

◆ EDINBURGH ◆

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

CITY DEVELOPMENT

**NORTH WEST PORTOBELLO
DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

May 2008

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Most of Portobello has been built up since Victorian times in the traditional tightly-knit street pattern of a typical Scottish small town. However, with the changing pattern of industry and employment, there is now around 17 hectares of vacant or underused land in the north-west part of the town in various ownerships which have potential for development.
- 1.2 The Council encourages a comprehensive approach to redevelopment and regeneration wherever possible, and the preparation of development frameworks or masterplans, to identify the full design potential for creating successful places. The Council considers this to be a particularly appropriate approach to pursue for this area of Portobello, in order to avoid an unfortunate patchwork of piecemeal and uncoordinated developments which do not relate to each other, do not integrate with and contribute to the existing townscape, and fail to create an attractive and pleasant sense of place.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Development Brief is to provide a general framework to guide and co-ordinate the development of North West Portobello over the next 15 to 20 years. It is however intended to be flexible, and will be expanded as required as specific proposals, additional sites, or development pressures come forward. Existing uses and buildings will be respected, with no intention to force redevelopment against the wishes of present owners, but when redevelopment becomes desirable or necessary, the brief will provide guidance on acceptable forms which it should take. Meantime all new development must respect neighbouring in terms of existing policies, including amenity, privacy and daylight.

2 Background

Description of Sites & Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The area covered by this Brief is framed by the main north west approach to Portobello, and is contained by Sir Harry Lauder Road to the west and the Promenade to the north east, with the Figgate Burn and Bridge Street defining the southern limits. The Westbank housing area and Kings Road tenements lie immediately to the north, with Portobello High Street and the Portobello Conservation Area situated to the south east. It also contains two major potential strategic routes, the Promenade / Boardwalk and the Figgate Burn Corridor.
- 2.2 The area comprises clusters of sites in various ownerships. The main groupings are:

- Baileyfield Industrial Estate, including BL Developments, Standard Life, other owners, and residential cottages;
- High Street to Promenade link, including Figgate burn, 5-aside pitches, Bowling Centre, car park;
- Promenade, including Funpark site, kilns, and seafront area.

Land uses are currently a mix of mainly light industrial and residential uses with some retail, commercial and leisure activities, and incidental areas of open space.

Policy Context

- 2.3 Approximately 60% of the study area (the Baileyfield Industrial Estate) is designated in the North East Edinburgh Local Plan for business and employment uses. The remainder of the area is designated largely for housing and compatible uses. The finalised Edinburgh City Local Plan Policy *Emp 4* on Employment Sites and Premises is also a material consideration.
- 2.4 Overall, the redevelopment of the site must function satisfactorily within the context of Portobello, but also in the broader Edinburgh context as well – that is, it must satisfy both local and city wide needs with regard to residential, employment, community and leisure provision, and also reinforce the special role of seafront recreation. Redevelopment will inevitably result in additional residential and working population, and development should aim to absorb this, taking steps as necessary to address the impact on the rest of the local infrastructure, while should be addressed positively to absorb the extra numbers while enhancing the viability / vitality for local shops, community facilities, bus routes etc.

3 Land Uses

- 3.1 The area will be developed for a variety of residential, commercial and community uses. The residential use will predominate, but must be intermixed with other uses to achieve diversity and vitality. In particular, continuing the area's contribution to the citywide needs for employment sites.

Residential

- 3.2 The area has great potential for residential development because of its relatively easy access to the city centre combined with its distinctive local ambience and amenities including shops and services, the seafront, and cultural facilities. It is important that the new development complements the existing provision both in Portobello and in the city as a whole, and in particular takes appropriate opportunities to balance deficiencies and shortfalls.
- 3.3 In this regard, new residential provision should be mixed but, to maximise Portobello's character and assets, with a higher concentration of units more suited to family use. There is an opportunity to explore

more innovative ways of achieving modern densities while retaining the most desirable elements of inner suburbia such as private gardens, tree-lined streets, in-curtilage parking etc.

- 3.4 Proposals should also provide smaller units for first-time buyers – for instance, through inventive studio flat layouts – and other specialist provision, both “affordable” and mainstream for users such as older residents and wheelchair users. Student accommodation may also be possible, providing it can be incorporated in a way and at a scale which minimises any adverse impact on neighbouring residential property. Conventional 2 or 3 bedroom flats should not comprise more than 25% of the total accommodation provision.
- 3.5 25% of the housing should meet the Council’s Affordable standards, and this must be mixed in the same proportions as the mainstream developments. This provision should not rely wholly on Registered Social Landlord (housing association) renting, but should also look at more imaginative alternatives such as shared equity and co-ownership schemes.

