

FORT KINNAIRD DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The planning and development guidance contained in this brief relates primarily to Fort Kinnaird retail park, Newcraighall as shown on diagrams 1 and 2. Reference is also made to various sites within the wider 'West Newcraighall' area, and these are also identified on diagram 2.

- 1.2 Fort Kinnaird is the trading name given to the city's largest retail park, on the south east edge of the city at Newcraighall close to the A1 Musselburgh Bypass road. As well as a range of retail facilities, it is a major leisure destination with a multiplex cinema and ten-pin bowling. It is a popular and successful centre in commercial terms, but like most such centres, it is highly car-dependent and does not provide an attractive environment that enhances the image of the city at one of its major entry points. The owners of the park are considering how the park might best evolve, to meet market demands and customer expectations. If further development is to be allowed, it is important that change should lead to a more attractive, better functioning centre, connected with its surroundings, more sustainable in terms of access and as well-integrated visually as can be expected. The following brief provides guidance for development that may be allowed to help achieve these objectives. It takes account not only of the centre itself, the retail park, but also of the surrounding area, itself dominated by a series of free-standing retail warehouses. The wider study area is shown on the attached plans.

2 Background

2.1 The area began to attract large-scale retail development (Asda and B&Q) in the 1980's, a direct consequence of the completion of the Musselburgh Bypass road and the availability of large sites for new development around its junctions at Newcraighall and the Jewel. The first retail park at Newcraighall (Kinnaird Park), combining retail units and leisure uses was built in 1988. This specialised in bulky goods retailing and was the first park in the City to be designed as an entity around shared car parking. A second retail park was subsequently built at Edinburgh Fort (old brickworks site). A third phase of development created the present day situation: two contiguous areas of retail and leisure uses, separated only by Newcraighall Road, but otherwise owned and managed as a single entity – Fort Kinnaird.

2.2 Although there have been several more retail park developments in and around Edinburgh, Fort Kinnaird with 54,719 square metres of floorspace remains by far the largest. With Asda, Big W, DFS, Wickes and B&Q, the wider area can be counted as one of the largest out-of-town shopping destinations in the country.

3 Policy Context

3.1 Planning guidance for future development in this area is provided by the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan, approved 2004, and the South East Edinburgh Local Plan, prepared in 2002. The local plan has not yet been adopted (anticipated August 2005), but in the Council's view reflects the structure plan (and government guidance) on matters relevant to future development at Fort Kinnaird.

- 3.2 The Structure Plan gives primacy to Edinburgh City Centre and other specified town centres for new retail development. Fort Kinnaird is identified as one of a series of 'other major shopping centres of strategic importance' that may be considered for future retail development, but only if it can be demonstrated through a sequential test that appropriate sites are not available in or on the edge of a defined town centre, and provided also that it can be demonstrated that there will be no harm to the vitality and viability of such centres.
- 3.3 The finalised local plan defines the boundaries of the strategic shopping centre at Newcraighall. This corresponds with the boundaries of 'Fort Kinnaird'. Surrounding areas are generally allocated for industrial and business purposes. The local plan includes the following general principle, that decisions on future retail development will be based primarily on the existing pattern of shopping centres within or serving the area and how these may be sustained in terms of their vitality and viability, and improved in terms of quality of provision within them, quality of environment and their accessibility by public transport.

4 The wider planning context

- 4.1 In the immediate vicinity of Fort Kinnaird, there are opportunities for development on four vacant sites:
- between Newcraighall Road and the Council boundary with Midlothian is a small terrace of industrial units (the Eastern Industrial Estate) and, to its south, vacant land allocated for industrial/business use in the Local Plan. This is site 'n' on Diagram 2. The Council will consider in the context of the Edinburgh City Local Plan whether an alternative, residential allocation might be appropriate for the majority of this site, to allow development for housing. Housing in a suitable form

could help to create a more urban environment for the wider area, and a setting for the listed cottages at Newcraighall Road.

