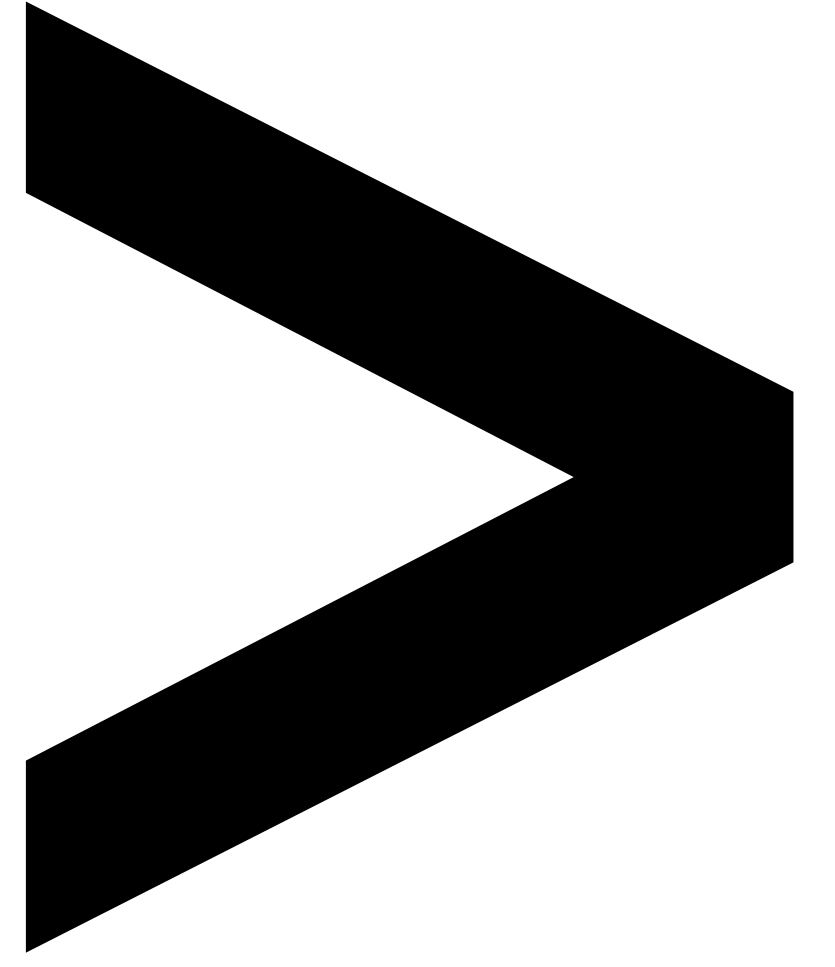


Walsall Wayfinding/ Introduction



What is this Project About?

Walsall Council have asked designers *URBED* and *United Creatives* to forge an innovative public art project, aimed at guiding shoppers and visitors round Walsall's changing town centre.

The Walsall Wayfinding initiative is co-funded by contributions from private developers, and supported by council staff and students from the College.

There is a modest budget to spend by Christmas, to create a long term strategy and deliver some first stage actions.

Eventual features could include items like maps, murals, feature lighting, information signs and artworks - perhaps in unusual forms!

