

Gorgie/Dalry Town Centre Guidance

January 2025

INTRODUCTION

Development plans guide decisions on applications for planning permission. The statutory development plan comprises the National Planning Framework (adopted February 2023) and the local development plan, namely City Plan 2030 (adopted November 2024).

This guidance sets out the approach to the change of use of shop units within Gorgie/Dalry Town Centre and assists the implementation of development plan policy.

Gorgie/Dalry is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre) defined and protected in the City Plan 2030 as a hub for a wide range of activities including shopping, providing local services and as a leisure destination.

The Local Development Plan provides a framework for a tailored approach to assessing proposals for change of use applications in individual town centres. This guidance was originally prepared, as statutory supplementary guidance, in accordance with the superseded 2016 Local Development Plan, prior to the National Planning Framework forming part of the statutory development plan. However, the substance of the planning guidance remains valid in the context of the current statutory development plan, and is unchanged by the update.

The guidance has been updated only to reflect:

- Statutory changes to permitted development rights
- The overarching policy framework of the current statutory development plan, both in terms of:
 - National Planning Framework 4; and
 - City Plan 2030, including Policy Re 4: Alternative Use of Shop Units in the City Centre and Town Centres,
- Revisions to town centre boundaries to accord with the boundaries defined by City Plan 2030.

The updated guidance is no longer statutory supplementary guidance, but will remain as planning guidance and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This guidance assists the delivery of National Planning Framework 4 objectives and policies, in particular to ensure town centres are vibrant, healthy and resilient places for people to work, enjoy and visit.

This guidance assists the City Plan 2030 aim to support the existing network of city, town and local centres which are an important focal point for people who live and work in Edinburgh, providing shopping, leisure and community facilities in locations which are easily accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling or public transport. They also contribute to local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods.

This guidance is a material consideration for planning applications seeking consent for a change of use of a retail unit where permitted development rights do not apply. The Council's [Guidance for Businesses](#) is also of relevance to proposals of change of use. This will also be a material consideration in the determination of applications.

This guidance has been informed by a 'public life street assessment' carried out by design consultants for the Council, which explored how the town centre should evolve to maximise the potential for benefiting public life and a health check which has considered the centre's strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resiliencies.



Ensuring that Gorgie/Dalry Town Centre has a variety of shops is important in maintaining it as a destination for shopping. However, there are also benefits in allowing shops to change to non-shop uses that complement shop uses and make the best of the town centre’s accessible location for the local community. Allowing non-shop uses may also help to address vacancies which have arisen due to changing behavioural patterns in shopping such as an increase in online shopping. It is therefore felt that, in certain areas, permitting a change of use to a service use such as an office or a cafe/ restaurant use would enhance the town centre.

Pubs and hot-food takeaway uses will also be considered if these are felt to be appropriate for a certain location in the town centre provided they do not lead to an unacceptable impact on living conditions for nearby residents. To prevent non-shop uses that detract from the streets’ liveliness, changes to uses such as residential will not be permitted.

This document will support the vitality of Gorgie/Dalry town centre as well as contributing to the success and vision of Edinburgh. The Guidance supports Gorgie/Dalry town centre in being inspired, connected, fair and thriving through:

- Creating a thriving town centre through supporting a mix of uses, whilst retaining retailing as the primary function of the town centre
- Consider the contribution of the use of units can make to placemaking
- Providing a flexible approach to change of uses to meet the demands of a growing economy and changing society and
- Contributing to the quality of life of Gorgie/Dalry residents and visitors.

Strengths and weaknesses

The Supplementary Guidance has been informed by a ‘public street assessment’ carried out by design consultants for the Council. Some of the findings are shown adjacent.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Diverse small independent local businesses
- High footfall
- Good transport links
- Links to amenities and cycle routes

Weaknesses

- Lack of places to meet/gather
- Lack of green space
- Lack of dedicated cycle routes
- Fragmentation between Gorgie/Dalry

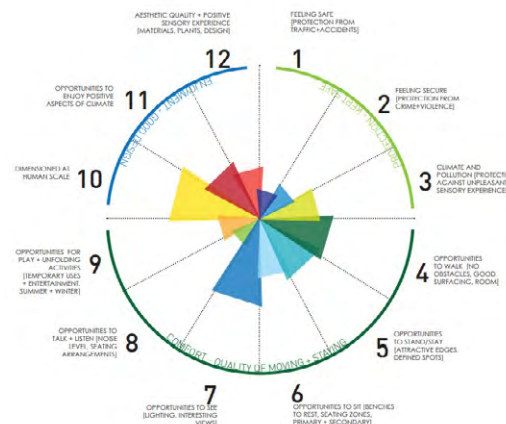
Opportunities

- Provide opportunities to meet socially
- Improve walking/cycling experience
- Integrate planting and street trees
- Enhance connectivity

