

The Fleece Complex

Planning Concept Statement

An undiscovered jewel in Westgate Street February 2012



The Fleece Complex

Planning Concept Statement

An undiscovered jewel in Westgate Street

Contents

Introduction	1
Site Location	3
Land Ownership	4
Site Character	4
Existing Land Uses	4
Historic Environment	4-5
Archaeology	6
Policy Context	6
Overview of The Fleece Site	7
Design Objectives	9
Development Proposals	9
Design Framework	9
Possible Demolitions	10
Enhancing Pedestrian Links	11
New Build	12
The Architecture of the Context	13
The Materials of the New Buildings	14-15
Nature Conservation	15
Highway Issues	15
Contamination	16
Appendix 1	17

Contacts

Policy

Claire Rawlings 01452 396222

Adam Gooch 01452 396836

Historic Environment

Charlotte Lewis 01452 396855

Urban Design

Claire Haslam 01452 396847

Matt Haslam 01452 396847

Development Control

Adam Smith 01452 396702

The Fleece Complex

Planning Concept Statement

An undiscovered jewel in Westgate Street

Introduction

The Fleece is a valuable historic asset and also represents a major regeneration challenge located within the city centre of Gloucester.

Purpose of the Statement

To provide guidance on the redevelopment of the 0.28ha Fleece Hotel Site, Westgate Street, Gloucester and set out planning and urban design parameters for the site and proposed uses.

Objective

To secure a comprehensive repair, restoration and active reuse of the historic Fleece Hotel by 2016 and create a vibrant urban space.



Site Location



Site Location

The central site lies in the Blackfriars area to the south west of the city centre. It is bounded by the main shopping street of Westgate Street to the north, Mercer's Lane and Southgate Street to the east, Cross Keys Lane to the south and Bull Lane to the west.

To the south and adjacent to the site lies Longsmith Street multi-storey car park. 19-23 Westgate Street forms the public face of the Fleece Hotel site.

Land Ownership

The site was privately owned until it was acquired by SWRDA in 2002. During South West Regional Development Agency ownership the complex has deteriorated through lack of use. A series of holding repairs and works have been carried out. With the end of Regional Development Agencies nationally, the city council has stepped in to continue the regeneration agenda and became owner of the collection of buildings on 18th July 2011.

Site Character

The Fleece complex is an under-utilised, run down, centrally located historic site with a combination of listed buildings, more modern buildings all in poor condition within a tight urban grain. The site offers huge potential to be sensitively redeveloped, whilst retaining its important historic value, and ultimately form a key site within the city's urban fabric contributing towards the city's ongoing regeneration programme. The area is currently densely urbanised, primarily with retail units fronting onto Westgate Street. Behind this a number of structures exist, including a disused garage facing onto Cross Keys Lane. Much older elements have been concealed by more recent alterations.

The site is of great historic importance, housing the Grade 1 listed Great Inn. The building is one of Gloucester's hidden treasures and is of national significance due to its age and its strong associations with pivotal elements of national history.

The site comprises a collection of buildings around a number of courtyards. Within the site principle public spaces include the Fleece Yard and the Livery Yard.

Access follows the historic street pattern of Bull Lane, Cross Keys Lane and Westgate Street. These provide limited vehicular access, primarily for servicing and maintenance. There is no current pedestrian access through the site.

Existing Land Uses

The majority of the site is unoccupied with limited parts still in use, most notably the three shop units on Westgate Street. There is also some limited use of a building off Cross Keys Lane by Gloucester Academy of Music.

Historic Environment

The Fleece Hotel developed from medieval lodgings associated with the Abbey. At the heart of the Fleece complex is a C15th Grade 1 Listed timber-framed Inn which stands above a C12th masonry undercroft. This is considered to have been the original location of the Great Inn which became the Fleece Hotel. This building represents the single most important historic element of the site and has a significant place in the story of Gloucester. It has no street frontage on Westgate Street but stands at right angles to the street. Although in poor condition the Inn and undercroft are remarkably intact.

Over the years the Great Inn became the Fleece Hotel which was gradually expanded to create more accommodation over a period of 300 years. The greater part of this expansion was during the C20th when the Fleece Hotel extended from Westgate Street at its northern edge across the city block to the south to include properties on Bull Lane and Mercer's Lane.