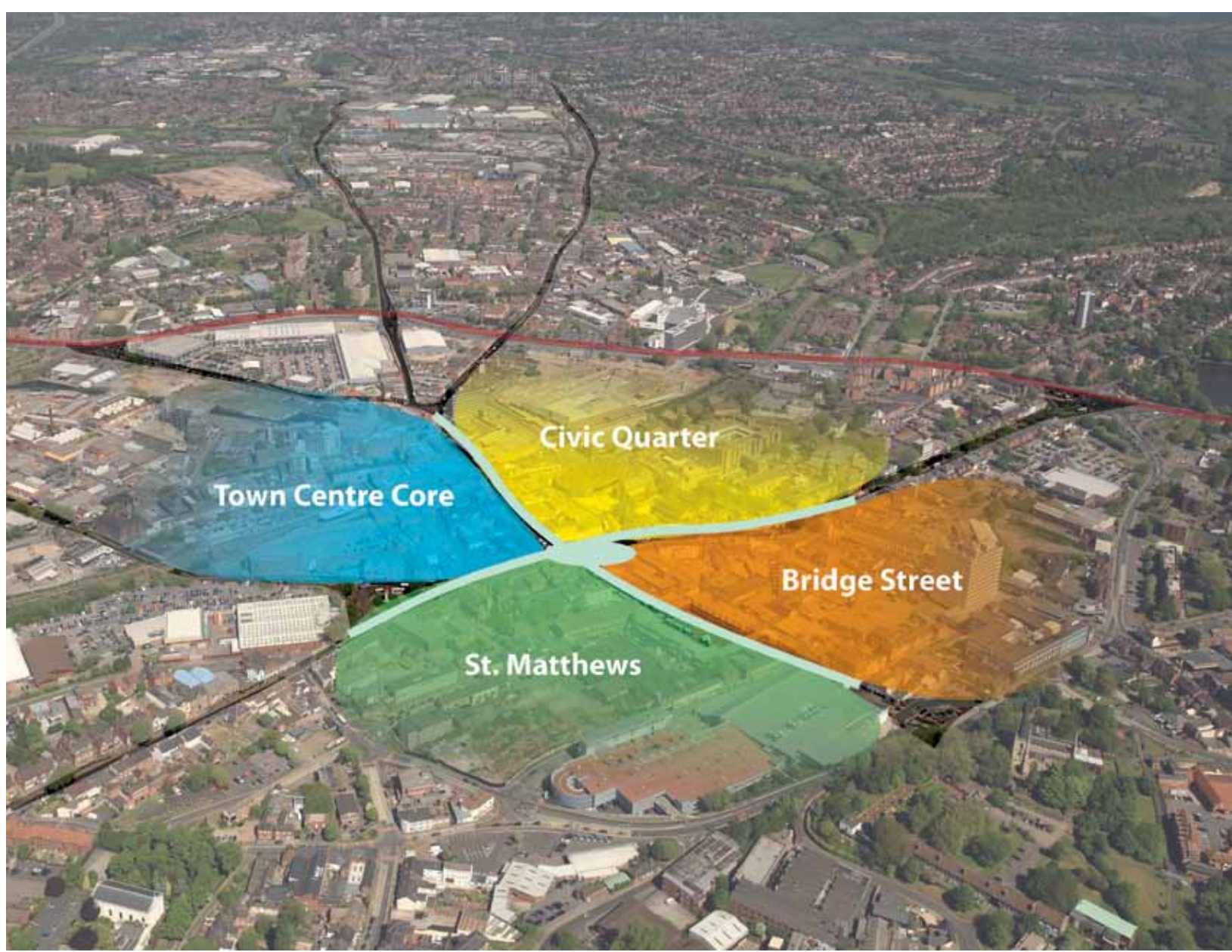
We've already been out speaking to local traders and townspeople to understand more about Walsall. We welcome your thoughts.

What are our Aims?

Our aim is to help connect walking routes to the main shopping, parking, public transport and market areas (around Park Street) with new and improved facilities like: Manor Hospital, Walsall Gallery, Tesco, ASDA, Morrisons and Crown Wharf superstores, Walsall's relocated College and canalside Waterfront.

We also want to uncover some of Walsall's hidden gems like the Victorian Arcade, the restored Arboretum, Jerome K. Jerome's birthplace and Leather Museum. And, we hope to help people find their way to visit other interesting parts of the town like Reedswood Park and Caldmore.

With your input and support we can reflect Walsall's proud and diverse character, rich heritage and confident future.



What is Wayfinding?

Wayfinding refers to the way you direct yourself round town – is it easy or confusing to get where you want to go?

Do you use landmarks like shops or certain buildings?

Do you have your own 'mind map' of Walsall?

Do you look at signs unless you are lost?

Do you think that other symbols can help with wayfinding – like the lively street market or St. Matthew's spire? Equally, do you find some things put you off – like heavy traffic or too much street clutter?

When places are busy with people it could be enough just to follow the flow.

