

North Sighthill

October 2007

Development Brief

DRAFT
for consultation

◆ EDINBURGH ◆

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CITY DEVELOPMENT

NORTH SIGHTHILL DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

**Approved by the Planning Committee for public consultation purposes on
4 October 2007**

DRAFT NORTH SIGHTHILL DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 A number of significant developments are in prospect on sites in the North Sighthill area of the City: a major refurbishment of Napier University's campus, developments at Stevenson College Edinburgh; and the renewal of the North Sighthill Housing Estate. Also, the Council aspires to develop a new library and community facility, a facility that could not only meet the needs of the community, but also Stevenson College and, in the longer term, Napier University. The Council has also published proposals to develop a municipal stadium and sports centre on Sighthill Public Park. However, these proposals are presently under review pending a decision on whether to retain in part or in its entirety Meadowbank Sports Centre and consideration, in consultation with local communities, of what sport facilities are needed in the west of the City. The outcome of the review will not be known until early next year. In the meantime, draft development principles for the wider North Sighthill area have been developed on the basis that a sports complex proposal on the public park might come forward. Accordingly, the proposals of the draft development brief safeguard the Council's interests in this regard.

1.2 The development programme for each of these projects is such that the opportunity exists to progress development in a manner that will maximise the potential to achieve integrated and sustainable developments to the benefit of each project and the wider community. The development principles proposed by this brief have been informed by a working group comprised of Council departments and the principal stakeholders with an interest in the North Sighthill area. The brief proposes a set out of guiding principles on which future development in the area should be based.

Co-ordinated Development

1.3 The Council encourages a comprehensive approach to redevelopment and regeneration whenever possible, and the preparation of development frameworks or masterplans, to identify the full design potential for creating successful places.

In light of the development proposals in prospect, the Council considers this to be an appropriate approach to pursue at North Sighthill.

2.0 Background

Education

2.1 Napier University has recently announced proposals to redevelop its Sighthill campus, including the remodelling of its main building and the demolition and replacement of other buildings on site. When complete, anticipated 2010/11, the campus will provide 26,000 square metres of teaching, sports and administrative accommodation and provide a home for the University's Faculty of Health and Life Science. The University hopes to be in a position to submit a planning application in January 2008.

2.2 Stevenson College Edinburgh too has ambitious plans to redevelop its campus. The College has recently completed the construction of a performing arts building, the 'Music Box', and has commenced refurbishment of its main teaching block. Longer term proposals include the construction of an engineering block and the redevelopment of the quadrangle. In the absence of new sports facilities being developed on Sighthill Public Park both Stevenson College and Napier University have indicated that it will be desirable to review the scope for additional sports facilities either separately or jointly. This would, however, be dependent upon further investigation on the feasibility of any such proposals.

Housing

2.3 In 2004 the Council commissioned consultants to prepare a masterplan to guide the process of urban renewal of the North Sighthill Housing Estate, an area extending to 4.4 hectares and containing 451 residential properties. A final report was presented to the Council in August 2005 for its consideration which proposed:

- the development of 445 dwellings, principally for rent but also including 40 units for private sale;

- 4 replacement retail units (250m²);
- New anchor retail unit (450m²)
- Community centre/library facilities (1,800m²);
- Landscape and public realm improvements.

The design proposals were based on a series of urban blocks that sought to create public streets and private/shared rear gardens. The blocks generally extended to 4/5 storey around the edges of the site, to reflect the nature of the surrounding streets and roads, and 2/3 storey within the development to reflect a more local environment. The proposals envisaged the creation of a hierarchy of streets and a series of public open spaces, including a community park. The proposals also recognised the opportunity to link the community park with Sighthill Public Park and by so doing sought to maximise the benefits of integrating the spaces and the quality of facilities.

- 2.4 Following the outcome of the stock transfer ballot in 2006, the Council has been unable to progress its redevelopment proposals for the estate. Alternative sources of funding to progress its proposals continue to be sought. Notwithstanding this position, the Council proposes to demolish both the high-rise and low-rise blocks over the next 4 to 5 years, commencing with Broomview House in autumn 2008. A fully cleared site is hoped to be achieved by 2012-15.

Sports Complex

- 2.6 In early 2007 the Council published proposals to develop a municipal stadium and sports centre on Sighthill Public Park as part of its National and Regional Sports Facilities project. Since that time, the Council has commenced a review of the project and is undertaking further investigation and assessment of options to retain and develop new facilities at Meadowbank Sports Centre. A review of sports facilities needed in the west of the City is also being undertaken in consultation with local communities. For this reason, the draft development brief does not promote any development on Sighthill Public Park. The proposals of the draft brief, however, do not prejudice the Council's interests in this regard.