- derelict land despoiled by former mine workings lies to the south. This is part of the old Niddrie Bing (site 'l' on Diagram 2) and is the subject of a planning application for residential development. Housing use would in principle be supported by the South East Edinburgh Local Plan. However, an acceptable ground stability and contamination remediation solution for the bing has not yet been put forward by the applicants. Such a solution is required for the bing in its entirety.
- to the north is an extensive wedge shaped site straddling the A1 Musselburgh Bypass road (sites 'd' and 'e' on Diagram 2). This has been the subject of outline planning permission for business use and an undetermined planning application for retail development.
- a site in Midlothian immediately to the south of the B&Q store and east of Whitehill Road (site 'p' on Diagram 2) is allocated for business and industrial use.

4.2 A park and ride site has been formed adjoining the recently built rail halt at Newcraighall (site 'k' on Diagram 2), at which a cross-Edinburgh passenger rail service now terminates. The Council's proposals for a tram system for the city include a line (Tram Line 3) that will run along Newcraighall Road and terminate at the park and ride site. It has now been established that only stabling facilities for parking Line 3's trams will be required, and that the only technically and environmentally acceptable location along the Line 3 route is site (n).

It is important that any site considered or safeguarded for this purpose should not reduce the opportunities for general improvement and

beneficial development in the area generally, therefore a portion of site (n) has been identified as an area of search within which approximately 1 hectare for tram stabling could be identified and where its impact on these objectives would be minimised (Diagram 3). The precise location and footprint of the stabling within this area should be established as part of a wider masterplan for site (n), which should also set out appropriate buffer uses or landscaping around the stabling. The east-west length of the stabling should be reduced to the minimum technically possible. It should be noted that the area of search shown in Diagram 3 is indicative only, and does not necessarily reflect the technical limitations on that length.

- 4.3 A small area of industrial uses lies to the west, the Blackchapel Road industrial estate (site 'f' on diagram 2). Planning policies in the South East Edinburgh Local Plan would allow the redevelopment of this site for housing. There may be ground stability issues relating to this site.
- 4.4 Individual, free-standing retail warehouse units and car showrooms occupy sites to the south of Fort Kinnaird (sites 'm' and 'o' on diagram 2). These are expected to continue in their existing uses.
- 4.5 Open land to the south forms part of the South East Wedge. Comprehensive proposals for development in this area have been prepared by the City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils jointly. These include a planned new settlement of some 4000 houses at Shawfair in Midlothian, and proposals for industrial and business use on land immediately to the south of the Council boundary with Midlothian (site 'p' on Diagram 2).
- 4.6 An urban design framework is in preparation to guide redevelopment and regeneration activities in Craigmillar, including the Greendykes

area. The Duddingston Park South /The Wisp roads form the eastern boundary of the area for which this framework is being prepared.

4.7 In the immediate vicinity of Fort Kinnaird are two building groups that are included in the statutory list of buildings of architectural and/or historic interest:

- Niddrie Cottages – category C (statutory);
- Craigmillar Arts Centre (formerly St Andrew's Church) – category B, including gatepiers and boundary walls.

4.8 The study area lies between the land of two medieval estates – Niddrie Marischal and Bruntsane – and the general area is known to contain extensive prehistoric remains. There may also be sites of importance for industrial archaeology. Accordingly, archaeological evaluation of development sites may need to be carried out. Early consultation with the Council's archaeologist is advised to determine the scope of such work.

5 Planning Objectives and Requirements for Development at Newcraighall

5.1 The following is an indication of the kind of proposals that might be acceptable to the Council. They should be taken as a whole, and any proposals formulated as a package that places considerable emphasis on how the centre is to be improved in terms of its environmental qualities, its connections with the surrounding transport network and its accessibility by sustainable transport modes, namely, walking, cycling and public transport.

