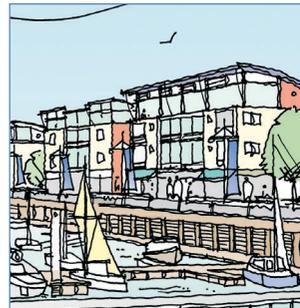


NENE WATERFRONT, WISBECH

Development Brief



Supplementary Planning Guidance

Fenland District Council

July 2004

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Contents

Section 1: Introduction

- Background
- Brief adoption process
- Consultation
- Structure of the brief

Section 2: Appraisals

- Site location & ownership
- Urban design best practice
- Planning policy context
- Urban design influences
- Movement & access
- Flood risk
- Ground conditions
- Archaeology
- Utilities
- Summary of development opportunities
- Illustrative layout

Section 3: Development framework

- Introduction
- Land use
- Routes & linkages.
- Open space & public realm
- Building heights & landmarks

Section 4: Design guidance

- Introduction
- Urban design analysis

- Defining the public realm
- Built form
- Designing streets for people
- Designing out crime
- Sustainability
- Development edges

Section 5: Delivery & implementation

- Introduction
- Development related requirements
- Securing the benefits
- Apportionment mechanism - contribution rate per sqm
- Other

Reference Documents*

RD1: A contributions framework*

RD2: Transport assessment*

RD3: Flood risk assessment*

RD4: Geo-environmental assessment*

RD5: Retail technical paper*

* Reference documents available from Fenland District Council on request.

Section 1: Introduction



Fig 1.1: Site location

Background

The group of sites that lie between the port and the town centre have been vacant for some 20 years. The establishment of a new leisure port in the vicinity of these sites has, however generated new activity and lead to an enhancement in the town's retail and tourism role. As a result Fenland District Council (FDC) consider that the time is now right to build on the leisure port's success and create the conditions necessary to promote the comprehensive regeneration of the vacant sites that comprise Nene Waterfront (Figure 1.1).

In the context of the above FDC are keen to maximise the potential of the area in terms of the diversity of uses, its sustainability contribution and the quality of the urban design and built environment.

The vision for the creation of a vibrant, sustainable and contemporary new urban Quarter, comprising a diverse range of new uses including housing, restaurant, retail, café uses, a yacht club/ harbour offices and employment related uses i.e. boat builders, boat repairer and new marine related light industrial activity.

In view of the above, the scale of the area and the existing landownership position FDC recognised that whilst many of the sites are already allocated for residential purposes that there was a need to prepare more site specific guidance to guide the future redevelopment of the area.

Thus in the context of Local Plan policy Imp 3, which requires development briefs to be prepared for major allocations and other major development proposals FDC resolved to prepare area specific guidance or Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to guide the future development of the Nene Waterfront (minute 139/01).

Brief adoption process

It was envisaged that this SPG would perform a number of distinct functions in terms of:

- Articulating FDC's ambitions for the site.
- Identifying the various constraints and the development

potential of the area.

- Clarifying the current and emerging planning policies and their application to the area.
- Defining the planning and design criteria against which proposals for development will be assessed.
- Providing prospective developers with guidance on achieving design quality in accordance with FDC's aspirations.
- Providing a framework to ensure that the essential benefits/ requirements associated with the development are secured and implemented in an appropriate manner.

In the context of the above a multidisciplinary team, lead by Tibbalds Planning Et Urban Design, was appointed by FDC to prepare the Nene Waterfront Development Brief (SPG).

As a result of this process this Development Brief draws together the work carried out to date and sets out how the site is proposed to be developed. It establishes a series of principles and relationships that will govern the future development of the area - [the development framework](#).

These principles are accompanied by [urban design guidance](#) for the different parts of the overall development and an [illustrative masterplan](#) shows one way in which the area might be developed in accordance with the development framework principles and urban design guidance.

Consultation

The draft Development Brief was approved by Cabinet on 5th February 2004. This was followed by a seven week period of public consultation involving an exhibition of the proposals at the Tourist Information Centre, Wisbech and presentations to Wisbech Town Council and Wisbech Regeneration Partnership.

In parallel with this process discussions were held with a number of key consultees including the existing landowners, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary CABE, The Environment Agency, East of England Development Agency (EEDA), English Partnerships (EP) and the Government Office for the East of England (GO East).

A total of 40 questionnaires and 13 consultation letters were received. In response and where relevant further discussions were held with a number of consultees and interested parties. In addition more detailed work was undertaken in relation to certain key aspects of the Brief, namely:

- An assessment of the retail potential of the brief area.
- A traffic impact assessment.
- Detailed feasibility work in relation to the treatment of the Freedom Bridge roundabout and the location of crossing points.
- The process of delivery and implementation.
- The cost of the necessary infrastructure requirements.

As a result of the above processes the Brief has been amended and updated, as necessary.

Structure of Brief

The Brief is organised into five sections :

- Section 1: Introduction & background, explains the overall vision for the Nene Waterfront, together with the processes and procedures that have been pursued through the Brief adoption process.
- Section 2: Appraisal. Provides an appraisal of the urban design, engineering and environmental constraints and opportunities. It also establishes the relationship of the Brief to existing Planning Policy Guidance and current best practice in relation to urban design, sustainability, character, movement, land use, security and safety.
- Section 3: Development framework. Provides a series of 'layers' addressing issues such as access and movement; land use mix, open space / public realm and the siting bulk and massing of the built form. These layers together establish a preferred structure for the new development in terms of land use siting, bulk and massing of the proposed development.
- Section 4: Design guidance. Provides guidance in relation to

design quality and character, and treatment of the public realm.

- Section 5: Delivery & implementation. Sets out the preferred strategy in relation to the implementation of development and outlines what will be expected of developers, in terms of planning obligations.

In addition a series of background technical papers have been prepared. The content of these documents have helped inform the preparation of the Development Brief and are available on request: These include:

- A contributions framework, prepared by Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design.
- A movement and access strategy and transport assessment prepared by Campbell Reith.
- A flood risk assessment prepared by Bullen Consultants Ltd.
- A Geo-environmental assessment prepared by Bullen Consultants on behalf of the East of England Development Agency.
- A retail technical paper, prepared by Roger Tym & Partners.

Section 2: Appraisals

Site location and ownership

The Brief area is situated some 0.25km to the north of the commercial centre of Wisbech. The majority of the land lies adjacent to the eastern bank of the River Nene and includes parcels of land formed by Nene Parade, Bedford Street, Chase Street and Russell Street. Its boundaries are as follows:

- Eastern boundary: formed by De Havilland Road;
- Northern boundary: formed by the rear of properties along Albany Road and by Silver Street;
- Southern boundary: formed by Lynn Road, and the Freedom Bridge Roundabout, and Nene Quay; and
- Western boundary: formed by the River Nene.

This part of the study area is approximately 3.84 hectares. The land is largely derelict, with some buildings and commercial premises on the periphery. The sites are in a variety of public and private ownerships. (Figure 1.4)

In addition to the main area, the Brief area includes two small sites on the western bank of the River Nene: a triangular site south of Freedom Bridge adjacent to North Street (currently partly used as a surface car park), and the strip of land along the western bank of the river running north from Freedom Bridge along West Parade.



Fig 1.2: Riverside



Fig 1.3: View westward across R. Nene

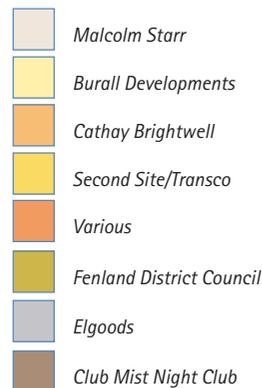


Fig 1.4: Land Ownership

Urban design best practice

URBAN DESIGN BEST PRACTICE REFERENCES

This Development Brief has been prepared in the context of and draws on recent government documents that encourage good urban design. Currently these are:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (2000) sets out a radical new approach to planning for housing. It makes fundamental changes, both to the way we plan for new housing and the ambition we show for places that we build. Higher density housing development is encouraged, with a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare required. Underlining all this is the central concern that planning for housing should be about people, places and our environment.
- By Design (2000) aims to promote high standards in urban design in planning and is intended as a companion guide to the planning policy guide notes.
- Places, Streets and Movement (1998), a companion guide to DB32, encourages a people friendly approach to the design of residential streets.
- Better Places to Live by Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3 (2001) complements By Design and Places, Streets and Movement. It aims to promote principles of good design, and its focus is on the urban design principles and approaches which underpin successful housing, not just the architectural treatment.
- The Urban Design Compendium (2000) provides guidance on achieving high quality design at all stages of the urban design process.
- The Urban Task Force Report - Towards an Urban Renaissance (1999) sets out the need to create sustainable urban development within the UK and the issues relevant to this.

- Secured By Design (1994) is produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers, and provides advice on designing-out crime.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (2001), provides guidance on how to integrate planning and transport. This includes promoting more sustainable transport choices for people, and reducing the need to travel, especially by car.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 (2001): Development Et Flood Risk, sets out how flood risk should be considered at all stages of the planning and development process.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 21 (1992): Tourism , promotes tourism as a component of urban renaissance.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (1996): Town Centres, promotes mixed use, diversity, design and environmental quality.

KEY GOOD PRACTICE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Sustainability

- Encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwelling per hectare net), and higher densities in locations such as town centres and areas close to public transport (PPGs, Towards an Urban Renaissance);
- Encourage lower parking standards with, on average, no more than 1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling (PPG3, PPG13);
- Integrate natural and man-made environment to maximise energy conservation and amenity (Urban Design Compendium); and
- Attract people to live, work and play in the same area (PPG1, By Design).

Character

- Create development that responds to its context and achieves a distinctive, safe and high quality public realm. Instead of taking the highway engineering requirements as the starting-point for layout design, the arrangement of buildings should be considered first. The demands they generate should then be checked against the highway engineering needs. This approach, describes as 'tracking', allows variety of built form, and enables buildings, streets and pavements to work together to define and emphasise spaces (Places, Streets, and Movement);
- Promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture (By Design);
- Encourage a distinctive design response that arises from and complements its setting (Urban Design Compendium);
- Promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around (By Design); and
- Clearly define public and private space by promoting continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development (By Design).

Movement

- Achieve ease of movement by putting people before traffic, and integrate land uses and transport (By Design, Streets and Movement, Urban Design Compendium, PPG3);
- Streets and routes should be part of a wider network of connected streets and follow a distinct hierarchy (Urban Design Compendium, By Design);
- Design the movement network to create a sense of place and community within the streets and spaces of housing areas (Places, Streets and Movement); and
- Promote spaces and routes that are attractive, safe,

uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled, youth and elderly people (By Design, Urban Design Compendium).

Land uses and flexibility

- Mix uses and building forms to provide visual stimulating and enjoyable places that fulfil the needs of a wide range of people (Urban Design Compendium, PPG3);
- Promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions (By Design, Urban Design Compendium); and
- Create mixed and inclusive communities by providing a range of housing types and housing tenures, including affordable housing (PPG3, Towards an Urban Renaissance).

Security and Safety

- Provide natural surveillance: neighbours should be able to see each other's houses, and where cars are parked outside (front or back), owners should be able to see them (Secured by Design, Places, Streets and Movement);
- Routes should be overlooked and busy, and should be well lit. Long, indirect pedestrian and cycle links may feel threatening for users, and may provide escape routes for criminals. Residents should be able to choose alternative routes. (Secured by Design, Places, Streets and Movement);
- Play areas or communal space should be located where they are well-related to surrounding areas and are overlooked. They should not be regarded as just a user for parcels of land left over after the layout has been drawn up. (Secured by Design, Places, Streets and Movement); and
- Mixed land uses and active frontages to the ground floor enable security throughout generating greater vibrancy and surveillance (By Design, Urban Design Compendium).

The Development Brief for the Nene Waterfront pulls together these various good practice guidelines to create a Brief that embraces good urban design.

Planning policy context

NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

Central Government Planning Policy Guidance is set out in a series of subject specific policy guidance notes referred to as PPGs. This Development Brief has been prepared in the context of best practice guidance as set out in:

- **PPG1 General Policies and Principles** – establishes the key principles that underpin policy in terms of securing sustainable development, mixed use and high quality design.
- **PPG3 Housing** – promotes the re-use of brownfield land in town centres, increased densities, mixed use and tenure, affordable housing, good design and accessibility.
- **PPG6 Town Centres** – promotes mixed use, diversity, design and environmental quality.
- **PPG13 Transport** – promotes accessibility, reduction in travel by car, mixed use.
- **PPG21 Tourism** – promotes tourism as a component of urban renaissance.
- **PPG25 Development & Flood Risk** – sets out how flood risk should be considered at all stages of the planning and development process.

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR EAST ANGLIA TO 2016

RPG 6 recognises the importance of market towns to the region's economy and states that development should be directed to them where possible in order to promote employment, overcome deprivation and promote the reuse of brownfield land in urban areas.

Wisbech is identified as a Priority Area for Economic Regeneration. In such areas RPG 6 encourages the preparation of local strategies that should:

- Identify and build on existing linkages between communities and businesses to create and support local business clusters.
- Provide business support services

- Ensure an adequate supply of employment land and premises.
- Promote them for inward investment
- Encourage regional local supply networks.
- Improve transport accessibility for all sectors of the community.
- Protect and enhance the environment in terms of design, conservation and bio-diversity.
- Protect and enhance their entertainment and retail facilities.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH STRUCTURE PLAN

The adopted Structure Plan promotes Wisbech as a key market town in Policy P10/3 and it is selected for growth under Policy P1/1.

Of particular note are the following policies which promote:

Approach to development – Policy 1/1. The policy gives priority to the development of previously developed land and buildings within existing settlements and to the location of development where travel distances by car can be minimised, walking and cycling encouraged and where good public transport accessibility exists or can be provided.

Sustainable design in the built environment – Policy P1/3

The policy seeks a high standard of sustainable design to:

- Minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency.
- Provide a sense of place.
- Make efficient use of energy and resources,
- Take account of community requirements.

Reuse of Previously Developed Land – Policy P5/2

The policy sets a target for Fenland for the period 1999 – 2016 of at least 35% of new dwellings should be provided on previously developed land or refurbishment of existing buildings.

Water Based Recreation – Policy P4/4

The policy promotes the recreation and tourism potential of water based recreation.

Walking and cycling – Policy P8/8

The policy promotes walking and cycling.

WISBECH TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Strategy for Wisbech forms part of the adopted Local Transport Plan. It identifies and costs priorities for a number of transport projects that relate to the Development Brief Area:

- Safety related – High priority is given to improvements to the Freedom Bridge roundabout.
- Cycling and walking – The introduction of pedestrian crossings, cycle facilities and improvements to pedestrian links via Nene Parade to the town centre and through the provision of the Hill Street/ North Street pedestrian and cycle bridge.

