FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS

CABINET 6th November 2000

Marconi, Blackbird Road, Site Development Guidance

Report Of the Director of Environment & Development

1 Purpose of report

The Marconi site is a vacant industrial site 5.2 hectares (12.9 acres) in size and is covered mainly with industrial sheds. A steep bank on the western edge of the site reduces the developable area to approximately 4 hectares (10 acres). The site, which is surrounded by housing, represents a major development opportunity. Guidance is needed to inform existing landowners and potential developers of the land uses and form of new development that will be appropriate. Once adopted the guidance will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications on the site.

2 Summary

Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Committee considered the Draft Site Development Guidance for Marconi, Blackbird Road on 30th August 2000. It was stated that local people were in favour of residential development on this site. The following concerns were raised at Committee:

a) The overall net density sought for the site is higher than the surrounding area.

Response

The Site Development Guidance seeks a net residential density of between 70-80 dwellings to the hectare. This is higher than the surrounding development but is consistent with Central Government guidance to seek higher densities on sites close to the City Centre and within easy walking distance of good public transport facilities.

A range and mix of building types is being encouraged across the site to ensure that the development is integrated with the surrounding area. Higher density can help create a sense of place with streets that are safe and well overlooked. Higher densities on 'brown field' sites close to public transport facilities are more sustainable as they reduce the need for 'green field' land and increase the possibility of public transport usage as a greater number of people are within closer walking distance of these facilities than where densities are low. The density sought on this site is similar to that of Bede Island North.

b) The requirement for two play areas within the development (rather than just one).

Response

There is a need to provide adequate children's play space as part of this development. The Local Plan requires 0.6 hectares of children's play space per 1000 population. Two play areas have been requested to ensure that adequate play space can be provided close to all housing development.

Public Consultation

Public Consultation took place between 15th September and 6th October 2000. 164 community consultation leaflets, summarising the guidance, were sent out to local residents, local ward councillors and other interested parties. Some 40 full copies of the guidance were also sent out. 21 replies were received with comments on the following areas

Land Use
Traffic and Access
Housing Design
Security and Privacy
Demolition and Site Works
Landscape and Open Space Requirements
Affordable and Access Housing
Education

Detailed comments and responses are set out in the Supporting Information. A number of relatively minor changes to the guidance have been made. These are explained in the Supporting Information and are included in the latest version of the guidance attached.

3 Recommendations

Members are recommended to ADOPT the Marconi Site Development Guidance as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan.

4 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the City Council.

5 Officer to contact: Nigel Wakefield or Ian Tomie

Urban Design Group. Ext: 7262 or 7288

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FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS

CABINET 6th November 2000

Marconi, Blackbird Road, Site Development Guidance

Report Of the Director of Environment & Development

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 Consultation

The following detailed comments on the Site Development Guidance were made:

Land Uses and Planning Policy

 A suggestion has been made that the guidance should allow for the development of shopping facilities (possibly in the form of a supermarket) as well as housing on the site.

Response

Residential development is the most appropriate use for the Marconi site bearing in mind the surrounding residential uses. The safeguarding and strengthening of existing local centres is a Local Plan objective. Retailing outside existing centres is therefore discouraged.

The site is only 400 m from the Blackbird Road/Groby Road shopping centre, which has both a Spar and a Co op supermarket/convenience store and supports a range of other local shops and facilities.

The guidance does allow for flexibility for the incorporation of some ancillary local shops, live/work units, and or small starter business units on the ground floor with residential above.

Traffic & Access

- Concern about the impact of additional traffic in the area.
- Concern about access from Cornwall Road due to residential 'on street' parking limiting a free flow of traffic into the site.

- The need for a pedestrian crossing on Anstey lane near to the shop on the corner of Colwell Road.
- Concern about the possible location of new accesses.
- Request that new cycle paths should not be provided on existing pavements due to the potential conflict with pedestrians.
- Reduced parking standards on the site would not allow visitor parking.
- Traffic speeds should be limited to 20 mph and should be self enforcing.

Response

The Site Development Guidance requires a Transport Assessment that will consider the impact of additional traffic on the road network, including Cornwall Road. It will also assess the need for a pedestrian crossing on Anstey Lane. It is accepted that there is a need to reduce any conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. These matters will be taken into consideration as part of a full application.