3.0 Description of site and surrounding area

- 3.1 North Sighthill is situated approximately 8km (5 miles) west of Edinburgh City Centre and less than 1km from the Calder Junction on the City By-pass. The study area is bounded to the south by the A71 Calder Road, a principal arterial route into the City, the B701 Broomhouse Road to the east, Bankhead Drive to the north and the Sighthill Industrial Estate immediately to the west. The area extends to approximately 28 hectares and is shown on figure 1. To the south and east of the study area lie extensive areas of post-war local authority housing, typically 2/3 storey dwellings laid out in suburban blocks and interspersed with primary schools and other community facilities. To the west is Sighthill Industrial Estate, an area of 2/3 storey large floor plate industrial and office buildings. The estate caters for a diversity of uses, including a Council roads depot and a community recycling centre, and is readily accessible to heavy goods vehicles which use the trunk road network. To the north is Bankhead Drive, which provides access to the industrial estate, beyond which runs the Edinburgh/Glasgow railway line, which at this point sits on top of a raised embankment.
- 3.2 The study area itself contains a variety of uses and building types. The area is dominated by three 17-storey blocks and an 11-storey deck-access block of the North Sighthill Housing Estate which, together with a mixture of 3 and 4 storey tenement blocks, provide 451 dwellings. A library, community education centre, privately owned retail units and a variety of ill-defined open spaces complete the estate. Sighthill Health Centre and a fire station also lie within the area and take access from Sighthill Court and Calder Road respectively.
- 3.3 Sighthill Public Park lies immediately to the north of the housing estate. The park extends to 13.7 hectares (approx. 34 acres) and accommodates 5 full sized football pitches, a well equipped and well used play park and a skate park. A 5-a-side football facility, including changing facilities and car park, has been developed in the north east corner of the park. Access to the facility is via Bankhead Drive. The facility is run on a commercial basis and is open to the general public. The park is open and exposed and the pitches of poor quality. In

recent years the park has been subject to extensive Millennium forestry planting, much of which is now well established and thriving.

3.4 Immediately west of the housing estate and park lie Napier University and Stevenson College Edinburgh. The University and College presently share some facilities at North Sighthill, mainly sporting and car parking facilities. Vehicular access to Napier University is via Sighthill Court and access to Stevenson College via Bankhead Avenue. Pedestrians can access to both campuses sites via Sighthill Court and Bankhead Drive.

3.5 Further to the west, the Council has developed a roads depot and a community recycling centre on land formerly occupied by Ethicon Ltd.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 The Council's planning policies for North Sighthill are contained in the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan (2015) and the North West Edinburgh Local Plan (1992) (NWELP), which together comprise the development plan for the area. In addition to the development plan there are a number of documents that will be material to the consideration of proposals that come forward proposing development in North Sighthill, principal among these is the Finalised Edinburgh City Local Plan (2007) (ECLP), which when adopted will replace the NWELP. The ECLP is the most up-to-date statement of the Council's planning policies and proposals for the City as whole and accordingly is the main source of guidance contained in this brief. Other material considerations include:

- Local Transport Strategy 2007, including the Council's Parking Strategy;
- Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design;
- Edinburgh Standards for Streets;
- Edinburgh Standards for Sustainable Building.

4.2 The Finalised Edinburgh City Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the North Sighthill area, for the most part, as lying within the urban area, an area in which the Plan supports in principle a range of uses subject to there being no detrimental effect on residential amenity. The Plan seeks to ensure that all new

development has regard to the principles of sustainable development and contributes positively to the development of sustainable communities. The Proposals Map specifically identifies Sighthill Public Park as 'open space'. Land immediately to the west of Napier University/Stevenson College is identified as a Business and Industry area.

- 4.3 Finally, the Proposals Map safeguards land required for the tram project (Line 2). The route of the tram in this location runs to the north of Sighthill Public Park, and generally follows the line of the Edinburgh/Glasgow railway line. A tram stop is identified on Bankhead Drive, west of its junction with South Gyle Access.

5.0 Considerations

Archaeological Interest

- 5.1 While there is considered to be little of archaeological interest in the area, prospective developers should undertake a desk-based evaluation of possible archaeological interests prior to the preparation of detailed proposals. This should be undertaken in consultation with the Council's Archaeological Service.

Pollution, Air, Water and Soil Quality

- 5.2 Pollution can arise from many sources and activities, for example traffic and transport and industrial process. Air, soil and water quality can all be affected and harmed by some forms of development. Land can present a potential pollution threat if it has been contaminated by previous activities. Noise and light pollution can also be a source of harm to health and amenity. The potential risk and significance of pollution will be considered when assessing planning applications, in consultation where necessary with relevant agencies, notably SEPA.

Water and Drainage

- 5.3 The scale of development proposed in the area is such that a drainage impact assessment will be required. It is not anticipated that the development, individually or cumulatively, will raise any issues in terms of water supply.

However a local network investigation will be required to confirm that there is sufficient capacity in the local network to accommodate new development.

