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# BUILDING HISTORY

# 03.01 THE BRUNSWICK CENTRE HISTORY

## EARLY DAYS

## FOUNDLING ESTATE

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

## TWENTIETH CENTURY



ENGRAVING OF THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, 1753, BY T. BOWLES AFTER L.-P. BOITARD (WELLCOME, V0013444)



SURVEY OF LAND BELONGING TO THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, 1763 (BRITISH LIBRARY, MAPS CRACE PORT. 14.49), SHOWING ITS UNDEVELOPED, RURAL SETTING

The Brunswick Centre sits within the historic boundaries of the 'Grete Conduytshote' field, which was located in the Lay Manor of St Pancras. This manor was held in 1491 by the Prior and Convent of the Charterhouse, a Carthusian monastery in present day Farringdon. The estate changed hands a number of times before being inherited by Frances Bennett (1670-1713), wife of James Cecil, the 4th Earl of Salisbury (1666-94). By the mid-eighteenth century it was held by James Cecil, the 6th Earl of Salisbury (1713-80). On the 21st January 1741 the 6th Earl sold the estate to the "Governors and Guardians of the Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children", otherwise known as the Foundling Hospital. It was a popular cause, the hospital granted a royal charter to such ends by George II in 1739.



MAP OF LONDON 1825

An increasingly pressing need for more funding on the part of the Foundling Hospital pushed them towards seriously considering the development of the surplus land they held from 1785. In 1790, the prominent architect and surveyor Samuel Pepys Cockerell submitted a plan for the laying out of the estate. Large squares, Mecklenburgh and Brunsvick Square, were laid out to the east and west of the Foundling Hospital respectively, creating an open space at the heart of the development. Meanwhile, Guildford Street, Tavistock Place, Bernard Street and Great Coram Street linked the otherwise isolated and unconnected new development with the adjacent Bedford Estate to the west. Cockerell's plans were supplemented by those submitted by the various developers that worked on the Foundling Estate, the most prolific, James Burton, designing and building 586 houses there in the decade between 1792 and 1802.



ORDNANCE SURVEY, LONDON XXVI (1877)

In the nineteenth century, a number of institutional uses were introduced to Bloomsbury. Buildings associated with University College London were erected in the 1820s and 1830s, including its training hospital and main building on Gower Street. This followed on from a fall in the popularity of Bloomsbury as a residential area.

The Hospital was a relatively uninvolved landlord until its hand was forced somewhat in the later 19th century, the St Giles' Board of Works having Russell and Coram Places - two run down mews areas - condemned in 1872, these two areas, alongside Marchmont and Chapel Places bought shortly thereafter from the Hospital by the Peabody Trust, who rebuilt higher quality housing for the poor residents who called these areas home.



1916 OS MAP WITH SITE A, OF WHICH HODGKINSON WAS TO BE ARCHITECT, AND SITE B, WHICH MARTIN WAS TO DESIGN MARKED UP

In 1925 the Hospital sold its holdings in Bloomsbury entirely, the main Hospital buildings demolished. From there it was subdivided and parcelled up into small plots, some of which ended up in the hands of Goodenough College. An arm of the college, Dominion Students' Hall Trust, sought to sell a site of 11 acres and 250 properties in various uses at auction in 1958, but only a week before the auction was supposed to take place the developer Alec Colman swept in and bought it for £2 million via Marchmont Properties. Almost of these properties would later be demolished to make way for the Brunswick Centre.

Patrick Hodgkinson was taken on to develop a scheme for the bulk of the area owned by Colman - **Site A**, between Marchmont Street and Brunsvick Park, stretching as far north as Tavistock Place, whilst Leslie Martin was entrusted with **Site B** to the west, bounded by Coram and Herbrand Streets, and planned to be the site for a hotel and offices.

