

**WEST TOLLGROSS
DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

January 2006

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 West Tollcross lies immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Fountainbridge Development Brief which was approved by the Council in November 2004 (see Figure 1). The Fountainbridge area has seen a number of recent developments adjacent to Lochrin Basin and further significant change is anticipated as a result of the closure of Scottish & Newcastle's Fountain Brewery. The Fountainbridge Development Brief was prepared to establish a comprehensive townscape and infrastructure framework for redevelopment proposals on sites in and adjacent to the Brewery.
- 1.2 During the consultation exercise for the Fountainbridge Brief, the issue of preparing land use and design guidance for the area between the canal basin and Tollcross was raised. In approving the guidance for Fountainbridge, the Council agreed that an additional study would be undertaken to examine the redevelopment opportunities and the potential to achieve high quality linkages between Fountainbridge and Tollcross.
- 1.3 The regeneration of West Tollcross provides the opportunity to reflect and, where possible, enhance the positive attributes of the existing environment and to address current weaknesses. The legacy of alterations to traffic movement and underused road space has resulted in poor pedestrian accessibility and public realm. The area now has a key role in the integration of the canal regeneration with the existing nodal space at Tollcross.
- 1.4 *There is an area of overlap between the Fountainbridge and West Tollcross Briefs as shown on Figure 1. Proposals in the overlap area will be assessed in accordance with the provisions of both briefs. However, if there are any inconsistencies between the two briefs, West Tollcross will take precedence as it is the most recent.***

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

- 2.1 The area included in this development brief covers approximately 5 hectares and encompasses a range of uses and architectural forms (see Figure 1 and 2). A number of important community services are located in this area, including a health centre, primary and nursery schools and fire station. Residential development is predominantly in the form of traditional tenements, some of which have retail or commercial uses occupying the ground floor premises. Retail and commercial uses are concentrated along Earl Grey Street and Home Street. The area is bisected by Ponton Street which provides a busy link in the City road network, carrying significant volumes of vehicular traffic between Tollcross and Fountainbridge.

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The development plan covering the Tollcross area is the Central Edinburgh Local Plan (adopted May 1997) and the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015 (approved June 2004). Work is underway on the preparation of a new Edinburgh City Local Plan. Once approved, the development brief will be used as supplementary planning guidance and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the West Tollcross area.
- 3.2 In terms of the adopted Local Plan, the area lies within the Mixed Activities Zone, where there is an emphasis on promoting an appropriate mix of activities which contribute to local character and vitality. Acceptable uses may include office, business, retail, leisure and residential, provided proposals are compatible with relevant local plan policies. Earl Grey Street and Home Street lie within Tollcross town centre and are protected shopping frontages.

4.0 ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Architectural Interest

- 4.1 The statutorily listed buildings in the development brief area are :-
- 2-20 Earl Grey Street & 2 West Tollcross, Methodist Central Hall. Listed Category B
 - Tollcross Primary School, West Tollcross, including boundary wall, gatepiers and railings. Listed Category B
 - 26-44 Home Street, 1-3 Lochrin Terrace and 2-6 Lochrin Place Listed Category C
 - 46-66 Home Street, 1-3 Lochrin Place and 2-4 Lochrin Building Listed Category C
 - 1 Ponton Street , 89 -95 Fountainbridge and 1 Thornybauk. Listed Category B
- 4.2 Proposals should take full account of the special architectural or historic interest of these buildings and how this may be protected. Consideration should be given to how an appropriate setting can be retained or created. ***In addition, proposals for built development in this area should be accompanied by design information which shows the height relationship with the skyline profile of Edinburgh Castle.***

Archaeological Interest

- 4.3 Since the early 18th century, Tollcross has been a focus for both industrial activity and domestic/commercial settlement. Ponton Street and Thornybauk provided the historic divide between the two zones of activity, with the area to the south and west used for industrial purposes and the area to the east for housing and commercial uses. Along with Fountainbridge, Tollcross was an important area in the growth of Edinburgh during the Industrial Period.
- 4.4 Despite modern developments, evidence suggests that this area may contain important archaeological remains associated with Edinburgh's 18th/19th century industrial past. Where proposals will require groundbreaking works, developers are advised to contact the Council's Archaeologist at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss appropriate mitigation measures.

Education

- 4.5 The West Tollcross area is located within the catchment areas of Tollcross Primary School, James Gillespie's High School, St Peters RC Primary School, St Cuthbert's RC Primary School, St Thomas of Acquin's RC High School and St Augustine's RC High School. All schools have spare capacity, with the exception of James Gillespie's High School and St Thomas of Acquin's RC High School. A developer contribution would be required from any housing proposals in the area towards alleviating accommodation pressures at these two schools.
- 4.6 The amount of developer contributions would depend on the number and type of residential units proposed, in accordance with the Council's "Developer Contributions for Investment in Schools" policy.

Transport

- 4.7 At present, the character of the area is dominated by unnecessarily wide roads and junctions and areas of end-on public car parking, all of which make inefficient use of space and are to the detriment of pedestrian permeability and the quality of the public realm. There are a number of potential improvements which **have been** explored within the context of this brief. These include :-
- reduction in the amount of land given over to road space;
 - new or revised traffic management measures;
 - redistribution of car parking provision.

To ensure that local improvements do not have an unacceptable impact on traffic movements in the surrounding network, transport consultants were appointed to undertake a detailed

study of the area. This study included the identification of a number of options for traffic and streetscape improvements, an assessment of traffic impact in both the immediate and wider area consideration of parking provision and consultation with the Fire Service. It concluded that the majority of the improvements proposed in West Tollcross can be carried out with no material detriment to traffic circulation in and around the area. The results of this study have informed the finalised version of the West Tollcross Development Brief.

