

Gipsy Lane Brickworks - Site Development Guidance

1.0 Introduction

The Gipsy Lane Brickworks Site Development Guidance includes the former clay pits (last worked in the 1980's), a scheduled Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), an area of former golf course land and the Barkby Road Allotments, which are under-utilised. The whole area is referred to as the Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area. The site is just under 20 hectares and represents a major development opportunity. The majority of the site is "Brownfield Land"

The purpose of the brief is to:-

- Clarify Development Plan Policy
- Improve the quality of development and promote a high standard of urban design

2.0 Site Location and Character

Gipsy Lane Brickworks is located to the north of the city, to the west of Hamilton and to the south of Thurmaston Lane. (See diagram 1). The Victoria Road East Extension that runs to the south east of the site has received planning permission and work is expected to start in Spring 2002 and be completed in 2003.

The topography of the site is varied and the land rises from a height of 58 m on the western boundary of the site to 82m at the highest point on the eastern boundary. An embankment in the middle part of the site rises to a triangular plateau that was part of the old golf course. The SSSI has steep sides and rises 7m from the water level to the surrounding level ground. The clay pit also has steep sides and has a level difference with the surrounding area of 16m. The topography of the site is, therefore, an important consideration in developing the site.

The site is very prominent within the wider landscape and the impact on long distance views will need to be taken into consideration.

Much of the area adjoins existing industrial development. However, the south of the Policy Area is close to housing and both access and residential amenity will need to be taken into consideration.

The whole area is being naturally re-vegetated and part of the site has been identified as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

3.0 Existing Ownerships

The majority of the site is in private ownership (Approx. 16.16 ha). However, the City Council owns the triangular area of former golf course land (approx. 2.44 ha) and the allotment land off Barkby Road (approx. 1.37 ha). (See Diagram 2).

DIAGRAM 1. SITE LOCATION - NE LEICESTER



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Scale 1:10000
Date: 18/11/1999

Peter Webster, Director,
Environment & Development
Leicester City Council



4.0 Land Uses and Planning Policy

The land is currently within a “Primary Employment Area” in the adopted City of Leicester Local Plan (1994). The triangular area of former golf course land and the Barkby Road Allotments are allocated as Employment Development Proposals. The Gipsy Lane Clay Pits Policy covers the brickworks themselves. This permits further industrial development following the restoration of the pits. The site also includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The following policies are relevant to this site:-

Policy E4 states that **“Within Primarily Employment Areas planning permission will normally be granted for development of B1, B2 and B8 uses, and not for changes to other land uses.”**

Policy EN60 states that **“The City Council will not permit any development likely to affect adversely Sites of Special Scientific Interest.”**

