

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND
MEETINGS
SCRUNITY – Strategic Planning & Regeneration
CABINET**

**8th November 2000
20th November 2000**

**BEDE ISLAND SOUTH
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 Bede Island South, a key riverside site situated on the west bank of the River Soar approximately 2.0 km to the south west of the City Centre

2 Summary

The Site

The Bede Island South site comprises a large former timber yard, which has recently been vacated, and two smaller industrial buildings in the north of the site, which are still occupied. It measures 15.1 hectares (37 acres) in size.

This site represents a major 'brownfield' re-development opportunity, in an important location on the riverside.

The area is currently designated in the City of Leicester Adopted Local Plan 1994 as a Potential Development Area. The current Local plan is under review and it is likely to continue this designation in the Replacement Local Plan.

Site Development Guidance

A draft version of the SDG was approved for consultation by the Environment & Development Committee in January 1998. It was decided not to proceed with

consultation at that time because of the impending interest and subsequent planning application for a football stadium on this site. This proposal is not now proceeding, but we are aware of other development interest in Bede Island South.

The SPG has now been revised and brought up to date to reflect current Government Guidance. Housing development is actively encouraged on this site as a priority, along with a range of complementary uses including Business (Class B1), Food & Drink (Class A3) and Leisure (Class D2) subject to these being principally to meet local need, as well as a hotel (Class C1).

In addition to potential land uses the SPG deals with the following aspects of potential development:

Land ownership,
Key development requirements and planning obligations
Access and highway requirements,
Key urban design principles,
Nature conservation,
Site layout and design requirements
Landscape, ecology and open space requirements,
Archaeology
Affordable housing,
Educational requirements,

Consultation has taken place on the SPG with local residents, ward members, land owners and other parties with an interest in the land. The details of the consultation are set out in the Supplementary Papers. A number of changes have been made to the guidance as a result of the comments received.

3. Recommendation

1. The comments of the Scrutiny Committee on the Bede Island South Site Development Guidance are sought.
2. Cabinet are recommended to APPROVE the Bede Island South Site Development Guidance as Supplementary Planning Guidance, subject to any comments of the Scrutiny Committee, which will be reported at the meeting.

4 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the City Council.

- 5 Officer to contact:** Nigel Reeves
Urban Design Group. (Ext: 7239)

Westcotes & Castle Wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS SCRUNITY – Strategic Planning & Regeneration CABINET

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BEDE ISLAND SOUTH SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE SUPPORTING PAPER 1

1. Consultation on Site Development Guidance.

Details of Parties Consulted on Site Development Guidance:

- *City Council Departments*
 - Director of Arts & Leisure
 - Director of Education
 - Director of Housing
- Site Owner and Interested Parties
A copy of the guidance was sent to the agent representing the majority and to all parties with an interest in the remaining land, including all businesses located on the site.
- *Adjoining and neighbouring residents.*
Copies of the guidance were sent to all neighbouring residential properties in Western Road.
- *Local Ward Members.*
Copies were sent to the local ward members for Westcotes Ward within which the site lies and Castle Ward which directly adjoins the site.

Consultation Replies:

A number of detailed replies have been received. These are set out below:

A letter has been received from a **local resident living in Western Road**, containing several suggestions for future uses on Bede Island South. These include:

- An open green space
- A marina
- Some housing along the riverside
- Trees to improve the riverside and provide wildlife habitats
- A childrens play area.

Response.

All of the above (except the marina/moorings which is a 'desirable' requirement) will be key requirements of the SDG. The size and amount of public open space and play areas will to some extent be proportional to the numbers of houses that are provided. A marina or moorings will be encouraged as part of this development.

Offside Residents Association, representing 238 members living around Bede Island, wish the following comments on the SDG to be taken into account:

- Open Space – The area to the west side of Narborough Road is lacking in green open space – previous City Challenge plans promised 2.1 ha on Bede Island South – the Great Central Way should be widened – the future developer should be asked to reserve the land of ecological value and hand it over to the community who will form a trust to care for it.
- Whatever is built on Bede island South should attract the minimum amount of traffic, and disruption avoided between 11.00 pm and 8.00 am.
- Buildings should be sympathetic to the Victorian scale of homes in the area.
- Local people need leisure facilities – there are no accessible leisure centre or swimming pool and other facilities are being closed – we require a bowling green, a bowling alley, an ice rink, a local swimming pool, tennis courts etc
- We desperately need a health centre in the area
- We would not welcome business uses and would be hostile to General Industry due to traffic generation
- Houses would be welcome provided that it does not lead to problems of increased traffic and eventually results in a new park/play areas.
- Buildings should be limited to 3 stories in height – a riverside pub would be a valuable addition – a marina would be welcomed.

Response

The above issues, in general, have been incorporated within the SDG.

Open space in the form of new riverside parkland and within the development site itself will be sought as part of this SDG. The land of ecological interest is dealt with below in the response to Railtrack (although the idea of it being looked after by a community trust could be considered subject to the agreement of the landowner)

Lower car parking levels, as achieved at Bede Island North, will be encouraged here.

The provision of a health centre will be encouraged, especially if there is a large residential community created here. The SDG also allows other leisure uses to be provided, but the final make up will depend on current market conditions.

General industry will not be permitted in any re-development proposals on this site. Any business uses (Class B1) that are proposed, will not impact on adjoining residents, because

by their nature they must be capable of being undertaken 'in any residential area' without detriment to the areas amenities by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes dust etc.

The issue regarding general lack of leisure facilities (e.g. swimming pool, leisure centre, bowling green/alley, ice rink, tennis courts etc) is difficult to address in this SPG. Planning gain benefits have to be reasonable and related in scale to the proposed development and most of the above would meet city-wide need or areas much wider than the development site. I consider it would be unreasonable to try to seek these as planning gain benefits. The SPG could allow some of these facilities to be provided by a private operator, subject to certain leisure proposals meeting the sequential test for site location. A significant level of public open space in the form of a new riverside park is being sought.

In terms of building heights and densities, the Government (particularly through PPG3) is seeking to encourage more sustainable development in the form of higher densities, to ensure a more efficient use of urban land. Accordingly higher density development and higher buildings (up to 6 storeys) will be encouraged on the riverside and within the development, but will be scaled down to 2/3 stories closer to existing houses in Western Road.

Marrons Solicitors have made a number of representations on behalf of Barrett (East Midlands) who I understand have purchased the Raab Karcher site.

They are supportive of the adoption of a planning brief for the re-development of the site, broadly in the form of the current SDG. Their clients intend to submit a planning application for residential development, employment, small-scale retail, a pub/restaurant, cafes and leisure uses.

They are seeking to promote a sustainable development that:

- Reduces the need to travel by car
- Provides a mix of uses
- Produces a greener residential environment and exploits the waterside opportunities
- Is of high quality and design as a place for people to live and work
- Makes the most efficient use of land

A number of detailed comments were also included in their response. These are summarised as follows:

- The SDG should not be unnecessarily prescriptive in terms of design and layout advice (e.g. design of new bridge over the River Soar and the location of public open space), as recommended in PPG1.
- A Traffic Impact Assessment should not be required, given the amount of existing lawful use on the site
- Following on from this, the City Council should take a more flexible approach to the question of site access, because the proposal for a bridge involves a third party which could constrain its implementation.
- The SDG should not be prescriptive about proportions of the potential mix of affordable housing on the site, which should be subject to detailed negotiations and reflect the significant reclamation costs and other planning objectives to secure re-development.