Land use

5.2 Further development within the Fort Kinnaird retail park area, as defined in the South East Edinburgh Local Plan, should be in accordance with the development plan as it stands. Development for retail and/or leisure purposes may be accepted which conforms to the existing character of the centre as a retail park in which large retail units suitable for bulky goods sales remains the dominant retail type. It must also be demonstrated through a Retail Impact Assessment that any proposed new floorspace and units will not harm the vitality and viability of the city centre or other town centres within the catchment of the proposal. The following will also be a condition of support by the Council for any proposals:

- the net increase in floorspace, assuming that demolition of existing units is necessary, shall amount to no more than 10,000 square metres gross floor area. This figure shall be inclusive of any future expansion, for example through the insertion of mezzanine floors into existing and new-build units, that the applicants wish to reserve;
- future development at Fort Kinnaird, by way of new retail development, redevelopment, conversion and change of use, including the insertion of any mezzanine floors, shall not exceed a floorspace cap of 64,665 sq. m. gross floor area.
- proposals to insert mezzanine floors into existing and new-build retail units at Fort Kinnaird will only be permitted provided they do not breach the floorspace cap, as expressed by this brief. The floorspace cap will be agreed and enforced through the terms of a legal agreement related to a planning application that implements the provisions of this brief (for the avoidance of doubt, this provision will apply to the whole of the development known as 'Fort Kinnaird').

- the mix of unit sizes may include a single new large unit of up to 5,500 square metres capable of providing an additional anchor store. It might also include a limited number of smaller units that will allow the centre to enhance its offer with facilities that address the needs of a more local catchment. It should be assumed that there will be no increase in food retail floorspace beyond that which already has consent.
- the improvements to connectivity and access identified below are completed before new retail floorspace is completed.

Connectivity and Access

- 5.3 New development must contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the Council's Local Transport Strategy, which include reducing congestion, increasing the share of journeys made by foot, cycle and public transport, improving safety and reducing environmental impacts. New development must safeguard a route and stop for the proposed Tram Line 3 as shown on Plan 3. The Council has in place a policy that seeks to secure developer contributions towards meeting the costs of the tram proposals or equivalent strategic public transport projects.
- 5.4 Proposals that reduce the importance of Newcraighall Road for car travel will be favourably considered. Three options for re-routing car traffic away from sections of Newcraighall Road and onto the new southern service road have been identified (refer to Diagram 3 for Options). One would involve extending the incomplete service road south of the southern 'Edinburgh Fort' part of Fort Kinnaird across the former Niddrie Bing to the Wisp.
- 5.5 The Wisp northwards of this new junction would then require to be improved for pedestrians and widened to increase its capacity on the

northbound approach to the junction with Niddrie Mains Road (Option 1a & 1b). The alternative would involve the construction of a new road around the back of the southern part of Fort Kinnaird (Option 2). A third option would be to build both the link across the Bing and around the back of the southern part of Fort Kinnaird, which would avoid the need to widen the Wisp (Option 1a & 2). The stretch of Newcraighall Road thus relieved of private traffic could then become a dedicated public transport route, allowing the construction of a more pedestrian friendly link across the road combined with a public space based around a bus and future tram stop. Residents car access to the area affected would be retained.

5.6 Proposals must also include provision for safe, attractive pedestrian and cycle movement through and around the retail park based on existing or predicted desire lines. Of particular importance are the following (see Diagram 3):

- Improvement of the existing right of way between Asda and Newcraighall Road.
- Extension of this route along the western edge of the southern part of Fort Kinnaird, through Niddrie Bing and across the Wisp to form a direct, continuous connection with the right of way that links the Wisp and the new Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.
- Provision or improvement of links with Newcraighall Station and park and ride site.
- Creation of a direct, continuous off-road route from the public transport hub through the Eastern Industrial Estate connecting with Whitehill Road in Midlothian, which in the long-term can provide the start of an off-road route to Shawfair.
- Creation of convenient and safe pedestrian links to Asda and Fort Kinnaird as part of any future rail halt proposal at the safeguarded site on the South Suburban line.

- Creation of convenient and safe pedestrian and cycle links to the residential areas north of Newcraighall Road and Niddrie Mains Road.

Where possible, buildings should present active frontages to these routes. The choice and convenience of pedestrian routes within Fort Kinnaird should also be improved, and potential conflict with traffic on car park circulation roads minimised through appropriate layout, though not at the expense of pedestrian convenience.