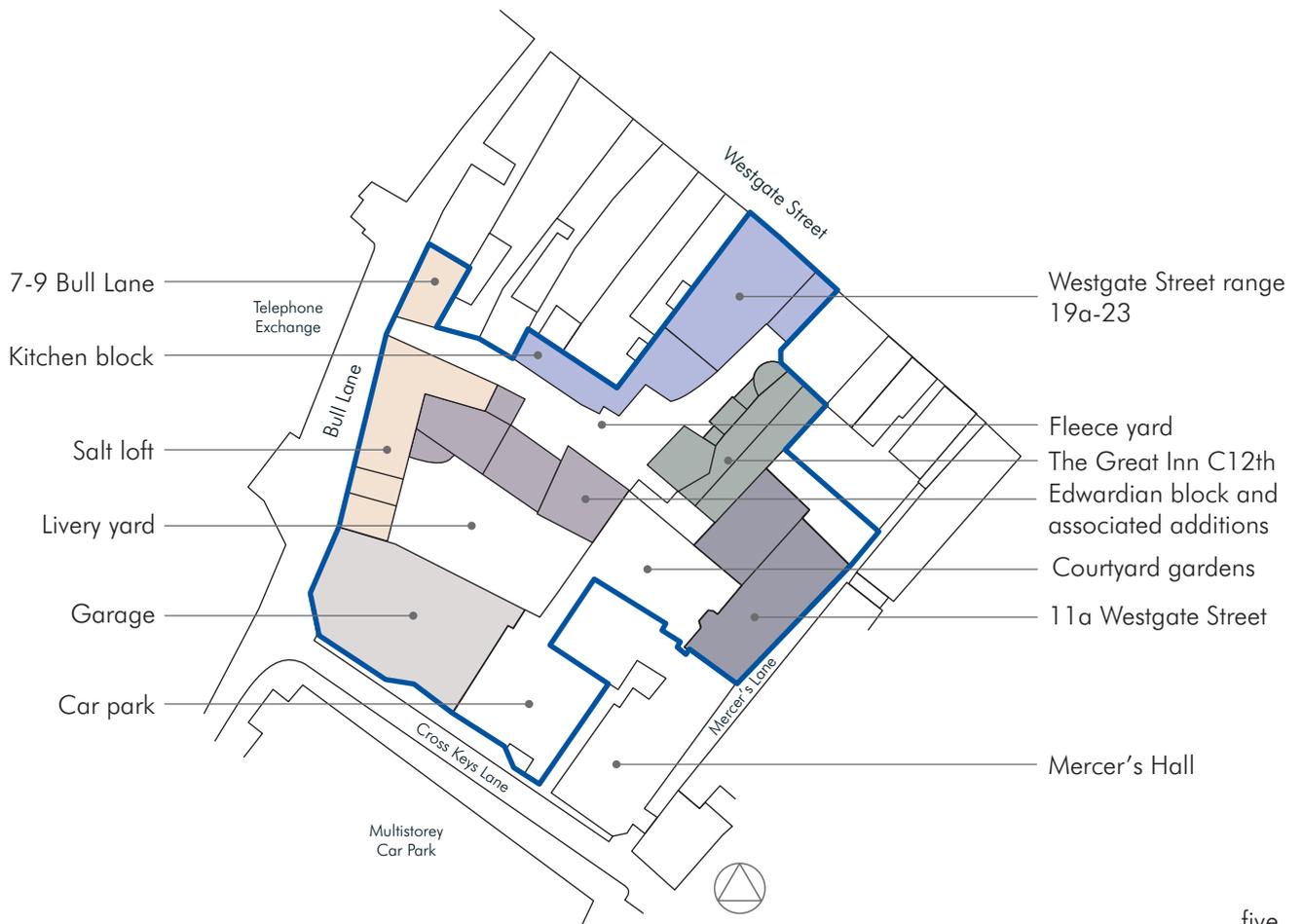
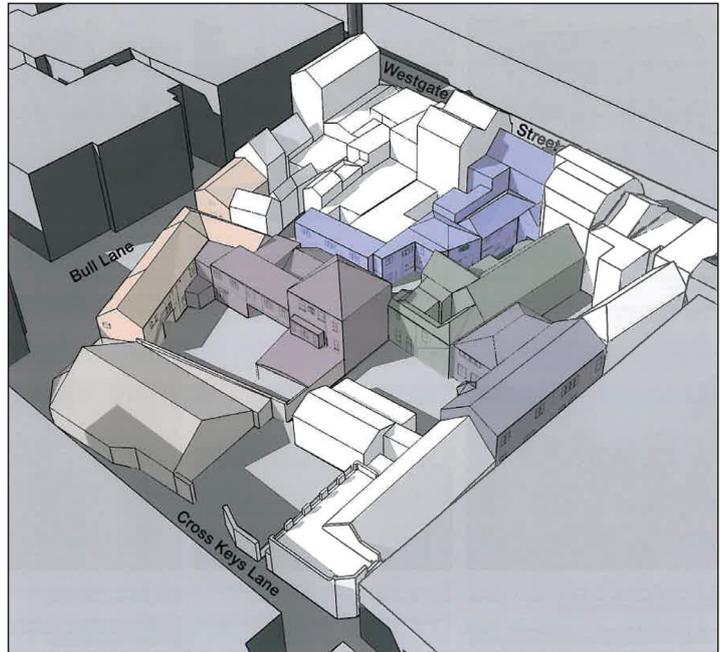
The Fleece yard contains a number of buildings of varying historic and strategic importance of which the most interesting is the Edwardian Block. Although in poor condition the building retains strong character, has a prominent position located at the axis of open courtyards to the southern part of the Fleece site.