Response

The general acceptance of the key aims and objectives of the SDG by Marrons is welcomed.

The SDG represents the City Council's planning and design requirements for the site and has been prepared as an aid to the negotiating process that is inevitable on such a large site. The suggested site layout and design in Plan 3 and the accompanying text is one way, albeit the preferred way, that the City Council consider that the site could be developed. Other design solutions may be equally valid and the SDG does not rule these out.

Alternative site layouts will be acceptable, providing that they meet the key planning and design principles set out in the SDG. There is enough flexibility in the SDG to allow this to happen.

Many of the detailed concerns set out in Marron's comments, reflect differences of opinion about the level and detail of guidance that should be contained in the SDG. I am of the opinion that the SDG reflects the correct level of guidance for a site of this importance. Many of the detailed issues will be returned to and debated through either pre-application discussions or when a detailed planning application is submitted.

Frederick Chadburn on behalf of Mawby & King Ltd (a glassworks located in the north east of the site) has also commented on the SDG, raising two key points:

- The company currently has a right of way along the unadopted road leading onto the Upperton Road bridge, which currently also forms the main access into the Raab Karcher site. They are concerned that a satisfactory access to their site is maintained in terms of vehicle access. They also suggest separating out the Mawby & King site from the remainder of the new development site, with Mawby & King using the Upperton Road access and an alternative access being provided to the remainder.
- The company are also concerned that if residential development is allowed on the adjoining development site, this may prejudice the future operation of the glassworks, because of the noisy operations both within the plant and around it that currently take place.

Response.

- *The question about rights of access over a privately owned access road is a private matter between the different landowners. In determining any future planning applications on Bede Island South, the required transport assessment will have to have regard to the level of traffic generated from the Mawby & King premises, and satisfactory access provision will have to be made for all users of the site (both existing and future occupiers).*
- *It will not be possible to completely reserve the Upperton Road access for the sole use of the Mawby & King premises, because there is also a right of access along this road into the Raab Karcher site. We also wish to ensure that full public access is available into the site from as many directions as possible, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.*
- *The point raised about problems arising from the existing Mawby & King factory has been addressed in the SDG. If they choose to remain then new development must be designed to have regard to their current operations. A new Class B1 Business building is suggested to be located next to the Mawby & King works to screen it from proposed new residential development to overcome this problem.*

Railtrack, which owns the redundant sidings alongside the Great Central Way has objected to the SDG.

- It argues that the railway is still technically "operational". As a result, it will not be possible to implement some of the urban design objectives in the SDG (i.e. the links from the site to the Great Central Way).

- It also claims that the present ecological value of the Railtrack land is by default and could easily be lost if it was properly maintained as railway.
- Its main concern however relates to it being left with a 'landlocked' site if we allow the Raab Karcher site is allowed to be developed independently.

Railtrack suggests that if a small part of their land was allowed to be developed as part of a comprehensive scheme for the whole site, it would be prepared to decommission the operational land and give it over to the City Council for public access or for a nature park. This would then allow the site to be properly managed for its long-term ecological benefit.

Response.

- *I accept that the Railtrack land is still operational. It is therefore important that this site is included within a comprehensive development scheme for the whole site and not left as an isolated piece of land without a future use or management arrangement.*
- *I have therefore amended the SDG to require that a comprehensive development scheme including the Railtrack land is achieved. The question of the amount of land that may be made available for development, in return for the handing over of the rest of the former railway line for ecology/nature conservation purposes, needs to be discussed further, but the SDG will allow this to be considered.*

British Waterways have also submitted detailed comments about this site.

It endorses the general content of the SDG but wishes to raise several issues, which are set out below:

- British Waterways would only be willing to consider a proposal for a new bridge over the River Soar to serve the site, once it was totally satisfied that no other infrastructure improvements to serve the site are feasible. If no other access to the site is possible, a set of detailed design requirements for a new bridge have been provided. These have been set out in Appendix C in the SDG.
- Comments were also provided that the site could be suitable for a potential mooring basin or marina, that improvements to the towing path including additional access points would be beneficial and about the design and orientation of buildings to create a good sense of enclosure for this waterside location.

Response.

I am satisfied that all of the above points raised by British Waterways have been included in the SDG. The City Council's preferred access to serve the site is via a new bridge across the river to create better connections, but would consider alternatives if they could be shown to work.

Other points relating to moorings, the towpath and design of buildings are included in the SDG.

2. Implications Contained in this Report.

Equal Opportunities.

The SDG seeks to ensure that all public space (e.g. parks and squares, the riverside and play areas) is fully accessible and available to all sections of the community.

Legal Implications.

There are no direct legal implications for the Council contained in this report.

Sustainability & Environmental Implications (including EMAS).

The guidance includes measures to encourage sustainability in the new development (e.g. higher densities, lower parking standards, energy efficiency).

The development will contribute to meeting the following EMAS targets:

- 7.4 Protection of prime ecological sites, shown on Site Alert Map
- 8.1 Creation of additional publicly accessible green space.

Crime & Disorder Implications.

The guidance includes measures to engender public safety and security.

Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

City of Leicester Local Plan (1994)

Bede Island South – Site Development Guidance, Report to Environment & Development Committee, 13th January 1998 (plus update sheet)

1.0 Introduction

Bede Island South comprises a large area of land approximately 2 km to the south west of the city centre. It contains a number of long established industrial uses, although the Raab Karcher site has recently been vacated, releasing a large part of Bede Island South for redevelopment.

The site is located next to the recently completed City Challenge regeneration scheme at Bede Island North, and the Freeman's Wharf Potential Development Area to the east on the opposite bank of the River Soar. It provides an exciting opportunity for the major regeneration of this area of the city, building on the progress made by City Challenge on adjoining sites.

This would accord with recent Government advice (contained principally in PPG's 1, 3 and 13) which seeks to re-use urban sites and to encourage a more sustainable form of development, including mixed uses and higher densities, and to encourage good design.

The City Council wish to see comprehensive development proposals for the whole site, with agreement achieved between all parties to secure quality development. It is recognised that occupiers of existing buildings may wish to remain and therefore the design needs to have a degree of in-built flexibility to allow comprehensive development in the future if agreement with the existing occupiers is reached.

This Site Development Guidance provides details of the development layout and form and also acceptable land uses that will be appropriate on this site.

2.0 The Site

Bede Island South comprises a total area of 15.07 ha (37.24 acres).

