Gloucester City Council

Planning Brief: Kwiksave Site, Northgate Street/Worcester Street.
(May 2004)
If you have problems understanding this in English please contact:
Tapestry Translation Services,
Corporate Personnel Services,
Herbert Warehouse,
The Docks, Gloucester GL1 2EQ.
Tel No: (01452 396909)
Introduction
This document has been produced in order to provide guidance on planning, highway and other issues to assist in the preparation of proposals for the redevelopment of this site. It has been the subject of a public consultation exercise and, following revisions set out in the accompanying Response Report, has now been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Land Ownership
The site as shown on Plan 1 is owned by Somerfield. Kwiksave leases the property fronting Northgate Street. Bedmaker, a furniture retail outlet, occupies the single storey property fronting Worcester Street. It is not known if other tenancies exist within the property. Kwiksave has recently ceased to trade from the Northgate Street premises, which are now vacant.

The planted areas fronting Black Dog Way are owned by the County Council and maintained by the City Council.

The Site
The site extends from Northgate Street to Worcester Street and boasts a substantial frontage to Black Dog Way, the Inner Relief Road. The site is predominantly single-storey but is bounded by three-storey properties on Worcester Street and by three and four-storey properties on Northgate Street.
Plan 1: The Site

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringed Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Access

Vehicular access for deliveries is via Worcester Street. Customer access is via on street parking to both Worcester Street and Northgate Streets. There is no vehicular access into the site from either Black Dog Way or Northgate Street.

Servicing for retail, office or other commercial uses will continue to be from Worcester Street. It is considered to be neither practical nor safe to enable vehicular servicing from Black Dog Way. Nor is it considered desirable to introduce vehicular access into the site from Northgate Street. This would be too close to the bus gate, would result in the loss of on-street parking places and have an adverse impact upon what is seen as an opportunity to significantly improve the streetscape with the removal of a single storey use and its replacement with 3 - 4 storey buildings.

There is an issue with visibility at the junction of Black Dog Way with Worcester Street, caused particularly by the bend in the road which serves to prevent any view of traffic queuing at the lights until the bend is reached. This situation can be substantially improved by the setting back of the development from the highway along Black Dog Way which will also enable the provision of a footway and segregated cycleway. The footway will enhance pedestrian access to and from the development, whilst the cycleway will enhance access between Kingsholm and the bus and railway stations.

Contaminated Land

A review of old Ordnance Survey Plans reveals that the site was occupied by a garage use prior to its conversion to retail. The 1852 maps show part of the site was used as a tannery. There is therefore the possibility that the land may have been contaminated by a previous use. Any planning application should be accompanied by a survey showing the type and extent of any contamination and a scheme of measures necessary to either remove the contamination or make the land suitable for the proposed end use.

Much of the roofing material and some wall cladding is known to be asbestos cement, some of which is of a friable nature due to fire or age. The contamination survey referred to above should pay particular attention to the potential for other asbestos-based contamination. Demolition of the property and disposal of the waste will be subject to the “Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1987” and the “1996 Special Waste Regulations.”

The Environment Agency advises that the underlying geology is classified as a minor aquifer of high vulnerability. It is concerned that the redevelopment of the site should not contaminate the groundwater in any way. Any development will therefore be subject to conditions which will ensure this.

The Environment Agency is also concerned that the surface water run-off from the site should mimic a natural situation more closely. Surface water run-off should therefore be attenuated to Greenfield run-off for up to and including a 1 in 100 year event.
Noise

Black Dog Way and the adjoining railway line are potential sources of noise nuisance to noise sensitive developments. Black Dog Way is a relatively short stretch of dual carriageway between two signal-controlled junctions, and is characterised by vehicles stopping, starting and accelerating away, before decelerating and stopping. Any proposed schemes on the site should be accompanied by a noise survey and assessment, together with proposals for the mitigation of any likely future problems from noise.