Policy E21, the site-specific policy for Gipsy Lane Brickworks, states: -

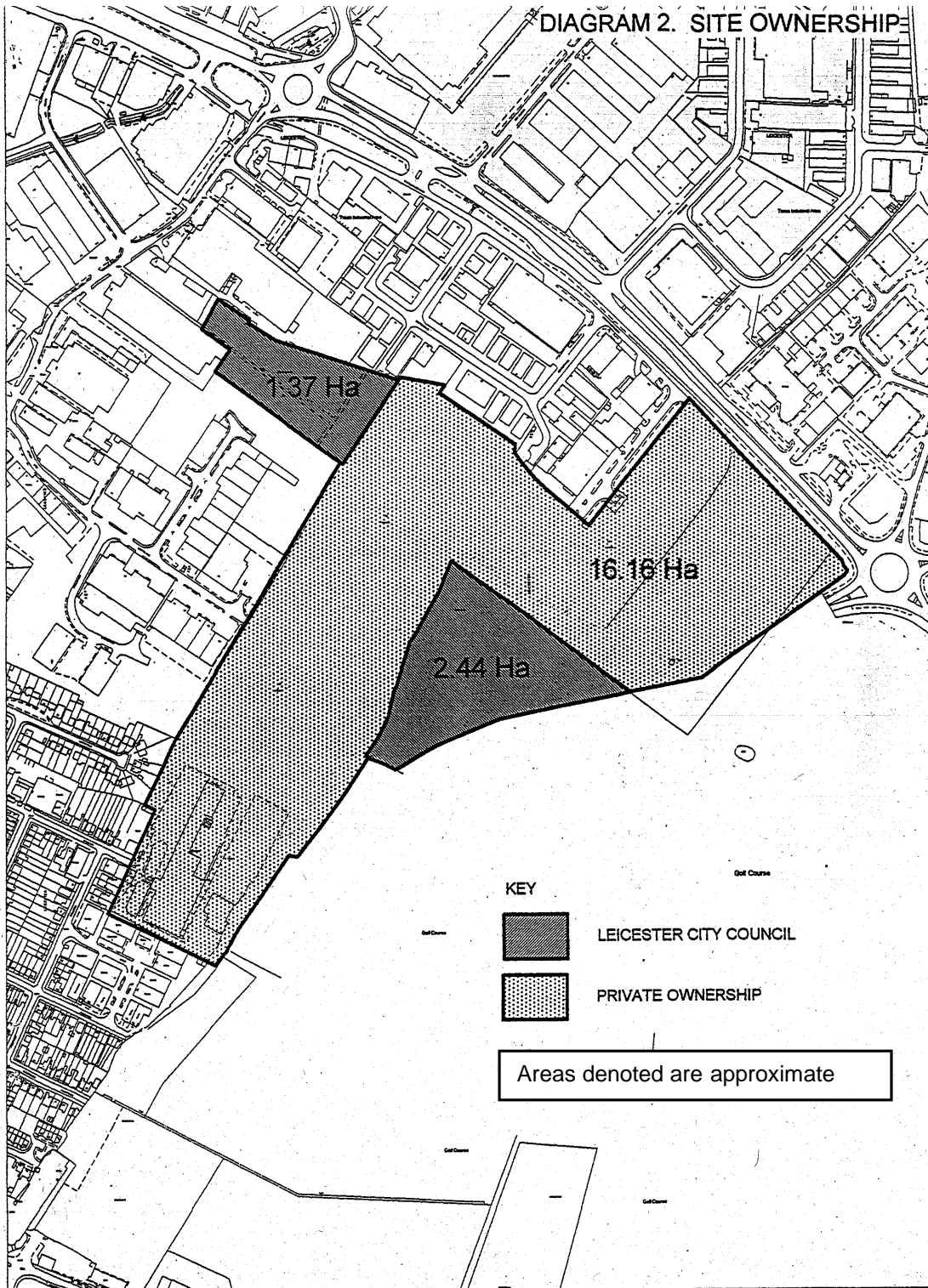
“Within the Gipsy Lane Clay Pit Policy Area planning applications for development for industrial purposes will normally be permitted subject to the following specific criteria:

- a) that the sterilisation of brick clay reserves does not arise;**
- b) the proper filling and restoration of that part of the site is completed having regard to the safeguarding of the scheduled SSSI;**
- c) planning applications for the development of any part of the Gipsy Lane clay pit area which would prejudice the comprehensive development of this policy area will be refused;**
- d) planning applications for significant industrial development may require access to be provided from Victoria Road East Extension.”**

The Local Plan Review

The City of Leicester Local Plan is currently being reviewed. A Deposit Draft Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan underwent public consultation in Autumn, 2001. Very few sites of any significant size remain in the city available for industrial development. The Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area is one of only two sites of over 10 hectares still available. As a result the City Council intends to optimise the quality and quantity of jobs that will result from the development of these areas. The Council is also committed to encouraging economic diversification, particularly into growth areas such as high-tech industries and the service sector. The Examination in Public of the Draft Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands in June 2000 concluded that there is a shortage of strategic high quality employment sites in the urban area of Derby, Leicester,

DIAGRAM 2. SITE OWNERSHIP



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Peter Webster, Director,
Environment & Development
Leicester City Council



Nottingham and Northampton and recommended that this should be addressed. The retention, and enhancement, of the SSSI and parts of the SINC within the Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area provides an opportunity to develop a high quality business park in this setting. It also provides a natural barrier between this potential business park area in the eastern half of the site and the opportunity for an area providing for the full range of B-Class uses to the west adjoining the existing industrial area.

The new proposed policy, which may be subject to change following examination at a public inquiry, states:-

E14a Western Half

- i) Within the western half of Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area, shown on the proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for B1 (except major office development), B2 and B8 uses.**
- ii) Development of this part of the policy area will form part of the wider Troon Way Key Employment Area.**

E14b Eastern Half

- i) Within the eastern half of the Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area, shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for high quality B1 (except major office development) and B2 uses.**
- ii) Other uses that are complementary to a high quality business park and to the wider employment area will be considered on their merits.**

Development will include the proper treatment and restoration of the clay pit area.