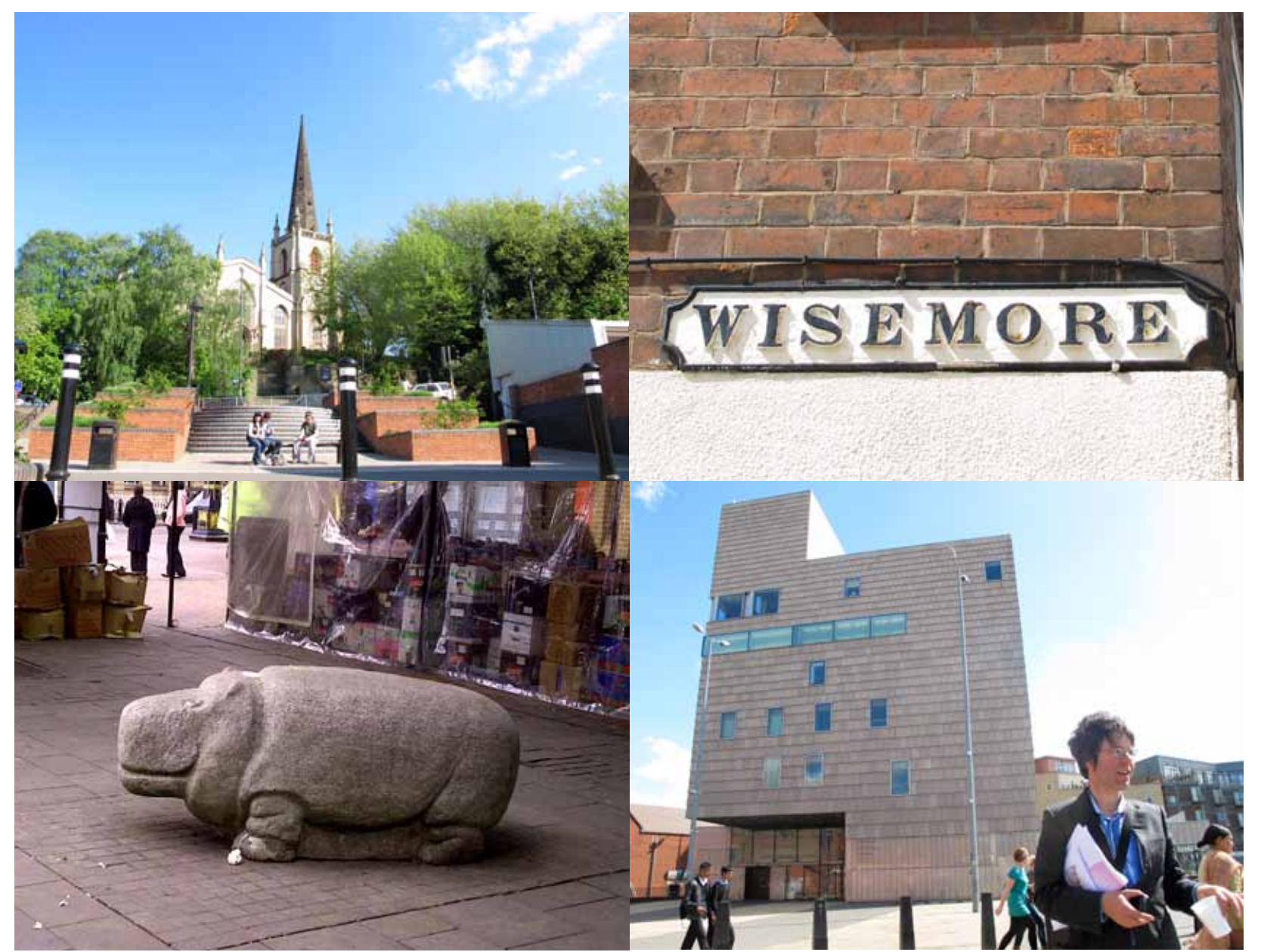


What's in it for Walsall?

Walsall town centre has changed a lot in the last ten years – with many new facilities and infrastructure improvements, some well connected and others less so.

It is important that people can move easily from one part of town to another. They will spend more time and money here if Walsall offers welcoming routes into and around its centre.

For example, we want shoppers at the superstores and College students to enjoy the whole town, not just the new buildings.



Wayfinding Strengths

Walsall has a great mix of modern mainstream stores, civic facilities, a lively traditional market and some interesting buildings and small shops.

Around Park Street, Bradford Street, Digbeth and the Bridge, townscapes are lively and diverse.

If you look up there is some superb architecture, and views to strong landmarks like the Gallery, spire and Town Hall.

Walsall also has a clear underlying structure, similar to a four leafed clover created by the old cross-roads and potential circuits between different quarters - see image above left.



Wayfinding Weaknesses

Walsall's potential is sometimes obscured – by street clutter, traffic conflicts, weak signage (especially to the railway station and from Tesco's) and some tired looking alleyways.

Part of the Wayfinding initiative should involve 'decluttering' street scenes to help create clearer sight lines for people to follow.

1

Art as Narrative/ Heritage Market Artworks



Stall Awnings: A Canvas for Art

Walsall's medieval market is its heart. Reworked awnings could become canvasses for stitched or printed artworks.



Celebrating Local Language

Proposed artworks could use a mixture of contemporary local language and heritage inspired statements.



Crafted Stall Signage

Vibrant, fairground-style signs created by local canal boat painters would give the market a more premium feel.

