



WEST BROMWICH TOWN SQUARE

LANDSCAPING PROPOSAL
ALSOP ARCHITECTS
APRIL 2002



“Our public places were proud repositories of a common history. We have largely abandoned that sense of a shared destiny, and our public places show it. What is left may not be much, but it is crucial. We still want to be with other people, if not engaging with them directly at least watching them from stroll by. The public places unique to our time may be thoroughly privatised. Their motive may be no more than to lure us to buy. But having been drawn...we discover each other and remember the place when we want to stage a public event, or celebrate a private event in public. And, who knows, we may yet learn to do better.”
(Spiro Kostoff)

With the West Bromwich Town Square, there are opportunities for us to recover what has been eroded over generations: a sense of community, generated by the social activity that an imaginatively and sensitively programmed space can stimulate. Along with the development of cultural and social exchange, the creation of such a public forum will underpin and support new forms of commercial and service exchange, thus consolidating and promoting the continuing regeneration of West Bromwich in its broader context.



WEST BROMWICH TOWN SQUARE
Aerial view across the site of the Town Square

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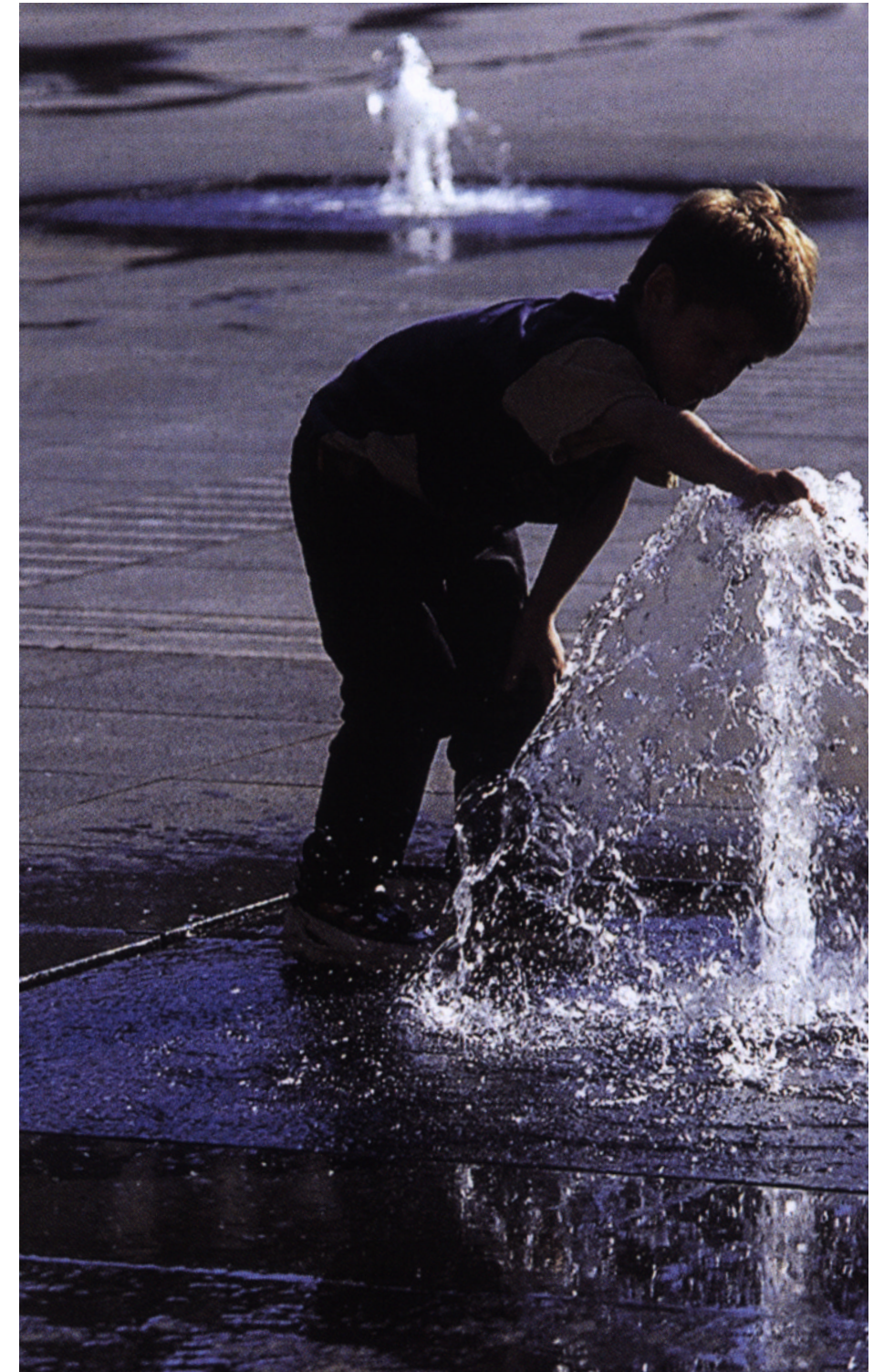
The Town Square is situated within the following overlapping design contexts:



The SOCIAL CONTEXT which acknowledges the public need to engage with others - gathering, conversing, waiting or queuing, watching, contemplating, eating and drinking, entertaining and being entertained

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The PERCEPTUAL CONTEXT which explores the role of light, colour, pattern, texture and sound as important contributors to the experience of this special piece of the public realm

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The INDIGENOUS CONTEXT which considers the ecological, environmental, manufacturing, historic and cultural matrix of West Bromwich and Sandwell

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'Bucket' Plug-Ins by Tom Grimsey
An installation of diverse objects set into stainless steel buckets recessed within the surface of the public square, and illuminated at night.