Development will not be allowed on the scheduled Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and, as at the centre of the policy there is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), policy GE02 of the Replacement Local Plan will apply. Policy GE02 states that Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and the Regionally Important Geological Sites, unless an overriding need of strategic importance can be shown (see 6.4 Landscape and Nature Conservation) to outweigh the ecological value of the site. In such exceptional cases, planning conditions will be imposed to mitigate the impact of development on the ecological and geological features of the site.

Where the City Council perceives a significant impact on any Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserve or Regionally Important Geological Site, an Environmental Impact Assessment may be required.

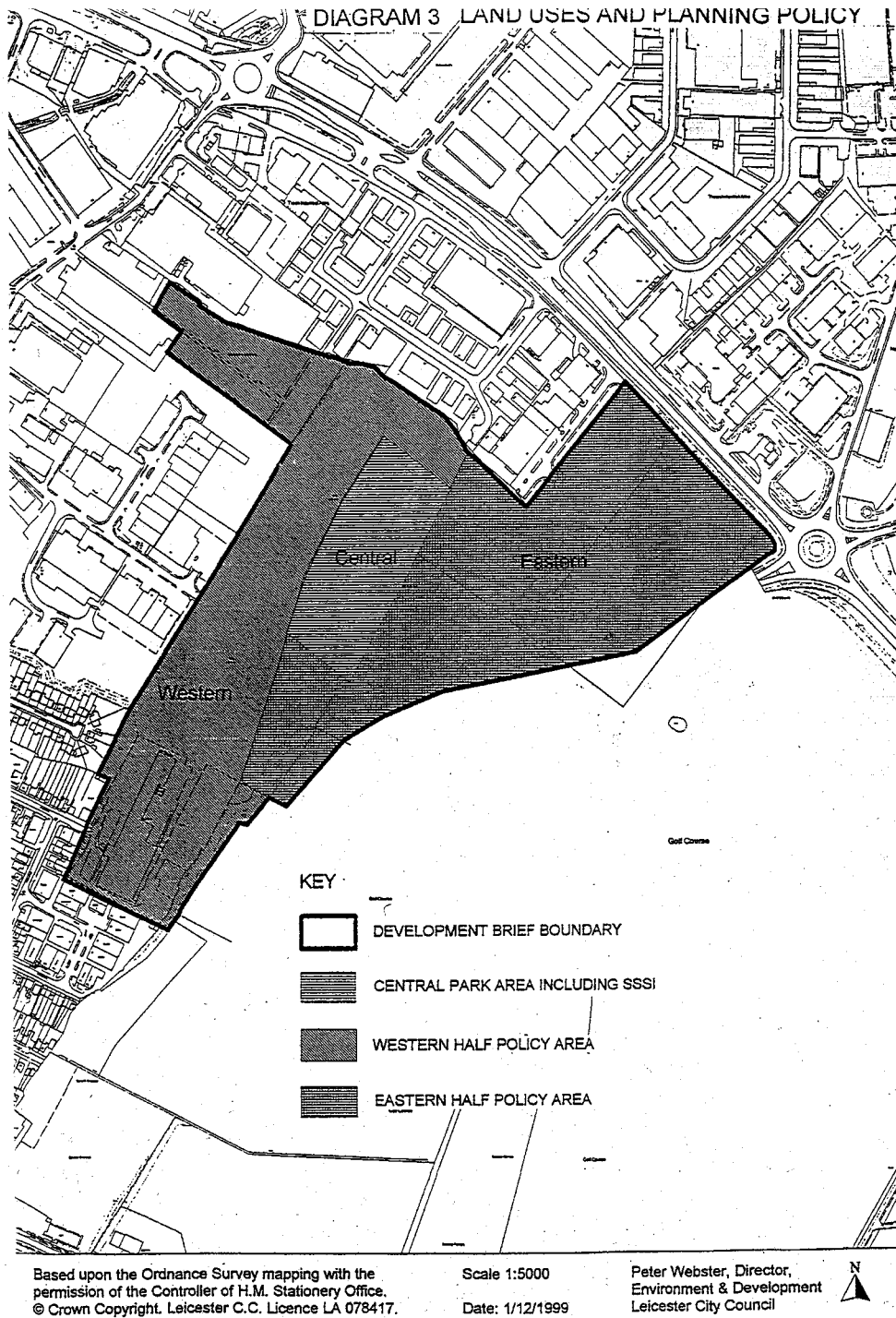
These are shown as open space on the Proposals Map. Plans for the development of the employment areas should include provision for the management and maintenance of the SSSI and SINC areas

Development of the majority of the Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area will depend upon the construction of the Victoria Road East Extension and access onto the site from this road.