5.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

- 5.1 In the West Tollcross area, there are a number of fine buildings, namely Tollcross Primary School and Central Hall and a strength of edge definition to Earl Grey Street, Home Street and Fountainbridge. However, this area lacks the clarity of urban block which is evident in the surrounding streets. Whilst there is a variety of building types, the general mass of these streets is dominated by a four storey tenement scale and sandstone finish. The streets at the heart of the study are less well defined, largely as a result of excessive road surfacing, leftover pockets of land, the modest scale of some buildings and the prominently located electrical sub station.
- 5.2 The movement corridors of Earl Grey Street and Fountainbridge are well established and will continue to be of primary importance. Figure 3 illustrates the potential pedestrian routes through this area, which link to wider pedestrian routes from the Meadows, Quartermile, Lochrin Basin, Bruntsfield, Lothian Road etc. New pedestrian routes to Morrison Street and Lochrin Basin place an increased importance on this area in determining the quality of placemaking and the pedestrian experience.
- 5.3 A key issue for the development brief is to ensure that streetscape proposals can integrate the surrounding context through the creation of spaces with clearly defined roles. The spaces within the study area are primarily circulation spaces where the interface between the footway and ground floor activity is critical. The spaces are intended to be predominantly hard surfaced, although the opportunity to introduce green landscape into the proposed West Tollcross open space should be explored.
- 5.4 The scope for new buildings is limited. Where opportunities for new buildings exist, these should present an appropriate scale and massing to give definition to the space between the buildings. The challenge for new development is to respect the height and scale of neighbouring properties whilst creating a positive edge to the street to enliven these routes.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

General

6.1 The key concern of the brief is to set out the main planning and design principles on which development opportunities and improvements to the road layout and public realm should be based. The western section of the site is closely linked to the Fountainbridge Development Brief as it relates to Lochrin Basin and its environs. For proposals affecting the area to the west of Ponton Street and Thornybauk, it is recommended that reference is also made to the Fountainbridge Brief, in particular paras 8.8 – 8.11 and Figure 12.

6.2 The brief seeks to achieve the following inter-related objectives:

- improve pedestrian linkages between Tollcross and the Union Canal.
- reduce the amount of space given over to vehicular traffic and car parking use and in so doing make pedestrian movement safer and more attractive and enhance the public realm.
- support appropriate redevelopment opportunities for uses compatible with the mixed use character of the area.
- encourage proposals which would strengthen the vitality and viability of Tollcross town centre.

6.3 In order to achieve these objectives, proposals should take account of the following considerations.

Improve Pedestrian Linkages

6.4 The opportunity exists to create stronger pedestrian links between Tollcross and the Union Canal. Achieving this aim will have a number of benefits:

- it will encourage people living, working and socialising in the Fountainbridge area to go to Tollcross, which will help support local shops and businesses.
- it will make the canal and its environs more accessible for Tollcross residents
- it will improve accessibility to the new public transport interchange facilities at Tollcross.

Reduce Amount of Road Space

6.5 The area around Thornybauk, West Tollcross and Ponton Street is dominated both visually and functionally by road space and vehicular traffic movements. The area has a number of one way streets which have unnecessarily wide road space, where footways could be more

generous. The opportunity exists to reclaim some of this road space for use by pedestrians, for open space purposes or for built development.

Mixed Use Redevelopment

- 6.6 This area is identified as a Mixed Activities Zone in the adopted Central Edinburgh Local Plan and therefore a range of uses which reflect the character of this area and its central location in close proximity to the City Centre. In particular, proposals for residential and/or office development are likely to be acceptable. Careful consideration will require to be given to the impact of commercial leisure development or other uses which can lead to late night activity on the amenity of local residents.

Development Opportunities

- 6.7 Figure 4 illustrates the four areas where development opportunities have been identified.
- 6.8 Zone 1 - This lies within the grounds of the existing fire station. The site offers the opportunity for the expansion of the fire station or a stand alone development. Any building should seek to create a positive ground floor to West Tollcross. The building should take pedestrian access from West Tollcross and vehicular access from Dunbar Street, if required. The mass of the building should be subservient to the adjacent Methodist Central Hall and the use of natural stone is encouraged.
- 6.9 Zone 2 - This site contains buildings of varying uses and massing, including a number which are of architectural merit. However, through site assembly and major redevelopment, this zone could make a significant contribution to the regeneration of the area. Any redevelopment should seek to strengthen the enclosure to Home Street and present a primary frontage to Thornybauk to address the proposed public space. The mass of the buildings should reflect the scale of neighbouring tenements and the use of natural stone is encouraged. If car parking is required, it should be located under the building or under adjacent open space.
- 6.10 Zone 3 - This site contains an electrical sub station and area of green space. Whilst development opportunities may be less obvious, the continuation of the tenement and development over the substation could be explored. Due to its location fronting both Thornybauk and West Port, and being on axis with Ponton Street, this site provides an opportunity to create a building of distinction. Any new building will also fulfil an important role in terms of punctuating the view from Home Street and framing the edge to the proposed public space.

6.11 Zone 4 - This site contains student residential units which are currently occupied. The brief does not actively propose the redevelopment of this site. Rather its purpose is to provide guidance, should an opportunity for redevelopment arise in the future. Redevelopment of this site should seek to:

- improve pedestrian access from West Tollcross to Lochrin basin and Fountainbridge
- enhance the setting of Tollcross Primary school and positively address Fountainbridge and West Tollcross.

Any future redevelopment of this site needs to be considered in the context of the adjacent Mecca Bingo site and the Fountainbridge Development Brief, and in particular views to Edinburgh Castle from the canal.

