

**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE,  
30 SEPTEMBER 2002**

**REPORT ON: DEVELOPMENT BRIEF, RIVERSIDE DRIVE, DUNDEE – FORMER  
SAINSBURY HOMEBASE DIY STORE**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

**REPORT NO: 660-2002**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Since the Sainsbury Homebase DIY outlet at Riverside Drive relocated in 1999, the property has remained vacant. This is a very high profile site located on the Riverside Esplanade Ambassador Route, the principal route to the city centre from the central belt. The re-use of the site is therefore sought and a Brief to guide the development of this site is required.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to

- 2.1 Approve the content of the Development Brief.
- 2.2 Commend the Development Brief to the Development Quality Committee as a material consideration for development control purposes.
- 2.3 Remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to engage in consultations with the local Community Council and other interested parties (including owners and tenants).

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of this Development Brief.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The redevelopment of this site will help to contribute to the viability and vitality of the city centre. With the successful improvement of this important site the distinctive character of the Waterfront and City Centre will be enhanced and assist in addressing a key theme of Dundee 21 “Places, spaces and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility”.
- 4.2 The upgrading of the major access corridors into the City Centre will have considerable benefits for the visual elements of the environment and accessibility.

## **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Provisions for pedestrians is an important objective and access for the disabled is an issue which will be addressed in the development of this site.

## **6 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 This site was occupied by the former Sainsbury Homebase DIY store, which closed three years ago. Sainsbury Homebase, who will retain the leasehold to the property, have attempted to seek the property's re-use as a retail outlet, so far unsuccessfully.
- 6.2 A Section 75 Agreement remains in place between the City Council and Sainsbury, which restricts the range of goods which can be sold, in order to protect the viability of the City Centre and District Centres. The Council have consistently declined to agree to relax this agreement.
- 6.3 The site is bounded by the Riverside Esplanade Ambassador Route and the property's present condition and lack of use is detrimental to the Ambassador Routes aims and objectives. The main east coast railway line also overlooks the site. Thus the site does not give a good impression to visitors to Dundee.
- 6.4 A planning brief is required for this site. The purpose of which is to:
- Identify a development opportunity.
  - Promote the site.
  - Confirm acceptable land use policy options.
  - Promote high standards of design and inspire better and more imaginative architecture.
  - Augment the principles of Dundee City Council's Urban Design Guide.
  - Provide a context for dialogue with prospective developers/users.
  - Provide a framework for Development Quality/decision making.

## **7 CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services, Director of Corporate Planning, Director of Economic Development and Scottish Enterprise Tayside have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None.

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Mike Galloway  
Director of Planning and  
Transportation

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Iain Jack  
Acting Policy & Regeneration Manager

IJ/PMJ/EB

19 September 2002

Dundee City Council  
Tayside House  
Dundee

## **DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

### **FORMER SAINSBURY HOMEBASE DIY SITE RIVERSIDE DRIVE, DUNDEE**

#### **1 VISION**

- 1.1 The site is a component part of the former Waterfront Development, which was borne out of the enterprise zone developments in the 1980's. This resulted in a generally fragmented development on one of the city's most prestigious development sites. This Brief identifies an opportunity to start to reverse this and create a development more appropriate for this important gateway and approach to the city centre.

#### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This site was occupied by the former Sainsbury Homebase DIY and previously Texas DIY developments, which closed three years ago. Sainsbury Homebase retain the leasehold on the property and have attempted during the past three years to seek the property's reuse as a retail outlet. This would require the Council to relax a Section 75 Agreement, which restricts the range of goods, which can be sold; the Council has consistently declined to agree to such a relaxation.
- 2.2 The restriction was imposed in conjunction with the original planning consent granted for the development, in order to prevent its conversion to other more sensitive retail uses which could impact adversely on the shopping role of the city centre and the district centres. The justification for the restriction continues to remain valid and relevant to this day.
- 2.3 In 2001, consultants DTZ/Pieda examined the issue of free-standing and poorly located retail warehouses and provided advice on the mechanisms which might be employed to secure the discontinuation of retail use at these locations. The City Council agreed to have regard to these findings in the review of the Dundee Local Plan.
- 2.4 The Consultative Draft Dundee Local Plan published in August 2002 reaffirms the desirability of terminating such operations and includes policies to encourage their relocation to sites more suitable in terms of current national and local retail policies. The former Homebase unit at Riverside Drive is included in the Plan as an example of such a unit.
- 2.5 The present building on the site was designed as a typical DIY outlet, and remains unaltered. The site is approximately 1.2 ha and is bounded by Riverside Drive, the access to the Tesco Superstore, the main east coast railway line to the north and an area of landscaping to the west (see site plan).
- 2.6 The purpose of this Brief is to:
- identify a development opportunity.
  - promote the site.
  - confirm acceptable land use policy options.

