as durable and easy to repair/replace if the need arises
- where appropriate, tree planting should be included – being mindful of the species of tree and its growth rate, watering needs, and leaf/berry drop
- provide opportunities for art to be incorporated into the design
- be accessible to all being particularly mindful of disabled access
- make it easier for pedestrians to navigate their way around the town, and be better connected to the surrounding area and points of interest
- be sensitive to the various heritage assets and points of interest, in particular listed buildings
- provide indicative costs for implementing each proposal
- represent good value for money

9.2. The designs for Week Street must integrate with the Maidstone East Station redevelopment proposed by South Eastern, which is planned to be implemented in the last quarter of 2016/17.

## 10. Outputs

### 10.1. Stage 1 – Week Street & Gabriel's Hill (RIBA stages 0-2):

- Production of very early sketches to show design intent/ideas
- Review of streetscape and traffic regulations undertaken to date
- Site investigations into the location of utility services
- Topographic survey
- High quality consultation materials for public and stakeholder consultation
- Report on stakeholder and public consultation responses
- Plans/drawings in pdf and other formats as requested e.g. jpeg
- High quality artist's impressions of options
- Details of proposed materials including surface material, street furniture
- Details of any proposed colour palette for materials
- Suggested phasing and timescale of construction (being mindful of works at Maidstone East Station)
- Outline initial and in-use costings

### 10.2. Stage 2 – Week Street & Gabriel's Hill (RIBA stages 3-4)

- Production of detailed technical construction drawings and specification for all materials

- 10.3. Any surveys, drawings and plans should be provided in pdf, CAD and any other format as required.

## 11. Stakeholders and Consultation

- 11.1. The consultants will be required to produce very early sketch designs/ideas to be presented to Members. This will allow them to agree the style for consultants to follow e.g. a traditional approach, or a more modern and bold design style.
- 11.2. The consultants will be expected to work closely with officers from MBC and KCC in particular. There will also be a requirement to work with the land owners and businesses that have a private forecourt which we intend to carry out works on as well as all other retailers in the affected areas. They will also need to consult with any other stakeholders and access groups.
- 11.3. The consultants will need to also work with Network Rail, South Eastern, and their design contractors. Any contact will be via officers from MBC to ensure a joined up approach to this particular area.
- 11.4. The consultants will also be expected to work with FrancisKnight, who are producing the strategy for Public Realm Plan incorporating Public Art Policy.
- 11.5. The proposed designs will be presented to MBC's Policy and Resources Committee, for approval to continue to the detailed design phase.

## 12. Relevant Documents and Strategies

- 12.1. Listed below are the various documents and strategies which the consultants need to be aware of:
- Emerging Local Plan
  - Maidstone High Street Improvement Works: Economic Impact Assessment (Mott MacDonald, Oct 2015)
  - Maidstone Phase 3 Improvements, PERS Audit and Economic Impact Assessment (Mott MacDonald, Oct 2015)

## 13. Submission Format and timetable

- 13.1. Consultant teams should submit the following material with their bid:  
Details of consultant's proposals to fulfil the brief including initial thoughts on the vision, objectives and identified outputs. This should be no more than 3 sides of A4.  
particular consultants should present examples of previous work on consultation and

stakeholder engagement. A key component of this project is to be able to 'sell' the design to members and stakeholders with quality imagery.

- Details of specific, relevant experience/track record – including that of those individuals who would be specifically working on this project.
- Details of project team members, including specialist sub-consultants if necessary, their proposed roles and reporting lines.
- A lump sum fee, broken down into stages, to deliver the outputs identified in the brief, including details of hourly fee rates for all team members. The fee must include all disbursements, including draft and final documentation and presentation of material for consultation purposes.
- A draft programme for this stage, which covers the tasks/outputs set out in the brief and the follows the proposed timescale indicated below.

Appoint consultants	Late June
Inception meeting	Late June
Consultants to carry out surveys e.g. topographical	Early Aug
Initial sketch proposals/ideas back to Members (incl. Ward members)	Mid July
Consultants produce outline designs and consultation materials	End Jul/Aug
Consultants report back to Policy & Resources committee with designs	28 <sup>th</sup> Sep
Consultants produce detailed construction drawings	Oct/Nov/Dec
Procurement process for construction phase	Jan 2017/Feb
Appoint contractors	March
Start on site	May

#### 14. Selection Process and Evaluation criteria

- 14.1. Selection will be carried out by a client group of Council officers from MBC and KCC, chaired by the Head of Economic and Commercial Development. The contract will be awarded on the basis of which quotation is assessed as being the most economically advantageous, having regard to price and quality weighted at 40% and 60% respectively.