Tollcross Town Centre

6.12 ***The Council has recently commissioned a study to undertake a "health check" of Tollcross town centre and identify an action plan for public and private sector investment. Better linkages to and from the canal area should bring economic benefits for businesses in Tollcross and help support the future role of the town centre.***

6.13 Tollcross lies at the intersection of views from Bruntsfield Place, the Union Canal and Lauriston Place. The introduction of a public art feature at this intersection would provide a visual acknowledgement of the importance of Tollcross. In order to achieve the visual impact of a focal point, when viewed from these key points, the public art would need to be as high as the existing buildings.

7.0 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

7.1 Figures 4 - 6 show potential opportunities to enhance the public realm in West Tollcross. Key elements include :-

- Stopping up of the road at West Tollcross/Lochrin Place to create a public open space
- Creation of a public open space at the junction of Thornybauk and West Tollcross.
- Reduction in road widths and subsequent increase in pedestrian space along Thornybauk, Ponton Street and West Tollcross.
- Enhancement of pedestrian routes along and across Fountainbridge.

- 7.2 **Figure 5 illustrates the new public space which can be created as a result of the stopping up of the road at West Tollcross/Lochrin Place. This space will function as a pedestrian arrival point between Tollcross and Lochrin Basin, linking through the former Arnold Clark site once it is redeveloped. The north section of the space will be formed in a raised shared surface to accommodate vehicular turning at the end of West Tollcross. The stopping up of the road should result in reduced traffic movements and thereby create a safer environment adjacent to the primary school.**
- 7.3 **Figure 6 illustrates the area of public realm to be created as a result of a reduction in the road width at Thornybauk. This public space should be carefully designed to provide an attractive, open and safe environment. It is intended that Thornybauk will accommodate one lane of traffic travelling north with Fire Brigade only traffic travelling south. These proposals, in conjunction with footway widening on West Tollcross, will create an enhanced pedestrian route from Tollcross to the primary school and on to Lochrin Basin.**
- 7.4 **The opportunity to reduce road widths to the minimum necessary to accommodate traffic movements will create an enhanced pedestrian environment along Thornybauk, Ponton Street and West Tollcross. The most notable change is the reduction in the road width on Ponton Street to two lanes of traffic which will allow the provision of additional on-street car parking.**
- 7.5 **Figure 4 indicates the intention to improve pedestrian movement along and across Fountainbridge. Work is now ongoing on drawing up detailed proposals for the section of Fountainbridge between Gardner's Crescent and Lothian Road/Earl Grey Street, including improved crossing facilities and footpath widening. Such proposals may impact on traffic management in the wider area and this needs to be considered alongside the objectives to improve the public realm set out in the Edinburgh Standards for Streets. This study will take some time and it is not desirable to delay approval of the brief until this work is complete. It is therefore intended that detailed proposals for pedestrian improvements along Fountainbridge will be incorporated into the West Tollcross brief at a later date.**
- 7.6 **The Fire Service have been consulted on the proposals for West Tollcross. They are satisfied that the provisions of the brief will not compromise the operations of the Tollcross Fire Station provided the contra-flow fire lane on Thornybauk is kept clear at all times. Further consultation with the Fire Service and the Council's Transport Function will be required on the detailed design and implementation of public realm proposals.**