- promote high standards of design and inspire better and more imaginative architecture.
- augment the principles of Dundee City Council's Urban Design Guide.
- provide a context for dialogue with prospective developers/users.
- provide a framework for Development Quality decision making.

### **3 POLICY REVIEW**

3.1 A number of National and Local policies and guidelines apply which will require to be considered by prospective developers:

- a Scottish Executive "A Policy on Architecture for Scotland" and "Designing Places".
- b National Planning Policy Guidelines No 8.
- c Dundee and Angus Structure Plan Finalised Written Statement 2002. Environmental Resources Policy 6 requires new developments to make a positive contribution to the identity, character and quality of the built environment.
- d Dundee Local Plan (1998).
- e Urban Design Guide.

3.2 General Policies:

- Policy BE1 – Design quality – The Policy applies to all new developments and highlights the requirement for high standards of design, integration, landscaping, etc.
- Policy BE2 – Townscape Policy – Emphasises requirement for quality in new developments and the City Council's desire to see incorporation of new public spaces, protection of significant vistas, etc.
- Policy BE3 – Use of Materials – Encourages appropriate and imaginative use of materials, especially in conservation areas and on main approaches to the city.
- Policy BE24 – Public Art – Involve Public Art in future building developments.
- Policy S30 – Areas of No Change – The site is within an area covered by Policy S30. These are areas where no changes to existing uses are expected over the Plan period. Proposals for new uses on these sites must therefore be viewed against other relevant policies of the Plan.

3.3 Policies specific to possible alternative uses:

- Policies S27 and S28 – Car Showroom – Sets locational criteria and limits changes of use.
- Policies EU16, EU17, and EU26 - Employment uses (light industrial, storage, offices, call centre, etc) and provide for office use exceptions.
- Policies LT7, LT8 and LT11 - Leisure/Fitness Provision – Sets locational criteria for major leisure developments, licensed and hot food premises and seeks adequate provision of sports and recreation facilities.

- Policy LT5 – Tourist accommodation – Encourages provision of visitor accommodation.
- Policy LT3 – Visitor attractions – Encourages the development of visitor attractions in line with other policies.

## 4 SITE AND CONTEXT APPRAISAL

### 4.1 Context

- a The site lies adjacent to Riverside Drive, a principal approach road to the city centre, and one of the city's Ambassador Routes. Riverside Drive/Avenue extends from the Kingsway, the city's outer ring road, to the city centre. Much of Riverside Drive/Avenue passes through a parkland/estate environment. However, as it passes below the historic Tay Bridge, it become more urban in character as it approaches the city centre. The importance of this site therefore is that it is the first site to be approached within this more urban character. The site is also in full view from the main east coast railway line.
- b It is therefore a very important gateway site for the city potentially forming a first time impression of the city for visitors. A further important consideration is the site's aspect across the Tay estuary.
- c Any building on the site will therefore have to be of a very high architectural quality and be capable of presenting itself satisfactorily in each direction. Therefore, the site's "waterfront", "gateway" and "railway" contexts should be given equal consideration.

### 4.2 Site Character

- a The site is flat and particularly elongated, being 265 metres in length and tapering in width from 60 metres to 25 metres. The tapering nature of the site limits much variation in any building footprint. Being close to the Tay Estuary, the site experiences a harsher than normal microclimate for Dundee.
- b The site was subject to major decontamination prior to being redeveloped in the 1980s. The site was formerly railyards developed in the late 1880s on made up ground. Building in this area has required piling and/or vibro compaction.
- c The existing building, originally a Texas DIY store, was designed to match the present Tesco Superstore on the adjacent site. However, this relates only to roof and wall finishes and the building is much more basic, particularly in its box like appearance and lack of openings to take advantage of the unique aspect overlooking the river. This would have to be addressed if the building was to be retained (see 7.2).

### 4.3 Continuity and Enclosure

- a The present building line is too close to Riverside Drive as a result of the previous developer wishing to maximise the limited width of the site. Any redevelopment would require a new building to be set back further to accommodate the full width required in the Ambassador Routes Design Guide.

- b As indicated above, all potential building frontages will either overlook public space or be overlooked from public space. At ground floor level, all frontages will be active as at the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care building to the east of this site.

#### 4.4 **Quality of the Public Realm**

- a The site overlooks the Esplanade, which has been completely refurbished to a high quality over the past six years. It is this scheme, which sets the standard of quality expected for landscaping, associated with this site.