Commercial

- 3.6 The major employer within the site, with some 500 staff, is Standard Life, who is also a major landowner. This Development Brief does not place any pressure on the company to vacate the site or rearrange its accommodation; but when their buildings eventually become obsolete or life expired, it will set the framework for a redevelopment which retains their presence while producing an attractive modern working environment and maximises the estate value through productive use of surplus lands.
- 3.7 The site should also make a contribution the Council’s strategic employment objective for units suitable for smaller businesses, both for light industrial (subject to suitable safeguards in term of location and construction to protect residential amenity) and studio / office accommodation. There are opportunities for innovative provision, such as live/work units with workshop / studio / office space at ground level and living accommodation above, mews-type developments, and multi-storey provision (up to 20% of these types of units can function satisfactorily on more than one floor). Suitable locations are along the High Street, extending the interest and employment generation without detracting from the retail uses in the town centre, and clustered within the Baileyfield sites.

Retail

- 3.8 Other than a possible purely local “corner shop” facility within the development, perhaps as the focus of a local centre or at the seafront, no new retail provision is envisaged within the area. Instead, the extended High Street would house other specialist uses that benefit from

a street frontage such as small offices, local services, healthcare, professional offices, graphics and computer design, and artists' studios.

Hotel

- 3.9 Portobello's dual role as both part of Edinburgh and as a seaside town in its own right affords an attractive opportunity for a hotel development, possibly as a "landmark" building on the north part of the Baileyfield site at the entrance to the town, or as part of a promenade seafront development.

Civic, Culture and Leisure

- 3.10 Possible community uses which have been identified, subject to discussion with potential providers, are a health centre practice, perhaps fronting the High Street for ease of accessibility; and a nursery / crèche facility, which could visually link its open space requirement with that of adjoining public space.
- 3.11 A potential core location for civic uses is an upgraded pedestrian route from the High Street to the Promenade beside the Figgate Burn. These uses would provide interest and vitality to the link, and could include existing community, cultural and sports operations who seek more or better quality space, or completely new uses (either local or city-wide) such as a museum or gallery. Potential users will be identified in further discussions with providers and interested parties.
- 3.12 Existing sports uses are the Bowling Centre at the Promenade, and the 5-a-side football pitches at the Pitz. The bowling centre will remain but in the longer term should be remodelled to create a more inviting frontage to the promenade, possibly with expansion to accommodate additional facilities. No loss of the football pitches will be acceptable unless a new facility of at least equal standard is provided elsewhere in the near vicinity. Other sports, particularly those related to beach- and water activity, could be introduced.
- 3.13 If a reinstatement of a pier is desired in Portobello, a possible site could be at the foot of Kings Road. Such a development could culminate in a Winter Garden structure. Alternatively, it could be located further northwest as part of a redevelopment of the Marine Gardens site. The pier would be suitable for small craft and pleasure trips. The impact of a pier on nature conservation in the Firth of Forth would need to be assessed and its use for a regular ferry/hovercraft terminus would require further investigation more generally in terms of noise and traffic generation.
- 3.14 Other existing community uses, currently housed in unsuitable or sub-standard premises (eg the British Legion, the Islamic Centre) could also benefit from new custom-built provision within the Baileyfield site or along the Figgate Burn link.

4 Urban Structure and Public Realm

- 4.1 The underlying design objective of any new development is to achieve an urban grain and street structure which reinterprets in a modern fashion the intricate pattern of lanes and streets which are characteristic of Portobello, extending the existing town while creating a distinctive new sense of place and identity. Buildings will normally be grouped into terraces, linked clusters, corners, pends and vennels opening into small courtyards and lanes. Appropriate scale, massing, building lines and street design are important elements.

