

THE MIDSTEEPLE QUARTER IDEAS COMPETITION (MQIC) D U M F R I E S

COMPETITION BRIEF

The Stove Network and the Glasgow Institute of Architects is inviting architectural concepts for the Midsteeple Quarter of Dumfries High Street from professional individuals and practices for a reimagined urban core of Dumfries.

The Midsteeple Quarter competition is first and foremost an ideas competition to envisage an innovative new approach to town centre living and being. The goal of the Stove Network is to see the high street re-energised and repopulated, contributing inclusively to the local community and economy.

The competition is looking for innovative yet practical solutions with regards to the building fabric of the Bakers Oven, a conscious solution to a sustainable energy strategy with a people-centred focus and a vision for the Quarter.

CREATING A VISION

As designers you are in a position to respond to a set of challenges and dream of solutions, but these ideas need to be shared. Visualisations are a fundamental technique to communicate ideas as both a form of architectural representation and as an exploratory tool to convey the possibilities of our future environment. An image can offer direct evocations of lifestyle or inventive connections to surrounding cultural, social and historical conditions or reveal the potential through transformation and change. The competition revolves around creating a vision for the Midsteeple Quarter and these visionary ideas should be submitted as 2 images to illustrate proposals.

Give the vision of Oz, show the direction and convince you can create the yellow brick road...



CONTEXT

The Midsteeple block is currently privately owned, however the Stove Network is in discussions about an asset transfer of 137-139 High Street, known locally as The Bakers Oven.

Offered with this competition brief are a range of resources, including:

The House on the High Street Movie
Plan, Section and Elevation of the Midsteeple Quarter
Photographs of the Dumfries High Street
A recent Community Engagement report

SUBMISSION

The competition is anonymous. Each submission should not contain any mark or name identifying the author, the anonymity will be controlled by the GIA and not released to the Judging panel until a decision has been made.

Submission of competition entries are to be sent electronically to app@gia.org.uk and should include:

Maximum of 2 visualisations/images.
Up to 1000 words description of concept.
Video submissions will be accepted but are optional.

The visualisations should be 500mmx500mm and a minimum 200dpi to ensure they can be included in the public exhibition. The visualisations should not exceed 5MB each and should be submitted in pdf or jpg format.

The written description should be submitted as a pdf. If you choose to submit a video please keep it to 60 seconds or less.

The submission is to be digital only so that images and videos can be projected or formatted for print as part of the exhibition. Questions should be sent to app@gia.org.uk before the deadline and answers will be posted on the GIA website.

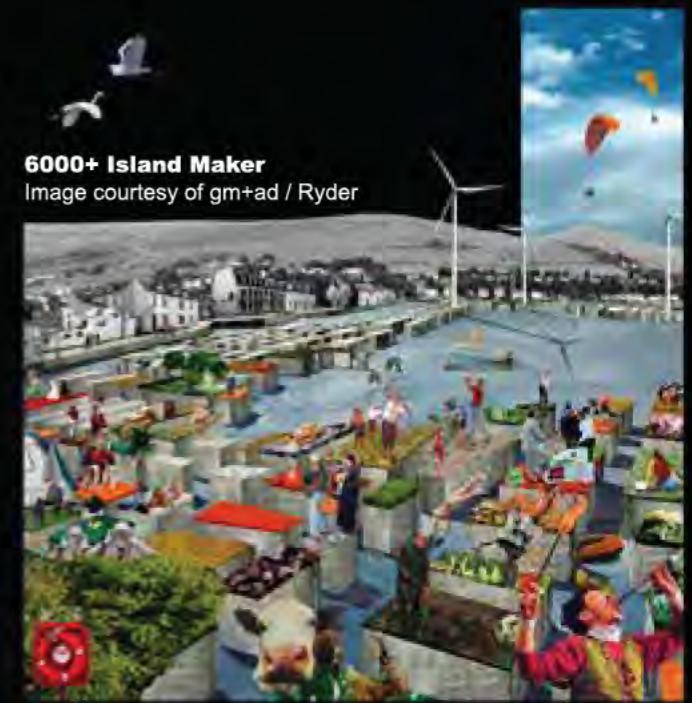
OPEN DAY AND MIDSTEEPLE QUARTER SITE VISIT

We will hold an Open Day for interested entrants on the 22 April 2017 in Dumfries. Participating architects will be given a tour of the area, meet key team members and hear about The Stove Network.

To reserve your place at the open day, please book a ticket on our eventbrite page: <https://mqic.eventbrite.co.uk>

KEY DATES

Competition Launch - 24 March 2017
Open Day & Midsteeple Quarter Site Visit – 22 April 2017
Submission Deadline – 15 May 2017
Announcement – End of May



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

WHO CAN ENTER

This competition is open to architects, landscape architects and urban designers and any other related discipline, as individuals or in a practice from across the UK. This competition is not open to students.

PRIZES

1st Place - £1000
2nd Place - £500
3rd Place - £300

EXHIBITION

The competition of entries will be exhibited in Dumfries and in Glasgow. A decision on format will be made once the venues are confirmed.

ENTRY FEE

£25 – GIA Members
£30 – Non members

COPYRIGHT

Copyright of the entries will remain the property of their designers, but the promoters and partners of the competition reserve the right to publish the entries, use on associated websites and social media.

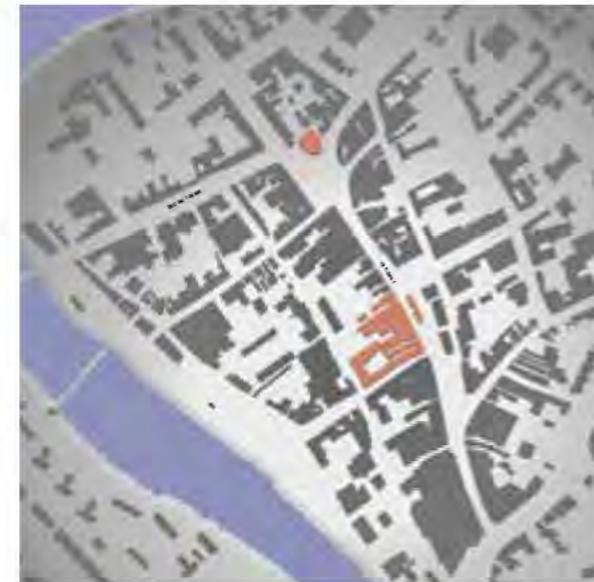
Midsteeple Quarter Ideas Competition

These are the submissions to the architectural competition launched by The Stove Network in March of this year. Working with the Glasgow Institute of Architects we asked for ideas of how architects and designers might approach the task of redeveloping and rejuvenating Dumfries High Street and the Midsteeple Quarter. The starting point they were given was the responses we had from the people of our town to our question of what can be done with our High Street to make it fit for the future? They also had the responses to detailed consultations we have done with local people and the answers given to the online survey we ran at the end of last year.

Peoples Choice

We awarded cash prizes to the our 3 winners. Our question to you now is what do you think of these? Which submission is the 'Peoples Choice'? Please fill in our voting slips and tell us what you think and give us your reasons why.

None of these ideas will be implemented as they stand but they give us a idea of what might be possible. We think they help us take a step forward to realising a vision of more people living, working and thriving on Dumfries High Street, and we are excited about taking the next step on that journey.



Midsteeple Quarter

Long-term and careful consultation has brought a consensus that bringing people back to live in the town centre is an urgent necessity. Midsteeple Quarter is a response to this need, identifying a block of underused buildings in the heart of the town centre as the site for a bold initiative that will see local people developing their own High Street as a contemporary living, working, socialising, learning and enterprising hub. The Midsteeple Quarter project is being carried forward by a wide community partnership including The Stove, Loreburn Community Council, Third Sector D+G, University of West of Scotland, NHS D+G, Dumfries and Galloway Council and more than 400 local people who have signed up to support the project. If you would like to be added to the mailing group for Midsteeple Quarter please include your email address on your voting slip for Peoples Choice.



the stove network

the
stove
network

GIA

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST of SCOTLAND
UWS

SCOT
CREATIVE
LAND
ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL
LOTTERY FUNDED

Dumfries
COUNCIL
& Galloway

The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Amanda Flockhart

Our proposal envisages a natural habitat at the centre of a thriving community block. The 'crust' of the block is conceived as a density of living accommodation above a re-invigorated retail and commercial base which contains a new public garden incorporating sculptural timber worksheds. 'Steamie' outbuildings (wash houses) still found locally within the regions back land gardens, are reinterpreted as worksheds for the creative industries to flourish within a natural landscape in the heart of town. The planted open courtyards between the creative 'steamies' provide opportunities for play, relaxation, cultivation, biodiversity, networking as well as a wonderful visual amenity for residents and visitors to enjoy. The creative 'steamies' are arranged in the garden within a new rig pattern drawn from the existing high street townhouses. The existing rear rig buildings are cleared to liberate the heart of the block for this creative centre, and at the same time, capture the full potential of this south facing site.

Infill structures, at specific locations, complete and consolidate the 'crust' of the living block. The Irish Street infill piece comprises new townhouses above an arched podium base. The townhouses include private gardens to complement and visually extend the new public garden. Below the townhouses, through the podium arches accessed from Irish Street, a garage facility provides a useful and much needed car parking requirement in the heart of the town for residents and badge holders. This facility addresses an issue, voiced at the public consultation, for several local people who feel excluded from visiting town.

Spanning between the rear of the Bakers Oven and the council building fronting Irish Street is a new south facing student housing infill block containing and engaging with the north edge of the garden. The arch theme, taken from the simple arched alleys found in the town connecting the high street to the backlands, continues at the podium base and façade with arched fenestration. The massing above podium level is stepped to respect the sub-divided scale of the adjacent high street townhouses.

The arched fenestration is deliberately conceived to allow south facing balcony space and thereby promote further living interaction with the public garden. The Bakers Oven becomes an important gateway to the student housing and is conceived as a building that provides the facilities to connect the University to the town centre. With this in





mind, and in order for the Bakers Oven to be a building that is fully utilised throughout the day and night, a Students Union would provide a number of beneficial uses not only to the University and town centre but most importantly to the students who would define its culture and atmosphere.

Another positive outcome of the existing rear rig buildings being removed is that it allows the High Street upper levels to become meaningful dual aspect flats enjoying both street and garden views. Bank Street upper levels also enjoy a similar front and rear relationship. The retail base fronting the High Street is given a subtle yet transformative proposition for the public approach. Existing arch alleyways and new café/restaurant entrances are transformed into projecting canopies into the street which continue through to the garden. These structural arches act as a new conduit between street and garden drawing the public through the 'crust' to engage with the centre. The arches project into the garden and grow to become linked fluted canopies providing south facing shade and shelter to the café and restaurant terraces thereby taking advantage of this prime historical high street position for the public to enjoy. Again, a similar condition is envisaged to the Bank Street retail base. Towards the bottom of Bank Street, the only non-listed structure is replaced with a new townhouse similar in composition to the Irish Street infill. The arched base allows a direct connection through to the centre and a diagonal pathway dissects the garden and connects the creative 'steamies' up towards the Bakers Oven. The block has thereby been transformed into a welcoming public space with access from the three main streets surrounding the block.

The proposal has sought to address many important issues raised through the public consultation. Our vision, underpinned by the outcomes of this consultation, is of an inclusive community block where all ages of people want to live, work, and socialise within the back drop of a landscaped amenity which promotes a palpable sense of sustainability, wellbeing and creative use at its centre.

Amanda Flockhart

VIDEO INCLUDED

THE MIDSTEEPLE QUARTERS IDEAS COMPETITION DUMFRIES

1

IDEA A INSTALL A SPECIAL PLASTIC ROOF OVER SHOPPING CENTER

The reason form suggesting all the ideas is to promote a younger persons environment. Shopping centres require to attract the youth in our society.

The properties forming this centre are growing old and subject to Scottish rainy and frosty weather. This is an area with historic connections "BURNS and awe that" and must be protected.

IDEA B BUILD A TOWER TO SUPPORT PLASTIC ROOF OVER

The plastic roof over the square is similar to that at Gatwick Airport but supported from above hence the reason for providing a structural tower and a Fourth Road Bridge suspended structure. The existing buildings not being able to support the roof structure.