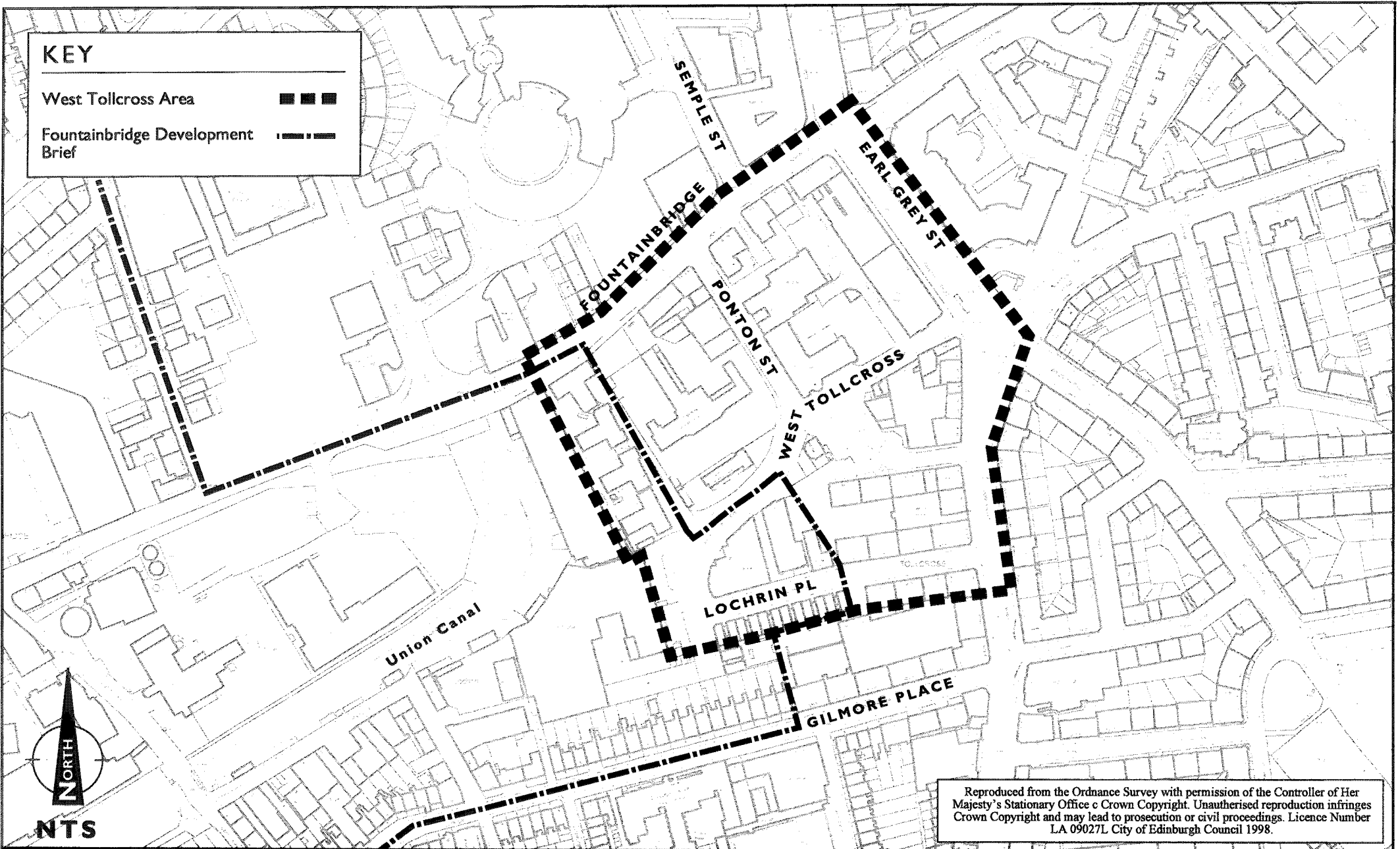
8.0 PARKING PROVISION

- 8.1 *The availability of car parking spaces to serve local residents, town centre customers and visitors to local businesses is an issue of concern to those living and working in the West Tollcross area. Recent changes in the area, including the closure of the Arnold Clark business and the residential development now under construction at Lochrin Place have had implications in terms of availability of and demand for on-street car parking spaces.*
- 8.2 *The transport consultant's study looked at car parking provision in the area and where possible identified opportunities to provide additional spaces within the context of meeting the objectives of the brief as set out in para 6.2 - in particular enhancing the public realm and improving pedestrian links.*
- 8.3 *It is not possible for the brief to set out detailed solutions to the parking issue at this stage – proposals will require to be considered in consultation with the Council as and when opportunities arise. However Figure 7 highlights where existing parking spaces will be lost and identifies the potential for the creation of new spaces – these could be for either public or residential parking. New parking restrictions will be required on Thornybauk to ensure that the fire lane is kept clear at all times. Public parking is provided within recent developments, below the Bank of Scotland on Earl Grey Street and at Edinburgh Quay – however these facilities are not currently well used. There is an opportunity, through better directional signage and promotion, for these car parks to make a greater contribution to meet the demand for public car parking in the Tollcross area and reduce demand for on-street spaces.*

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 Unlike the Fountainbridge Brief, where major redevelopment is proposed on the site of the Scottish & Newcastle Brewery, there are limited development proposals currently anticipated in the Tollcross area. The brief seeks to highlight the potential for improvement that exists in the area and provide a framework to guide the assessment of planning applications and encourage investment from various sources, including developer contributions.
- 9.2 *Implementation of the brief will require partnership working between the various public and private sector stakeholders who have an interest in the future of the West Tollcross area. The Council will have a pivotal role in bringing together the proposals and resources of different parties to achieve the objectives of the brief. In particular it can assist the implementation of the brief in the following ways :*

- **Land Acquisition** - with a number of land ownerships, including the Council's own interests, progress in meeting the brief's objectives is likely to require the active intervention of the Council in land acquisition. If necessary, the Council will investigate the potential to make use of its Compulsory Purchase Order powers.
- **Determination of Planning Applications** - The approved brief will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in and adjacent to the West Tollcross area. Future proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will contribute to meeting the overall objectives of the brief, either through financial contributions or including improvements works as part of a planning application.
- **Delivery of road and public realm proposals** – Relevant developer interests will bring forward detailed designs and the Council will work with them on the necessary stopping up and parking orders to implement the provisions of the brief.