FENLAND DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN (ADOPTED 1993)

The Plan recognises the need for diversification of the local economy, including the maximisation of opportunities to support the tourism sector and promote visitor attractions.

Relevant policies include:

Housing – Policy WIS/H1

The policy allocates many of the sites with the Development Brief area for housing.

Provision of public open space – Policy R4 (as amended)

The Policy establishes a set of standards for the provision of open space.

Tourism – Policy T1

The policy supports the development of tourism and tourism related facilities.

Pedestrians and cyclists – Policy TR6

The policy requires suitable facilities to be made for pedestrians and cyclists.

Urban design – Policy E8

The policy promotes development which is compatible with its surroundings in terms of townscape/ landscape character, scale, architectural detail, materials and landscaping.

Water and drainage – Policy PU1

The policy requires new developments to make satisfactory arrangements for water supply, sewerage and sewerage disposal, land drainage and flood protection measures.

Community benefit and planning agreements – Policy IMP2

The policy seeks to secure, through planning agreement, the provision of the following benefits in association with development proposals:

- Essential on and off site services.
- Highway improvements and car parking.
- Community, education and recreational facilities including informal recreation provision.
- Environmental improvements.

Preparation of development briefs – Policy IMP3

The policy states that development Briefs will be prepared to guide major development proposals.

Access for disabled – IMP4

The policy requires access for people with disabilities to be provided in all new developments.

FENLAND DISTRICT – WIDE LOCAL PLAN. INTERIM STATEMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGES.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (January 2001).

Affordable Housing – H13

The policy requires an adequate supply of affordable housing and the incorporation of a reasonable mix and balance of housing types and sizes to cater for a range of housing needs, including affordable housing based on FDC criteria.

Housing

Deletion of land west of Chase Street for housing. Although it was recognised that part of the site might come forward as a small site.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

In addition to the Local Plan FDC has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance to support and expand on the policies of the Local Plan. Of relevance to this Development Brief are:

- **Play space provision: December 2003.** The document provides the up to date position in relation to provision of play space and the payment of commuted sums, associated with new housing development.
- **Planning Agreements – Education Provision Local Plan Policy IMP2.** The document sets down FDC's requirements in relation to the level of contributions towards education and the timing of such payments, associated with new housing development.

The Nene Waterfront Development Brief has been prepared in the context of the above national, regional and local planning policies.

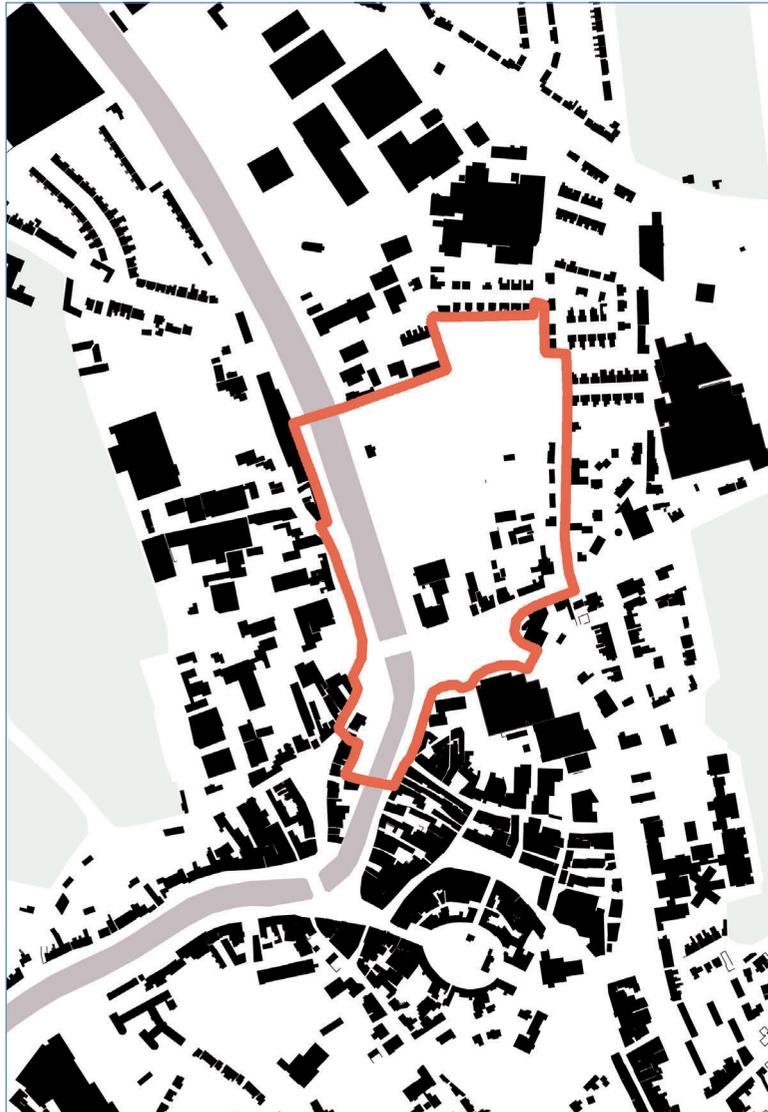


Fig 2.1: Urban grain

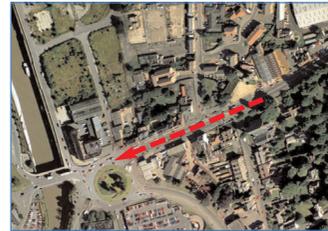


Fig 2.2: Lynn Road is a major through route and provides access to most of the development areas



Fig 2.3: The study area forms a stark 'gap' in the urban form of Wisbech

Urban design influences

This urban design appraisal explores how the Brief area sits within the context of the town of Wisbech, and sets out the key site issues and influences that will shape and inform the future regeneration of Nene Waterfront.

Figure 2.1 shows the brief area and its relationship to the surrounding townscape of Wisbech. The diagram highlights:

- how the Brief area forms a stark 'hole' in the urban form of Wisbech;
- the contrast in the intricate urban forms of the historic heart of Wisbech to the south and the large scale industrial buildings to the north of the study area; and
- the smaller scale of the residential areas immediately to the east and north-east of the Brief area.

In view of the above there is an opportunity for the redevelopment of Nene Waterfront to re-introduce an urban form that can 'stitch' this fragmented area back into the Town. In pursuit of this opportunity the key issues and influences faced by the area are described opposite.

The key site issues and influences include:

- Lynn Road: Role and function as the main through route and access to the sites located on the eastern bank of the River Nene.
- The barriers to pedestrian movement across Lynn Road and hence the severance of the sites from the rest of Wisbech Town Centre.
- Land ownership pattern and the desire to protect existing land ownership boundaries in any redevelopment proposal, as far as possible.
- The orientation of the site and riverside aspect.
- The form and character of the raised flood defence wall.
- The form and character of Nene Parade and the fact that it provides a continuous link along the waterfront.
- The existing road patterns and the hierarchy of movement in and around the sites.
- The nature, location, character and operation of existing land uses surrounding the Brief area.
- The historic patterns of development and the form and character of the existing built form and townscape within the town.
- The nature and character of development on the western bank, north of the Freedom Bridge.
- The location of the individual sites and their relationship to their surroundings.
- The proximity of the Brief area to the existing town centre.

-  Major routes
-  Minor routes
-  One way streets
-  Pedestrian crossing points
-  Significant pedestrian movement barrier
-  Existing buildings
-  Existing landmarks
-  Negative edges
-  Significant views
-  Existing green spaces
-  Key site boundaries

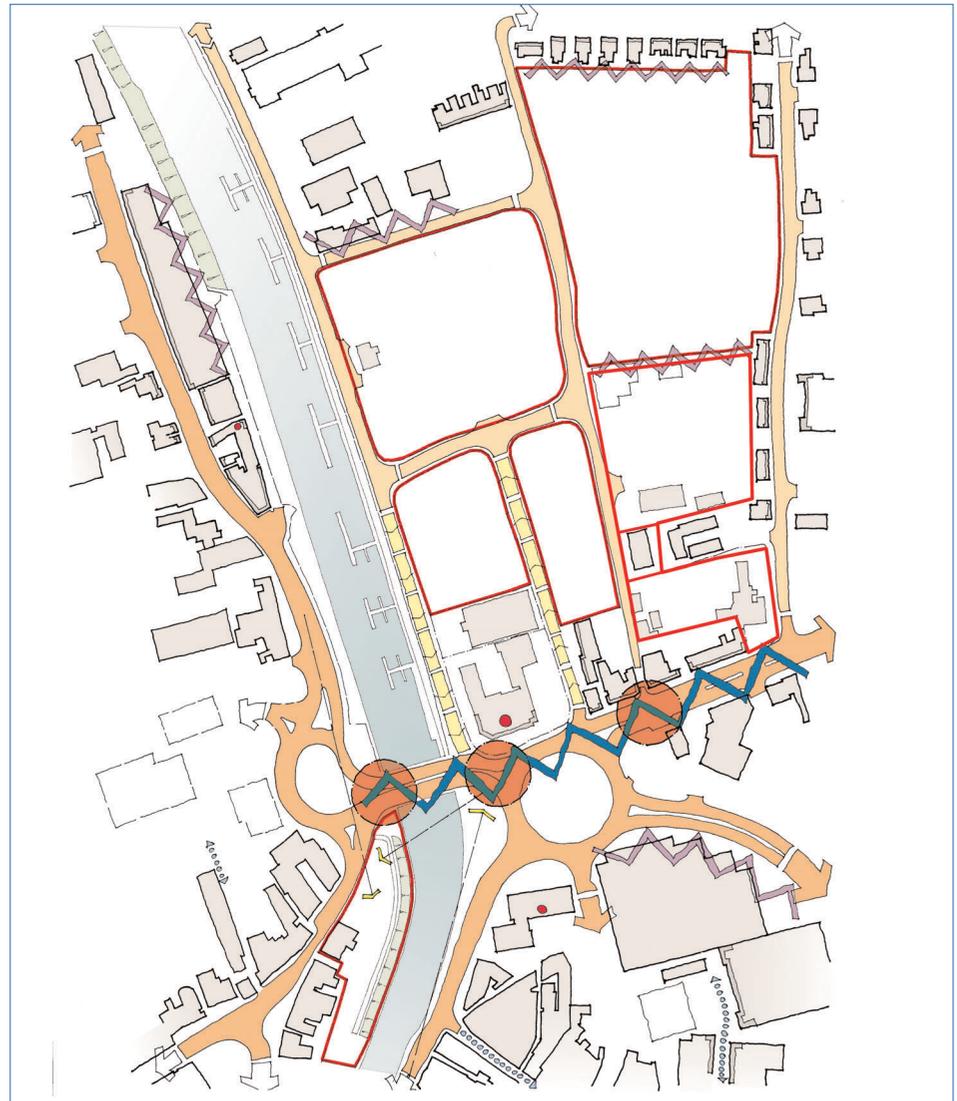


Fig 2.4 Key site issues and influences

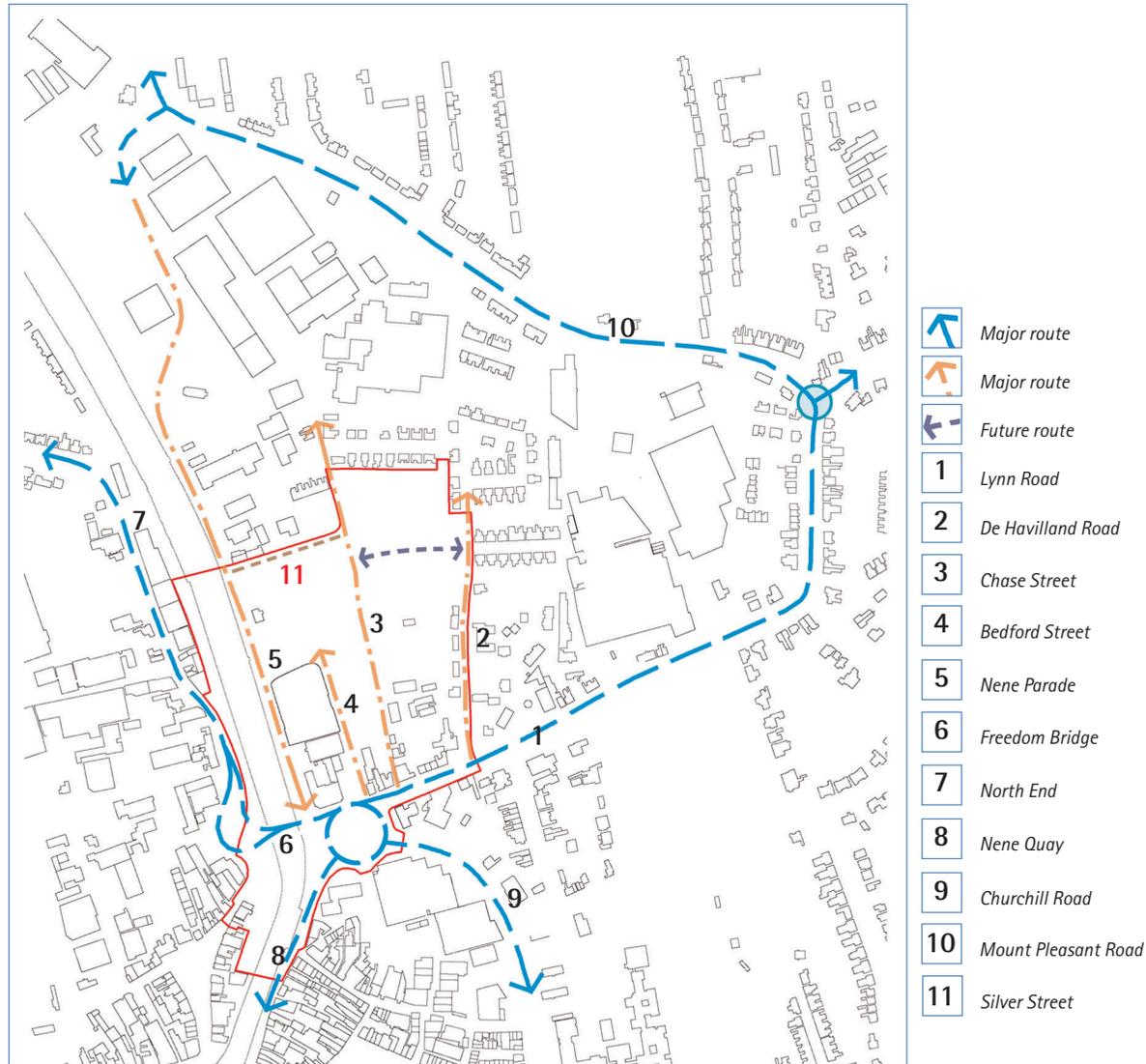


Fig 2.5: Movement network

Movement and access

An assessment of existing movement and access has been undertaken by Campbell Reith. This assessment has allowed for the identification of a movement strategy for the Brief area and for the identification of all necessary transport improvements associated with the regeneration of Nene Waterfront, their costs and phasing.

