

BLACKNESS

B U S I N E S S P L A C E P L A N



INVEST WORK LIVE VISIT

Adopted 9 Dec 2019

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“...a vibrant mixed-use area, consisting of compatible and complementary uses that create a successful place to invest, work, live and visit.”

A large, light grey silhouette of a factory with three tall chimneys and several windows, serving as a background for the title.

1.0

OVERVIEW

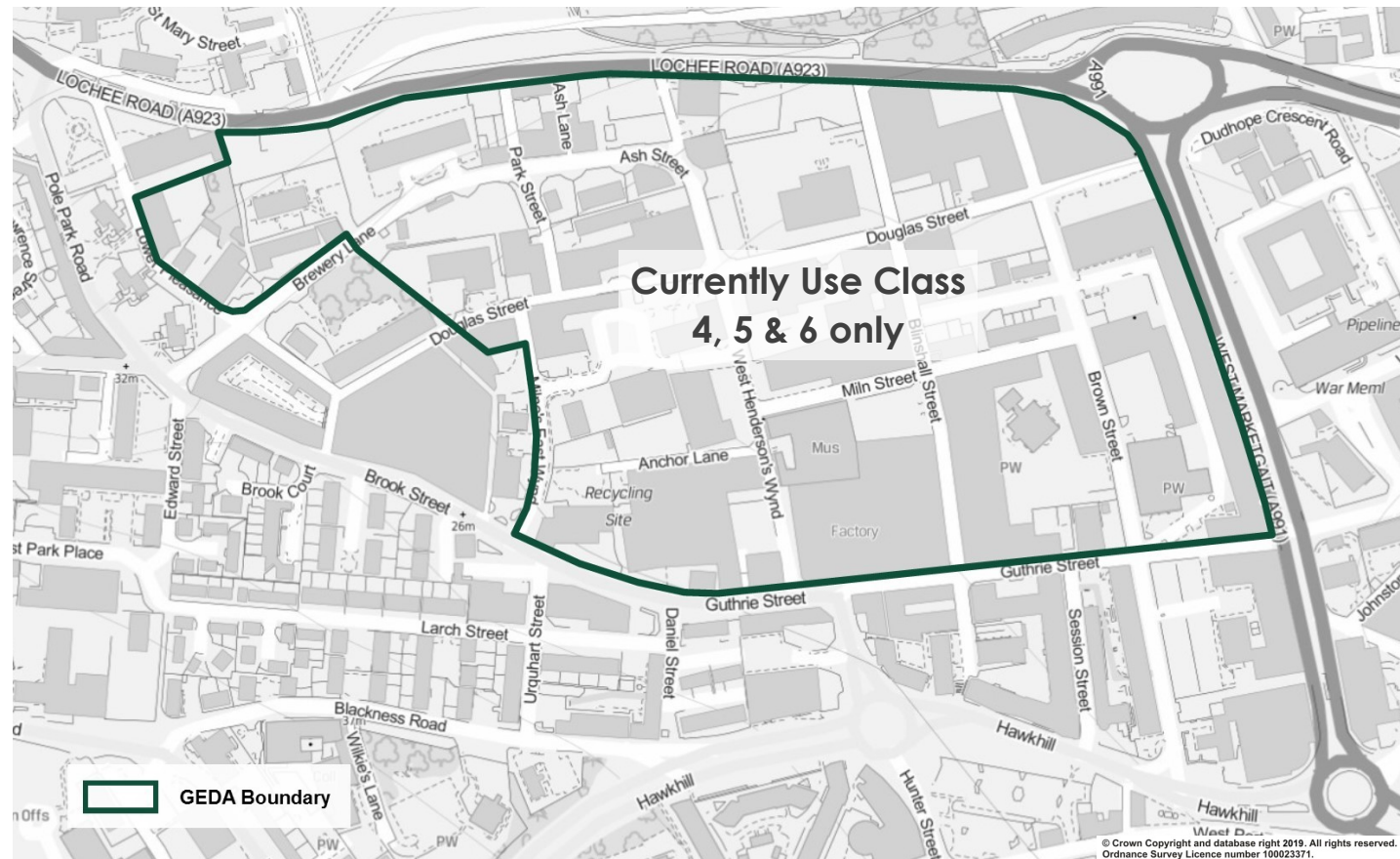
1.1 GEDA Function & Current Land Uses

General Economic Development Areas play an important role in the supply of sites for a broad range of businesses. To protect this land supply, **'Policy 5 General Economic Development Areas'**, of the Local Development Plan 2019, supports development under land-use class **4 Business, 5 General Industrial and 6 Storage and Distribution**.

Despite Dundee's demand for working spaces, and the policy protection provided, the **Blackness GEDA has a considerable level of vacant, derelict and underused land and buildings**. The area's historic building stock, tight street plan and ownership patterns are contributing factors.

Over many decades non-compliant uses have been successfully established within the GEDA and many more continue to be put forward due to the close proximity of the city centre and universities. This trend can be interpreted as a threat to the current economic development status, but it also **provides an opportunity to positively transform the area through the introduction of complementary land uses, while creating a more positive urban realm**.

The above issues are explored further in the following sections and conclude with a land-use proposal, which is intended to implement radical change in the GEDA area.



1.2 Local Development Plan 2019

The Blackness GEDA's key issue of vacant, derelict and underused land and buildings was initially highlighted and publicly consulted on during the Main Issues Report stage in the development of the Local Development Plan 2019 (LDP 2019). The outcome of the public consultation provided a strong message in favour of the 'preferred option':

“To adopt a more flexible policy designation and prepare a physical and economic regeneration masterplan that promotes the opportunities to develop Blackness as a location for new employment and other complementary uses that would improve the vibrancy and attractiveness of the area.”

In response, the LDP 2019's 'Proposal 1: Blackness Regeneration' commits the City Council to producing a framework for the future development of the GEDA, which aligns with the Main Issue Report's preferred option. **The most influential aspect of this framework is the change in land-use allocation, which is set out in detail in section 3 Response.**

Other important aspects around placemaking, conservation and working space needs are outlined in section 2 Key Considerations and then summarised in section 3.6 Summary of Development Considerations. Development proposals must take these important aspects into account in .

Proposal 1: Blackness Regeneration

To highlight the potential to reuse vacant land and buildings within the Blackness General Economic Development Area and set a framework for physical improvements the City Council will prepare a design framework. This will identify and support the development of appropriate complementary uses within the Blackness area such as creative industry workspaces; social and cultural uses; shared work hubs; live-work units; micro-businesses; wholesaling; and ancillary retail sales.