The dual carriageway may also be a source of concern from the air quality point of view, given the high volumes of traffic and the added factor of rail traffic. The developer should produce an air quality assessment to accompany any planning application setting out mitigation measures for both internal and external air quality issues as are identified for the approval of the City Council.

Services

It is assumed that all the necessary services and utilities are present on or near the site to enable development to proceed. Prospective developers are advised to check the adequacy and availability of utility services. Attention should also be paid to the existence of an electricity substation on the site, presently served by the access road from Worcester Street, and the impact this may have upon any design.

Public Transport

Both frontages of the site are situated on public transport routes. Northgate Street provides a bus gate in front of the existing store to provide access to the bus station via Spread Eagle Road.
Conservation Areas

The whole site lies within the newly extended Conservation Area 9, London Road. Worcester Street is a part of the City Council’s successful Townscape Heritage Initiative bid and the scheme will run from January 2002 for a period of 5 years. During this time grants will be made available for the repair and improvement of historic, but not necessarily listed buildings to promote economic regeneration through investment in the heritage asset. For further details contact Karen Radford, Conservation Officer, Planning Services, Tel 01452 396855.

Two elements of the site are mentioned within the Draft Conservation Area Statement:

1. The unlisted building on the east side, at the junction of Black Dog Way and Worcester Street is identified as a key building making a positive contribution to the proposed conservation area;
2. On the other hand, 26 Worcester Street, The Bedmaker retail unit is seen as an inappropriate building with a strong horizontal emphasis detracting from the strong vertical emphasis of the remainder of the street.

Conservation Area Consent will be required for the demolition of non-listed buildings within the Conservation Area. Given the contribution made to the Conservation Area the City Council would not consider favourably any application to demolish the property at the junction of Worcester Street and Black Dog Way.

The property at the junction of Worcester Street and Black Dog Way as referred to above may be considered for demolition if it can be shown that its continued existence would prevent the development of a “Landmark” building in this location. The opportunity to design a building that wraps around this corner site should not be prejudiced if it can be shown that it is to be replaced by a building of merit.

Listed Buildings

No buildings within the site are listed, although No’s 18, 20 and 22 Worcester Street which adjoin the site are listed Grade II. On Northgate Street there are no listed buildings affecting the site but the two buildings which flank the existing Kwiksave are both of some architectural importance in the context of the street scene.

Archaeology

The whole site lies within the City Centre Area of Principal Archaeological Interest. The area is known to have been the origin of a number of finds of artefacts of Roman origin. A field evaluation would be required before any planning application is resolved (see PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning, paragraph 21). It is considered that, if necessary, this evaluation could be carried out with the co-operation of the existing or any subsequent retail occupiers with minimal disturbance to operations. For further details contact Richard Sermon, City Archaeologist, City Museum and Art Gallery, Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1HP, Tel: 01452 396300.
Land Use

The existing site is mainly single storey retail. Given its central area location it is considered that the following uses would be appropriate in any redevelopment of the site:

retail, residential, office and leisure in the context of a mixed use scheme.

In the interests of promoting a positive contribution to the street scenes of both Northgate Street and Worcester Street the emphasis should be on retail at ground floor with a variety of uses above. The provision of a limited retail scheme will be promoted. Should more substantial retail provision be sought then the scheme would be considered in the context of the sequential test as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments.

In order to meet a particular need to provide large-scale units of affordable housing the City Council is prepared to consider a solely residential proposal on the Worcester Street frontage on the site of the Bedmaker unit, provided that it is in the context of an otherwise mixed use scheme for the wider site.

The site fronting Black Dog Way could be utilised for a mix of leisure or commercial uses given the provision of suitable and safe pedestrian access. Such access could provide for a footway running between Worcester Street and Northgate Street with no allowance for any pedestrian movements across the dual carriageway other than at the existing signal controlled junctions. Consideration will also be given to the need for a cycleway to be provided in conjunction with the footway. Care would be needed to control the design of the site so as not to encourage or enable drop off/pick ups from vehicles on the dual carriageway. This could be achieved by the provision of a metal fence/barrier preventing access to the highway.