##### Assessment Criteria

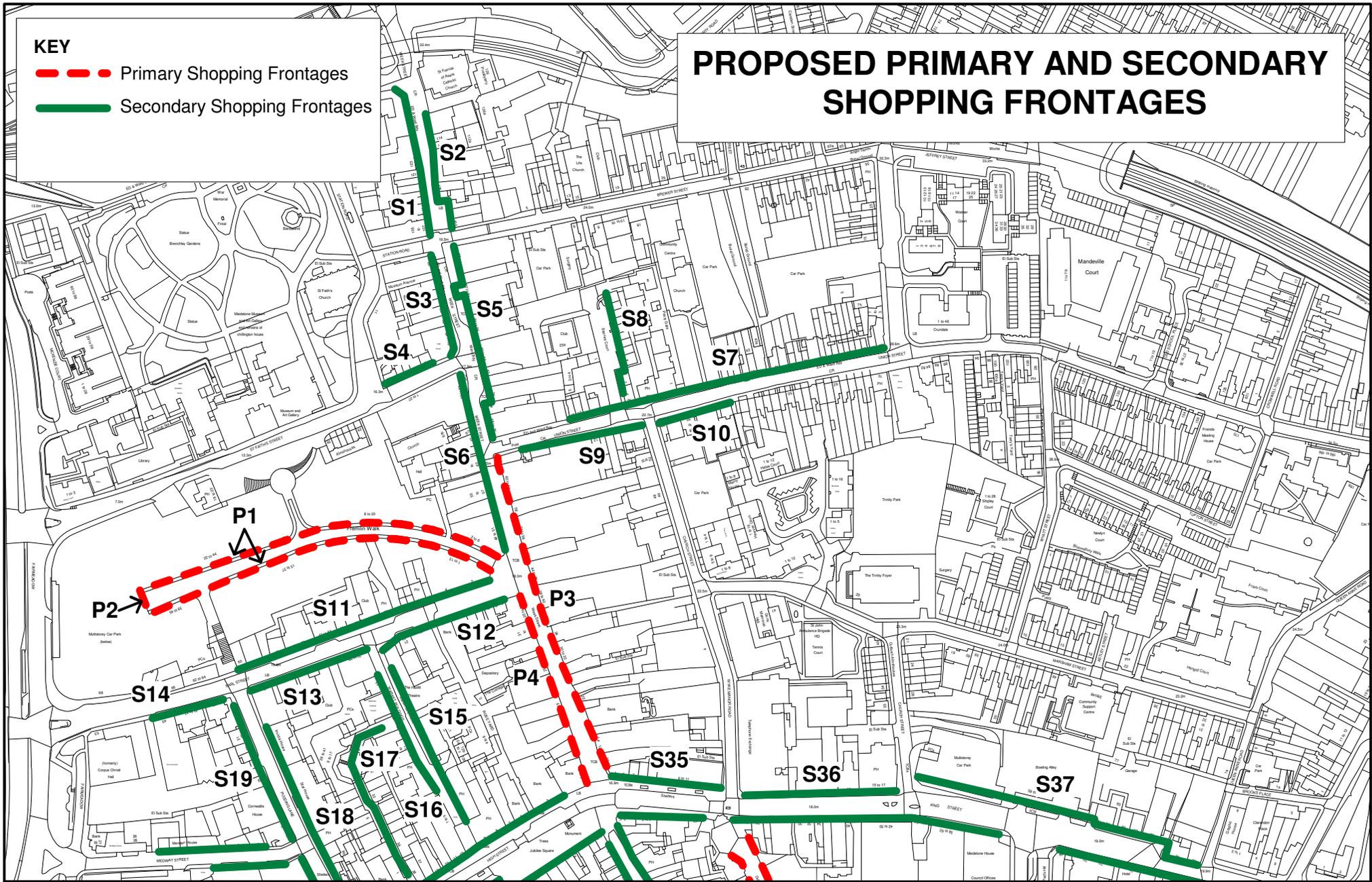
Criteria	Weighting
Response to project objectives including enhancement of local character, sensitivity to	20
Ease of maintenance with appropriate choice of material and colour palette	10
Viability of the design including affordability and practicality of implementing and maintaining.	15
Examples of work carried out elsewhere showing clear communication of ideas through illustrations and text, and unique designs to transform locations with experience of getting buy-in from stakeholders, Members and the	15