In terms of the detailed designations the Fleece complex is located within the City Centre Conservation Area, and contains a range of designated heritage assets:

- 11a Westgate Street - Grade II listed
- 19 Westgate Street - Grade I listed
- 19a/21/23 Westgate Street - Grade II listed

Model showing the principal buildings that form the focus of this document

- Westgate Street Range 19a-23
- The Great Inn C12th
- 11a Westgate Street
- Garage
- The Salt loft and 7-9 Bull Lane
- Edwardian block and associated additions



Although not listed in their own right the following curtilage buildings are seen as positive and should be retained and reused in any scheme:

- The Salt Loft
- The Edwardian Block
- 7-9 Bull Lane

Archaeology

The buried heritage assets on the site are not similarly designated (i.e. the site is not scheduled). It does, however, include heritage assets of equivalent significance and should, as a consequence, be treated as though it is scheduled within the planning process [see PPS5 policy HE 9.6].

The site of the Fleece Hotel is situated centrally within the core of the Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval city. It is close to the Roman forum and numerous medieval markets, with a twelfth-century cellar surviving on the site. Beyond this, the detail of what buried heritage assets survive within the site is not known, although it is reasonable to assume that they are likely to be of high significance.

Policy Context

The site is located within the Greater Blackfriars area. The overall aim for this area is to create a new destination within the city centre and for it to function as the creative and cultural quarter of Gloucester building on its strategic location between the Cathedral and the Docks, its proximity to the core retailing on the gate streets, its built heritage and historic character and its proximity to the water front.

The policy framework, which is covered in more detail in appendix 1 of this statement, seeks a mixed use development within this area including retail, hotel, leisure and cultural uses, restaurants and cafes and drinking establishments.

In particular the Fleece Hotel is identified within this context as a focus for small scale specialist

retail development. The Fleece complex is located within the City Centre Conservation Area and contains a range of designated buildings as well as being located within an Area of Principal Archaeological Interest.

In working up the detailed application regard should be given to the following:

- National Planning Policies.
- 2002 Second Stage Deposit City of Gloucester Local Plan (adopted for development control purposes).
- Revised Draft Central Area Action Plan (August 2006).
- Greater Blackfriars Planning Brief (interim adoption Supplementary Planning Document November 2009).
- Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company Masterplan (endorsed by the City Council).
- City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals document (approved as interim planning guidance September 2007).
- Heights of buildings SPD (adopted as supplementary policy November 2008).
- Development Affecting sites of Historic Environment (Archaeological) Interest (interim adoption Supplementary Planning Document November 2008).