All proposals for development will be considered against the approved design framework, and must demonstrate how the development will support the regeneration of Blackness.

In order to safeguard the objectives of the design framework the City Council may impose planning conditions removing the right to change between Use Classes.

Whilst this proposal encourages new development within the Blackness General Economic Development Area this must not prevent the operation or expansion of the existing employment uses.

Proposal 1 of Dundee's [Local Development Plan 2019](#) (p.26 & 27)

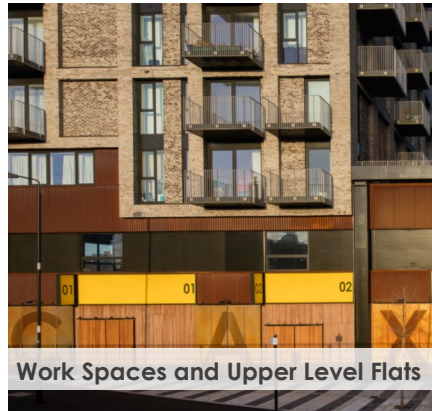
1.3 Place Vision

The vision for the future of the Blackness GEDA is that it will be **a vibrant mixed-use area, consisting of compatible and complementary uses that create a successful place to invest, work, live and visit.**

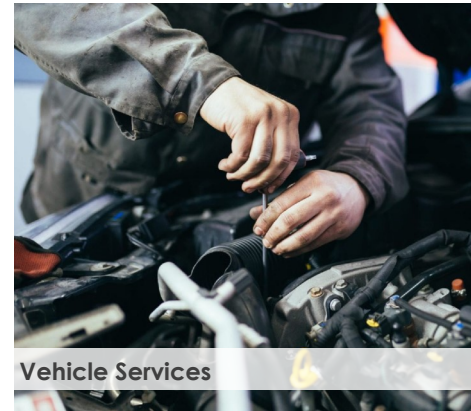
Setting the framework for this future vision is primarily dependant upon the land use allocations that are permitted within the GEDA. This framework proposes to introduce further compatible and complementary uses to encourage development and regeneration.

The proposed introduction of live-work units and flats above ground level is one of the key uses which should provide the financial leverage to encourage developers to invest in the regeneration of existing listed buildings and new build developments.

Through these changes, the City Council aims to make the Blackness GEDA **a more welcoming, safe, vibrant and active place, while supporting investment, business development, employment and tourism.**



Work Spaces and Upper Level Flats



Vehicle Services



Shared Work Hubs and Office Space



Artisan Brewers/Distillers/Bakers



Artist & Maker Spaces



Cultural/Creative Hubs



Light Industry & Manufacturing



Wholesale, Storage & Distribution



Creative Sector Services



2.0 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

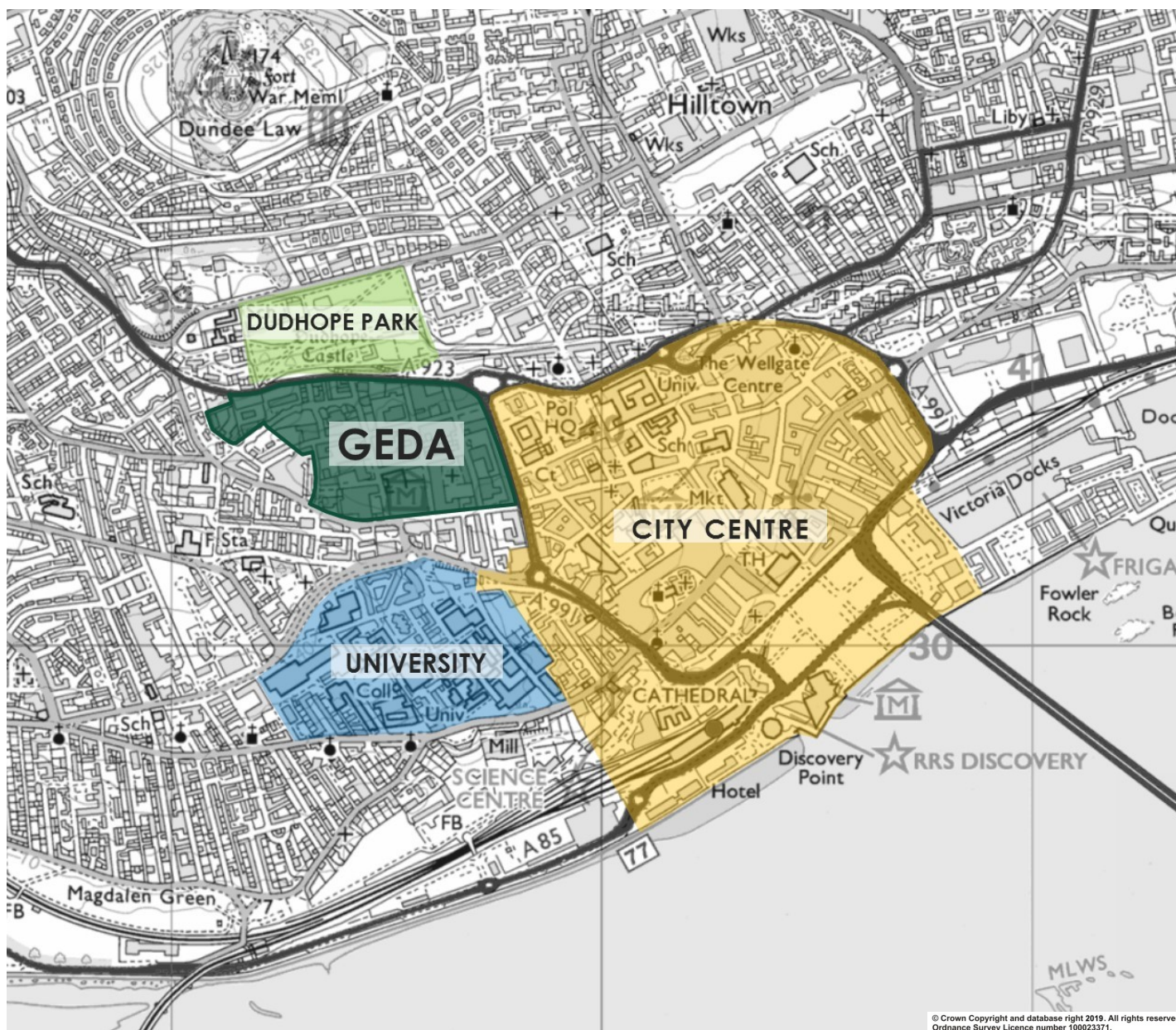
2.1 Strategic Location

Located on the city centre's western edge and in close proximity to the city's universities, Dudhope Park and residential areas, the GEDA's position and industrial nature is of particular importance and concern.