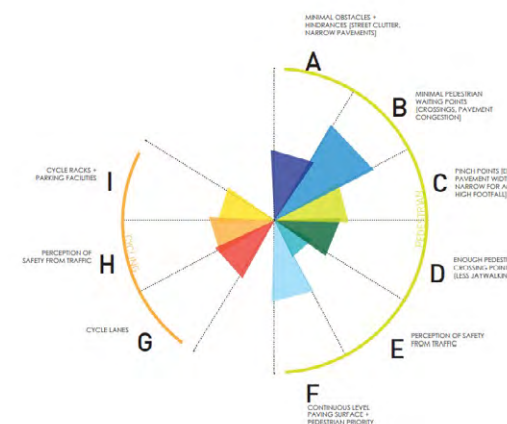
Threats

- Car dominance
- Lack of green space
- Uneven pavements
- Street clutter

FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC LIFE STREET ASSESSMENTS

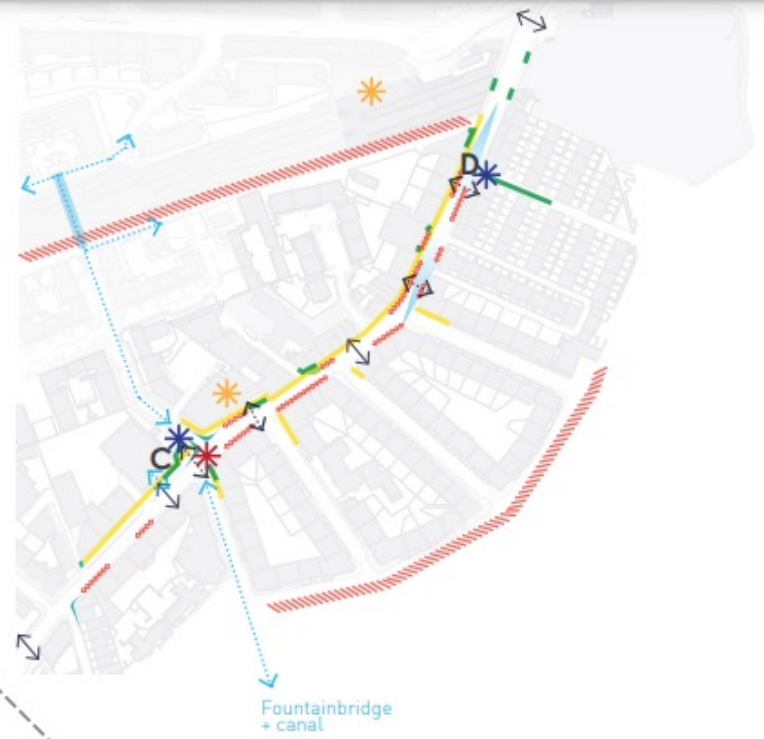


Place Function



Movement Function

-  Popular destination locality
-  Key areas of conflict between pedestrians and traffic. Where pedestrians are trying to move freely between different parts of the town centre or cross the street but traffic or parked cars are proving a hazard or barrier.
-  Favourable microclimate (sun, mostly sheltered from wind)
-  Key positive views
-  Existing pedestrian crossings.
-  Existing public life - primarily relating to active shop fronts, bus stops, parks, benches or other gathering places conducive to staying activities.
-  Key walking / cycling connections to nearby green spaces and canal.
-  Better prioritising of pedestrians needed at minor road junction e.g. addition of raised tables, reduced corner radii, increased pavement width, improved drop kerbs.
-  Potential for improved connection.
-  New foot/cycle bridge or crossing would enable improved connectivity.
-  Barrier to urban connectivity e.g. railway line.
-  Parking, including loading bays and single yellow lines. Places cars regularly stop - creating a barrier restricting pedestrian connection with the opposite side of the road, and effectively prioritising car parking over bus lane, cycle route or wider pavement for pedestrians.
-  Increase visual and/or walkable connection between both sides of the road e.g. new pedestrian crossing.
-  Key location at which research was conducted (labelled A to D).
-  Potential opportunity for key improvement for public life



CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

The policies in this guidance apply to shop units.