This information has provided the basis for assessing the level of contribution that will be sought from developers advancing proposals within the Brief area towards the delivery of essential highway and access works (see section 5).

EXISTING SITUATION

By far the greatest amount of transport usage in Wisbech is car based. The A47 and A1101 originally met in the centre of the town, and the crossing of the River Nene by the A1101 made Wisbech a vital link in the wider Fens road network. The Freedom Bridge (constructed in the 1970s) took the A1101 away from the old market place town centre. A southern and eastern by-pass has taken the A47 out of town. The traffic using the A1101 is a mixture of local traffic and long-distance through traffic.

The roundabout to the south of the study area has five major roads connecting into it:

- Freedom Bridge (A1101 west);
- Lynn Road;
- Churchill Road (east);
- access to the Horsefair multi-storey car park and the bus station; and
- Nene Quay, connecting to the old Town Bridge across the River Nene.

A large proportion of the traffic in and around Wisbech passes through this single roundabout. Traffic counts show that Lynn Road carries a heavy volume of traffic for its type, and Churchill Road may not have fulfilled all that was hoped of it.

The Freedom Bridge roundabout and Lynn Road have a poor accident record, and a detailed study by the County Council found that a large proportion of the accidents were pedestrian or cycle related. The study therefore considered ways of reducing accidents without increasing traffic congestion.

CHALLENGES FOR REGENERATION

The Brief area is physically close to the Town Centre and the bus station, but poor pedestrian access across the Freedom Bridge roundabout gives a perception of a relatively isolated area. The challenge is to find ways of 'stitching' the site back into the Town whilst balancing the needs of safety and pedestrian linkage with traffic flow and congestion issues.

POTENTIAL ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

The redevelopment of Nene Waterfront for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, cafe, restaurant and yacht related uses requires the removal of Port traffic from Nene Parade, Bedford Street, Russell Street and Chase Street. It is proposed, therefore that all port traffic be routed via Mount Pleasant Road. This will require upgrading of the Mount Pleasant Road / Lynn Road junction.

De Havilland Road has the potential to become a major vehicular route into and out of the Brief area. It is of a good standard in terms of road width and alignment and already has a junction with Lynn Road. However, the junction has a poor accident record and it would therefore be necessary to improve the De Havilland Road / Lynn Road junction to accommodate the Brief area traffic and to reduce accidents by improving road safety. This will involve the introduction of signalisation and new pedestrian crossing facilities.

Bedford Street currently provides the main route into the Brief area, and is also used as a route through the area into the commercial port facilities. It has a carriageway of approximately 7m width and a footway (of varying width) on both sides. It currently operates one way northbound. As part of the regeneration it is proposed to stop up this road in the vicinity of Lynn Road and improve the pedestrian environment, through the introduction of measures that may include raised pedestrian crossings and shared surfaces.

The works to this junction will, however allow for police vehicles to access Lynn Road, via Bedford Street and their proposed new vehicular access road and for existing businesses to access their premises.

Chase Street is narrow and has no proper footways with its junction to Lynn Road. Vehicular traffic is currently permitted northbound only. As with Bedford Street it is proposed to stop up this road and to improve the pedestrian environment of the street itself and its junction with Lynn Road.

Nene Parade. The southern end of Nene Parade currently operates one way southbound, and is used as a main access out of the area and for existing port traffic. The junction of Nene Parade and Freedom Bridge is poor, and there have been a number of accidents at the site. There is potential to pedestrianise Nene Parade as part of the redevelopment of the Brief area. The traffic assessment work, however indicates that to allow for the stopping up of this route and its subsequent pedestrianisation will require the introduction of a new link road, connecting Chase Street to De Havilland Road and the upgrading of the De Havilland/ Lynn Road Junction to a signalised junction.

Accommodating police operational requirements: As part of the process it will be necessary to continue to accommodate the operational requirements of the police in terms of vehicles needing to leave the site at high speeds in emergency situations.

At the present time these vehicles leave the site via Nene Parade and onto Lynn Road. Thus until such time as an appropriate alternative access can be provided the existing arrangements will be retained.

In view of the proposals to pedestrianise Nene Parade this will necessitate the southern part of Nene Parade remaining open until such time as an alternative access can be provided.

A potential alternative access for the police onto Bedford Street has been identified. This will require a strip of land from the site currently occupied by the night club. Thus as part of any redevelopment this site will be expected to allow for the construction of an alternative access that meets the operational requirements of the Police.

Silver Street: Silver Street provides potential access to land in the northern part of the Brief Area. It is envisaged that this area should accommodate new employment generating uses. Thus in the context of the objectives to both ensure that employment related traffic is diverted via Mount Pleasant Road and to prevent rat running through the Brief area it is proposed that all traffic leaving this site will be permitted to turn left only into Silver Street. This will require the introduction of bollards or some other mechanism to stop up Silver Street in the vicinity of the proposed new employment site.

Pedestrian Linkages: A number of strategies for improving pedestrian linkages between the Brief area, the Port and the surrounding residential areas have been considered as part of the Transport Assessment. The outcome of this work has been integrated into the Brief.

Flood risk

The majority of the Brief area is shown as being in a tidal flood plain on the Environment Agency's Indicative Flood plain Maps - i.e. within an area which would flood as a result of a 1 in 200 year return period tidal event if no flood defences existed. Developers advancing proposals within the Brief area will therefore need to undertake a flood risk assessment to accompany their schemes, and demonstrate that flood protection measures have been designed into the buildings. As part of the Brief preparation process Bullen Consulting have undertaken a preliminary flood risk assessment of the Brief area. The output from this assessment is summarised below:

EXISTING FLOOD ALLEVIATION MEASURES

The River Nene through Wisbech is a tidal river with levels determined by tide levels in The Wash. Fluvial flows in the River Nene are controlled by the Dog-in-a-Doublet Sluice which is located approximately 22km upstream of Wisbech. There is also an upstream tidal limit on the river. The whole of the development area is protected from tidal flooding by a series of flood defences consisting of:

- a reinforced concrete wall constructed above a series of steel sheet piles along the river edge;
- an earth embankment at the northernmost end of the development area; and
- floodgates located in the defence wall to allow pedestrian and vehicular access through the flood defence.

The flood defences are maintained by the Environment Agency and are generally considered to be in good structural condition. However, in the past the defence system has been known to deteriorate as a result of erosion, slippage and loss of channel shape. Stabilisation works have been implemented and further similar works are likely to be required in the future. The EA has decided that a 1 in 200 year standard should be sustained against tidal flooding, and has allowed funds in its investment plans to cover repairs to erosion, bank stabilisation, channel shaping, clearance etc.

There are only a few surface water outfalls into the river along the lengths of the banks within the development area. These have non-return flap valves to prevent river water backing up into the surface water drainage system at high tide.

The existing standard of protection from tidal flooding to the majority of the site is probably in excess of a 1 in 200 year event - i.e. an annual probability of less than 0.5%.

POTENTIAL FLOOD RISKS

Existing Surface Water Drainage: Given that the existing standard of protection afforded to the Brief area is considered to be in excess of a 1 in 200 year return period, the probability of the defences overtopping is very low. During high tides the existing drainage system has the potential to back-up and cause localised flooding from manholes either due to the system's capacity being exceeded or because of faulty flap valves. It is considered that the existing surface water drainage system provides a standard of service of less than 1 in 50 years. Hence the probability of flooding due to the backing-up of the system is higher than flooding caused by overtopping the defences. However, if such flooding occurred it would probably be localised, shallow and of short duration.

The residual risks which potentially affect the specific development sites will vary, and these should be considered when individual site risk assessments are carried out.

Floodgates: The floodgates are operated manually by EA staff on receipt of warnings of extreme high tide levels. The potential failure of the gates to maintain the integrity of the flood defence system could be triggered by a number of circumstances:

- lack of, or late, warning of extreme high tide levels;
- delay in closing the gates;
- damage to the gates to prevent them from being closed; and
- poorly maintained seals and skirts allowing seepage through the defence line.

There is a sophisticated tide prediction and warning system in place, together with a standard operating system to ensure that the gates are closed well ahead of peak tide levels. There are also systems in place to provide temporary defences should the gates not be shut. Therefore, the probability of failure of the floodgates to maintain the integrity of the defence system is considered to be low.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

In considering the layout and form of development of individual sites, developers will need to consider ways of mitigating flooding should the defences be breached. Exact arrangements will need to be agreed by individual developers with the Environment Agency, but potential options to deal with residual risk could include:

- locating open space in the areas with the lowest ground levels;
- constructing buildings with living accommodation on the first floor rather than the ground floor;
- constructing flood storage areas;
- providing walls and floodgates to individual sites;
- flood-proofing new buildings; and
- connecting properties to the EA's Automatic Voice Messaging system and ensure awareness of flood warning systems.

The above approaches will need to be carefully considered in parallel with other design issues in order to ensure that a public realm of appropriate quality and character is created: for example, the lack of 'active' uses' at ground floor level could result in dead street frontages.

The potential for flooding from the surface water drainage system could be reduced by: upgrading the existing system; providing additional storage; and sealing manhole covers.

Ground conditions

As part of the brief preparation process, Bullen Consulting undertook a Desk Study and Preliminary Ground Investigation of the Brief area. The area has been subdivided into four main areas: Sites 1, 2, 3 and 4, for ease of describing the individual character and details of these individual plots. The main purpose of the study was to identify potential contamination issues. It should be noted that the Gas Distribution site to the south of site 4 did not form part of this appraisal. It is likely, however, to have significant contamination issues, and hence if brought forward for development will need to be subject to detailed testing.

The desk study investigation included a broad assessment of:

- Current and former land use.
- Geology, hydrogeology and hydrology of the area.
- Potential sources, migratory pathways and targets (receptors) for contamination.

The study identified that:

- Parts of the site have previously been used for a variety of potentially ground contaminating uses; and
- Several sources of potential contamination in the surrounding area – however, all were considered to represent a 'low' risk.

The preliminary ground investigation found that:

- The Brief area is located on an area of silty clay and sandy silts underlain by Amphihill Clay, which are recorded as between 38m to 50m thick. No faults cross the site.
- Groundwater generally at less than 3m depth, principally within the sand.
- Groundwater flow across the Brief area is considered to be to the north-west;
- Elevated heavy metals, TPH and sulphate contamination in soil samples on sites 1, 2, 3 and 4.

- Elevated phenol, iron, sulphate, cyanide and ammonia contamination in some water samples on sites 2 and 4.
- Elevated gas levels in parts of the Brief area and hence it is considered that gas protection may be necessary for residential development on sites 2,3 and 4. No elevated gas levels were recorded on Site 1.

In view of the above and as part of any future planning application process, developers will be required to undertake more detailed ground investigations prior to development, and will need to provide:

- A site-wide array of sampling and analysis points.
- Installation of permanent groundwater monitoring wells, including at site boundaries.
- Regular monitoring of groundwater wells for levels and/or quality.
- Leachability testing.
- Geotechnical testing for building foundations.
- Testing appropriate to determine suitability of bio-remediation and other alternative techniques.

As a result of the above developers will need to produce a remediation strategy and agree it with the EA prior to establishing firm costs for clean-up.

At this stage it has been estimated that the total remedial cost range for clean-up of contaminated soil is approximately £1.4 – 2.9 million. However, these estimated costs are disproportionate on Site 4 where contamination is heaviest.

The findings of the preliminary ground investigation (2003) in respect of groundwater quality are such that remediation is not likely to be required. However, the earlier findings of the 1991 Report for Site 4 record higher levels for some contaminants in water which may indicate that groundwater remediation might be required. Therefore, a detailed site-specific risk assessment should be undertaken of groundwater contamination of Site 4.

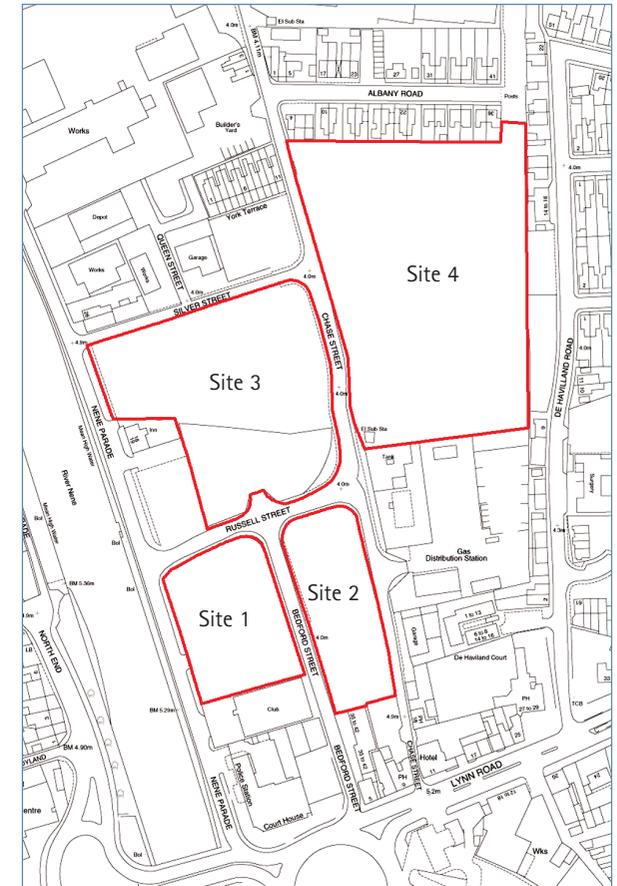


Fig 2.6: Location of sites described in Ground conditions and Archeological Appraisals

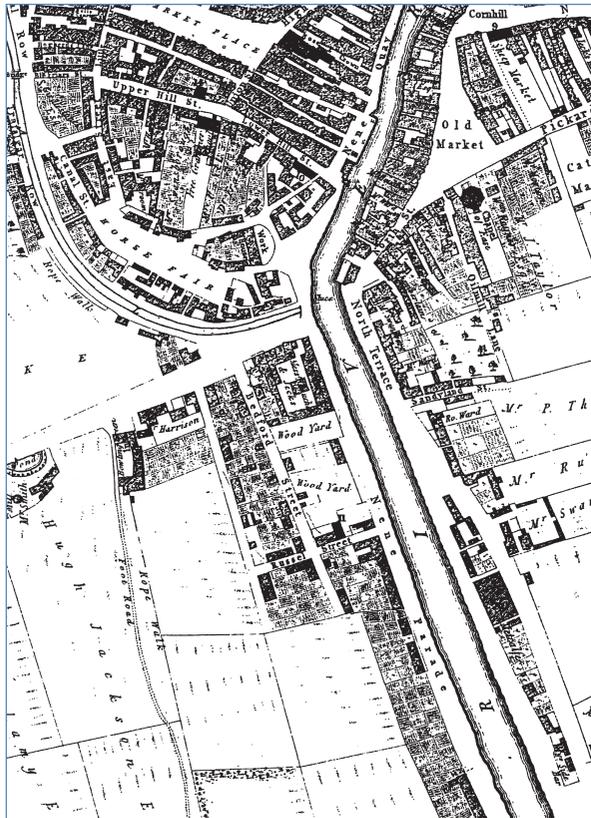


Fig 2.7: Plan of Wisbech Town 1830 (inverted)

Archaeology

An archeological desktop study of the Brief area and the surrounding area (about one square km in total) was undertaken by Bullen Consultants in 2003 following the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) guidelines. An archeological walkover study was not undertaken because the sites proposed for redevelopment are under modern debris, concrete and tarmac, as well as scrub, and there was a low potential for the discovery of new archeological sites.