IDEA C INSTALL A SMALL ICE RINK TO ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE

It is proposed to invite the existing owners of the large ice rink in town to support this project for introducing very young children to ice skating in all its forms. This would introduce youngsters, teenagers and adults to the center and introducing all sorts of event to suit all ages. Cafes would provide seating all round the ice rink which would increase the numbers in the center.

This idea is not original but it has proved very satisfactory and successful in a shopping mall in Clearwater Florida.

IDEA D BUILD ON TOP OF TOWER A VIEWING PLATFORM

This idea along with ideas E and H is proposed to bring in the young who seem to be tied to their mobile phones for everything. The viewing gallery will serve all ages I propose stimulating the young by using E and H to send messages about the surrounding landscape, local history, universe direct to their phones and allow to respond via the tv screens and telephones.

We must brake into the young's communication system to reduce the large gaps between young and old.

IDEA E ERECT A TELESCOPE/PLANITARIUM AT TOP OF TOWER

We need to get a local or international University interested in this project to open up the universe to all and in particular the young. This is a very large project and requires a great in depth work by specialists all working together.

The telescopes in the planetarium would be worked from a central control room and provide pictures with voice recordings to telephones and TV screens at base of tower. There are so many new technologies being developed constantly and they in consultation with the universities could enhance interest.

REF. NO.58da9276b6ba8

GENERAL

The work illustrated is in the form of enlarged thumb nail sketches and not to be scaled.

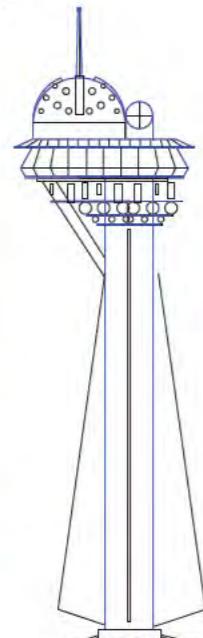
The pitcher shown incorporates some poetic license in that ice rink admin unit has been omitted for illustration purposes.

3

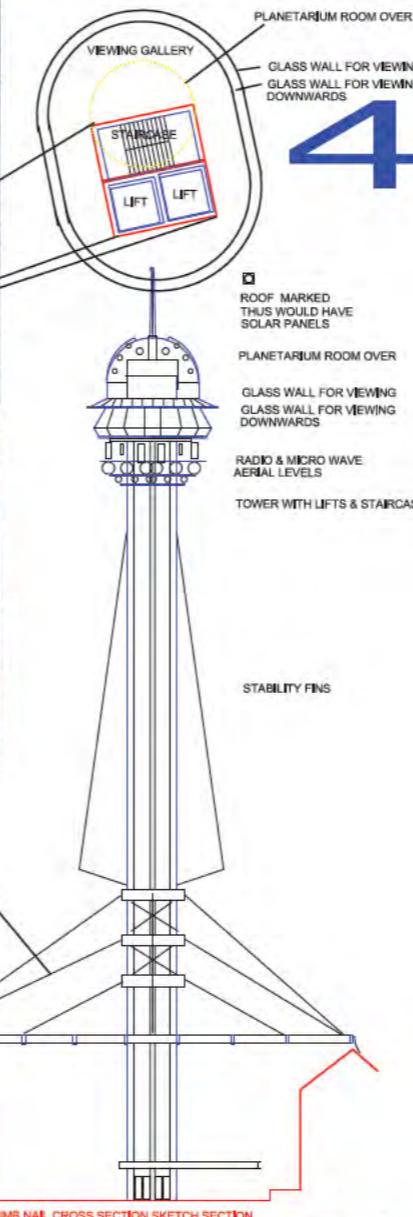
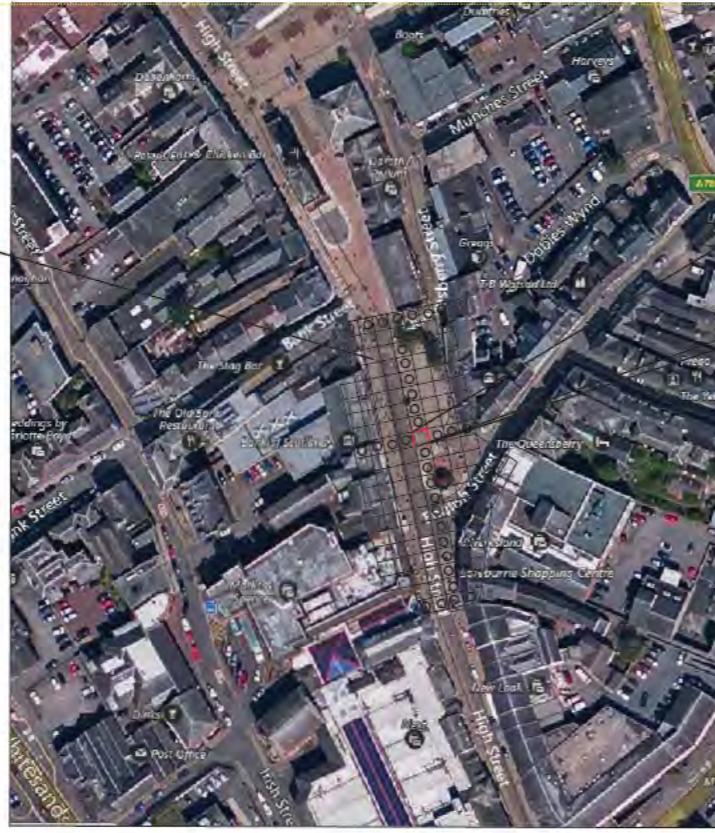


THE MIDSTEEPLE QUARTERS IDEAS COMPETITION
DUMFRIES

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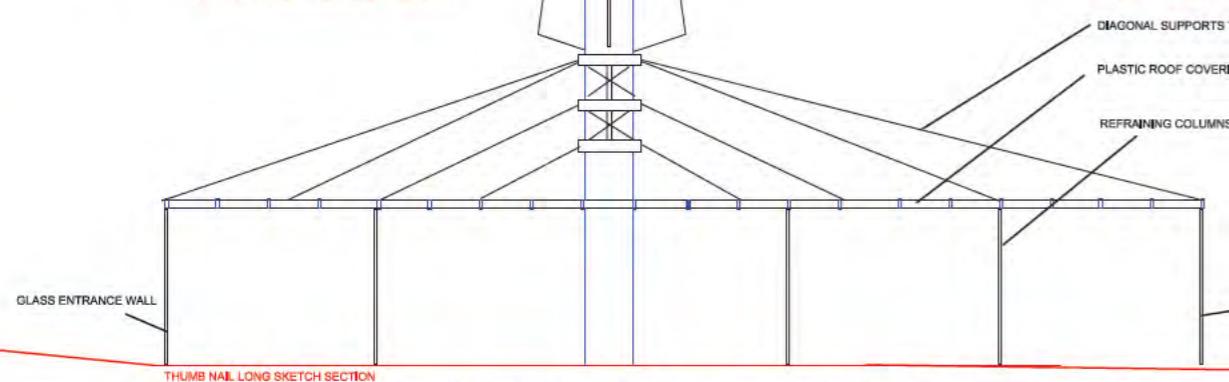


GROUND LEVEL PLAN



4

ROOF PLAN



THUMB NAIL CROSS SECTION SKETCH SECTION

THE MIDSTEEPLE QUARTERS IDEAS COMPETITION DUMFRIES

REF. NO.58da9276b6ba8

DUMFRIES COUNCIL	PARKING TICKET	
DATE 20/4/17	DAY TH	TIME 9:00-13:00
DISPLAY TICKET ON DASH BOARD 87495 MORNING		
TICKET NOT TRANSFERABLE		
DUMFRIES COUNCIL	PARKING TICKET	
DATE 20/4/17	DAY TH	TIME 9:00-13:00
HAND TO DISOUNTER TO RETURN COST 87495 MORNING		

DUMFRIES COUNCIL	PARKING TICKET	
DATE 20/4/17	DAY TH	TIME 13:00-17:00
DISPLAY TICKET ON DASH BOARD 87496 AFTERNOON		
TICKET NOT TRANSFERABLE		
DUMFRIES COUNCIL	PARKING TICKET	
DATE 20/4/17	DAY TH	TIME 13:00-17:00
HAND TO DISOUNTER TO RETURN COST 87496 AFTERNOON		

DUMFRIES COUNCIL	PARKING TICKET	
DATE 20/4/17	DAY TH	TIME 9:00-13:00
DISPLAY TICKET ON DASH BOARD 87495 MORNING		
TICKET NOT TRANSFERABLE		
DUMFRIES COUNCIL	PARKING TICKET	
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HAND TO DISOUNTER TO RETURN COST 87496 AFTERNOON		

2

IDEA F ERECT PLATFORMS TO ACCOMMODATE AERIALS AND MICRO-WAVE ANTENNAS

Know how do we pay for all these ideas.
The tower has to be high enough to attract aerial and micro-wave companies to support the capital cost (partly) and rent for them.

IDEA G TAKE CONTROL OF ALL PARKING SPACES WITHIN CENTER

The local authority and owners of parking spaces within the town center have to take control of all the parking within the center to gain an income from this valuable land yet make it an incentive to shoppers and shop owners. My proposal is to issue parking meter tickets say for £1 for morning parking and £1 for afternoon with shops giving discount incentives say spend £6 and get £1 back. So that parking is paid for at no cost to the user and the shop gains a customer. This will also encourage the business people to park for nothing. So every one gains and illegal parking will be reduced. SEE TICKET ABOVE

IDEA H PROVIDE LARGE TV SCREENS TO DISPLAY DUMFRIES EVENTS AND ADVERTISE SHOPS AND LOCAL COMPANIES

It is proposed to have large tv screens installed at each entrance & at the ice rink to relay all sorts of programme's including sky seam's from planetarium and advertising shops and local companies. (another cost contributor)
Peoples thoughts and messages could also be broad-casted through this media. I understand this can be done using Sharecast using some sort of censor.

IDEA I RUN FUNCTIONS AND CONCERTS FOR ALL AGES AT CENTER

Functions and concerts and discos could also be incorporated into the centre. It may also be possible to extend the roof over the existing stage area to bring it into the scheme (although not shown in the sketches).
Large entertainers may be possible in the center.

IDEA J INVOLVE THE EDUCATION AUTHORITIES WITH IDEA D,E,H & I

Local councils, university and education authorities with all others could contribute ideas for all sorts of events. I would suggest 4 large events per year could become a great tourist attraction (especially if the whole town was involved).

IDEA K INSTALL SOLAR PANELS ON TOP OF ROOF STRUCTURE

Solar panels as indicated on roof plan could provide the power required for the lifts and other electrical requirements.

Robert G. Lang

Andie Cook, Megan Ward, Cara Brunton & Ashley Mitchell

midsteeple campus

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet, And each for
other's welfare kindly speirs:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet: Each tells the
uncos that he sees or hears.
- Robert Burns

Abby Solway thinks back to the year 2020 when the University of the West of Scotland had just relocated to its Midsteeple Quarter Campus. At the time, Abby was 17, and living with her family in Auldgirth and was excited by the Dumfries transformation from the dreary ex-market town it had become. She remembered that this was the turning point for the High Street - after being derelict for so long, each of the buildings bustled with life. On a trip into town with her Mum, she remembered hearing students laughing and buskers playing music. At 18, she was eager to further her education and enrolled in the Professional Catering course at UWS – it was taught at 137 High Street, near Business Studies and Hospitality.

The top floors of these High Street buildings served as halls of residence during term times, the mid floors often operated as study rooms but the ground floor, where most of Abby's learning took place, served as a bar and restaurant for the town and was called 'The Oven'. The students from all three disciplines worked as there as chefs, front of house and junior management under tutelage of experienced University staff. The menu changed every month, not only responding to locally sourced, seasonal produce but also evolving in tandem with what Abby and her fellow classmates were learning at that time. The Oven offered mutual support to local businesses such as Frugaldom who supplied eggs, Townfoot Farm's Bruce Goldie supplied the exceptional meats, Roans Dairy in Dalbeattie who often brought some cows fresh produce to the Midsteeple Market on a Saturday and Mrs Greene's Tea lounge who supplied the most incredible scones. During non-term times, the students were employed in The Oven and its pop-up food vans across Dumfries and Galloway to meet the demand of the out-of-towners who descended en masse not just to be part of the extremely successful Electric Fields Festival or the more recent Foodie Festival, but sometimes just to enjoy the creative Dumfries vibe that has been established here.

