

Why and how to get involved

In response to the decline of Shaftesbury Square and its neighbouring streets the Department for Social Development along with the South Belfast Partnership Board commissioned G M Design Associates to prepare a development framework for the area. The aim is to create a sound basis for the restoration of Shaftesbury Square as a successful urban space, at the heart of vibrant local communities, linked by attractive and active major urban streets.

A Project Board was set up with representatives from all the local interests to guide the drafting of a development framework. At the same time there has been an in depth review of all aspects of the functioning of this area, including identification of the existing weaknesses and the future opportunities. There has also been extensive consultation with the local communities, with their valued insights. Their views have been sought and considered.

This development framework is the outcome of this process; reflecting local aspirations and wider opportunities, having had regard to what is needed and what is possible in this area.

Now is the opportunity to respond to the wide range of draft proposals presented. All are encouraged to consider and comment, either in writing or in person at any of the 4 public meetings that have been arranged.

The study area



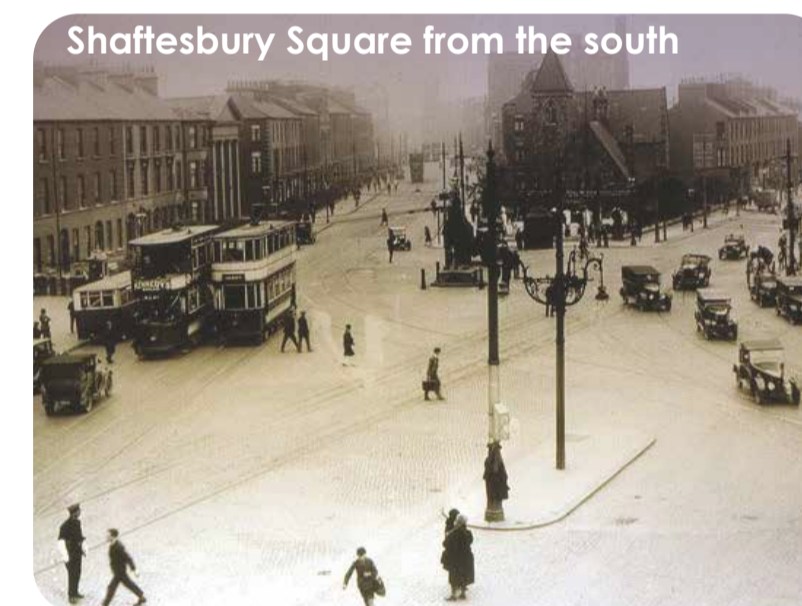
The challenge

This is an area that has survived a generation of change but has been left weakened:-

- The local residential communities are now emerging from the double trauma of comprehensive redevelopment (with the evitable thinning out of residents) along with the direct and indirect effects of "The Troubles". They are now stabilising and some are showing increasing evidence of renewed vibrancy, confidence and size.
- Shaftesbury Square has degenerated from a lively, multi functional hub to domination by a complex set of road junctions where other uses and activities are marginalised with fragmented edges.
- The quality of the neighbouring urban streets has been eroded as the commercialisation of the original large homes has been succeeded by physical deterioration, vacancy, dereliction and clearance.

The historic photographs illustrate how much has been lost and how much needs to be restored.

Historic Shaftesbury Square



The role of Shaftesbury Square and its wider environs

Shaftesbury Square is at the fulcrum of a large, growing, energetic and extraordinary youthful residential population. There are:-

- 3,500 residents within 400 metres (a 5 minute walk),
- 10,500 residents within 800 metres (a 10 minute walk),
- 23,600 residents within 1,200 metres, and
- 40,600 residents within 1,600 metres (a mile).

Shaftesbury Square is also:-

- Strategically located between the extensive University Quarter and the City Centre, each within easy walking distance,
- Close to both the Region's main teaching hospitals,
- Close to some of the Region's main tourist and visitor attractions including The Ulster Museum and Botanic Gardens, and
- Within a mosaic of local residential communities each with their distinct character, some long established and with a rich heritage, others increasingly the home of new-comers from near and far, but all are characterised by only weak functional links to Shaftesbury Square.