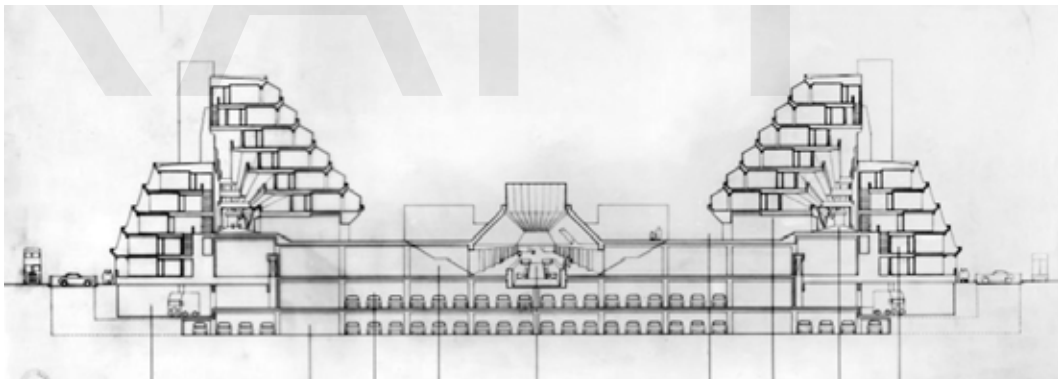


## 03.02 BELOW GROUND SPACES AT THE BRUNSWICK CENTRE

There was initially meant to be a much stronger relationship between the above and below ground spaces than was realised in the scheme as built, as is shown by the perspective cut-away drawings through the unrealised glazed shopping hall. This gave a degree of prominence to the shoppers car park in the basement, which was planned to provide easy access to the shops above via a number of stairs and escalators.

There are a number of aspects of the original scheme that were left unrealised at the Brunswick Centre as a result of the choice of the contractor and developer, McAlpine, to dispense with Hodgkinson's service in 1970 and modify his design. The most significant of these is the decision not to build the glazed roof which was to extend over the shopping street. This was intended, as Hodgkinson wrote in 1972, as the 'focal point of the new arcaded street'. It was also intended to give a meeting place to the area and allow the terrace above to become one large space: a piece of quiet tree-lined ground (not just a raised 'deck') separating the housing from the street bustle. Similarly unbuilt was the enclosure that was to protect the upper level deck access to the flats in the perimeter block, which left the access route not only open to the elements, but also meant that the 'proper cornice to the housing blocks' was not realised.

Hodgkinson noted in 1972 that there was an evolution in the design of the car park level between the outline scheme produced up until 1963 and the scheme that emerged in the years prior. The design rationalised and ramped car parking spaces were replaced by continuous floor levels to both the upper and lower levels of the car park. This change came from an awareness that 'ramped or mechanical parking would have limited the basement's adaptability for future shop extensions or warehousing. Even during the late 1960s of the Brunswick Centre there was an expectation that the basement would be the location where new or extended units would be located. A large supermarket was planned (but unrealised) for the basement level at the centre of the site, underneath the central shopping street sometime between 1965 and 1968.



PERSPECTIVE SECTIONS SHOWING THE UNBUILT SHOPPING HALL, PLANNED TO BE EASILY ACCESSED VIA THE UPPER BASEMENT SHOPPER'S CAR PARK





## 03.03 ALTERATIONS POST 1970S

By January 1978 the Brunswick Centre was already in relatively poor condition. Plans to alter the building have been proposed over a number of decades, the earliest of these seemingly coming from the office of the self-proclaimed 'anti-architect' Cedric Price, whose designs were, as with many of his projects, unrealised. He worked on a feasibility study which sought to inject a degree of vitality into the building, carrying out design work to this end from 1982 to 1985. These included a wind screen, somewhat similar in conception, due to its cross-braced metal frame, to one of Price's few realised projects.

In the 90s the wide staircase to the south east-corner of the site, featured prominently in Jack Antonini's 1975 film *The Passenger*, was demolished. This link between the main shopping street and the deck above was removed in order to open up sightlines into the Centre from Bernard Street with two lightweight bridges between the two podiums to the east and west housing block constructed instead.

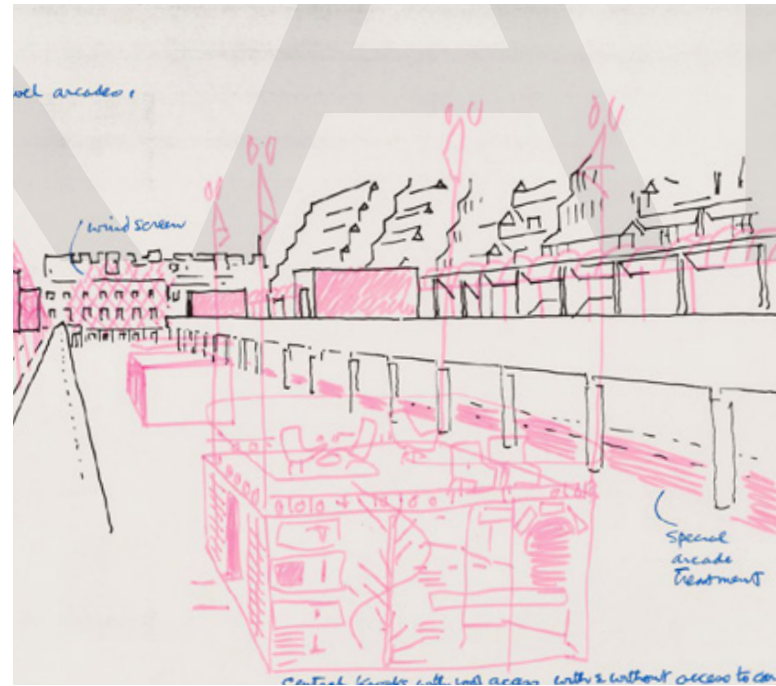
During the second half of the 90s, Hawkins/Brown and Michael Squires Associates teamed up to design new residential spaces.