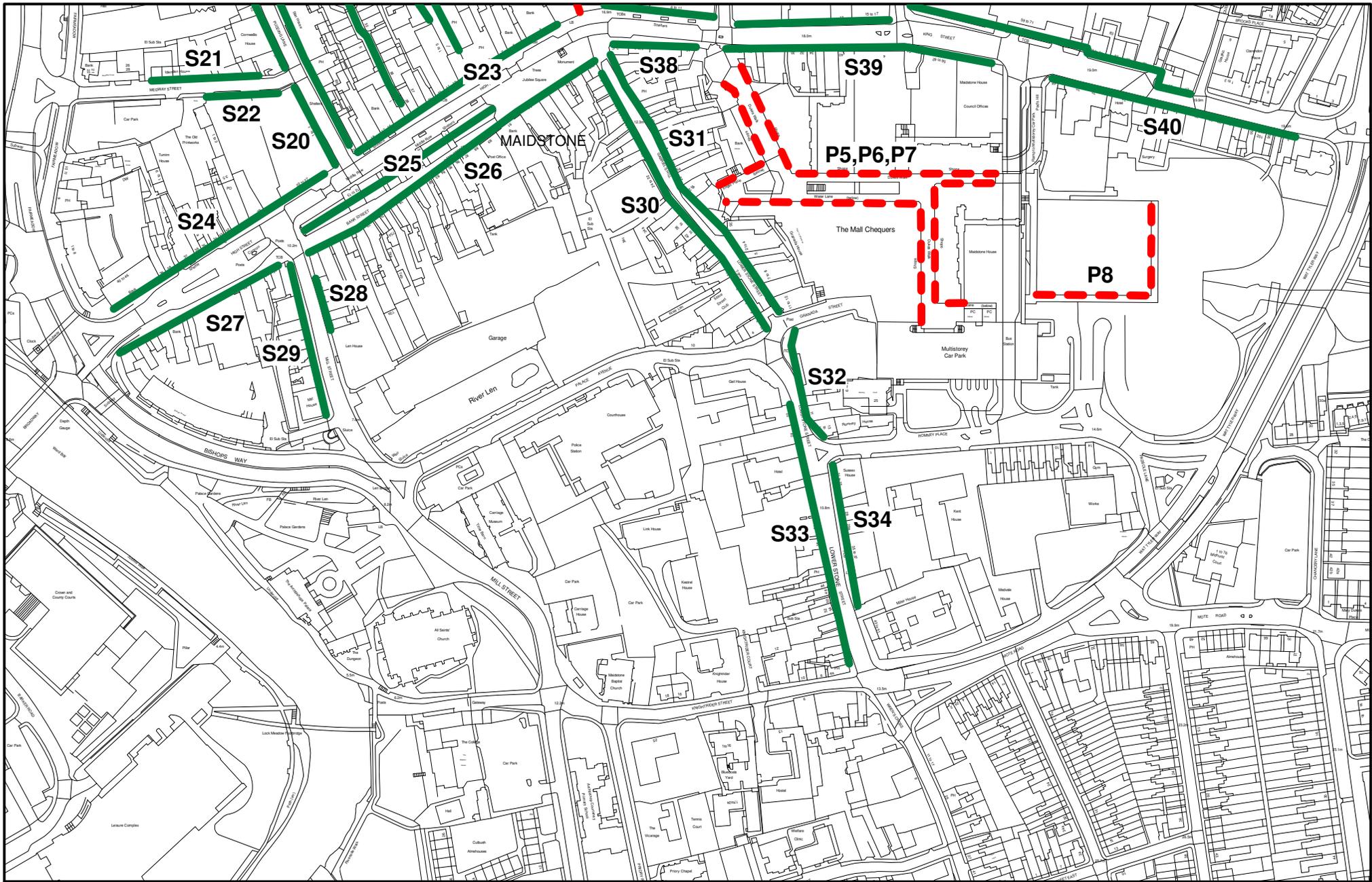
Fee proposal	40
TOTAL	100

**KEY**

-  Primary Shopping Frontages
-  Secondary Shopping Frontages

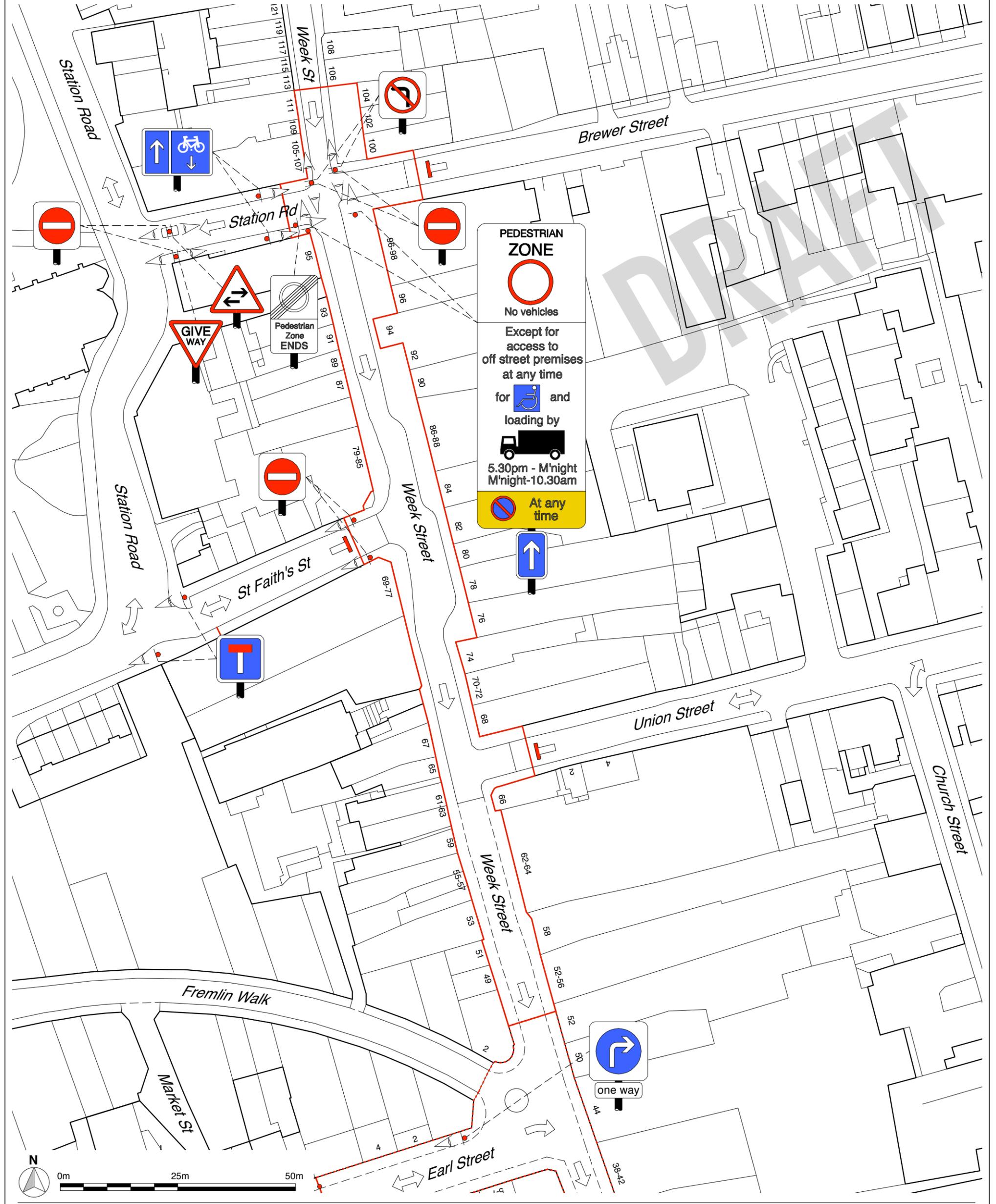
# PROPOSED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SHOPPING FRONTAGES







**Week Street Proposed Layout**  
**Scale 1:1250**



**PEDESTRIAN ZONE**

No vehicles

Except for access to off street premises at any time for wheelchair and loading by

5.30pm - M'night  
M'night-10.30am

At any time

- Notes**
- Phase 3 - Week St (A)
  - Existing traffic movements
  - No through route for traffic