What is a shop unit? Premises accessed directly from the street and designed primarily for shop use. In some locations the shop unit can be above street level or at basement level but still have direct access and be visible from the street.

What is a shop use? Shop use is now included within the class 1A (shops, financial, professional and other services) as set out in the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992, e.g. charity shops, tattoo parlours, beautician, estate agents etc.

Other uses falling outwith the definition of class 1A include:

Food and drink (class 3) – Use for the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises e.g. restaurants, café.

Business use (class 4) – general office, light industry or research and development, which can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of any residential area.

Assembly and leisure use (class 11) – e.g. cinema, and gymnasium.

Sui generis uses – e.g. betting shops, pay day loan shops, pubs and hot food takeaways.

Permitted Development Rights

Class 11A of the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 does allow the change of a use of a building/shop unit within Class 1A to Class 3 (food and drink) without planning permission. However, change of use is not permitted by this class if it involves a unit directly

below a residential dwelling or within 1 metre of a residential dwelling. In the case of Gorgie/Dalry Town Centre, Class 1A does not apply to the majority of shop units.

Class 11B of the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 allows the change of use of a building unit from Class 1A to Class 4 (business) without planning permission if the building or unit is 300sqm or less.

Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of this town centre guidance is to assist planning officers and applicants in determining whether a change of use of a shop unit would undermine the retail function of the centre. It has been prepared to support the delivery of Policy Re 4 of City Plan 2030.

Policy Re 4: Alternative Use of Shop Units in the City Centre and Town Centres

In the City Centre Retail Core and town centres, changes of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a. *The change would not undermine the retailing function of the centre, and*
- b. *The proposal is for an appropriate commercial, community or business use, which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.*

The Council's city centre and town centre guidance will be used to assess whether the change of use would undermine the retail function of the centre. These guidelines have been prepared following detailed analysis of each centre and

set out detailed advice tailored to identify the appropriate balance of uses within each centre to maintain their vitality, viability and deliver good placemaking. The Council's city centre and town centre guidance will be used to assess whether the change of use would undermine the retail function of the centre

Planning applications should be assessed against the policies in this guidance. Where a proposal meets the requirements of the policies, a change of use is not expected to undermine the retail function of the centre. Where a proposal is contrary to the policies, there is a risk that a proposal would undermine the retail function of the centre, unless there are other material considerations that outweigh the loss of the retail unit, for example, a significant number of vacant units exist in the same retail frontage.

Guidance Policies

GD1

Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of a unit in a shop use to a non-shop uses that is an appropriate commercial or community use on the following frontages provided the change will not result in more than one third of the total number of units in the frontage being in non-shop use:

Primary Retail Frontages

194 – 256 Gorgie Road

15 – 65 Dalry Road

18 – 78 Dalry Road

98 – 128 Dalry Road

GD2

Elsewhere within the defined Gorgie/Dalry Town Centre a change of use from a shop use to a non-shop use will be permitted provided the proposal is:

- a. Class 3 – food and drink uses
- b. An appropriate commercial, community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.



Links to other Policies and Guidance

National Planning Framework 4

City Plan 2030

Other relevant policies in Local Development Plan include:

Re 1 Town Centres First Policy

Re 3 Town Centres

Re 9 Entertainment, Leisure and café/restaurant developments – Preferred locations

Re 11 Food and Drink Establishments

Env 13 Shopfronts

Env 9 World Heritage Sites

Env 11 Listed Buildings – Setting

Env 12 Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions

Env 13 Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings

Env 14 Conservation Areas – Development

Env 15 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

Policy Re 3 generally supports shop uses in town centres. Policy Re 9 supports leisure and entertainment facilities in town centres. Policies Re 11 considers the impact on nearby residents for proposals such as public houses and hot food takeaways. Env 13 supports improvements to shop fronts.

Guidance for Businesses – non-statutory guidance to assist businesses in preparing applications to change the use of a property as well as providing guidance on shopfront design.