This scheme similarly saw flats proposed for the north end of the building, with the concrete bridges linking the roof decks serving the two blocks of housing to be demolished, to create a greater sense of openness on the central street. The shops and landscaping were also to be overhauled by Hawkins/Brown, new paving laid, and glazed kiosks and a café introduced into circulatory spaces. Permission was granted for Hawkins/Brown's redesign of the shopping centre in January 1998.

In 2001 permission was granted for the refurbishment of the Brunswick Centre, including:

- Forward extension of the existing retail units fronting the pedestrian concourse
- Creation of a new supermarket across northern end of the pedestrian concourse
- Creation of new retail units within redundant access stairs to the residential terrace and erection of new structure above Brunswick Square for potential alternative use as retail
- Redesign of the cinema entrance
- Redesign of existing steps and ramps at the Brunswick Square, Handel Street and Bernard Street entrances
- Removal of two existing car park entrances at pedestrian concourse level
- Installation of retail display windows within Bernard Street elevation, redesign of the existing southern car park stairway
- Replacement of waterproofing layers to the pedestrian concourse and the residential terrace
- Concrete repair works and introduction of new hard and soft landscaping surfaces

In 2006 permission was granted for works in connection with the extension of glazed shopfronts at the east end of the Coram Street arcade together with the installation of new shopfronts to the west end of the arcade and internal works comprising a new suspended ceiling/lighting.



DRAWING BY CEDRIC PRICE SHOWING THE ARCHITECT'S PLANS TO RENOVATE THE SITE IN THE EARLY 1980S, NEW KIOSKS TO BE INTRODUCED TO THE MIDDLE OF THE SHOPPING STREET, ARCADES ADDED TO THE ACCESS DECKS AND A LIGHTWEIGHT WINDSCREEN INTRODUCED AT HODGKINSON HAD ALSO SPECIFIED SHOULD BE PAINTED CREAM (RIBA)