Overview of The Fleece Site



19a - 23 Westgate Street

The Westgate Street range is a three storey façade with retail outlets at ground floor and hotel rooms, which are no longer in use, on the upper storeys. It is thought that the current C19th timber framed façade may hide older C18th brick frontages. The building has a cellar, of which parts are used for storage and other areas are unused. These buildings are Grade II listed and are considered to be of national importance.



Salt Loft

The 'Salt Loft' was converted into part of the Fleece Hotel from a group of small cottages fronting onto Bull Lane. It provides access into the courtyard of the Fleece Hotel. The Salt Loft is not listed in its own right but forms part of the curtilage of the complex.

It does have local significance for its part in the history of the area and is good quality domestic scale building.



The Great Inn

This building has been known for several centuries as the Great Inn. It represents the most important historic element on the site. It has no street frontage onto Westgate Street, standing at right angles to it. The building is a two storey masonry structure with a C12th basement. This building is no longer in use. The last use for the building was bar and function rooms on the ground and basement floors with hotel rooms above. This building is Grade I listed, is considered to be of national significance and is on the National Building at Risk Register.



Garage

The garage structure is relatively modern. It has no historic or architectural interest. The garage is not listed but does form part of the curtilage to the Fleece complex.

The garage also provides a suitable boundary to the complex. Demolition may be appropriate as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme.

Overview of The Fleece Site



11a Westgate Street

This two storey brick building is a C19th structure, originally built as an extension to the dwelling at 11 Westgate Street. It has previously been used as a Gentlemen's Club, known as the Gloucester Club and is now in use by Gloucester Academy of Music, who have a lease on the building.

11a Westgate Street is Grade II listed and of national significance.



Edwardian Block

The Edwardian block was built in 1914 by the family who owned the Fleece Hotel complex between 1908 and 2003 when it came into the ownership of the South West Regional Development Agency. The block is a three storey square building. The ground floor contained a garage and inspection pit to encourage those with motorcars to stay at the hotel.

The building is not listed but has historic interest as part of the Fleece Hotel as a whole and would fall under the listed curtilage of the Fleece complex.



Kitchen/Staff

This appearance is of poor quality although much of this may be attributable to the breeze block first storey extension.

The building falls under the curtilage of the listed buildings on Westgate Street.



7-9 Bull Lane

Little is known of this building at this time but it is a good quality brick building which fronts onto Bull Lane. This building is not listed but is considered to be of local significance as part of the group of buildings which front onto Bull Lane and for the good quality materials and facades.

Design Objectives

- Achieve a high quality mixed use development which acts as a destination within the city centre.
- Create a vibrant and rich urban space.
- Sensitively retain, restore and reuse the historic assets of the site in a way that reflects its historic importance, and re-establish the sense of density and tight urban grain which characterised the site throughout its history until the mid C20th.
- Provide an attractive transition and improve linkages and legibility between the docks, wider Blackfriars area, the city centre and cathedral.
- Improve permeability through the site by enhancing the historic lane structure.
- Explore opportunities for new build elements that will positively contribute to the sites unique character.

Development Proposals

- Create a new and exciting 'destination' within the city centre. The area has the potential to function as the creative quarter of Gloucester building on its strategic location. However, there should be a caveat that these uses should be compatible with the historic form of this site and proportionate to the existing building's capacity. It may also be appropriate to discuss the need for a viability exercise for future developments.

Further information is available at www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/enabling-development-and-the-conservation-of-significant-places.

- Niche retail, offices, retail frontage, building on Bull Lane retail offer, active ground floor uses, residential upper floors, office, retail, restaurants, cafes, residential, hotel.

Design Framework

• Historic Assets

The site is rich in historic assets. Currently knowledge about the evolution of the Fleece complex of buildings is limited. Accordingly, an assessment of significance and evaluation of the heritage assets should be utilised to inform a justification for any alterations within the complex.

For any proposal that has an impact on historic standing fabric, the applicant will need to provide information on the fabric's significance and detail the proposal's impact on that significance as part of any planning application [See PPS5 policy HE 7].

An appropriate use is required that will ensure the designated assets are reused without compromising the architectural and historic features which remain.