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

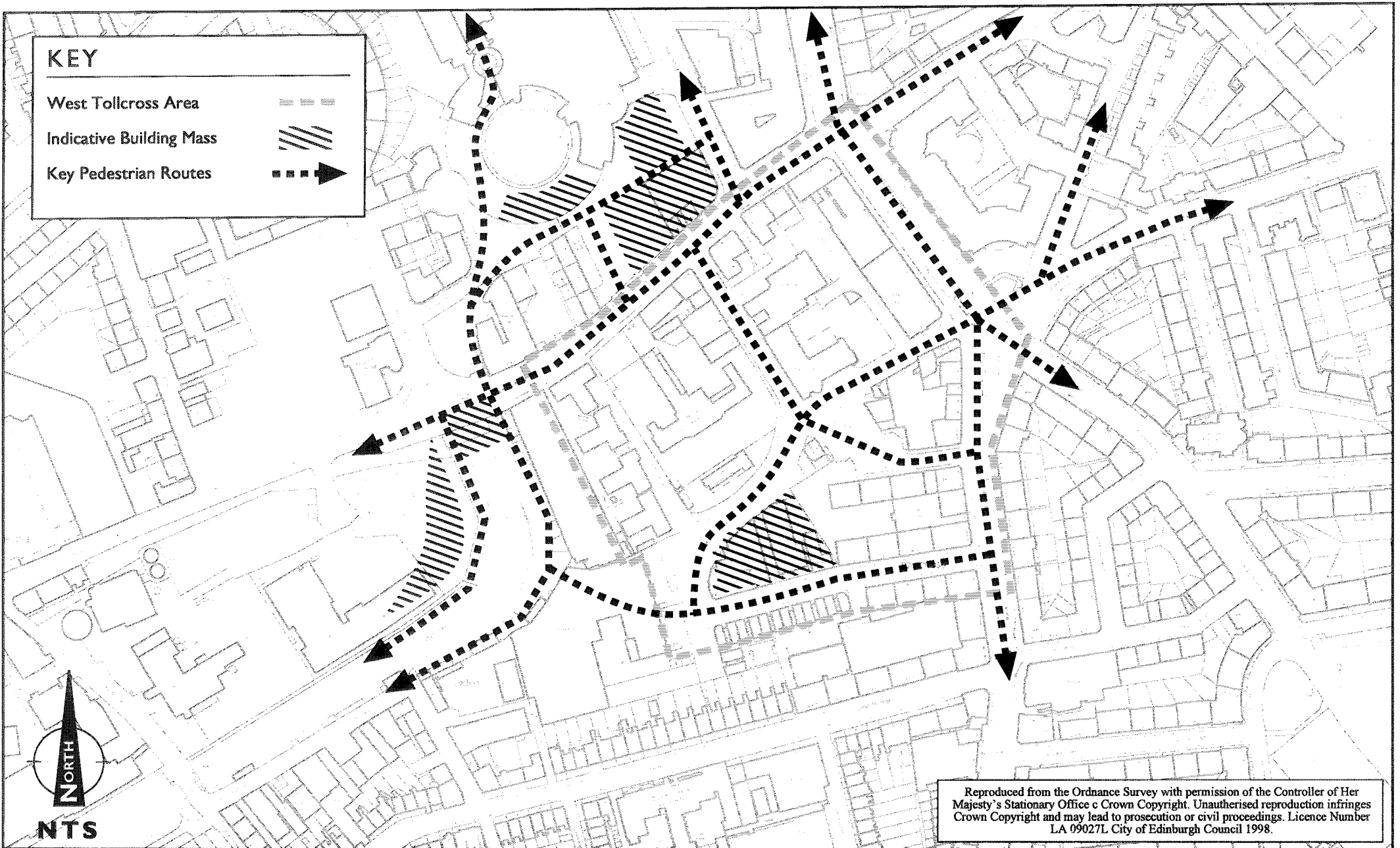
FIGURE I : SITE AREA



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

WEST TOLLCROSS

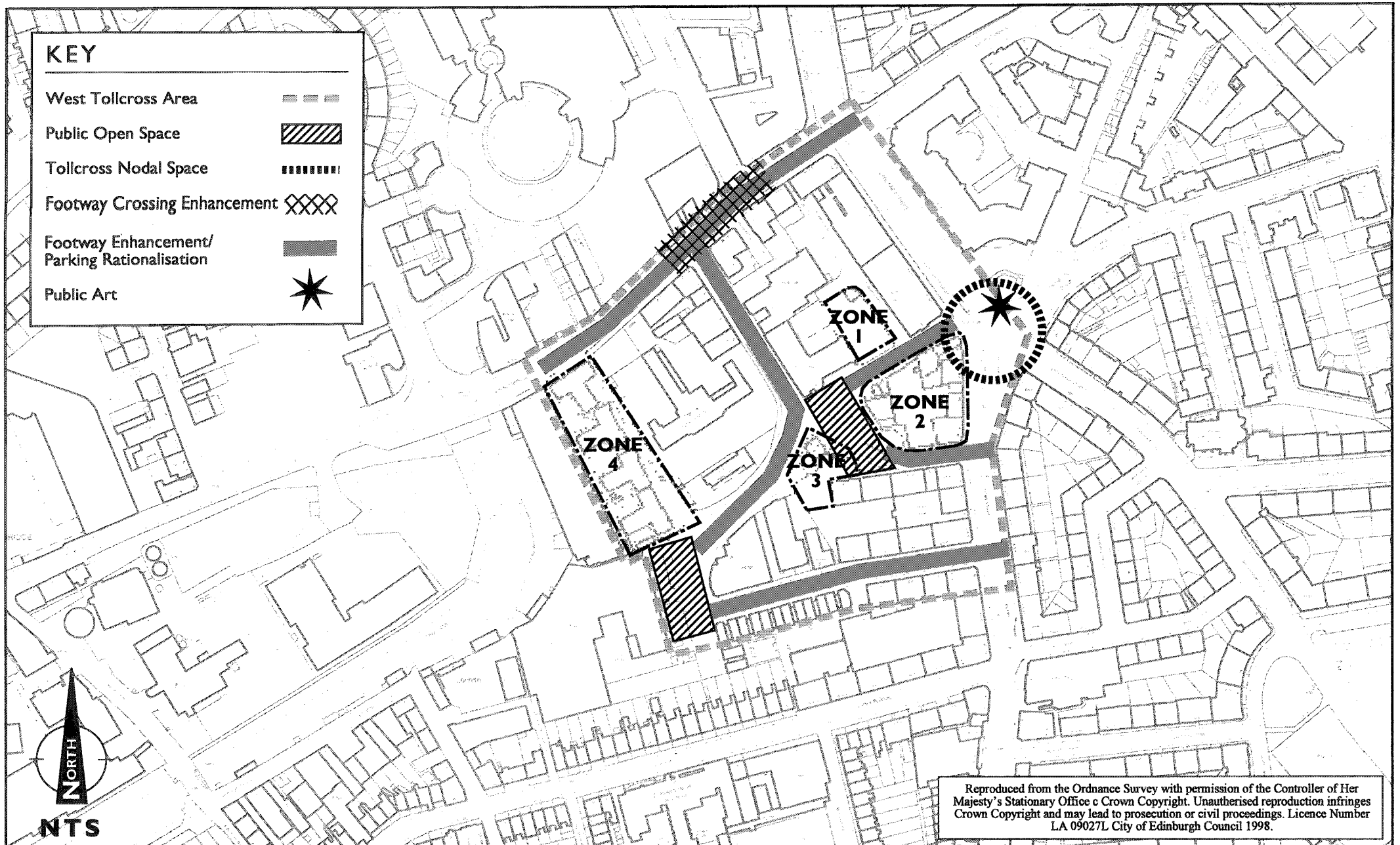