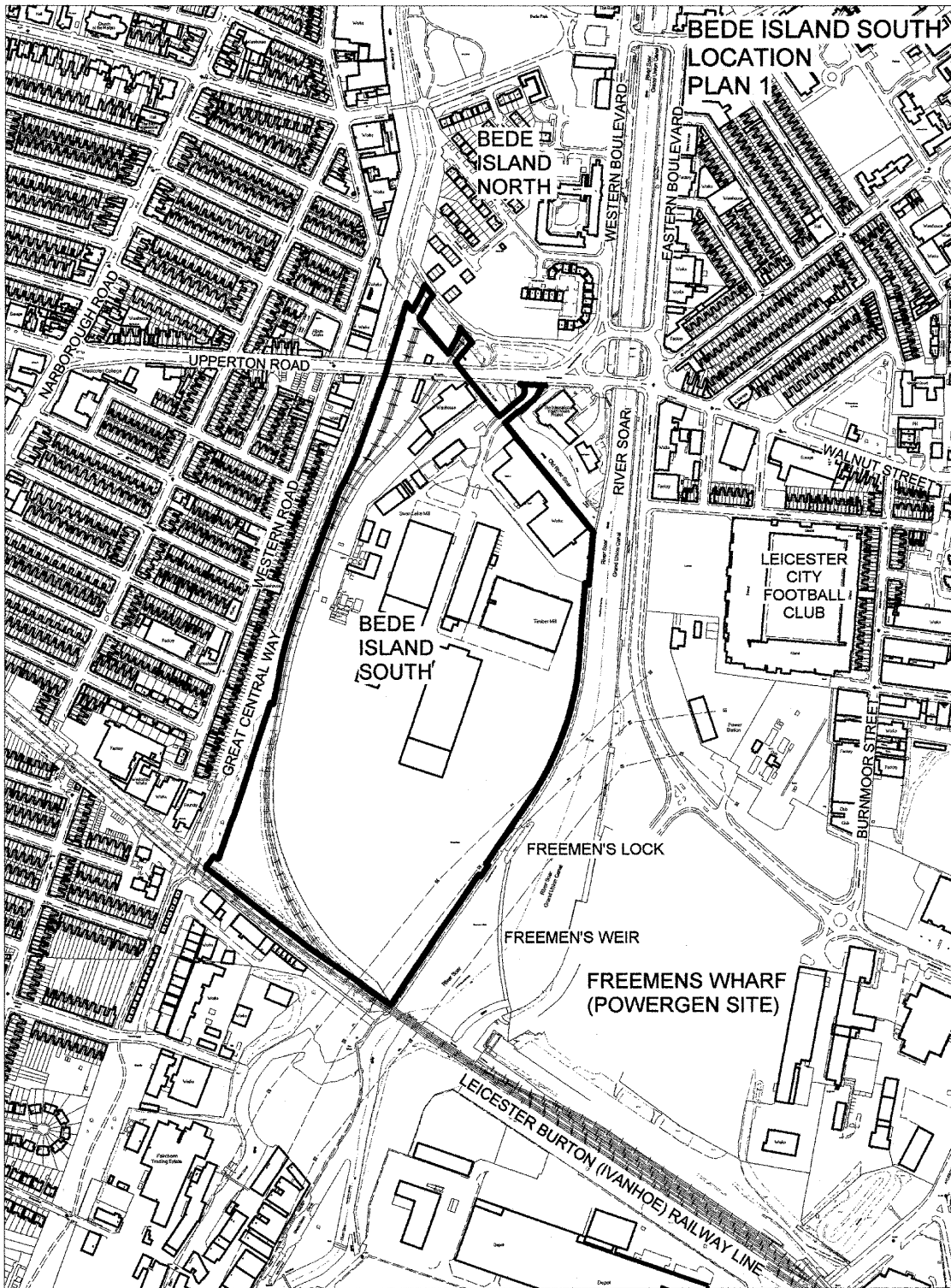
Plan 1 shows the location of the site and its immediate surroundings.

The site has a significant frontage alongside the River Soar where the river widens below Freeman's Weir. The weir also incorporates a canal lock adjacent to the bank nearest to Bede Island South.

A large part of the site was until recently, occupied by a timber yard (with associated buildings) and by open land for the storage of wood. Other buildings on the northern part of the site are occupied by a glass works (Mawby & King) and an engineering company (CPH Thurmaston).

There are large electricity pylons crossing the south-eastern portion of the site, carrying power lines across the River Soar from the electricity transformer station located immediately to the south of the football stadium.

The western boundary contains former railway sidings and a triangle of land in the south west corner, which is an ecologically sensitive meadow.



<p>Based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:1250 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationary Office. Crown Copyright Reserved</p>	<p>Scale 1:5000 Date: 21/7/2000</p>	<p>Peter Webster, Director, Environment & Development Leicester City Council</p>
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The site is currently accessed from Upperton Road via an unadopted vehicle bridge over the River Soar. A right of way under Upperton Road from Western Boulevard (through Bede Island North) to the CPH Thurmaston premises and the railway sidings also exists.

3.0 Land Ownership

Plan 2 shows the approximate boundaries of the land ownership's, that are currently known for this site. This is for information only and should be confirmed with the respective owners.

The Great Central Way adjacent to this site is owned and managed by Leicester City Council. The towing path is owned by British Waterways, but managed on their behalf by the City Council.

4.0 Recent Planning History

The occupiers on this site have been established for many years include Raab Karcher (Timber Suppliers) who have recently vacated the site, Mawby and King (Glass Supplies) and CPH Thurmaston (Engineering). These uses generally fall within Class B2 (General Industry) and Class B8 (Storage & Distribution).

Various planning applications have been submitted for minor buildings on the site over many years.

The most notable recent planning applications are set out below:

- A planning application for a new football stadium, retail, leisure and a hotel (Planning Application 98/0775) was 'called-in' by the Government Office and a public inquiry arranged to be held in November 1999. The applicants indicated that they did not wish to proceed with the inquiry and the planning application was withdrawn.
- An application for the renewal of a mixed use development including retail was refused (98/0987)
- Permission was granted for the re-mediation of the site has recently been granted (99/0951)