**Studio 10**  
Ayr Street Workshops  
Ayr Street  
Nottingham  
NG7 4FX

Telephone  
0115 911 0734

Facsimile  
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**Drawing Title**  
Week Street (A)  
- existing TRO's

**Project**  
Maidstone Public Realm  
Improvement Project  
PHASE 3

**Drawing No.**  
sk602

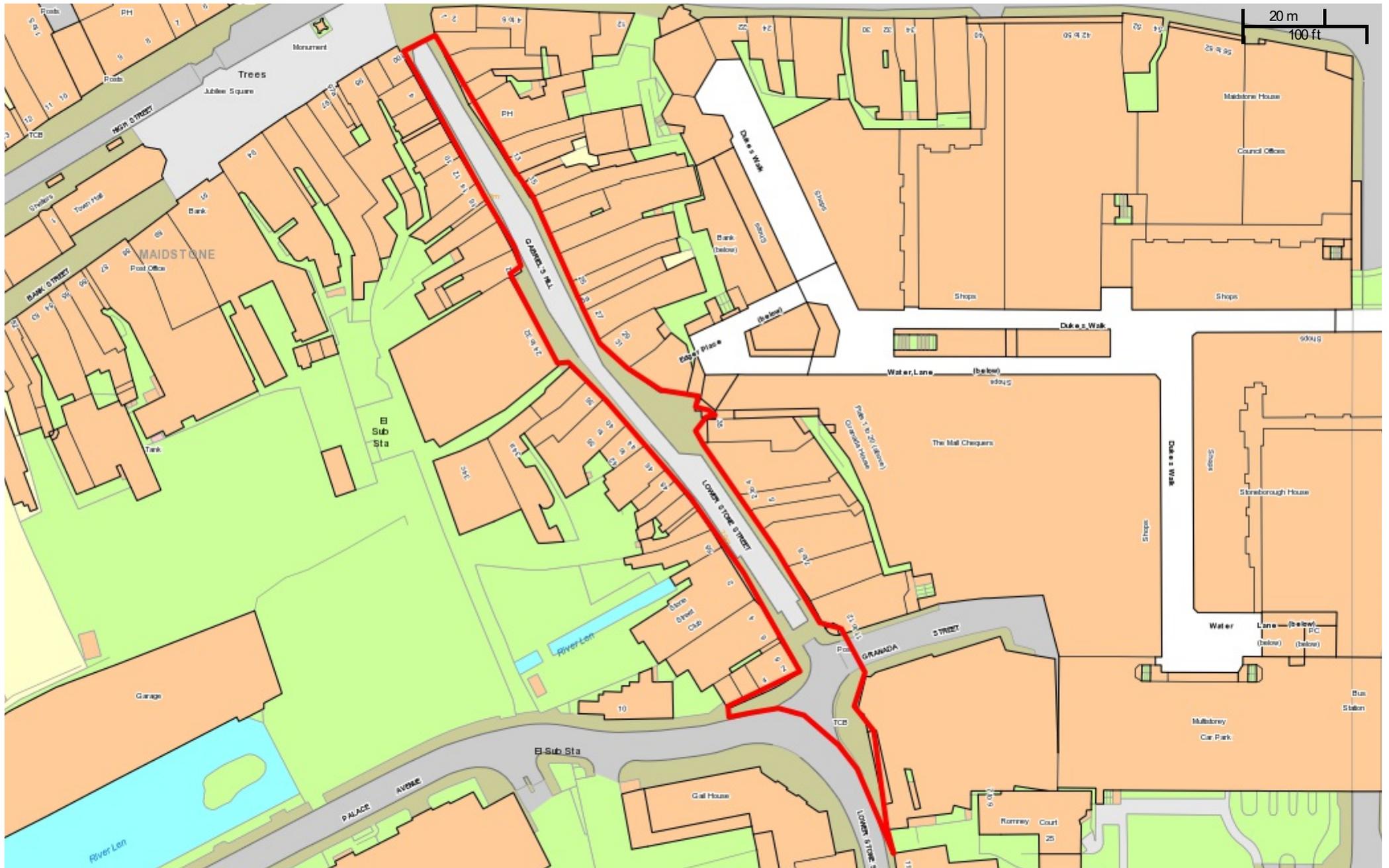
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**Revision**  
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**DRAFT ISSUE**