FIGURE 2 : AERIAL VIEW



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

WEST TOLLCROSS

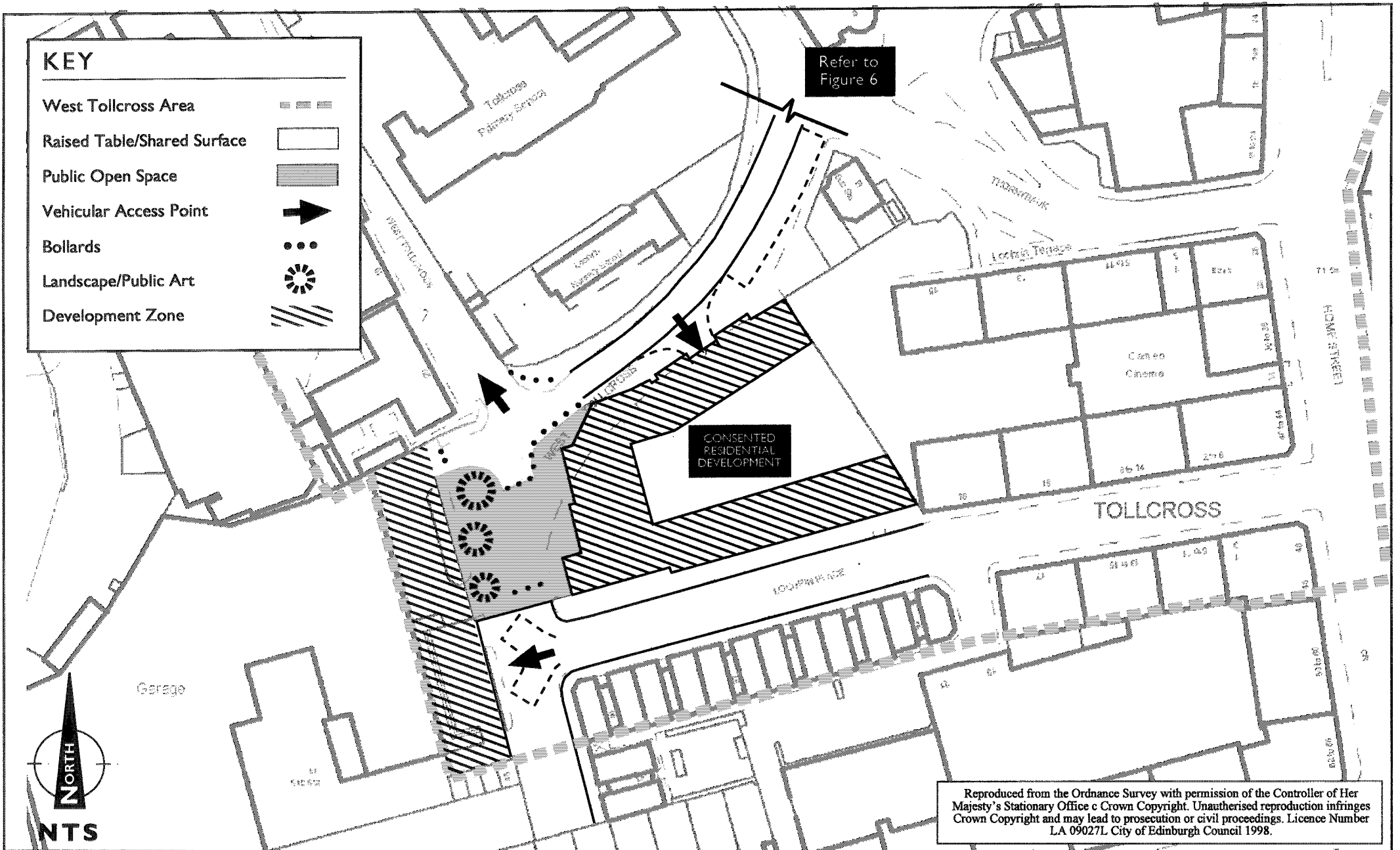
FIGURE 3 :PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT STRATEGY