• Archaeology

Any development proposal for the site that includes ground works will need to investigate the site for buried heritage assets of archaeological interest, model their form and extent in terms of significance and assess any proposal's impact on those assets. This information will be necessary for the planning authority to determine an application.

The City Archaeologist should be contacted at the earliest opportunity to discuss the appropriate level of investigation and information required proportionate to a development proposal with respect to heritage assets on the site and the proposal's impact on them.

Possible Demolitions for Fleece Complex



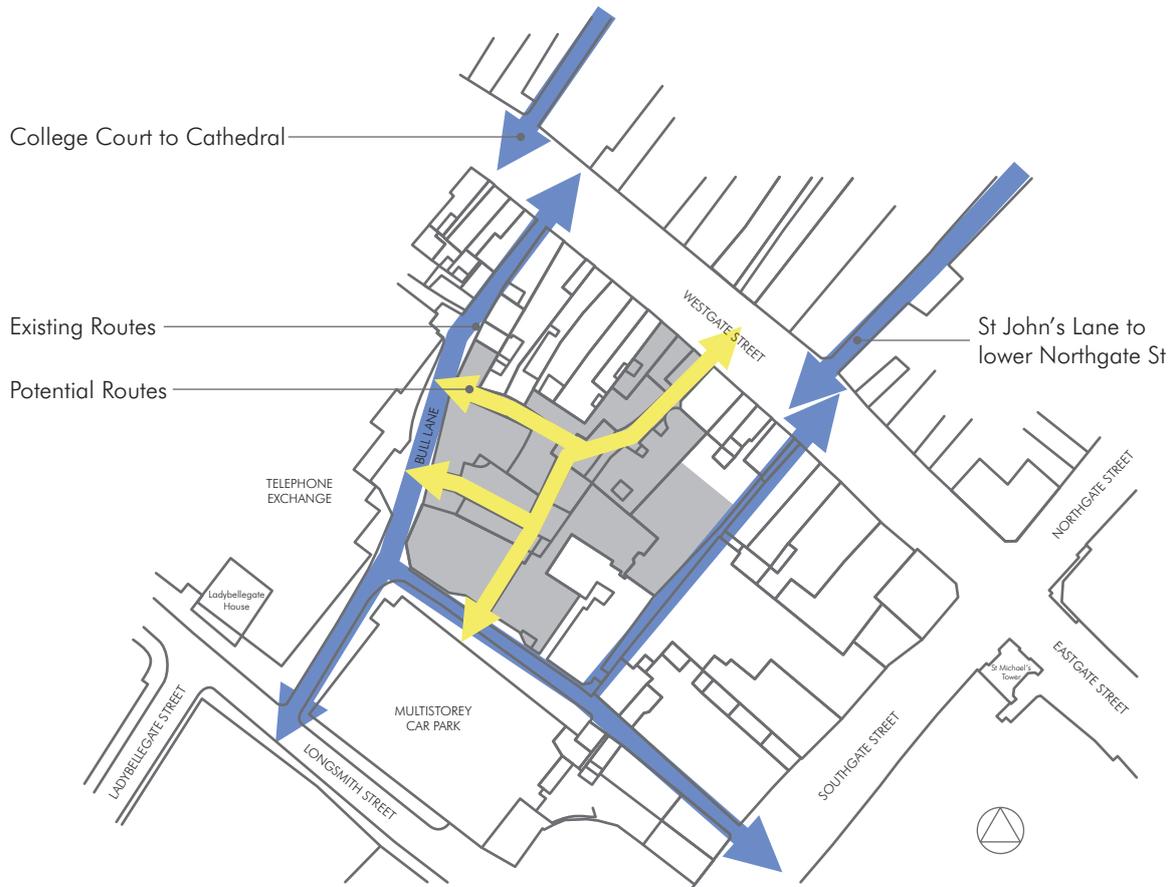
• Identify Buildings Suitable for Demolition

Policy HE9.1 PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment states that: "There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification."

The plan above identifies elements that may be considered suitable for demolition subject to a full and detailed assessment and justification in accordance with PPS5 HE9.2 which states: "Where the application will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that:

- (i) the substantial harm to or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss; or
- (ii) (a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

- Enhancing Pedestrian Linkages within the Site and City Centre



- (b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term that will enable its conservation; and
- (c) conservation through grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is not possible; and
- (d) the harm to or loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.”