Abby's Gran, who remembered the hotels (and their bars!) on the High Street, once told her the town was starting to 'feel





like its old self'. Every weekend the Midsteeple theatre, an island on the street, was packed out - there was always something to see! When the venue wasn't showing UWS-led productions (arranged by Drama students working in collaboration with their Set Designer and Sound and Lighting technology classmates) it hosted a drama group for school children and, once a year, showed movies in conjunction with the nearby Odeon as part of Dumfries Film Festival.

Across the way, Beauty, Holistic Therapy and Physiotherapy courses shared a ground floor premises called 'Ciùin' (Calm) catering to all of Dumfries' spray-tan and deep tissue needs... and the Health Centre operated drop-in clinics run by Optometry, Podiatry and Dental students. The Stove Network continued to manage their extensive operations from 100 High Street but had also been gifted the building adjacent, offering residencies to artists and creatives from across the country. The 'Stove Stalls' was a seasonal event which drew art enthusiasts to the town. Along the street, another long time empty property was converted to provide University Library services, also available for public use. The library staff have a strong focus on improving adult literacy and numeracy in the district which continues to have a very positive community response from attendees and volunteers.

Her student days now 12 years behind her, Abby has just celebrated her 2nd year of operation of 'Solways', the first Michelin Star restaurant in the Borders . Working with UWS and The Oven, she offers year-long paid internships to two lucky graduates from the University each year, retaining talent in the area. The place is booked out months in advance, with a menu that celebrates local produce and culinary excellence. The restaurant crockery and glassware is redesigned annually with local business We Make Pots and furniture was made by joinery graduates of the university using facilities at MakLab.

All in all, the Solway's together with the collective Dumfries and Galloway community are delighted with how the town centre has regenerated and grown in recent years. Their success and forward thinking attitude installs every confidence that they will continue provide a sense of purpose and enjoyment for so many for years to come.

**Andie Cook, Megan Ward,
Cara Brunton & Ashley Mitchell**

Holmes Miller

Dumfries Co-lab Proposal for Dumfries Midsteeple Quarter Ideas Competition,

Intro - Dumfries Co_lab is a proposal to stimulate activity in the Midsteeple Quarter by creating a 'Collaboration Lab', a multi-disciplinary network of studios where creatives and the public can work and collaborate in a mixed use environment. To sustain this mixed use living/working environment, we envision a rich programme of spaces, and various events which will take place within the Quarter, the central event of which is a Hackathon. This will act as a catalyst for attracting people to gather within the Quarter.

The High Street - In recent years, the High Street of Dumfries has witnessed a slow decline, as many commercial outlets have decentralised to larger stores on the outskirts of the town. In the last 4 months alone, 18 businesses have closed. In order to respond to this decline and repopulate the town centre, we believe there's an opportunity to introduce new activity by focusing on technology with the aim of attracting existing residents of Dumfries back into the centre, but also bring new inhabitants in.

Technology - The development of the internet has meant that it is no longer necessary to rely on the local economy alone to sustain our communities. These shifts have also changed the notion of the workplace, where it does not require a physical environment, rather, it can be anywhere with an internet connection. However, the value of people gathering together has enormous social and cultural benefits. We envisage the Co_lab as providing a space for this gathering to take place by providing studios for artists and offices for potential new startups, encouraging and facilitating spontaneous collaboration. Furthermore, the internet is opening a new realm of possibilities in terms of 3D fabrication and prototyping, making it an ideal fit for the creative culture already established in Dumfries by The Stove Network. The Co_lab would aim to be a part of this, linking the studios and work spaces with the existing community. However, in order to take full advantage of this we must place greater emphasis on the education in emerging technologies and skills, this will play an important role in Dumfries Co_lab, where a series of education programmes will take place in the events spaces.

Hackathon - To nurture this creative atmosphere, a 'Hackathon' is proposed as a yearly event that will take place within the Co_Lab and the Midsteeple Quarter. The event will be open to the creatives who occupy studios in the Quarter, as well others from outside Dumfries. Similar to other Hackathon events, participants will collaborate with each other and form teams in order to rapidly develop and build new ideas. Hackathons are not restricted to software development, and normally extend to graphic designers, and artists. At the end of the week long event there is the potential to focus on successful teams, providing them with the spaces, funding and facilities to further develop their ideas into a reality. Hackathons around the world are responsible for the creation of thousands of successful new startups each year.



Dumfries
Co_lab



Dumfries
Co_lab

Collaboration/communication - We believe that the collaborative atmosphere is vital for the success of the project and the ideas that are created within. As a species, we have only become so advanced through our ability to communicate and work together. This notion was famously alluded to by Leonard E. Read in *I, Pencil*. Read explores the creation of an object as simple as a pencil, where it requires collaboration of thousands of people in dozens of industries to produce it. Read concludes that there isn't a single person on Earth who could make a pencil from conception to production on their own. We are at an exciting point in time, in the sense that we can now communicate instantly with anyone, anywhere in the world through the internet. However, physically gathering plays an even more important role in collaboration, and we can facilitate this through the spaces proposed in the Co_Lab.

Design of the space - The architectural proposal is to construct a canopy as a superstructure which unifies the closes and infill buildings of the Midsteeple Quarter under a single roof. The purpose of such a structure is both symbolic and practical. Depending on their condition, existing buildings will be renovated, or adapted to form new spaces. At the ground floor, the closes will be divided into small independent units suitable for a variety of uses. We would not assign specific uses to each individual unit, but rather allow these to be defined dynamically as either studio spaces or independent shop units as the quarter develops. The proposal utilises these existing closes to develop a series of public routes which connect the High Street to Irish Street through the quarter development. Around the perimeter of the quarter, residential units will occupy the upper floors of the blocks, looking onto the High Street, and Bank Street. A portion of this will be student housing. These new inhabitants will in turn attract more, diverse uses for the units within the Midsteeple Quarter activating the area throughout the day and night. Flexible spaces have been included to allow for this, with events like open air film screenings and music performances. Recognising the overall scale of the proposal, the construction of the project would be split into several phases, using The Bakers Oven as the initial foundation for the project. The principles of the Co_lab can be applied at a much smaller scale, as an inter-disciplinary studio space, with a Hackathon event. As interest grows, the project will develop dynamically and additional spaces can be renovated/created in sequence. Not only to address ongoing decline but generate new opportunities for art, culture and industry.

Holmes Miller

Colin Anderson

Does Dumfries Town Centre Need Another Utopian Vision?

The answer, surely, lies not in whether the vision is Utopian but in whose vision it is. That the Stove Network is galvanizing this vision is encouraging. Its ambitions represent the aspirations and concerns of a community, not the strategic manoeuvring of a remote few, no matter how well intentioned. The Stove Network's continued existence and the realisation of its ambitions now seems essential. The challenge for those seeking to inspire, then, is initially to respond in a manner that enables rather than proscribes; to present the skeletal framework within which the sinews, arteries and vital organs can be grown. That the heart is clearly in need of resuscitation is in no doubt, if that is not too visceral a comparison!

Every town has a grain, coarse and fine, which defines its character, the "sense of place", wrought from buildings and made legible by the spaces between. Unlike the people, politics and economics that make up its life blood, the physical form of a town presents a backdrop, a stage on which daily life is played out. Less temporal than the players, it becomes the stuff of memory, association, identity and belonging. The town's warp and weft must be respected as the fabric is continually woven, unpicked and woven again, over time.

That the High Street has maintained its character is testament to the skill of the generations who constructed it. Its robust fabric and the people that inhabit it create the spirit of Dumfries but it has proven sufficiently yielding to meet new challenges over the years. Despite this, the life blood of the centre, its people, have been gradually excluded. Now, the extraordinary and unprecedented demands and revolutions of the 21st Century must be accommodated, so that today's community can breathe new life into its stones.

The vision offered by this proposal responds to that challenge, to maintain the spirit of the place yet serve the needs of the present. To restore a critical mass of community life to the Town Centre by presenting a lively, attractive and diverse environment, in harmony with history and context but relevant to the present. To conserve what is of value but to intervene in an appropriate way, so that the place is not a museum of dusty relics, or worse, a mocking pastiche.

Midsteeple Quarter typifies the dense urban block at the heart of the Town Centre; a strong edge of meandering buildings comprising both urban backdrop and civic presence. Facing the counterpoint of Midsteeple itself, the Quarter is a significant Town Centre location. Street edges enclose a core comprising clefts of linear closes, like roots penetrating the soil, some opening out into enclosed, shady and almost secretive courtyards. The buildings forming these closes and courtyards have evolved, transformed and eroded over time in an ad-hoc way and now pose the question of how best to revive their lost purpose.

That morphology of the close hints at how new forms behind the street frontage might be stitched into the space. Their defensive purpose has now dissolved into time to leave only shady



Midsteeple Quarter - High Street Elevation



Midsteeple Quarter - Red Kite's Eye View



chasms, sheer walls and spindly staircases. The ramshackle arrangement of outbuildings does not readily suit the needs of a 21st Century community, though their intriguing, almost charming nature hints at how new functions and spaces might be formed.

The layout suggested behind the street frontage seeks to invite exploration. Reinterpreted “closes” connect with each other and with adjacent streets through a more permeable and transparent ground level edge, allowing access and visibility to the spaces behind. Existing close entrances are retained and new gateways created to encourage the curious. Discovery and surprise await in their varying widths and orientation, discharging into bright, open and lively spaces. Enclosing buildings are simple blocks; adaptable spaces over one, two and three levels containing and enabling a variety of uses. They form a backdrop, a framework completed in stages to animate and enliven the perambulation from one encounter to another. Generous areas of glazing and projecting bays illuminate the interior and the imagination of passers-by, hinting at activities within. Materials are simple and sustainable, a canvas upon which will be written the narrative of modern community life.

Over time the framework will develop into a larger composition, always changing and responding, some becoming associated with art, performance and music, others with technology, trade, education, well-being and critically, with the enjoyment of wholesome, locally produced and prepared food. That dwellings are largely absent from the Town Centre is a sign that something is broken. Is it just that it no longer provides an environment that is attractive? Are there other mechanisms of exclusion that operate? That there is empty space above street level that could provide viable homes in a community that needs affordable accommodation is an absurd contradiction that needs unravelling. The processes that create these conditions need to change and the catalyst is a clear demonstration that an alternative reality is not just possible but practical, essential and desirable.

The life blood of a community is managed change that preserves what is meaningful and adapts the environment to fit the needs of the present. Interventions proposed to the street frontage herald such positive change, signalling revitalisation. New, live-work studios create living and working space that will drive regeneration. Their forms establish new portals into the heart of the Quarter and are a tangible sign of renaissance. Upper floors to existing street front buildings can be adapted to provide comfortable, efficient homes, their rear walls reconstructed and their outlook enlivened and energised by the activities behind. So is this Utopia? Perhaps not; Utopia represents an unobtainable ambition. It is, however, something worth striving for, as it stretches ambitions and pushes at boundaries. The community certainly deserves its benefits and with courage and imagination, the Stove Network can deliver it.

Colin Anderson
VIDEO INCLUDED

MIDSTEEPLE QUARTER IDEAS COMPETITION

CRAFT RETAIL AND AN INHABITED HINTERLAND

Dumfries town centre, in common with many former county market towns, is in a state of gradual decline. The centre has moved from being a major retail focus for the region to a struggling and increasingly hollow core. As out of town shopping has expanded and internet shopping has arrived the functions which have kept the town vibrant for decades are disappearing.

THE AGE OF BIG RETAIL IS OVER.

This proposal brings forward ideas of small scale, flexible and intensive uses which can bring life and inhabitants back to the Midsteeple Quarter. The intensification of uses will create a town centre which is a new type of place, one which people will want to visit as a social and human alternative to the sterile worlds of chain store, digital and business park landscapes.

The proposal integrates a range of key ideas into an overall conceptual framework. The key aims are to provide

AFFORDABLE RETAIL AND CRAFT SPACES FOR INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES

FLEXIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKING, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY SPACES

MAJOR INCREASE IN ATTRACTIVE VIABLE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

Achieving these aims would begin to bring Dumfries town centre back to being a viable lively and sustainable environment in the region.

In order to achieve these aims this proposal develops ideas for the perimeter buildings to the Midsteeple quarter and a re-forming of its hinterland to provide all the necessary spaces to bring a new range of users to Dumfries town centre. The scale and inherent flexibility of the smaller scale spaces proposed offers the chance for a new type of town centre to emerge. The density and intensification of uses provides a unique chance to create an urban framework with the flexibility to provide long term viability and sustainability.