Urban edges

- 4.2 To the west, Sir Harry Lauder Road provides a somewhat harsh edge which requires softening through building form and landscaping. This buffer strip will take the form of an embankment or earthworks, and/or structured tree planting to screen and create an avenue effect to Sir Harry Lauder Road itself. Building forms and uses should be selected to minimise amenity issues while retaining sunlight penetration and views out.
- 4.3 The Portobello High Street edge will extend the existing High Street to create a frontage of similar scale and urban enclosure. New streets from the Baileyfield development will link through to the High Street and across to the seafront. Land uses can be residential on the upper floors but with commercial and civic uses at street level to preserve residents' privacy and create pedestrian interest. There is an opportunity for a landmark building at the north end to provide a suitable entrance to the town.
- 4.4 The Figgate Burn provides a potential edge to the south, largely coinciding with the boundary between the existing and new development. The Burn should be opened up wherever possible as a public walkway and linear park, especially to the east of the High Street where it will form an important feature of the link to the Promenade.
- 4.5 The Promenade edge is already a well-established and high profile feature of city-wide rather than purely local significance. The completion of a complete waterside link onwards to Leith Docks, Newhaven and Cramond is a major city aspiration, and new development at the former Funpark site will therefore be set back 2m to widen the existing Promenade pinch-point. An active frontage is required from the Bowling Centre to Beach Lane, concentrating traditional and new "seafront" leisure uses. Permeability can be improved by opening up the obstructive walls within the Pipe St / Bridge St area to permit through pedestrian movement.

Baileyfield Interior

- 4.6 The layout concept will be one of development in the form of traffic-reduced shared streets, fronted by terraces of buildings of appropriate scale as indicated below (section 6), linking to and grouped around a central parkland open space. In the event of phased development, this open space should be designed so that it is extendable as further redevelopment takes place, with related road diversions to ensure that the space remains uninterrupted. The layout should work in the first instance with the retention of the Baileyfield Cottages and the protection of their residential amenity, although this would not preclude taking some or all of them into redevelopment at a later stage should they become available.

Listed Structures

- 4.7 The Kilns are in important link to the area's historical past, and require an improved setting which increases their visibility and links them directly to the Promenade.
- 4.8 The Tower at Beach Lane is an interestingly eccentric historical building which deserves a better setting, and future development around it should seek to achieve this.

New East-West Axis

- 4.9 The links to the seafront are currently understated and not particularly clear to visitors seeking access to the Promenade. A more legible purpose-built link would assist in guiding pedestrians and vehicles away from existing streets and therefore minimising nuisance to residents. The redevelopment affords an opportunity to improve the whole east-west link between Baileyfield and the seafront as a key urban design element of the new area, raising its profile through a more formalised design and by using it as a location for suitable social, community, cultural and sporting facilities.
- 4.10 The western section of the axis already exists, formed by Fishwives Causeway, an historical route from Portobello to Edinburgh, and this will remain as the major pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the Baileyfield redevelopment sites. To strengthen it, the pedestrian / cycle link to the west should be reinstated by bridging over Harry Lauder Road. To begin with, it will remain on its present formation but, with the eventual development of the southern part and the extension of the central open space, vehicle traffic will be diverted around the edge of the parkland leaving only pedestrian and cycle traffic on the original alignment. In any redevelopment or refurbishment the architectural design quality of new buildings fronting the Causeway, including the corner site currently occupied by a garage, must be of a significantly higher standard than those existing at present to reflect their key role.
- 4.11 The pedestrian connection across High Street will be an at-grade signalised crossing, of suitable width and choice of paving, designed to maximise pedestrian priority and legibility.

4.12 The eastern part of the axis will be formed as a pedestrian route with the Figgate Burn as a central landscape feature. This route will currently serve the football pitches and the Bowling Centre, but would be a location for other civic and leisure uses to reinforce its role. A suitable corner building and use would assist in pinpointing its location and function to visitors. The visitor parking will be retained but re-landscaped to an improved standard. A more detailed study is required for the function and design of this area.

Landscaping

4.13 The general character of new development will be a reinterpretation of the traditional urban grain of Portobello, with landscaping – surface materials, walls, occasional strategic tree planting as punctuation or for emphasis – complementing this. All existing trees on site are to be surveyed and their retention sought wherever possible. Green landscaping including street planting should be used as a visual linking mechanism.

4.14 The major public open space provision will be concentrated in the centre of the Baileyfield site, designed to accommodate traditional park activities (walking, sitting, games etc). Generally, public open space provision must provide the potential for activity, informal sport, incident, meeting places, seats, shelter, social spaces (such as barbecues and children's play), and integrate with the surrounding architecture. The main space within the Baileyfield site will be parkland and could incorporate some of the advanced principles of innovative open space design seen elsewhere.

4.15 Private realm will be differentiated but must integrate seamlessly into public space where it lies adjacent to it. There is potential to explore interesting inside/outside relationships offered by the configuration of landscape proposals and the interaction between buildings, with potential to enrich the public realm as well as the private spaces and architecture.

4.16 All houses, and all ground floor flats and maisonettes, will have adequate private garden / patio space. Upper floor flatted developments will have a shared backgreen space, and can use roof terraces or balconies to provide a degree of private space for these properties also. The backgreen areas will not be used for parking. Roof terraces must be suitably constructed to support full landscape treatment including tree pits. Where possible, back gardens and back greens should mesh visually into public open spaces to provide continuity of green landscape and planting.