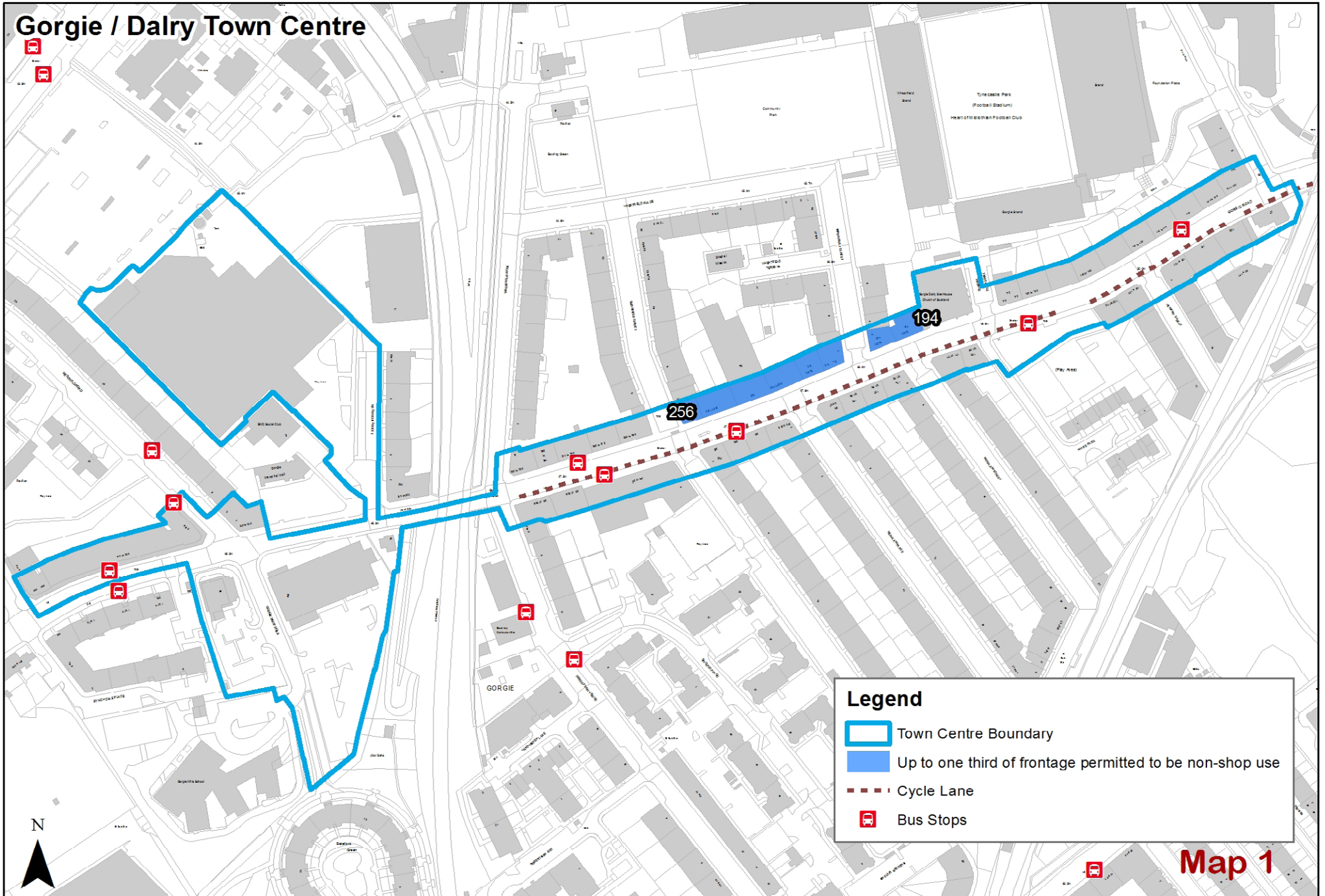
Licensing – Food and drink, public house and hot-food takeaway uses will often require other consents and are subject to separate controls by licensing for: alcohol; hours of operation and outdoor pavement seating. For more information on these, see the Council’s web site on [licenses and permits](#).

Definitions

Shop unit – As defined in the City Plan 2030, a shop unit is a premises accessed directly onto the street and designed primarily for shop use.

Class 1A – are shops and financial, professional and other services. Uses under Subsection 1 are; retail sale of goods other than hot food, a post office, sale of tickets, a travel agency, sale of cold food for consumption off the premises, hairdressing, direction of funerals, display of goods for sale, hiring of domestic or personal goods or articles, a launderette or dry cleaners, for reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired. These uses are where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public. Uses under Subsection 2 are; provision of financial, professional or any other service, which is appropriate to provide in a shopping area and where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public.