'Re-positioning fear'
Relational Architecture B by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer
An interactive shadow piece.
Photo by Joerg Mohr

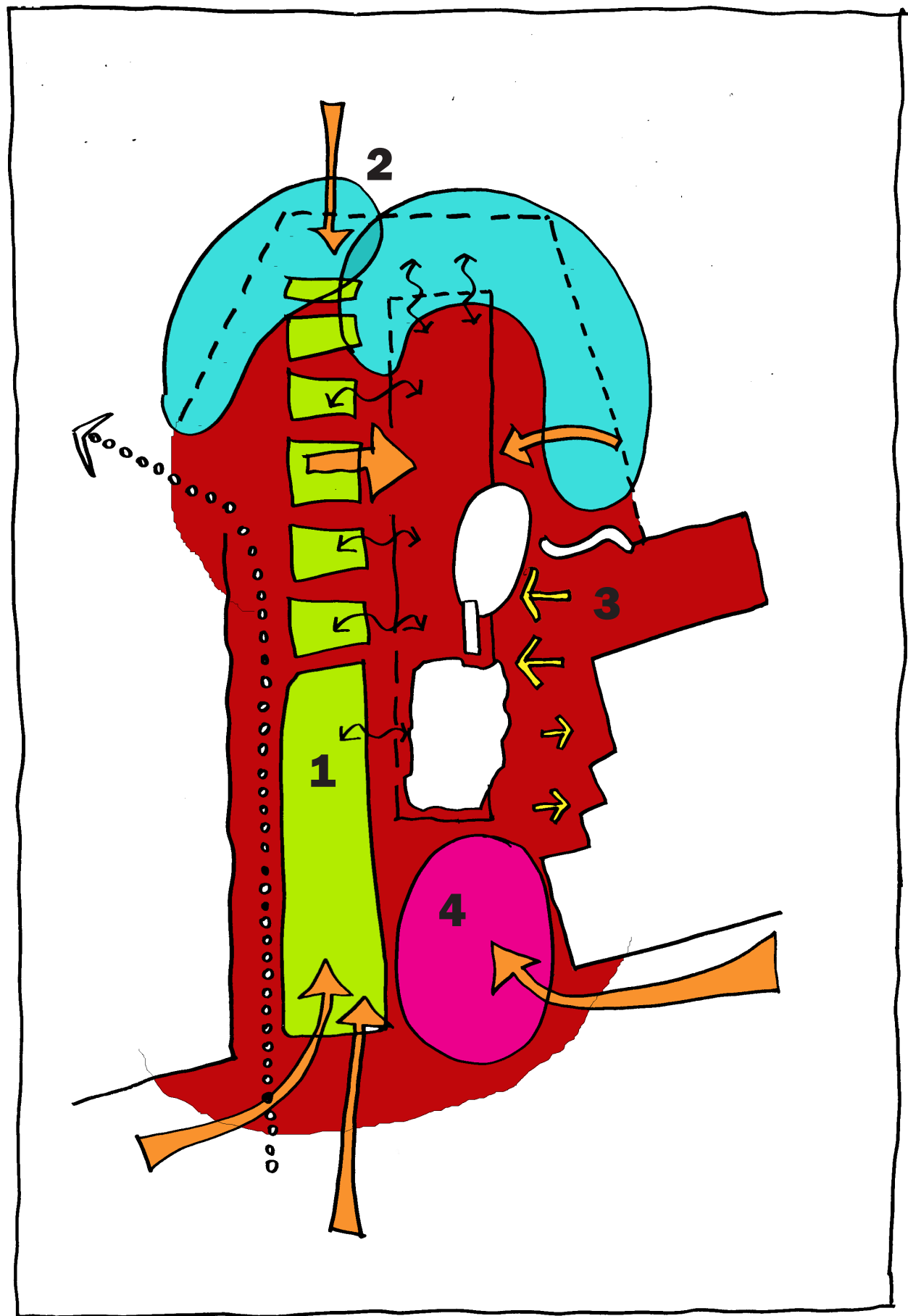


'Displaced Emperors'
Relational Architecture 2 by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer
Photo by Dietmar Tollerind

The INFORMATION CONTEXT which acknowledges the public need for verbal, visual and auditory information for the purposes of orientation, exploration, interpretation and revelation. This is particularly necessary given the complexity of c/PLEX, the required synergy between the c/PLEX building and the public square, and the potential to scatter aspects of c/PLEX throughout the wider town centre.