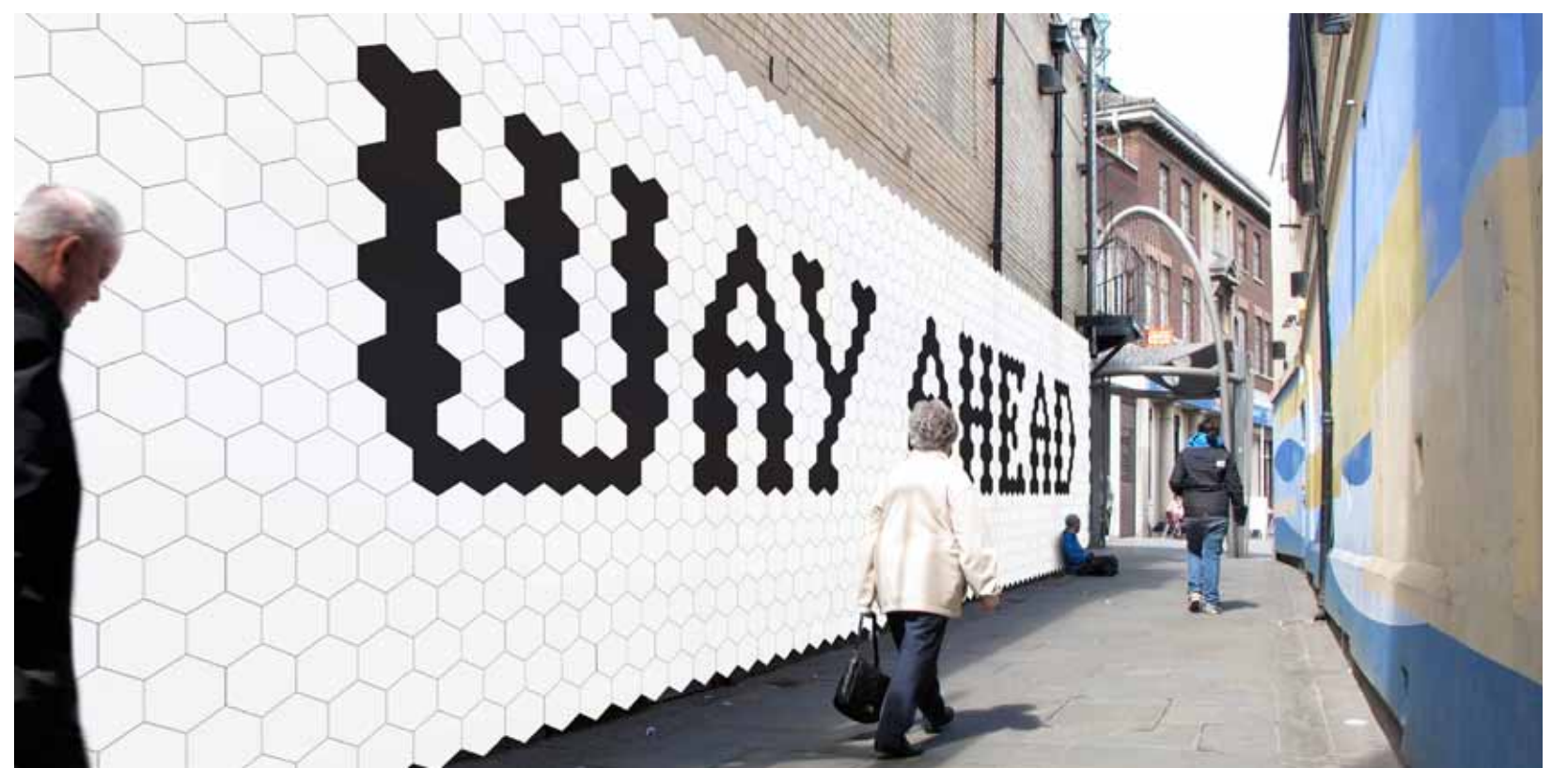
2

Art as Narrative/ Art for Alleyways



Cleaning Up Grot Spots

There are some important alleyway routes in the town centre but they are in bad condition and uninviting.



Tiled Typography & Motifs

Murals created from coloured, ceramic hexagonal tiles will revitalise these spaces and ensure they are easy to maintain.



Illuminations

Fairground-style lighting could also be used in these spaces to create a brighter, more festive atmosphere.

3

Art as Narrative/ Key Decision Points



Increasing Footfall

Artworks can guide people into areas which are currently overlooked or poorly signposted, e.g. the Victorian arcade.



Guiding the Way

Offering pedestrians visual reassurance thus strengthening key routes to aid wayfinding and help fill bland spaces.



Strengthening the 'Clover Leaf'

Interventions can help people at cut-off points e.g. where the ringroad separates the town from the beautiful Arboretum.

4

'Look Up Walsall' / Highlighting Hidden Gems



A Celebration of Local Architecture

Look up and you'll see Walsall's town centre is home to great contemporary and historic architecture, let's show it off!



A 'Look Up' Trail

An icon could be placed at each 'Look Up' location, either temporarily with 'Reverse Graffiti' or permanently paved.