The principal design moves required to create this new environment are to develop

- CRAFT RETAIL

the transformation of the large footprint retail spaces into small scale independent users. The big deep retail spaces will be reduced with new small scale spaces on the perimeter given priority. These smaller spaces will line the edge of the block giving an active frontage to the streets.

This offers the possibility of low rent / low business rate spaces which independent and craft venues can afford.

The open street spaces would allow market stalls to be erected. Each shop would have the right to expand into the public realm. This would provide the opportunity for the small retail space to extend out into the public realm at low cost on key busy weekends or for special events. A new street life would be offered as a result of small intensive functions.

- LIVE/ WORK/ COMMUNITY SPACES

The existing single storey retail support structures which lie in the hinterland of the perimeter blocks will be altered/ adapted/ extended to create an internal world of courtyards and vennels. These existing structures can be integrated into a new language of courtyard building. Some roofs would be retained, some removed to form new ground level spaces. The newly created matrix of spaces provide accessible flexible accommodation which can house a range of small scale activities including learning, working and living.

The courtyards allow the high density network of spaces to have a pleasant, well lit arrangement across the urban block. The existing vennels would be transformed with new entrances opening off each space.



HINTERLAND



Passive supervision and interaction from the adjoining spaces and courtyards would ensure a lively and safe interior to the urban block.

MODULAR LIVING

Alongside the potential for ground floor living spaces a series of residential stacks would be carefully placed within the existing structures. Built using modular construction techniques these would offer small apartments benefitting from daylight and open balconies. The modular construction allows these to be built with the minimum of on site disruption and access.

The placing of the stacks and their careful arrangement of windows allows open outlooks with controls on overlooking and privacy.

All the residential spaces would be of highly insulated low energy construction to offer low energy consumption to all residents. Each stack is capped with solar panels to provide enhanced energy generation for residents and communal power needs.

GREEN TERRACES

The living environment would be enhanced with the greening of the roofscape and terraces. A mix of accessible terraces, balconies and green roofs will provide a unique outlook for this dense urban living arrangement. Each balconies and terrace would be carefully orientated and screened to maintain privacy and shelter for each resident.

A new intensive planted landscape would begin to grow between the open courts and residential stacks adding to the quality and personal spaces of the residents.

SMALL OFFICE / STUDIO SPACES

The existing perimeter buildings would be adapted to provide flexible small working and living spaces. Upper floors would open out to the rear hinterland with new balconies and terraces. These could work in conjunction with the small retail spaces below offering outlets for artists and craft makers.

The combination of living/ working/ making / selling would offer a unique place for new craft to grow.

The aim of this proposal is to expand and intensify the density of town centre functions in the Midsteeple quarter. The overall development of a new concept for retail and craft alongside the creation of new community/ learning/ working and residential uses offers the chance for a new approach to town centre development.

"the strange hinterland where life begins....."

ARPL Architects

VIDEO INCLUDED

Pioneer Landscape Architecture

MQIC_Vision

Introduction The approach proposed to revitalising Dumfries' Midsteeple Quarter is to look for responses on both a regional and local scale. This will reinstate the importance of Dumfries as a regional capital in a post retail society. The strategic vision will influence the design and programme of Midsteeple Quarter allowing a solid foundation to be created for an incremental and flexible reimaging of what a high street is for in a contemporary town.

Regional Vision The Midsteeple Quarter is to become a centre for research, learning and community involvement on regionally important topics, such as flood prevention, community self sufficiency, public health and skill development.

The main driver of the regional vision is a flood prevention strategy based on alternative ideas to the traditional flood prevention methods proposed for the town centre. The initial line of investigation is to be inspired by research that states that beaver's dams in Scotland have flood alleviation potential. This approach relies on small dams on tributaries to hold back water high up in the River Nith's catchment area in order to reduce pressure downstream. This would not impact any one landowner disproportionately and would be monitored from the Midsteeple Quarter research centre. In parallel to the scientific monitoring of the strategy there would be an artist in residence programme to bring cultural meaning to scientific endeavour

The design and construction of the dams would be a unique learning opportunity and could help skill development within the region, centred around Midsteeple Quarter.

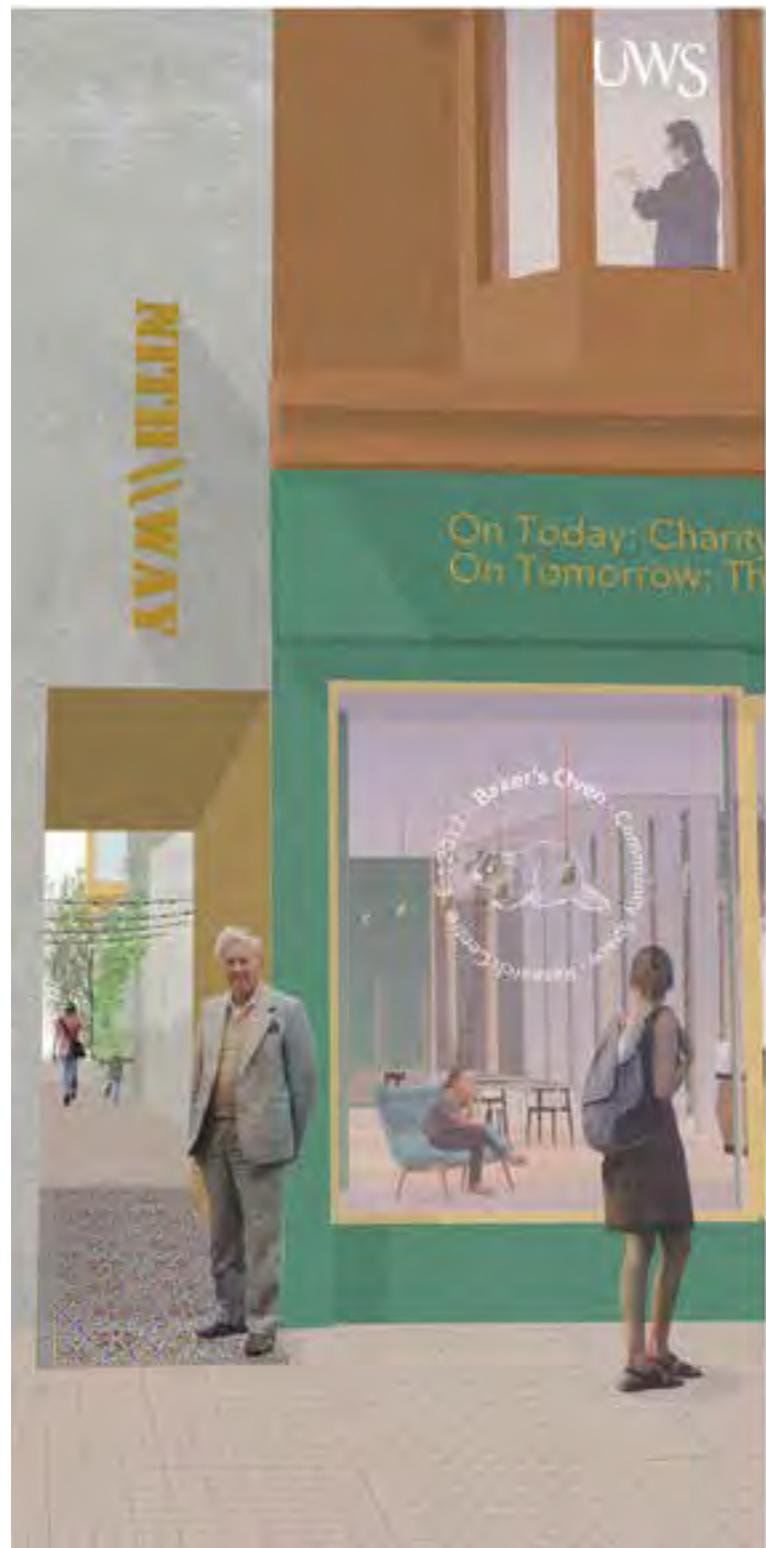
Midsteeple Quarter Scientific innovation, education and the arts are the key themes of regeneration, the quarter becomes a physical manifestation of the regional vision. This changing focus is marked by the introduction of a third steeple in the town centre in the form of a Swamp Cypress tree. This species is tall and columnar, tolerating wet and polluted conditions. These attributes tell a story of the new direction for the quarter, one that will only get stronger and more visible over the next 100 years.

The quarter is to be opened up, creating a network of vibrant spaces of differing character that will add flexibility and adaptability to the area, moving away from the model of an active high street and passive back lands. This rich mix of building scales and types will allow for a wide range of users to establish themselves, supported by a strong framework of revitalised public space.

The redevelopment of the Baker's Oven, adjacent close and rear space will act as the catalyst for the renewal of the quarter. The adjacent ground floor units can then be used for supporting uses with residential above for key workers, students and older people who will benefit from living in the town centre.

Spaces The public space framework will be created by improving and reactivating the closes, alongside redefining the spaces to the rear of the high street. There will be a mix of openly public and semi public spaces that react to and influence the transformation of the surrounding buildings. The main public areas are to the exterior of the block, with the internal spaces being more intimate in character, offering a different spatial experience to the High Street. This reintroduced pedestrian permeability through the blocks will have an increased impact on the flexibility of existing building uses.





The following key spaces will be used to unlock the quarter's potential:

- **Closes** As buildings are gradually redeveloped they will respond to the closes. As a precursor, the closes will be renovated to provide a setting for a public arts programme to encourage people to step off the High Street and explore. Initially activating the closes in this way paves the way for future redevelopment and new public spaces as these routes will already have become part of people's understanding of the townscape.
- **Yard** This space will be created to the rear of the Baker's Oven and will primarily function as a spill out space for the Baker's Oven and new live/work building. It will have a yard character allowing for informal events and a space to work in. Occasional tree planting will add to liveability of space without impeding its main functions.
- **Wetland** This is a high profile new public space created at Irish Street. It will be a wetland and reed bed that both collects surface water run off from the quarter and also fills up artificially as an indicator of river levels, giving a warning to imminent flooding.
- **Garden** This is the site of the swamp cypress and a public garden will be created below the tree. Historic plans show a garden previously in this location. This will also form part of a new public route through the quarter.

Generally, all spaces will have elements of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) incorporated within them and crucially, their performance can be monitored by the research unit.

Buildings Key buildings are proposed to define revitalised public spaces and improve pedestrian permeability. The Baker's Oven redevelopment will kick start and monitor the regeneration of the quarter, creating a fertile environment for future development:

- **Baker's Oven** Facing on to the High Street will be a flexible space for community and university use. The main research and teaching spaces will be situated on the floors above. To the rear of the building is a cafe/restaurant space with that opens out onto the close and through to the newly created yard.
- **Live/Work block** This new building will define the extents of the yard and have large building envelope allows for internal flexibility. Part can be fitted out as live/work units allowing for easy personalisation and future adaptation. This process will be managed by occupants as a collective. The remaining portion of the space is reserved for prefab construction techniques allowing the elements needed to fulfil the regional aspects of the vision, such as dams and refuge studios, to be developed within the Midsteeple Quarter. This will be a commercial and educational/research facility.
- **Winter Garden** A glasshouse is proposed between the garden and wetland. This winter garden will allow for a public route to be created from the High Street, through the garden and wetland, to Irish Street. The winter garden will allow for a verdant public space to be enjoyed all year round, even during the cold winter months. Areas of this space could also be used for botanical research relating to agricultural self sufficiency.

Pioneer Landscape Architecture

Lateral North

Midsteeple Quarter / Nordic Quarter

Imagine if town centres throughout Scotland were not populated with vacant shops, Poundlands or Starbucks, but instead with international cultural, retail and dinery experiences based on the people who live, work and play in that place, or those who have contributed to it throughout its history.

In the case of Dumfries, it is our proposal to transform the Midsteeple Quarter in to a 'Nordic Quarter', hinting at the possibility of other international and cultural 'Quarters' to develop in the future throughout the town centre.