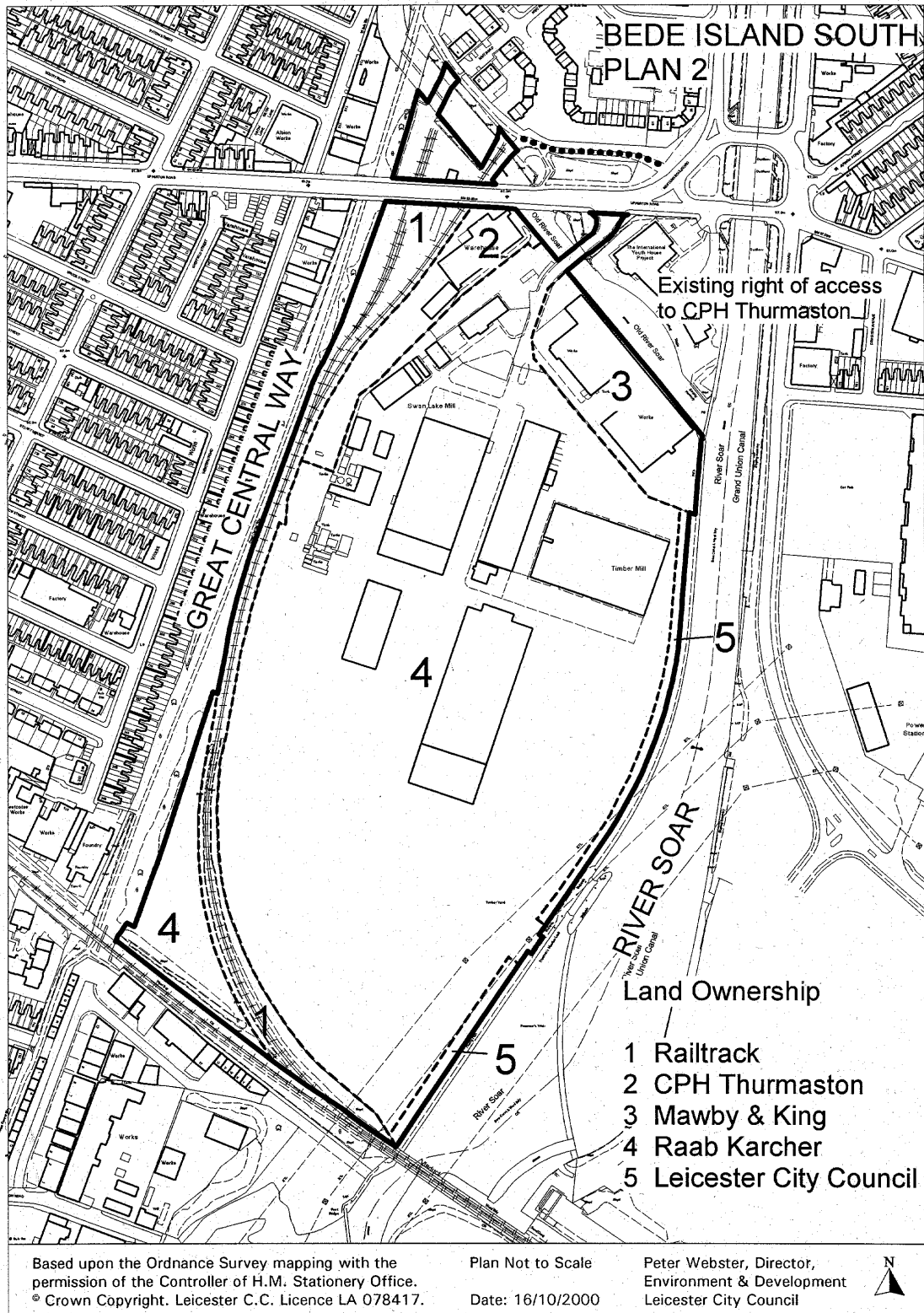
5.0 Planning Policies

The majority of the site (apart from the nature area) is currently allocated in the adopted City of Leicester Local Plan 1994 (CLLP) as a Potential Development Area (Policy E14e). The council's aim is to encourage regeneration and redevelopment in such areas by permitting a range of land uses.

The Replacement CLLP, which is currently being prepared, is likely to continue this allocation.

The site also lies within the Riverside Park, which is a key open space corridor running through the City following the River Soar and Grand Union Canal (Policy R31)

The triangle of land in the south-west corner (separated from the main part of the site by a railway embankment which rises up to the existing Leicester-Burton freight line), is identified as a nature reserve in the CLLP (policy EN59).



The site also lies within the Storage & Distribution Restriction Zone (Policies E10, E11).

Policies in the CLLP, which are relevant to future development proposals on this site, are set out in Appendix A.

6.0 Potential Land Uses

Bede Island North, which lies immediately to the north of Upperton Road, is now recognised as a national example of a high quality, mixed use regeneration scheme. Development at Bede Island South should seek to emulate the success of Bede Island North.

The City Council will therefore encourage re-development schemes that achieve a relatively high density and a mix of uses, to help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel.

Development that would be considered appropriate in this area includes the following:

(a) Housing (Class C3)

The City Council will actively encourage the development of housing on this site, in conjunction with a range of complementary uses (set out below), as a priority for this site.

This is subject to development proposals meeting following requirements:

- the satisfactory treatment of any contaminated land to allow residential development, and,
- satisfactory measures to protect the new residential occupants from noise from any existing industrial uses that remain on the site or located in the immediate surroundings.

Should the Mawby & King and/or the CPH Thurmaston premises (Class B2) remain, then a buffer zone of non-residential development is likely to be required to screen these sites from proposed residential areas (See also Class B1 – Business below)

Versatile and flexible living and working accommodation (Class C3/B1) as provided at West Bridge Place and on Bede Island North, may also be appropriate.

A range and mix of house types and tenures should be provided at Bede Island South (CLLP Policy H3a), to encourage the development of a mixed and balanced community. This should include an element of affordable housing (See Appendix B for more details).

It should also include adequate open space and play space provision (See also Appendix B)

The presence of overhead power lines will have an impact on the location of any new housing on the site. Housing will not be permitted closer to power lines than the distances recommended by the National Radiological Protection Board, whose advice should be sought. Guidance on potential radio/TV interference should also be sought to mitigate potential problems.

(b) Business (Class B1)

Including: B1(b) Research and development, studios, laboratories etc, and,
 B1(c) Light industry

Bede Island South lies outside of the proposed Central Commercial Zone and therefore Office development in excess of 1,000 sq.m., which falls within Class B1(a), may be subject to the requirement to meet the sequential test. Another factor that may also be taken into

account in considering the level of B1(a), is the need to meet wider planning objectives (i.e. to provide a buffer between existing Class B2 Uses and residential, or to provide a quality riverside frontage adjacent to the pylons).

(c) General Industry (Class B2)

In view of the City Council's desire to seek a significant amount of housing in any re-development proposals, further B2 industrial development is therefore unlikely to be considered favourably.

In very limited circumstances, some additional B2 may be acceptable subject to the use meeting stringent requirements, in terms of the impact (i.e noise, vibration, smell fumes etc) on any proposed residential development on Bede Island South and existing residential areas immediately adjoining the site.

(d) Retail (Class A1)

This should be a local facility only, comprising a number of small shops or a convenience store. Therefore retail development will be restricted to a maximum of 300 sq.m.

These uses should be located around the Civic Square or other main focal point in this development (See Plan 3).

(e) Food and Drink (Class A3)

Re-development schemes will be encouraged to include restaurants, cafes or pubs/, to create vitality and activity particularly on the riverside. Suitable locations for these uses could also be major focal points (e.g squares, parks or junctions) in the development.

The location of any proposed Class A3 Uses must be carefully considered and positioned in relation to any future residential development. A3 development catering for non-local need, will be required to follow a sequential approach to location.

(f) Hotel (Class C1)

A hotel could also be included in a proposed re-development scheme, particularly if it is located to benefit from a location along the riverside at the north end of the site.

A hotel building could also be located to act as a buffer between any existing Class B2 Uses and proposed residential development.

(g) Non Residential Institutions (Class D1)

Re-development at Bede Island South should include the provision for a health centre/doctors surgery, if the scheme contains a high proportion of residential units (See 8.0). This should be located next to the shops in the Civic Square or main focal point of the development.

Consideration will also be given to the inclusion within the site of development containing a public hall, a creche and a place of worship, providing that they are intended to meet need generated by the future residents and not those of the wider area.

(h) Leisure Uses (Class D2)

Leisure uses will be acceptable on this site, providing that they are intended to meet the needs of the immediate community (i.e. a local facility serving the future residents and the immediate surroundings).

A leisure proposal that is intended to draw from a wider area than that set out above (i.e. greater than 1,000 sq. m.), will be subject to the requirement to follow a 'sequential approach' to site selection, to establish its acceptability.