BRUNSWICK CENTER - CENTRAL STREET IN THE 70S



BRUNSWICK CENTRE CONCOURSE - IN RED THE CANOPY ADDITIONS AND WAITROSE BUILDING ON THE NORTH SIDE

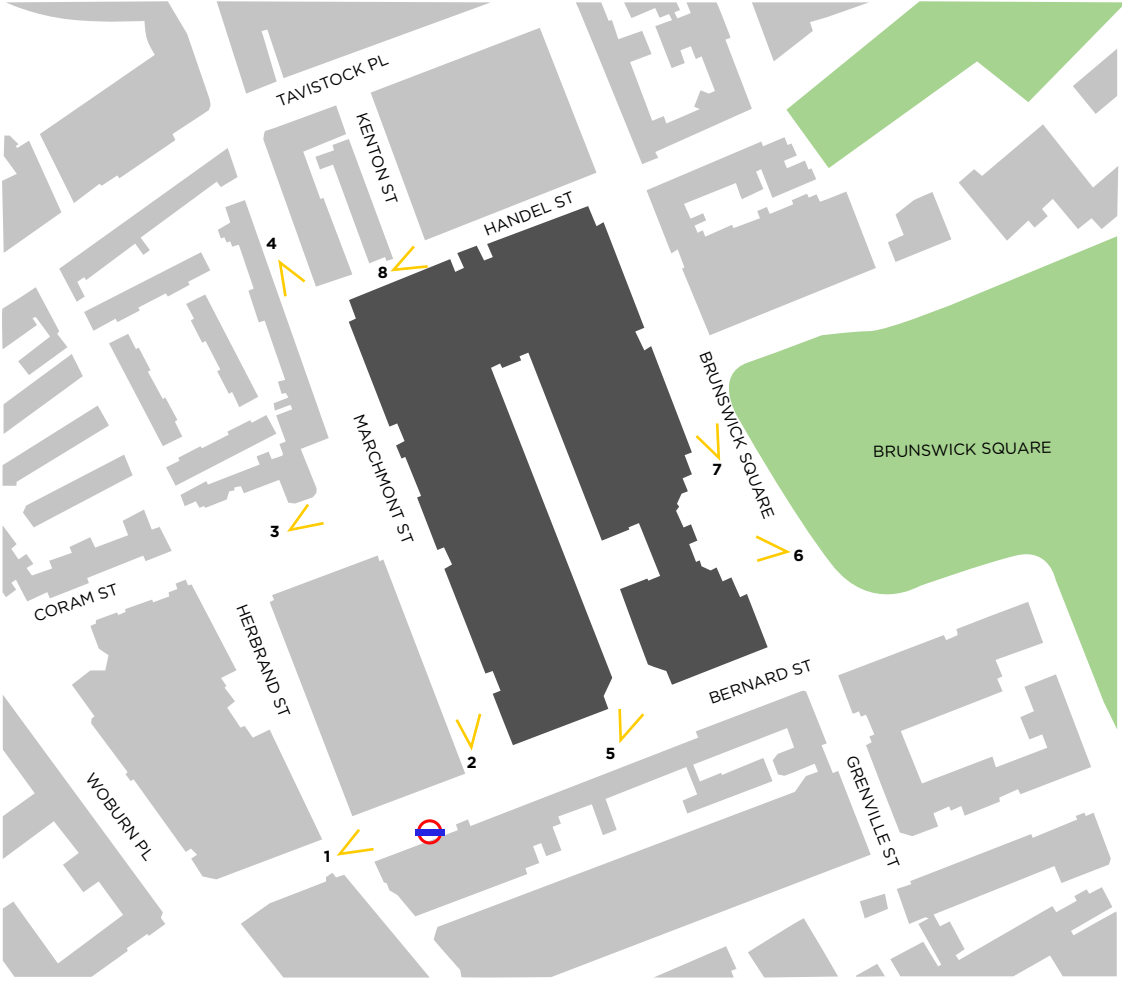
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# SITE ANALYSIS



# 04.01 STREET VIEWS



KEY MAP



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








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# 04.02 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

**KEY**



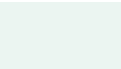






-  SHOPS/COMMERCIAL
-  HOTELS
-  RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL/CAR PARK
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  STUDENT HOUSING
-  TREES
-  TUBE STATION
-  LEISURE/PARK
-  MAIN PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
-  HOSPITAL