5 Infrastructure and Movement

5.1 The main route into the Baileyfield site, Fishwives' Causeway, will be a 7.3m access road with 2m pavements. As it penetrates the site and

splits in different directions, it will reduce to 5.5m. By judicious use of combinations of reduced width and geometry, the design traffic speed will be reduced to 20mph. Other access connections to the High Street, Harry Lauder Road and other parts of the existing network are possible, but may require some restrictions on vehicle use.

- 5.2 All other streets within the sites will be designed on shared access principles, making them a pleasant social and habitable space. This will be achieved through limiting the impact of vehicle movement, provision of trees and planting, landscape and street furniture, and defensible front garden / parking.
- 5.3 The High Street – Promenade link will be designed as a pedestrian street, taking account of microclimate and shelter requirements. Eventually it may be bounded by new cultural or leisure facilities, but the design should be sufficiently robust to provide an attractive space from the outset.
- 5.4 All traffic layouts and proposals will be subject to a Traffic Impact assessment, demonstrating that the connections are adequate to take the additional development from the sites. The assessment should be based on the new junction arrangements to replace the existing roundabout at Seafield Road. If deficiencies or problems are identified, it will be the responsibility of the developers to devise and provide solutions.
- 5.5 Parking for residents and commercial users should be based on the Council's standards, and in any case must be sufficient to ensure that there is no over-spill into congested neighbouring streets. On-street parking for visitor and casual users must be located to support the function of the street rather than forming a barrier between occupants and passers-by.
- 5.6 Parking for visitors to the Promenade is essential, especially at weekends and on busy summer days, and should be largely retained in its present location but with re-landscaping to improve its visual and amenity value.

6 Building Design

- 6.1 The area is open to both innovative and more traditional architectural design approaches providing they emphasise and reinforce the historic context, provide an imaginative response to the development principles set out in this brief, and are of a humane scale. Building forms must support the vitality of the streets with main-door entrances and active spaces (for instance, living rooms, kitchens, shopfronts, offices etc) overlooking the streets.
- 6.2 Building heights will largely derive from the general height of the existing adjacent buildings and the surrounding urban grain. Sunlight, overshadowing and daylighting studies will be required to assess the

impact of new development on neighbouring buildings, internal courtyards and streets, and adjacent open space and the Promenade. Subject to these, specific height indications are:

- Sir Harry Lauder Road Edge: no higher than the existing Kings Road tenements
- Around the central Baileyfield park: sufficient height to give enclosure without overshadowing the open space
- Elsewhere in the Baileyfield site: street frontages commensurate with the scale of the street hierarchy and to meet daylight and sunlight criteria
- High Street frontage: taking the height from the existing traditional buildings nearby on the High Street
- East of the High Street: stepping down near Bridge St & Westbank to minimise impact on the adjoining housing
- Promenade: of a height which minimises overshadowing of the Promenade and beach; depends on layout but likely to be 3 storey frontage with 4th storey set back
- Gateway site on the east side of the High Street at Kings Road: maximum one floor higher than the existing tenements.

6.3 Materials can include stonework or traditional clay bricks (not concrete or silicate) for lower levels to tie in with Portobello's industrial past, and with appropriate diversity at upper levels, but still harmonising with the surrounding context.

7 Other Considerations

Ecology, Sustainability and Micro-climate

7.1 All buildings will be subject to ecological investigation to maximise the benefits of situation and orientation. South-facing sunny aspects will be required for open space. Private garden space, balconies and terraces must meet the Council's sunlight requirements. All development must meet the Council's Standards for Sustainability.

Phased Development

7.2 It is envisaged that redevelopment will occur in sections which reflect the main land ownership boundaries, and it is therefore important that adjoining developers work together with neighbours to ensure seamless junctions. All submissions will be required to demonstrate this. Where issues over ownership or a lack of co-operation would be to the detriment of the achievement of a satisfactory plan, the Council may, in exceptional cases, consider the use of its compulsory purchase powers to assemble a site for development and enable a satisfactory outcome to be achieved.

