



Lancaster District Local Plan
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3
Kingsway Development Brief

Lancaster City Council
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Notes

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Lancaster City Council is promoting the redevelopment of 2.3 ha of land and buildings at Kingsway, Lancaster. The site location and details are shown on the attached plans. This brief has been prepared to guide the future development of this important site, which lies on one of the main entrances to Lancaster.
 - the impact any commercial proposals, particularly retailing and leisure, will have on Lancaster centre and other shopping centres in the District; and
 - the traffic generated by development and its impact on the local road network.
- 1.2. The overall objective of the proposal is to provide a high standard mixed-use development to bring a range of new facilities for residents and visitors, and to achieve a major improvement to the appearance of this important area at the entrance to Lancaster City centre. Redevelopment proposals must include measures to restore the seriously dilapidated Bridge Houses, which are listed Grade 2*.
- 1.3. Proposals should also, so far as practicable, incorporate the main elements of the listed former swimming baths and bus garage. The Council also wishes to see the inclusion of car parking facilities within the proposal, serving not only the new development but also acting as a public parking facility.
- 1.4. The site lies on the edge of Lancaster centre, at the convergence of some of the District's busiest roads. The Council's main concerns when dealing with development proposals will centre on:
 - 1.5. This is a revised version of the brief that was approved by the Council's Planning Policy Committee for the purposes of public consultation in March 2001. An earlier version of the brief was approved in June 1998 following two rounds of public consultation. The Council has considered comments received during public consultation and has now formally adopted the Brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance to Policies EC17 and T7 of the Lancaster District Local Plan.
 - 1.6. As a major land owner and custodian of three listed buildings, the Council has a significant interest in the site. However, this brief covers only the Council's role as Local Planning Authority. Any questions concerning land ownership issues should be addressed to the Head of Property Services, whose contact details are set out in Section 11.

2. The site and its Surroundings

2.1. This Brief covers the 2.3 ha island site between Caton Road, Back Caton Road, Parliament Street and Bulk Road (see Diagram 1). These roads form the main link between Lancaster and the north and east, and carry in excess of 20,000 vehicles per day. At the northern end are a large disused bus garage, the adjoining former Kingsway Sports Centre and a car park. Bridge Houses back onto the car park and face the nearby Skerton Bridge. All of these buildings are listed.

2.2. South of Bridge End House are a shop unit occupied by Farm Foods

Ltd and a former electrical goods repair and service centre. Both occupy former industrial premises. 32 Parliament Street, a listed 3 storey Victorian building, is in use as a restaurant with student accommodation above. On the corner of Parliament Street and Bulk Road is a vacant plot. There is a petrol filling station, former car showroom and car hire depot on the corner of Bulk Road and Back Caton Road. This adjoins the extensive Sunlight laundry and dry cleaning works, with its attached drive in shop.