Of the known sites, monuments and listed buildings within the Brief area, none fall within the proposed regeneration area.

Site 1 was used for industrial purposes until the 1927 Ordnance Survey edition, when the majority of the site is shown as empty buildings. The 1991 OS edition, however, shows the area to be built up.

Site 2 is shown as being largely under residential uses until somewhere between 1958 and 1991, except for one small part of the site which was used as a saw mill and timber yard. Between the 1958 and 1991 OS editions, the residential houses were removed, and part of the area used as a factory or storage depot. This has since been removed.

Site 3 was partially used for housing on the 1830 plan of the town. As Wisbech expanded in the late 1800's, more housing was built within the site boundary, as well as a coal yard. The site was used solely for residential until some time between 1958 and 1991 OS editions when, like Site 2, it was used for industrial purposes. Again, these uses have since been removed.

Site 4 is not shown as built upon until the 1867 map when a gas works is shown. The remnants of this are shown on the 1991 OS edition, but the site is otherwise empty.

The archeological potential of the four key sites within the Brief area is low. Building on the sites in the last two hundred years will have disturbed any shallowly buried remains, and any deeper buried remains may not be disturbed by regeneration of the area. However, the regeneration may impact upon buried archeological remains but - given that the sites have been built

over at one time or another - the chance of finding previously unrecorded sites is considered low. The Victorian Housing and industrial sites may have left below surface remains which may be of note. Industrial warehouses may have included vaults below them, as has been seen elsewhere in Wisbech.

Developers should consult with English Heritage and the Cambridgeshire County Archaeologist in drawing up their proposals at the earliest opportunity. Watching briefs may be required for any ground disturbance works.

Utilities

EXISTING SERVICES

A review of the existing services and public utilities provision within the Brief area has been undertaken. This review indicates that all essential services are available within the Brief area.

ANGLIAN WATER

Drainage

Foul and surface water sewerage is available. The foul sewerage system within the brief area is gravity based, and beyond the port area is then pumped to the Wisbech Sewerage Treatment Works.

Surface water sewerage is discharged via gravity sewers to a number of flapped outfalls to the River Nene up stream of Freedom Bridge and along Nene Quay.

Potable Water

Potable water is available throughout the Brief area by way of comprehensive distribution system. The area is served from the 300mm diameter pipeline that runs along North End and Lynn Road, via smaller mains ranging from 50mm to 100mm diameter pipes.

Anglian Water have advised that their standard connection charges are as follows:-

- Sewerage Infrastructure £315 per unit
- Water Infrastructure £236 per unit
- Water Connections £315 per unit

Anglian water have also indicated that some of the existing cast iron mains in the Brief area may need to be replaced with plastic pipes. Anglian Water would expect developer contributions for replacing the mains of £130.00 per metre.

British Telecom

Both residential and commercial services are available from BT throughout the port area. However the vacant sites are not at present serviced by the BT facilities but can be readily provided from the port area network.

British Telecom do not anticipate having to undertake any major works, other than to provide the appropriate connections into the various development sites. BT will undertake these works at their cost.

ELECTRICITY (24 SEVEN)

24 Seven have indicated that they do not anticipate any problems in providing electricity supplies to the redevelopment area. However, they have indicated that it will be necessary to reinforce their existing network in order to install low voltage mains and service cables to the development sites. 24 seven will meet the increased load by upgrading their existing sub station.

24 Seven have also indicated that they need to divert some of their underground cables where new site access are to be constructed and have suggested that a contingency sum of £6,000 be allowed for these works. 24 Seven, currently charge £700.00 per connection. These costs should be met by developers advancing proposals within the Brief area.

GAS (TRANSCO)

Transco have a number of gas mains throughout the site and port area of which emanate from the Chase Street Distribution Station. The diameters of the various mains range from between 450mm down to 63mm.

Transco have confirmed that there is no gas supply mains beyond the junction of Brigstock road and Crab Marsh.

Until the full scope of the development is known, Transco are unable to provide budget costs for any diversion works that may be required.

Summary of development opportunities

Based on the various physical, urban design and technical assessments undertaken, Figure 2.8 provides a summary of the development opportunities presented by the Brief area. These key opportunities may be described as follows:

- The closure of Nene Parade to all but emergency vehicles and the establishment of a new pedestrian link/promenade along the waterfront
- Provision of a new pedestrian/ cycle bridge link from the site situated to the south of the Freedom Bridge to the eastern bank of the River thus providing a direct link into the Town Centre from the west, linking the old market area to the core of the Town Centre.
- The introduction of improved and safe pedestrian links with the town centre.
- The retention and environmental enhancement of the existing road network within the regeneration area.
- The diversion of Port and employment related traffic via Mount Pleasant and the introduction of associated traffic calming, parking and environmental improvements on it
- The provision of improved pedestrian/ cycle links to the Mount Pleasant housing to the north of the Brief area.
- The creation of a hierarchy of different routes, to help give the area a sense of place, overlooked by built frontages.
- The creation of a series of new and linked open spaces/places, overlooked by development in order to create variety, interest and a sense of place.
- The creation of a strong landmark edge to the riverfront.
- Maximisation of views and contact with the River.
- The upgrading of existing flood defences as part of the public realm improvements.
- Use of landmark elements to reinforce corners/key views corridors.
- Introduction of a range and mix of uses including employment uses towards the northern part of the East bank sites related to the existing port related employment uses. Predominantly residential in the remainder of the sites, with mixed retail/leisure uses concentrated on the riverfront around courtyard type spaces/squares on the key riverside frontage, creating animation and interest.
- The removal of uses which have a negative impact on the area i.e. The night club.



-  Key public frontages
-  Opportunities to reinforce corners
-  Other built edges
-  Key streets and links
-  Potential for connections between main streets
-  Opportunities for public squares/spaces
-  Opportunity for separate access to police station/existing businesses
-  Road closed to traffic
-  Junction improvements

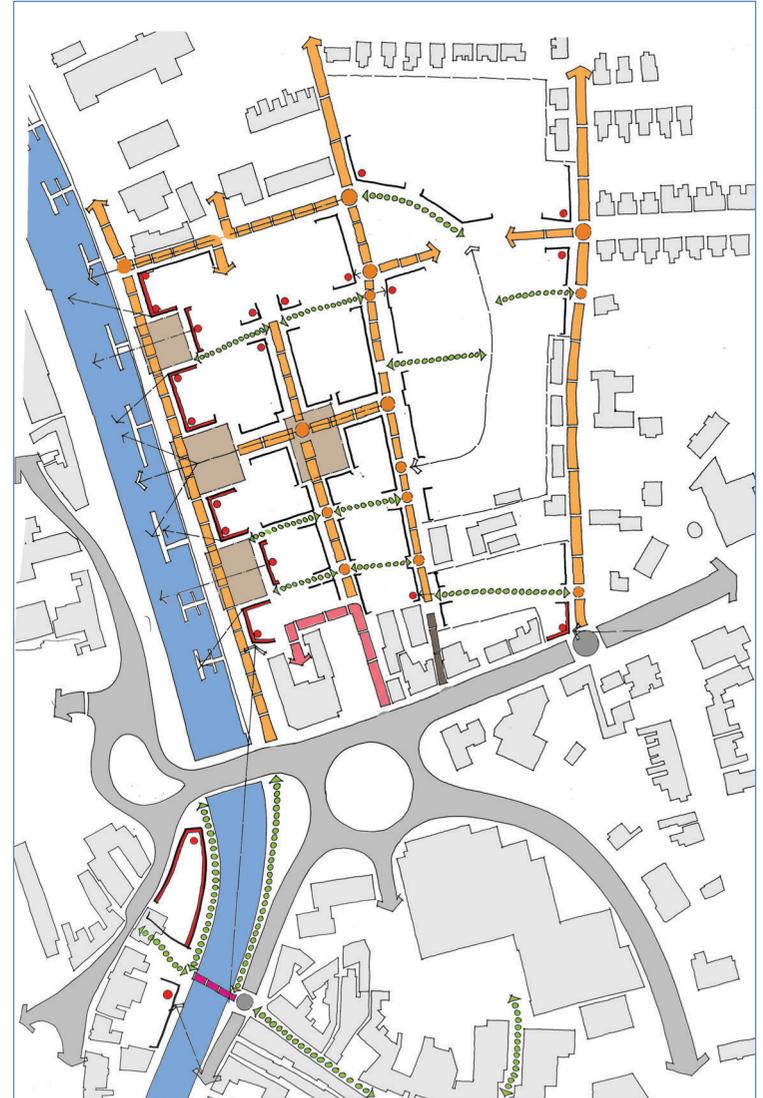


Fig 2.8: Urban design opportunities

Illustrative layout

Based on these urban design principles the illustrative layout shows how many of FDC's ambitions might be realised. It comprises:

NEW BUILDINGS

- A mix of new residential accommodation (houses, flats, live/work, private, affordable).
- A mix of new employment related space.
- New shops, cafes, restaurant, local training and office facilities, leisure uses, within the ground floors fronting onto new waterfront public spaces, comprising Nene Parade and new public courtyard spaces.
- A new yacht harbour, harbour offices, club/training facilities and associated shower, toilet facilities and chandlery.

NEW PUBLIC SPACES

- A waterfront pedestrian/ cycle only promenade comprising Nene Parade and public courtyard spaces.
- A linear park on the western bank of the River.
- A pocket park, bounded by Nene Quay, Freedom Bridge Roundabout and the River.
- A residential amenity/ play space on Bedford Street(LAP).
- Additional pontoons and space, north of the existing provision.
- New signage, street furniture, lighting and public art.
- The planting of street trees along the key streets that comprise the development.
- The upgrading of the existing streets within the development and the promotion of a more pedestrian oriented environment.

TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS

- New pedestrian crossing points across Lynn Road
- A new pedestrian/ cycle footbridge link.
- Closure of Nene Parade to all but access traffic
- Accommodation of police operational requirements in the short and long term, via Nene Parade and Bedford Street respectively.
- On closure of Nene Parade provision of a new vehicular link between Chase Street and De Havilland Road and the associated improvements to the junction of Lynn Road/ De Havilland Road, including the introduction of a new lighted junction.
- Upgrading of the junctions on De Havilland/ Lynn Road
- The stopping up of Chase Street and Bedford Street in the vicinity of their junctions with Lynn Road..
- Re-routing of Port traffic and new employment related traffic via Mount Pleasant Road
- Environmental improvements and introduction of new parking bays in Mount Pleasant Road.
- Freedom Bridge shared use footway/ cycle track.

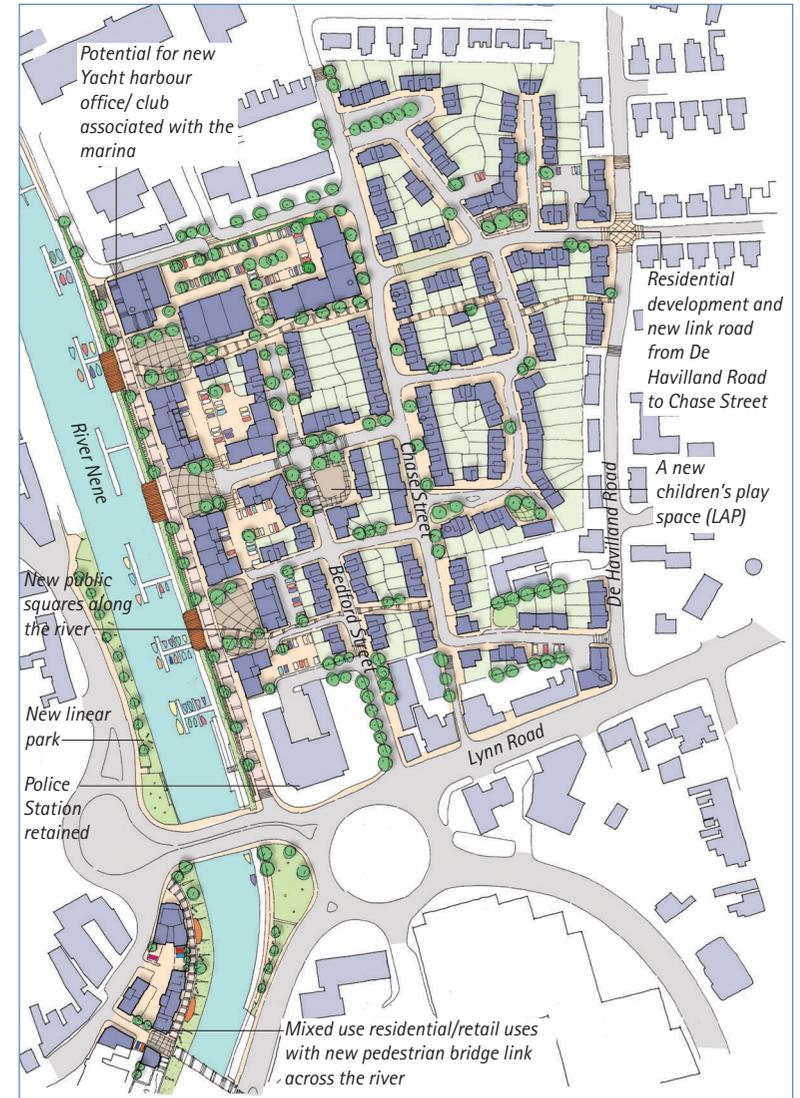


Fig 2.9: Illustrative layout

Section 3: Development Framework

Introduction

The guidance for developers in this document is provided in two parts: this section sets out the Development Framework; and Section 4 sets out the Design Guidance.