The location of accesses is governed in large part by highway safety considerations. Adequate junction spacing can be achieved between Jean Drive and the proposed new access on Anstey Lane.

The parking approach adopted is designed to create spaces that visitors can actually use. It is a requirement to have designated residents parking within the interior of the housing blocks with flexible on street parking that can be used by visitors and residents. This arrangement is clarified in the guidance.

The guidance seeks traffic calming that is integral to the overall design of the site that will ensure that traffic speeds are reduced to 20 mph.

Housing Design

 The council should consider any scheme on its merits. (and not rely on existing space standards).

Response

A flexible approach to the Council standards is being taken. Standards will only apply if issues of privacy and amenity and outlook cannot be overcome by good design. A high-density scheme with reduced parking standards is being sought to ensure the efficient use of land. It will however not be acceptable to have a scheme that has a detrimental impact on existing residents.

Security and Privacy

- Concern that privacy of surrounding housing should not be jeopardised by new development.
- Concern about the possibility of increased burglary and vandalism at the rear of existing properties.
- The police architectural liaison officer is generally in agreement with the design principles given.
- Need to provide well-designed lighting to reduce the fear and incidence of crime.

- Shared access to rear gardens should have lockable gates at the outer entrance, and should not link to provide a short cut across the site.
- Where side parking is provided to semi-detached dwellings, a gable end window to a habitable room should be provided.
- Old driveway at the side of No. 23 Anstey Lane should not be used, as side windows would be vulnerable.
- Concern about boundary treatment at the rear of existing properties.
- The steep bank on the western edge of the site should remain inaccessible.

Response

The guidance refers to the need to ensure privacy either by design or through minimum distances. Increased distances may be required for development above two storeys and/or where levels are not flat.

Security is promoted for both existing and new residents. New development should back onto existing housing in order to provide an active front to new streets (rather than backing onto either new public spaces or the highway). Within the centre of the site secure perimeter blocks are sought. These will ensure streets are well overlooked and a distinction made between public and private space.

In order that parking provision does not dominate the site it is a requirement to have some secure parking courts that will only be accessible to the residents that live within that block.

It is accepted that there is a need to have adequate lighting, secure lockable gates at the outer entrances to shared rear accesses and that they should not be linked to provide a short cut across the site. The guidance has been amended accordingly.

The guidance requires that the steep bank on the western edge of the site is made inaccessible to the general public. New development that backs onto this space should ensure that the public couldn't gain access. A secure access point is required to ensure adequate maintenance can be carried out.

The guidance discourages pedestrian links at the side of properties for reasons of security. This includes the old driveway at the side of No. 23 Anstey Lane.

Demolition and site works

- Concern over the impact of demolition of existing buildings in terms of noise and dust on surrounding properties.
- Concern over contaminated land and removal of asbestos roofs.
- Concern about the disturbance of new building work (particularly from contractors vehicles).
- Concerns that steep western bank should not be made unstable by new development.

Response

These concerns have been referred to in the guidance as issues that will require specific attention by the developer of the site at the appropriate time.

Landscape and Open Space Requirements

- Concern that play areas will create further problems with vandalism, alcohol and drug abuse.
- The shrubbery planted on the steep bank was planted for soil retention. It is essential that it be preserved. The area has become a miniature nature reserve.
- Retention of trees on Blackbird Road and Anstey Lane and at the end of the gardens of No. 2 & 4 Cornwall Road.
- Request for additional dog-waste bins.

Response

There is a requirement for adequate children's play space to meet Local Plan standards. In order to reduce the likelihood of anti social behaviour it is proposed that children's play areas are well overlooked by surrounding properties.

The guidance seeks to protect the steep bank on the western edge of the site and the trees on Blackbird Road and Anstey Lane. However, subject to the detailed design one of the mature trees on Anstey Lane may need to be removed for highway safety reasons.

The City Council will require an accurate tree survey indicating the location, identity, and canopy spread of trees likely to be affected by development proposals. The development will be expected where possible to retain existing trees.

The requirement for dog waste bins will be included within the guidance.