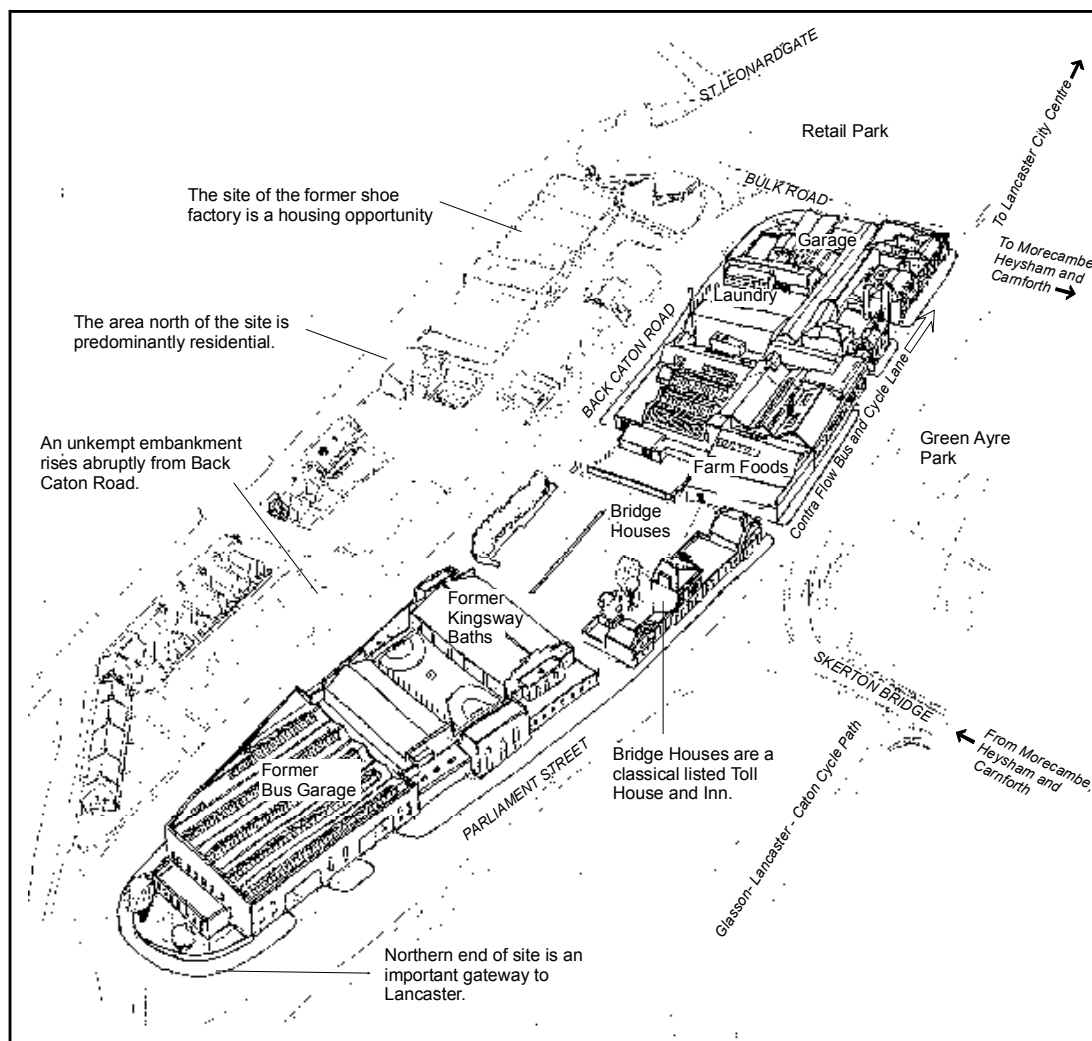


Diagram 1 – The Site and its Surroundings

2.3. The Kingsway frontage of the site overlooks Green Ayre Park and Skerton Bridge, which together form an important part of the Lune Riverside Park. On the opposite frontage, beyond Back Caton Road, there is a marked change in level and an unkempt embankment. At the top of this former riverbank, an area of dense terraced houses overlooks the site. Next to this is an extensive area of vacant land that once contained a shoe factory, scrap yard and a motor workshop.

2.4. Opposite the south end of the site, on the other side of Bulk Road, is a small retail park containing Currys, Comet, and Halfords. The city's Sainsbury store and car park lie opposite the Bulk Road / Parliament Street junction.



An aerial view of the Kingsway site

3. Land ownership

- 3.1. The City Council owns the disused former bus garage, the former swimming baths and sports centre and part of the associated car park, and Bridge Houses. Part of the Kingsway car park is leased to the Sowerby family.
- 3.2. Other major land owners are believed to be the Sowerby family, who own a large part of the southern

end of the site including the garage and the Farm Food retail store, and Sunlight Service Group, which owns the Laundry.

- 3.3. There are also various small ownerships at the corner of Bulk Road and Parliament Street. The main known land ownerships are shown on Diagram 2.