Planning applications for any part of the Gipsy Lane Brickworks Policy Area that would prejudice the comprehensive development of the site will be refused.

A1 retailing uses will not be acceptable. Any other form of retailing and major office development would need to satisfy a sequential test.

PPG6 identifies major office development as a town centre use and requires that such uses should be located within existing centres, where access by a choice of travel modes is easy and convenient. The location of any major new office development is, therefore, subject to the sequential test-as set out in PPG 6. Within the Replacement Local Plan, major office development has been defined as comprising over 2,500 square metres of floorspace.



Uses that would be considered as complementary to the employment area could include: hotel and conference/ exhibition facilities; central office and banking facilities; a children's nursery; and, small scale A3 uses, which would serve both the employment area and visitors to the SSSI.

5.0 Access and Highway Requirements

- The main access to the site should be from the Victoria Road East Extension and should provide a connected route with Lewisher Road for vehicles, including HGV's, and pedestrians.
- Facilities should be provided that will encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- All routes through the site should have wide and continuous footpaths and cycleways as part of the street, with safe accessible crossing points at road junctions. These footpaths, or pavements, should provide access between buildings and open spaces and be linked into pedestrian routes within, and beyond, the site.
- Pedestrian crossings will be required across the site to ensure safe pedestrian movement and between buildings with ancillary uses. The detail of locations will need to be agreed with the City Council at the detailed planning stage.
- A direct cycle and pedestrian route will be required between Victoria Road East Extension, from close to the south east corner of the Gipsy Lane Brickworks site, as shown on the attached concept plan, and Lewisher Road Extension.
- Traffic calming will be required at all road junctions to provide pedestrian priority. Consideration should be given to Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/94 - Entry Treatment and 12/93 Overrun Areas. This will need to be agreed with the City Council before development commences.
- Adequate lighting to adoptable standards should be provided along all publicly accessible streets, using column mounted, vandal resistant SON -V fittings. It should be co-ordinated with wash-lighting to the face of all buildings and localised lighting to door openings. Development lighting should be compatible with the use of CCTV monitoring facilities. Light pollution and the prominence of the site should also be taken into consideration.
- Car parking should be provided in accordance with the vehicle parking standards as set out in Appendix Nine of the adopted City of Leicester Local Plan (1994) and revised standards, set out in the draft on Vehicle Parking Standards (October 2001).
- Cycle parking, in the form of secure provision and under cover, should be provided in accordance with the cycle parking standards, as set out in Appendix Nine of the adopted City of Leicester Local Plan (1994) and revised standards set out in the draft on Vehicle Parking Standards (October 2001).
- All roads should be designed in accordance with the adopted highway standards, which are currently the "Highway Requirements for Development" (1991) produced by Leicestershire County Council.

6.0 Site Layout and Urban Design Principles

Applicants should be able to demonstrate how they have taken into account the need for good design in their development proposals. A written statement setting out the design principles adopted as well as illustrative material in plan, section and elevation is required. This should explain how proposals relate to all relevant design policy and guidance.

6.1 Key Principles

The development of the site will be based on the following key design principles:-

- i) Making a place that is legible, memorable, distinctive and attractive.**
- ii) Ensuring that streets are the main focus for activity with windows and entrances overlooking the street.**
- iii) Ensuring the impact of buildings on the wider city landscape is minimised.**
- iv) Ensuring the SSSI is protected and enhanced and located within a large central park which is overlooked by surrounding buildings.**

6.2 Site Layout

- The street layout should be integrated into the surroundings roads, cycling, public transportation and pedestrian networks.
- The layout of the site, and the design of the buildings, should not create any unnecessary limitations on potential future adaptability or expansion.
- Buildings should be laid out in perimeter blocks with secure internal servicing and car parking, where possible. Staff parking provision, loading bays and storage facilities should be sited to the rear of the building blocks. Access to these rear courtyards should be gated.
- Buildings should be located on the edge of the plot to enclose and overlook public streets, visitor car parking and open space.
- The visual impact of large areas of car parking should be minimised by design and by restricting their frontage onto main streets.
- Buildings should not back onto any public space, including the highway. Back alleyways should be avoided and fire escape routes designed to comply with this requirement.