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

WEST TOLLCROSS

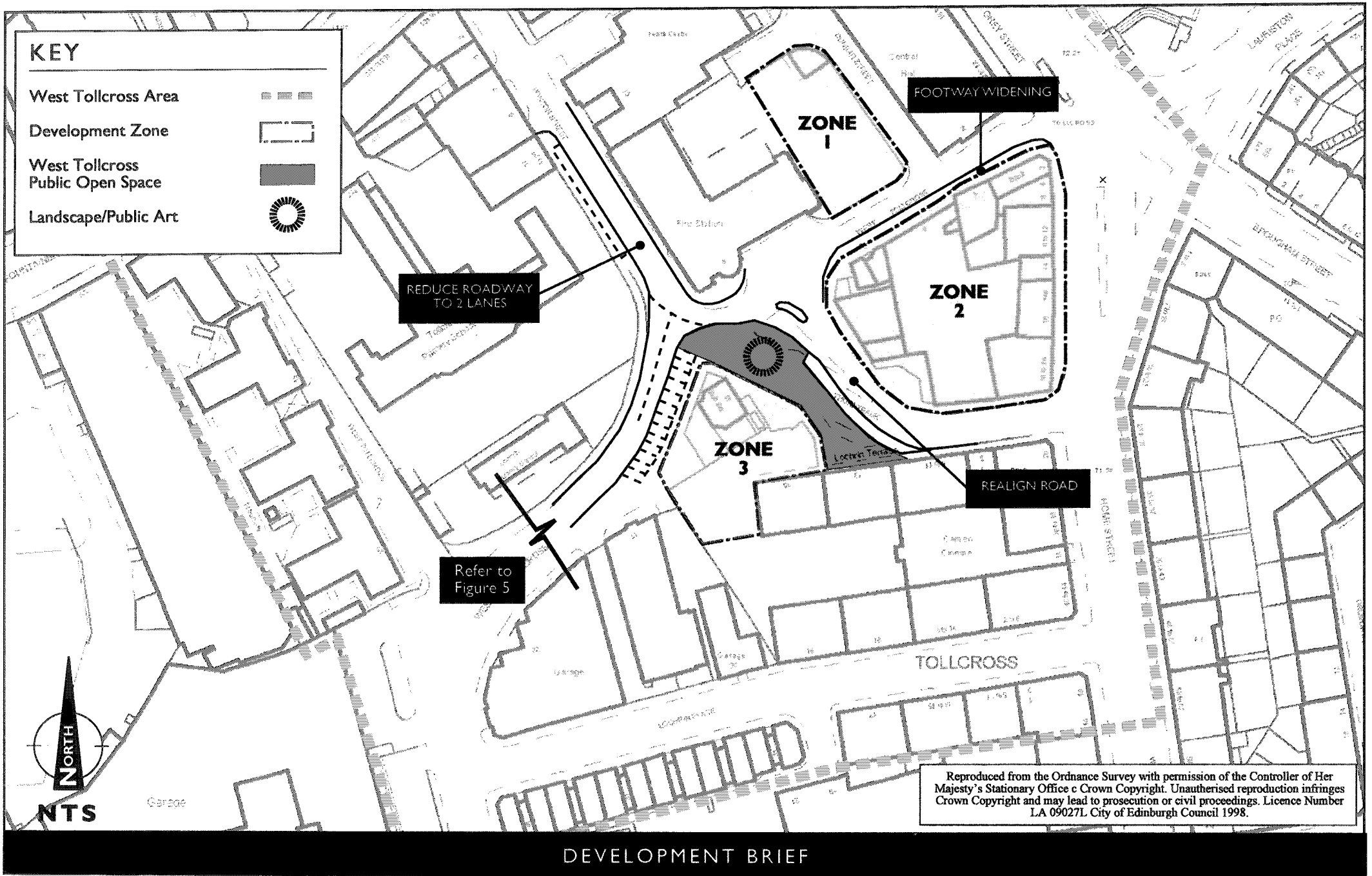
FIGURE 4 : URBAN DESIGN AND PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