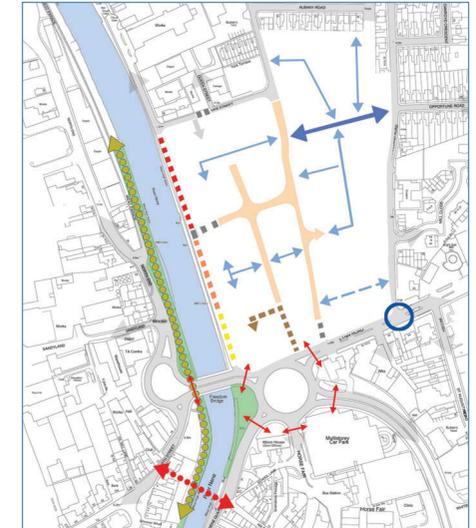
The Development Framework consists of four 'layers' dealing with different aspects of the Port of Wisbech area. These are:

- Land use.
- Routes and linkages.
- Open space and public realm.
- Building heights and landmarks.

These layers can be brought together to form a robust yet flexible framework that sets out the key principles for development without the rigidity or prescriptiveness of an architectural masterplan. The Development Framework is intended to coordinate the development of individual parcels to ensure that each contributes to a coherent urban form. It aims to guide and encourage high quality design of buildings and open space and one which creates an identifiable new 'quarter' within the Brief area but is also sympathetic to the wider context of the Town Centre.



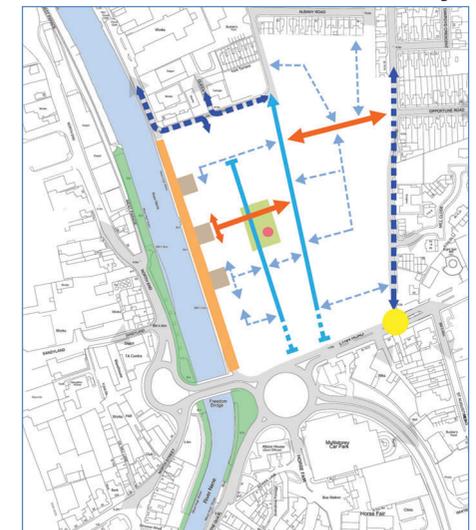
Land use



Routes and linkages



Building heights and landmarks



Open space and public realm

Land use

OBJECTIVES

- To create a new urban quarter with a mix and variety of uses.
- To locate 'destination' uses on the river front to draw visitors to the Brief area.
- To relate sensitively to existing uses around the Brief area.

FRAMEWORK GUIDANCE

A key objective for the Nene Waterfront is to create a vibrant new place within which people will live, work and visit. The Brief makes provision for a mixed use development comprising predominantly residential and a mix of retail, restaurant, commercial, leisure and community uses within key ground floor locations.

In addition it is considered important to build on the success of the yacht harbour. Thus it is proposed that an area associated with the existing employment area will accommodate a new yacht club and harbour office, training facilities and small employment units/ workshops.

The illustrative masterplan makes provision for the following:

- Residential: Up to 330 new residential units, of which 13 % will be affordable.
- Mixed use: Small scale, mixed use development, comprising of specialist retail, restaurant, cafe, commercial uses that build on the areas' potential as a new visitor destination. Such activity must be seen to compliment that of the existing town centre.

Retail activity that competes with and which has the potential to damage the vitality and viability of the existing town centre will not be considered to be appropriate.

- B1 employment: Up to 1,440sqm of small scale employment workshops.
- Yacht Harbour, harbour offices and multi purpose training & conference facility: As part of the regeneration strategy it is proposed to carry out more detailed feasibility work to assess the precise requirements/ specification of this function.
- Car parking: Overall, residential parking provision should be in accordance with the government's guidance in PPG3 on securing sustainable residential environments, that is an average provision of 1.5 spaces per residential unit.

This car parking should be accommodated within secure, on site parking areas i.e. within garages, either integral to the building; in curtilage parking, accessed from either the front or the rear of the property; shared parking in a 'public courtyard (to the front of dwellings) or in a 'private' courtyard (to the rear of dwellings); and/ or semi basement parking associated with the waterfront development.

In terms of the distribution of these various land uses across the site the Brief proposes the following:

Zone 1

This zone shall include a mix of residential accommodation and a new link road from De Havilland Road to Chase Street. The precise form and layout of the residential development will depend upon the outcome of detailed ground investigations and the proposed remediation strategy.

Zone 2

It is envisaged that this zone shall include a mix of residential, leisure (Class D2), cafe/restaurant (Class A3), and employment (B1a, b,c) uses. It may also contain an element of small scale retail (Class A1). Residential above ground floor cafe/restaurant/leisure uses ('vertical' mixed-use buildings) will be particularly encouraged on the waterfront. It is likely that residential will be predominantly flats, although houses of an urban character and density will also be appropriate. It is considered that the northern part of the zone would be particularly suited to the accommodation of marina / port

related leisure and employment uses.

Zone 3

This zone should include for a mixed residential and leisure /retail/cafe/restaurant/ commercial (Class D2, A1, A2, A3, B1) uses. It is envisaged that such uses will be accommodated within the ground floors of the buildings associated with the proposed town square. In addition the zone should include for the provision of an open space designed to accommodate a Local Area for Play (LAP). The LAP could be provided to the east of the zone (rather than on the river front) so that it is accessible to residents from the wider regeneration area.

Zones 4a and b

These zones shall include a mix of existing uses (in existing buildings) along with new buildings accommodating residential and retail/cafe/restaurant/leisure (Class D2, A1, A2 and A3) uses. Vertical mixing uses will be encouraged.

Zone 5

It is likely that the existing uses will remain, although there may be long-term potential for future redevelopment for a mix of uses. Such future development will be encouraged.

In addition developers advancing residential proposals will be expected to include for 13% of total housing units as affordable.



Fig 3.1: Active uses will bring life and vitality to the riverfront



Fig 3.2: Residential may predominate, but it must be supported by a mix of other uses

- Zone 1: Mixed residential
- Zone 2: Mixed residential / yacht club/ workshops /leisure/retail/ restaurant/cafes
- Zone 3: Mixed residential /leisure/retail/ restaurant/ cafes.
- Zones 4A & B: Existing uses and mixed residential/office/leisure/retail/A3
- Zone 5: Existing uses remain (with potential for future mixed-use)
- New Waterfront public realm
- Public realm improvements

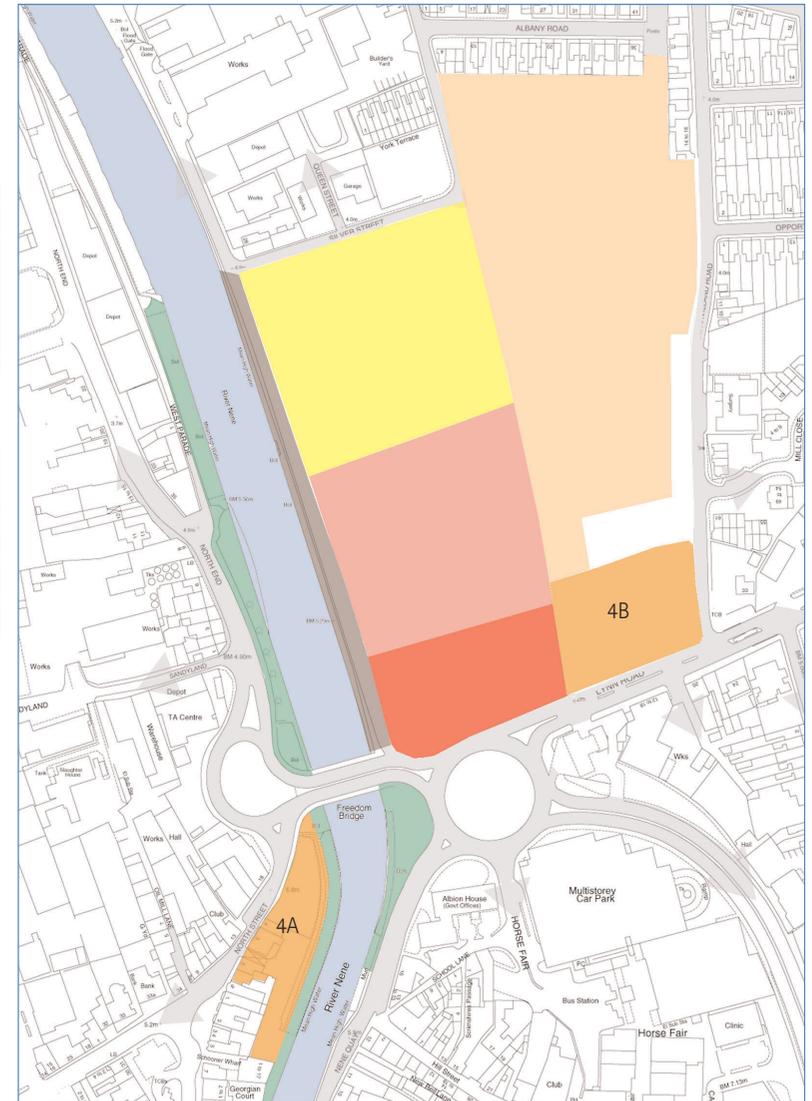


Fig 3.3: Land use framework

Routes and linkages

OBJECTIVES

- To create a permeable network of routes, so that pedestrians can move about easily within the Brief area.
- To improve the pedestrian/ cycle linkages to the wider area, especially to the Town Centre to the south and from the existing housing to the north.
- To create new riverside routes for pedestrians that make the most of the special character of this part of Wisbech.

FRAMEWORK GUIDANCE

Figure 3.4 describes the network of routes and connections Fenland District Council will seek for the redevelopment of the Brief area. The key principles include:

- The retention and environmental enhancement of the existing internal street layout.
 - The closure of Nene Parade to all but emergency vehicle traffic, and the creation of a high quality pedestrian orientated public realm.
 - On closure of Nene Parade, the introduction of new vehicular route connecting De Havilland Road and Chase Street.
 - The upgrading of De Havilland Road, including the introduction of a new signalised junction and pedestrian crossing.
 - The stopping up of Chase Street and Bedford Street in the vicinity of their junctions with Lynn Road.
 - The provision of an appropriate access strategy which meets the operational requirements of the existing police station, both in the short and long terms. This strategy is likely to require the maintenance of the existing Nene Parade access until a suitable alternative access can be created onto Bedford Street.
 - The provision of a new foot/ cycle bridge connecting the east and west riverbanks, south of Freedom Bridge.
- The provision of a new pedestrian / cycle route along the western bank of the River, providing a contrasting experience to Nene Parade.
 - The re-direction of Port traffic via Mount Pleasant Road.
 - The upgrading of Mount Pleasant Road, together with its junction with Lynn Road.
 - The introduction of new/ upgraded pedestrian crossing points.
 - The stopping up of Silver Street and the introduction of a left only access onto Silver Street from the new employment area in order to prevent employment traffic from passing into the main development.
 - The phasing of the proposed highway improvements in accordance with the phasing strategy set out in the Transport Assessment (RD2).

-  Existing streets retained and upgraded
-  Proposed pedestrianisation of Nene Parade (PHASE 1)
-  Proposed pedestrianisation of Nene Parade (PHASE 2)
-  Proposed pedestrianisation of Nene Parade (PHASE 3)
-  Proposed riverside pedestrian / cycle route in soft landscaped corridor
-  Proposed foot/cycle bridge across river
-  Potential to introduce new/ improved pedestrian crossing points
-  Stopping up of route to all but police and existing business traffic
-  Stopping up of existing vehicular routes
-  Shared surface internal links
-  Desirable shared surface route
-  New signalised junction
-  Introduction of new vehicular link following closure of Nene Parade to traffic.

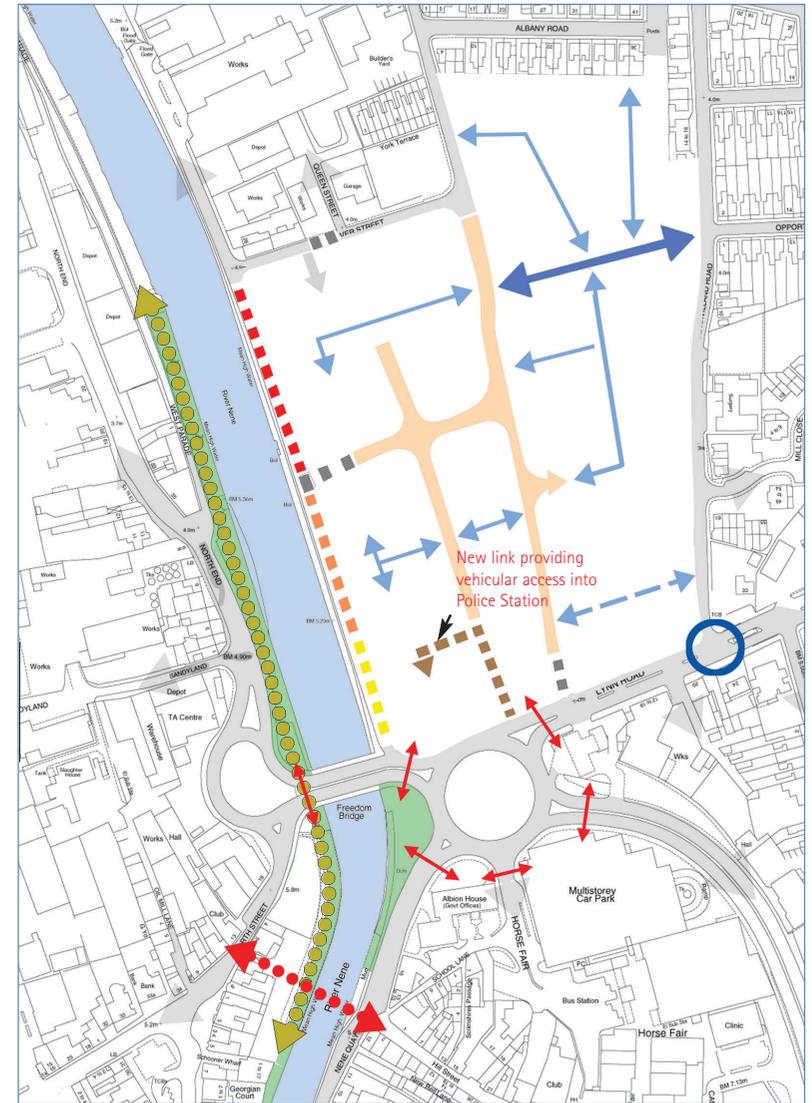


Fig 3.4: Routes and linkages

Open space and public realm

OBJECTIVES

- To create high quality, pedestrian orientated environment along both the east and west banks of the River Nene.
- To introduce public open spaces integrated with these routes, and defined by strong buildings and lively ground floor uses.
- To ensure that a legible place is created, by encouraging the development of a hierarchy of routes within the Brief area.
- To green the urban environment.

