

INGRESS PARK
and
EMPIRE MILL
PLANNING BRIEF

Dartford Borough Council

Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, DA1 1DR

NOVEMBER 1998



INTRODUCTION

1. Ingress Park and Empire Mill have been bought by a housing developer. The adopted Dartford Local Plan includes a policy for development at Ingress Park, but the Plan was prepared before Empire Mill was declared redundant. It is important that the Council has in place a clear policy framework against which to judge development proposals which may come forward, and developers will be expected to comply with the requirements of this Brief. Where necessary the requirements of the brief will be secured through planning conditions or planning obligations.
2. The site provides a superb opportunity to create a major riverside mixed-use urban village development, focusing on Ingress Abbey. The Council regards this site as the crucial opportunity for establishing a new standard of sustainable urban environment, which will set the keynote for other major developments elsewhere in the Borough and in Thames Gateway. However, conservation issues will also be important; listed buildings must be retained and the character of the site respected,
3. A review of the Local Plan is currently in preparation, and this will reflect strategic policies for Thames Gateway and Kent Thames-side. However, in the meantime, specific guidance is urgently needed for this site. This brief sets out the principles which will underpin the master planning of this site, in the absence of an up-to-date local plan policy.
4. This Brief has been the subject of public consultation, and the views of interested parties have been taken into account in its preparation. The brief was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 30 November 1998.

POLICY CONTEXT

5. Policies for Kent Thames-side are contained in Government Regional Planning Guidance Note RPG9a (Thames Gateway Planning Framework), and the Structure Plan. This site adjoins Greenhithe Conservation Area and forms the westernmost part of the Swanscombe Peninsula area - a swathe of riverside land identified in RPG9a and the Structure Plan for, respectively, 'a riverside

opportunity, for urban village (development)' and for 'major mixed use development, predominantly housing, taking full account of the area's relationship with the River Thames..' RPG9b (Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames) urges riparian planning authorities to adopt policies '.....for securing a high quality of design, appropriate to its context for all riverside development...'. It is important to 'avoid the loss of the waterfront to development which neither contributes to, nor is, appropriate for, a riverside location'. The Main Issues Discussion Paper for the Local Plan Review is also relevant. The major development sites are seen as an opportunity for regeneration and the creation of a sustainable high quality urban environment.

6. It should also be noted that the principle of a major mixed-use development on Ingress Park was established in the consultation and deposit drafts of the current Local Plan in 1991. Indeed the policies relating to this site were debated at length during the Local Plan inquiry.
7. The Empire Mill site currently has a wharf, although this is structurally unsound. However a commercial port facility would be incompatible with the environmental quality sought for the riverside urban village development required by strategic policy. It would also generate unacceptable levels of heavy goods traffic.
8. The basic concept, which must underpin the development form, is that of the sustainable mixed-use urban village. The mixed-use concept is advocated in Government advice including Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG1, which sets out the characteristics of the 'urban village' approach:
 - compactness;
 - a mixture of uses and dwelling types;
 - a range of employment and other facilities;
 - appropriate infrastructure and services;
 - high standards of urban design;
 - access to public open space;
 - ready access to public transport.
9. The last aspect is developed further in Guidance Note PPG13 (Transport). RPG9a also adopts the urban village concept. Such urban villages should be of sufficient scale to support a range of amenities, but small enough for homes, jobs and facilities to lie within walking distance.

10. In Kent Thames-side this concept must be more than just a vague ideal. Transport modelling work undertaken within Kent Thames-side has demonstrated that a conventional car based approach on the scale envisaged, will result in unacceptable congestion and environmental impact.
11. The requirements of PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) are of particular relevance in relation to the setting of Greenhithe Conservation Area, and the listed structures on site. Regard must also be paid to PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning) particularly in respect of the Empire Mill site which is designated an Area of Archaeological Potential.
12. Set out below are the key principles which should be adopted in planning this development.