**Date**  
12.02.14





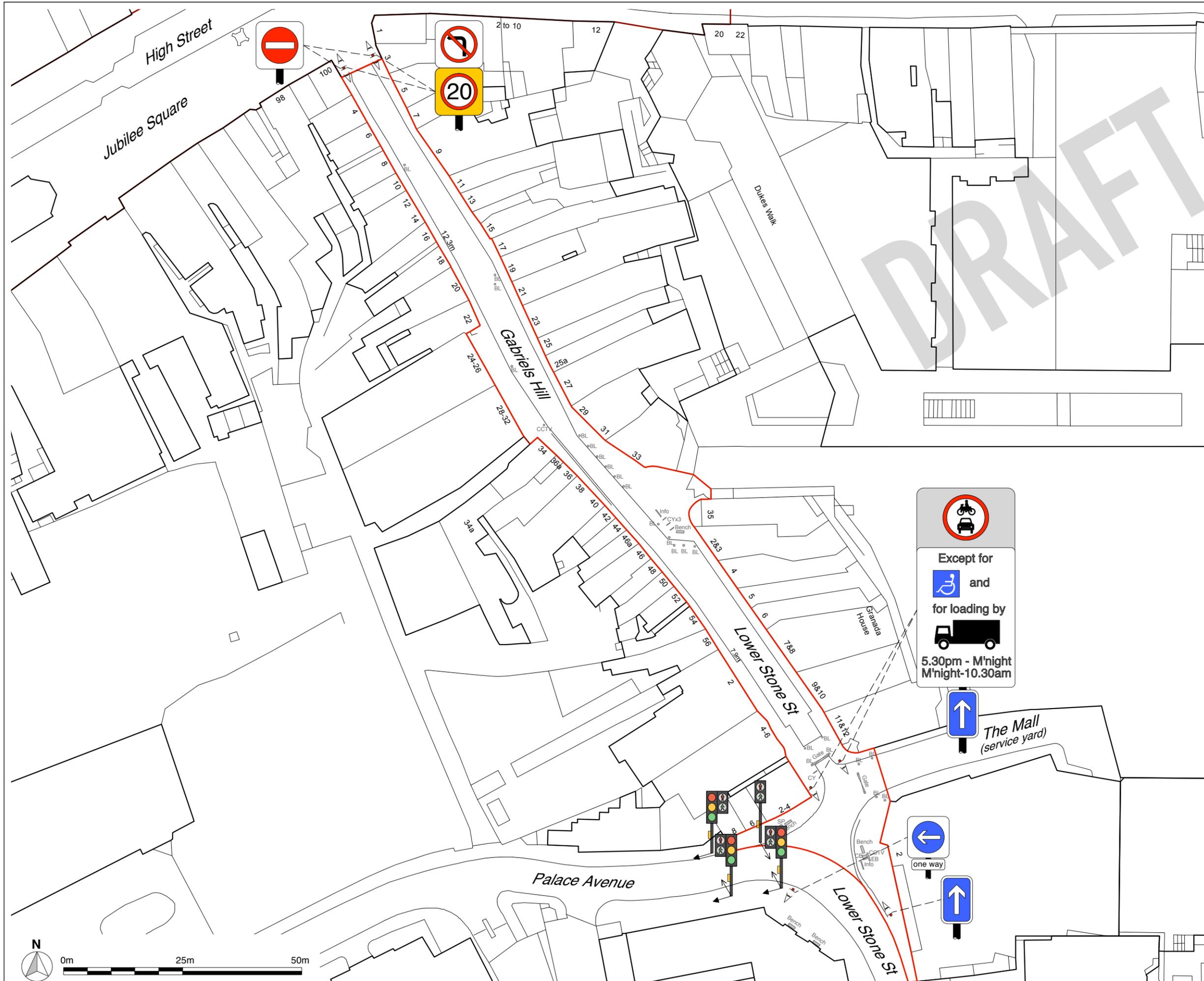
**Gabriels Hill Proposed Layout**

Scale: 1:1250

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**Notes**  
 Phase 3 site area - Gabriels Hill

Except for  
 and  
 for loading by  
  
 5.30pm - M'night  
 M'night-10.30am

**DRAFT ISSUE**

**Date**  
03.02.14

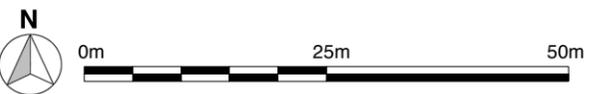
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**Revision**  
/