Leicester City Football Club applied for permission in 1998 for a 40,000 seat stadium and associated retail and leisure facilities. The City Council resolved to approve this application, although it was withdrawn after being 'called-in' by the DETR and a public inquiry arranged. Should an alternative scheme for a football stadium be submitted in the future, consideration may be given to such a proposal subject to it meeting the sequential test and it being considered on its individual merits against the relevant policies in the CLLP.

Uses that are unlikely to be acceptable on Bede Island South, include:

Storage and Distribution Uses (Class B8) in excess of 235 sq.m. – these uses will not normally be permitted because the site lies within the Storage and Distribution Restriction Zone in the CLLP (Policy E 10). This discourages such uses, which tend to be low-density employers, from locating in inner urban areas where land is in short supply for industrial uses.

7.0 Development Issues / Factors Affecting Development.

There are a number of development constraints that are apparent on this site, which could impact on the potential layout.

Much of this site was originally utilised as railway land including, the main line, sidings and a steam locomotive depot. Developers will be required to carry out site investigations into the possibility of this land being contaminated and to carry out any remedial works that are necessary.

The existing railway spur and sidings are still rail connected and therefore remain as operational railway land. This will affect the ability to create pedestrian/cycle connections from the site to the Great Central Way, which will not be possible if the operational railway remains. This issue needs to be addressed in any redevelopment proposals.

The Upperton Road viaduct, which is also owned by Railtrack, is in a very poor state of repair (See 9.0).

The problems associated with existing restricted access to the site is also covered in Section 9.0.

A beech tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO Ref. N4.287) is located adjacent to the existing site access onto Upperton Road.

The location of the electricity pylons and power lines crossing part of the site means that development could be severely restricted in the south-east corner.

The existing meadow in the south-west corner is identified as a nature reserve in the current CLLP and should be protected from development (Policy EN59). This is likely to be allocated as a SINC (Site of Important Nature Conservation value) in the replacement CLLP.

The former railway line and sidings in the north west corner of the site (adjacent to the Great Central Way) have also been identified as being of important ecological interest (Policy EN58) and should be taken into account when considering re-development proposals. It is also anticipated that these areas will also be included in the replacement CLLP as a SINC (See also Section 10.0i below)

There may also be archaeological interest on this site, as indicated by the Leicester Sites & Monuments Record (LMR). Palaeolithic and Bronze Age artefacts and Roman remains have been found in the vicinity of the site.

Preliminary archaeological investigation of the Bede Island South area has been recently undertaken. This revealed the presence of buried archaeological remains of varying dates, although these features were scattered or significantly truncated.

The former Great Central Railway carriage/wagon shed represents a rare local example of an ancilliary structure associated with the nineteenth century railway construction. It should therefore be retained and utilised in any redevelopment proposals.

The developer is therefore required to make provision for the following:

- The appropriate archaeological investigation and recording of any significant remains that are exposed as a result of the proposed development. Contingency provisions should be included to ensure adequate recording of more important archaeological deposits.
(This should include the consideration of the effects of any site decontamination works that are undertaken in advance of development)
- Early consultation with the City Archaeologist (Richard Clark Tel : 0116 247 3023) is recommended, to discuss the character of the development proposals. A brief setting out the full requirements will be prepared, if one is requested by the developer.

8.0 Key Development Requirements and Planning Obligations.

There are a number of key development requirements for this site, that the City Council consider must be met. These are:

▪ The Comprehensive Development of the whole site.

Development proposals for Bede Island South must be comprehensive covering the whole of the site. Awkward shaped sites must be included within the overall scheme to ensure that the wider urban design and planning objectives set out in Section 10 can be properly achieved. This is particularly important for the Railtrack land, which cannot be left in its present state because it leaves an isolated strip of land forming a barrier to future east-west links.

It should be brought into the overall site and managed as an ecological resource (with possibly a small amount of enabling development to pay for the closure of the operational railway and lifting of the tracks and its future management).

▪ The Enhancement of this Important Section of the Riverside.

Opportunities to enhance the Riverside will be sought by the City Council in connection with this development. These include:

- The potential to create a new marina within the development site (entrance upstream from Freemens Lock) and/or moorings in suitable locations such as the inlet into the Old River Soar.
 - A new focal point to be created around Freemens Lock through planting/paving and/or new buildings such as a pub.
 - The creation of a new footpath/cycleway running parallel to the existing towpath, to reduce pressure on it.
 - The retention of existing trees and shrubs alongside the river and the enhancement of this area through additional planting.
 - The creation of a new public park alongside the river, well overlooked by development.
 - There is also an opportunity to remove the existing electricity pylons and put the cables underground.
- **Community Benefits**

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

The level of benefits that the City Council will seek at Bede Island South will depend principally on the amount of housing that is provided in any future development. These are set out below:

(a) Education.

A limited number of spare places are currently available at nearby Infant and Primary Schools. If the proposed development at Bede Island South contains a significant number of family dwellings resulting in a need for additional places (which brings the Number on Role close to or in excess of the school capacity), then contributions may be sought to provide additional facilities at the designated school.

This requirement will be determined when detailed planning applications are submitted and a clearer idea of the number of family dwellings is known.

Hazel Primary School is currently the only primary school that is reasonably accessible from this site.

(b) Health Facilities.

This is dependent on the numbers of houses that are eventually provided on this site.

A site/unit may be required to be made available at the developers expense for the provision of a health centre/doctor's surgery. Consultations will be carried out with Leicestershire Health Authority, when detailed planning applications are submitted and the numbers of dwellings are known to determine if there is sufficient need for any health facilities.

9.0 Access and Highway Requirements

A Transport Assessment (TA) will be required for any re-development proposals on Bede Island South, given its critical location in the highway network and poor existing access.

Although there are a significant number of buildings on the site, the history of the relatively low intensity of usage, the poor access and the fact that a much higher density of

development will be expected with a different usage pattern, means that a full assessment will be required.

Whatever the uses proposed for the site, the TA should indicate how the need to travel to and from the site by car will be minimised. Its location within walking distance of the City Centre, with direct access to the City's cycle network via the Great Central Way and adjacent to good bus links, provides the opportunity to design a development with excellent opportunities to use means other than the private car.

Proposals for the comprehensive re-development of the site are likely to require significant highway and associated improvements to provide satisfactory access.

Suggested new access locations to serve Bede Island South include:

- (a) ***A new bridge across the River Soar linking to the Raw Dykes Road extension which runs from Eastern Boulevard to Aylestone Road.***

and/or

- (b) ***Improvements to the existing access off Upperton Road (It may be possible to improve this access to an acceptable standard but an additional/alternative form of access may still be required from a separate point on the highway network, depending on the level of traffic generated/scale of development and range of uses to be served).***

NB. *The Upperton Road viaduct has been identified as being in an advanced state of deterioration and a full investigation and feasibility studies are planned. This may ultimately involve either replacement and/or strengthening of the viaduct (for further information please contact Keith Rowe Highway Client Manager Tel : 0116 252 6545). This may also offer alternative access opportunities.*

The City Council's preferred option for the design and location of the main site access is for a new bridge across the River Soar from the Raw Dykes Road Extension.

A new link across the river would integrate Bede Island South into the wider area and to make better and more direct connections, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to destinations on the opposite side of the river. Two points of access from different parts of the highway network will also facilitate much better public transport access, allowing a loop to be created through the site rather than a single point for both entry and exit.