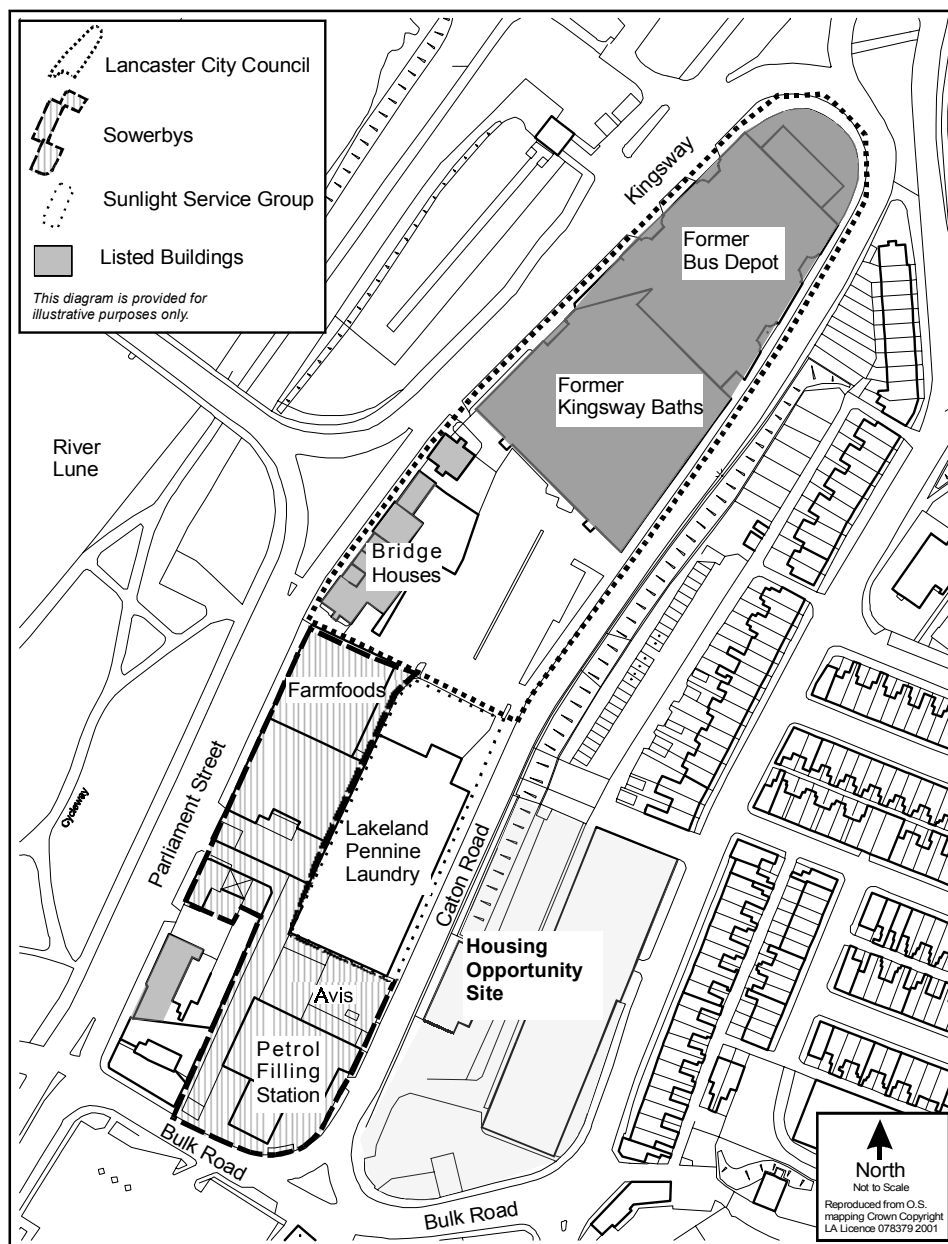


Diagram 2 – Main Land Ownerships

4. Services

- 4.1. The site is affected by a number of underground services, which may affect the layout and/or the constructional details of the new development. In particular, a former millrace, now a major surface water conduit, passes under part of the site. It will be important for intending

developers to be aware of the constraints set by these and other services before planning the details of development proposals. Potential developers are strongly advised to contact the relevant service providers at an early stage.

5. Development Plan Background

- 5.1. Lancaster City Council is producing a new District Wide Local Plan. This anticipates the possibility of comprehensive redevelopment of the Kingsway area for mixed-use development including business, leisure, housing and retailing uses, subject to a range of constraints.
- 5.2. The Plan also proposes a car park of about 300 spaces, which it is envisaged will serve on-site uses, long stay commuters, and shoppers and visitors to the city centre. This proposal will be assisted by the changing regime of car park management within the city centre, designed to discourage commuters in

favour of shoppers and visitors. The Local Plan policies concerning improving public transport, developing the Riverside Park and improving the city's access corridors are all relevant.