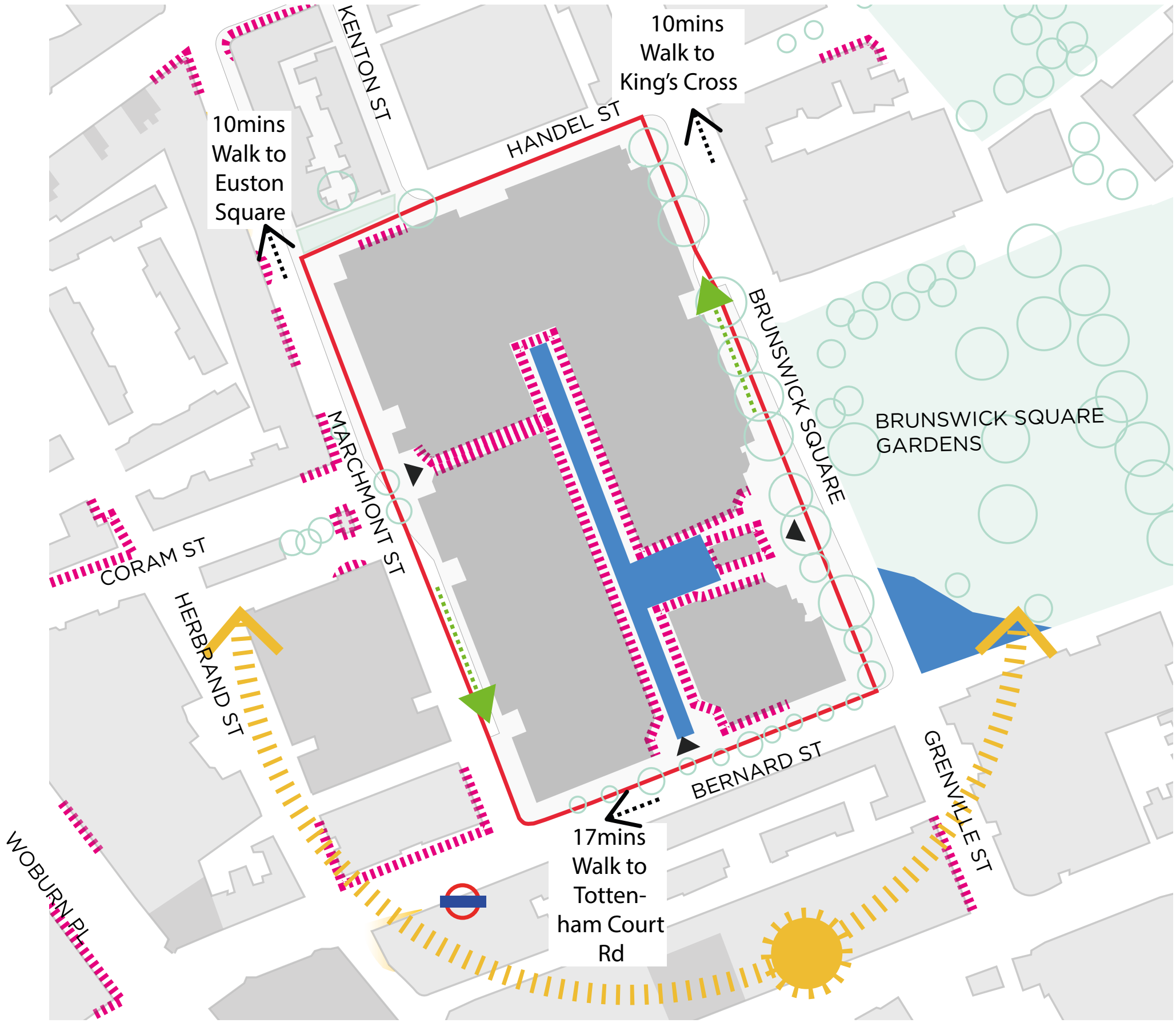


VIEW INTO BRUNSWICK SQUARE



# 04.03 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITY

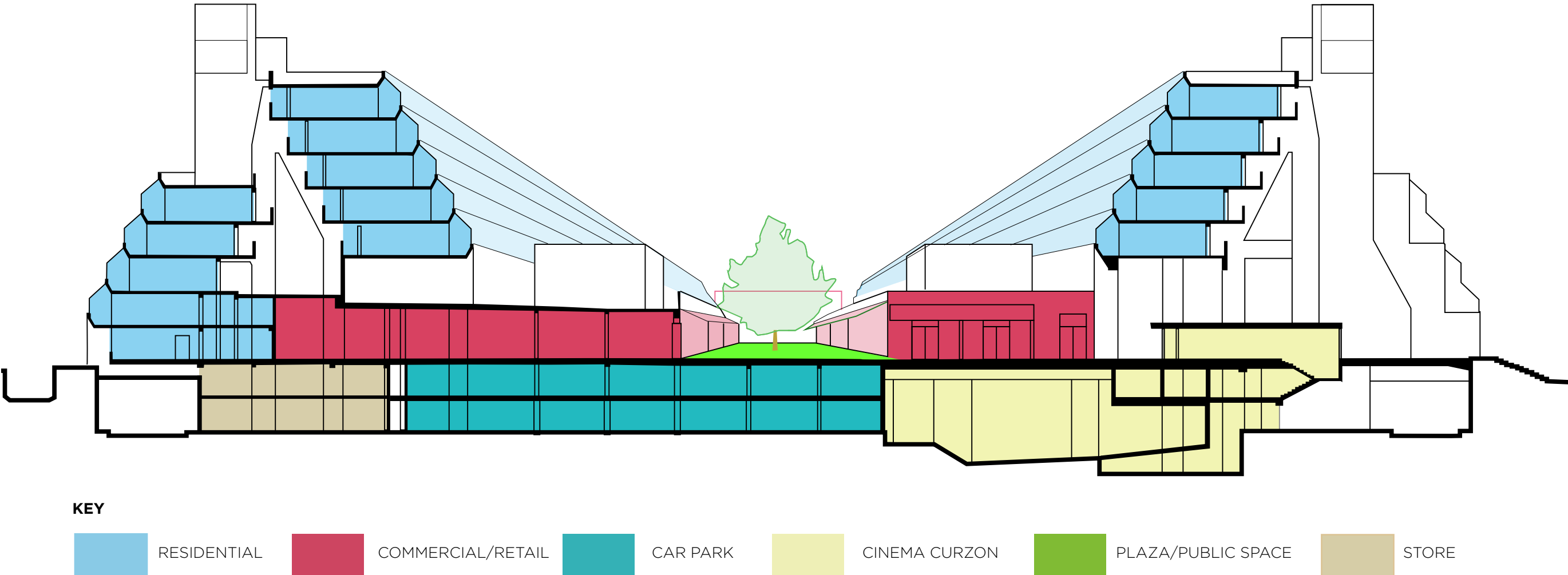
- KEY**
-  SITE BOUNDARY
  -  TREES
  -  PUBLIC GARDENS
  -  MAIN PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
  -  COMMERCIAL FRONTAGE
  -  PUBLIC SPACES/PLAZA
  -  RAMPS IN/OUT CAR PARK
  -  SUNLIGHT
  -  RUSSEL SQUARE STATION