In addition, the current highway standards require access by emergency vehicles to be maintained to all dwellings at all times, meaning that no more than 150 dwellings will be permitted to be served via a single point of access.

The final decision on the most suitable form of access to Bede Island South will be informed by the results of the TA.

In addition, an un-adopted right of way exists to the CPH Thurmaston site and the railway sidings, which run along the north side of Upperton Road, passing through an area of open space in the Bede Island North development. This access is clearly inadequate and the City Council will seek its closure and replacement with a satisfactory alternative, within any re-development schemes. It is not an acceptable access to the rest of the site.

The City Council will encourage the use of 'Places, Streets & Movement' (DETR 1998), which is identified in PPG3 as a source of good practice guidance on the layout and design of new development, particularly for the design of new streets.

'Places, Streets & Movement' suggests that in designing new residential layouts, the design of the spaces and places should be considered first and the layout then adjusted to meet highway needs. This should result in the area being developed based primarily on the needs of people rather than the motor car.

The design of these roads should allow speeds of no more than 20mph, using a range of speed reducing features. Speed reduction should be taken into account at the initial design stage and be an integral part of the overall layout of buildings, spaces and streets

The design of Bede Island South should provide a series of cycle and pedestrian links through the site to surrounding areas, including the Great Central Way. The main road network should be designed to allow public transport access (Min 6.75 m wide).

It is likely that the whole area will need to be subject to on-street parking restrictions (with possible exceptions for residents) to ensure that parking standards are not circumvented by on-street parking and that City Centre commuters do not park in the area. These restrictions should form an integral part of the design of the development and be implemented at the developers expense.

The City Council's parking standards are currently being reviewed, although given the location of Bede Island South the requirements for housing development are likely to be lower than the existing parking standards, in line with advice set out in PPG 3 (paras 61 and 62). Advice should be sought from the City Council when pre-application enquiries are made.

All public areas in this development must be designed to allow full access for disabled people.

10.0 Site Layout and Urban Design

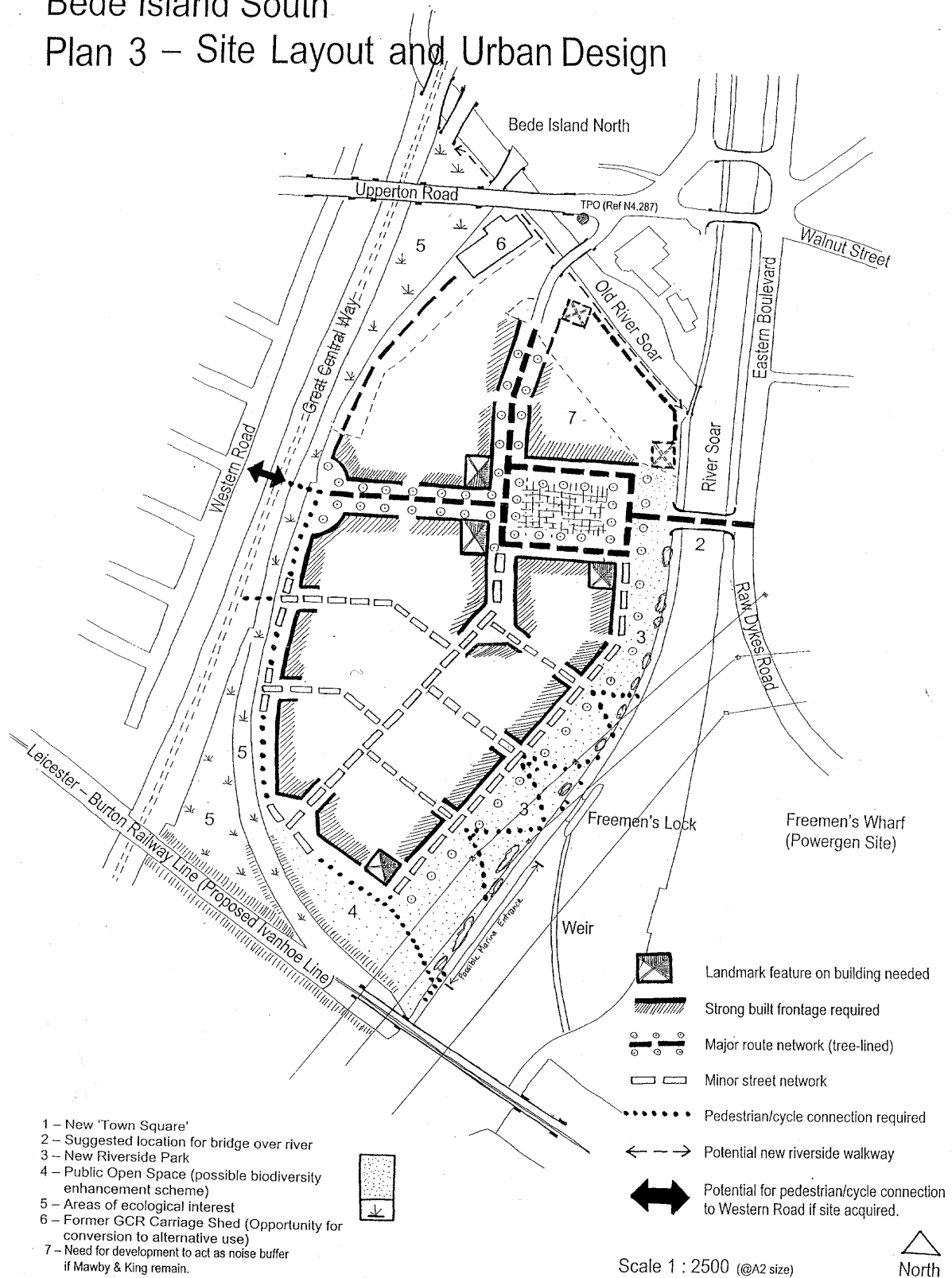
Key Design Aims

The main design aims to be incorporated in the layout for Bede Island South are:

- ***To build on the success of the recently completed Bede Island North redevelopment scheme, by the creation of a high density, high design quality, mixed-use development.***
- ***To create a place with distinctive character in this key riverside location***
- ***To ensure that the development is well connected; internally, through a network of streets and linked spaces and externally, to surrounding areas. The focus should be on people rather than traffic.***

Bede Island South

Plan 3 – Site Layout and Urban Design



- 1 – New 'Town Square'
- 2 – Suggested location for bridge over river
- 3 – New Riverside Park
- 4 – Public Open Space (possible biodiversity enhancement scheme)
- 5 – Areas of ecological interest
- 6 – Former GCR Carriage Shed (Opportunity for conversion to alternative use)
- 7 – Need for development to act as noise buffer if Mawby & King remain.

- Landmark feature on building needed
- Strong built frontage required
- Major route network (tree-lined)
- Minor street network
- Pedestrian/cycle connection required
- Potential new riverside walkway
- Potential for pedestrian/cycle connection to Western Road if site acquired.

- **To incorporate public space (streets, focal points, open space etc.) that is well defined, well used and attractive.**

- ***To create a sustainable place.***
- ***To create a safe place***
- ***To ensure that the place is well maintained.***

Detailed design objectives

The layout and design of the site should aim to satisfy a number of key urban design objectives, which are set out below. A scheme illustrating one way by which these objectives could be met, is indicated on Plan £.