- 5.3. The Local Plan has now been through its public inquiry and its main provisions in relation to the Kingsway site have been confirmed by the inquiry Inspector. Although not yet formally adopted, the policies of the Lancaster District Local Plan now carry considerable weight and will be important considerations in determining any planning application for the Kingsway site.

6. The Main Uses

- 6.1. A number of different potential uses may be acceptable on the site, providing they comply with the relevant Local Plan policies and are part of an appropriate mix of uses. Proposals should aim to bring about a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Alternatively, the City Council may consider proposals for partial redevelopment provided these could be satisfactorily integrated into an overall scheme. Proposals for partial redevelopment that would prejudice the comprehensive development of the site will not be permitted.
- 6.2. In appropriate quantities as part of a mixed-use scheme, the following uses are likely to be acceptable to the City Council:
- Business/Office (B1);
 - Housing;
 - Hotel/Youth Hostel;
 - Leisure uses such as health and fitness centres;
 - Food and Drink, (A3) especially in association with other uses.
 - Retail (A1) subject to its impact on existing centres.
- 6.3. The Council's requirements for each particular use are set out below.

Business/Office Use

- 6.4. With its proximity to the Riverside Park, excellent public transport links and ease of access to the city centre and the M6 Motorway, the site offers a potentially high standard of environment and is ideally placed to meet any demand for office space. Business space could be provided as a street frontage to Parliament Street, as a perimeter architectural feature at the northern end of the

site, and/or as a means of restoring Bridge End House.

Housing

- 6.5. In the last few years a large number of new residential properties have been completed in or adjacent to Lancaster City centre, and have proved extremely popular. The Council wishes to take every opportunity to promote the inclusion of houses within mixed use developments in or around the city centre, particularly on brownfield sites. Part of the site of the former shoe factory on Bulk Road already has planning permission for residential development and the adjoining former scrap yard and garage sites are also suitable for residential purposes. A mixture of terraced and flatted development could deliver a fairly high residential density in line with current Government guidance.
- 6.6. With careful layout and design, other parts of the main Kingsway site could also include high density, quality residential development. The site's frontage to Parliament Street, where southbound traffic is at present restricted to buses, is particularly suitable for housing. In addition, within the main body of the site, new houses and flats could be introduced set around a central courtyard. Whilst it is accepted that the surrounding road network will inevitably affect living conditions, the Council considers that these impacts could be overcome with careful attention to boundary treatment, landscaping and the location and orientation of living accommodation.

- 6.7. In view of the site's proximity to the city centre and to public transport, the Council will consider proposals on this site which increase residential densities by reducing the on site provision made for car parking.

Hotel/Youth Hostel

- 6.8. The site's location also means it would be a suitable location for a hotel. The Council is also aware that the Youth Hostel Association has expressed an interest in locating in Lancaster. Again, such a use would be an appropriate element in a mixed-use scheme. As with residential development, care will be needed to minimise the impact of traffic on any proposed use.

Leisure Uses

- 6.9. Leisure uses, such as health and fitness centres are amongst the fastest growing development sectors in the country. The Kingsway site could provide a suitable location for such uses. In dealing with such proposals, the authority will consider whether the proposal could be located in Lancaster centre by applying a sequential approach in a similar way to its treatment of major retail proposals. It will also take into account the potential impact of proposed development upon existing town centres and its accessibility to modes of travel other than the private car.
- 6.10. Given the recent construction of multi-screen cinemas in Lancaster and Morecambe, the Council does not consider that the Kingsway site is an appropriate location for such use.

Food and Drink

- 6.11. Bars and restaurants would be appropriate uses on the Kingsway site as part of a wider, comprehensive proposal. However, the Council is concerned over the

concentration of late night activities at the northern end of Lancaster city centre and will adopt a cautious approach to any proposal in which such uses are a significant element.

