

Derby Masterplan 2030

The release of the Derby City Centre Master Plan 2030 for consultation this month reminded me that at the bottom of a desk drawer I would find previous versions of similar plans. After a short rummage out came a publication entitled Derbyscope, Urban Design options for the City of Derby. Given the scepticism in some quarters about the effectiveness of such masterplanning exercises I thought it would be interesting to see how an old one fared. Remarkably, there is no date on it anywhere but it appears to date from 1992, and sits alongside a document on the Derby Promenade, being the pedestrianisation of the City Centre, with the official 'P-Day' ie closing of St Peters Street, Cornmarket etc to traffic on 16th August 1992.

Derbyscope identified 2 areas of specific need. Firstly a requirement to offer more retail space to satisfy demand from national retailers, and secondly to increase central car parking capacity alongside improved public transport. The development of the Westfield Centre (now Intu) has clearly addressed these issues and the need has swung distinctly the other way with there being an oversupply of retail space and more than enough car parking. The approach of the 2015 and 1992 documents is also quite marked. As well as identifying developments site, the Derbyscope Document quite specifically identified uses for those sites and provided artistic impressions for them.

By contrast, the 2015 document whilst also identifying sites is less specific about end uses and appears to be much more market led, acknowledging that the private sector will be the key to unlocking the potential of these sites and opportunities. It feels more like an investment prospectus that can be used as a reference point as well as providing a basic framework to encourage a collaboration between stakeholders. The document contains an array of opportunities to those wishing to invest here, some viable, some less so without public intervention and funding. The plan recognises that the City needs to readdress the balance and we need offices, City living and cultural facilities to bring vibrancy and sustainability back to the centre, and we need them in the heart of the City.

Press Release 2015

So how about the success of the early '90s plan? Well, some of the sites have indeed been redeveloped albeit not exactly as envisaged, including Sadlergate Bridge, The Cockpitt & bus station (Riverlights), Main Centre (now part of Intu) and Castle Boulevard.

And of course Duckworth Square which Derbyscope said as presenting "a rare opportunity for a prestigious leisure complex right in the City Centre. Seen here as an ice rink it would justify challenging design treatment. A major architectural showpiece would put Derby on the design and leisure map, attracting tourists as well as local residents". Actually, the pavilion style design looks pretty good. Maybe one day it might just happen.....

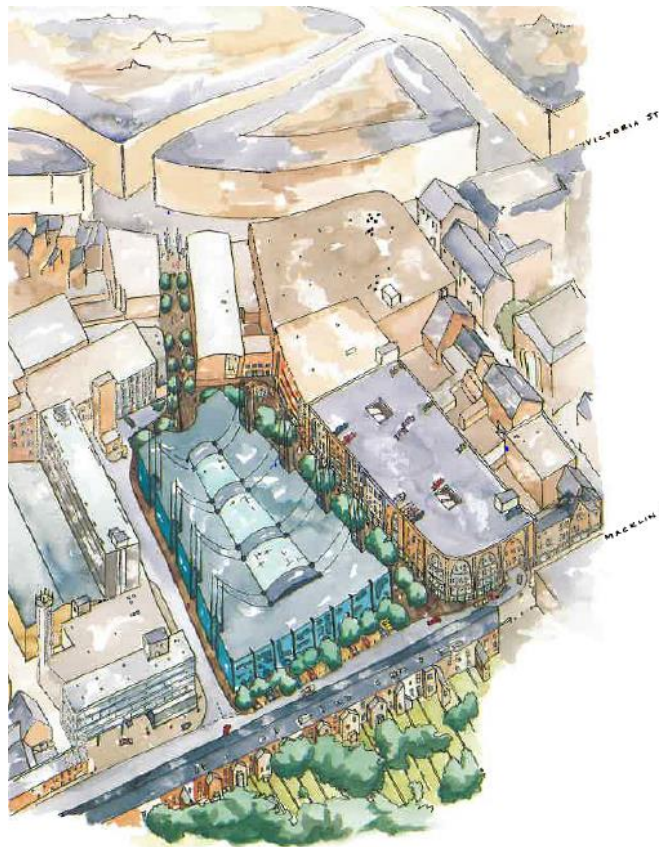


Illustration of Duckworth Square from 1992 masterplan

If anyone would like a copy of Derbyscope then please let me know. Contact:

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Notes to editors.

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