# 04.04 BRUNSWICK USES

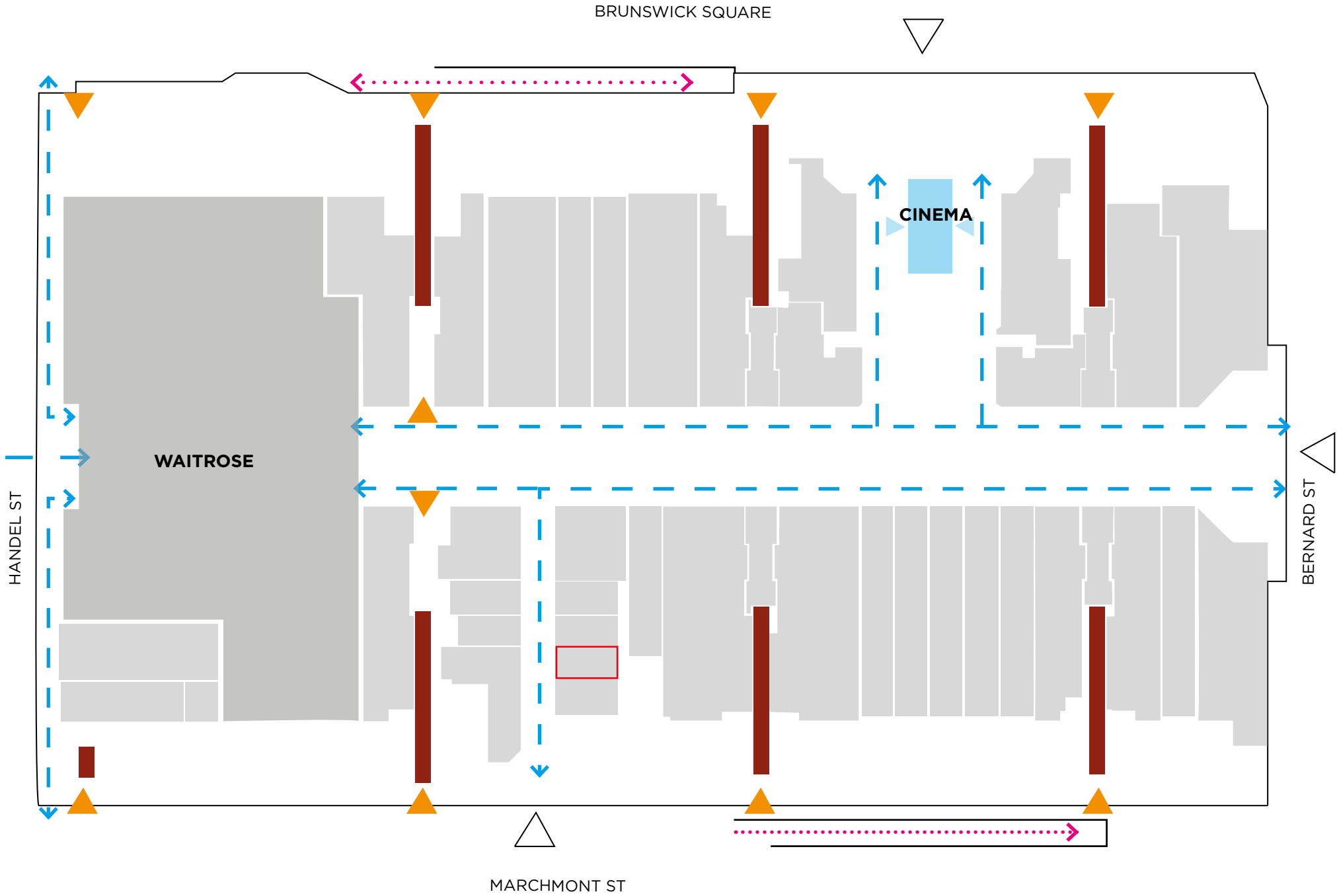
The diagram below show the mixed use condition of the existing building.  
Different uses are co-existing as planned by the original project.



