

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS

CABINET

6th November 2000

DUNS LANE Site Development Guidance

Report Of The Director Of Environment & Development

1 Purpose of Report

This report sets out the planning and urban design requirements for the Duns Lane Site which is situated 1km west of Leicester City Centre at the junction of Western Boulevard, Duns Lane and Braunstone Gate. Once adopted, the guidance will be a material consideration in the determination of any planning applications relating to the site. The guidance updates and extends a planning brief prepared for the site in 1996.

2 Summary

The Duns Lane site represents a long standing development opportunity close to the City Centre. The site covers 0.45 hectares and comprises a number of uses including, a vehicle hire depot, a public house and general storage. Part of the site is vacant. The site is bisected by six brick railway arches, formerly part of the Great Central Railway. These in turn support the Bow String Bridge which at present is intended for demolition by the City Council. Over the years a number of proposals for the development of the site have been put forward, but none have come to fruition. In contrast, significant investment has taken place on many other sites within the locality as part of the City Challenge initiative.

The SPG deals with the following aspects of potential development:

Guiding Principle

The Guidance seeks to promote a high quality, high density mixed use development.

Policy Context

The majority of the site is designated in the Local Plan as a Potential Development Area - where a number of different uses would be appropriate.

Acceptable uses

New priority uses suitable for the site include residential, community facilities and pub / restaurant. Other uses could include education, major leisure and offices. Schemes which provide a mixture of uses will be particularly suitable.

Urban Design principles

These include; quality, mixed use, high density, 'active' frontages, pedestrian and cycle links and treatment of the railway arches.

Other Development factors

These cover access, traffic and parking, amenity, archaeology, public art, energy, affordable housing, ecology and phasing.

Public consultation on the draft SPG (approved by Planning and Transportation Committee in August) was undertaken during September 2000. Comments were sought from landowners, nearby residents & businesses, development industry representatives and other interested parties.

In response to the comments received I propose a minor addition to the guidance relating to the retention of the 'Bow String' bridge (detailed in Supporting Information).

The effect of the wording is to allow the guidance to remain relevant if for any reason the bridge is retained. This could be from a revised decision by the Council to conserve the structure or, if a viable scheme comes forward, for its retention as an integral part of any specific site development proposals.

3 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to **ADOPT** the Site Development Guidance as Supplementary Planning guidance, subject to the inclusion of the additional text set out in the Supporting Information.

4 Financial and Legal Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the City Council.

5 Officer to contact: Stephen Haines
Urban Design Group.
Ext: 7215

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Supporting Information

1 Consultation

Copies of the draft guidance were sent to some 70 consultees. An article, outlining the main elements of the guidance, was featured in the Leicester Mercury in August. Three comments in total were received; one from the Leicestershire Constabulary which was generally supportive of the guidance and two from Leicester residents who both objected to the 'removal' of the Bow String bridge.

The guidance does assume that the bridge will be demolished though this is not a precondition of site development or of any specific requirement of the guidance. Given that the removal of the bridge has not yet been programmed and circumstances may change I feel it would make sense to include in the guidance reference to its possible retention and the development implications as a result. This would also cover the possibility of a viable development proposal coming forward which included retention of the bridge as an integral feature.

I therefore propose that the following paragraph be added to the draft text:

"However should the City Council decide to retain the bridge or specific site development proposals come forward which require its retention, either all of the arches could remain or the abutment only be retained (of sufficient length to provide support to the bridge). Any adjoining development proposals would be expected to relate positively to the bridge to complement its landmark presence."

2 Equal Opportunities Implications

The Guidance includes specific requirements to ensure that new development is accessible to all sections of the community.

3 Policy Implications

It is intended that the guidance be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the City Of Leicester Local Plan

4 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications for the Council.

5 Sustainability and Environmental Implications

The Guidance includes measures to encourage sustainability and protect the environment. The development should allow pedestrians a choice of routes. Existing planting and landscape features should be protected and enhanced. Energy efficiency in the building design is also encouraged.

6 Crime and Disorder Implications

The Guidance includes measures to help engender public security. Development of the site in the form of perimeter blocks with active frontages will provide good visual surveillance of the public realm and ensure that the backs of buildings do not face onto public open space.