- The more active elements of the building (offices, entrances etc) should be located at the front of buildings, overlooking the street, visitor parking and the Central Park.
- Refuse collection and storage points should be adequately screened, fireproof and secured.
- New industrial development will be expected to provide a buffer zone (min 10m) adjacent to residential property.

6.3 Building Design

- Buildings should be carefully planned to ensure that the internal layout allows windows and entrances to overlook, or address, public streets.
- The use of uninterrupted, long lengths of blank (windowless) facades overlooking public areas should be avoided.
- New buildings should be of high quality, contemporary design. They should make a positive visual contribution to the environment and provide accessibility to all sections of the community.
- The building form, massing, scale and height should be designed to respond to its context and key views of the site.
- The design of buildings should, where practicable, anticipate adaptation for different uses over their life span.
- Landmark buildings should be provided at entrances and key focal points to improve legibility (See attached plan).
- The visual impact of colours and finishes of wall and roof cladding materials should be considered in relation to the background and context of the building. Their impact on the landscape should also be assessed in terms of distant views.
- Loading bays, bin stores, outdoor storage (where allowed) and similar facilities and functions, including mechanical plant, must be incorporated into the overall design of the building.
- Buildings should be designed without large recesses to their elevations, particularly with entrance doors and access ways.
- The height of industrial units should not overshadow rear gardens or significantly reduce visual amenity.

6.4 Landscape Design & Nature Conservation

The City Council will require a site survey plan - showing existing ecological and landscape features. This should incorporate an accurate tree survey and hedgerow survey indicating the location, identity, and height and canopy spread of trees to be affected by the development proposals. Details of ground levels, drainage and other services will be required at the same time.

The landscape scheme should provide a strong character, through planting, and be integrated in layout, design of built form, fencing, surfacing and lighting. A planting plan, detailing species, plant specification and density of plants will be required to be submitted at an early stage, in order to assess the visual impact of the development as a whole.

A plan for the protection of trees, hedgerows and shrubs to be retained during construction will also be required. This should be in accordance with advice contained in the British Standard Institute Code of Practice "Trees in Relation to Construction" (B.S 5837: 1991)

- Existing planting and landscape features within the site should be retained and enhanced wherever possible, and the wildlife value of the site should be maximised.
- The SSSI (the only SSSI in Leicester) and the developing grassland in the central part of the site should be protected, and enhanced, and located within a larger Central Park that is overlooked by surrounding buildings. An access and management plan for the SSSI and Central Park will be required before development commences. A commuted sum will be required if the City Council is to maintain the SSSI and Central Park.
- Provided that appropriate measures are taken to protect the ecological features of the SINC, some development within this area will be acceptable. This site provides one of only three opportunities within the urban area to develop a high quality business park and therefore its strategic importance outweighs the need to prevent development throughout the whole of the SINC.
English Nature require that a protected species survey should be carried out for this site. If any species (such as badgers, great crested newts or bats) are found, English Nature should be informed. Where possible the presence of any protected species should be safeguarded. If this is not possible adequate mitigation must be provided. Protected species licenses may be necessary to carry out the work.
- The street layout should incorporate street trees, at a minimum of one street tree per 10m of street length. Car parking areas will require tree planting at a minimum rate of one tree per four car parking spaces. The location of CCTV should be designed in conjunction with the proposed planting.
- A double tree line will be expected on the boundary facing the golf course.

- Boundary treatments should be consistent with other properties on the site, with fences and railings painted or colour coated black or a dark colour.
- Fencing, adjoining public street frontages or having high visibility, should be of high quality design and materials. Industrial-type palisade fencing will only be approved in areas of low visual access. All fencing must be galvanised and colour coated.
- The impact of industrial buildings on the wider city landscape should be minimised.
- The hedges and mature trees around the triangular block of land adjacent to the SSSI should be protected. A woodland screen should be provided to screen the industrial buildings on the higher ground. This should be a minimum depth of 30 metres. Native species should be used, which are in keeping with the nature conservation value of the area.
- Standing dead wood should not be removed, unless it is a health and safety hazard to the public.
- Site clearance and removal/management of shrub, hedgerow and woody vegetation should be done outside the bird-nesting season, (i.e. between the beginning of August and the end of February).