Retail

- 6.12. The Lancaster District Local Plan directs new retail development to existing retail centres, at a scale appropriate to the function of those centres. It also sets out criteria against which out of centre retail proposals will be assessed including a "sequential approach" (in line with the provisions of PPG6) for the location of new retail schemes. Proposals that could result in an adverse impact on the overall viability and vitality of existing centres will be resisted.
- 6.13. The Lancaster and Morecambe Shopping Study concluded that by 2006, there would be capacity within the local economy to justify some additional non-food retail floor space in Lancaster. An element in this capacity was the scope for further growth in demand for shops selling "bulky goods". Subject to the tests set out in the Local Plan, such shops could form part of a new development at Kingsway. Any permission would be subject to agreement about the range and type of goods to be sold to prevent shops selling "high street" goods.
- 6.14. Because of the more limited scope for growth in spending on "convenience" goods (mainly food) and the physical and transportation constraints applying to the site, the Council does not consider that Kingsway offers the potential for a major food store. The Council also considers, that a redevelopment of the site comprising entirely retailing would result in a form of development that would be unlikely to meet the requirements of the Local Plan and will resist such a proposal.

7. Listed Buildings

- 7.1. The Kingsway site contains a number of listed buildings. The future of these must be considered carefully by potential developers in any redevelopment proposals.

Bridge Houses (38-42 Parliament Street)

- 7.2. Restoration and reuse of the derelict fBridge Houses is a main objective of the Kingsway redevelopment. Bridge Houses are a former inn and toll-house built in 1787 in classical style to collect tolls for the contemporary Skerton Bridge. They are aligned with the centre axis of the bridge and are an important part of Lancaster's Georgian heritage.

- 7.3. The properties are listed Grade 2* and, although in a poor condition and further damaged by previous extensions, it is important that the treatment proposed for the exterior faithfully restores the original exterior and fenestration details. Any extensions must be of an appropriate standard of design and must not overwhelm or otherwise spoil the appearance of the exterior of the original building.

- 7.4. The following uses for the restored Bridge Houses may be acceptable:
- Restaurant/Bar, operating in association with or independently of any leisure development;
 - Business/office use, possibly as an entrance and phase one of a potentially larger development;
 - Youth Hostel: the Youth Hostel Association is known to be interested in opening a hostel in Lancaster;
 - Housing: its conversion and restoration as part of a residential development would be acceptable, though this could be

prejudiced by traffic volumes close to its north west wall;

- Student Housing: similarly, its restoration as part of a larger development as student housing would be acceptable, and well located in relation to local transport, shopping and student facilities;
- Other uses of similar character.

Former Kingsway Baths and Bus Depot

- 7.5. The former bus garage and swimming baths are also listed buildings. Listed building consent will, therefore, be required for any works of demolition or alteration. Guidance on proposals involving listed buildings is set out in PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) and policies E29, E30 and E31 of the Local Plan.

- 7.6. Finding a new, viable use for these buildings will be extremely difficult given their form, layout and physical condition. However, consent for partial or total demolition will only be given if a detailed and costed feasibility study demonstrates that full or partial retention of the buildings is unviable and impracticable. Any potential developer will need to demonstrate the extent to which the existing structures, or their best features, could be incorporated into the overall development scheme.

- 7.7. As the buildings are owned by the City Council, any proposal for partial or total demolition will have to be referred to English Heritage. Initial discussions suggest that, provided the tests set out in PPG15 are fully complied with, English Heritage may look positively at proposals involving demolition of all or part of these two buildings.

8. Transportation

Car Parking

- 8.1. The Council wishes to encourage the provision of around 300 car spaces on the site. This is intended to provide essential access to the city centre and reduce the need to use the central one way system. The Council intends to encourage the use of the car park by differential charging, and wishes to promote a weekend park and ride service for shoppers.
- 8.2. It is important to the Council's emerging transport strategy that the new car park is available to the public for both long and short-stay use. It will not, therefore, be possible for all new parking to be restricted to users of new on site facilities such as leisure and/or retail uses. The Council will be happy to discuss a scheme of management for the car park aimed at achieving sufficient general public access for city centre users, without compromising the legitimate needs of new development on the site.