(a) Development should address the riverside by orienting new buildings to face onto it.

Historically, riverside development has turned its back on the waterway. New development proposals including key buildings, public spaces and routes, should be designed to properly address the river to maximise the potential of views across and views from Freeman's Weir, the widest section of the River Soar in the area.

New development proposals along the river must therefore:

- ***Clearly address and relate positively to the riverside (See below).***
- ***Create visual interest and an interesting skyline on the riverside through the elevational treatment and form of the buildings. A fairly consistent design theme should be provided, punctuated by landmark buildings at key locations.***
- ***Contain building entrances that open directly onto the riverside to increase activity along it.***
- ***Contain a wide variety of uses to ensure activity throughout the day and evening.***
- ***Provide an additional footpath/cycleway alongside the existing towpath.***
- ***Ensure that buildings are set back at least 10 metres from the existing towpath (taller buildings i.e 5/6 storeys may need to be set back further)***

There may also be opportunities to introduce water into this development to create a feature which buildings look onto, or even create a marina. Opportunities for water-bourne freight facilities may also be possible. The advice of British Waterways should be sought at a very early stage if any of these options are being considered.

(b) Create a new focus within this development.

As well as the riverside a new focal point could also be created within the new development, where key routes meet. A suggested location is shown on Plan 3.

A new civic square located within the centre of the site, but leading down to the riverside (as shown on Plan 3), would help to provide a much stronger visual and physical connection from the rear of the site to the river. A strong building form and sense of enclosure around it would greatly enhance its appearance and help to give the development a stronger sense of place and identity.

This square would also be the ideal location for a significant proportion of any public open space and play space that is required for proposed residential development in this scheme.

Further details on possible designs are contained in Section (h) below.

(c) Improve East – West Links

The current site is very isolated and its current layout forms a barrier to east-west movement across the site. Access from the site to the Great Central Way (a key north-south pedestrian/cycle route passing this site) is not currently available, but will be a key requirement in any redevelopment proposals.

- **The site layout should be designed to introduce direct east to west links across the site between the Riverside and the Great Central Way. It should include well connected routes within the site particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. A new bridge over the River Soar to Raw Dykes Road represents the City Council's preferred option, to achieve better connections from Bede Island South to the east bank of the river.**
- **Opportunities to create a pedestrian/cycle links from the site across the Great Central Way through to Western Road should also be explored. This is to allow residents of the Wilberforce Road/Western Road area to gain direct access to the riverside and the Great Central.**

Detailed design requirements for a new bridge across the River Soar (including those supplied by British Waterways) are set out in Appendix C

(d) Promote Mixed Use Development

New development should include a wide range of complementary land uses.

A wide range of uses would add to the vitality and liveliness of the area and results in increased activity throughout the day and the evening, both along the riverside and within this development. Housing, along with cafes, pubs and leisure uses, can all contribute to achieving these aims. Locating employment uses within and adjacent to housing areas also reduces the need to travel and can help to support shops and facilities in this area.

(e) Overall Building and Site Layout Design

The overall layout of streets should seek to create an 'urban' character for the new development, similar to the character of the adjoining Bede Island North development.

This should be achieved by the following means:

- ***A connected street network***

The layout of Bede Island South should comprise a continuous network of streets and places, to produce the maximum level of connectivity and accessibility throughout the development. Streets should provide direct connections between the major places and focal points in the development particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

- ***Strong built edges in the form of building frontages must be provided along all of the streets and around key junctions and public spaces in Bede Island South.***

These are needed to provide the sense of enclosure required in an urban setting. Buildings, which are positioned to follow a continuous or near-continuous building line

around key spaces or along a street line, help to enclose and thus create successful urban space.

- ***Landmarks, gateways, vistas and focal points must be provided at key locations in the new development.***

Landmarks, gateways and focal points help people find their way around and vistas create visual links between places. These help to provide a clear image and structure that is easy to understand in the new development.

Locations where it is considered that these features would be particularly suited, are shown on Plan 3.

- ***The relationship between the public and private realm must clearly be defined.***

Buildings should generally follow a continuous building line around a street block and contain the private space within back yards and courtyards.

Along plot frontages, where front gardens or landscaping areas are provided, a clear definition of public and private space is required with the boundary defined by railings and/or walls. Undefined space, especially alongside plot boundaries, should be avoided.

- The location of car parking needs to be carefully considered in the design and layout. It should be discreetly located and should not dominate the street scene.

Large areas of on-plot parking should not generally be located in front of buildings, where it will dominate the street scene and thus affect the overall setting and character of the development. Where parking in front of buildings cannot be avoided (e.g. in a high density housing scheme), it should be broken down into small discreet groups separated by walls or railings in association with tree planting.

Parking courts or squares may be acceptable providing that they containing dwellings which front onto and provide direct overlooking over the parking areas. There should generally be no more than 10 spaces in a parking court or square.

(f) Density and Building Heights.

Recent guidance, set out in PPG3 (2000), seeks to encourage housing development that makes more efficient use of land. As a guide this seeks to achieve a figure of between 30 and 50 houses net per hectare in all new developments. The recently completed Bede Island North development achieved a net density of 67 dwellings per hectare.

Given the success of Bede Island North (average density 68 dwellings/ha), development at Bede Island South should aim to be built at a similar density.

The CLLP (Appendix 5) sets out guidelines on minimum distances between dwellings in new residential development. Where it can clearly be demonstrated that problems of overlooking and loss of amenity are avoided by design, the City Council may be prepared to relax these guidelines to achieve a higher density development. It is recommended that this matter is discussed at a very early stage, before any final designs are drawn up.

The highest densities should be located closest to the riverside and around the major focal points in this development (Up to 5/6 storeys or 20 metres maximum to eaves level). Lower building heights (Maximum – 3 storeys) should be achieved close to the western boundary, opposite existing housing on Western Road.

(g) Safety & Security

Buildings must be located to provide overlooking over all public routes, including the Great Central Way.

All building entrances should be located directly off the street or public space. Details should be in accordance with the City Council document "Crime Prevention By Planning And Design".

Boundary fences to rear gardens and service yards should not be located next to public areas.

(h) Public Space, Landscape Design and Public Art

Plan 3 shows suggested locations for the key public spaces that could be provided in connection with this development.

The City Council will expect the key public spaces (i.e. the riverside and the key focal point) to be well designed and to relate to the buildings surrounding them. These will be the key spaces that will contribute to creating the overall character and identity in this development.

The design of the other smaller spaces within this development is important, to assist in the legibility of the overall scheme and to help people find their way around.

The design and layout of these spaces will form a key component of the site development master plan, which will be required for this site (See Section 12.0 below)

Significant levels of tree planting will be expected to be provided at Bede Island South, in the form of boulevards along the major routes and within the key public spaces as well as providing structure planting within individual plots.

The future management of public space must be catered for, by agreeing its handover with a commuted sum to the local authority.

The City Council expects the voluntary incorporation of new works of art as part of major development schemes (Policy EN62 – 'Per Cent for Art').

It is suggested that the works of art could include detailed features on new buildings, or features within focal points or on the riverside. The use of lighting and the river bridge itself (if required to gain access to the site) also provide opportunities for an artistic input into the design. (For further information on this, please contact the City Council's Public Arts Officer - Tel. 0116 299 5987).