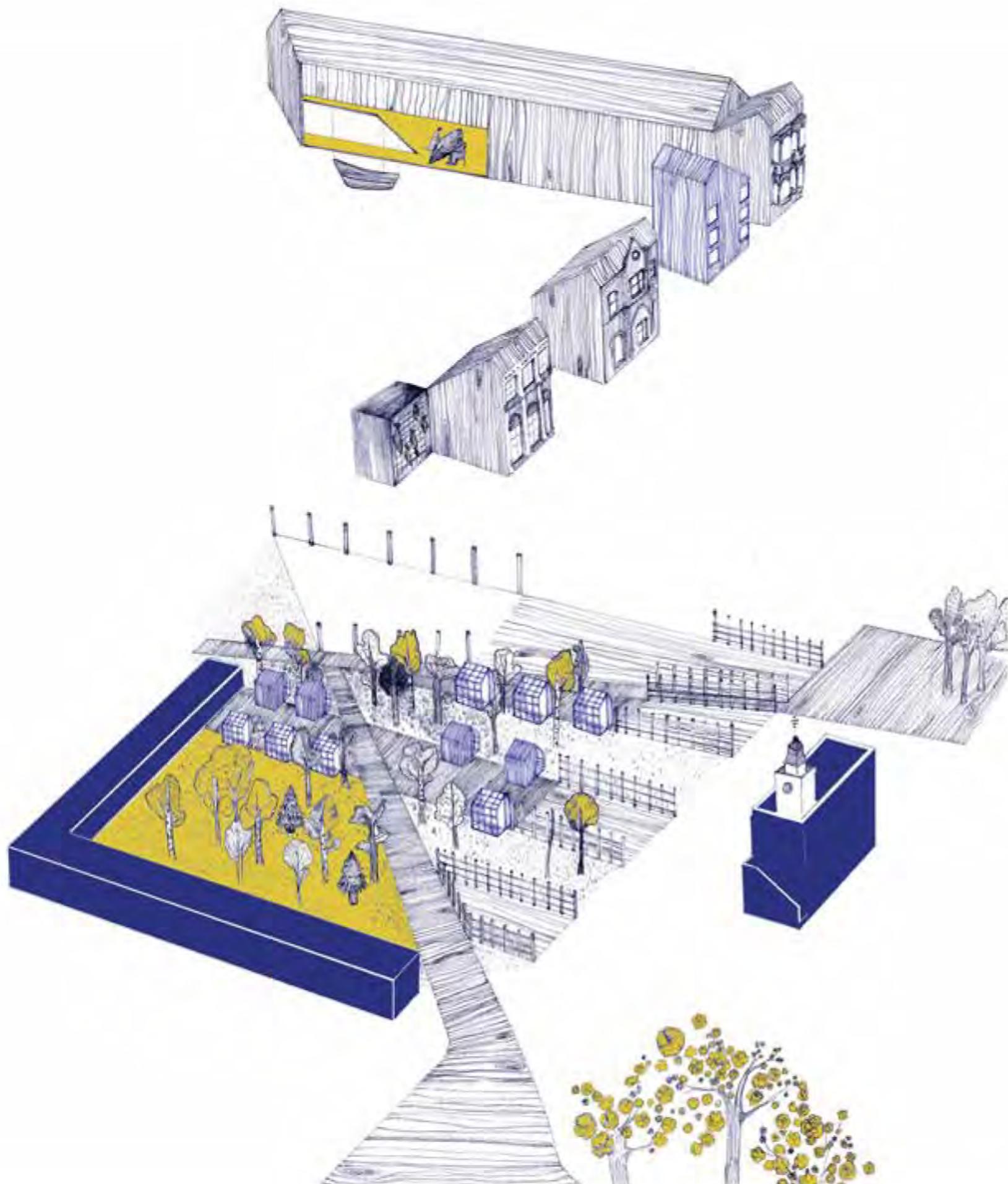
Dumfries's Nordic heritage, and that of the entire region, might be a new discovery to many, however it is also an identity of the town that has been hiding in plain sight; be it the Greystone Rovers trips to Norway since 1940, the Nordic surnames which populate the schools or the Christmas pine tree which used to be gifted to the town every year from abroad.

With this in mind, and the strategic positioning of the Midsteeple Quarter within the town centre, our proposal looks to make this central nodal point of the town have some Nordic flair through exploration of each of the Nordic countries, what makes them a success and how these ideas and principles can address challenges within Dumfries at a social, environmental and urban planning level.

Our proposal connects all the squares within Dumfries by turning the area around the Midsteeple in to one massive square; as a result it makes a strong focus out of the Midsteeple as the focal point for this newly formed master-square. Trees will be introduced throughout and timber ground cover will indicate clearly which parts of the town centre are areas for the public to explore.

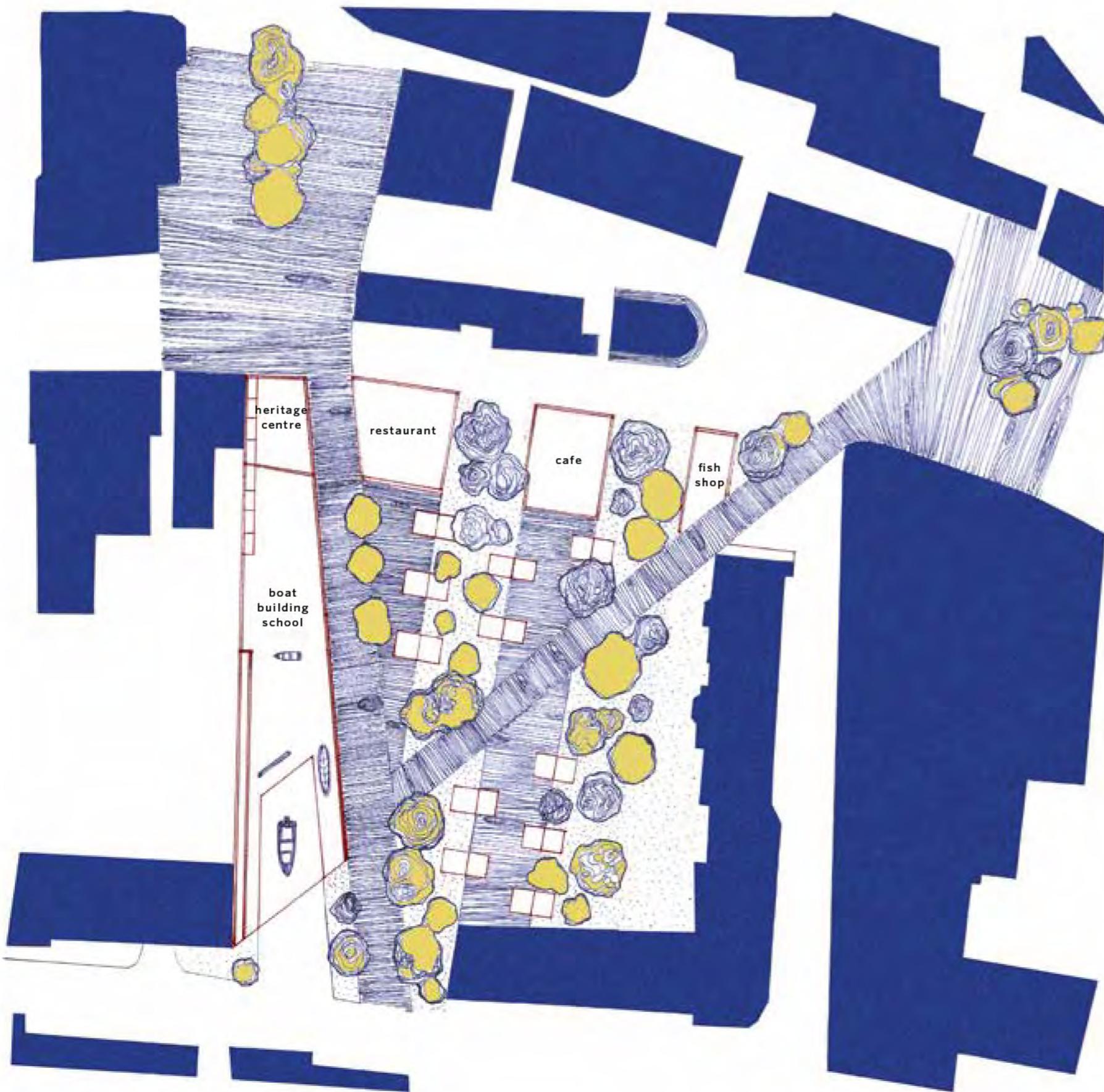
Our proposal disposes of any of the run down and derelict architecture which currently sits within the site instead replacing it with new forms of modular housing, a restaurant, a fika café, an Icelandic fish shop and a Norwegian Heritage Centre. To the rear, a new building will address the interior of the newly formed square - this building will be a boat building school, tying in further culture and heritage links for the town and developing its relationship once again with the river while providing a space of social inclusion taking precedent from GalGael in Glasgow.

A series of small 'huts' will populate the newly formed landscape and be used for activities such as sauna, outdoor eating and also provide a space for community gardening. The sustainable nature of the project will mean that the food produced in the



community gardens will be used within the restaurant, café and other public buildings, while solar panels will be installed along the south facing roofscape of the boat building school, huts and also housing.

These dwellings, public buildings and spaces will explore the nature of Nordic living through introducing cultural ideas and principles while tying in social aspects of life and ultimately focus on people as the focus of the project.



Lateral North

VIDEO INCLUDED

John Duffy

Introduction

Dumfries is a fine example of a planned Scottish settlement. Like many of its Scottish peers Dumfries offers up a mix of startling buildings from the last 300 years or so, alongside rather less good examples of late 20th & early 21st C Architecture. It has a very distinct morphology and structure which is still evident today and the patterns of streets and plots reflect the influence of, burgage, municipality, and marketplace.

The wider townscape is also varied. The tightly knit complex of closes and rigs in the centre give way to more generous Victorian villas and terraces to the north and east of the town and to the dramatic openness of the River Nith and broad riparian stretch of White Sands. Further still, the new post-war settlements brought about by slum clearance. A deep set of contrasts within a very short distance. Midsteeple Quarter analysis:

- The Midsteeple itself occupies a strategic / topographic site within the High St sited on the former Old Tollbooth and forestair overlooking the former marketplace. It is a prominent node which can be seen around the town and from some distance from the centre itself.
- A, B and C listed buildings alongside more vernacular buildings
- Bounded by the High St, Bank St, Irish St and Standard Close to the North. Within the encompassing block -Standard Close, Grainger's Close, and Caerlaverlock Close
- Long rigs of land established by the original feu burgage with closes separating each strip step down the hill from the High St
- Civic quality and vernacular built wall buildings to the High St and Bank St
- Urban edge broken on Irish St – no sense of enclosure
- Original clarity of the rigs / closes has been diminished by various accretions of unsympathetic buildings which have broken the reading of the closes and buildings which are not active to the closes themselves
- The South-western flank has a South Westerly aspect which means that it gets sunshine from approx. post-midday till the evening but the narrow and tall strips of buildings means that it doesn't always penetrate to ground level or be received by the building's elevations
- Non-active frontage on both sides of closes largely everywhere, inactive shopfronts and unoccupied upper levels
- Impenetrable facades and unoccupied vennels present a challenge to occupy and activate

Synthesis: Bringing the design together

The needs and aspirations of the community should be at the heart of any proposition but it also needs to address the scale, grain and morphology of the Quarter as well as the wider town context. In short:

A holistic solution is required to meet these needs and aspirations

A design that takes its cues from the historical patterns of occupations – ‘LIVE OVER THE SHOP’, MARKET PLACE / MEETING PLACE/CIVIC MARKER

A design which harnesses the latent qualities of the site- sloping / sun/ aspect – connection to the landscape – especially to the South & West across the Nith