Access and Circulation

- 8.3. The site lies between some of Lancaster's busiest roads. The County Council, as Highways Authority and the City Council are working together on proposals to improve the transport system in this area. Developers must therefore work closely with both authorities and ensure that their proposals take account of possible changes to the highway network between Back Caton Road and St. Leonardgate, proposed in the Local Plan. Any proposals for major development on the site must be accompanied by a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA).

Public Transport

- 8.4. A key part of the City Council's transport strategy (as set out in the Local Plan) and the Local Transport Plan is a bus priority route from Heysham to Lancaster University. An important element of this is the proposed extension of the existing Parliament St bus lane along North Rd to the bus station. Kingsway is well placed to take advantage of the increased emphasis proposed for public transport. Development proposals should ensure that public transport users have direct, convenient access to the new facilities to be provided at the site.

Access for Vehicles

- 8.5. Roads around the site are heavily congested. Access will require careful consideration. Whilst present circulation arrangements remain, it is likely that access and egress for vehicles will be to Back Caton Rd.
- 8.6. Proposals involving modifications to the traffic system should indicate from where access to the various parts of the site would be taken. Such arrangements will have to be discussed with the County and City Councils. Developers may find it helpful to brief traffic consultants on this issue.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

- 8.7. Proper, safe provision for cyclists and pedestrians to and through the site is of great importance. Both should be afforded priority over vehicles wherever potential conflicts arise. Essential facilities such as cycle storage for staff and customers, and adequate signing for walkers and cyclists, should be provided. The Council's Cycling Strategy can be made available on request.

9. Form and appearance of development

9.1. The Kingsway site is situated in a prominent position at a key entrance to the urban area of Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham. However, the vacant listed buildings on Parliament Street and Kingsway currently spoil the attractive riverside frontage. The enclosed industrial character of Back Caton Road and the rising background of dense, mainly Victorian building also provide a poor first impression of Lancaster. Redevelopment provides the potential to radically improve this unsatisfactory situation.

New Building

9.2. In considering proposals for all or part of Kingsway, particular emphasis will be placed on the impression the development will create as a gateway to Lancaster. The Council will look at the way the development exploits the positive elements of the Riverside Park and views of Castle Hill, conceals negative features such as Back Caton Road and conveys local distinctiveness in new buildings. The Council has no fixed ideas of the final appearance of the site, and will welcome innovative and contemporary building solutions. However, it will expect these to relate satisfactorily to traditional local building styles on nearby sites towards the city centre. In particular,

a high standard and visually attractive frontage to Kingsway and Parliament Street is considered essential.

Landscaping

9.3. Open space and car parking will need to be treated with great care and the Council will look for a thoughtful approach to the design and maintenance of open landscaped areas. Within the site, the subdivision of car parking into visually contained areas by the use of tree and shrub planting and the creation of attractively landscaped settings for the new buildings will be important. Pedestrian routes through the site linking the new buildings to bus stops, car and cycle parking, nearby housing areas and the city centre, should be suitably landscaped.

9.4. On the east side of Back Caton Road, the steep largely overgrown embankment has long been a negative feature in the area. At present, it contributes to the poor visual quality of this northern entrance to the city centre. Developers should consider how best to improve its appearance, to the benefit of site users and drivers on Back Caton Road.

10. Implementation

10.1. The Council attaches great importance to securing the early, successful redevelopment of the Kingsway site. It will, therefore, assist this process wherever possible. It will work with potential developers to facilitate discussions with key

agencies such as English Heritage and Lancashire County Council. It is also prepared, if appropriate, to consider whether grant aid could be available from economic development funds.

11. Further Information

11.1. Further information on the redevelopment of the Kingsway site can be obtained from the following sources.

Lancaster City Council

Planning and Building Control
Services

Palatine Hall, Lancaster

Vic Crumley, Chief Planning Officer

Andy Roe, Development Control

David Lawson, Local Plans and
Policy

Brian Fagan, Building Control

Engineering Services

Morecambe Town Hall

Jim Robson, Highways

Brian Abraham, Drainage

Property Services

Lancaster Town Hall

Graham Cox, Estates and Valuations

Lancashire County Council

Environment Directorate

Guild House, Cross Street, Preston

Bill Jopson, Highways and

Transportation