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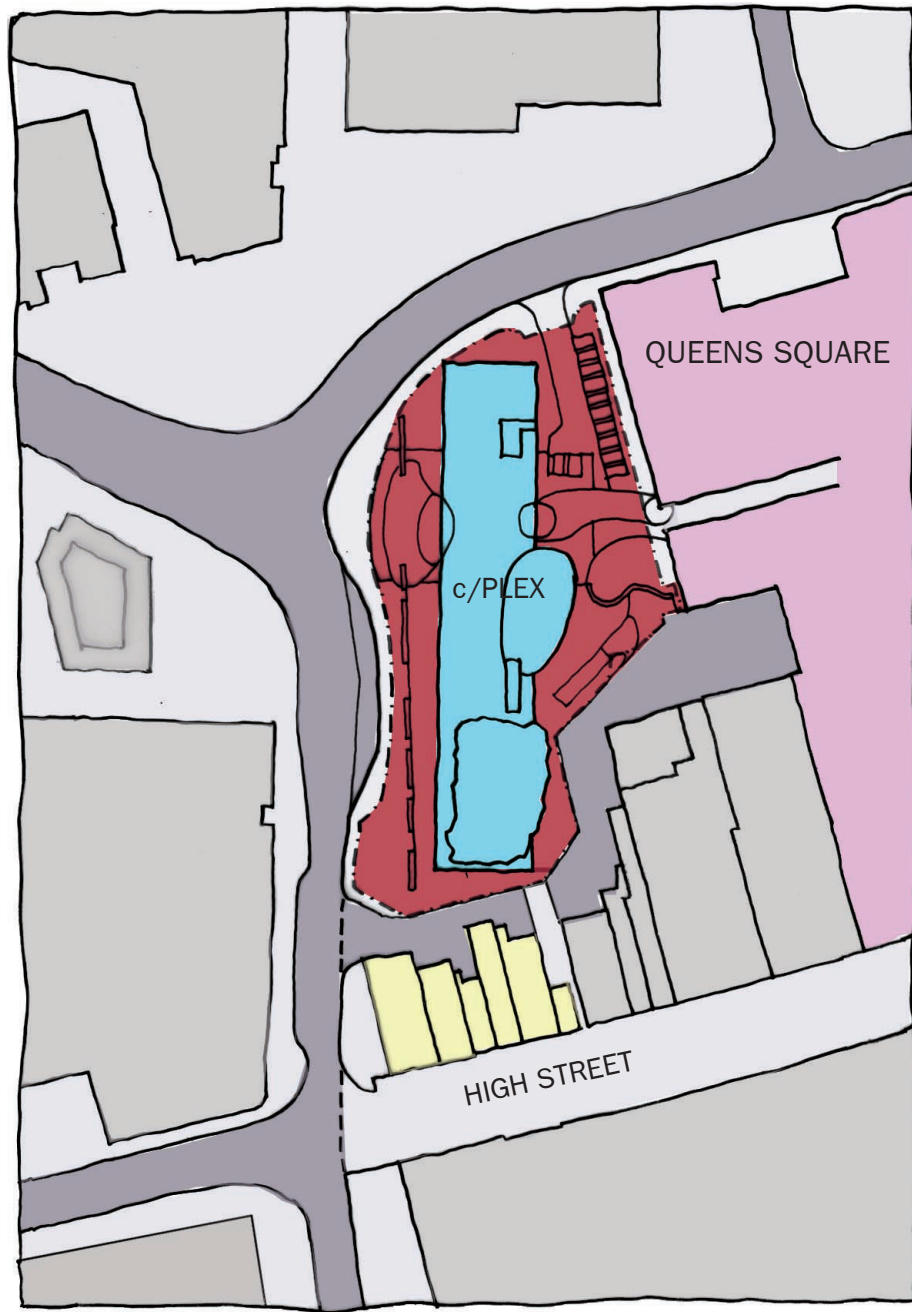