Listed building consent would be required for any demolitions within the complex. Any standing fabric that may be accepted for demolition will need to be recorded in advance of demolition. This would be undertaken in accordance with English Heritage ‘Understanding Historic Buildings 2006’ and a brief written by the City Archaeologist.

The urban grain surrounding the site consists of wide primary gate streets with narrow lanes connecting to secondary routes. The lanes also serve the function of forming connections between the different gate streets, providing alternative routes and convenient connections.

The lanes and linkages add depth and richness to the urban grain. They are an integral part of the historic fabric of the city and provide an opportunity to explore and enhance the pedestrian’s experience.

Within any future Fleece scheme the development of a small scale lane structure should be utilised to respond to the sites historic context, enhance the linkages through the site, reopen old pedestrian routes and improve connections from the site to the city centre, Cathedral, Blackfriars, the Quays, the Waterfront and Longsmith car park.

- **New Build - Establish a sense of density and tight urban fabric building.**



As part of the sites role in strengthening the routes and linkages between the docks, Blackfriars, the city centre and the Cathedral, the existing garage block is an important part of any new build scheme. The garage is situated on an important corner that fronts both Cross Keys Lane and Bull Lane, it should be redeveloped to provide a focal point to aid legibility and define the entrance to the Fleece site and the city beyond.

All routes should have active frontages to create richness and vitality whilst maximising surveillance in order to reduce the potential for crime and the fear of crime.

Development proposals need to ensure integration with key adjoining buildings which lie adjacent to the site including the Masonic Hall.

Any development of the site should allow for the retention and repair of the key historic buildings. Any new build elements will provide a tight urban grain around high quality spaces whilst creating an intimate lane structure. Such new development needs to be high quality and contemporary in design, yet sympathetic and harmonising to the sensitive historic context of the designated and non-designated heritage assets.

New build will need to be balanced with sensitive issues of archaeological impact.

- **Re-establish High Quality Public Spaces within the Site**

There is an opportunity to create some high quality public spaces and courtyards within the site. This will complement the lane structure and enhance the setting of the important historic buildings.

The Architecture and Materials of the Context



The timber-framed Great Inn

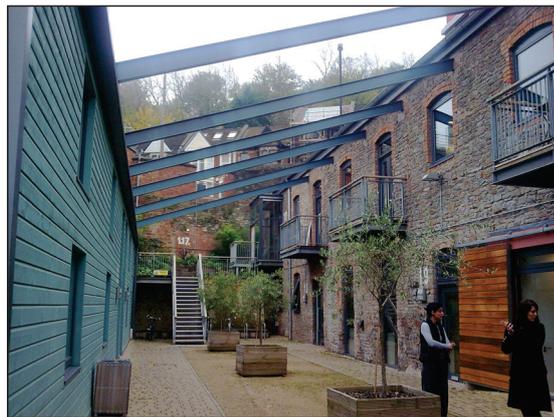
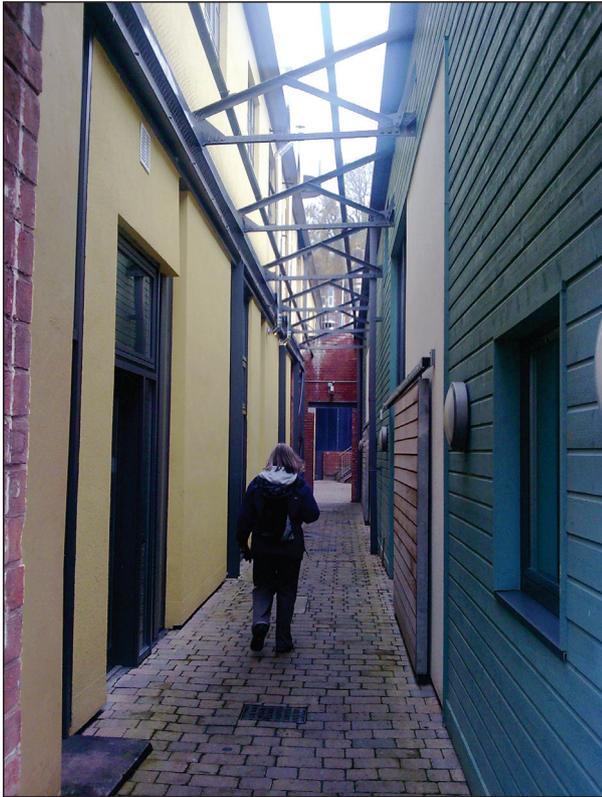