6.5 Energy Use

- Measures to maximise energy efficiency and reduce CO₂ emissions of new buildings will be encouraged. Advice on energy efficiency issues can be obtained from the:

Government Energy Saving Trust's Energy Services Office at Milton Keynes (plus details of grant funding to developers); telephone 01908 558209 or email ["EST's Practical help" <info@practicalhelp.org.uk>](mailto:info@practicalhelp.org.uk)

Leicester Energy Efficiency Centre, Market Street, Leicester, is also able to give advice on a wide range of energy related issues; telephone 0800 512 012 or web www.energy-advice.co.uk

- All buildings should be tested against the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM 5/93) and achieve a high rating in terms of overall energy efficiency.
- Consideration should be given to the use of recycled building materials.

6.6 Security

- Provision should be made for the use of CCTV surveillance and consideration given to a central monitoring station on site.

- A secure underground service and communication network should be provided to the site, with lockable covers to all vulnerable inspection chambers.

7.0 Development Constraints

7.1 Highways

A Transport Assessment (TA) will be required if the uses proposed are different from those uses that were considered as part of the Traffic Impact Assessment (T.I.A) for the Victoria Road East Extension. An assessment of cycle, pedestrian and public transport needs should be considered as part of the TA.

7.2 Environmental Impact Assessment

An Environmental Impact Assessment of the site will be required in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999). Information will be required in relation to Landscape Issues, Water Management, Ecology, Protected Species, Traffic, The SSSI, Archaeology, Landfill and the Strategic Planning Context.

The Environment Agency has identified that there are three landfill sites within 250m of the proposed development. The Agency considers that there is a perceived risk that landfill gas could adversely affect the development. It is advised that the necessary precautions should take place to assess the risk and ensure that landfill gas does not adversely affect the development.

7.3 Drainage

- The site provides an opportunity to capture and detain surface water run off from roofs and hard standing areas. The use of porous hard standings, the detention of water within the site can create positive advantages, providing amenity, drainage source control and ecological benefits. The City Council will expect proposals to consider the re-use of water in these ways. The development, as a whole, should look at utilising the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) as the primary method of source control. PPG25 (Planning and Flood Risk) Appendix E advocates the use of SUDS. The Environment Agency has requested, that in the development as a whole, the use of the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as the primary method of source control should be examined.

The current natural drainage is a problem for the SSSI. The re-grading of the surface, and the diversion of any surface water away from the SSSI, will be required to reduce the drainage problem. A ditch network and open pond may be required to prevent runoff into the SSSI. This may need connection to the main

drains. Any open ponds should be made a positive feature, with development fronting onto it.

7.4 Protected Species

Development will not be acceptable where it would harm or damage the habitat of a protected species; a species that is included, or meets the criteria for inclusion, in the National or Red Data Book, or a species subject to a special Species Action Plan in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan. If protected species are found, English Nature must be informed and the conditions of any licence, where issued, must be followed.

7.5 Archaeology

The Leicester City Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) indicates that the Gipsy Lane site has not been subject to any systematic archaeological survey. Consequently, no known archaeological sites are recorded within, or in the immediate vicinity of, the development area. Furthermore, the site has been significantly affected by 19th and 20th century clay extraction to the extent that only limited plan areas retain the potential to preserve buried archaeology (Diagram 4 - Areas A & B).

Archaeological survey work undertaken in advance of development to the north and east of Gipsy Lane has revealed a rich archaeological landscape comprising Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon Sites and finds (SMR ref. LC567, 1305 (Tesco's & Manor Farm), LC430, 431,433 (Hamilton/Quakesick Spinney), LC547 (Towers Hospital). Iron Age and Roman Occupation seems to be located on spurs of higher ground, overlooking the Soar Valley and its tributary streams. Despite the recent quarrying of the site such areas survive along the eastern fringe of the Gipsy Lane Brickworks Site.