CONCEPT DIAGRAM FOR LANDSCAPING PROPOSAL

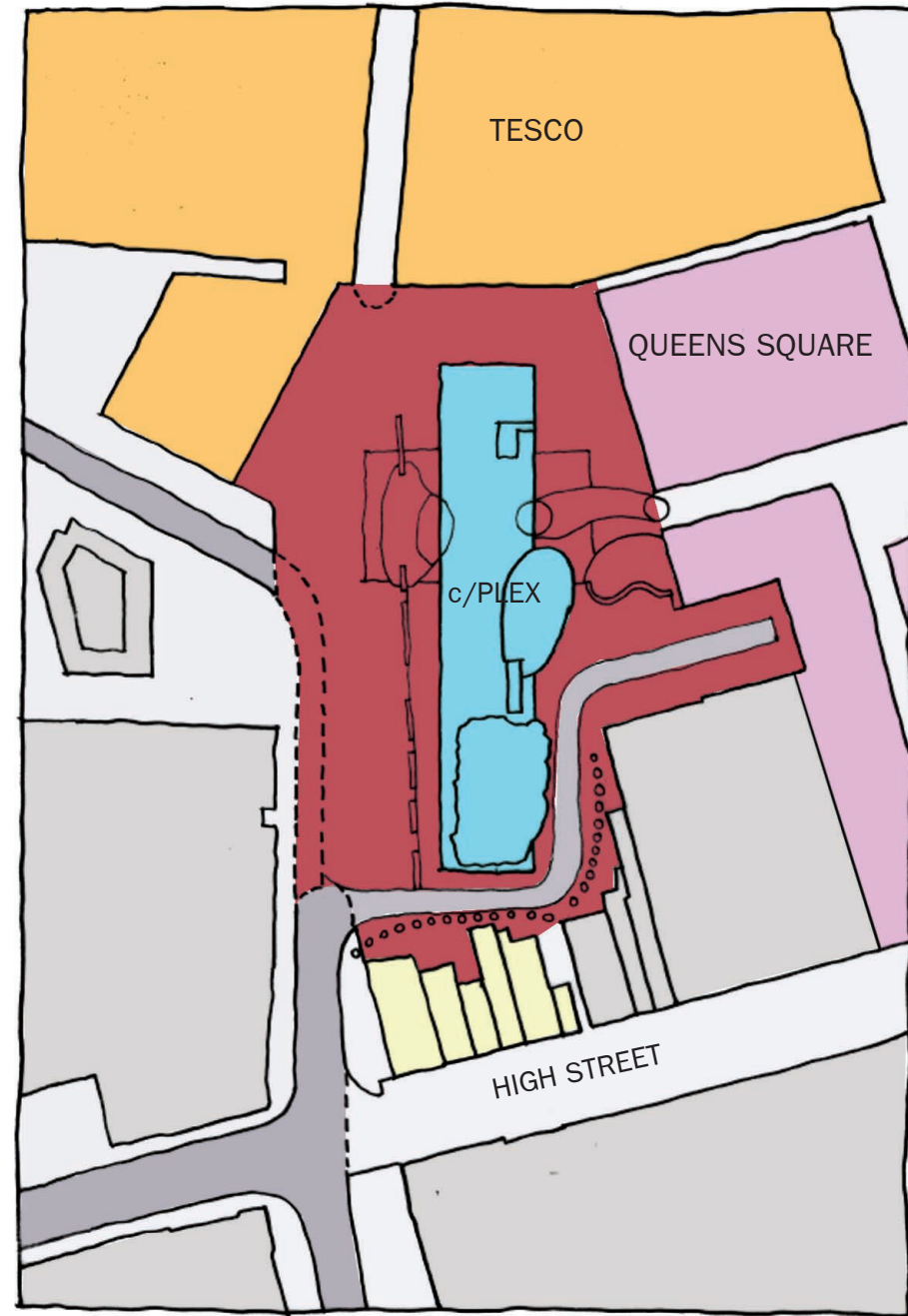
The Town Square is seen as a 'carpet' of newly formed hard landscaping within which exist 4 zones mediating between c/PLEX and its context.

- 1** The c/PLEX building has been organised to allow direct pedestrian access from the town square along its north-west facing facade at frequent intervals in line with the major flow of pedestrian traffic from the High Street and Bus/Metro Station towards the north of the site. We are proposing a linear arrangement of lighting, seating, planting and information display which will enhance the experience of this journey across the square and articulate a public space which is seen as an extension of the building, with the potential to draw people inside to discover more.
- 2** The zone of the square that is shared between c/PLEX and both the new Tesco development and Queens Square to the north and east of the site begins to be broken up by softer lines defining areas for external seating, planting or display of art work.
- 3** The area to the east of the square is currently used for service access to the adjacent Queens Square retail units as well as being the proposed zone for servicing c/PLEX itself. This space is not seen as being isolated from the rest of the square. Service and parking areas will be defined by a change in the surface treatment of the ground. It is to remain accessible to pedestrians crossing the square on this side of c/PLEX.
- 4** At the southern end of the square, where it meets the High Street pedestrian zone, we propose to create a space for outdoor performance which will be enhanced by an overhead canopy and seating. In future, the plan would be to develop this area with an extension to c/PLEX ie. a building raised on columns above the square which could accommodate further lettable managed workspace for users of the building, or a new public library.