This is a potentially high profile site but would require to be serviced from the rear and restricted to pedestrian access only from the Black Dog Way frontage.
Affordable Homes

Should proposals emerge for the development of private housing within the site, the City Council would require the provision of up to 40% of the units to be Affordable Housing. Developers need to be aware that, with the limited amount of Social Housing Grant (SHG) there is likely to be little, if any, public subsidy available to enable the cost to the development to be reduced. Whilst the site has many attributes, for example city centre; brown field site that would make such developments qualify for SHG there are many competing priorities for the City Council, the Housing Corporation and the Regional Housing Body (RHB). Developers would be well advised to familiarise themselves with the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) of the RHB, which can be found on the Web. The City Council is unable to provide any capital finance to prospective Housing Associations from within its own resources. Whilst the site therefore has many attributes for qualifying for a grant, it is not one of the highest priorities for Social Housing Grant of either the City Council, the Housing Corporation or the RHB.

Low cost discounted market housing is not considered by the planning and housing authorities to meet housing need and therefore would not qualify under Circular 6/98 as Affordable Housing. The preferred tenure for the site by the Housing Authority is for social rented, although an element of shared ownership available for sale on an equity stake requiring no more than £50,000 mortgage would be acceptable. Developers should therefore assume no availability of SHG for the Social Housing.

Where residential units are proposed over retail or commercial units the requirement would be for the majority (66%) of such housing to be 2 bedroom/3 person accommodation with a net floor area of not less than 62 square metres and one bedroom/2 person flatted accommodation of not less than 50 square metres net floor area. If development went above the second floor height it would require installation of lift access.

On the Worcester Street frontage the option exists for the provision of flatted accommodation above retail or three-storey 4-6 bedroom-housing units which clearly would not require provision of retail.
Open Space

The minimum acceptable area for the provision of on-site public open space is 0.2ha (0.5 acres) (Local Plan policy OS4). Given that the overall site area is 0.43ha (1.05 acres), it is accepted that it would be inappropriate to seek on-site provision in this instance. Nevertheless there may be instances where it is necessary to provide private garden space to houses dependant upon the size of units proposed.

Instead, the City Council will seek contributions towards off-site provision, upgrading or improvement of facilities. These contributions will be defined by the number of units and bed-spaces proposed and the level of contributions set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6 – New Housing and Open Space.

In addition, within the grounds of new higher density developments of flats, or housing with no private garden provision, separate areas designated for play for very young children will be required. These Private Spaces for Play (PSPs) or Doorstep Equipped Area for Play (DEAPs) will not contribute to the public open space requirement for the development, and will not be adopted or maintained by the City Council. For further details, refer to SPG 6, page 56. This should be situated at the rear of the site and not facing Black Dog Way and should be safely accessible from the residential units without the need to cross either the access road or the car parking areas.

Car Parking

Given the central area location, the existence of on street parking on both Northgate Street and Worcester Street and the wide availability of public parking within the wider area the City Council would not support the provision of customer or employee parking on site. Parking for the residential units could be provided on site to a maximum of one space per dwelling unit.

Materials

Within the Worcester Street area as identified within the Conservation Area Statement the traditional materials are red brick or painted stucco walls, blue/grey Welsh slate or plain clay tiles, timber shopfronts and sliding sash windows at first and second floors.

The choice of materials in both the buildings and the public realm should be based not only upon the need for a high standard of design but should also seek to minimise whole life costs, i.e. optimising the balance between initial costs and maintenance and operating costs without compromising user comfort.

Massing

Plots should reflect the narrow width of the existing, predominantly three-storey terraced units on Worcester Street. Front facades should continue the vertical rhythm at first and second floor level with the strong horizontal emphasis at ground floor level.
Urban Design Considerations
The site as it affects the Black Dog Way and Northgate Street junction is identified within the Rapid Characterisation and Scoping Study produced on behalf of the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) as a City Gateway. It suggests that the site should be highlighted by a contrast in spatial enclosure and include a “Landmark” building.