Affordable Housing

 A blanket requirement for affordable housing does not reflect Government Guidance. Given the nature of the development envisaged there is likely to be a high number of small market houses which will meet a significant need within the city.

Response

The guidance sets out the amount of affordable housing that will be sought based on housing need in accordance with City Council policy and Government advice.

Education

- Given the regime of parental choice it would be wrong to assume that all primary school children from this development would want to attend the nearest school Richard Hallam Primary. Any request for contributions to education provision should consider the likelihood of this situation.
- Cllr Walker states that the effect of the closure of Beaumont Leys Sixth Form will be exacerbated if the majority of the Marconi site is to be developed as residential. However, an increase in primary school numbers would be beneficial for Slater Street Primary School.

Response

The development of this site will result in the need for primary school places. The guidance states that a developer contribution may be necessary depending on the number of family dwellings proposed and the number and location of spare school places.

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 Sustainability and Environmental Implications

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

5 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 street frontages will provide good visual surveillance of the public realm and ensure that the backs of buildings do not face onto public open space.

6 Consultations

Arts and Leisure Housing Education Legal Services

7 Background Papers - Local Government Act 1972

None

Marconi (Blackbird Road) Site Development Guidance

1.0 Background

The Marconi Site is a vacant industrial site located approximately 1.5km North East of Leicester City Centre. The site is 5.2 hectares (12.9 acres) in size and is covered mainly with large

industrial sheds. A steep bank on the western edge of the site reduces the developable area to approximately 4 hectares (10 acres). The site represents a major development opportunity.

The purpose of the brief is to clarify development plan policy and provide detailed planning and urban design guidance for:

- The layout of the built form
- The relationship of the development with adjacent uses
- Access and highway arrangements
- Landscape/open space and nature conservation requirements.

2.0 Site Location and Character

The Marconi site is located at the corner of Anstey Lane and Blackbird Road. (See Diagram 1) The majority of the site is flat apart from the steep slope on the western edge of the site and the northern spur. The steep western bank is covered with vegetation including a number of self-set native trees. This area will need to be protected and incorporated into the overall design.

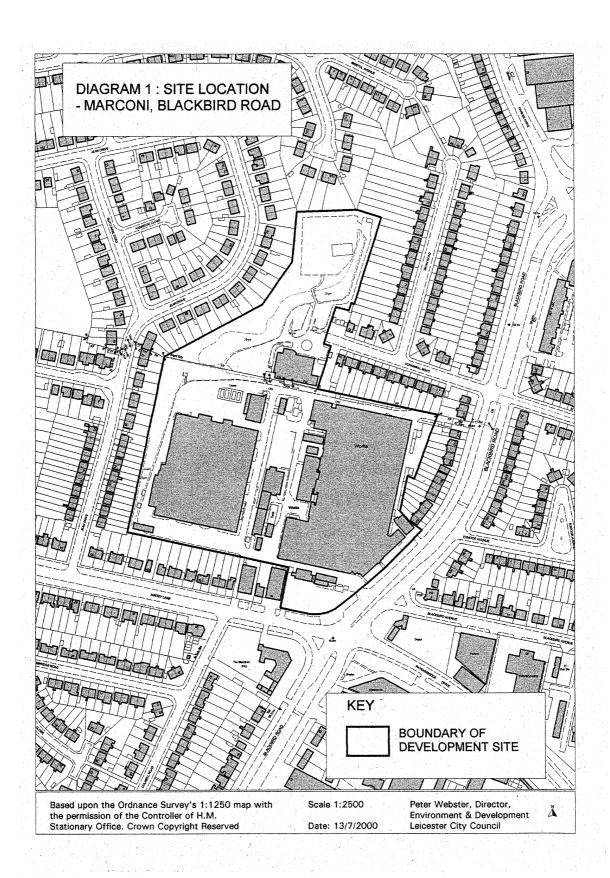
The site is within a residential area with the nearest local shopping centre just over 400m from the edge of the site. The majority of the dwellings in the area are semi-detached. The properties on Jean Drive to the west of the site look down on the Marconi site. On Anstey Lane there are a number of small retail/business units.

A number of large street trees (London Plane and Lime) are located at the corner of Blackbird Road and Anstey Lane which will need to be retained.