Student residences, leisure activities and pedestrian movement generates some activity around sections of the GEDA's perimeter; however, the core area has almost none of these activities. Combined with various neglected buildings and sites, the GEDA is generally an unwelcoming place that acts as a significant barrier to pedestrian connectivity and has a negative impact on the surrounding areas. **Consequently, public perception of the area is not positive, particularly in the evenings when, for safety reasons, people choose to walk around, rather than through, the GEDA.**

By their nature, this is generally how industrial areas function; however, the appropriateness of this is brought into question given its strategic location, underperforming business status, and that it houses the Verdant Works, one of Dundee's key tourism destinations.

The GEDA has great, untapped, potential in its historic fabric and existing businesses. Unlocking this potential would greatly improve the area's attractiveness and better support investment, employment and the future prosperity of the surrounding areas.



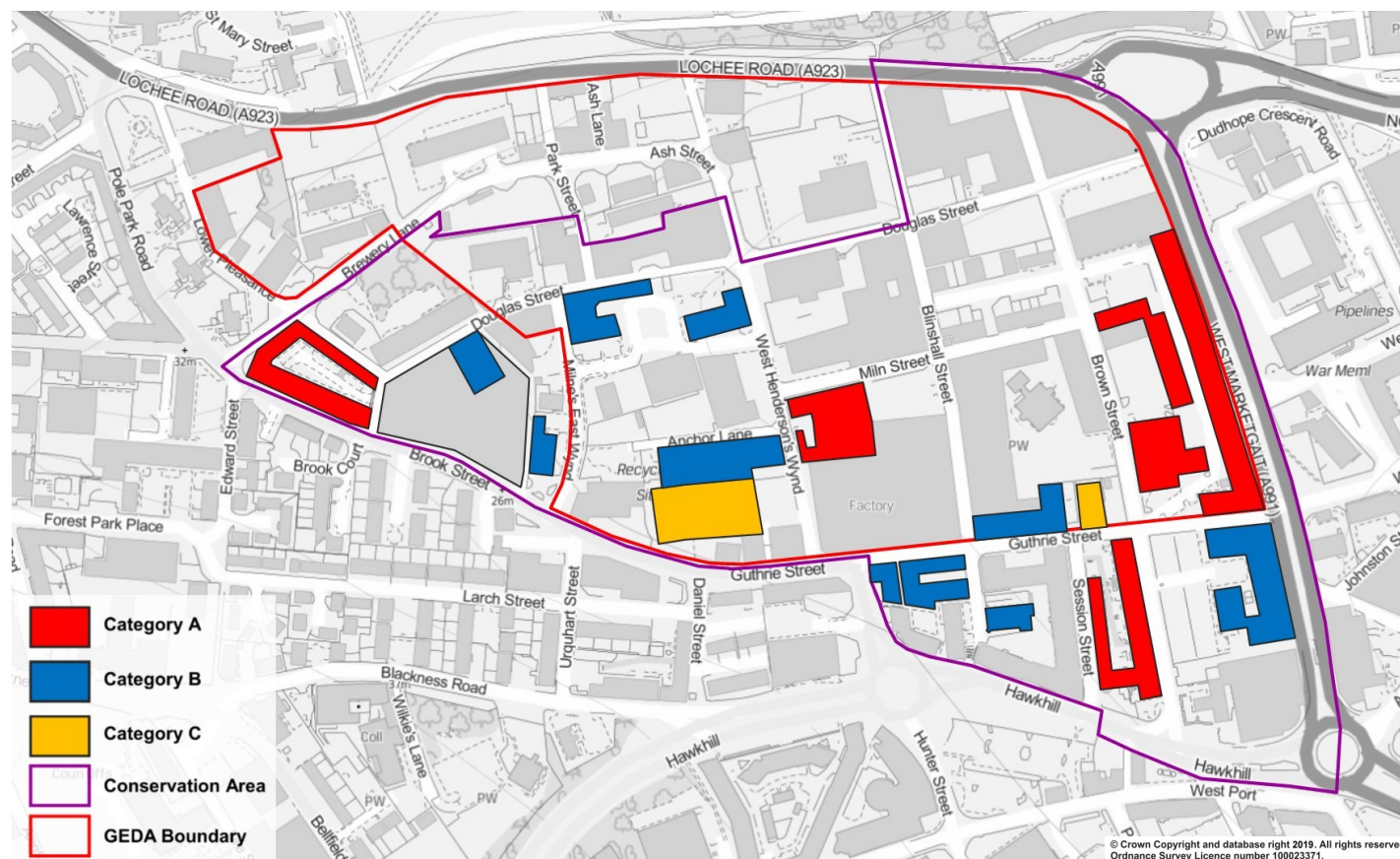
2.2 Sense of Place

A strong sense of place exists within the Blackness GEDA due to its historic mill context and multiple listed buildings. As a result, conservation area status applies to the majority of the GEDA. The [Blackness Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#) provides detail on the area's special character and should be considered in development proposals. Great potential lies in this asset, which unfortunately remains under utilised.

Examples of redeveloped and repurposed historic industrial areas can be found in various post-industrial cities. Successful business, culture, tourism and leisure destinations are often created within these valuable assets, such as the [Ouseburn Valley](#), Newcastle; [Custard Factory](#), Birmingham; [Finlayson/Tampella](#), Tampere, Finland; [VEF Territory](#), Riga, Latvia; and the [Gooderham & Worts Distillery District](#), Toronto, Canada.

There is scope for similar development within the Blackness GEDA, which this framework supports through ambitious changes in the land use designations.

Importantly, new architecture and urban design proposals should be of high-quality and strengthen the GEDA's unique sense of place. Poor quality development proposals, which diminish this sense of place, will not be supported.