- 5.4 New development will be required to include sustainable drainage systems for the attenuation and treatment of surface water, unless local conditions prevent such an approach. The appropriate sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) specification will be dependent upon detailed site conditions and should be determined in accordance with best practice and in consultation with the Council, SEPA and Scottish Water.

Waste and Energy

- 5.5 The Council requires that sustainability is at the core of future development proposals in the area and an integral part of the development process, including the design, procurement, construction and management of new development. In this regard developments of the scale envisaged will be required to meet the targets and aspirations of the Edinburgh Standards for Sustainable Building. The Standards, among other things, address:

- require on-site generation of energy;
- the reduction in climate change impacts and increase in renewable energy generation;
- use of sustainable resources and materials;
- reduction in pollution and improvement in recycling; and,
- sustainable construction and operation.

The Council will support in principle the development of renewable and sustainable energy schemes such small-scale wind turbine generators, solar panels and combined heat and power/district heating schemes provided that they do not cause harm to the local environment and will not unacceptably affect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers by reason of, for example, noise emission or visual dominance. Consideration of such developments at the start of the design process should enable measures to be incorporated into new buildings in ways which do not compromise other important design issues. While not necessarily using renewable sources, combined heat and power (CHP) stations can offer

significant efficiencies and carbon savings through the use of waste heat and locally generated and consumed electricity. The scale of development in prospect at North Sighthill offers a good opportunity for the construction of the necessary plant, and the Council requires this opportunity to be fully explored.

Accordingly, planning applications for new development in the area should be supported by a Sustainability Statement, including a working method statement which outlines the developer's commitment to sustainability throughout the whole development and construction process and how the Council's sustainability objectives will be realised. The Standards, and a draft supplementary planning guidance on micro-generation, can be viewed on-line at www.edinburgh.gov.uk.

Nature Conservation

- 5.6 Sighthill Public Park has been the subject of extensive Millennium Woodland planting. The planting is well established, is generally of good quality and of increasing nature conservation value. The development brief recognises that some planting may have to be removed if development is to proceed immediately beyond the boundaries of the park, but also that there are opportunities to replace lost stock on site and to create new landscaped areas. The removal of Millennium planting may require the repayment of grant monies to bodies that originally funded the planting and/or an administrative charge.

Transportation

- 5.7 The A71 Calder Road is a main arterial route into and out of the city centre. It provides excellent access to public transport and is designated a 'Greenway'. It also provides access to the North Sighthill area via several roads: Bankhead Avenue to the industrial estate, Sighthill Court to the University, College and housing estate, B701 Broomhouse Road also to the housing estate and to South Gyle and Corstorphine beyond. To the north, Bankhead Drive also provides access to frequent bus services between the city centre and the Gyle and, in time, tram line 2 will also pass along this route. In addition, a number of bus services also run along Broomhouse Road.

- 5.8 The potential scale of development across North Sighthill is such that a Transportation Assessment may be required to be prepared by prospective developers before individual planning applications can be considered. Development proposals for the area generally should comply with the Council's transportation policies and objectives which seek to discourage private car dependency, especially journeys to work, and encourage more sustainable alternatives, principally the use of public transport, walking and cycling. A Transport Assessment would determine impacts of development proposals on the surrounding road network, including Calder Road and Bankhead Drive, and the measures that should be taken to alleviate any consequent worsening of conditions. Developers will be required to fund the costs of such measures. In this regard, the Council has secured financial contributions from development proposals in the north Sighthill area that have recently been granted planning permission. These monies may be made available to help meet the costs of some infrastructure improvements required in the North Sighthill area.
- 5.9 The Council has prepared supplementary planning guidance that seeks to secure developer contributions towards the tram project where new development will obtain some benefit from its proximity to proposed tram lines. Tram line 2 passes within 80m of Sighthill Public Park, and all land and buildings within the development brief area is within 750m of a proposed tram stop. The level of contribution is dependent upon the scale of development envisaged and its proximity to the proposed line – where development is within 250m of a line, within 500m of a line and 750m of a proposed tram stop. The contribution sought will not necessarily replace other local transport infrastructure requirements, where these are justified. Development proposals will not normally be required to contribute to other public transport provision where a contribution to the tram project is required. The supplementary planning guideline, a map identifying tram lines and stops and a table setting out levels of developer contribution likely to be sought can be viewed on-line at www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Land Use

- 5.10 The attached plans show North Sighthill broadly divided into 3 areas: education campus, housing estate and park, although the brief does not promote any development within the park. New educational facilities for the University and College are contained within their present site boundaries. Housing renewal is promoted, generally within the boundaries of the existing estate, although the brief recognises that there is an opportunity to extend recreational open space into the housing area and for new housing to extend along Broomhouse Road, beyond its present boundaries. The renewal of the housing estate will require the provision of a new library/community facility. While the development brief identifies a preferred location for this facility, at the north end of Sighthill Court, the Council would welcome comments on this aspect of the development brief. There are advantages to locating a new library facility at Sighthill Court where it would add vitality to the area and be readily accessible to the general public, both further education establishments and students. Alternatively, a facility located in a suitable location along Broomhouse Road would be more accessible to those living in the Broomhouse area.