3.0 Land Uses and Planning Policy

The area is currently designated in the City of Leicester Local Plan (**adopted** 1994) as a Primarily Employment Area. However, the current Local Plan is under review and it is proposed to designate the whole of the site as a housing allocation in the replacement Local Plan. (Deposit version expected early in 2001)

The majority of the site should be residential (C3 use class). However, a small amount of mixed-use development at the corner of Anstey Lane and Blackbird Road would be beneficial to the overall quality of any residential scheme. Opportunities exist to incorporate some live/work units, ancillary local shops and/or small starter Class B1 business units on the ground floor with residential above that are commensurate to the scale of the development.



4.0 Access & Highways

- Two points of access to the site will be required, (as the development will accommodate over 150 dwellings). Access to the development is difficult from Blackbird Road as it is close to a busy traffic junction and visibility is reduced by a number of large mature street trees. Access from Anstey Lane and Cornwall Road will be acceptable subject to the detailed design being agreed. Access from Anstey Lane will be subject to satisfactory opposite junction spacing and will require the acquisition and demolition of existing buildings. Agreement will need to be made with the landowner at an early stage.
- Development should facilitate and encourage pedestrian and cycle movement to and within the site but discourage vehicles to cut through the site from Anstey Lane to Blackbird Road by the use of traffic calming measures.
- A Transport Assessment (T.A) will be required for this development. An assessment of cycle, pedestrian and public transport needs should be considered as part of the T.A. A signalised junction may be required at the junction of Cornwall Road and Blackbird Road.
- Traffic calming measures will be necessary at all entrances to the development, and within the development itself. This development will be designated as a 20mph zone.
- Traffic calming features must be designed as an integral part of the built form of the overall development, and not included as an "add-on" once the layout has been designed. The development should include speed tables at junctions, chicanes, traffic calmed square, shared surfaces and road narrowing features. The creation of "Home Zones" as part of the development will be expected. (Areas that include shared surfacing, and where drivers are subservient to other users of the space.) Traffic calming measures should reduce traffic speeds to 10mph within the "Home-Zones"
- The street layout should allow adequate access for emergency vehicles.
- Vehicles and pedestrians should use the same routes. Passing vehicles can make a place feel lively and safe.
- Reduced parking standards will be accepted on this site, as it is well located to alternative means of transport on both Anstey Lane and Blackbird Road.
- A mixture of parking should be provided on the site including provision within the interior of the block, on street or between dwellings. Car parking should not dominate the appearance of the site. On street parking should provide the opportunity for both resident and visitor parking.
- Parking in rear courtyards should be made secure with electronically controlled gates segregating what is private and public space. Ideally access to these courtyards should be through an archway with residential accommodation above to maximise visual surveillance of these areas.
- Rear parking courtyards should not be connected and should be well related to the surrounding properties and provide visual surveillance from the rear. These courtyards should provide parking for residents only.
- At the corner of Anstey Lane and Blackbird Road underground parking may be required to accommodate one space per dwelling. This will ensure the creation of a high-density scheme that does not have a negative impact on the street scene with an over provision of parking spaces.
- Adequate lighting to adoptable standards should be provided along all publicly accessible streets and should be co-ordinated with localised lighting to parking courts, public open spaces and entrance points.

5.0 Urban Design and Planning 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 and section and elevation is required. This should explain how proposals relate to all relevant design policy and guidance.

5.1 Site Layout

- The street should provide the main focus for activity. Segregated footpath links between properties will not be acceptable.
- Streets should be connected at both ends with routes as short and direct as possible. Culde-sacs should, on the whole be avoided as they increase walking distances and can make an area more susceptible to crime due to quiet streets and concealed rear accesses.
- Buildings should be laid out in perimeter blocks with secure internal amenity space and should not back onto any public space including the highway.
- The backs of existing dwellings on Anstey Road, Jean Drive and Cornwall Road should be enclosed by new development.
- Buildings should be located on the edge of the plot to enclose and overlook public streets and increase the overall density of the site.
- Street frontages should be as continuous as possible with the minimum of blank walls and gaps between buildings.
- The built form should create a "sense of place" by ensuring the built form is appropriately scaled to the size of the space that it seeks to enclose. The character of an urban street is a function of the width between buildings related to their height.
- All front gardens should be clearly bounded by fences, walls or railings. The provision of gates should also be provided.