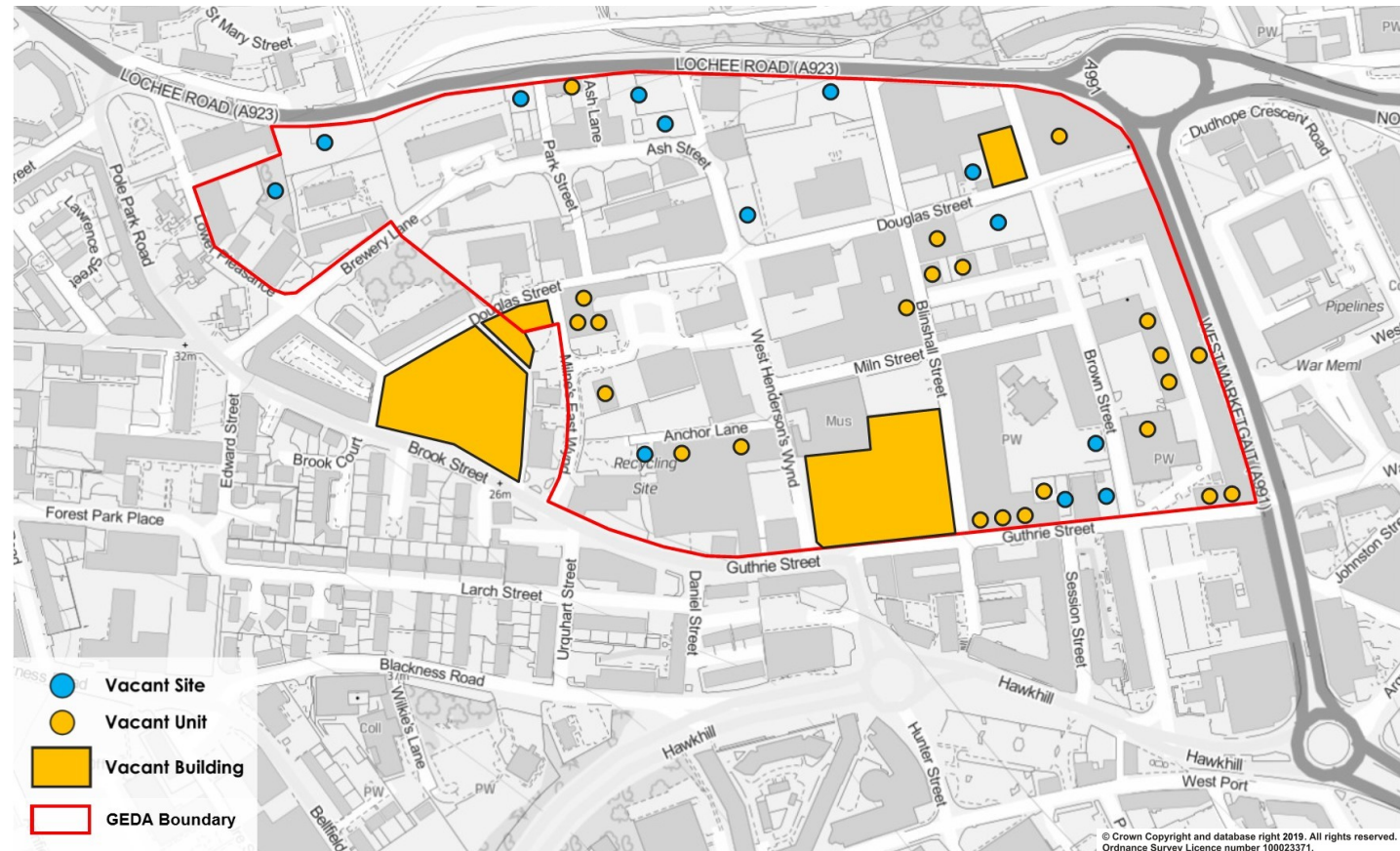


2.3 Vacant Land and Buildings

Despite the demand for working spaces in Dundee, various units, buildings and sites within the GEDA remain vacant, underused or derelict. The cause of this situation appears to be a combination of two key factors. Firstly, the **regeneration of historic buildings can be financially prohibitive to proprietors and most new businesses do not want to locate in old run-down properties; instead, preferring to locate in upgraded or modern, efficient and reliable spaces.** Without significant investment in many of the area's historic buildings they will remain unattractive to new businesses and their potential could be squandered through continued deterioration.

Secondly, the large footprint/volume of some of the historic buildings is unattractive to many new businesses. **Most new SMEs are looking for properties in the range of 500, 1000 and 1500 sq. ft.** Again, without investment to reconfigure and upgrade these buildings they will remain unattractive to new businesses.

The introduction of new land-uses to the area is design to provide the financial leverage required to facilitate the regeneration of these historic buildings.



2.4 Connectivity & Development Opportunities

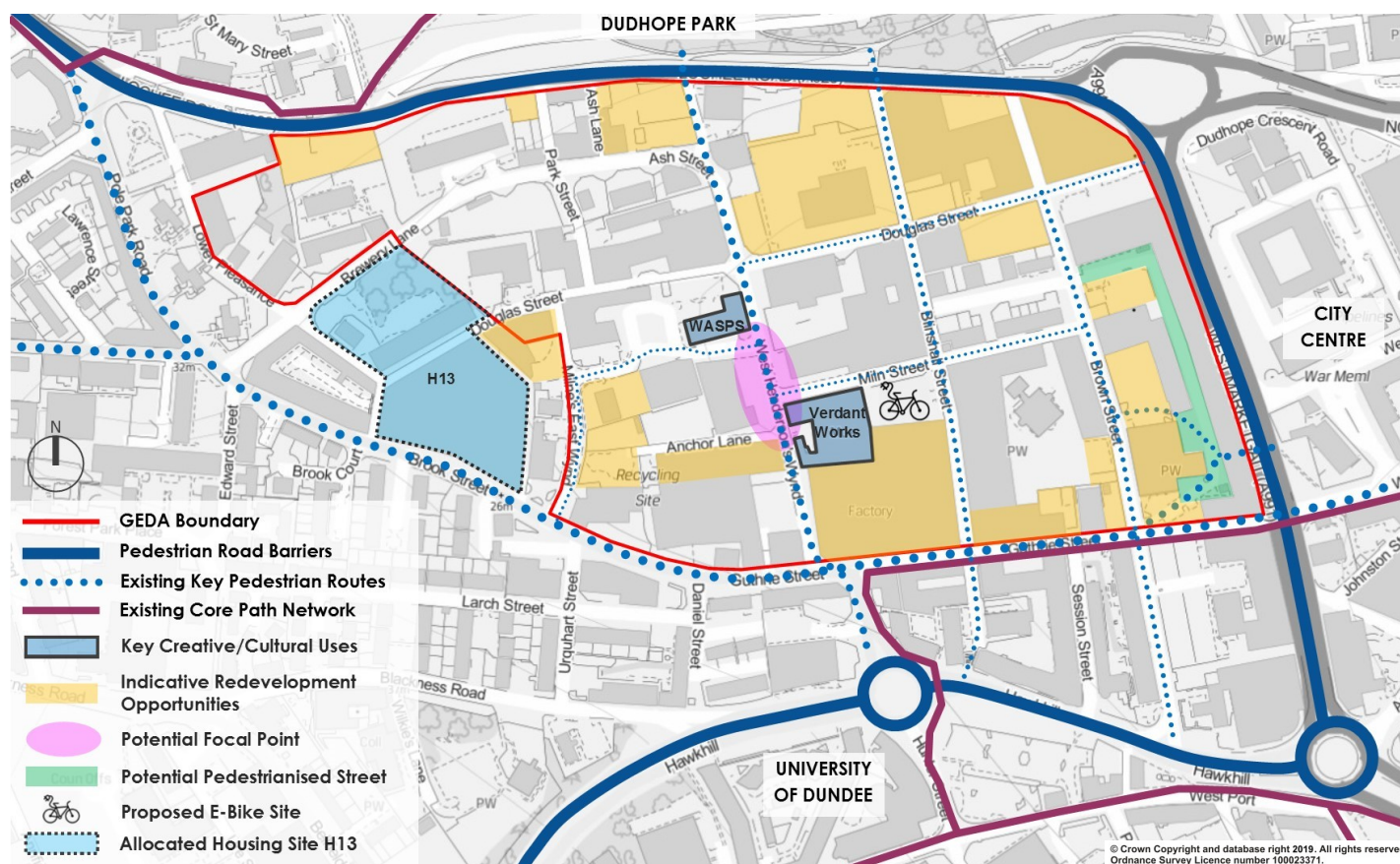
Pedestrian permeability within the GEDA is very good; however, as previously highlighted, the current nature of the area is unfavourable to extensive use of the streets, particularly in the evenings. As a result the potential connectivity to the GEDA and between the surrounding areas is underutilised.