5.7 A new direct bus link between Fort Kinnaird and Asda via a new or upgraded bridge would significantly improve the public transport accessibility of the area. The possibility of forming such a route should be recognised and provided for in future development proposals. Proposals must also facilitate general bus movement to and through the area. This is likely to involve signalisation and bus priority at key junctions.

5.8 New development is likely to be required to contribute to managing parking on the surrounding road network in order to avoid adverse impacts on nearby residents and to enable the network to function with the minimum congestion possible.

6 Development Design

6.1 New development and redevelopment brings the opportunity to create a more attractive, distinctive and welcoming environment for leisure shopping and contribute to a better overall first impression of the city for its visitors. A greater sense of place could be achieved through the following (see Diagram 4):

- the layout and design of new development should protect and incorporate views of the Craigmillar Arts Centre building and of more distant landscape features such as Arthur's Seat and the Pentland Hills.
- special attention should be paid to the design of buildings that will be visible or prominent from elevated sections of the A1 Musselburgh Bypass road.
- a reduction in the amount of surface car parking in order to release space for pedestrians and landscaping should be considered. Sub-division of the car parks by tree-line footpaths and small pocket-parks would be desirable in this respect. It is recognised that this is likely to require the replacement of surface car parking in a new multi-storey car park. Any net change in the amount of car parking available within Fort Kinnaird will require to be agreed with the Council.
- place making should also be pursued through the use of high quality surfacing materials, through the provision of a strong landscape structure and setting for the development, through well-designed street furniture and advertisement and directional signage, and through public art.
- any development proposals for the Blackchapel Road Industrial Estate and the sites north of it should demonstrate how they allow pedestrian and vehicular access through their site to adjacent sites. Development here should also present an active frontage to the right of way and pedestrian / cycle route. Landscaping to screen the fencing to the rear of Fort Kinnaird may be necessary. The point at the north of this area, where that route crosses south over the bridge from Asda, is likely to become a pedestrian / cycle hub, with routes leading in four directions, in addition to its current role as a secondary, pedestrian gateway to Fort Kinnaird.
- proposals for new development should reflect the significance of this place by presenting active frontages to the hub, protecting its

key long distance views and by other appropriate urban design measures.

- a masterplan will be required for any development proposal for the Eastern Industrial Estate (site 'n' on diagram 2). This should be laid out to create an axial view of Craigmillar Arts Centre from the end of Whitehill Road. This axis should also carry the off-road pedestrian / cycle route proposed in paragraph 5.4. East-west pedestrian access through the centre of this area is desirable.
- as a principle the Craigmillar Arts Centre building should remain a prominent feature in the area, and building heights and lines should be set to retain or achieve this. This may be of particular relevance for any redevelopment proposals for industrial areas south of Newcraighall Road (site 'n' on diagram 2).

6.2 Planning applications for the development of sites within the area should be accompanied by a design statement prepared in accordance with Planning Advice Note 68: Design Statements. These design statements should explain how the principles in the Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design and in this brief have been interpreted.

6.3 In addition, the following features in the vicinity of Fort Kinnaird are of some nature conservation interest:

- the Niddrie/Brunstane Burn;
- railway embankments to the east;
- the community woodland at Vexhim Park;
- the unnamed burn south of the Eastern Industrial Estate and southern service road.

6.4 In order to contribute to natural heritage objectives the following actions will be sought (see Diagram 4):

- the formation of a safe green corridor along the existing pedestrian/cycle route that connects Newcraighall Road, the Asda site and Niddrie Burn;
- the formation of a safe green corridor along the proposed pedestrian / cycle route through the Eastern Industrial Estate to Whitehill Road;
- internal landscaping of car parking and other open areas at Fort Kinnaird; the use of larger, woodland species of trees (oak, ash, lime) in planting schemes along front and rear building facades, to reduce the apparent scale of buildings. Advice should be sought from the Council on appropriate species for other landscaping;
- existing planting in front of business units opposite Niddrie Cottages should be retained or replaced. The existing building line is also important in contributing to a long view of the Craigmillar Arts Centre building;
- sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be incorporated into the layout and landscaping of any development on vacant sites, and the level of potential for creating SUDS features to existing areas of car parking should be demonstrated in relevant proposals.