Addresses the issues of decay /morphology/inoccupation

Addresses the issues of aspirations for the future WORK/LIVE/PLAY/COMMUNITY

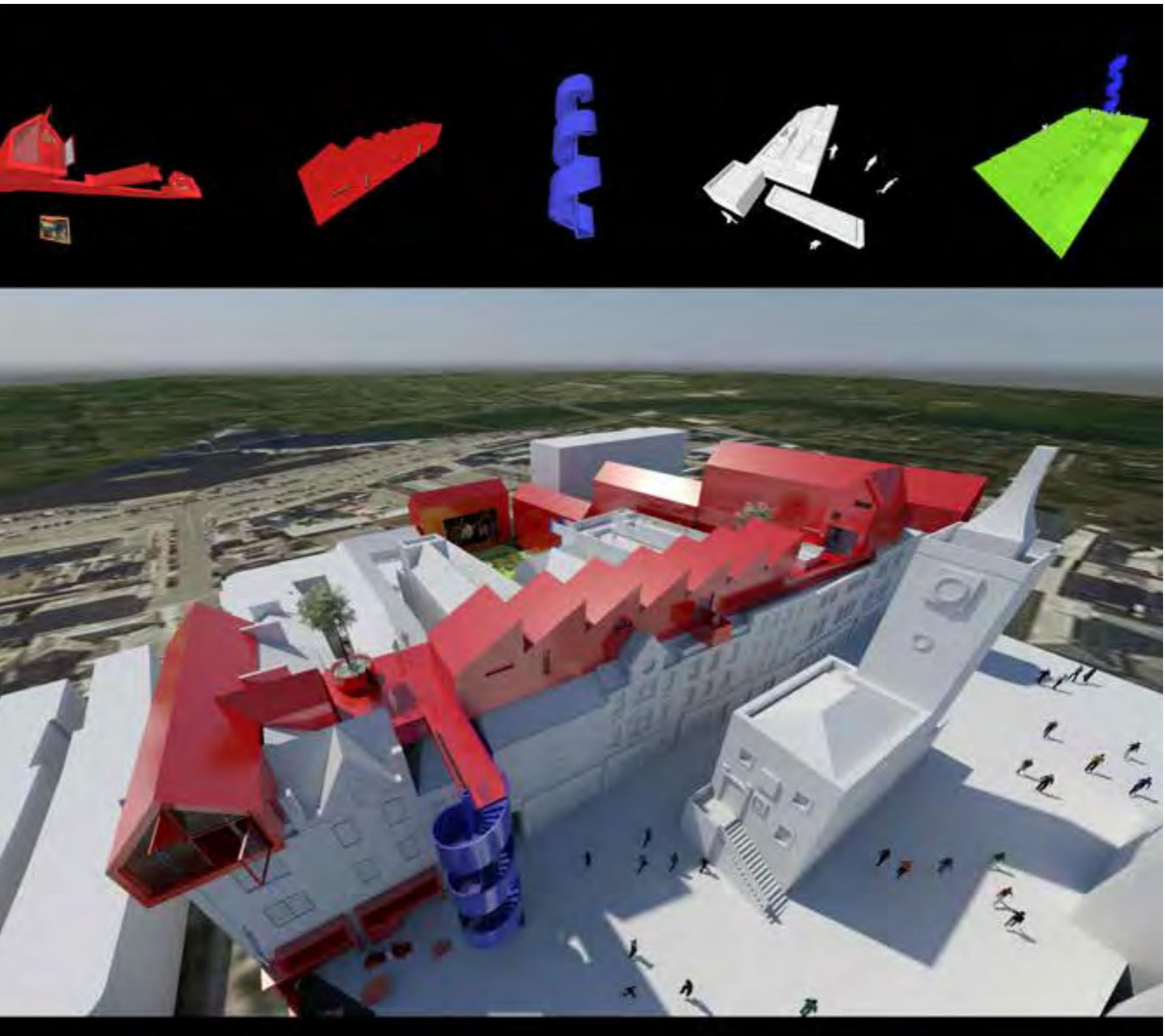
Mend fractured block in a meaningful way

THE PROPOSITION/ DESIGN: MIDSTEEPLE EXCHANGE:

The MIDSTEEPLE EXCHANGE proposes a manifesto for new way of occupying the quarter: a microcosm of the town itself. A place to meet, to live, to work, to play: to exchange ideas; to;

TO ACTIVATE ground plane and upper levels, repopulate the upper floors

Introduce dynamic and active shopfronts and roof spaces



TO OCCUPY the upper domain with its contextual views and aspect
 TO CARVE OUT a new green public space and heal the broken urban form
 TO INTRODUCE architecture with a playful character, inviting exploration, informal occupation and creating defensible spaces
 'A DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER' from the tight closes
 'A BATTERY PACK' which re-energises the lifeless domain
 AN ICONOGRAPHY that encapsulates both the domestic- living HOUSE and the workplace- industrial - FACTORY
 TO JOIN up fronts and backs and link to existing public spaces
 TO ACTIVATE the night time economy
 TO EXPLOIT the southerly, sloping aspect of the quarter in a meaningful way

HOW:

THE MIDSTEEPLE EXCHANGE proposes to introduce 6 elements to the Midsteeple Quarter each of which can be read in a dramatic, but playful manner: like a child's timber building blocks or Lego:

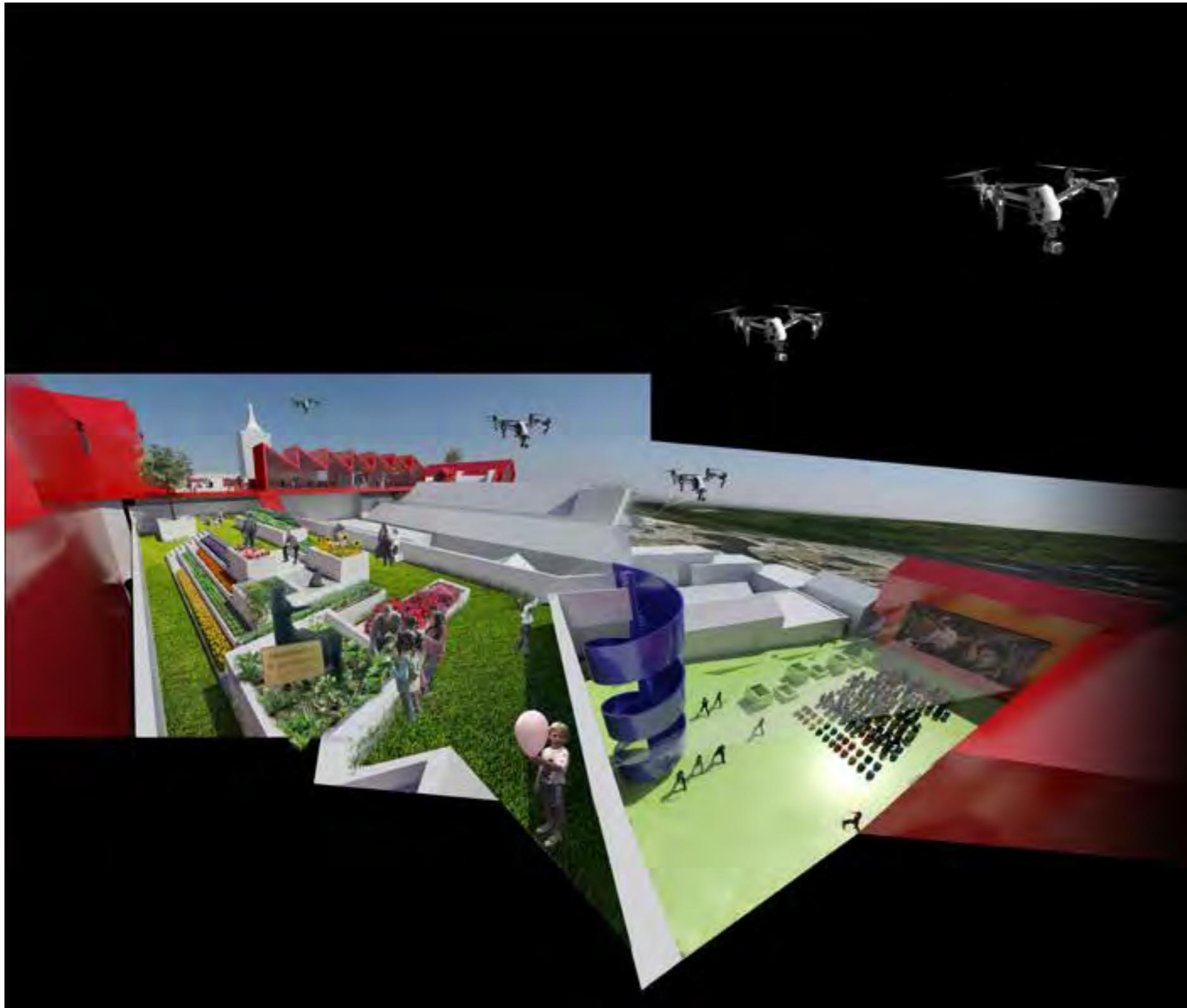
1. The dynamic façade- To introduce new, bold shopfronts which activate the street. Shopfronts which can fold, extrude, implode/explore
2. High St Spiral stair –The externalisation of Midsteeple's Tower spiral stair Rather than encased within the thickness of the wall the spiral proposes a new spectacle or object on the High St which allows the breaking of the crust of the wall buildings. To get you to the above-and to realise the connection to the roof domain and to the wider context
3. Occupy the roof space. A long rooftop extension with studios, flats, and a public walkway. To the High St, the dynamic façade is given expression with facades that fold out to allow loading and unloading like the winches in a vernacular Amsterdam canal terrace. Pitched roof and saw-tooth roof offer an iconography of domestic and industrial
4. Connect the walkway with a community rooftop garden with a sunny southern aspect linking studios and flats and access to the new public space
5. Public square / marketplace /external cinema and connecting to existing external space at Hugo's Bar. The Southerly sloping aspect of the Quarter makes it ideal as a gathering space -for outdoor events/ markets/ it is a natural amphitheatre in which films could be shown or theatre performed all within a new precinct of buildings which form a new plaza and which square and heals the break in Irish St.

Conclusion:

Dumfries has an intriguing set of problems but that also lends itself to intriguing possibilities. The MIDSTEEPLE EXCHANGE proposition can be seen in many ways: a provocation, a call to arms or a re-awakening of elements latent in the fabric of the town. The Midsteeple competition has been an enjoyable journey and hopefully it will add to the accumulated pot of ideas.

John Duffy

VIDEO INCLUDED



Michael Leybourne, Nic Coombey & Nicky O'Toole

Midsteeple Quarter – a new way of living

Our vision for the Midsteeple Quarter takes cultural references from the past and reimagines a town centre where people live and work in the same spaces.

The Quarter has a story obscured by neglect and a combination of stagnation and market failure. Layers of its rich history are still discernible and these cultural references will be used to strengthen the identity of place. Located in the centre of the Midsteeple Quarter is Caerlaverock Castle Close which was named after an inn located there. Caerlaverock is derived from two words: caer (Old Welsh cair meaning castle) and laverock (Middle English laverok meaning skylark). The skylarks rise or lift is a symbol of freedom, inspiration, hope and joy; all required to re-energise the Midsteeple Quarter. Imagine an urban centre reinvented through community action to empower a circular economy revolution based on maintenance, reuse, refurbishment and recycling.

The circular economy is a resource efficient alternative to the traditional linear economy of produce it, sell it, consume it, bin it. It will enable communities in the Midsteeple Quarter to innovate and secure a positive future by developing a dynamic place where artisans live and work. An environment where a sustainable way of living is not only possible but happening. A place where rents are affordable and the buildings are a mix of adapted historic and eco-contemporary. A place where cooperation between people from many backgrounds and skills have a common identity, through the services and products they offer, in a place where they stay and thrive. The vision is grounded in understanding the past and developing the ideas of the present to deliver a viable and successful future for Dumfries. Today we often believe that the central area of a town should be dominated by shops. However, the absence of shops would have been unremarkable to a town dweller in the past.

Historically, early towns were based on street markets with a medieval pattern which is still recognisable today. The Burgh of Dumfries had a wide market place enclosed by houses pierced by gateways (ports) and narrow burgage plots extending from the street frontage.

As the population of Dumfries grew the town developed along the burgage plots which were previously used for market gardens with associated outbuildings. They were infilled with houses accessed through “closed” or gated passageways, (hence the name close) which remain today. Artisans who lived in these closes made goods and sold their wares on stalls or booths in the market place. At this time being a retailer, one who bought only to sell again, was an offence because there was no place for such activity in an economy where the producer and seller was expected to be one and the same.

Dumfries prospered as a regional centre which led to a demand for



goods imported from elsewhere and the development of small specialist shops. As buildings were replaced or remodelled small shops took the place of market stalls and booths. With the advent of the industrial revolution the role of combined artisan / seller became redundant as mass produced goods were purchased and resold by the now acceptable retailer. Migration into town led to the closes becoming overcrowded slums and eventually condemned, resulting residents being moved to the new suburbs.