**Drawing No.**  
sk502

**Drawing Title**  
Gabriels Hill  
- Existing TRO / signage

**Project**  
Maidstone Public Realm  
Improvement Project  
PHASE 3



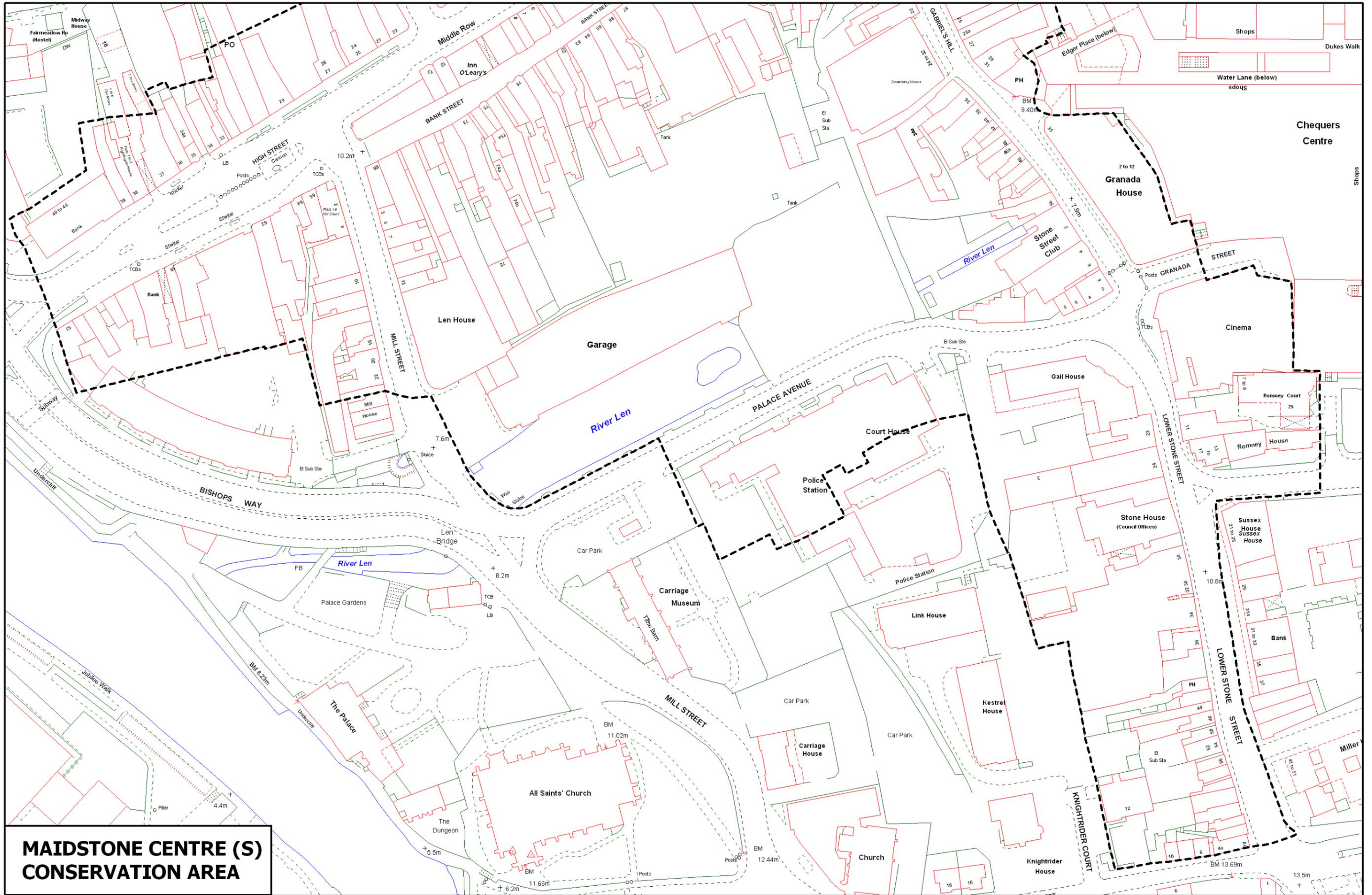
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**MAIDSTONE CENTRE (S)  
CONSERVATION AREA**

**THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



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