#### 4.5 **Ease of Movement**

- a The existing vehicular access to the site from Riverside Drive should be maintained. Vehicular access within the site should be adjacent to the north boundary of the site as it is at present.
- b It is expected that many visitors to this site will be car borne. However, there is a public footway, which passes through the south edge of the site from the city centre to Riverside Approach, which will require to be maintained.
- c Apart from a bus service to the adjacent Tesco Superstore, there is no public transport to the site.
- d On the south side of Riverside Drive as part of the Esplanade, a cycleway forms part of the Green Circular Cycle Route.
- e There are no plans at present to alter the present transport arrangements within the vicinity of the proposed site.

### 5 **POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR FUTURE USE**

A new retail use on this site would not be acceptable. Such a use would be in conflict with the Council's existing retail policies and the sequential test, as set out in National Planning Policy Guideline 8. Other uses that may, however, be acceptable in terms of the adopted Local Plan are as follows :-

#### 5.1 **Employment**

Certain light industrial, storage or other employment uses could in principle be suitable. Examples might include class 4 office use like a call centre. However, such uses are already well provided for elsewhere in the city and do not make the best use of the site's strengths.

Industrial 'shed' type developments will not be acceptable and the Planning and Design principles set out in Section 6 will strictly apply.

#### 5.2 **Leisure/Fitness**

Growth in the leisure market may point to potential for uses not already catered for by the City's existing leisure parks. More specifically, the coming liberalisation of the gaming laws could generate demand locally for new casinos and other gambling

related activities. A commercial leisure complex incorporating a casino, amusement centre, associated bars, restaurants and entertainment facilities might be an example of the type of facility, which could utilise the site.

### 5.3 **Hotel**

Although not on the edge of the City Centre, the site's relationship to it might be sufficiently close to attract an hotel operator seeking a high profile location. A standard Travel Lodge or budget hotel design will not be acceptable and the Planning and Design principles will strictly apply.

### 5.4 **Other Uses**

The site's accessibility to the railway station, its high profile and its relationship to existing visitor attractions in the area could make it suitable for a major visitor facility. A car showroom could make good use of the prominent location alongside the western arterial route and might secure valuable spin-off from visitors to the Tesco store.

5.5 It should be noted however, that these represent possible alternatives only and that any proposal under these categories would require to be fully justified in its own rights under the relevant policies.

## 6 **PRINCIPLES – PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

### 6.1 **Size of Development**

It is not the intention of this brief to state exactly what the floorspace requirements should be for any proposed building on this site. This should be established by the developer. However, there are a number of constraints, which will have to be balanced to establish what is feasible.

- the elongated nature of the site.
- a maximum permitted height of any development of 3 storeys.
- the need to accommodate car parking to the council's standards depending on what use is sought.
- the need to accommodate the Ambassador Routes Design Guide.

### 6.2 **Site Layout**

Again the elongated nature of this site will have a bearing on what is feasible. This brief will not be prescriptive as to where to position buildings on the site. However, the importance of the site as a gateway to city centre must be borne in mind.

### 6.3 **Height and Massing**

- a The maximum permitted general height of any buildings on the site will be three storeys. Taller elements such as stair/lift towers, other penthouse type accommodation whether for office or other usage and any other architectural devices will be permitted, but only if they contribute significantly to the aim to create a strong visual point of arrival, gateway or "beacon" feature for the development, and to add richness and interest to the development.

- b It may be feasible to investigate the possibility to create a taller structure for any development to the west end of the site where the Tay Bridge ramps begin to rise to the rear of the site.
- c The design and location of any buildings should avoid the creation of a structure, which is bulky in appearance.

#### 6.4 **Materials and Detailing**

- a Materials to be selected can be traditional and/or contemporary but should avoid a pastiche solution, which is inappropriate for this site. Well detailed glazing is also encouraged, mirror glass or masked glass to create dummy openings will not be permitted. The use of innovative materials would be encouraged if appropriate.
- b The selection of materials should take account of durability and ease of maintenance. Materials should also be of good texture, colour and pattern and be lively and attractive.

### 7 **THE URBAN DESIGN GUIDE**

7.1 Prospective developers should refer to this document. This has been produced to set criteria for developers and designers embarking on new projects, and aims to raise design expectations for development.