6.0 Development Principles

General

- 6.1 The purpose of this development brief is to set out the main planning and design principles on which development in the North Sighthill area should be based. It also identifies infrastructure requirements and opportunities for improved connections throughout the area. The Council recognises that developments in the area may not take place simultaneously and the brief seeks to demonstrate how sites could be developed without prejudice to others and enable the overall objectives set out in this brief to be achieved.

Objectives

- create a clearly recognisable sense of place and strong identity;

- to enhance movement and access to and within the North Sighthill area, ensuring that new development is co-ordinated and well connected for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and other vehicles;
- ensure buildings and spaces of the highest architectural and urban design quality;
- to place sustainability at the core of future development proposals by encouraging the integration of sustainable features into the design of new development at an early stage.

6.2 The key components required to fulfil these objectives are identified in figures 3 and 4 and include:

- creation of new housing and educational buildings that positively address and define streets and civic spaces;
- a series of urban blocks that create public streets and private/shared rear gardens to establish a physical form of housing and open spaces around which new education buildings can be developed;
- creation of new library facilities to meet the needs of the local community, further education establishments and students;
- use of a limited palette of materials and boundary treatments, which can be used throughout the public realm to create cohesion and a sense of place;
- formation of new pedestrian/cycle routes from Bankhead Drive through the public park to education campuses, community facilities and the North Sighthill Housing Area;
- an extension of the public park into the renewed housing area;
- the retention and enhancement of landscape features along the edges of the park, particularly along parts of Broomhouse Road, to enhance the visual impact of new development;
- creation of an improved vehicular access at Calder Road to meet the needs of Napier University and Stevenson College, and bus operators;
- removal of the pedestrian subway and creation of a new Calder Road / Sighthill Court junction incorporating measures to allow vehicles to turn

right into and out of Sighthill Court and surface crossing facilities for pedestrians;

- in the longer term, creation of a new public transport route between Bankhead Avenue, through Stevenson College/Napier University campuses to Sighthill Court/Calder Road; and,

Housing and Community Uses

- 6.3 The brief presents indicative proposals for the renewal of the North Sighthill Housing Estate. Broadly based on proposals prepared for the Council in 2005, they recognise the need to replace the majority of dwellings that presently exist on the site (451 units). Figure 3 explores the relationship between new housing and the public park. Whilst most of the new housing is expected to be housing for social rent, an element of student housing may be acceptable given the proximity of the estate to Napier University and Stevenson College, possibly located above shopping and other facilities on Sighthill Court. Access to all new housing is required to be via roads built to adoptable standards and designed to 'Home Zone' principles. Access to properties by footway only may be permissible within 25m of a road suitable for service vehicles.
- 6.4 The brief assumes that the community education centre and library presently located within the housing area will be relocated, although this has yet to be formally agreed by the Council. While it remains unclear whether a joint library/community facility is feasible, it could take the form of a single building or a series of buildings located around a civic space. Figure 4 shows how a new facility could be incorporated within a building at the western edge of the housing estate. A facility in this location would relate well to adjoining educational facilities and physically enclose the space in front of the university. A facility in this location would also be readily accessible to the public, the university and college, and their students. The brief also suggests that shops could be better placed to meet the needs of the resident and student populations and those working in the area by also locating these on Sighthill Court, between the health centre and the joint library/community facility. The brief promotes the idea that student housing could be located above the shopping facilities.

Open Space/Public Realm

- 6.5 The brief promotes the creation of public green space that extends south into a renewed housing area, in which new play park facilities could be located. New development around this space will offer a high level of natural surveillance and is well placed to create good physical connections with the surrounding area. These open spaces, and others along Broomhouse Road, are considered essential to create informal recreational spaces for local residents, maintain an open outlook and amenity and to minimise the impact of new development.

Education

- 6.6 The brief also promotes the idea that the Napier University/Stevenson College redevelopments could be based on a series of courtyards. An area to the east of the retained central spine building of Napier University could serve as an arrival point and a setting for new university buildings. The redevelopment proposals also incorporate the potential to create in the future a link and/or shared facility between the university and college.