It is, therefore, possible that buried archaeological remains will survive within the site, and this potential should be addressed during the preparation of development proposals for the area. An Archaeological Impact Assessment for the site is required and should include:-

- 1) a desk based assessment (DBA) of the study area, concentrating upon any recent land use that may have affected the preservation of archaeological remains;
- 2) an archaeological field evaluation (AFE), if shown necessary by the results of the DBA. This should include appropriate techniques (geophysical survey, trial trenching, etc) to enable the characterisation of any below ground archaeological remains; and
- 3) a mitigation strategy should be prepared, and agreed with the City Archaeologist, as advisor to the planning authority, to enable appropriate investigation and recording of significant archaeological remains as identified by 1 and 2 above.

The City Archaeologist will set, or agree, a brief for the archaeological work at the request of the developer. This will ensure that the necessary programme of archaeological work is undertaken to the satisfaction of the planning authority. If you have any queries or require information on suitable archaeological organisations to carry out this work please contact Mr R Clark, Planning Archaeologist at Jewry Wall Museum Tel: 247 3023.

8.0 Consultation

It is important that the contents of this Guidance are understood and, ideally, accepted by interested parties. To this end, the Draft Guidance has been subject to consultation with the following groups:

- Landowners;
- local residents;
- local ward councillors;
- adjacent industrial sites; and
- other interested bodies

The results of consultation were considered in the preparation of the final form of the Guidance, which was presented to the Cabinet of the City Council for adoption.

Every effort was made to include constructive suggestions that support the key development principles of the Guidance or that help resolve any legitimate concerns of neighbouring properties.

Where it is felt unnecessary, impracticable or undesirable to incorporate specific suggestions, Cabinet was made aware of their nature and the reasons for their exclusion.

9.0 Contacts

For all planning matters please contact:

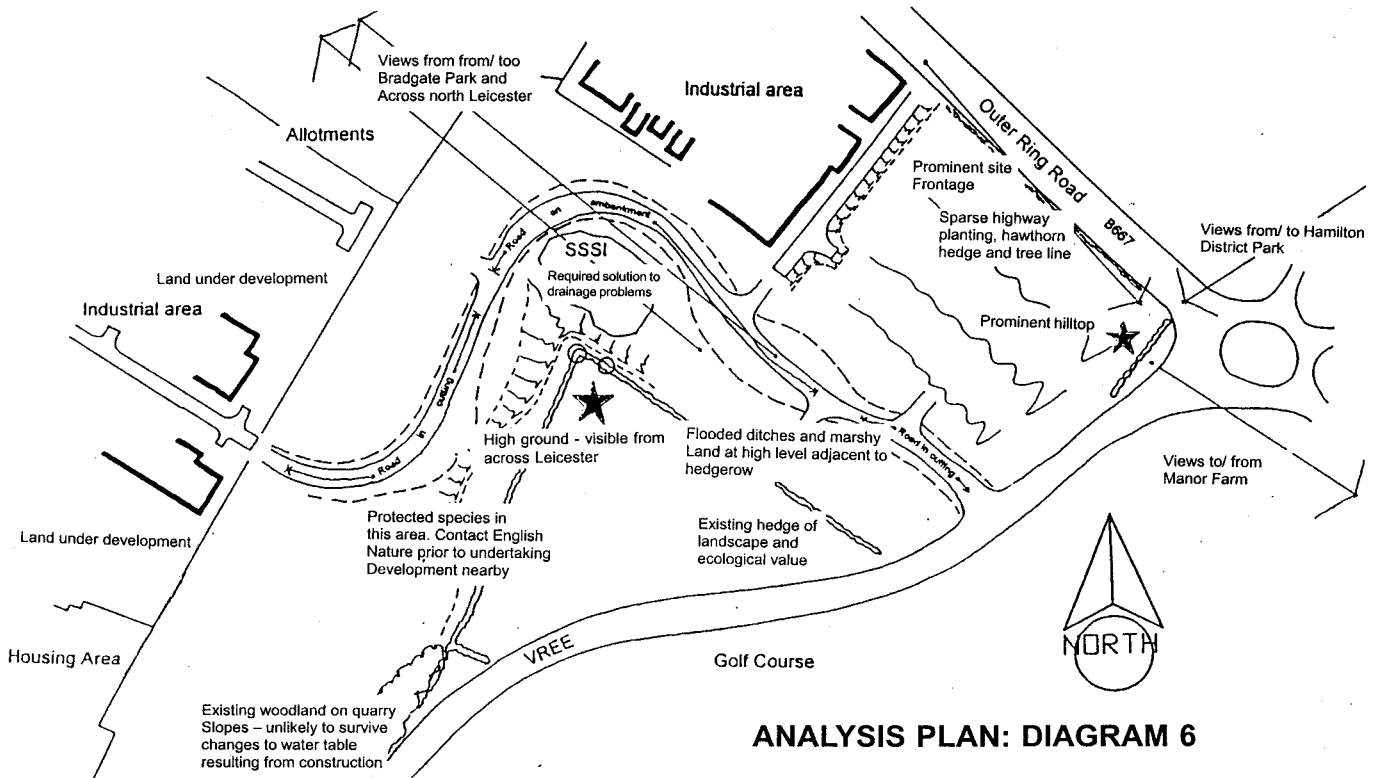
The Development Control Group,
Environment, Development & Commercial Services Department,
Leicester City Council,
New Walk Centre.
LE1 6ZG