Gorgie / Dalry Town Centre

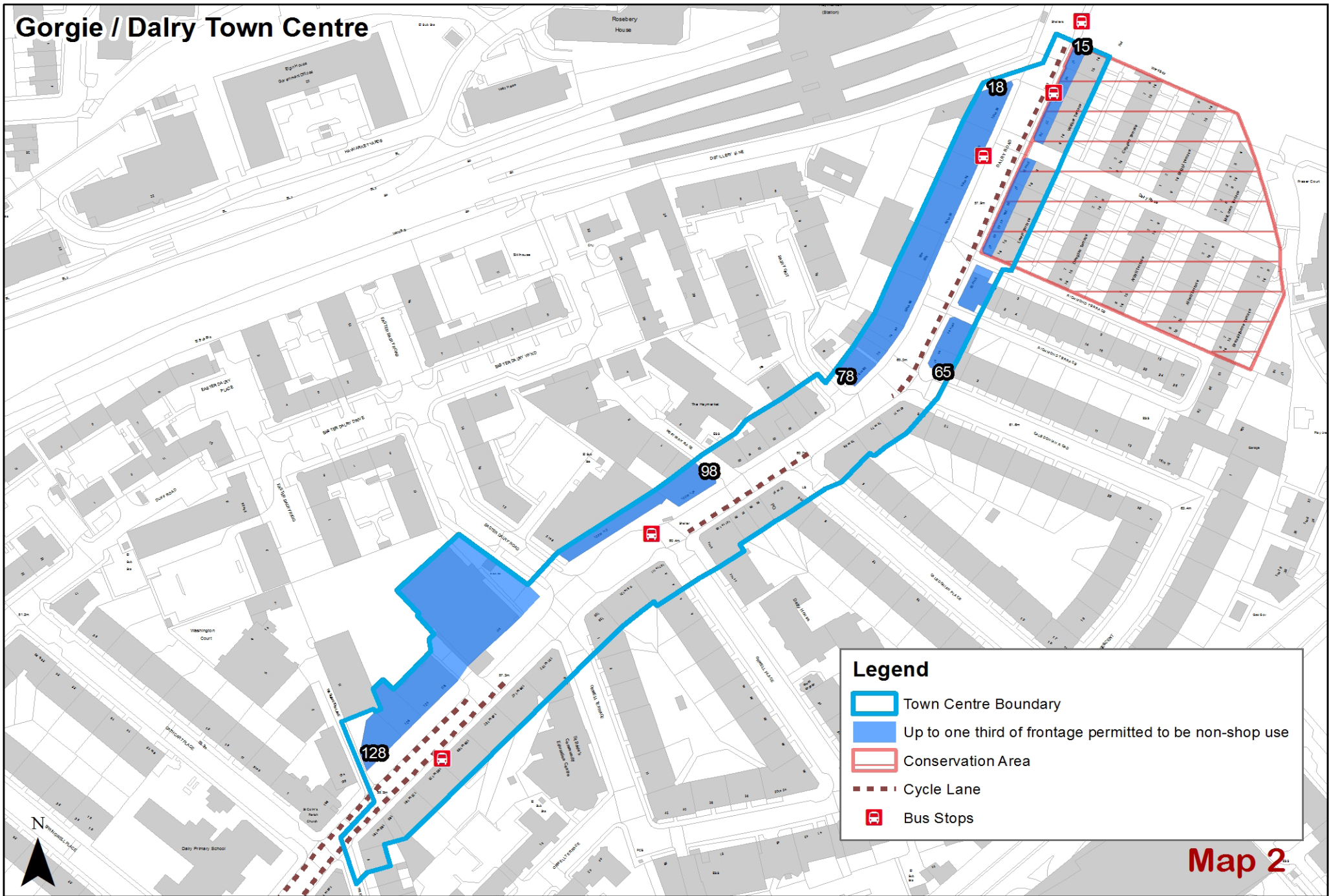


Legend

- Town Centre Boundary
- Up to one third of frontage permitted to be non-shop use
- Cycle Lane
- Bus Stops

Map 1

Gorgie / Dalry Town Centre



Legend

- Town Centre Boundary
- Up to one third of frontage permitted to be non-shop use
- Conservation Area
- Cycle Lane
- 🚌 Bus Stops

Map 2

Contact us:

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www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cityplan2030

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