FRAMEWORK GUIDANCE

- Fenland District Council will design and implement the proposed pedestrian-dominated spaces on the east and west banks of the River Nene. The Council will also take the lead in procuring a new pedestrian bridge link across the River Nene south of Freedom Bridge (see Routes and Linkages Framework)
- Developers bringing forward sites on the riverfront will be required to include the public spaces, as indicated. The design, character and quality of these spaces will be required to relate to the design proposals that will be prepared in respect of the pedestrianisation of Nene Parade. This will necessitate liaison with FDC at the detailed planning stages in respect of each particular site.
- The provision of a new public amenity/open space including a local area for play (LAP) on Bedford Street. This should be urban in character and designed for use by residents of the new development and the wider area.
- De Havilland Road and Chase Street will be the principle linkages from the water front to the wider area. They should be designed to reflect their importance, and should include street tree planting to give them a contrasting character to other streets in the regeneration area.

- The provision of an appropriate level of residential amenity space in line with FDC guidance, including children's play space.
- To introduce public art and local tourism initiatives into the project.

In the context of the above FDC propose to produce a Landscape Plan for the Brief area. This Plan will provide more detailed guidance in relation to the treatment of the public realm, both on and off site.

Developers advancing proposals within the Brief area will be expected to comply with the guidance set out in the Landscape Plan.



Fig 3.5: proposed character of principal street



Fig 3.6: Proposed riverfront character

-  Riverfront pedestrianised space
-  Hard landscaped riverfront public squares with urban character
-  Principle street with tree planting as appropriate
-  Enhanced existing streets - given pedestrian priority.
-  Existing street closed to all but police/existing business
-  Existing street creating interface between proposed and existing development
-  Urban residential space incorporating children's play area (LAP)
-  Environmental enhancements adjacent to river front
-  Local Area for Play
-  Junction improvements
-  Internal 'Home Zones'/pedestrian priority

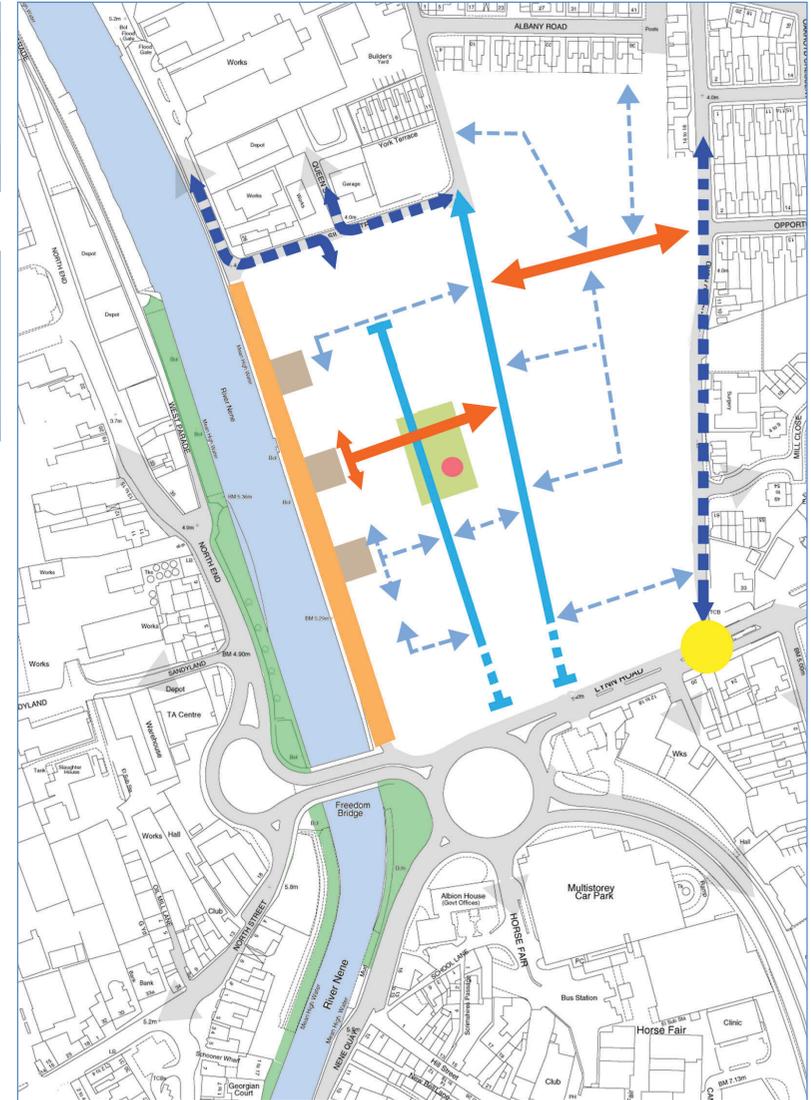


Fig 3.7: Open space and public realm

Building heights and landmarks

OBJECTIVES

- To create a new urban quarter with a strong urban character and identity.
- To reinforce the proposed linear route along the river.
- To relate development sensitively to adjacent uses.

FRAMEWORK GUIDANCE

- The highest buildings will be located on the river front, where buildings of up to five storeys will be appropriate.
- There are opportunities to create landmarks with high quality buildings - these may be higher than is generally recommended.
- Apart from the waterfront and areas next to existing residential buildings, heights of between 2 - 4 storeys will be appropriate.
- Heights generally to fall from high point on waterfront to 2/3 storeys fronting De Havilland Road

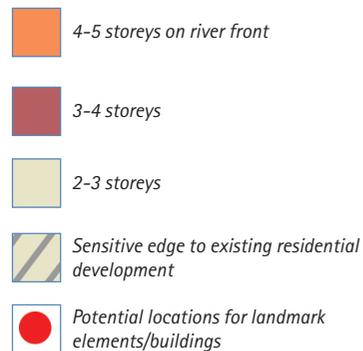


Fig 3.8: Building heights and landmarks

Section 4: Design Guidance



Fig 4.1: The Brinks



Fig 4.2: The Market Place



Fig 4.3: The 'Oval'



Fig 4.4: Wisbech's three 'set pieces':

1. the continuous line of buildings lining North Brink creates a very positive and strong sense of arrival in the town for those approaching from the south and west;
2. the Market Place that forms the commercial core to the Town; and
3. the 'Oval' made up of the Crescent, Union Place and Ely Place.

Introduction

Section 3 sets out the key principles for the development of the Nene Waterfront as a series of Framework 'layers'. This section is designed to establish a set of:

- Design principles that can help the redevelopment of the Nene Waterfront relate positively to the identity and character of Wisbech, creating a genuine sense of place; and
- General urban design guidance that illustrates best practice in making good places happen.

The design principles relating to Wisbech are derived from an urban design analysis of the town centre undertaken by Tibbalds in October 2003. A summary of this analysis is used to inform the urban design themes introduced through the general guidance.

Urban design analysis

In order to help inform the process Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design undertook a character analysis of the townscape of Wisbech, along with the neighbouring towns of Ely and Downham Market. The analysis has three parts:

1. What are the characteristics of Wisbech?
2. What makes Wisbech different from other nearby towns?
3. What are the urban design lessons for the Port of Wisbech redevelopment?

OVERVIEW OF WISBECH

Wisbech has strong, clearly identifiable character – its Georgian architecture and townscape are outstanding. However, this character is very much limited to the core of the town and, in particular, to three 'set pieces':

- The continuous line of high-quality buildings lining North Brink on the north bank of the River Nene to the west of the town centre, that creates a very positive and strong sense of arrival in the town for those approaching from the south and west.
- The Market Place that forms the commercial core to the Town.
- The 'Oval' made up of the Crescent, Union Place and Ely Place, which forms a focus for small offices and public facilities such as the library.

Moving away from the core of the town, the townscape becomes less urban and the quality of the buildings diminishes. Figure 4.5 shows how the urban pattern is tightly focussed in the Town Centre and disintegrates with distance from it.

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Although Wisbech is famed for its Georgian architecture, the town has a rich mix of building types and styles. This rich mix is not random, however, and is related to the different 'character areas' found within Wisbech.

Figure 4.5 breaks the centre of Wisbech down into a series of overlapping 'character areas'. These are areas given a coherent character by: a similar range of uses; shared characteristics of layout ('urban grain'); similar building heights and types; and, very often, buildings of a similar age. The key character areas are:

- The Town Centre Core.
- The Brinks.
- Town Centre Fringes.
- The 'working' waterfront.
- Residential areas.

THE TOWN CENTRE CORE

The main influences on the character of the Town Centre are:

- The urban grain is dense, with buildings of a very 'urban' scale - three storeys is the norm.
- Formal spaces are 'hidden' away, and approached via narrow streets and alleyways. These spaces are strongly enclosed and defined by buildings, that form almost continuous edges around them. However, buildings do not really acknowledge the waterfront - it's an inward looking area.
- There is a variety of building types and styles in Market Place - but these are given coherence through: limited palette of materials; consistent building lines; consistent plot widths.



Town Centre Core



The Brinks



Town Centre Fringe



'Working' Waterfront



Residential areas

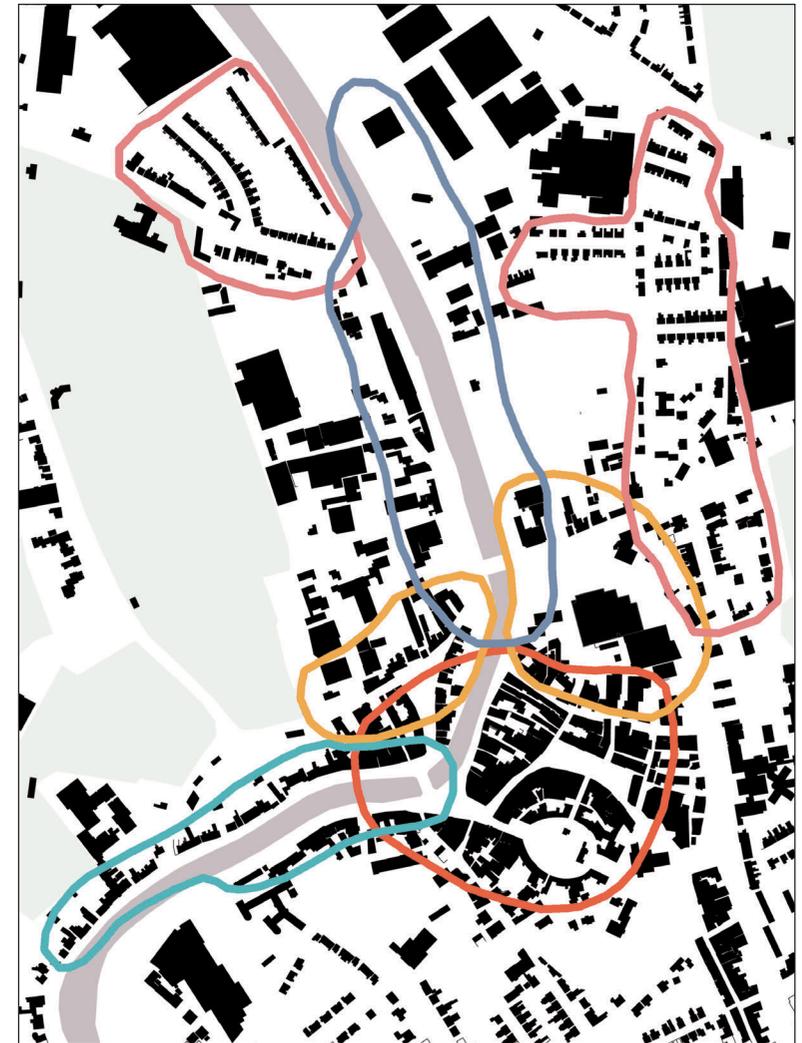


Fig 4.5: Townscape Character



Fig 4.6: Downham Market's central open space has a much more informal and smaller scale character than Wisbech's Market Square



Fig 4.7: Ely's High Street has a strong linear form, but does not have the commanding 'presence' of Wisbech's set pieces.

THE BRINKS

The initial impression is of sweeping building line of strong Georgian buildings. Yet - on closer inspection - there is a surprising amount of variety within this 'terrace':

- There is a tendency for buildings to be less formal in appearance further away from the town centre, with asymmetrical elevational arrangements of windows and doors, pitched roofs visible from the street, dormer windows, plain materials and detailing, and lower heights of around 2 to 3 storeys.
- Closer to the town centre, the architecture becomes more formal with: symmetrical, elegantly proportioned elevational

arrangements; parapets disguising pitched roofs, to give an imposing appearance; and rich detailing (especially where The Brinks overlaps with the Town Centre Core, where commercial buildings such as banks announce their importance through grand entrances).

The Brinks is given its coherence through a strong building line that - although it is broken in a couple of places - ties all the buildings together. Additionally, all buildings face the same way - with fronts onto the river.

TOWN CENTRE FRINGES

The Town Centre 'fringe' areas that surround the core are all different in character. The Fringe around the old market is one of the few with a positive character, where townscape is attractive, and buildings define a clear public space. However, most of the fringe areas have a rather negative character - for example, the bus station and northwards towards Freedom Bridge. These unsuccessful areas tend to:

- Have 'pavilion' buildings that sit in the centre of their sites, so that there are areas of 'left over' space between them and the street.
- Lack the consistent arrangement of public building fronts and private building backs of more successful parts of the town.
- Have buildings with large 'footprints' that reduce opportunities for pedestrian connections (a lack of 'permeability' to use the urban design jargon).
- Be dominated by roads and fast-moving cars, and so not have public places where people enjoy lingering.

WHAT MAKES WISBECH DIFFERENT TO NEARBY TOWNS?