Transport

- 6.7 Provision for pedestrians and cyclists should be safe, secure, and direct and designed to encourage walking and cycling. It should be a comprehensive and dominant feature of the overall layout, providing routes through the area and connecting where possible with the existing and proposed network. Where routes are shared, these should be provided at a minimum width of 4m. All routes should be appropriately signed within and around the development.
- 6.8 A new junction on Calder Road that would allow vehicles, including buses, to turn right into and out of Sighthill Court is considered essential to meet the growing needs of the University and College. The junction could also incorporate considerably improved facilities for pedestrians, providing safe and convenient access across the road at all times of the day. A new junction, incorporating such facilities would remove the need for vehicles to take circuitous routes into and out

of North Sighthill, improve public transport accessibility and significantly, the need for a pedestrian subway in this location.

- 6.9 The development brief recognises the potential to create a public transport route linking Calder Road with Bankhead Avenue/Drive, via the University and College campuses. In the short term, this is not considered to be an essential requirement to meet the needs of development proposed in the area. However, the Council would not wish to see the potential to create such a link prejudiced by new development.
- 6.10 All new development will be expected to take advantage of the improved public transport accessibility to the area. To address the expected increase in pedestrian activity existing pedestrian crossings in the area will require upgrading to enable the installation of bus and pedestrian detection equipment at signalised junctions.

Car Parking

- 6.11 The Council's parking standards are set out in supplementary guidance, and form part of the Council's Development Control Handbook. North Sighthill lies with Zone 5 of the standards, which is recognised as a major growth area requiring significant investment to ensure good accessibility to the area by means other than private car. As a general principle visitors/users of the education and community facilities should be encouraged to use public transport where possible. This can be influenced greatly through the design and management of the developments envisaged e.g. by ensuring that bus and tram stops are well located in relation to the main entrance points of the facilities proposed, that car parking provision is essentially for operational purposes and for people with disabilities.

7.0 Implementation

- 7.1 Where it is apparent that a comprehensive approach is not in prospect it may be necessary for the Council, in exceptional cases, to use its powers of compulsory

purchase, to assemble a site for development and enable a satisfactory outcomes to be achieved.

Planning Agreements

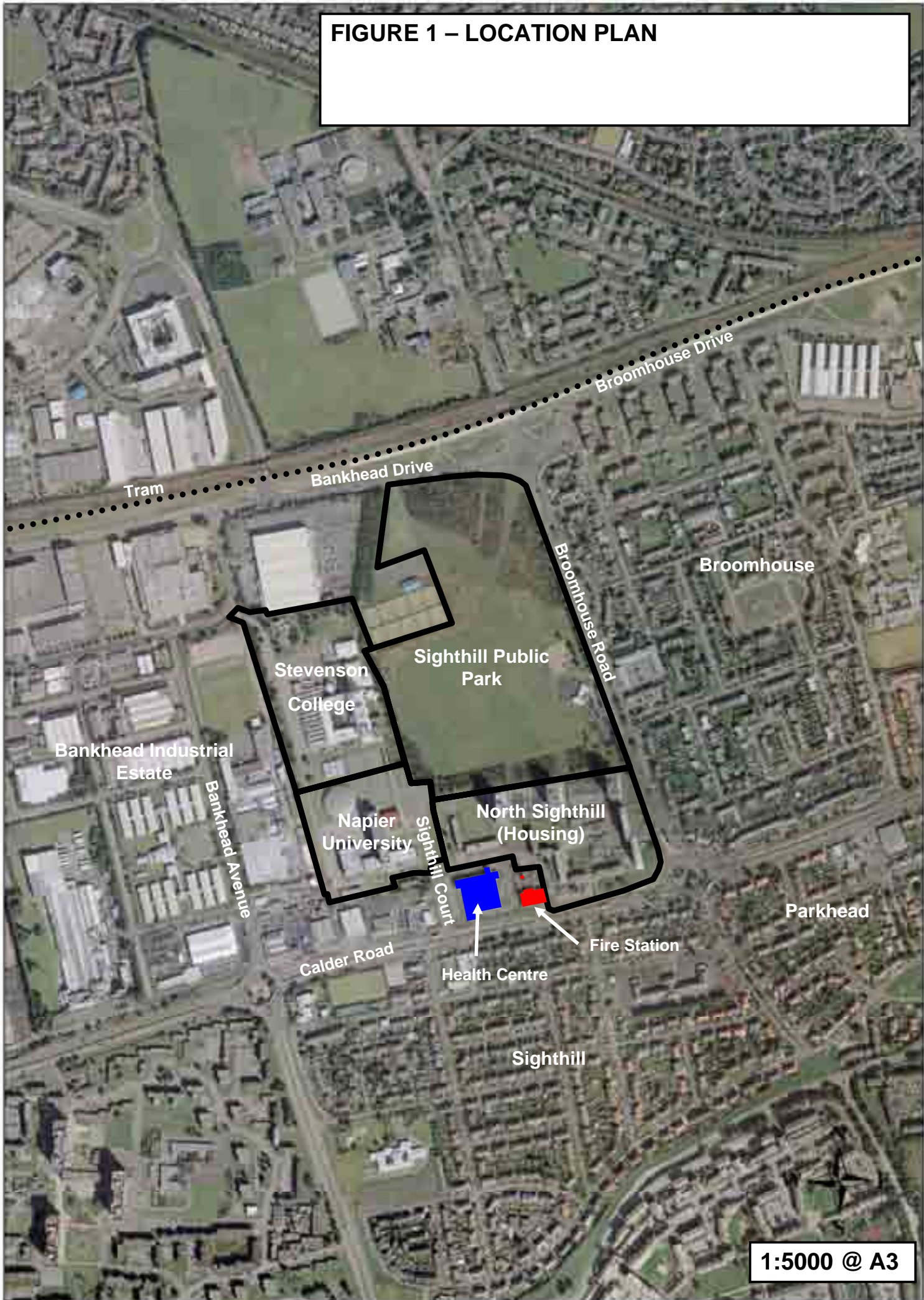
7.2 Development on the scale envisaged at North Sighthill will have a significant impact on the provision of infrastructure and services in the area. Developers will therefore be expected to enter legal agreements to secure appropriate contributions towards meeting identified requirements. In this regard reference should be made to the following Council guidelines:

- Movement and Development;
- Tram Project: developer Contributions.

7.3 The Council will also seek to secure significant improvements to the public realm. One mechanism for securing this and other improvements is through developer contributions.

31.10.07



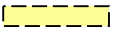






FIGURE 1 – LOCATION PLAN

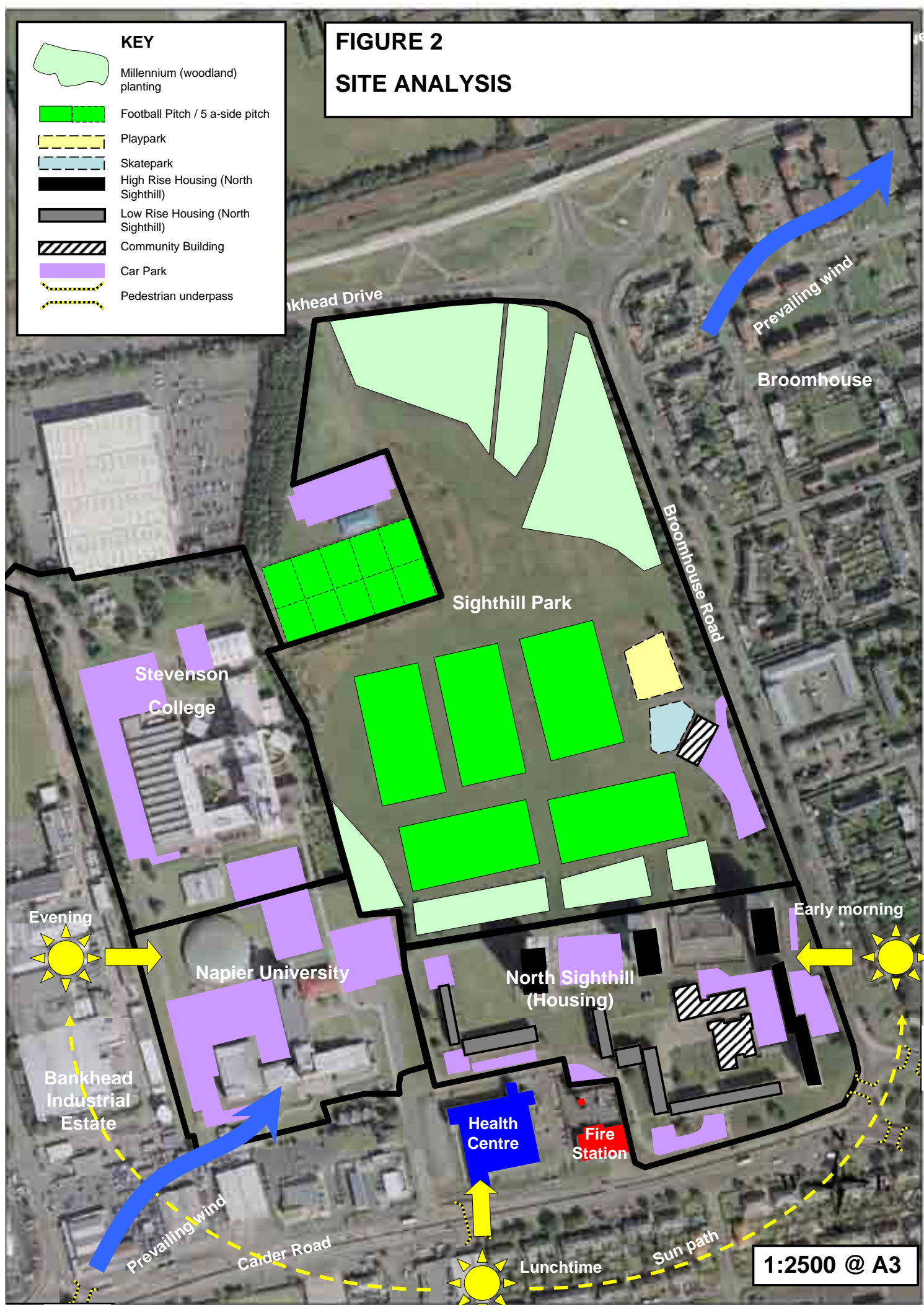


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FIGURE 2