The intention is that connectivity and street quality will improve with the regeneration of sites and buildings, and the introduction of a broader range of uses and activities will make the area more attractive and welcoming to pedestrians.

Improving the potential of the area's streets is an aspiration. For example, West Henderson's Wynd, which runs north-south between [WASPS studios](#), [Verdant Works](#) and West Ward Works has the potential to be a key pedestrian route and a focal point of activity.

Importantly, the development of other sites, buildings and the uses they introduce will be key to shaping and determining the importance and influence of other streets.

The indicative redevelopment opportunities identified opposite are not exhaustive and intended to highlight the potential of vacant, derelict and underused land and buildings. It is understood that developing some of these sites could involve partnership working with multiple land owners and in some cases radical redevelopment works.



2.5 Dundee's Working Space Needs

INDUSTRIAL SPACE NEEDS



Summary:

- A significant proportion of Dundee's available stock is failing to meet occupier requirements due to size, configuration and age.
- Good demand exists for small to medium sized units of between 100 and 300sq.m., exactly where stock is most limited.
- Rental levels remain firm as a result of the limited supply of modern stock.

OFFICE SPACE NEEDS



Summary:

- Dundee continues to focus on smaller requirements from local and national occupiers.
- The majority of these requirements are seeking premises that would qualify for the Small Business Bonus Scheme.
- Recent office transactions in Blackness GEDA include: Unit 1 Brown Street (290sq.m.) let to Hyper Luminal Games (computer game designer).

CREATIVE SECTOR NEEDS



Summary:

- Dundee's creative sector requires various permanent, temporary and mixed-purpose alternative spaces ([Dundee's Creative Industries Strategy 2017-2021](#)).
- Workshop & Artists Studio Provision Scotland (WASPS) hold a Dundee waiting list for workshop and studio spaces. Smaller, self-contained, studios of around 200 Sq. Ft. (18m²) are in demand.

Despite the demand for small to medium sized industrial, office and creative sector spaces, the Blackness GEDA still has many derelict, vacant and underused buildings and sites. The perceived reasons for this inactivity are set out in section 2.3 Vacant Land and Buildings.

With the correct intervention in existing buildings and new build development there is an opportunity for the Blackness GEDA to better support Dundee's working space needs and to help stimulate employment and business growth.

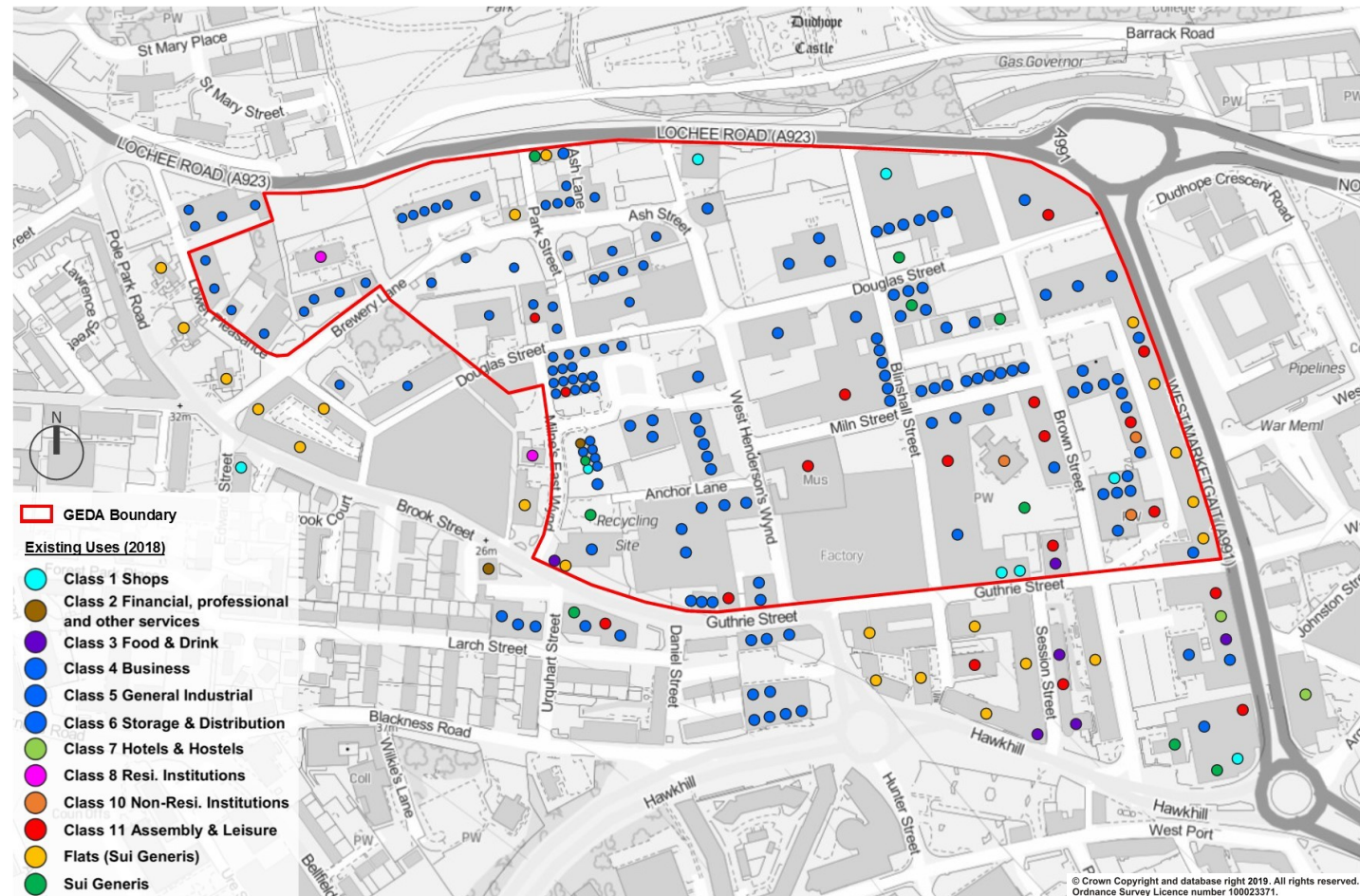
2.6 Existing Diversity & Development Pressures