(i) Nature Conservation.

The City Council will seek the retention and enhancement and future management of all areas within Bede Island South, which have nature conservation and ecological interest.

These are:

- The nature reserve identified in the CLLP, within the triangle of land in the south-west corner of the site.
- The former railway spur and sidings alongside the Great Central Way (recently identified as a Site of Important Nature Conservation value (SINC) on the Site Alert Map 2000)

The City Council will also seek to negotiate a Biodiversity Enhancement Site along the southern boundary (alongside the railway embankment) connecting the above site to the riverside. These sites have been identified on the Site Alert Map (produced by the City Council) as opportunities to create wildlife corridors between SINC's. Further advice can be obtained from Sue Timms, Nature Conservation Officer (Tel 0116 252 7268).

11.0 Energy Efficiency

New buildings should demonstrate good practice in energy efficiency and water conservation. 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). Residential development should achieve a National Home Energy Rating of 9 or above.

12. 0 Master Plan

Before detailed planning applications can be considered a master plan should be prepared for the whole of the site and submitted for approval by the City Council.

This should show in more detail how the above site layout principles and development requirements will be met. This should also include an indication of the development phasing.

The master plan should also include key design principles and sketches showing in more detail the design and layout of the key public areas (e.g Riverside, Civic Square, the relationship of development to the Great Central Way), and key principles for the landscape design of this site.

13.0 Further Information

Early discussions between owners/potential developers (including the City Council) are encouraged in order to facilitate proposals that are as inclusive and comprehensive as possible.

For all planning matters please contact:

The Development Control Group – City Centre Team (Hilary Leigh-Brown Tel.: 0116 252 7261)

Department of Environment and Development

Leicester City Council

New Walk Centre

LE1 6ZG

Other Useful Contacts:

Nigel Reeves, Urban Design (E&D)	Tel : 0116 252 7239
Steve Quick, Pollution Control (E&D)	Tel : 0116 252 6401
Barry Pritchard, Highways (E&D)	Tel : 0116 252 6522
Sue Timms, Nature Conservation (E&D)	Tel : 0116 252 7268
Richard Clarke, City Archaeologist	Tel : 0116 247 3023
C.J. Holmes, British Waterways	Tel : 0113 281 6837

14. 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 guidance will be subject to consultation with the following groups:

- landowners
- local residents
- local ward councillors
- development industry representatives
- other interested bodies.

The results of consultation will be considered in the preparation of the final form of the guidance, which will be presented to the City Council Cabinet for adoption. A full report on the results of consultation will be available from the Director of Environment and Development, Tel. (0116) 252 7239

APPENDIX A

City of Leicester Local Plan (1994) - Policies relevant to this site

Policy E14 in the Local Plan states that planning permission will normally be given to schemes for the development, regeneration and/or refurbishment of Potential Development

Area, which provide improved employment opportunities and other benefits. The City Council will encourage this by permitting a range of land uses, including residential and recreation.

Policy S22(b) in the Local Plan allocates the site for a superstore and retail warehouse measuring 16,720 sq.m. (180,000 sq.ft). Difficulties with access to Bede Island South were recognised in the plan and alternative sites were allocated for the superstore (now developed on the former Cattle Market) and the retail warehousing on the former power station site (this has not gone ahead). Retail development is no longer considered acceptable on Bede Island South, which is an out of centre site.

The site is also within the Storage and Distribution Restriction Zone, which prevents any new uses in this category (Class B8) from being located here (Policy E10),

Development adjoining public spaces or thoroughfares (including the River and the Great Central Way) must provide positive and attractive built frontages to them (Policy EN3).

Planning permission will normally only be granted for development within or near the Riverside Park, which enhances the natural environment, facilitates leisure use or increases public access to the riverside (Policy R31).

A small area to the south-west is designated as a nature reserve within the Local Plan. The council's aim is to ensure appropriate use and management of this area in line with its value as an existing meadow habitat and its potential as part of an environmental corridor linking the River and Great Central Way (Policy EN 59).

The River Soar, the towpath alongside it and Great Central Way, are allocated as a Green Corridor or Green Space. Development will not be allowed to encroach on these areas (Policy EN 48), and their open character must be retained (Policy EN 49). Development adjoining these areas will be expected to have a high quality boundary and frontage treatment (Policy EN 54). These requirements are described in more detail in Section 9.0.

Most of the site is within the River Soar flood plain and new development must be constructed to floor levels specified by the relevant Water Authority (Policy U2).

The site lies adjacent to an archaeological alert area, the boundary running along the western boundary of the Great Central Way. Therefore, the view of the City Council's Archaeological Officer should be sought before any development proposals are submitted.

APPENDIX B

Additional requirements for housing development at Bede Island South

A minimum of 1.6 ha (4 acres) of publicly accessible open space per 1,000 population (pro rata for dwellings built) is required for new major development (Policy R1). The location of this must be usable and overlooked.

Adequate children play space (3 sq.m. per child bedspace or 7.5 sq.m. per family dwelling), and associated amenity open space will also be required in new residential development (Policy R11).

DETR Circular 6/98 encourages the provision of a range and mix of house types and tenures to encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities, within new housing developments.

Policy H3(a) in the City of Leicester Local Plan sets a target figure of at least 30% of all dwellings on new development sites, to be provided as affordable housing. For the purposes of this policy affordable housing encompasses both subsidised (rented or shared ownership) and low-cost market housing.

The City Council's supplementary planning guidance on Affordable Housing (adopted January 2000) contains detailed information on housing need in the City.

In view of the clearly identified housing need in the City, the target figure of 30% will be required to be provided as part of the proposed development of the site, (unless evidence is provided of particular costs associated with this development justifying a reduction in this amount, as set out in para 10 of Circular 6/98). At least 50% of this total should be affordable rented housing provided by a Registered Social Landlord.

All of the rented affordable housing on the site should be constructed to meet the City Council's Access Housing Standards.

APPENDIX C

Design requirements for a new river bridge over the River Soar.

British Waterways have indicated that they would only be willing to consider a proposal for a new highway bridge once it had been totally satisfied that no other infrastructure improvements are feasible that can be utilised to serve this site.

Separate approval will therefore be required for a new river bridge from British Waterways. If this is forthcoming, a high design quality will be expected, given this important location on the 'Mile Straight'.

The key design requirements for a new bridge are set out below:

- *The bridge should cross the river at a right angle to the existing banks. A skew bridge will not be acceptable.*
- *The minimum distance between the upstream face of Upperton Road bridge and the downstream face of any proposed new bridge should be 225m.*
- *Navigational clearance will need to be established with British Waterways and incorporated into the design (this will include the headroom over the navigation as well as the towpath)*
- *The bridge must cross the navigation and towing path in a single span. Piers within the river navigation are unacceptable.*
- *The bridge design needs to be considered in terms of the environmental, visual and landscape impact on the river corridor and should form a new high quality landmark structure on this stretch of the river.*

Further detailed requirements relating to the above can be obtained from Mr C.J. Holmes, Estates Surveyor, British Waterways, Fearn's Wharf, Neptune Street, Leeds LS9 8BP (Tel : 0113 281 6800)