By the 20th century retailers flourished by offering a wider range of goods in larger premises created by the expansion into the now vacant plots behind the High Street. Residential areas continued to be built on the periphery of the town where the development of dominant large scale outlets and franchised led retail caused a gradual decline in the economy of the town centre. Now vacant shops are nearly equalling those still operating and many of the buildings are empty above ground floor level. However, buildings have always been altered and adapted to meet the changing ways we live and work.

In our vision the historic buildings are refurbished to create small retail spaces used by specialist businesses. The closes have been retained and are once again "closed" by controlled entry metal gates. The initially narrow passageways expand to become wider interconnected vennels and squares. Residents have personalised and maintain community open spaces to take advantage of south-westerly aspects. The demolition of the shops extending into the back lands has provided opportunities to build new "eco-contemporary" residential blocks which are energy efficient spaces making use of green technologies. Constructed from materials that have been reused or remanufactured, the juxtaposition of old and new is a feature of the Midsteeple Quarter narrative. Workshop and studio spaces are leased to modern makers and traditional artisans from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. They collaborate to create more opportunities to interact positively together, as part of a united, enhanced community. Specialising in maintenance, repair and reuse they provide a valuable service by being committed to the ethos of the Scottish Government's Circular Economy Strategy, encouraging the people of Dumfries to embrace a sustainable way of living. Situated on the ground floor the studios and workshops are easily accessible to clients or the general public who visit during regular "meet the makers" events. Stairs and lifts provide access to a first floor level walkway leading to a mix of one and two bedroom flats. Key historic buildings have been adapted to be flexible spaces used for visitor accommodation or a community hub that showcases a new way of living.

Now it is time for the Midsteeple Quarter to become a welcoming place to live, work, study, visit and, most important of all, enjoy. A place where economic, environmental and social sustainability are of equal importance. Where by working together we rise and lift others.

The soaring larks lift up with them the sky,
which weighed so heavily on our shoulders
Rainer Maria Rilke

**Michael Leybourne,
Nic Coombey & Nicky O'Toole**



The Morrison Partnership

Dumfries Digital Quarter



This submission proposes a Dumfries Digital Quarter (DDQ) to be created in the Midsteeple area of the town centre, characterised with a continental flair about its look and image.

THE CONUNDRUM

- Apathy
- Dis-interest
- Disconnection

FINDING SHARED MOTIVATION

- Identify mutual and practical interests
- Create a diverse platform to foster those interests
- 'IT' is it.

THE TARGET

- Vibrant community
- Involved community
- Progressive community

PEOPLE



of all ages – because a digital future touches everyone. Different age groups would use particular periods throughout the day

- older people might frequent during 8am till 4pm
 - workers and school children might call in 4pm till 7pm
 - adults, including some teenagers and students would populate 7 till 12 midnight.
- This as a basic base for the spread across the day, but the idea would be for considerable overlap to mix the different social groups through seminars and teaching sessions.



EDUCATION

giving the local schools, college and university campuses a platform for community engagement and social integration in the heart of the town. The list of educational possibilities is endless from digital students taking seminars for older people or giving advice to younger people exploring digital based ideas with digital students from the local colleges etc.



ENTERPRISE

place where digital ideas can be exchanged/ developed/ collaborated in a highly charged digital environment/ social setting; and digital music – downloaded / shared/ listened/ composed; a social media exchange place where people can exchange/ share knowledge etc.



DESTINATION

- A 'Go to' place for digital thinking/ help/ experience/ contacts.
- Using internet cafes for meeting, seminars, tutorials and sharing.
- Pop-up desks or centres for repair/ advice/ training.
- Open from 8.00am till 12.00 midnight on any one day.



SOCIAL

There are two key social aspects tackled by and under girding this idea.

- a) The poor lack of engagement of under 16s – only 0.1% (1 in 809) of the community consultation respondents were under 16.
- b) The need to address mental health issues in an isolationist digital world.

CONCEPT

The DDQ would provide a strong and sustainable concept for the regeneration of the Midsteeple area. The ground floor shop units would become a mix of internet cafes/ workshop spaces/ and some specialist related retail to assist occupancy levels. There would still be room for creative digital industries or providers – perhaps safe gaming rooms for digital fanatics, maybe some students doing emerging creative digital ideas with school pupils or other enthusiasts, incubators for digital business ideas; and some arts based digital workshops. Some of these ideas could be teaching driven and others giving people an address or a local identity. The upper floors would be converted to student accommodation for digital based students (from the University of the West of Scotland) who can then work in the cafes below on ground floor providing the on site staff needed and giving them a social platform for better integration and to support the town life. The shops and cafes are intended to have a more continental appearance with seating, screens and planting extending out into the public space to highlight presence and invigorate the image of the High Street. The under 16s will be the next generation of the vibrant and dynamic Dumfries community – they need to be engaged and the DDQ can provide that engagement platform – publicly.

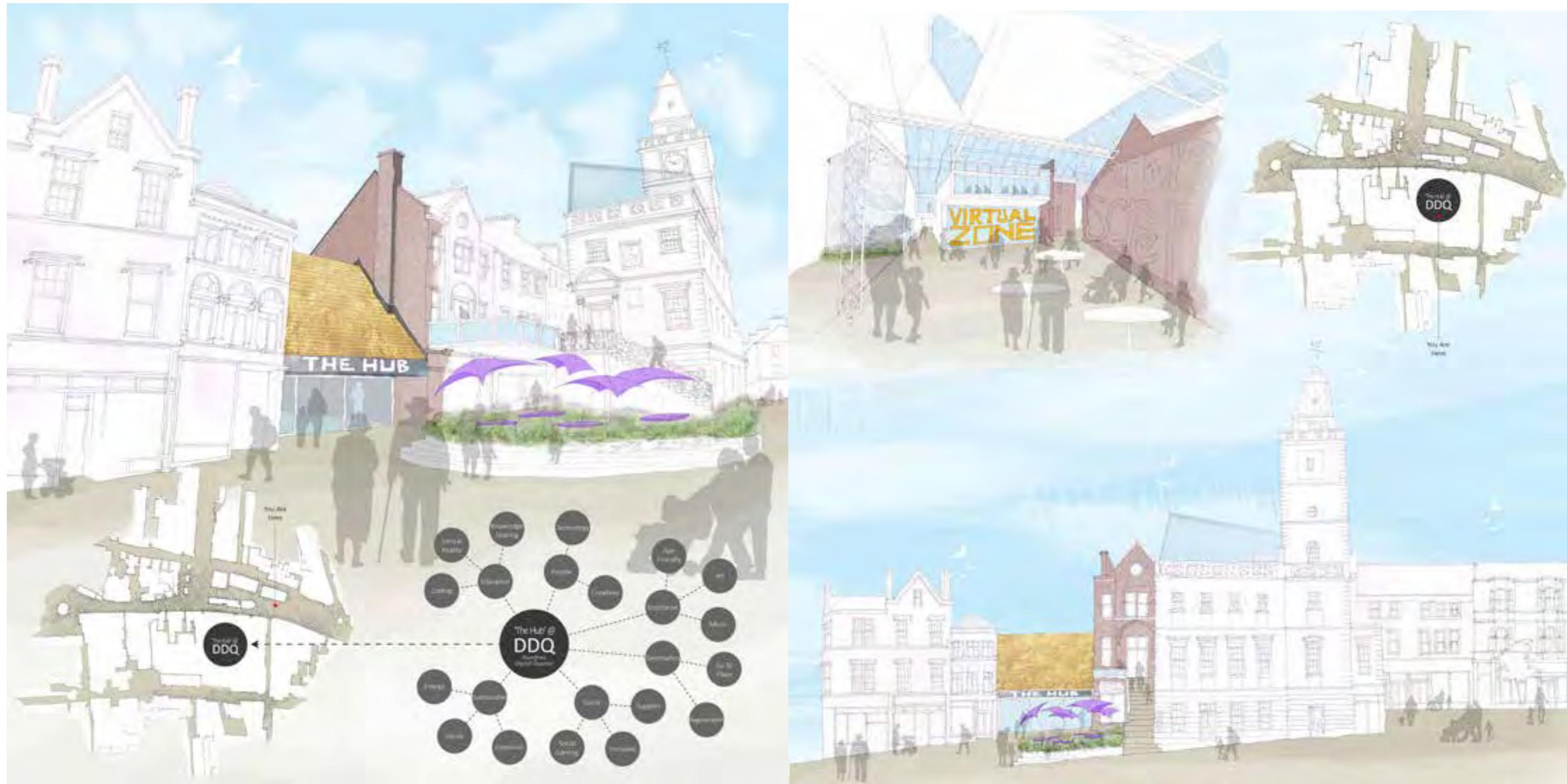
DESIGN

The key design feature to achieve this concept is to open up some sections of the existing street facade and apply a lightweight galvanised framework applied to the façades of the vennels and internal lanes. This frame is intended to support sliding screens for a large outdoor TV screen, advertising displays, photo-voltaic (PV) panels, open sections in front of windows and supports for balcony sections – all intertwined with climbing plants to soften the structure's appearance. At ground level, the framework can extend out to form a covering for the street level outdoor seating associated with the internet cafes. The digital framework, only being attached to the elevations would not require alteration or demolition of the existing street buildings. Each of the buildings can be developed independently and over time to suit the owners' aspirations, yet responding and integrating to the framework outside. By keeping the physical accommodation of the existing buildings flexible it will be possible to adjust to emerging and developing scenarios within the digital sector. The local NHS services can also use one of the shop units or the workshop spaces designated to digital mental health awareness. While the DDQ seeks to create a vibrant and inclusive social environment in the town centre it will hopefully act as a local gateway for those with mental health issues.

OUTCOME

DDQ will provide innovation; community integration and social interaction across all age groups; new life in the area as a specific non-residential sector; re-populate the town centre over a 16 hour day; establish an enterprise area or digital hub; create a strong vision for the area – forming a validated future identity to build on; and offer an outreach educational campus for the local colleges and universities so that they can be at the heart of the local society – and not in the cloisters. DDQ would aim to be zero energy and zero carbon by linking the PV panels to electricity demand and space and water heating systems as required for each unit. In summary, the proposed DDQ aims to be a practical, affordable and achievable concept, addressing the main aims of the brief to enliven and enrich the town centre with a sustainable and socially minded intervention.

BRING TOGETHER



The Morrison Partnership

Stuart Stevenson Architects

High Street

Properties fronting on to the High Street are shown selectively refurbished and in some cases re-developed to landmark the new quarter and provide it with some unified street presence when seen from the High Street pedestrian zone. Historic close entrances are maintained and new points of access created to encourage pedestrians through to the new routes, spaces, and uses created within the block.

Ground floor spaces and shop fronts are re-developed to suit a wide range of new uses which will support the wider community and the new cultural quarter as whole. This might include café's, arts/music venues, local business and tourism support, and other community focussed facilities. All ground floor spaces would be designed to enable and encourage the hosting of events, including for use to made of the pedestrianised High Street via shopfronts designed to open up to the street.

Existing upper floors would be refurbished and brought back into use as flatted accommodation suited to a variety of different people – singles, young and elderly people, and also families. Facades would be developed where appropriate with architectural interventions which allow residential spaces to connect with and activate / passively supervise the High Street, helping to encourage secure use during the evening hours.

Irish Street / Block Internal Spaces

The block internal space and the street frontage to Irish Street are shown re-developed as a mixture of refurbished and converted existing buildings, and new apartment buildings. Both are shown developed with ground floors designed for use as small scale commercial space; e.g. artist's studios, craft workshops, café/restaurants, and small offices. All ground floor spaces would be designed to open up to and engage with new public spaces created within a network of inter-connected closes and pedestrian lanes. Where appropriate, ground floor units would be connected with first floor living accommodation to create live/work units for artists/ craftspeople and homeworkers. Top floor / roof spaces within some of the existing buildings may also be suitable for re-development as loft type live/work studio space for artists and crafts people.

High quality, robust public realm would include natural stone pavings, planters, tree planting, street furniture, street lighting, and public art / historical interpretation.



Midsteeple Dumfries

A New Cultural and Residential Quarter -High Street Elevation

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Midsteeple Dumfries
A New Cultural and Residential Quarter -Aerial View

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The new buildings fronting on to Irish Street include ground floor office spaces which address and activates the gap which currently exists on Irish Street. These buildings are taller and step up south to north to respond to the changing scale of the existing buildings on either side.