Contributions

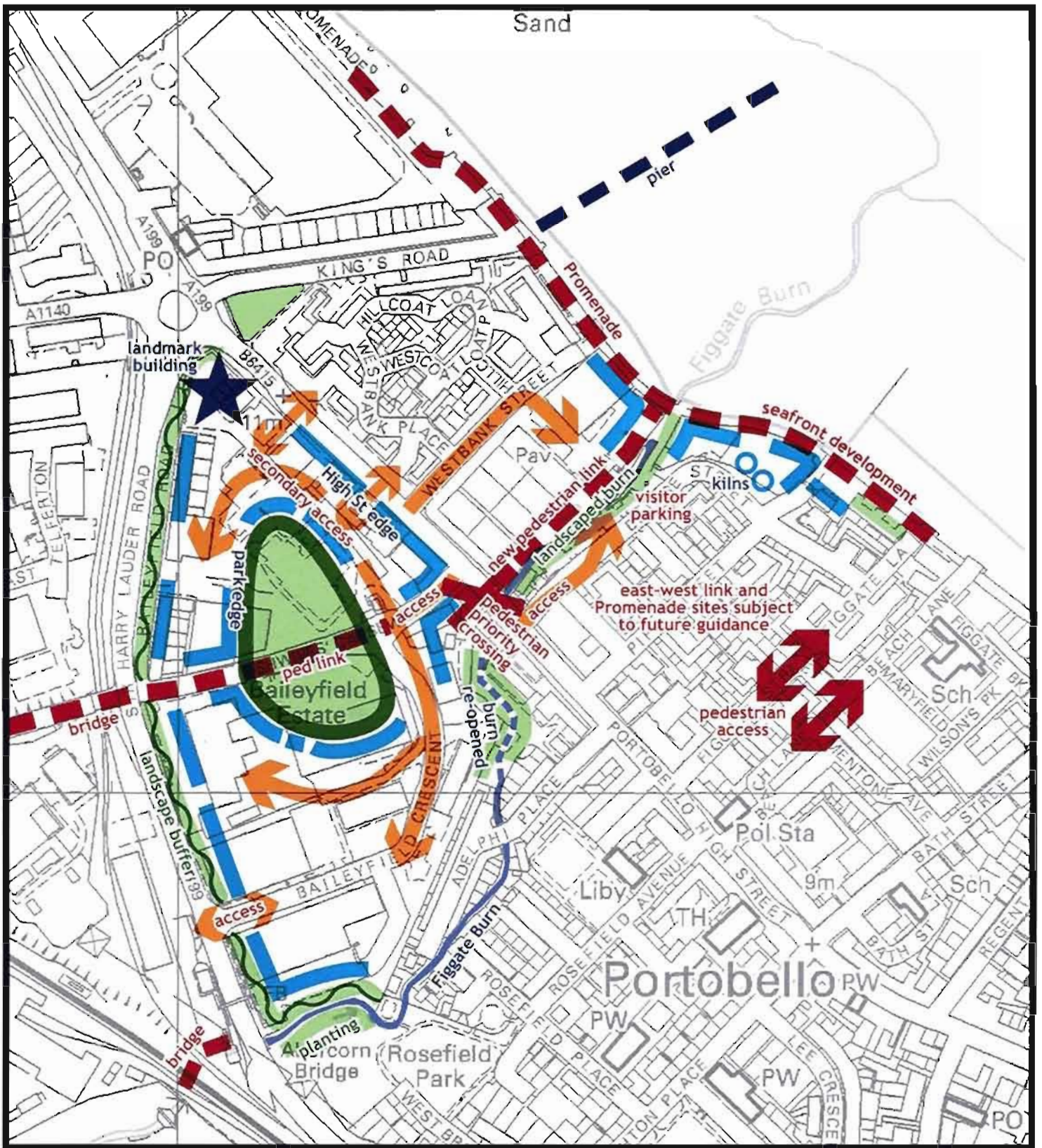
- 7.3 The incremental scale of new development on these sites will have a significant impact on the provision of infrastructure and services in the area. Developers will therefore be expected to enter legal agreements to secure appropriate contributions towards meeting identified requirements in line with its policies, such as education, affordable housing, and movement. Developers are referred to the appropriate guidelines. The Council will also seek to secure significant improvements in the public realm through developer contributions.

Policies and guidance

- 7.4 All development will be in accordance with the Council's guidelines and policies as set out in the Structure and relevant Local Plans, in Supplementary Planning Guidance, and in other adopted policies, strategies, reports and briefs.

Future development

- 7.5 This Brief, or parts thereof, will be developed in more detail as required in accordance with the need for additional or more specific guidance for individual sites and developments. In particular, development of the East–West Axis from High Street to Portobello, of the Promenade between the Axis and Beach Lane, and of the Marine Gardens area, will be the subject of further guidance.



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-  Building Edge Required
-  Vehicle Access
-  Pedestrian Route
-  Landscaping/Planting