Comparing Wisbech with the neighbouring towns of Downham Market and Ely provides an indication of the special character of Wisbech, in particular:

- Scale - Wisbech has strong, urban scale buildings, particularly in its Town Centre and in the Brinks; and
- Formality - three 'set pieces' that give the town a real sense

of place

The comparison also highlights the shared successful characteristics:

- Each town has a central focus - it is clear where the centre is, and where it ends.
- There is a sense of expectation / anticipation along routes leading to town centres, so that it is obvious to people which way to go.
- The Town Centre core tends to be the most distinctive area but other 'character areas' or quarters have their own identity - the most obvious being the cathedral 'quarter' at Ely.

LESSONS FOR NENE WATERFRONT

There is a real opportunity to create a new, distinctive quarter with its own identity - a new 'set piece'. Nene Waterfront is NOT the Town Centre or the Brinks, and the redevelopment should not try and copy these other parts of Wisbech. Instead, the redevelopment should:

- Relate to Wisbech with scale / height / massing of buildings - very important to echo urban (not suburban) character of Wisbech's 'heart'.
- Create a high quality public realm defined by buildings.
- Use a consistent, restrained palette of materials (which may be modern, as the aim is to create a distinctive new place).
- Ensure that proportions of openings and elevations are carefully considered..

The next part of this section provides urban design guidance that addresses these themes, including:

- Defining the public realm.
- Built form.
- Detailed design and materials.
- Integrating cars and pedestrians.

Defining the public realm

Successful parts of Wisbech have a good quality public realm. That is, they have streets and spaces which are:

- Overlooked by building fronts.
- Lined with 'active' uses, which range from the very lively (such as shops) to the more low key (the 'public' fronts of houses).
- Enclosed by an almost continuous built edge, comprising mostly building fronts but also made up of walls and outbuildings.
- Enclosed by buildings of a height that is appropriate to the scale of the street or space.

The regeneration of Nene Waterfront should aim to reflect these principles of successful public realm. Developers should ensure their proposals meet the following guidelines:

FRONTS AND BACKS: Building fronts should overlook public space, and private rear spaces should back onto other private spaces. Private rear spaces onto public space should normally be avoided, as it not only makes the public space unattractive but also means that the private space is vulnerable to access by strangers. A consistent approach to fronts and backs is a simple urban design principle, but one that is fundamental to creating safe and attractive public spaces.

ACTIVE USES: Bringing active uses to the ground floor of new buildings will be a challenge given the need to design buildings to address issues of flooding. However, it is particularly important to ensure that active ground floor uses are located along the river front and at other key locations (such as overlooking the proposed urban squares) within the regeneration area.



Fig 4.8: Public fronts and private backs

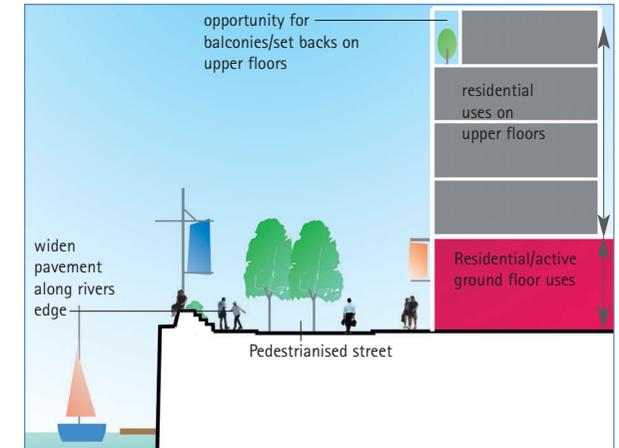


Fig 4.9: Active edges overlooking the Riverfront

ENCLOSURE: The aim is to create a new 'quarter' within Wisbech with a distinctive, urban character. Buildings should therefore be designed to tightly enclose streets and spaces by ensuring that:

- The street width / building height is of an appropriately urban proportion.
- Buildings form as continuous an edge as possible to the street.
- Where buildings cannot be continuous, boundary walls should be carefully designed to provide continuity.



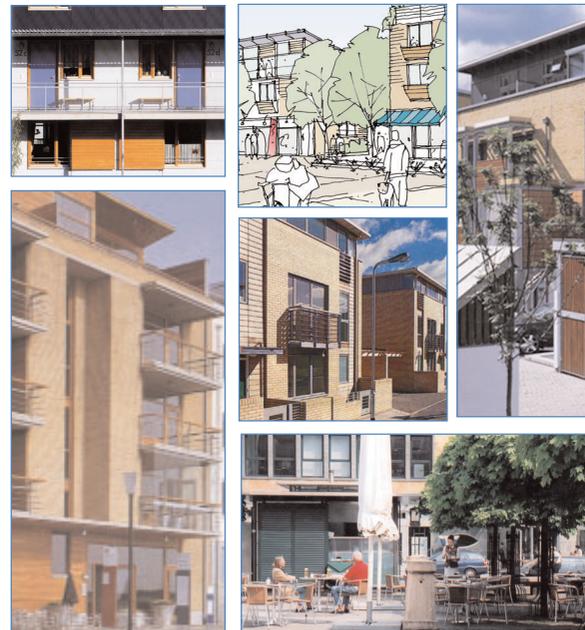
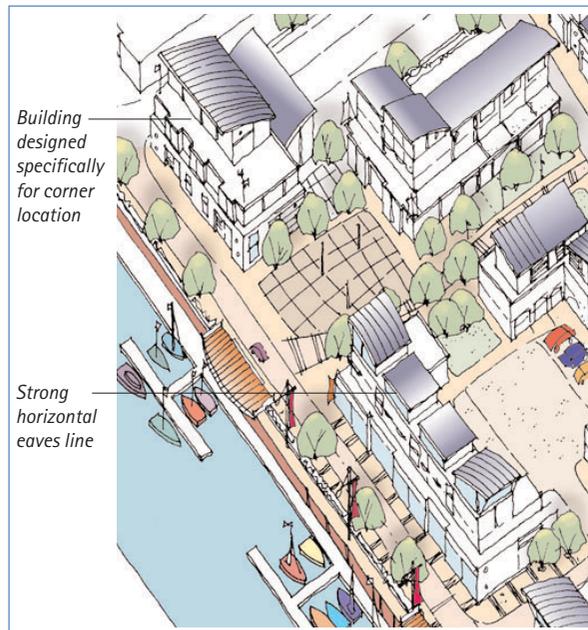
Fig 4.10: The new quarter should have a distinct urban character



Fig 4.11 Strong, linear building forms should be used to reinforce the Port of Wisbech's grid of streets and the river front



Fig 4.12 A vertical rhythm on new buildings can echo the historic plot widths of traditional towns like Wisbech



Built form

The quality and character of buildings in Wisbech is derived not only from what buildings look like and the materials used, but is also strongly influenced by the way in which buildings and spaces work together to create townscape. Although all development within the Nene Waterfront should be built to a high quality, no amount of expensive materials and high quality detailing can rescue a scheme that is poorly laid out, with built forms unrelated to the urban grain. Conversely a good scheme can be ruined by poor detailing and inappropriate materials. Development schemes must therefore get the 'big picture' right before moving on to consider materials and detailed design. The big picture issues for Nene Waterfront are:

- Creating an appropriate urban scale, following the building heights set out in the Development Brief.
- Designing buildings so that their proportions and form reflect those found in Wisbech, including:
 - enabling the division of buildings into typical 'plot' widths;
 - an emphasis on vertical rather than horizontal proportions;
 - regularly ordered facades;
 - rooflines that reflect the imposing character of Georgian buildings by avoiding pitched roofs and having a strong, horizontal eaves line (e.g. by using monopitches);
 - confining pitched roofs to residential buildings away from the river front.
- Designing corner buildings specifically for their location, avoiding blank walls as the building turns the corner.
- Responding to the Development Brief by locating 'landmark' buildings at key points in the townscape. Landmarks are often (but not always) taller than adjacent buildings and designed to have additional, special visual interest.

It is important to emphasise that the aim of this Brief is to encourage the development of a distinctive, new urban quarter of Wisbech. It is not the intention to encourage the copying of existing buildings (especially Georgian buildings) within the Town. However, there are lessons to be learned from the town: especially the way in which a limited palette of materials and similar proportions to facades and window openings can bring a unity and coherence to an area, whilst retaining individuality within buildings.

Given the area's relationship to the River and the marina, a waterside / boat related theme for materials would be particularly appropriate. This would suggest materials such as:

- timber cladding;
- light coloured render;
- steel and glass; and
- lightweight roofs.

As buildings will need to be designed to resist flooding, the ground floors are likely to be designed differently to upper floors. It may be appropriate to emphasise these differences by designing 'solid' bases to buildings, contrasted by lighter weight upper floors.

Strong, contemporary roof forms will be especially appropriate to the waterside character of the riverfront. Non-traditional materials (such as steel and timber cladding) should be considered to give the area a contemporary look that contrasts with older parts of Wisbech. More traditional roof forms and materials may be more appropriate closer to the adjacent residential areas.

The design of windows will depend on the materials used - e.g. more traditional masonry walls will have 'punched' openings, whereas for steel and glass cladding, the wall *becomes* the window. Irrespective of window type, proportions should be carefully considered in the context of the building as a whole - the Georgian buildings of Wisbech demonstrate the positive impact on townscape of well-ordered facades.





Designing streets for people

- Function of streets and spaces: not only for vehicular movement, but also for social interaction and children's play.
- Traffic calming – designed in, not added on afterwards.
- Minimise the visual impact of car parking – accommodating car parking positively within the development is a key design challenge.
- Provide residents with safe and convenient access to their cars.

Designing out crime

- The design should promote community safety, having regard to the principles of 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Standards'. These principles include designing public spaces and access ways so that they are overlooked by development, provided with good lighting, and clear sight lines to ensure good visibility.

Sustainability

- All new homes to achieve a good to excellent Ecohomes standard. In view of this situation no development shall take place without the submission of a statement setting out how the development proposes to meet the Building Research Establishments' good to excellent Ecohomes rating scheme. Developments will be required to implement the provisions of the statement in full. Appropriate mechanisms to access compliance will be integrated into any planning permission granted on the site either via contributions/section 106 agreement.



Fig 4.13 : Illustrative masterplan



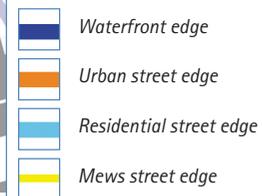
Fig 4.14 : Edge conditions

Development edges

Figure 4.14 identifies the different edge conditions that comprise the Brief area. These are:

- The Waterfront edge.
- Urban street edge.
- Residential street edge.
- Mews street edges.

For each of these conditions the aspirations in relation to character and treatment in respect of each edge is set out below.



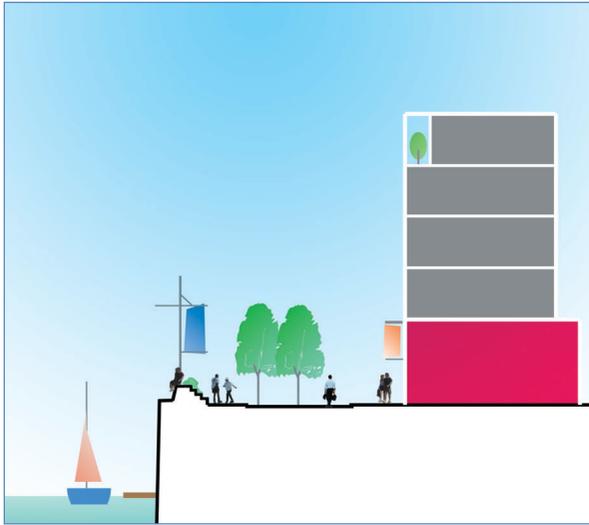


Fig 4.15A: Waterfront edge (with active uses at ground floor)

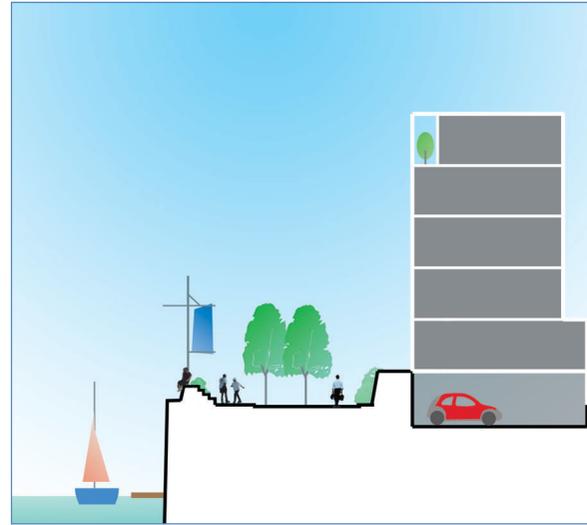


Fig 4.15B: Waterfront edge (with residential and undercroft car parking)

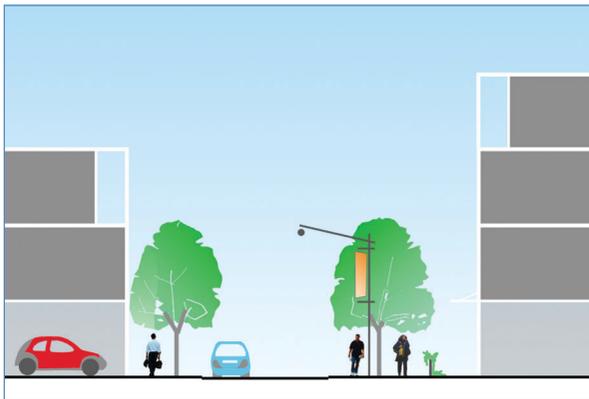


Fig 4.16: Urban street edge

WATERFRONT EDGE

The waterfront will give identity to the whole area with ground floor restaurants and cafes will be encouraged to spill out onto the pedestrianised Nene Parade and the new public squares.

These edges will be characterised by:

- High degree of animation at ground floor.
- Avoidance of continuous blank frontages at ground floor.
- Modern contemporary buildings creating a distinctive edge to the river.
- Robust design of the public realm, good lighting and night time uses to be encouraged to ensure pedestrian activity .
- Balconies on upper floors providing amenity space for residents in the upper storeys of the housing and animation to the facade.
- Fine detailing and articulation to facades.

URBAN STREET EDGE

These routes will carry the highest volumes of traffic in the brief area. Urban in character, they have the potential to eventually be enclosed by new development on both sides of the street.

These edges will be characterised by:

- Relatively wide streets carrying two way traffic.
- Street trees on both sides of the street and wide pavements.
- Streets enclosed by a consistently composed 3/4 (depending on location within development) storey flats and town house development.
- The use of quality materials.