Despite the area's General Economic Development Area status, there are various non-compliant uses which are outwith the area's designated 4, 5 and 6 use classes.

Some of these uses pre-date the formation of the GEDA and many have planning approval. 2010 to 2018 saw a notable level of planning interest in non-compliant uses. Most of these proposals were approved due to their compatibility with existing uses and proximity to the city centre. **Importantly, these non-compliant uses are deemed to be compatible and help to demonstrate that diversity within the area is feasible.**

Non-compliant land-use proposals can be perceived as a threat to the future security of the GEDA's employment land. However, they also provide an opportunity to positively transform the area through the introduction of complementary uses.

Therefore, this framework proposes to introduce new land-uses to the GEDA, while also establishing development principles (p.18) which will safeguarded the employment land.



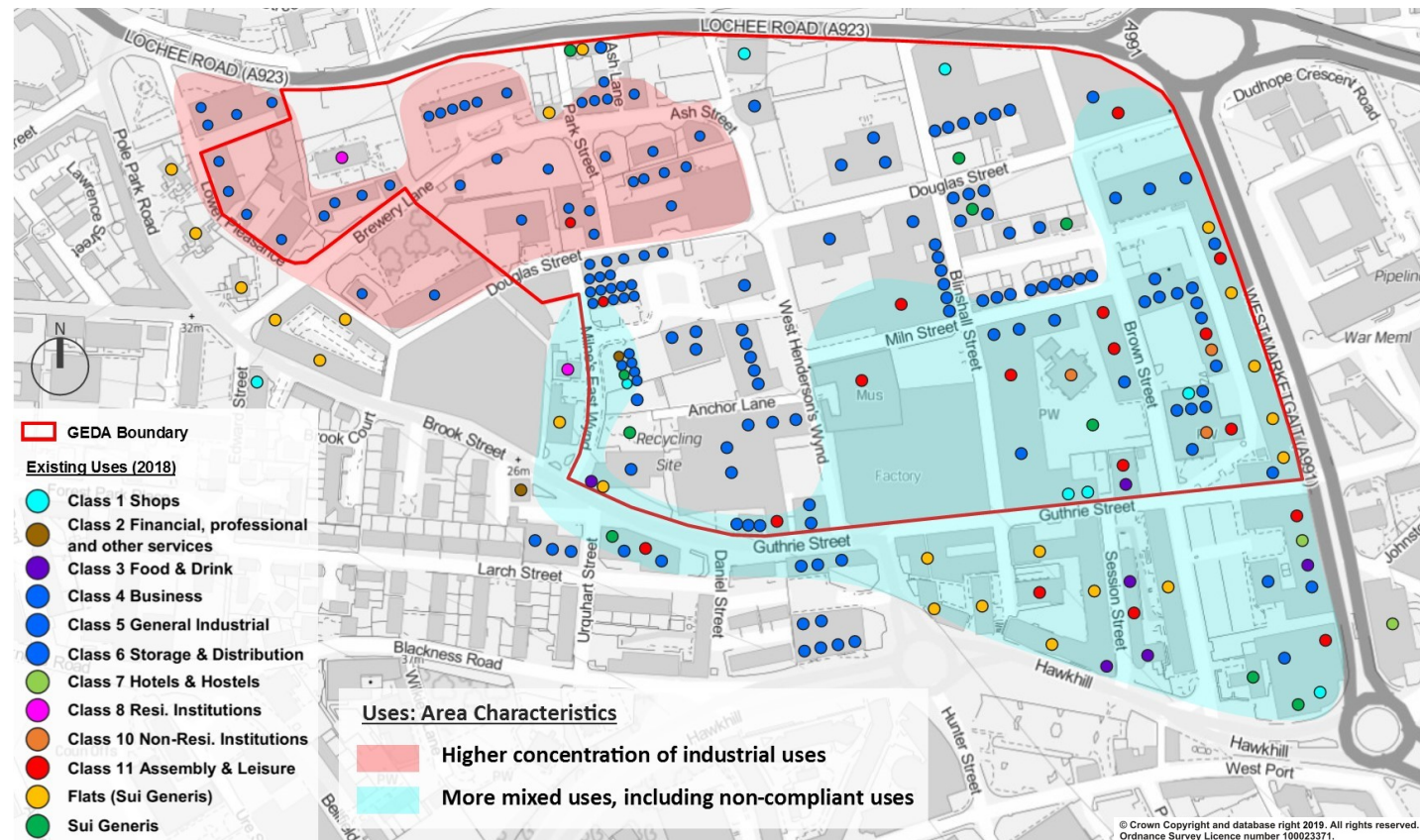
2.7 Land-Use Characteristics

Through site surveys and categorisation of each occupied unit in and around the GEDA, a detailed picture of the area's use characteristics has been formed.

Various pockets of mixed-use exist within the GEDA, however, two general observations can be formed on the area's land-use characteristics. Firstly, **more non-compliant uses (non 4, 5 and 6) can be found in the city blocks to east and south-east of the GEDA.** This occurrence is understandable given the closer proximity to the city centre and university campus.

Secondly, **the lowest concentration of non-compliant uses and the highest concentration of industrial uses, which have the potential to be incompatible with new non-compliant uses, is located in the north-west of the GEDA.** Again, this occurrence is understandable given the area's relative distance to the city centre and university campus.

These observations have been fundamental in shaping the proposed land-use changes, as set out in the proposals map in section 3.2.



Barbed wire and industrial processes are more concentrated in the north-west of the GEDA, which contrasts with the general feel of the GEDA areas located closer to the city centre and university campus.