5.2 Housing Design

House design should be of a high quality to create a distinctive place that is integrated into the wider area.

- High-density housing will be expected on this site as it is close to the City Centre and good public transport. A net density of between 70-80 dwellings to the hectare will be sought.
- The development will be expected to include terraces, flats, specially designed corner buildings and individual buildings at key focal points to reinforce the legibility of the site.
- Flats should have entrances onto the street not at the rear.
- Housing in this development should generally be between two and three storeys in height. The height of dwellings should not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties. The frontage to Blackbird Road should step up to four/five storeys to provide a key landmark, increase density and provide a noise buffer.
- Access to the garden areas of terrace properties should be provided by the means of a shared passage between properties. Where shared access ways are provided to serve rear gardens a lockable gate for both rear gardens and at the outer entrance to the alleyway should be provided. The outer gate should be fitted with a self closing lock and latching facility.

- Shared passages should be as short as possible with, preferably without concealed bends and not linked to provide a short cut across the site. They should also only serve a small number of dwellings.
- Where side parking is provided to semi-detached and detached dwellings, a gable end window to a habitable room should be provided to oversee the provision.
- The development should incorporate balconies and roof terraces to provide additional amenity space especially at the corner. These areas should be large enough to allow the occupants to be able to sit out but should not undermine privacy.
- The Space Standards as set out in Appendix 5 of The City Of Leicester Local Plan (i.e 21 metres between principal room windows, 15 metres between principal rooms and blank gables and a minimum of 11 m rear gardens) will apply unless issues of privacy, amenity and outlook can be overcome by good design. In certain circumstances increased distances may be required for developments above two storeys and/ or where levels are not flat.
- The boundary treatment at the rear of new dwellings should ensure adequate privacy to the garden areas of existing dwellings.
- The City Council wishes to promote robust building form which are capable of being adapted and extended to meet occupants changing needs. The development should indicate at the time of submission if and how dwellings are capable of being extended. Permitted development rights will be withdrawn in certain circumstances where extension would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

5.3 Sustainable Development

A number of aspects can improve the sustainability of the development including the layout of streets, the orientation of dwellings, the enhancement of landscape features, the provision of public transport and the use of building materials.

- Dwellings should be orientated to maximise solar heating and lighting wherever possible.
- The use of building materials produced from easily renewable resources is encouraged throughout the development.
- A recycling facility and convenient storage of waste facilities within plots should be
 provided to encourage the segregation of waste. It should be incorporated into the overall
 design of the site and should not have a detrimental impact on visual amenity.
 Consideration should be given to the use of restrictive covenants preventing refuse bins
 being visible except on refuse collection days. More detailed advice is available from the
 City Council Waste Management Team.
- Development should aim to achieve the maximum level of energy efficiency in the design of new housing on this site. Housing should be built to achieve a minimum rating of 9 on the National Homes Energy rating scale.

6.0 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 canopy spread of trees likely to be affected by the development proposals.

This site is not identified as a site of ecology value. However, the steep bank on the western edge of the site that is incapable of development is vegetated with a number of self-set native trees that should be protected.

7.0 Landscape and Open Space Requirements

The City Council's open space requirements as set out in the City of Leicester Local Plan require a minimum of 1.6 ha (4 acres) per 1000 population (pro rata for dwellings built) to meet the NFPA standards for major residential development (Policy R1). The location of which should be adjacent and part of the proposed housing development. The steep bank on the western edge of the site can be used to contribute to visual amenity. Arrangements to manage this area will need to be considered. The City Council would not wish to adopt this area. This area should be made inaccessible to the general public.

The NFPA standards also require a minimum of 0.6 ha of children's play space per 1000 population of which a minimum of 0.2 ha should be equipped. (Pro rata for dwellings built). When calculating the requirement for children's play space family housing with two or more bedrooms, including flats should be taken into consideration and on the basis of 2.5 persons per household.