SITE ANALYSIS

KEY

-  Millennium (woodland) planting
-  Football Pitch / 5 a-side pitch
-  Playpark
-  Skatepark
-  High Rise Housing (North Sighthill)
-  Low Rise Housing (North Sighthill)
-  Community Building
-  Car Park
-  Pedestrian underpass

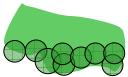














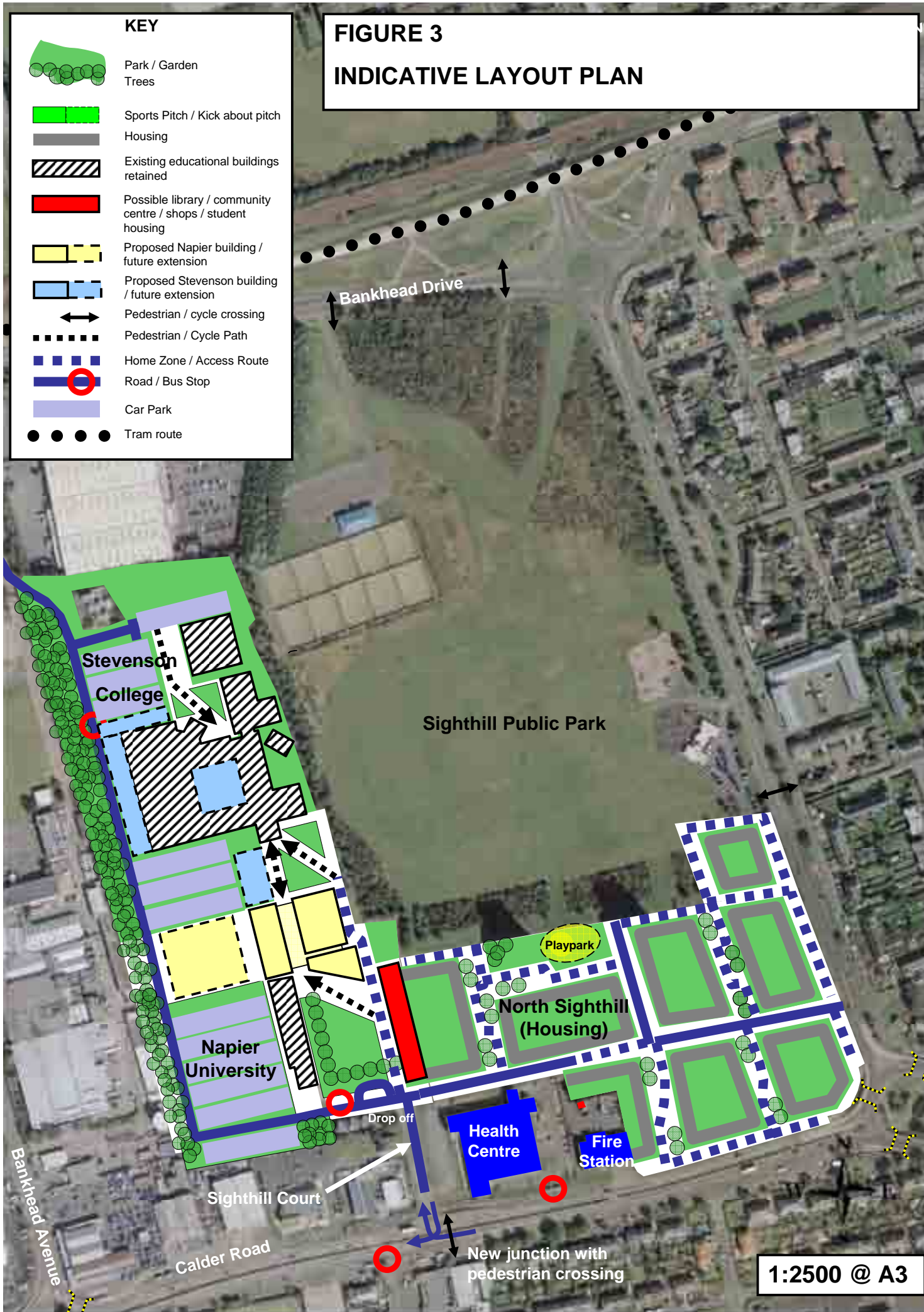
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FIGURE 3