2.8 'Places That Work' Precedent

Through significant change in global economics, technology, employment trends, housing demands, health care and life expectancy, mixed-use developments are growing in popularity. **While there will always be uses, such as heavy industry, which should not be mixed with residential uses, there are light industry, commercial, leisure and care uses which can work with residential developments to create vibrant and dynamic places to live and work.**

London's [Places that Work](#) strategy sets out the case for such developments with a specific emphasis on protecting employment land. This strategy has reinforced the City Council's approach to introducing more, complementary, land-uses to the Blackness GEDA.



London's mixed-use development strategy, by Architecture 00 in support with the Centre for London



Caxton Works, East London

Caxton Works is a new-build mixed-use development on the site of a former bakery and electrical supplies warehouse.

- 20,000 sq. ft. of light industry studios
- 300 new residential units above ground level

Businesses to date include:

- Bamboo Bicycle Club
- Dessert manufacturer
- Architects practice
- Innovative electrical manufacturer



Northside Studios, Andrews Road, London

Northside Studios is a small-scale gap site development creating ground/mezzanine level working space and upper floor flats.

- Five double storey work units totalling 800sqm.
- 10 upper level flats
- Residential units set back to minimise impact of activity below and creates a generous terrace.



3.1 Key Challenges, Priorities and Proposals

Key Challenges



- Long-term vacant, derelict and underused land and buildings, despite Dundee's demand for small/medium scale working spaces.
- The area's historic/listed buildings can be challenging for development; however, they are key to the area's strong sense of place.
- The proximity of the GEDA to neighbouring areas (City Centre, Universities, Dudhope Park and residential areas) is problematic given its negative characteristics and public perception.
- Maintaining existing businesses throughout potential changes in the land use designation and character of the area.

Key Priorities



- Generate increased economic development and employment through more productive use of the GEDA.
- Stimulate mixed-use development of vacant, derelict and underused land and buildings.
- Attract a wider variety of compatible uses, while helping to address Dundee's working space needs and maintaining existing businesses.
- Create a more welcoming, vibrant, diverse and interactive place/destination.
- Improve public perception, pedestrian safety and connectivity within and into the GEDA.

Key Proposals



1. Establish a new vision for the future of the Blackness GEDA: principally a place to invest, work, live and visit.
2. Introduce new land uses to help diversify employment and unlock the area's potential.
3. Support compatible and complementary uses, such as light industry, creative sector, service sector and specific leisure uses.
4. Support upper level flats and live-work units to leverage the regeneration of existing buildings and to stimulate new-build development, both of which must provide compatible ground level working spaces.

3.2 Land-Use Proposal

Introducing new uses, beyond the current 4, 5 and 6 use classes, is the cornerstone of change within the GEDA.

Due to compatibility concerns around use classes, the area with the highest concentration of industrial practices (coloured blue on map) will maintain its current 4, 5 and 6 use class status.

To encourage development and regeneration of vacant, underused and derelict land and buildings the remainder of the GEDA (coloured green on map) will permit the following use classes:

Use Class 1: Shops*

Use Class 3: Food and Drink*

Use Class 4: Business*

Use Class 5: General Industrial*

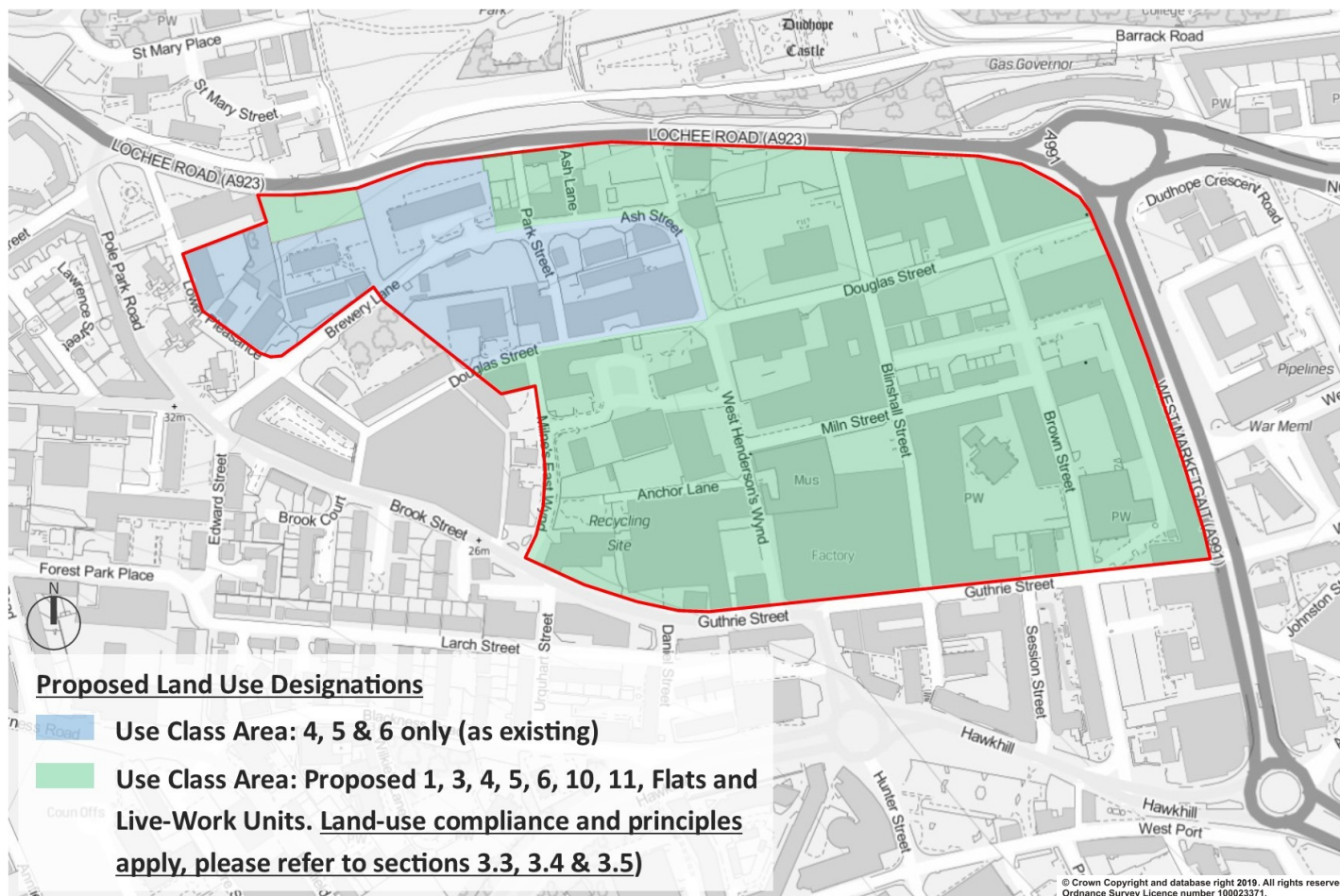
Use Class 6: Storage and Distribution*

Use Class 10: Non-Residential Institutions*

Use Class 11: Assembly and Leisure*

Sui Generis: Flats and Live Work Units*

***Land-Use compliance and principles apply. The following section 3.3 sets out the four key land-use principles. Further detail on the types of uses which are compliant and non-compliant are set out in sections 3.4 and 3.5.**