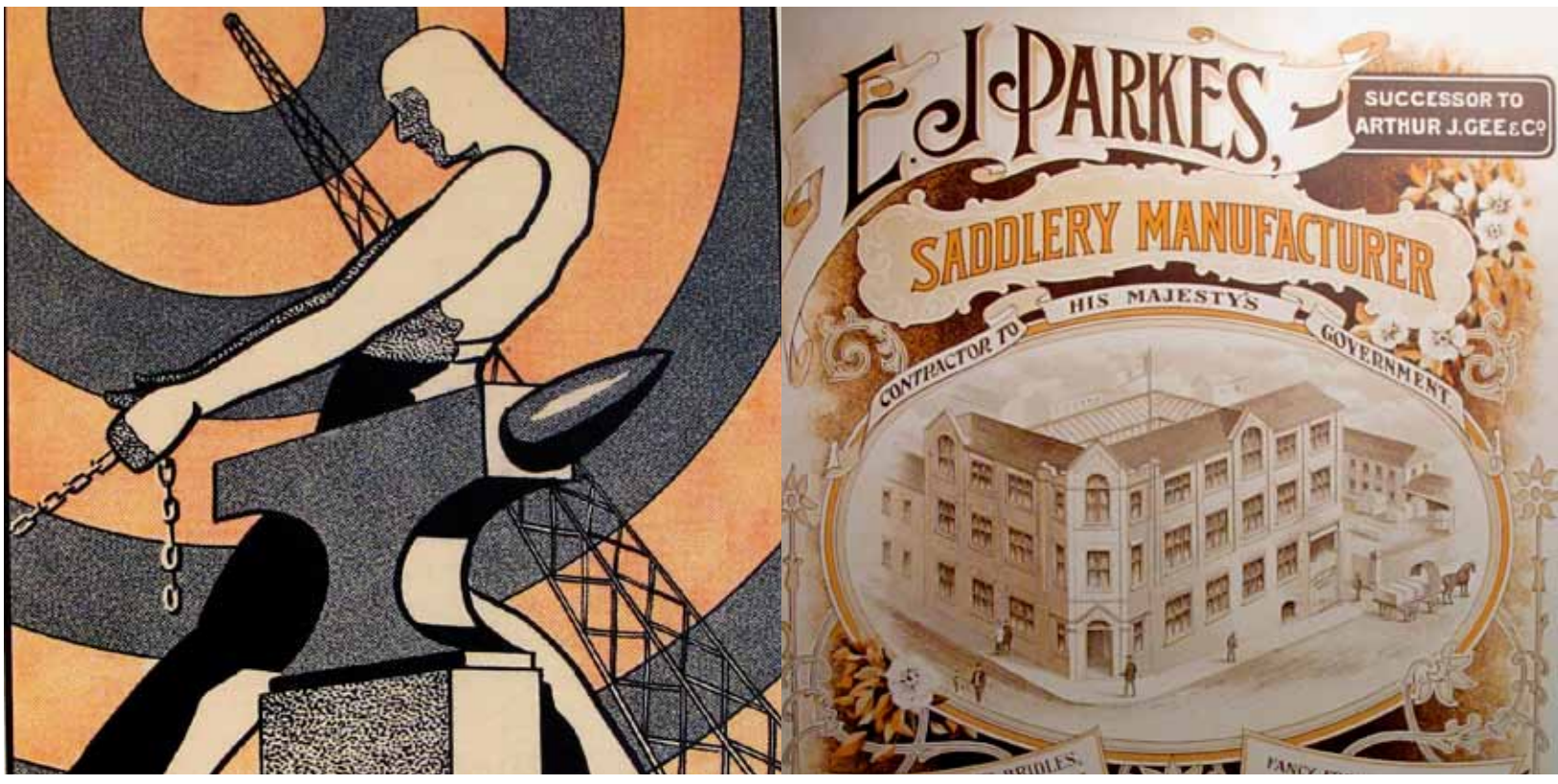


Community & School Interaction

After sites are chosen via consultation GPS handsets to follow the 'Look Up' trail could be borrowed free from the Gallery.

5

'Look Up Walsall' / The Home of 100 Trades



Civic Pride

Inspired by Walsall's manufacturing heritage we'd like to find 100 different tools used by local people.



Towpath Tools

Tools can appear throughout the town as stenciled artworks and could be used to mark out a scenic canalside trail.



Art with Context

Design source material will be taken from community workshops and site visits to local manufacturers.