WEST TOLLCROSS

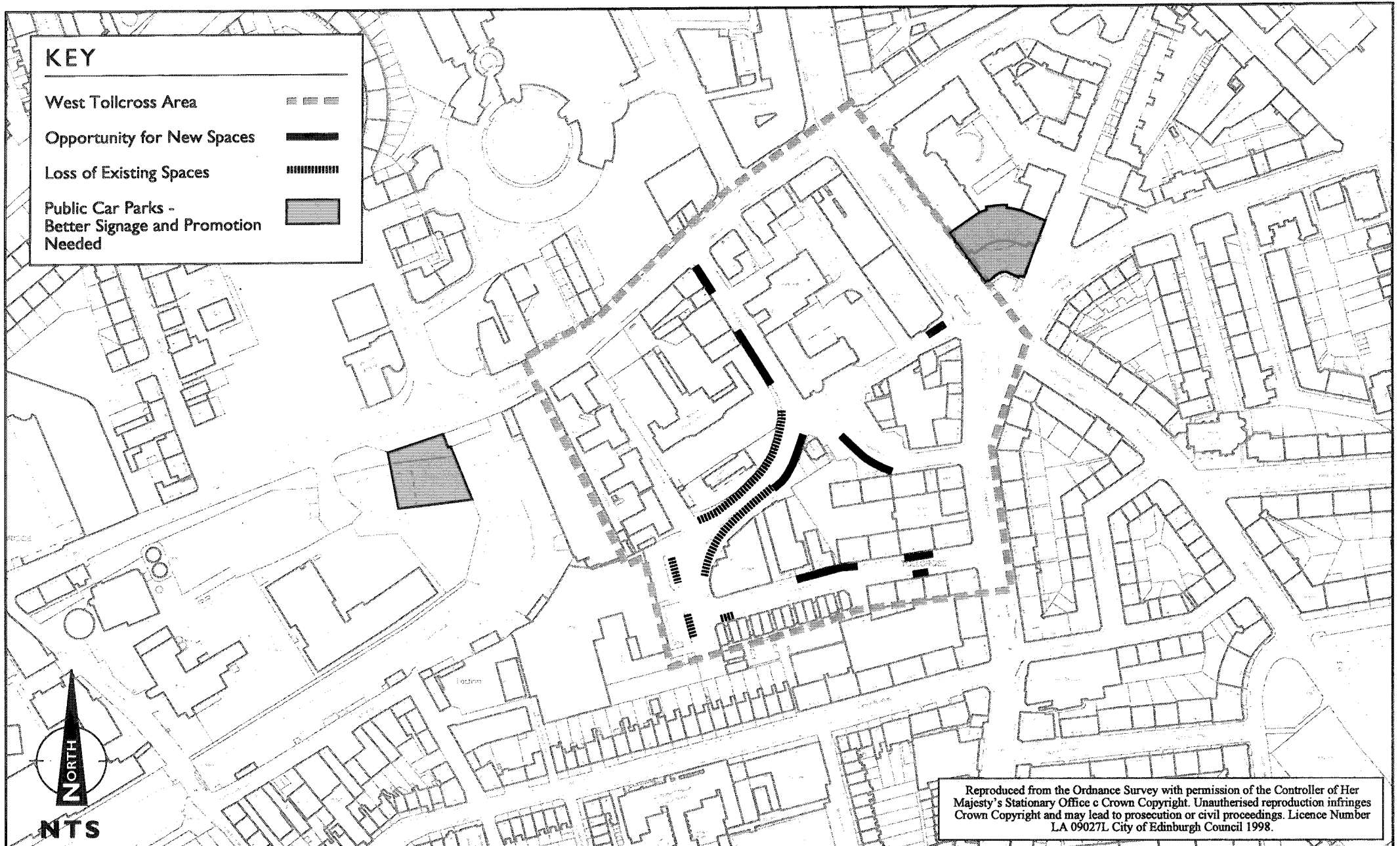
FIGURE 5 : LOCHRIN PLACE : INDICATIVE OPEN SPACE



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

WEST TOLLCROSS

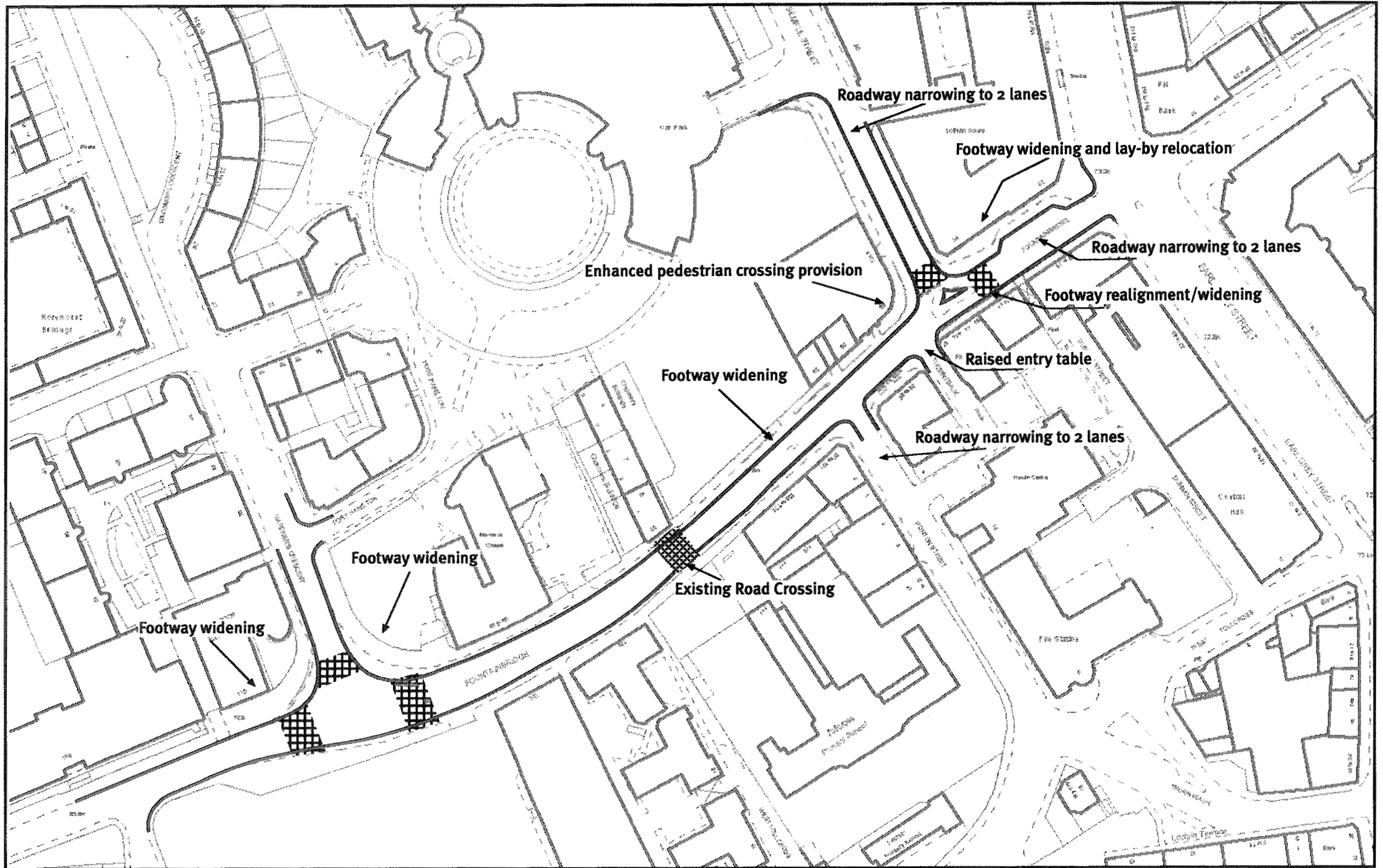
FIGURE 6 : THORNYBAUK/WEST TOLLCROSS :



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

WEST TOLLCROSS

FIGURE 7 : CAR PARKING PROVISION



Appendix 3 - Fountainbridge Indicative Public Realm Proposals