GENERAL APPROACH

13. The developer will need to demonstrate that the proposed development will become properly integrated in its riverside context: that it will tie in satisfactorily with the Greenhithe Conservation Area, and with the future development of Black Duck Marsh and the Swanscombe Works site (see map 1 for area covered). Liaison with adjoining landowners will be necessary to ensure that Greenhithe Riverside in its entirety is coherently planned. There should be no ransoming of adjoining land.
14. The following factors will be particularly important to the functional interrelationship of the two parts of the site:
 - a riverside walkway;
 - the function of Lovers' Lane as a pedestrian route;
 - the distribution of community facilities, shops etc;
 - the coherent planning of public transport, pedestrian, cycle and traffic routes throughout the whole site.
15. Conversely, however, the development of this site should function properly in advance of any development to the east, at Black Duck Marsh or the former Swanscombe Works site. Particular attention needs to be paid to transport links. Within the site any programme of phasing should ensure an adequate provision of infrastructure throughout the course of development.
16. It will be important to consult the local community throughout the planning of this development, to ensure that they are kept properly informed and that their views are accommodated as far as possible.
17. The developer should also be mindful of the following factors:

- the development form should serve to promote a sense of community and identity with place;
- Public Art: the design philosophy must be underpinned by an artistic awareness, such that the resulting quality of environment transcends the commonplace;
- proposals should include a landscaping and public realm strategy, dealing with both the form and the function of the open spaces and showing, where appropriate, the role of this site in contributing to the establishment of a 'Green Grid' and its inter-relationship with other Green Grid links.
- Conservation issues are important, in particular the need to restore Ingress Abbey and associated features.

DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE

18. The various community facilities which the development requires should be brought together in a centre which will be the physical, social and economic focus of the development. Public transport, cycling and pedestrian links should focus on the centre to encourage non-car access, and the bus waiting area should be of a high quality (see map 2).
19. The centre should contain, as a minimum:
- primary school;
 - flexible building units, perhaps on the ground floor of apartment blocks, for the following uses:
 - convenience shopping; shops, pubs, restaurants, etc. (use classes A1,A3)
 - employment uses; offices, workshops, etc. (use classes A2, B1)
 - live/work units;
 - community facilities (e.g. community space, day centre, surgery);
 - play space;
 - good quality bus stop.
20. The density of development should be related to the proximity of public transport so as to encourage the highest possible patronage of the public transport service. Highest densities should be close to the public transport stops (see below on Density).

DEVELOPMENT FORM

21. This should be essentially urban and tight-knit in character so far as the physical constraints of the site permits. It is possible that the

housing layout space standards set out in the adopted Local Plan might be set aside in order to secure an appropriate building form, but the developer will be expected to show that the intention underlying the standards has been served in a different way.

22. Issues which will require particular attention in any negotiations are as follows:
- Sustainability
 - at the macro level in creating an efficient layout and minimising the need for car use (to be demonstrated in the Master Plan);
 - at the micro level: materials services, energy efficiency, wind and solar profiles, orientation, flexible use of space (to be demonstrated through detailed submissions);
 - consideration should be given to using river transport for any necessary import of fill material;
 - relationship with topography and surrounding visual features; and the need to create a sense of place;
 - height and massing of buildings - creating appropriate height gradients and building height/street width ratios;
 - orientation and aspect of dwellings;
 - architectural quality, detailing, design criteria, visual variety but overall cohesiveness of design;
 - security - crime deterrence (defensible spaces, lighting) road safety. Wherever possible public spaces should be overlooked by dwellings.
 - flood defence, land drainage and contaminated land assessment – the requirements of the Environment Agency must be observed, including the estimated 1,000 year flood level (6.5m AODN) and the need to obtain their consent for any development within 15m of land ward side of the flood defence. These will be set out in planning conditions. The landowner should also be aware of his floodgate responsibilities (see appendix 1).

DENSITY

23. Whilst the Council does not wish to be prescriptive about residential densities, it is important that these are sufficient to give 'critical mass' to the urban village, whilst maintaining a high standard of amenity. It is envisaged that net densities will lie within an approximate range of

50 dwellings/ha (for houses) and 100 dwellings /ha (for apartments) where the constraints of the site permit.

TRANSPORT/ ACCESS

24. Transport provision should be fully integrated with all other aspects of the development and should be innovative, safe, sustainable and attractive. The site should make provision for the future Kent Thames-side Fastrack system by providing a route for buses which penetrates to the heart of the site and is fully integrated with adjoining developments and activities in visual and functional terms. The route should be designed in such a way as to allow bus priority throughout, and to avoid any impedance due to congestion or conflict with other uses. A fully dedicated bus way would achieve this aim, but it may equally be possible to devise a route which includes a mixture of segregated sections and bus priority measures to achieve the same aim.

