

# 1st Place -

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VIDEO INCLUDED

## CRAFT RETAIL AND AN INHABITED HINTERLAND

Dumfries town centre, in common with many former county market towns, is in a state of gradual decline. The centre has moved from being a major retail focus for the region to a struggling and increasingly hollow core. As out of town shopping has expanded and internet shopping has arrived the functions which have kept the town vibrant for decades are disappearing.

## THE AGE OF BIG RETAIL IS OVER.

This proposal brings forward ideas of small scale, flexible and intensive uses which can bring life and inhabitants back to the Midsteeples Quarter. The intensification of uses will create a town centre which is a new type of place, one which people will want to visit as a social and human alternative to the sterile worlds of chain store, digital and business park landscapes. The proposal integrates a range of key ideas into an overall conceptual framework. The key aims are to provide:

1. AFFORDABLE RETAIL AND CRAFT SPACES FOR INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES
2. FLEXIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKING, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY SPACES
3. MAJOR INCREASE IN ATTRACTIVE VIABLE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

Achieving these aims would begin to bring Dumfries town centre back to being a viable lively and sustainable environment in the region. In order to achieve these aims this proposal develops ideas for the perimeter buildings to the Midsteeples quarter and a re-forming of its hinterland to provide all the necessary spaces to bring a new range of users to Dumfries town centre. The scale and inherent flexibility of the smaller scale spaces proposed offers the chance for a new type of town centre to emerge. The density and intensification of uses provides a unique chance to create an urban framework with the flexibility to provide long term viability and sustainability.

The principal design moves required to create this new environment are to develop

### - CRAFT RETAIL

The transformation of the large footprint retail spaces into small scale independent users. The big deep retail spaces will be reduced with new small scale spaces on the perimeter given priority. These smaller spaces will line the edge of the block giving an active frontage to the streets. This offers the possibility of low rent / low business rate spaces which independent and craft venues can afford. The open street spaces would allow market stalls to be erected. Each shop would have the right to expand into the public realm. This would provide the opportunity for the small retail space to extend out into the public realm at low cost on key busy weekends or for special events. A new street life would be offered as a result of small intensive functions.



# HINTERLAND

## GREEN TERRACES

## MODULAR LIVING

## SMALL OFFICE/ STUDIO

## COURTYARD LIVE/ WORK

## WORK/ COMMUNITY

## CRAFT RETAIL



### - LIVE/ WORK/ COMMUNITY SPACES

The existing single storey retail support structures which lie in the hinterland of the perimeter blocks will be altered/ adapted/ extended to create an internal world of courtyards and vennels. These existing structures can be integrated into a new language of courtyard building. Some roofs would be retained, some removed to form new ground level spaces. The newly created matrix of spaces provide accessible flexible accommodation which can house a range of small scale activities including learning, working and living. The courtyards allow the high density network of spaces to have a pleasant, well lit arrangement across the urban block. The existing vennels would be transformed with new entrances opening off each space. Passive supervision and interaction from the adjoining spaces and courtyards would ensure a lively and safe interior to the urban block.

### - MODULAR LIVING

Alongside the potential for ground floor living spaces a series of residential stacks would be carefully placed within the existing structures. Built using modular construction techniques these would offer small apartments benefitting from daylight and open balconies. The modular construction allows these to be built with the minimum of on site disruption and access. The placing of the stacks and their careful arrangement of windows allows open outlooks with controls on overlooking and privacy. All the residential spaces would be of highly insulated low energy construction to offer low energy consumption to all residents. Each stack is capped with solar panels to provide enhanced energy generation for residents and communal power needs.

### - GREEN TERRACES

The living environment would be enhanced with the greening of the roofscape and terraces. A mix of accessible terraces, balconies and green roofs will provide a unique outlook for this dense urban living arrangement. Each balconies and terrace would be carefully orientated and screened to maintain privacy and shelter for each resident. A new intensive planted landscape would begin to grow between the open courts and residential stacks adding to the quality and personal spaces of the residents.

### - SMALL OFFICE / STUDIO SPACES

The existing perimeter buildings would be adapted to provide flexible small working and living spaces. Upper floors would open out to the rear hinterland with new balconies and terraces. These could work in conjunction with the small retail spaces below offering outlets for artists and craft makers. The combination of living/ working/ making / selling would offer a unique place for new craft to grow. The aim of this proposal is to expand and intensify the density of town centre functions in the Midsteeple quarter. The overall development of a new concept for retail and craft alongside the creation of new community/ learning/ working and residential uses offers the chance for a new approach to town centre development. "the strange hinterland where life begins....."