6

'Look Up Walsall' / Adopt a Shop



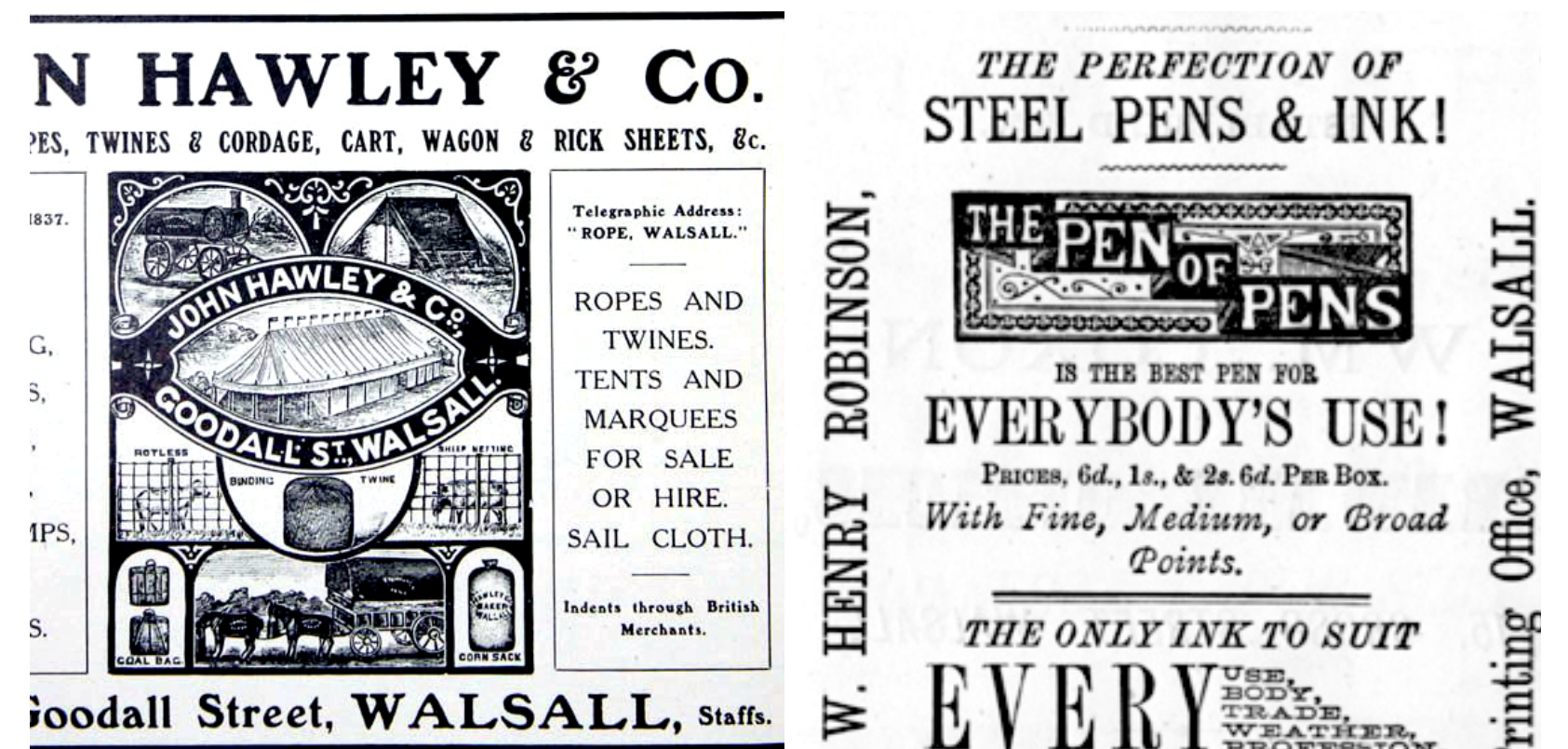
Student Collaboration

This project could work as part of the curriculum with local college students adopting their favourite local traders.



Crafted Advertising for Local Traders

Beautifully crafted, heritage inspired letterpress advertising could be used to promote local independent businesses.