7 Internal Consultations

Arts and Leisure
Housing
Legal Services

8 Background Papers - Local Government Act 1972

None

Duns Lane Site Development Guidance

PURPOSE

Site Development Guidance provides direction on the type and form of development that the City Council would expect of particular sites. It is intended that, subject to consultation and Council approval, the guidance will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the City of Leicester Local Plan. SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration in deciding planning applications. Developers should be able to demonstrate how they have responded to the guidance in their own ideas, initially in pre - application discussions with the City Council.

LOCATION & ANALYSIS

The site, located off Duns Lane and Western Boulevard, covers 0.45 hectares and is situated approximately 1km west of the City Centre. The site is currently in a number of uses; a vehicle hire depot, a public house, general storage and a vacant cleared site. The site is bisected by a row of six brick railway arches, formerly part of the Great Central Way. The upper level of the arches is presently used as a recreational pedestrian and cycle route accessed from the site by means of a stepped ramp. Due to rising maintenance costs, the City Council proposes to remove the railway bridge connecting the arches southwards to the rest of the Great Central Way. The cycle route will be re-routed to run by the river at ground level with a toucan crossing provided across Western Boulevard. (See Diagram 1)

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

This guidance seeks to promote a high quality, high density mixed use development. A "*sense of place*" should be created that is recognisable, easy to understand and which makes the most of its prominent location. The site is close to several high quality developments which were completed in the 1990s as part of the City Challenge initiative. New proposals should build upon this success in raising the quality of the built environment in this part of Leicester. This is more likely to be achieved if the site is planned, and if possible, developed comprehensively.

In circumstances where comprehensive development proposals come forward which extend across the site boundary or include adjoining sites, the planning and design principles set out in this guidance will be expected to apply.

POLICY CONTEXT

This SPG updates previous guidance which was prepared in 1996. The majority of the site is designated in the Local Plan as part of a Potential Development Area (PDA). The purpose of PDAs is to encourage development by allowing a number of different uses. This designation is likely to be maintained in the forthcoming replacement City of Leicester Local Plan (Deposit version to be published in 2001). The existing railway arches currently form part of the Great Central Way Recreational Cycle Route (part of the Sustrans network) which is also designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

USES

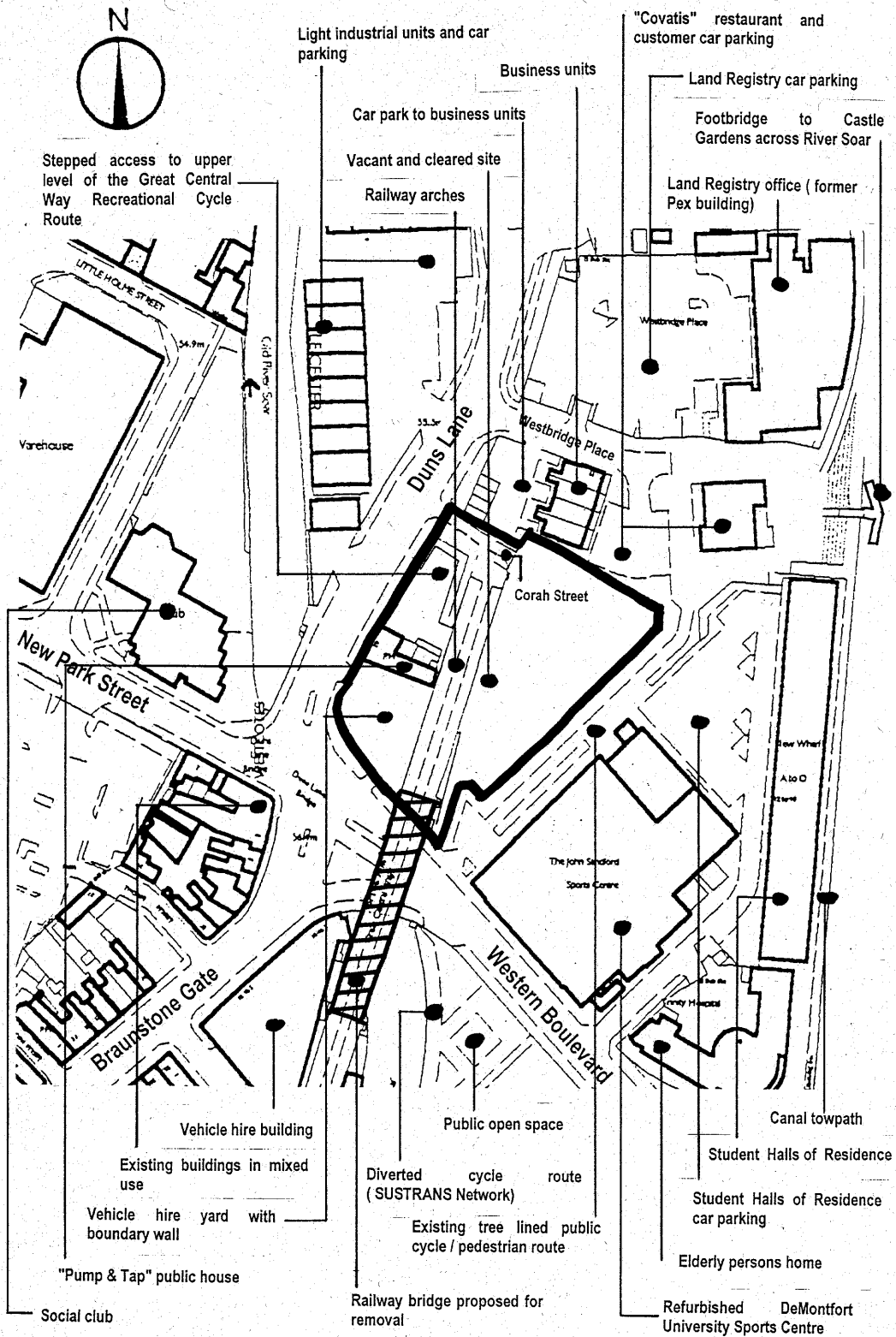
The range of uses that will be acceptable *in principle* on this site are :-