- Two Local Areas of Play (LAPs) will be required to provide facilities within easy walking distance of the majority of the housing.
- A high quality public realm will be expected where the spaces between buildings become as much as part of the open space provision as separate play areas.
- There is a need for a larger area of open space at the centre of the site. This should be large enough to incorporate play equipment and an amenity area. This should also include a buffer zone so it does not have a detrimental affect on surrounding properties.
- All play areas should be well overlooked by surrounding dwellings.
- Railings incorporating gates should be provided to define the edge of the public open space. The railings should be 1.2m high and colour coated and the gates should allow for disabled access.
- A low wall with railings above should be provided at the corner of Anstey Lane and Blackbird Road.
- Within the development the City Council will require the planting of street trees, and other plant material which will contribute to the character of the public realm.
- The landscape scheme should show the character and type of new planting as well as additional landscape features to be incorporated into the proposed development. A planting plan, detailing species, plant specification and density of plants will be required to be submitted and approved before development commences.
- The City Council will require a commuted sum to adopt any open space/play areas within the development, to cover the cost of maintenance over a period of 10 years.
- If the play areas are to be offered to the City Council for adoption the location and detailed layout of the play areas and associated play equipment will need to be approved in writing by the Director of Arts & Leisure prior to its construction on site.
- Adequate dog-waste bins should be provided as part of this development.

An indicative layout and design for the site that would meet the main planning and design requirements as set out above is attached.

8.0 Archaeology

The site is not identified in the City of Leicester Local Plan as being within an area of significant archaeological interest. However, the site has the potential to be of archaeological interest and an appropriate programme of investigation and recording may be required to support the submission of any planning application. Developers are advised to contact Mr R Clarke, Planning Archaeologist at Jewry Wall Museum Tel: 2473023 to ascertain the level of investigations that will be required.

9.0 Affordable and Access Housing

The City Council will encourage a variety of housing types and densities to meet all needs throughout the city. In particular it will seek the provision of affordable housing. (CLLP Policy H3a).

The City Council would expect to the provision of at least 30% of the likely total number of units on the site for affordable or social housing. Any planning permission for residential development is likely to be the subject of a planning condition or Section 106 agreement to achieve this. Social housing should not be grouped together nor should it be distinguishable from private housing by its design.

Developers will also be expected to provide at least 15% of its housing to the City Council's Access housing standards (CLLP Policy H3b). The access houses will be provided across the range and tenure of the houses to be built on this site. In addition to this 10% of the total rented houses should be built to wheelchair standards and the remainder built to access standards.

The City Council has supplementary planning guidance on affordable housing and access housing that is available on request.

10.0 Education

DETR Circular 1/97 provides guidance on the provision of community benefits to which developers may reasonably be expected to contribute to. The circular suggests that such benefits could include additional educational places.

The nearest primary school within easy walking distance of the Marconi site is Alderman Richard Hallam Primary. This school has 32 spare places based on roll figures produced in January 2000. Depending upon the number of family dwellings proposed a contribution may be sought to the provision of additional primary school places.

11.0 Services

All information regarding service availability to this site and any other requirements should be confirmed with the relevant service provider. This information should be obtained at an early stage, to allow this to be considered in relation to the overall design concept. The need to retain

land for wayleaves etc. should be shown on the landscape plan to ensure proper co-ordination with protected trees and shrubs and new planting proposals.

12.0 Section 106 Planning Obligation Requirements

To ensure that the development enhances the local environment and meets the City Council's affordable and access housing targets the City Council may seek to enter into a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 with prospective developers. This may include:

- Highway and Transport Improvements
- Affordable and Access Housing
- Additional Primary School Places

13.0 Demolition and Site Works

There is a need to ensure that when development takes place on this site it does not have a significant detrimental impact on existing residents. The following factors will need to be taken into consideration:

- When demolition of existing buildings takes place the impact of noise and dust should be minimised.
- Adequate parking and site compound facilities should be provided on site. The location of these facilities should not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.
- The steep bank should not be made unstable by site works.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that mud does not wash down Cornwall Road or transfer onto the highway network.

14.0 Consultation

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

- Local Residents
- Local Ward Councillors
- Other interested bodies

The results of the consultation will be considered in the preparation of the final form of guidance, which will be presented, to the City Council for adoption.

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

15.0 Contacts

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