3.3 Key Land-Use Principles

- 1) Agent of Change principle: developers must demonstrate that proposed uses are compatible with the surrounding existing and proposed uses and apply mitigation measures where necessary to address any existing and proposed issues, such as noise, odour and air pollution.**

Reason: to protect the viability of established uses which could be threatened by the introduction of new development. The responsibility lies with the agent of change to mitigate any potential issues to ensure that existing uses are protected and that the proposed use is viable.

- 2) Environmentally Sensitive Uses: light industry uses which are appropriate in residential areas without causing detriment to amenity will be supported. Industrial uses which are detrimental to the amenity of existing or proposed uses will not be supported.**

Reason: to protect the amenity of residential uses it is important to highlight that some industrial uses, particularly those within use class 5 General Industry, are not compatible with residential uses and will therefore not be supported.

Light industry uses, which comply with Class 4 Business, will be supported where they do not detrimentally affect the amenity of existing or proposed residential uses.

Detrimental issues can include noise, vibration, light, odour, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

- 3) Flats and live-work units will only be supported above ground level and where proposals provide a suitable level of appropriate working space at ground level.**

Reason: Introducing residential uses to the GEDA is designed, in part, to leverage development and regeneration of underused, vacant and derelict land and buildings. However, development must also support/ create a healthy level of desirable economic development space to support the city's working needs, business growth and employment.

- 4) Small scale ancillary retail will be supported where directly related to principle uses, particularly craft and maker businesses. For example, specific Class 4 Business uses: jeweller, ceramicist, artisan brewer/distiller etc.**

Reason: to protect and strengthen the vitality of Dundee's City Centre and District Centres it is essential that footfall generating uses, such as retail outlets, are focused in these historic, public, areas. This approach aligns with the Scottish Government's 'town centre first' principle and Dundee's LDP 2019 Policy 21: Town Centre First Principle.

3.4 Compliant Uses

| Proposed Use Classes | | Current Use Classes | | | Proposed Use Classes | | |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Class 1: Shops | Class 3: Food & Drink | Class 4: Business | Class 5: General Industry | Class 6: Storage & Distribution | Class 10: Non-Residential Institutions | Class 11: Assembly & Leisure | Sui Generis |
| Compliant Uses | | Desirable Uses | | | Compliant Uses | | |
| <p>Ancillary retail <u>directly</u> related to principle uses which focus on craft and making, e.g. Class 4 Businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeweller • Ceramicist • Artisan brewer, distiller & baker • Print maker • Cabinet maker • Etc. <p>A convenience store would be supportable if it serves a need, e.g. a rise in residential accommodation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafés • Snack Bars • Street food market • Restaurants where ancillary to a principal use, e.g. DCA, McManus Galleries etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft, design & artisan makers • Furniture restoration • Stage/lighting/theatre design • Costume/fashion design • Product design • Textile design • Fashion design • Game design • Graphic design • Interior design • Web design • Urban design • Film & TV • Photography • Recording studio • Music, performing & visual arts • Advertising and marketing • Shared work hubs • Social enterprise | n/a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-storage • Final Mile Distribution • Parcel Depot • Wholesalers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crèche • Day nursery • Day centre • Provision of education • Art gallery (non-sale/hire) • Museum • Library • Public hall • Exhibition hall • Public worship, religious instruction, or social activities of a religious body. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Gymnasiums • Indoor sports or recreation (trampolining , escape rooms) • dance/yoga studio | <p><u>Flats and live-work units</u> will be supported in designated areas (above ground level*) where proposals put forward a suitable level of commercial space on the ground level.</p> <p>*There may be instances on specific sites where ground level space could be considered for residential use, such as secluded/protected courtyard areas. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.</p> |

Table to be read in conjunction with the land-use proposal map in section 3.2.

3.5 Non-Compliant Uses

| Proposed Use Classes | | Current Use Classes | | | Proposed Use Classes | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Class 1: Shops | Class 3: Food & Drink | Class 4: Business | Class 5: General Industry | Class 6: Storage & Distribution | Class 10: Non-Residential Institutions | Class 11: Assembly & Leisure | Sui Generis |
| Non-Compliant Uses (unlikely to be supported) | | | | | | | |
| All shops unless otherwise stated in section 3.4 Compliant Uses. | Restaurants (single use) | Some bad neighbour uses may not be supported, particularly Class 5 General Industry uses where noise, odour and air pollution issues are incompatible with existing and proposed uses. | | | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General fitness • gymnasiums • Cinema • Concert hall • Bingo hall • Casino • Dance hall • Nightclub • Skating rink • Swimming bath | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground Floor Flats • All other sui generis uses unless stated otherwise in section 3.4 Compliant Uses. |

Table to be read in conjunction with the land-use proposal map in section 3.2.

3.6 Summary of Development Considerations

In addition to the project-specific policy requirements of [Dundee's Local Development Plan 2019](#), developers must ensure that proposed development:

- 1. supports the overall Place Vision for the Blackness GEDA, (p.5);**
- 2. aligns with the established compliant and non-compliant land uses, (p.19 & 20);**
- 3. takes into consideration the four key development principles, (p.18);**
- 4. helps to address Dundee's working space needs through the provision of desirable working spaces, (p.11);**
- 5. strengthens the area's unique and important sense of place, (p.8);**
- 6. enhances the quality and connectivity of the area's public streets, (p.10); and**
- 7. considers, where appropriate, the possibility of land amalgamation and wholesale site redevelopment to deliver radical change, (p.10)**

Invest in Dundee

Developers and businesses may wish to visit the City Council's Invest in Dundee website to discover the range of grants, loans, funding and support available to businesses in Dundee.

<https://www.investindundee.co.uk/business/investment>

Contact Details

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Dundee House

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Dundee, DD1 1LS

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Email: planning@dundeecity.gov.uk

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