Priority: Residential (C3 & C2), Community Leisure (D2), Community Facilities (D1), Pub / Restaurant (A3)

Other: Education (D1), Major Leisure (D1 / D2), Offices (B1a)

Schemes which provide a mix of uses (particularly within individual buildings) will be particularly suitable. Given the site's proximity to the City Centre, the City Council is anxious that traffic generation resulting from new uses is minimised. Accordingly the *type* of developments within these use classes, in so far as they may attract car borne users / visitors, will be a material consideration.

DIAGRAM 1 : SITE ANALYSIS



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

A mix of uses within the site will engender vitality, activity and natural surveillance. It will also encourage a variety of different buildings and spaces, helping to create visual interest and character. Mixed use in individual buildings will also be welcomed.

2. QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

High quality design will be sought with the appropriate use of form, scale, massing and materials in the design of buildings and external spaces. The site is located on a prominent junction and on important vistas. The loss of the bridge will remove a significant feature from the local townscape. Accordingly it is of particular importance that new development not only be of high quality but also provide prominent landmark building(s) to 'off set' the bridge's removal.

3. HIGH DENSITY DEVELOPMENT

The proximity of the site to the City Centre (within 5 minutes walk) and to major bus routes underlines its suitability for high density development. To ensure high development densities which also relate to adjoining buildings and structures, single storey built forms will not be acceptable. A minimum of 70 dwellings per hectare will be expected for residential development.

4. BUILT BOUNDARY EDGES AND "ACTIVE" FRONTAGES

Development should provide strong definition to streets and spaces through prominent built edges close to boundaries. Building frontages should contain windows and entrances (over - looked and active public spaces and routes help make places safer).

5. PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE LINK

The eastern edge of the site is bounded by a dedicated pedestrian and cycle route linking Western Boulevard to the canal towpath. A pedestrian route, connecting to this route will be required to cross the site from Corah Street.