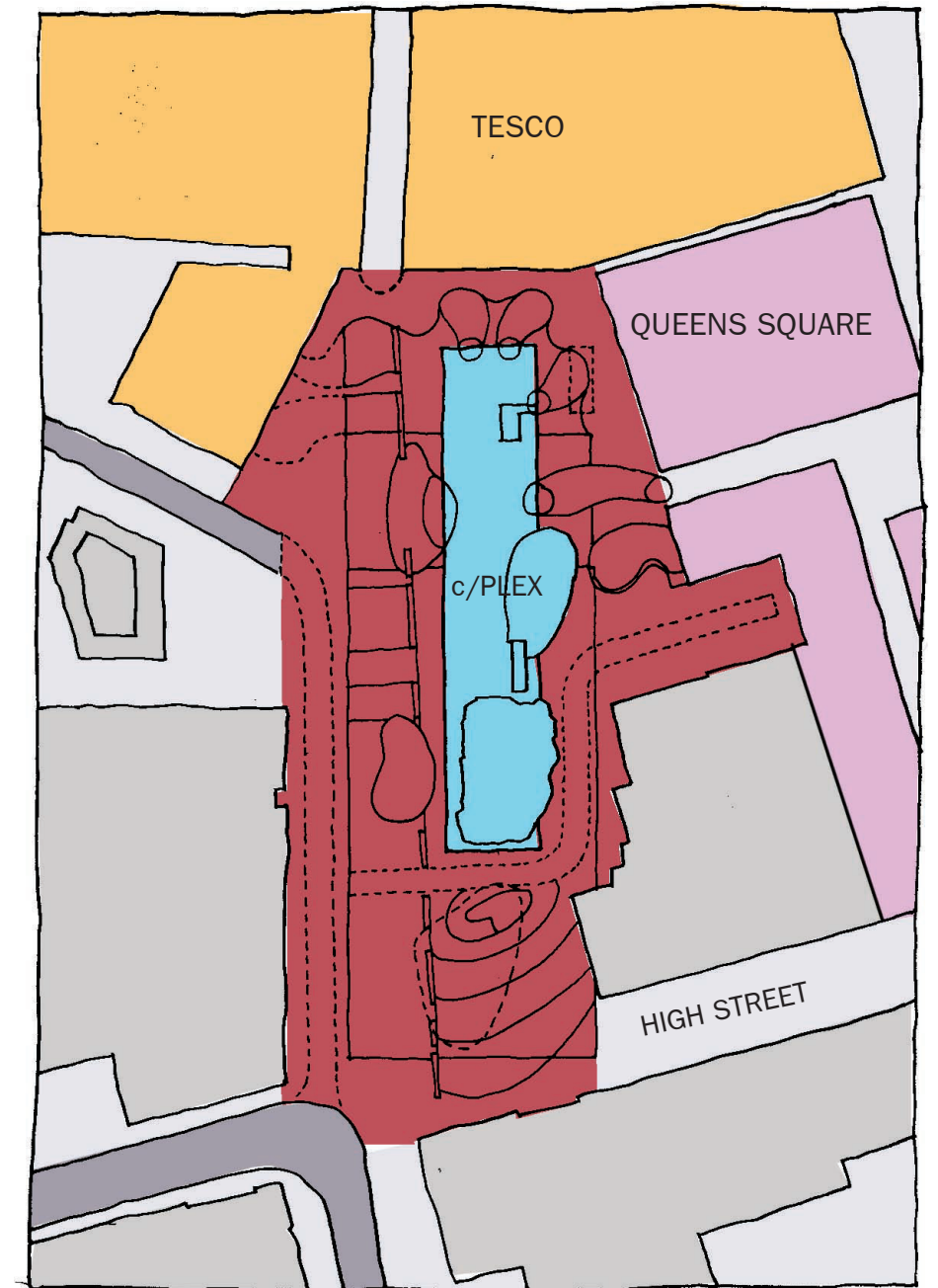
2004

c/PLEX building complete.
Disabled car parking located on provisionally on site.
Refurbishment of Queens Square in progress.
High Street shops earmarked for CPO shown highlighted.



2005

Queens Square refurb and Tesco Development in progress.
Ring Road diverted and bus route established.
Rear of High Street shops screened off from Town Square.



2008

Tesco and Queens Square complete.
Town Square landscaping stitched in to surrounding developments.
Access from High Street opened up by demolition of High Street shops.
Creation of open air performance space to the south of c/PLEX linking the building to the existing pedestrian routes.

FUTURE POTENTIAL:

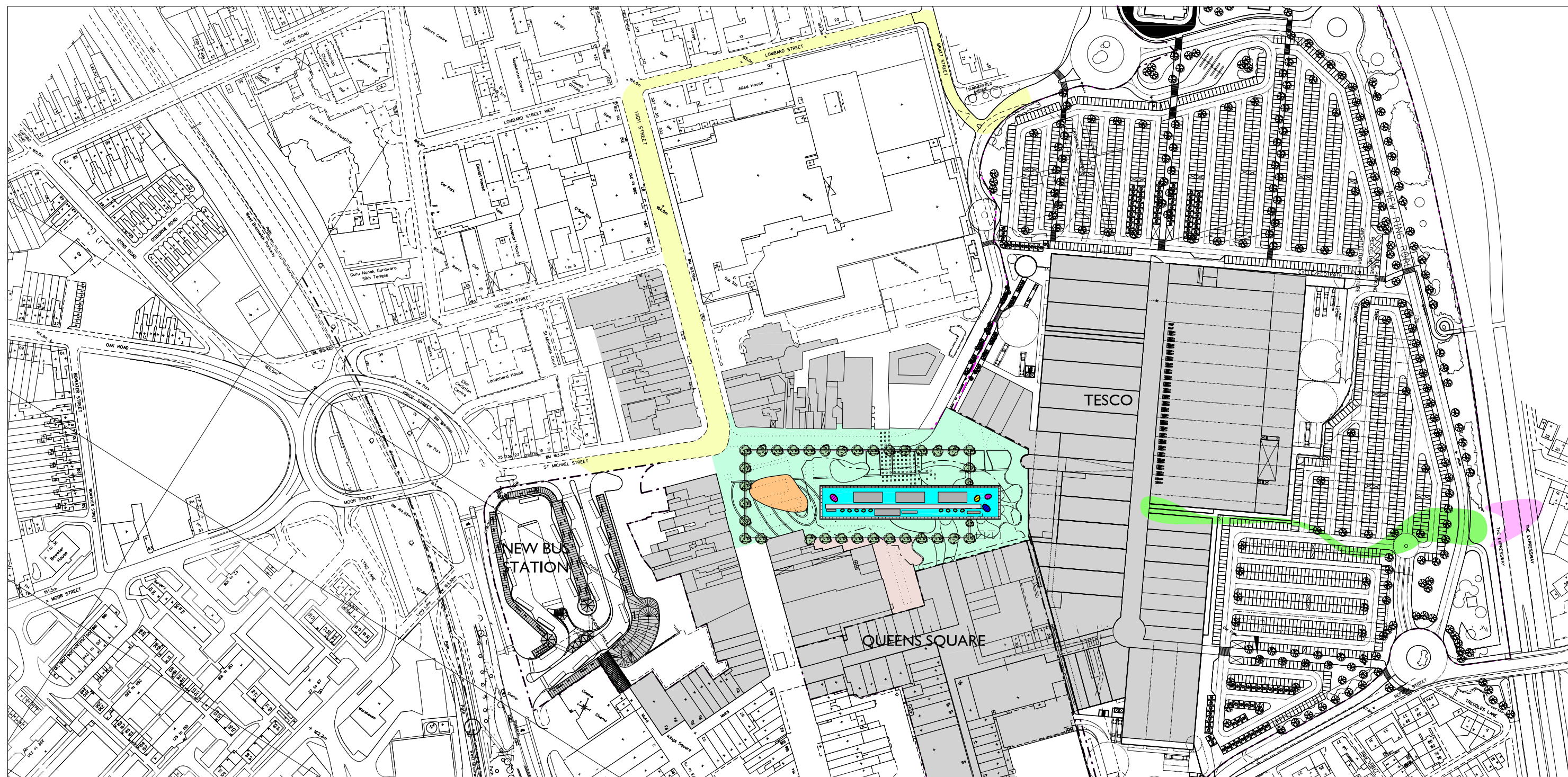
Further expansion of the Town Square towards the Bus Station by CPO of south side of High Street shops.

STUDY OF THE PHASING OF THE TOWN SQUARE

The evolution of the Town Square must be seen in the context of the 3 major construction projects that will take place in central West Bromwich during the next 6 years.