# 04.05 USERS FLOWS - PLAZA

**KEY**

- SHOPS
- RESIDENTIAL LOBBIES
- CINEMA LOBBY
- RESIDENTIAL ACCESS
- SHOPPING ROUTES
- CARS ROUTES
- CINEMA ENTRANCE
- MAIN PEDESTRIAN ACCESS



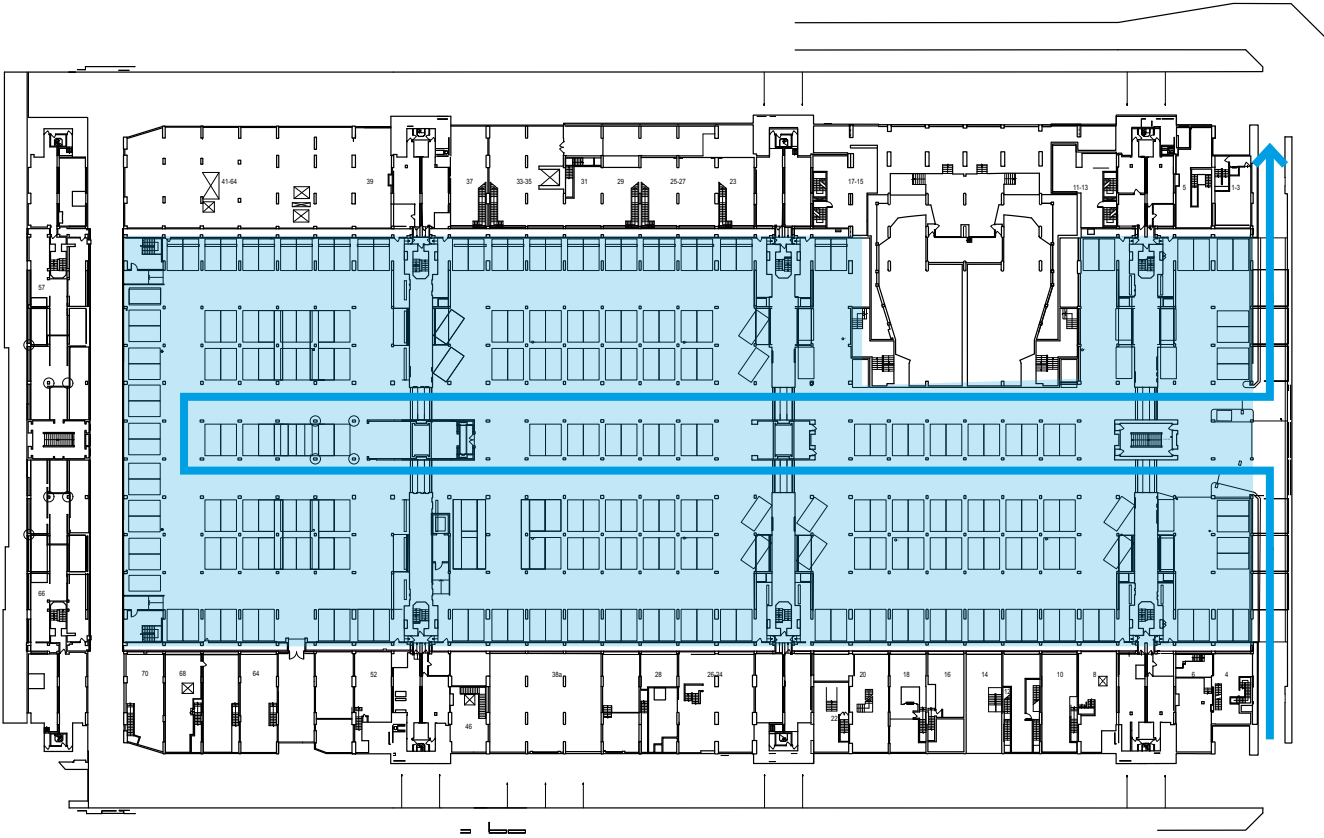
VIEW BRUNSWICK PLAZA



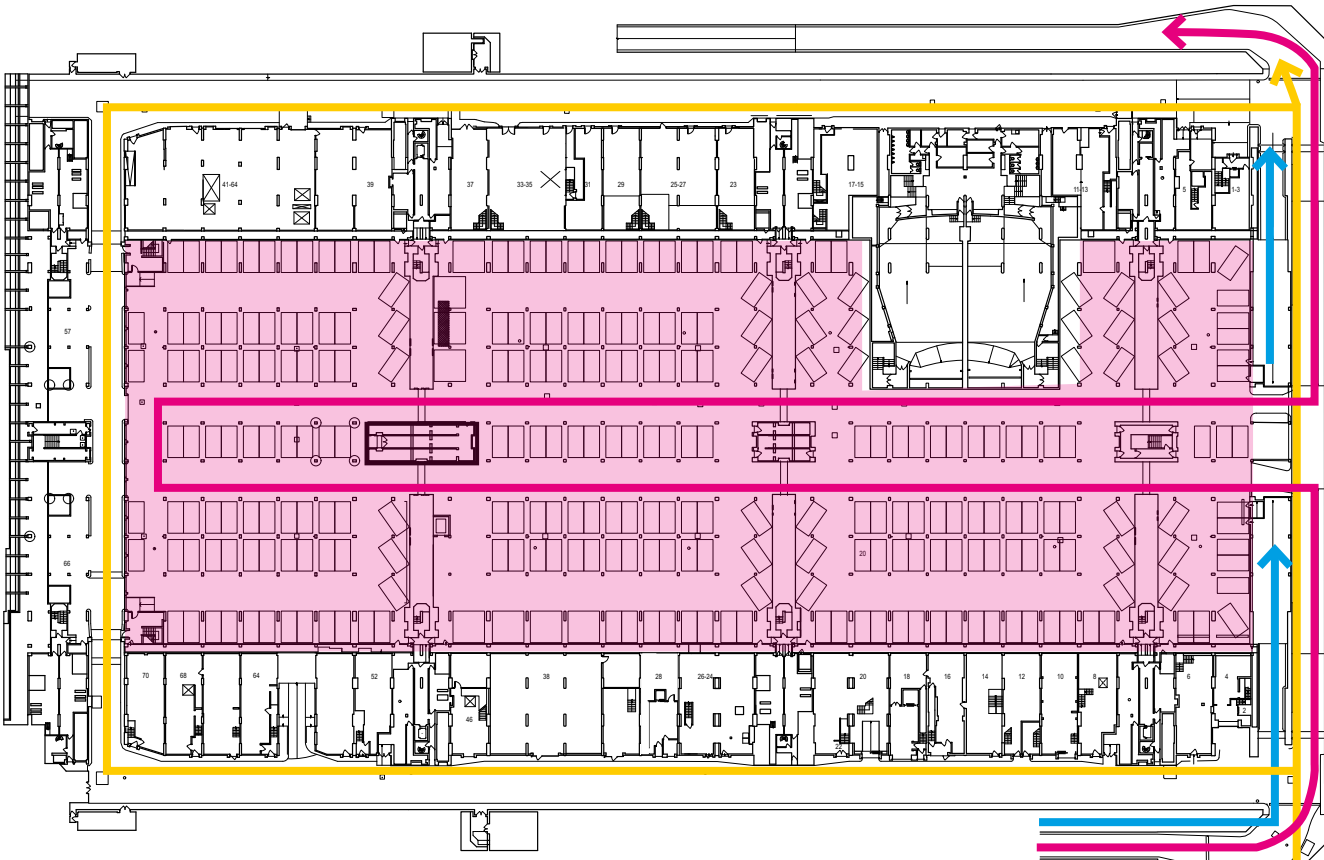
# 04.06 USERS FLOWS - CAR PARK

**KEY**

- PARKING LET TO CAMDEN (INCLUDING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY LOCATED ABOVE THE SITE)
- NCP PARKING (VISITORS TO WAITROSE AND THE REST OF THE BRUNSWICK CENTRE)
- SERVICE CIRCULATION
- WAITROSE CIRCULATION
- RESIDENTS CIRCULATION



**EXISTING UPPER BASEMENT**



**EXISTING LOWER BASEMENT**



**GENERAL LONG VIEW OF THE CAR PARK**