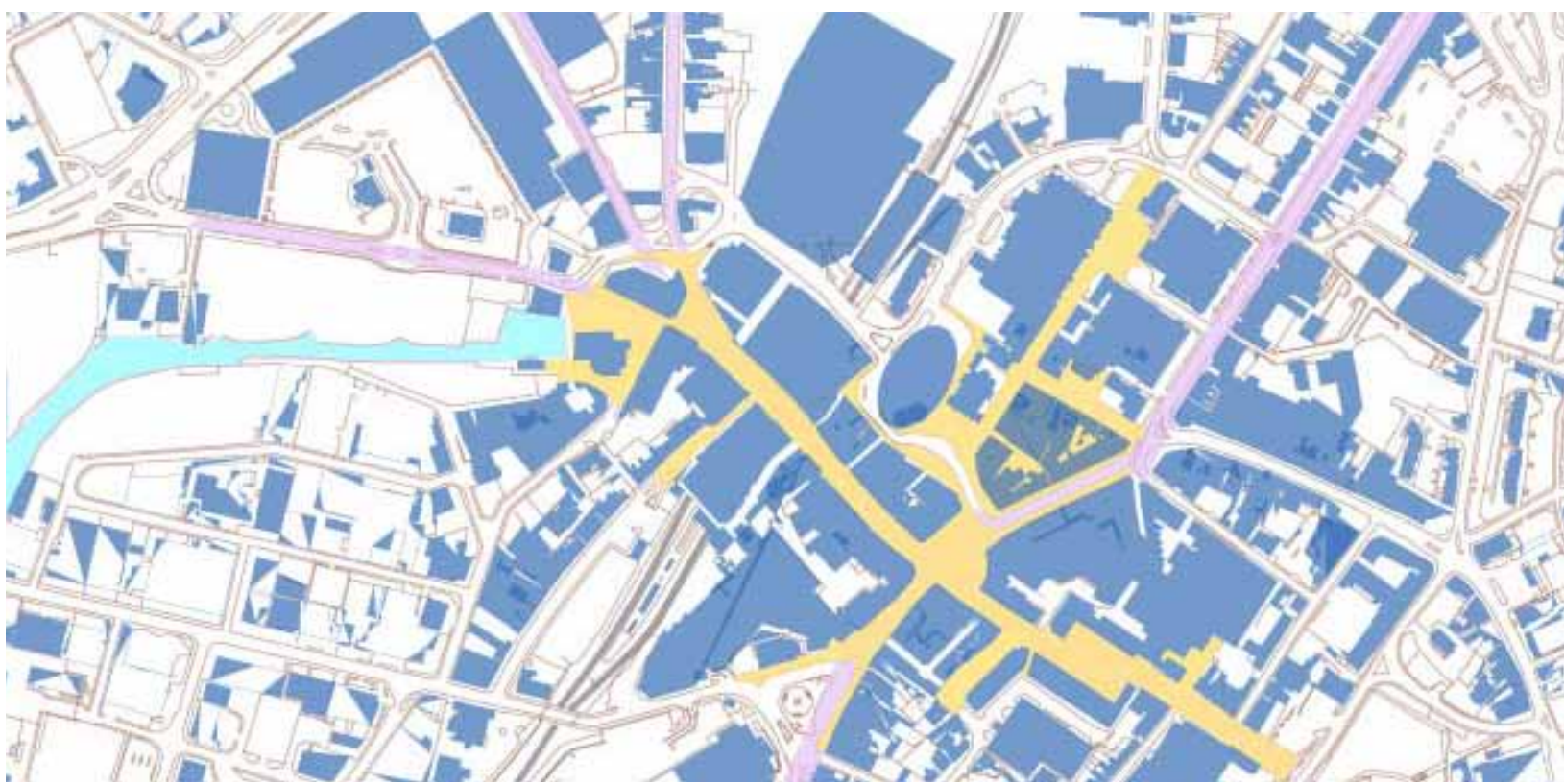


Postcards, Empty Shops, Posters

Local advertising could appear across various media - local publications, postcards, posters in empty shops.

7

'Look Up Walsall' / A Local Map and Directory for All



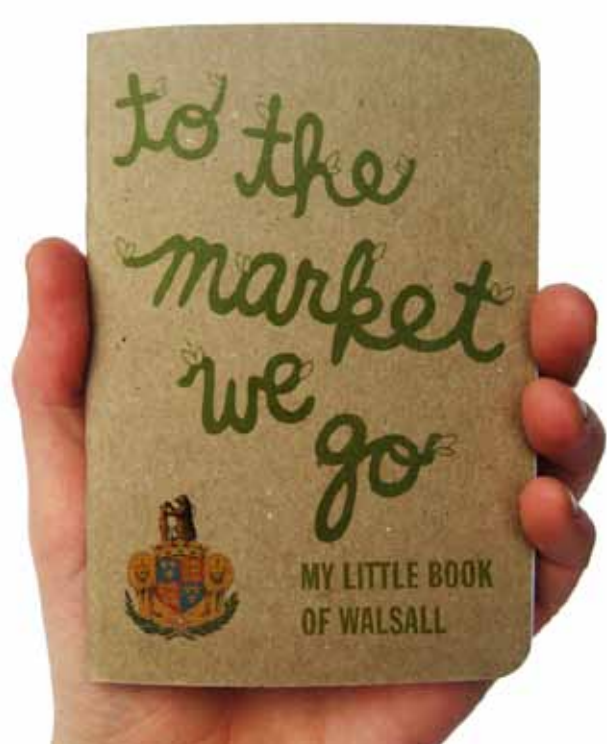
Easy to Follow Local Maps

Walsall needs good clear cartography in order for people to be able to successfully navigate the town.



Easy to Find Printed Information

'Look Up' Walsall directories with printed maps can be distributed and given out by town ambassadors and at key locations.



A Local Directory

'Look Up Walsall' will create a community directory showcasing the best sights, shops and attractions Walsall has to offer.

8

New Landmarks/ Highlighting the Way



Think Big!

There are already some visible landmarks in Walsall, we'd like to highlight a few more and build on this local language.



Locks, Lights, Lasers & Paint

Landmarks could be painted buildings, laser beams between two points or 100 locks adorned on an unused door.



Creating New Meeting Places

New landmarks can work to aid navigation, create places for people to convene and draw visitors to Walsall.