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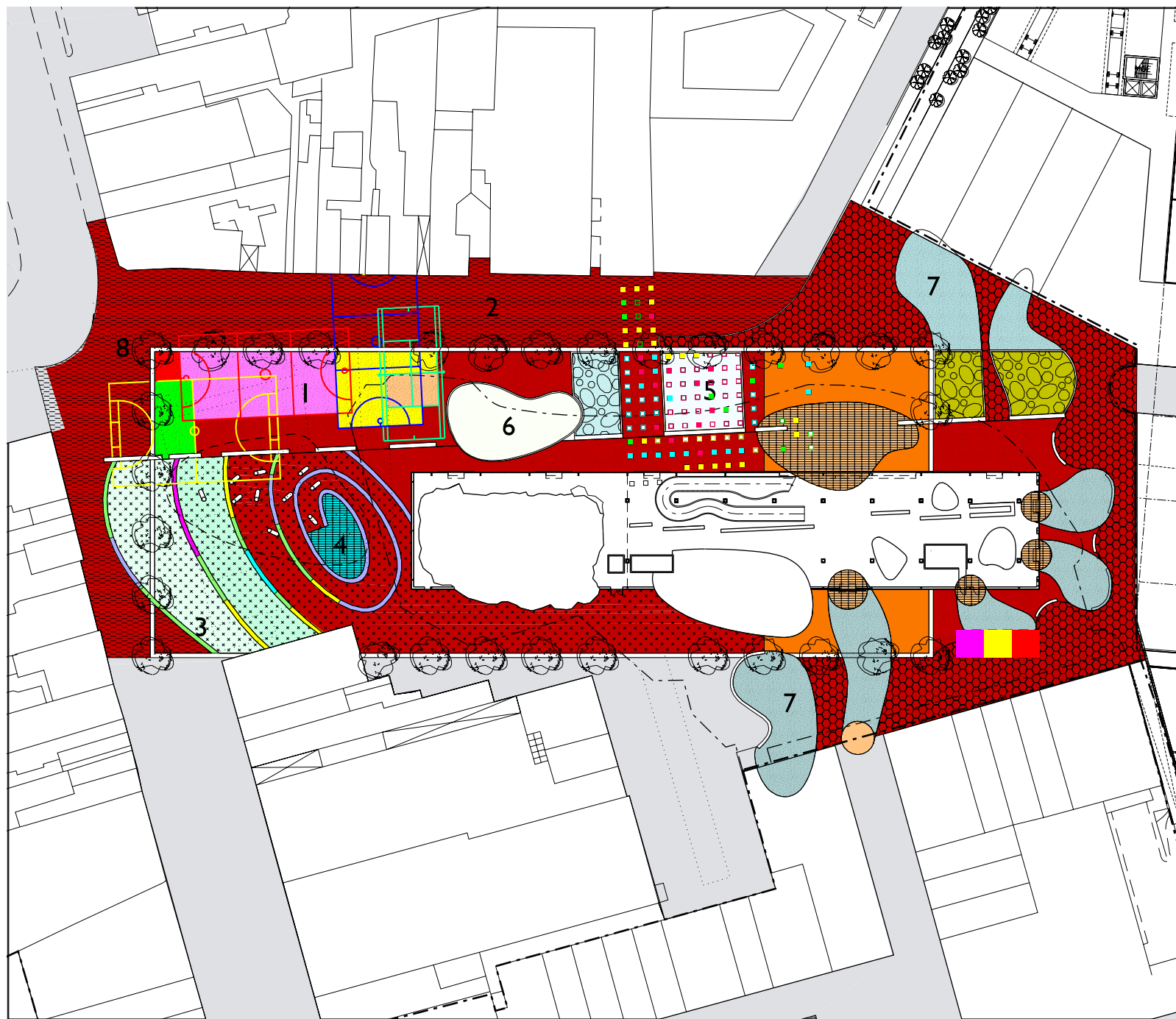


- C/PLEX BUILDING
- CANOPY TO PERFORMANCE SPACE OR FUTURE EXTENSION TO C/PLEX ACCOMMODATION
- TOWN SQUARE
- ZONE FOR SERVICING
- PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE BUS ROUTE
- CORUS STUDENT COMPETITION FOR GREEN BRIDGE

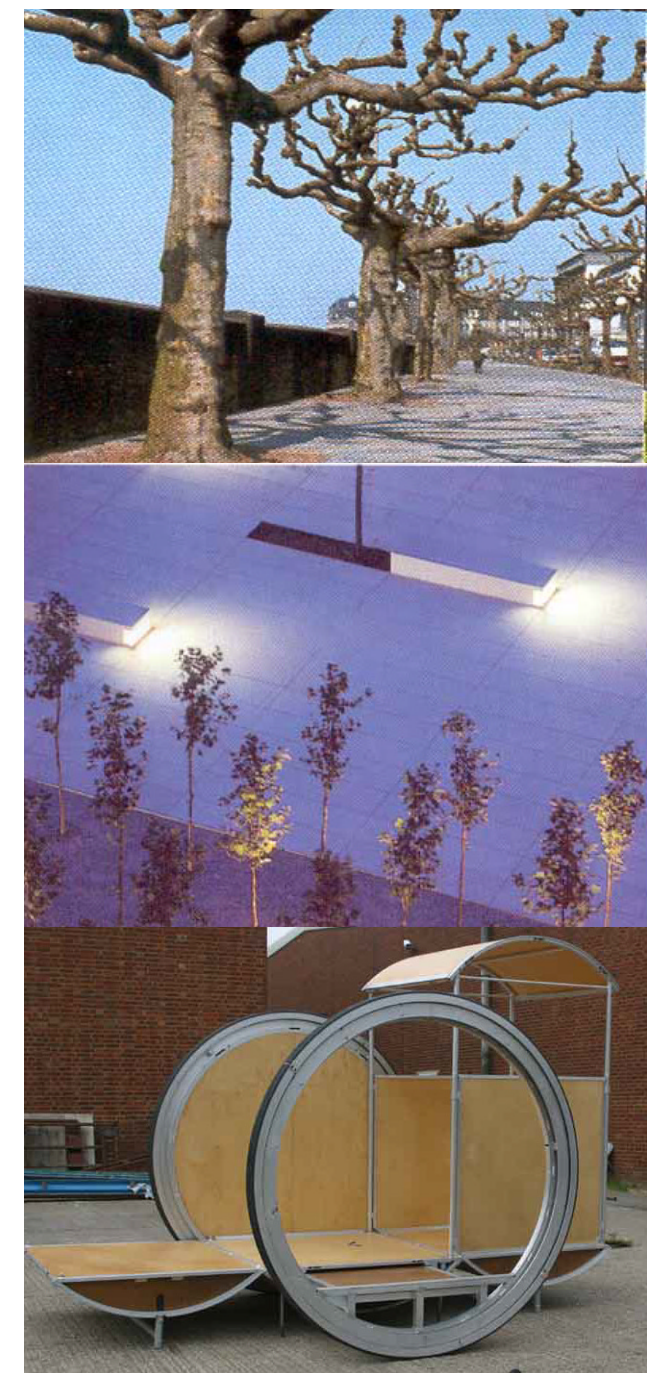
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1:1250 AT A1
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- 1 BALL PARK
- 2 BUS ROUTE
- 3 SPIRAL LIGHTING/SEATING
- 4 STAGE WITH OVERHEAD CANOPY
- 5 MUSEUM PITS: ART INSTALLATION
- 6 ICE SKATING RINK
- 7 EATING/DRINKING LILY PADS
- 8 SCREEN OF PLANE TREES
- 9 BUNGY JUMPING