RESIDENTIAL STREET EDGE

Smaller in scale than the north-south urban streets are the residential streets. These routes will not be traffic through routes and will have fewer cars than on the urban streets. They will provide however links and pedestrian cycle routes through the Brief area. The edges will be characterised by:

- Living accommodation at ground level where possible and hence there should be a suitable device for separation to maintain privacy from the pavement edge. This can be done in a variety of ways - eg. short front gardens, railings, raised ground floors.
- 2/3 storey development of predominantly town houses.
- Potential to introduce home zones into streets and shared spaces.

- High quality hard and soft landscape designed to indicate and ensure 20mph speed limits for cars and pedestrian priority.
- Car parking on street or within the curtilage of buildings.
- Development overlooking spaces.

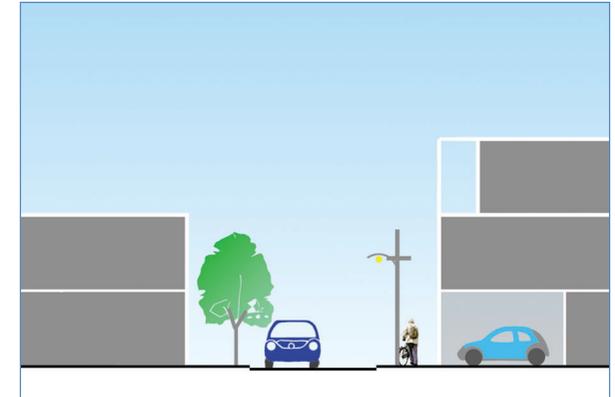


Fig 4.17: Residential street edge

MEWS STREET EDGE

These will be small and intimate scaled pedestrian orientated links that help to break up large blocks and allow a further degree of permeability within the development. These streets will form key through routes between the different areas of the Brief area. These small scale streets will be characterised by:

- Narrow widths and pedestrian orientated hard and soft landscape.
- 2 storey 'mews' style living accommodation of short terraces and the opportunity for flats over garages. Car parking accommodated on the ground floor generally within the curtilage of the buildings.

- Residential uses overlooking the streets.
- Residential entrances and frontages opening directly onto the public realm of the mews.



Fig 4.18: Mews street edge

Section 5: Delivery and Implementation

Introduction

This development brief provides a vision for the comprehensive regeneration of the sites that comprise the Nene Waterfront. It provides the Framework to enable a number of key vacant and underused sites to be brought forward for high-density new housing, commercial, leisure and retail development. However, for this Brief to be turned into reality FDC recognise that it may be necessary for the public sector to intervene and facilitate the process of regeneration.

As already stated the land that comprises the Brief area has been vacant for some 20 years. Throughout this period there has been limited interest in bringing the sites forward for development. In addition a number of the sites are contaminated and will require significant levels of investment to make them suitable for residential development.

The Brief preparation process also identified a number of physical/ technical issues and problems. These problems currently constrain the ability of the area to realise its full potential. Such issues include the continued presence of the nightclub, poor pedestrian access across Lynn Road, the current access arrangements for the police and the need to implement a new link road between Chase Street and De Havilland Road prior to the closure and subsequent pedestrianisation of Nene Parade.

In view of the above FDC recognise that in order to create the conditions necessary and to secure the comprehensive regeneration of the area that there will be a need for public sector intervention. In view of this situation FDC has, as part of the regeneration process, prepared and submitted bids to obtain funding from a variety of different sources, including the East of England Development Agency; English Partnerships and the European Regional Development Fund, Objective 2.

As a result of this process FDC is hopeful of securing some £10m of public funding from these sources and Cambridgeshire County Council. In addition Fenland District Council proposes to contribute to the initiative.

This funding package is aimed at a specific programme of works

that include site acquisition, site preparation and remediation, advance infrastructure and public realm works and for the construction of new employment units, harbour office/ training/ conference facilities.

Once this funding is in place FDC proposes to push forward with its preferred implementation strategy. This strategy will involve the pursuit of a number of key courses of action, which would include:

- Implementation of a process to select a preferred private sector developer partner (s).
- Preparation and submission of all relevant planning permissions and other consents.
- Site acquisition, whether by private treaty or compulsory purchase order.
- Site preparation and remediation works.
- Implementation of key advance infrastructure works (including improvements to Nene Parade, the linear park, the new pedestrian bridge and key highway works).
- Implementation of works to further improve the operation and capacity of the Port and yacht harbour.

In the context of the above FDC, subject to funding approvals are in the process of appointing a project team and setting up the appropriate management structures to take the project forward.

It will be FDC's preferred strategy to work with the existing landowners and a private sector developer/ developers and to take the development forward in a comprehensive manner in order to ensure that the problems are overcome and the potential benefits realised.

It is accepted, however that certain landowners may want to bring forward their own scheme for development. In such circumstances the development and design principles of the Brief will be a material consideration.

In addition any landowners bringing forward proposals within

the Brief area will be expected to contribute to the funding of the necessary infrastructure required to deliver comprehensive regeneration through entering into planning agreements with the Council under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other relevant powers.

Development related requirements

The comprehensive regeneration of the Brief area has the potential to deliver a significant level of new development, which will have a direct impact on the transport, social, education, health, utility and public realm infrastructure of the area.

Based on the level of development envisaged by the Brief and the community consultation undertaken as part of Brief preparation process, a number of environmental and transport related benefits and community uses have been identified.

These benefits/ requirements include:

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE:

- The funding of the necessary on and off site highway/ junction improvements generated as a result of the development.
- The upgrading of the internal road network to make more pedestrian friendly. Works to include resurfacing, provision of pedestrian crossings, footways and tree planting.
- The funding of improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities between the Brief area and the town centre.
- The funding of a network of high quality walkways and cycleways within and through the area.
- The funding of the new pedestrian/cycle bridge link.
- The provision of vehicular and pedestrian signage.

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS:

- The funding and provision of a new yacht club, training facilities and business units.

- Support for education in line with FDC SPG.

OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC REALM REQUIREMENTS:

- The provision of new public courtyard spaces on the waterfront and the residential amenity/ play space (LAP).
- The funding of the environmental improvement works associated with the pedestrianisation of Nene Parade and the environmental enhancement of the River flood defence wall.
- The funding of the west bank Riverside Park and pocket park.
- The funding of art in public spaces.
- The funding of landscape enhancements associated with the existing highway network.
- The provision of / contributions towards play space provision in line with FDC SPG
- The management and maintenance of the public realm in line with FDC SPG.

OTHER

- The provision of 13% affordable housing

Securing the benefits

Obligations that will be sought from prospective developers submitting planning applications within the Brief area fall into two categories:

- On site requirements. Those requirements that are essential to the development of each individual site. Such requirements will include the provision of affordable housing, the mix of uses, the layout and treatment of on site open space, public realm and private space; the provision of public art; the arrangements for public access, car and cycle parking, street furniture and lighting.

These on site requirements will be the subject of negotiation

as part of each individual planning application submitted within the Brief Area. Applicants will, however be expected to comply with the development and design principles set out in this Brief and other relevant FDC planning guidance.

- Financial contributions. Financial and other contributions towards items including the essential off site highway works, new improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, the pedestrianisation of Nene Parade and the environmental enhancement of the flood defence wall and environmental improvement works associated with the highway network.

In addition to these Brief specific requirements applicants will also be expected to contribute to education, play space provision and the management and maintenance of the public realm in accordance with existing SPG.

In relation to these financial contributions FDC are committed to delivering the comprehensive regeneration of Nene Waterfront. In view of this situation FDC want to ensure that the various obligations identified for the Brief area are placed equitably.

In view of this situation FDC has prepared a Contributions Framework for the Brief area (RD1). This framework:

- Provides a robust mechanism to ensure that provision is made for the delivery of the full range of benefits across all the sites that comprise the Brief area.
- Confirms the overall infrastructure requirements and other facilities associated with the total development proposed.
- Identifies the phasing requirements of such infrastructure/ facilities.
- Identifies a total budget cost for the identified infrastructure requirements.
- Sets out requirements in terms of timing of payments, indexation and the process of delivery and implementation

Apportionment mechanism – contribution rate per square metre.

The contributions framework attached under RD 1 and summarised below identifies a total infrastructure cost of £5,919,830, which may be broken down as follows:

Transport: £2,620,000

Social & community: £2,474,550

Open space & public realm £825,280

It is proposed that each applicant will pay a contribution based on a rate per square metre of development (see RD1). The contributions framework (RD1) envisages that this rate will be derived from dividing the total eventual infrastructure cost by the total residential/ mixed use floorspace proposed for the Brief area (excluding yacht harbour and employment workshops).

Based on a total estimated infrastructure cost of £5,919,830 and a total residential/ mixed use floorspace of 40,000sqm) would give a contribution rate of around £148 per sqm (gross external) (see RD1).

In addition to this Brief specific contribution there will be an expectation that individual site developers will provide:

- Support for education in line with FDC SPG.
- Contributions towards play space provision in line with FDC Play Space Provision SPG.
- Contributions towards management and maintenance of the public realm in line with FDC SPG: Play Space Provision. Appendix 4: Calculation for commuted maintenance payments.

The precise level of this contribution will be dependent upon the brief layout of each site. For example the landowner whose site includes for the provision of the LAP will not be expected to contribute to any off site play space provision for children, but will be expected to contribute to youth adult provision.

PUBLIC SECTOR INVOLVEMENT.

As stated above FDC has submitted a series of bids to obtain public sector funding.

If these bids are successful it is anticipated that FDC could be in a position to contribute to a number of the items identified as part of the above contributions framework. Based on the various funding bids the public sector contribution could include contributions of up to £4.84m as follows:

Transport: £1,832,500

Social & community: £2,474,550

Open Space & Public Realm: £535,000

Total: £4,842,050

This level of contribution would have the effect of reducing the Brief specific landowner contribution to £1,077,780 (£5,919,830 - £4,842,050) and hence the Brief specific contribution rate to around £27 per sqm (gross external) (£1,077,780 / 40,000sqm) of proposed development (see RD1).

It is proposed that the remaining public funds will be used for the acquisition of key sites and site preparation works.

Note: The final contribution amount will be dependent on the level of public sector contribution and amount of development floorspace (see RD1).

Other issues

Indexation.

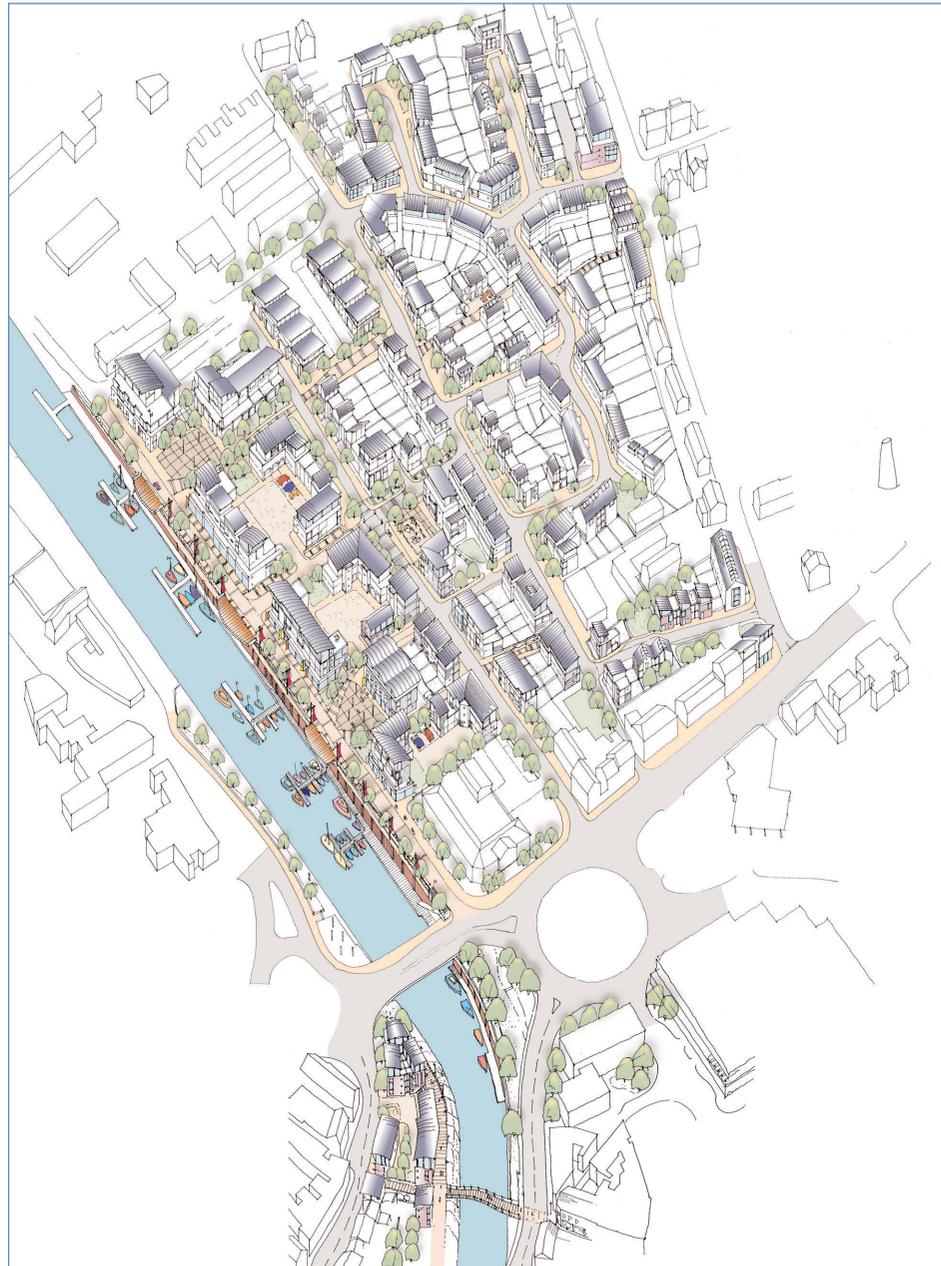
To counter potential cost inflation from the date when the costs have been set to the date when the contributions are to be received, it is proposed that the contribution payments will be made subject to a cost indexation formulae to be set out in the planning agreements. The indexation formulae will be based on the cost inflation rate provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS).

The cost indexation will apply from 13 July 2004 to the date of the payment of the contributions i.e. the date of the relevant

commencement of the development. It is envisaged that once the contributions are received they will be held in an interest bearing account. Under this mechanism, any potential increase in costs over time should be adequately countered by the indexation of contributions and the accrual of interest on held sums.

Timing of payments.

It is envisaged that payments will be made in a series of tranches, related to occupation. It is expected that 50% will be payable prior to commencement and 50% prior to occupation.



Axonometric



View of northern public square



View of Waterfront from Freedom Bridge