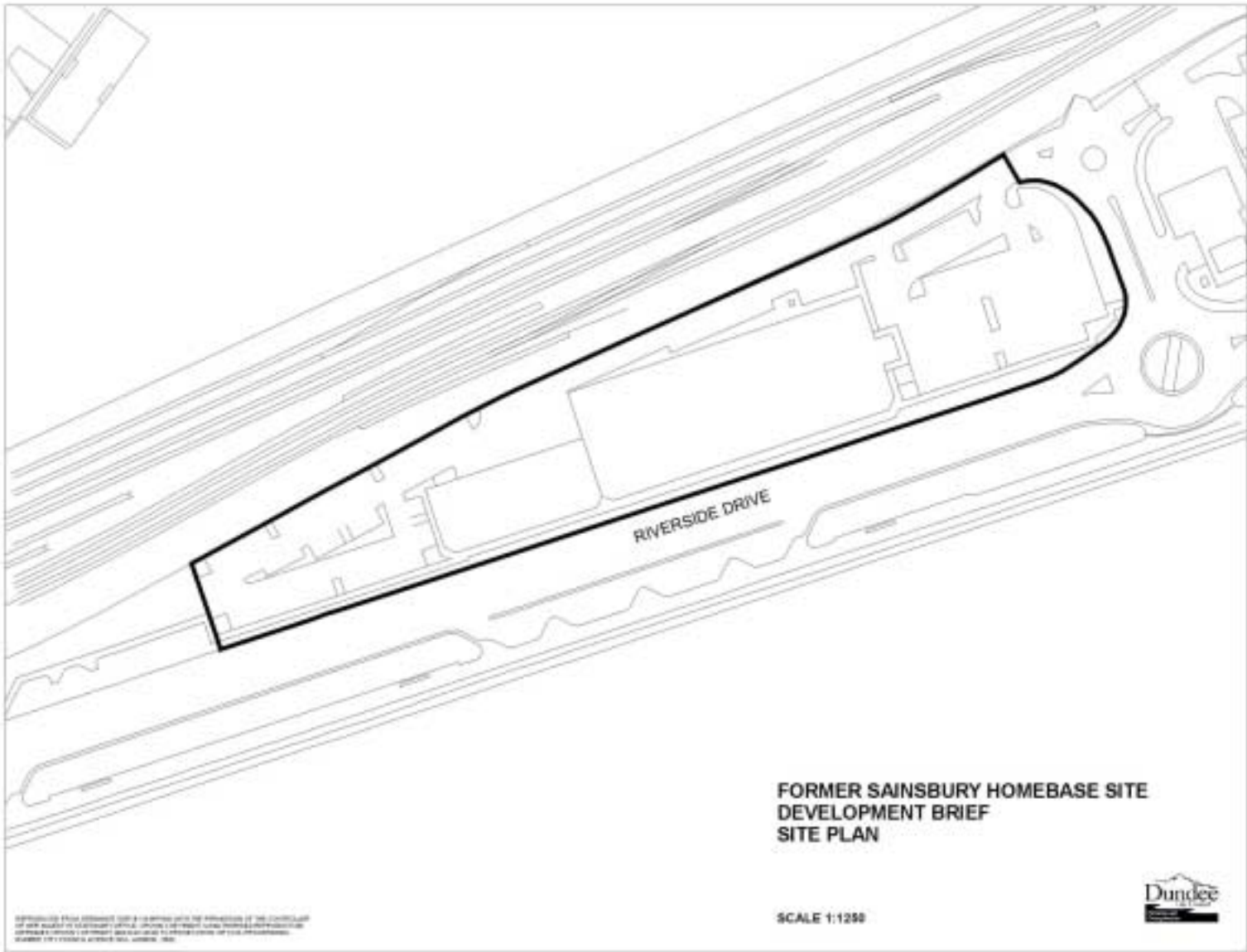
7.2 A number of particular references in the Guide are brought to developer's attention.

- **Sustainability** – Retention and reuse of already built structures where practical.
- **New Buildings** – Should be well designed, flexible and outwardly expressive as to their purpose. An agenda of imaginative and innovative contemporary architecture is sought to discourage 'off the peg' design. Existing buildings should always be considered for regeneration rather than demolition.
- **Public Art** – Major buildings in prominent locations will be subject to a future Percent for Art Policy whereby a percentage of the project costs will be used to enhance the project.
- **Design Statements** – These are needed at the Planning application stage to demonstrate that the local context has been appreciated and fully appraised and that the development proposals are based on consistent design principles.

### 8 **AMBASSADOR ROUTES STRATEGY**

8.1 The site is adjacent to the Riverside/Esplanade Ambassador Route and therefore the Ambassador Routes' Design Guide principles will apply to the boundary treatment of this site. The Guide seeks to provide a means of securing future development and improvements to the main arterial routes into Dundee in a cohesive and effective manner. The guide sets minimum standards to ensure the aims of the Ambassador Routes Strategy are met by developers to influence the function and appearance of these Routes. The guide has identified certain key elements to be influenced and these relate to boundary treatments, softworks, hardworks, street furniture, signage and colour.





**FORMER SAINSBURY HOMEBASE SITE  
DEVELOPMENT BRIEF  
SITE PLAN**

SCALE 1:1250



APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT WITH A COMMITMENT TO THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
OF THE SCOTLAND COUNCIL OFFICE, DUNDEE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE  
COUNCIL'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BY TELEPHONE ON 01382 552222 OR  
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