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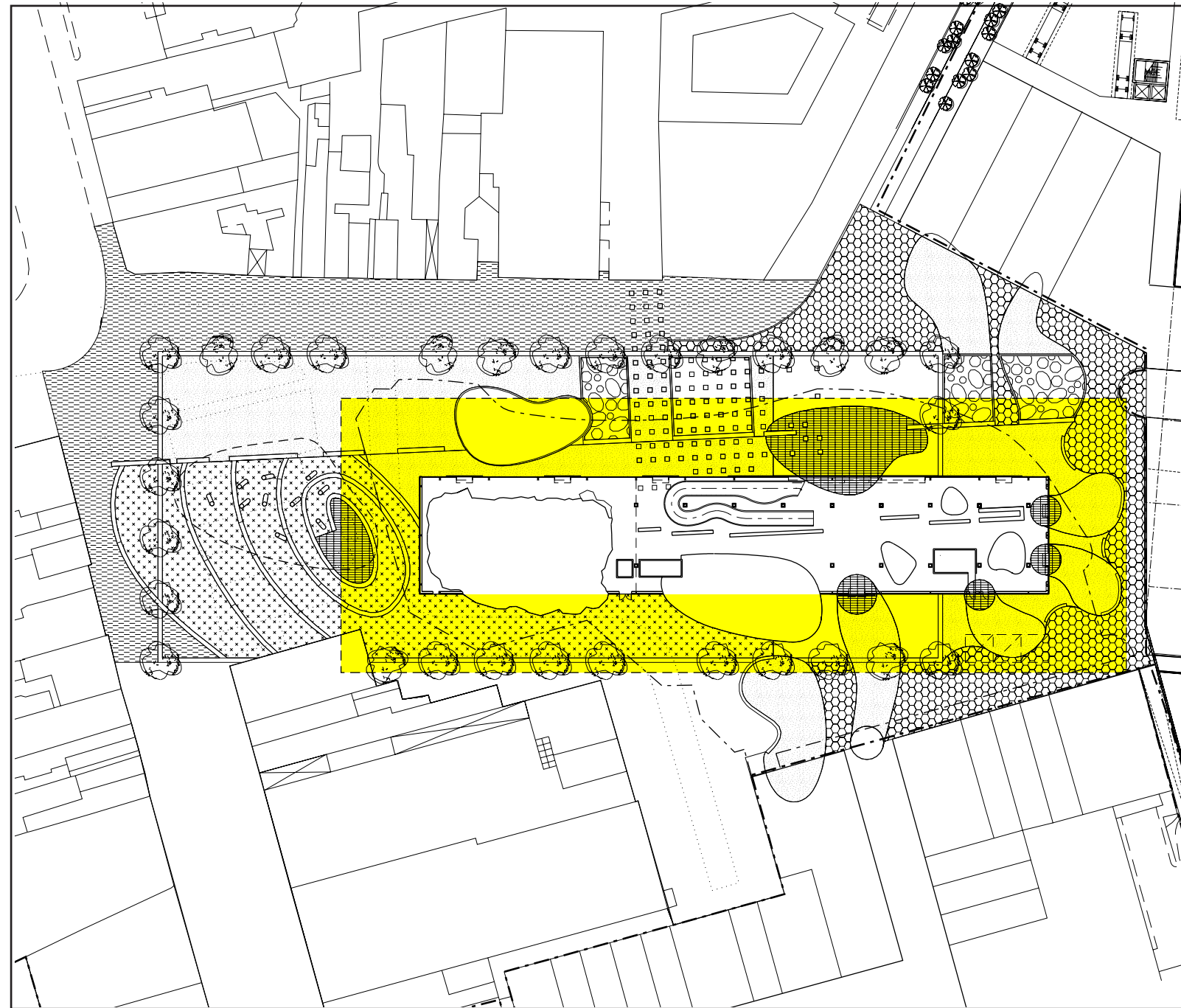




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This pedestrian zone is **14m** wide



Plan of Town Square highlighting zone of **14m** around the perimeter of the building.

This pedestrian zone is **22m** wide



APPENDIX:

AN INVESTIGATION OF SCALE: A WALK THROUGH COVENT GARDEN

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