New pedestrian routes and public spaces are closely overlooked and provided with passive supervision by new apartments and converted buildings with generous amounts of glazing to living spaces.

Sustainability

As an exemplar project with the potential to act as a model for the redevelopment of other town centres, every opportunity should be taken to maximise the project's sustainable credentials at every stage.

Modern methods of off-site construction which improve quality and minimise waste should be considered. New buildings should be designed to minimise energy use through a 'fabric-first' approach, with high levels of insulation, and scope for passive solar gains during the winter months. Renewable energy sources potentially including; photovoltaics, solar thermal, and ground / air source heating would be assessed for suitability and viability.

Existing buildings would be upgraded and altered to meet or exceed current standards for energy use, and all buildings would be designed to make waste re-cycling and collection simple. The masterplan is developed to be combustion engine free. Space and charging facilities would be provided within the plan to accommodate small electric four and two wheelers for local journeys, along with generous secure covered storage for pedal cycles.

Stuart Stevenson Architects
VIDEO INCLUDED

Douglas Strachan Architects

Design Concept for Midsteeple Quarter - **Open–Close**

Placing arts, culture and community at the centre of a town makes a positive statement, which can be articulated through well considered architectural interventions.

Dumfries High Street is edged with shopfronts and accessed through Closes. The Open–Close concept activates these edges and encourages movement though the Closes to revitalise the Midsteeple Quarter and define it as a centre for the community.

In a nation of towns and within the context of a movement of community-led initiatives, the Midsteeple Quarter is an opportunity to re-define the town centre. As retail moves away from town centres across Scotland, the geographical centre of a town can be re-defined as the hub of community activity. As buildings are re-claimed for living and working in the town centre, the relationship between these buildings and the public space between them must also be re-defined. Successful re-population of the town centre is therefore about designing armatures to accommodate a new live-work dynamic and articulate a reciprocal relationship with the High Street.

Self-empowered communities such as Dumfries are leading the way in re-defining town-centres. A sense of shared responsibility and ownership in the community is very powerful, even more so when the ownership becomes literal. The same principle can be applied to a live-work dynamic to facilitate closer ties between them and link these uses within a building. Community resources such as makers' spaces and social enterprises then become a natural extension of these uses and a more intuitive way to connect with the wider town.

Shopfronts form an edge through which the internal use of a building interfaces with what's outside. The nature of this edge reflects the activity within and therefore the nature of its relationship with the street. Shopfronts are designed to engage by means of a display window, inviting people to enter the building as consumers. Without this relationship the shopfront is an inactive edge, and the space in front becomes more of a route than a true street. Reactivating this edge must therefore be to establish a new relationship, based on the community activities to be housed within the buildings.

Closes connect the High Street to the surrounding





town. They are routes rather than streets, but crucially, they are pedestrian routes. Movement through these is therefore critical to the town centre being experienced on foot. Signalling of the Closes and encouraging people through them can therefore help to link the High Street to surrounding areas, such as the Whitesands.

The Open Close concept re-defines the relationship between buildings and street and encourages movement by fraying edges and making Closes open. The former shop-front edge would be made more permeable by carving into it, enabling the community to move more freely into the buildings. Elements of re-designed facades would also fold and turn out, reaching out and engaging with the street. Cutting the corners of closes would open them to the High street. The structure used to do so would reach out, signalling the close, and drawing the eye through it.

137-139 High Street could be the first of a series of buildings to accommodate the new live-work model. The former shop on the ground floor could be reimagined as a community resource, such a workshop or makers' space. This open community-led approach could be communicated through a series of architectural interventions following the Open-Close concept.

Removing the corner of the ground floor adjacent to the Close would make the building permeable, drawing people into its ground floor footprint and encouraging movement within the Close. The structural element used to retain the façade above would signal the Close, drawing the eye down the former building line. This would be further "ghosted" by a ribbon of core-ten steel, folding around the former shop-front and down the Close to encourage more dynamic movement. Similarly, timber screens along the building-line would also fold up and out, reaching into the street.

The Midsteeple Quarter has the potential to give rebirth to the High Street as the heart of the Dumfries community, and be an exemplar for other towns. This starts with re-defining what happens in the buildings, and flows through the articulation of an active edge into a vibrant street scene. Movement through this and connection to the surrounding town defines the Open Close.

Douglas Strachan Architects

Charles Welsh

THE MAIN IDEA

The main idea embodied in this proposal is that in order to revitalise the centre of Dumfries, it needs to be repopulated and this requires new Housing. Whilst "living above the shop" is remembered from a bygone age, it is unlikely that the piecemeal conversion of the limited number of individual premises along existing frontages, can make a meaningful contribution in this regard.

On the basis it will generate a momentum leading to a commercial demand for the refurbishment and uses of the existing properties, this proposal therefore seeks to accommodate in the form of flats, as much new Housing as is practicable in the Mid-Steeple Quarter. Not all of the built space that can be created will be suitable for Housing and although it might not have a distinctive visual identity easily depicted in graphic images, a secondary use comprising serviced office space intended to contribute to encouraging young, start-up enterprises, is also envisaged.

The opportunity is also taken in general terms of affording incidental advantage to the operation of existing businesses.

THE SITE AND EXISTING USES

The Mid Steeple Quarter is characterised by narrow frontages on High Street and deep curtilages extending into the centre of the site. The curtilages fronting Bank Street are accordingly restricted in depth and the viability of these premises in any use must be limited. Many of the existing structures behind frontages are apparently unused and derelict. Whilst the frontages on High Street and Bank Street are continuous and contain some interesting and probably historically valuable facades, the frontage on Irish Street has been broken and now affords service access to at least two existing retail premises on High Street.

In combination with the individual demands of the original developers, a significant variation of levels across the site has resulted in some contorted spaces which cannot now serve useful purpose and the opportunity now arises for comprehensive reappraisal of the use of the centre of the site. There are however constraints which it would be prudent to observe, arising in connection with existing uses. The aim should be to retain the frontage buildings themselves and whilst several are vacant, there are a number of functioning office, retail and leisure uses to which deference should be accorded. Among these are WH Smith and the premises recently used by Superdrug,



with existing service access and storage facilities extending into the centre of the site, which precludes a total site clearance.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND THE DERIVATION OF IMAGES

Consideration of an optimal use of the overall site will envisage excavation to an extent not available to the individual original developers. Use of the existing access at a low point off Irish Street, will allow more than one level of parking below the ground level of the higher High Street premises, from which direction the main pedestrian access will be obtained. Such parking will be an essential requirement for the new residential accommodation and a benefit to existing and potential business uses.



Above this, the opportunity exists for levels of flats at a height at which their outlook will not be unduly obstructed by existing structure. The illustrated proposal involves breaking through the High Street frontage at Nos 119 -120. At this point a lobby will contain vertical circulation down to parking levels and up to a public concourse with access to serviced office space and perhaps more commercial uses. Three levels of flats above oversail the existing retail servicing facilities adjacent which could remain unaffected by new development. Whilst this residential accommodation has a direct relationship to the centre of the town it is also sufficiently removed from it such as to afford the necessary sense of security. The opportunity is taken of routing escape via the rear of the Bakers Oven. In a world that is increasingly privatised and in which we are charged for our inhabitation of it, it is envisaged this accommodation will constitute part of the public rental sector (PRS).

Externally, the opportunity is taken of cascading levels of terraces as the site descends along Bank Street. The opportunity arises of improving the outlook, servicing possibilities and amenity of the existing office and leisure uses on Irish Street. Within this framework is the important consideration of how the new construction will relate to the rear of the existing frontage buildings in all their varied forms. The illustrated scheme includes a zone between old and new, within which the requirements in each case can be worked out, depending on what they turn out to be.

It is beyond the scope of this exercise to do more than give an idea of the kinds of spaces and volumes which might be created in detailed design and the nature of the accommodation that might be contained within them. Approximate available residential GIA is 2,450m² which equates for example to 10 x Studios at 40m²; 20 x 1b2p flats at 50m²; 10 x 2b3p flats at 70m²; 5 x 3b4p flats at 85m² (space standards exceeding Edinburgh City minima). Some sixty parking spaces can be achieved without too much difficulty, enough for one per household and a handful available for local business use. Opportunity exists for accommodating secure cycle storage and bin storage.

Charles Welsh

VIDEO INCLUDED

Dress for the Weather

'if a city hasn't been used by an artist, not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively.'
Lanark (1981), novel by Alasdair Gray.

The two images presented take precedent from the above line spoken by Thaw in Alasdair Gray's novel Lanark and by the artwork the author and artist produced for the same novel.

The images present a false perspective, elevation, section and plan and combine many temporary or performative artworks and events held previously in the town and surroundings.

The Stove Network has allowed people to live imaginatively in Dumfries and this should continue to filtrate planning policy, guidance and regeneration initiatives. Our favourite line from the consultation feedback is "Dumfries is an unusual and beautiful place". Our images aim to heighten both of these aspects and encourage the unusualness to be embraced fully by the public and authorities.

We have not presented any new ideas but tried to visualise ones that have been imagined through public consultation and creative endeavour. Ideas about dwelling, green spaces, markets, making, quality, night time activity, eating, cycling, singing and speaking and most importantly living are expressed in these images that lean towards the eccentric.

By night, to the left, we visualise spaces for extensions of events such as Brave New Words in public houses that are not just about drinking. Light, artwork and permanent inhabitation can make the smaller lanes of the town safer places to be.

By day, to the right, we visualise a High Street with more colour and connection to things being made, produced and consumed. With the aim of encouraging more dwelling in the town centre we suggest a show-HAME, carefully designed and curated to suggest what is possible.

Both images seek to embrace and expand the reach of the visual arts in the Midsteeple Quarter



and work towards permanence and temporality of artwork in equal measure.

As well as being our competition entry we would like to offer the source file for use with further community workshops allowing others to montage their own imagination either digitally, physically or both.



Dress for the Weather

1st Place
ARPL Architects

Judges' Comments

"Good architectural concept embracing affordable retail and craft spaces, learning and community spaces and viable residential accommodation. We thought the scheme promotes an urban archaeology to rediscover and utilise the heritage of the organically grown buildings of the back court of the block and that the lightweight additions create a new landscape and built form along the existing feu lines, but at a density and scale that is appropriate to Dumfries."

The scheme gave real consideration to the cross section through the urban block with a variety of typologies addressing each edge condition. The layering of typology allows for the housing in the core of the block that would feasibly attract a range of people, including families, to work, live and play in the town centre while business units activate the existing townscape with the utilisation of the High Street frontage for specialist local retailers.

We felt confident that the scheme would bring people and business to the area and would breath a new life and vibrancy to the midsteeple quarter."



2nd Place
Andie Cookm Megan Ward, Cara Brunton & Ashley Mitchell

Judges' Comments

"An inspirational narrative that told the story of Abby Solway, a fictional character, that addressed the human qualities of the brief and caused much discussion among the judges. While the entry lacked a recognisable architectural element credit is due to a proposal that connects people to the site and imagines the area re-invigorated rather than redesigned. A really creative entry which shows that major works are not always necessary to respond to the brief."

The approach tied in and could be seen as complementing Dumfries's approach to 'whole town learning' and everyone agreed that this integrated social and economic ethos was sustainable and was seen that it could be easily achieved.

Its only weakness was not building upon this methodology to explore the opportunities that could be afforded by a physical incursion but we agreed that without the type of collaboration portrayed in the narrative the regeneration of Mid-Steeple Quarter can't succeed."



3rd Place
Pioneer Landscape Architecture

Judges' Comments

"This scheme while ultimately ambitious, is practical in allowing an incremental growth as its popularity and economic success increases, an organic growth reflecting the botanical nature of the response to the brief. The integration of activities, embracing education, live/work and commercial activities, support the regrowth of commerce and activity in the heart of the town again organically to ensure a sustainable approach providing a realistic response to bringing life back into the centre.

The winter garden proved a very popular feature and, whilst playful, we noted that the wetlands and flood prevention links were problematic.

A great idea responding to the environmental condition of the site whilst producing a 'breathing space' for the town centre, other projects did propose open green space but this proposal stuck a balance between with leisure space, living space and commercial space. "



Drawing Commendation

Holmes Miller

Judges' Comments

"While we thought that the ideas were not as developed and wide reaching as the winning entries we wanted to recognise the graphic communication of this entry that includes an excellent axonometric section showing the 'journey' of the project fully embracing the existing high street context and the reworking of the existing urban grain."