Red brick 7-9 Bull Lane



The site's dynamic roofscape

The Materials of the New Buildings



The spaces between buildings are just as important as the buildings themselves. The public spaces within the site have the potential to draw people through the development and to be utilised in a number of ways to add vibrancy and vitality to the site.

- **Build Form, Scale and Massing**

The predominant building form on the main gate streets in Gloucester gives a vertical emphasis with the historic burgage plots still visible in the different frontages of the buildings. There is great variety and richness in the heights of buildings, their roof lines and plot widths. This characteristic variety should be reflected in the design of any new buildings.

The buildings which are part of the Fleece Hotel are largely domestic in scale. Views of the cathedral across the greater Blackfriars area and down Bull Lane should be maintained.

- **Materials**

The historic buildings in Gloucester contain a number of common materials of which red brick, render and stone are the most predominant. Stone tends to be used within the principle buildings with secondary status buildings using red brick. The oldest parts of the Fleece are all timber framed buildings with the cladding having changed overtime. The Fleece site contains a number of materials including brick, rough cast render, plain render and painted brick.

The contemporary scheme palette should draw from the existing prominent materials. There is an opportunity to create a high quality contemporary building palette within the historic context e.g. materials that tone with the local brickwork and timber to reflect the historic timber framed buildings.

New buildings should sit comfortably with the retained buildings while avoiding pastiche design. Any development of the site should seek to create a family of buildings with threads of

familiarity expressed through the materials palette, scale and form. This will hold all of the buildings, new and old, together in an appropriate and suitable context.

New development to meet best practice in sustainability, energy efficiency requirements and in maximising opportunities to design out crime.

Nature Conservation

The site has no designated nature conservation interest however as with all old building complexes there will be a need to consider investigating the presence of protected species, notably bats.

Highway Issues

A Transport Statement or Transport Assessment and Travel Plan would be required for the site in accordance with the indicative thresholds set out in the DfT Guidance on Transport Assessments (GTA).

The scope of the assessment is to include the generic requirements as set out in the GTA. Specific local issues to be considered:

- Suitability of Bull Lane access
- Access and turning for service vehicles
- GC Car Parking Standards
- Pedestrian and cycle links through and from the site to Longsmith Street, Southgate Street, Westgate Street and the Multistorey car park
- GC Minimum Cycle Parking Standards
- General Travel Policies set out in Chapter 5 of the Gloucester Local Plan Second Stage Deposit 2002

Given the location of the site, consideration needs to be given to access, servicing and parking issues. A study should be undertaken on the

previous, existing and proposed levels of parking and vehicular use of Bull Lane and arrangements for servicing and refuse collection should also be set out. Traffic movements should be no worse than those associated with existing/previous uses of the site. These should accompany the applications and if done in advance, could greatly assist discussions with the Highway Authority.

Given the highly sustainable location of the site and the adjacent Longsmith Car Park a car free development is sought. However, this is a complex site to redevelop given its historic importance and as a result a degree of flexibility is considered necessary with respect to car parking standards to assist with delivery of a future scheme on this key site. Where fully justified, essential car parking directly related to support the function of the proposed development will be considered.

The car parking should be located on the existing garage site and car park and should not compromise the redevelopment of the site and the retention and restoration of its historic features. Fully justified on-site parking provision should not have a detrimental impact on the historic setting of the site, be over dominate nor jeopardise the reinstatement of the sites lanes and courtyards. Suitable screening will be required. In addition car parking provision could also be provided by agreement with the City Council at the adjacent Longsmith Car Park.

The principle entrances into the site need to be retained reflecting the historic footprint.

Contamination

There is a strong possibility of contamination on this site due to the presence of a motel servicing pit. Any developer would therefore be required to enter into pre application discussions with the City's Contaminated Land Officer. A ground investigation survey will be required in advance of the submission of any planning application.