Reference is made below to the need to consider the wider policies contained within the current Local Plan. Particular attention should be paid to the policies contained within the Built Environment Chapter as they relate to design and landscaping issues.

The following comments are offered not as hard and fast rules to be followed by a developer but rather a series of questions that require to be considered in the development of a scheme.

Front Elevations
- The development has the potential to reform the street frontage between the existing buildings on Northgate Street. It will be critical to develop enough building height to work with adjacent buildings (around 3 storeys in height) to provide a ‘bookend’ to Northgate.
- It also presents the opportunity to extend the existing site to include 113 Northgate Street within the scheme, although this is only an opportunity and not a requirement.
- In the context of any retail proposals the developer should consider the advice set out within the City Council’s Shop Front Design Guide.
- Future development should reform the street frontage from the junction of Black Dog Way and Worcester Street. In addition this elevation will include delivery access to the site. Delivery access should be incorporated without undermining the continuity of the street frontage. As with the Northgate Street elevation, this elevation will form the ‘bookend’ to Worcester Street.

Section through Black Dog Way
- A number of proposals are possible for the built section through Black Dog Way. However the following points should be noted:
  - There will be no vehicular access
  - There is at present no footpath
  - Future for the existing planting belt
  - Black Dog Way frontage should be developed as a front elevation and not turn its back on the highway
  - The transition from a single storey structure to a three-storey structure or higher should not create a canyon effect to the dual carriageway. This may be achieved by setting the buildings back to enable a feeling of space to be created.
General

- The scheme should deliver a reasonable mix of uses on site and respond positively to the rear boundaries of adjacent properties.
- Given the need to consider development in the context of the existing Worcester Street properties, designs should pay due regard to the principles of “Secure By Design” and to ensure that all public areas are overlooked.

Sustainability

- The City Council would like to see a development that addressed the wider sustainability agenda. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) through its EcoHome and BREEAM assessment methodologies provides an objective means by which the overall environmental performance of a building can be measured.
- The City Council therefore will encourage any scheme to provide for an EcoHome (for residential) or BREEAM (for commercial) assessment as part of any application. It is anticipated that given the site’s excellent accessibility profile, and brownfield status that a rating of ‘Good’ could be realistically achieved.

Landscape Design

Whilst opportunities for planting and the provision of public areas may be limited within a site of this nature, particular attention should be paid to the opportunities that do arise. Hard surface treatment and the creation of character areas will be a particularly important element within any scheme.

Master Plan

The City Council will seek a comprehensive approach to the development of the site that embraces the advice contained within this brief and the policies of the Local Plan particularly as they relate to development and demolition within a Conservation Area and affecting the setting of a Listed Building.
Planning Obligations

The developers will be required to contribute towards off site local highway infrastructure (pedestrian and cycle route) and education (early years, primary and secondary) in relation to the scale and impact of their proposals. Actual contributions will be assessed with Gloucestershire County Council when specific redevelopment proposals are known.

Local Plan

The advice contained within this draft brief is based upon the policies of the City Council as set out in the Gloucester Local Plan, Second Stage Deposit Local Plan, 2002 and the document “Supplementary Planning Guidance, June 2001.” Both documents have been approved by the Council for the purposes of development control.

Both documents can be obtained from, Local Plans Team, Gloucester City Council, Herbert Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EQ, Tel: 01452 396854, or can be viewed on the Council’s website – www.gloucester.gov.uk

All relevant policies may not have been specifically referred to. All interested parties should refer to the documents. For example, it may be, depending upon the proposals which finally emerge and the nature of any housing units provided, that contributions may be sought towards the provision or improvement of education facilities in the area.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Gloucester City Council T 01452 522232
Herbert Warehouse F 01452 396899
The Docks, Gloucester GL1 2EQ E thecouncil@gloucester.gov.uk
Gloucester GL1 2EQ W www.gloucester.gov.uk