6. EXISTING RAILWAY ARCHES

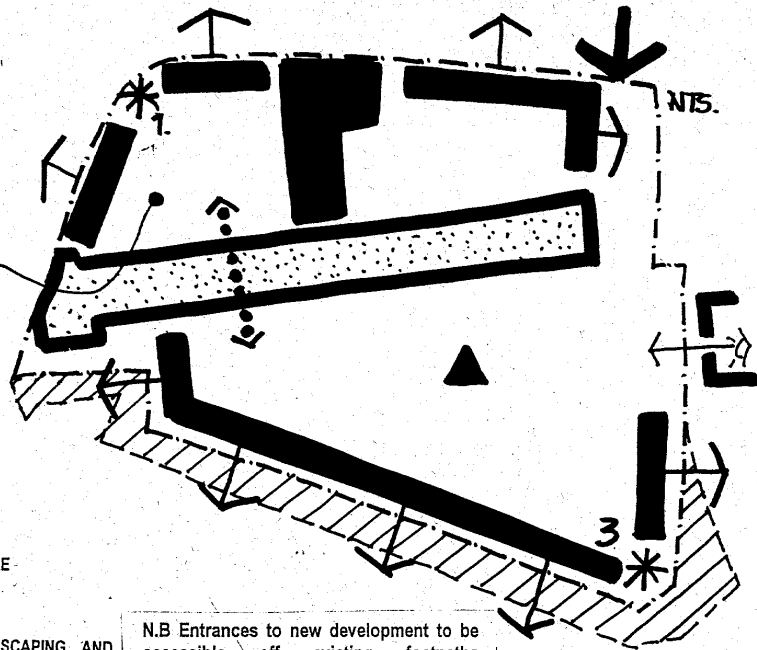
The potential demolition of the railway bridge and the re-routing of the Great Central Way, will remove the continuing need for the railway arches. Development proposals may therefore include either their retention or their removal. Any scheme which retains the arches will be expected to incorporate them imaginatively and sensitively as a positive feature within the proposals. In any case the existing pedestrian access ramp (located off Duns Lane) will not be required.

SEE DIAGRAM 2

- Option one illustrates how the site might be developed with the retention of the arches.
- Option two illustrates how the site might be developed with the removal of the arches

INDICATIVE GUIDANCE : Option One

A continual built frontage will be expected in this location, facing the junction of Duns Lane and Western Boulevard. The busy road access will require vehicular access to be from the rear, accessed via Corah Street, perhaps through the arches.



KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- * LANDMARK BUILDING FEATURE
- OVERLOOKING
- ▨ RETAIN EXISTING SOFT LANDSCAPING AND FEATURE BOUNDARY WALL AND RAILINGS
- █ PROMINENT BUILT FRONTAGES TO SITE BOUNDARIES
- ⋯ SERVICING & ACCESS THROUGH ARCHES
- ↔ RESPECT EXISTING DWELLING AMENITY
- ← VEHICULAR ACCESS
- █ PUMP & TAP PUBLIC HOUSE
- ▲ SERVICING & CAR PARKING
- ▨ RETAINED RAILWAY ARCHES

N.B Entrances to new development to be accessible off existing footpaths surrounding the site.

1. Built feature required at junction of Duns Lane and Western Boulevard.
2. Built feature required to terminate view along Braunstone Gate.
3. Built feature required to terminate view from River Soar pedestrian bridge.

Potential exists to adapt existing public open space to enlarge or provide a new entrance to the proposed development.

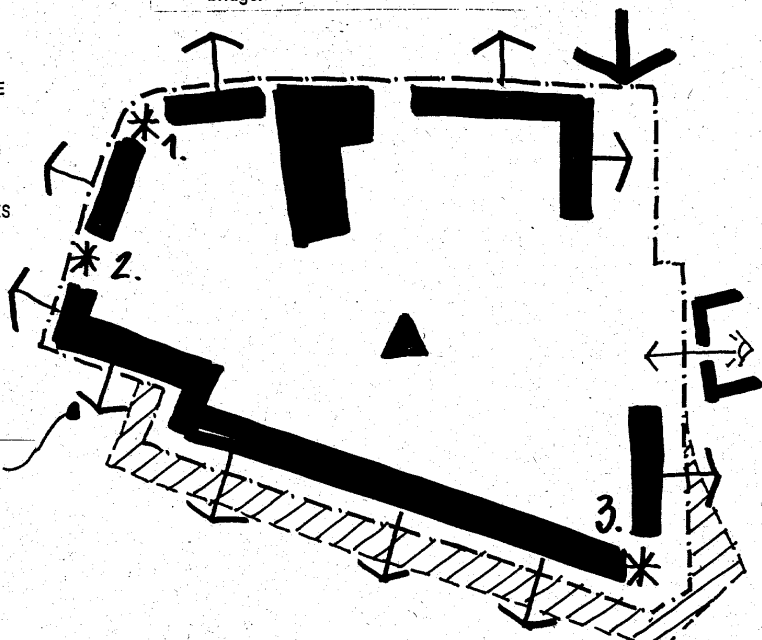


DIAGRAM 2

INDICATIVE GUIDANCE : Option Two

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

- **TRAFFIC AND PARKING**

Parking on the site should be minimal as the site is close to the City Centre and located on good bus and cycle routes. Depending upon the scale of development, proposals may be required to provide a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. A single point of vehicular access and egress is to be off Duns Lane via Corah Street.