Appendix 1

Policy Context

National Planning Policy

Any proposal should have regard to existing national planning policy/guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statements (PPS), Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Circulars. Given the historic nature of the site in question, PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' will be particularly relevant. Equally, given its city centre location, PPS4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' will be highly relevant.

The Government has recently published a draft National Planning Policy Framework, which will replace existing national planning policy. The draft NPPF is currently subject to public consultation but still represents a material consideration in planning decisions.

The draft NPPF sets out, amongst other things, a strong emphasis in relation to sustainable economic growth, supporting the reuse of brownfield sites and policies that promote the vitality and viability of town centres. The draft NPPF also sets out the importance of conserving the historic environment and heritage assets.

Second Stage Deposit Draft Local Plan (2002)

The Second Stage Deposit Draft Local Plan (2002) has been adopted by the Council for development control purposes and therefore forms an important material consideration in planning decisions. The Plan can be downloaded from the City Council's website at: www.gloucester.gov.uk.

Central Area Action Plan (2006)

The Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) reached the preferred options stage in August 2006. This Plan is currently on hold whilst other planning documents are progressed. The CAAP sets out the current policy position in relation to the wider

'Greater Blackfriars area at Policy CA.19, which included the Fleece Hotel site.

The content of the Plan will be revisited through the emerging Gloucester City Plan - see below for further information. The CAAP can be downloaded from the City Council's website at: www.gloucester.gov.uk.

Greater Blackfriars Planning Brief (2010)

The Greater Blackfriars Planning Brief sets out the Council's preferred approach to the development to the Greater Blackfriars area of the City, including the Fleece complex. The Planning Brief was prepared in accordance with the relevant planning regulations and was adopted by the City Council in November 2009 as interim supplementary policy for the purposes of development control. The full planning brief can be downloaded at: www.gloucester.gov.uk/blackfriars.

Blackfriars Masterplan

In response to the Greater Blackfriars Planning Brief, the Gloucester Heritage Regeneration Company has produced, with consultants, a Masterplan for the eastern part of the Greater Blackfriars area. The Masterplan has now been endorsed by the City Council as a reasonable interpretation of the Planning Brief and will form a material consideration in the determination of future planning proposals. The full Masterplan can be downloaded at: www.gloucester.gov.uk/blackfriars.

Gloucester City Plan (2011)

The Gloucester City Plan is a new planning document, currently being prepared by the City Council, which will guide the development of Gloucester to 2031. The City Plan will set out where and when major regeneration schemes are expected to come forward, identify sites for new homes, jobs and shopping, and provide a framework for managing and enhancing the wider City's historic and natural environment.

The City Plan will be the process through which the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) will be reviewed and taken forward. It will include detailed policy for the Greater Blackfriars area of the City, including the Fleece complex.

A 'scoping' document was published for consultation between May and August 2011. A 'preferred options' consultation will be published in spring 2011. More information on the Gloucester City Plan can be found at www.gloucester.gov.uk/cityplan.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Heights of Buildings SPD (2008)

The Heights of Buildings SPD sets out the Council's planning policy towards the development of tall buildings in Gloucester. The SPD was prepared in accordance with relevant planning regulations and was adopted in November 2008 as interim supplementary policy for the purposes of development control. The full SPD can be downloaded from the City Council's website at www.gloucester.gov.uk.

Development Affecting Sites of Historic Environment (Archaeological) Interest (2008)

This SPD sets out the Council's planning policy approach in relation to development proposals that affect sites of the historic (archaeological) environment. The SPD was prepared in accordance with relevant planning regulations and was adopted in August 2008 as interim supplementary policy for the purposes of development control. The full SPD can be downloaded from the City Council's website at www.gloucester.gov.uk.

- Validation requirements - The scheme would require listed building consent for the physical works and any proposed demolition, planning permission for the changes of use of various buildings and the building of any new structures. These applications should be made concurrently.

Contacts

Policy

Claire Rawlings 01452 396222

Adam Gooch 01452 396836

Historic Environment

Charlotte Lewis 01452 396855

Urban Design

Claire Haslam 01452 396847

Matt Haslam 01452 396847

Development Control

Adam Smith 01452 396702

Gloucester
City Council
Transforming Your City