9

A Typeface for a Town/ *A Consistent Look*



Signage for the Town Centre Quarters

Giving each of Walsall's urban quarters a consistent typeface will strengthen the sense of place.



Inspiration from the Best

We have reviewed a wide range of signage found in Walsall town centre and love the St. James's Place sign.



Civic Pride

Using Walsall's existing crest will add a decorative and premium feel to urban quarter signage.

10

Walsall's Way Ahead/ *Long-term Plans*



This is Just the Start...

Walsall's ambitions are for the long term, making improvements as resources allow, some projects need not cost much at all.



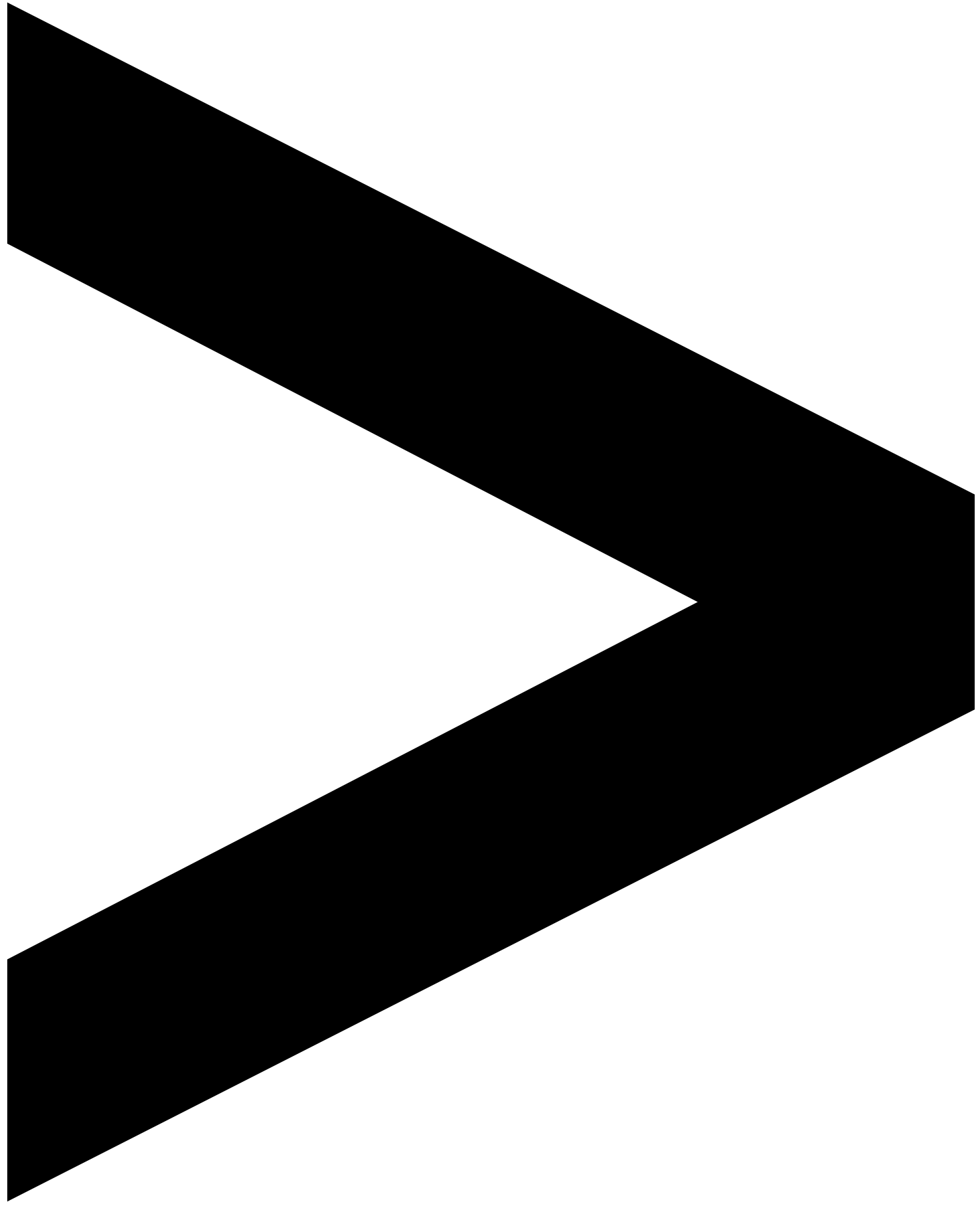
Sometimes Less is More

De-cluttering street scenes might actually save cash and help wayfinding and sight lines at the same time.



Other Ideas Might Include...

Traditional wooden market stalls, trails to Caldmore and Reedswood Park, cycle trails, a return of Walsall's Illuminations...



Have Your Say/ *Please Fill In Our Questionnaire*