Telephone (0116) 252 7265

For other development advice please contact:

Leicester Regeneration Company
Peat House
Waterloo Way
Leicester
LE1 6LP

Telephone (0116) 256 6035



ANALYSIS PLAN: DIAGRAM 6

Gipsy Lane Brickworks Design Guidance (Draft)

The guidance on this sheet is intended to aid the development in achieving a strong identity through design. The prominence of parts of the site and the existence of Leicester's only 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) make the treatment of the landscape particularly critical. Protection and management of the SSSI, the wider view and environmental impact of the development and the quality of the employees' working environment are the three key elements, which must drive the overall concept of the development.

Guiding Principles

Sustainability

- Energy efficiency
- Pollution minimisation
- Ecological protection

The hedgerow and trees require protection throughout any works. The area of wooded slopes along the South East boundary may die back due to the fluctuation in the water table caused by VREE construction, however this should be protected to allow regeneration. Some areas of disturbed ground with mixed herbaceous and grassland cover should be retained. Internal access margins, where they are not prominently visible from the main through route, could be reserved for this where desired. A larger area for natural colonisation should be provided around the SSSI and along steep slopes of the site where marked. Surface water drainage should rely on the Environment Agency's 'Best Management Practice' where feasible. The natural runoff of ground water will need to be collected in a detention area and the pit itself will need to be kept free of standing water.

Security

- Built Frontages
- Perimeter block
- Boundary Treatment

The use of building frontages as secure boundaries against the public street will minimise the need for unsightly security fence.

Buildings should be laid out to perimeter block format wherever possible to allow secure internal servicing with the minimum of street frontage parking and loading areas. Boundary treatments should be consistent with other properties on the site with fences and railings painted or colour coated black or dark colour. Security palisade fences

should be kept to a minimum on the public street frontage but if they are needed in runs longer than ten metres, the planting requirements will include trees to soften the effect. Small areas of visitor parking only will be expected on the street fronts to maximise activity in that area and to aid security. Larger areas of parking within blocks will require tree planting to divide the areas and create shelter/shade.

Legibility, Variety and Vitality

- Street definition
- Street design
- Building form and detail

Particular strong definition will be required for the streets which should connect pedestrians from the new VREE through to St. Ives Road; also the selections of development which front the Outer Ring Road and the VREE. Legibility will be through a consistency of approach to detail and material use on these built frontages as well as the provision of landmark elements to the buildings as marked. The design of the street area should include tree planting and high quality shrub and grass areas in front of buildings along the internal link route. A double tree line will be expected on the boundary facing the golf course and a street tree line to the rear of the Outer Ring Road's hedge, will enhance views up the hill along the main road. Office facilities, windows and main entrances to buildings should always face the major route closest to the building.

Permeability

- Connected streets

Where possible, spurs off the access road should link to existing streets. This will be subject to the city council's traffic group's agreement. There should be a pedestrian link between the VREE and St. Ives Road. Pedestrians using these streets should be able to do so easily and in safety. Each side turning should therefore be designed with minimum radii and surface changes across the entrance. There must be a connection for heavy goods vehicles to travel between Barky Road and VREE (via Lewisher Road)

Appropriateness

- Building Scale, massing, density
- Context
- Screening and softening

The diagram marks specific places where buildings will need to form land mark elements. Parts of this site can be seen from a very great distance and it will therefore be important to ensure an appropriateness of scale.