INDICATIVE LAYOUT PLAN

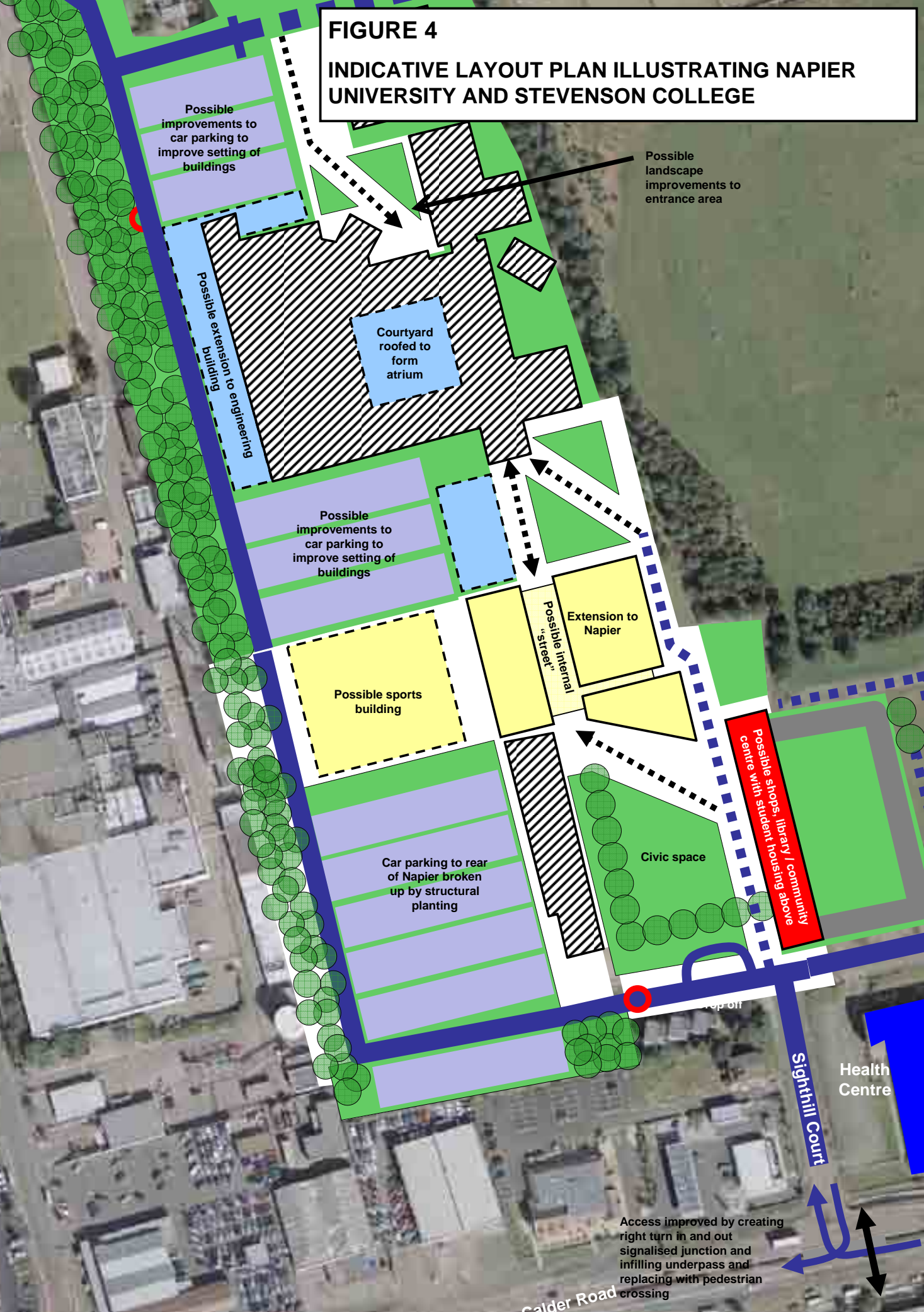
KEY

-  Park / Garden Trees
-  Sports Pitch / Kick about pitch
-  Housing
-  Existing educational buildings retained
-  Possible library / community centre / shops / student housing
-  Proposed Napier building / future extension
-  Proposed Stevenson building / future extension
-  Pedestrian / cycle crossing
-  Pedestrian / Cycle Path
-  Home Zone / Access Route
-  Road / Bus Stop
-  Car Park
-  Tram route



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FIGURE 4
INDICATIVE LAYOUT PLAN ILLUSTRATING NAPIER UNIVERSITY AND STEVENSON COLLEGE



This development brief sets out land use and design principles for its area.

You can get this document, in Braille, large print and various computerformats if you ask us.

Please contact ITS on 0131 242 8181

ITS can also give information on community language translations.

You can get more copies of this document by calling 0131 469 3412

You can view this brief online at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/devbriefs

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