- **AMENITY**

The location of the "Pump and Tap" public house may generate disturbance to residential developments. Sensitive design layouts and suitable building uses will need to be selected to mitigate this issue.

- **ARCHAEOLOGY**

The site lies within an archaeological alert area which may require an archaeological assessment and evaluation to establish the extent, character and significance of any surviving archaeological remains within the site. Planning consents may be conditioned to ensure that the archaeological remains are preserved and / or investigated and recorded.

- **PUBLIC ART**

The use of public art to reinforce a "sense of place" will be encouraged as part of any development. It is important that public art is integrated with the planning, design and construction process. The bridge and arches could provide an appropriate reference point for public art. The City Council actively endorses a "Percent for Art" policy on eligible developments. Further details can be obtained from the Public Art Unit at the City Council.

- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

New buildings should demonstrate good practice in energy efficiency and water conservation. Residential developments should achieve a National Home Energy Rating (NHER) of 9 or above. Non residential development should achieve a "very good" rating in terms of energy efficiency under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM 5/93).

- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

If residential development is proposed, the provision of affordable housing and access housing will be expected in line with the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

- **ACCESS**

New development will be required to fully consider the needs of disabled people. Designs in accordance with the City Council's "Paving the Way" document will ensure compliance.

- **ECOLOGY**

The arches may contain important ecological habitats such as a bat roost. Ecological survey of the arches will be required (the remit of which will be agreed with the City Council's Ecology Officer). Appropriate mitigation (if required) will be expected to be provided by the developer.

- **RAILWAY BRIDGE**

The dismantling and removal of the railway bridge adjoining the site may be undertaken by the City Council in the future. Any essential repair work to 'make good' the arches following the removal of the bridge will be the responsibility of the City Council. However should the City Council decide to retain the bridge or specific site development proposals come forward which require its retention, either all of the arches could remain or the abutment only be retained (of sufficient length to provide support to the bridge). Any adjoining development proposals would be expected to relate positively to the bridge to complement its landmark presence.

PHASING

The site is in a number of different ownerships which may militate against comprehensive development. Piecemeal development will therefore be acceptable providing that the development potential of remaining land within the site is not adversely affected. Piecemeal development will be required to demonstrate a clear and positive relationship with the remainder of the site, particularly adjoining land.

CONSULTATION

It is important that the contents of this guidance are understood and ideally, accepted by a range of interested parties. To this end, this draft guidance will be subject to consultation with the following groups :-

- Landowners (both on and around the site)
- Local residents and businesses
- Local Ward councillors
- Development Industry representatives
- Other interested parties

CONTACTS

Early discussion between owners / potential developers are encouraged in order to facilitate proposals that are as inclusive and comprehensive as possible

Specialist advice on all matters referred to in this guidance will be available from the City Council. Initial contact should be made with the Development Control Group : Christine Sarris on 0116 252 7260.

APPENDIX

The purpose of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The purpose of SPG is to elaborate the policies of the Local Plan. It helps policies to be understood and to be effectively applied. It clarifies what the City Council *expects* from physical development, either city-wide or in relation to particular areas or sites. The role of SPG is set out in Government Planning Policy Guidance Note No.12. It states that whilst only the policies of the development plan can have a special status in deciding planning applications, SPG, "may be taken into account as a material consideration". The weight accorded to SPG, "will increase if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and has been the subject of a council resolution."

In its draft form (i.e. before formal adoption) SPG should be regarded as representing interim council thinking.

The process of preparation and adoption

The normal process of SPG preparation is as follows:

- Production of initial draft guidance
- Internal consultation
- Approval of draft by City Council
- Consultation with appropriate community groups, land owners, developers and other interested parties
- Possible revision of draft (dependent on results of consultation)
- Adoption of guidance as SPG by City Council (a summary of the consultation undertaken is included in the SPG).