Site Access

25. Developers will be expected to produce an access strategy clearly explaining the means of access at each phase of development. It should demonstrate that the chosen strategy is the best possible given the physical constraints of the site and that the location and design of the accesses:-
- minimise disturbance and impact on the amenity of local residents and on the local environment;
 - discourage rat-running traffic on unsuitable roads, particularly The Avenue, High Street and Eagles Road, Greenhithe;
 - minimise additional delay and congestion for existing road users;
 - provide sufficient capacity for safe and convenient access to the development;
 - provide priority for buses at all new junctions on the existing road network;
 - are safe and convenient for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - make a contribution to improving the streetscape;
 - comply with Highway Authority safety and technical standards;
 - meet all other requirements of the Planning Brief and especially those relating to Fastrack, bus, pedestrian and cycle access;
 - are capable of delivery in respect of engineering feasibility and cost;
 - allow an acceptable form of development; and

- are compatible with the strategic transport networks proposed for Kent Thames-side.

Strategic Issues

26. The Highway Authority in partnership with the Local Planning Authority is currently undertaking further technical analysis to provide a framework describing the transport strategy for the Greenhithe Triangle. The issues being considered are as follows:-

26.1 Identification of future public transport services through the Greenhithe Triangle, specifically:-

- the role of Greenhithe station as a hub destination and the need for all bus services to call here;
- whether all east-west bus services will use the Everards Link to The Avenue/London Road; and
- whether bus services will continue to use London Road on opening of the Everards Link and assessment of the consequent need for freeing buses from delay on this route.

26.2 Assessment of the best use of the limited capacity available at the Station Road roundabouts to provide, in order of priority, a high level of bus priority consistent with the Fastrack concept and anticipated public transport routes, and minimum delay to general traffic based on the following scenarios for the Greenhithe Triangle:-

- public transport only use of the Everards Link and general traffic use of London Road;
- public transport and Greenhithe Waterfront development traffic only use of the Everards Link and general traffic use of London Road;
- dual public transport and general traffic only use of the Everards Link and general traffic use of London Road; and
- dual use. of the Everards Link and public transport only use of London Road.

26.3 Preparation of outline designs and approximate cost estimates for the Everards Link based on the preferred option identified in point 2. above.

26.4 Preparation, in conjunction with the developers, of outline designs for feasible junction design options connecting the Everards Link, The Avenue, London Road and access to the development as appropriate in a manner compatible with points 1-3 above. Junction designs must be capable of providing

acceptable general traffic and public transport access to the site at all stages of development, including in advance of construction of the Everards Link. They should permit feature connection to the Everards Link with the minimum of abortive work.

- 26.5 Determination of a target completion date for the Everards Link based on maintaining acceptable priority and reliability for public transport services through the Greenhithe Triangle.

This strategic framework is essential to making an informed decision about appropriate access to development at the Ingress Park and Empire Mills site and access proposals submitted before completion of the framework will be regarded as premature. Access proposals will be required to be compatible with the details of the framework.

27. Key transport design principles: -

Walking, Cycling and Public Transport.

Route networks for these modes should:

- permeate the site, focusing on areas of greatest activity;
- be direct, attractive, safe, comfortable and coherent (no awkward gaps);
- provide a positive advantage by being more direct and convenient than the equivalent car journey;
- have sufficient capacity and allow for future eastward extension to neighbouring development sites;
- provide links to neighbouring communities and facilities and include a riverside pedestrian and cycle route, which could become part of the Millennium Cycle Route (National Cycle Route 1);
- use a variety of designs and treatments to ensure the routes are attractive and provide appropriate priority over other modes of travel;
- be designed for their users and not for ease of engineering;
- safeguard, or improve upon, existing public rights of way.

Special considerations for public transport:

- bus operators must be consulted very early in the design process and their requirements will be a prime design consideration;

- development must be planned so that bus services can penetrate easily at every phase without doubling back (through routes are required);
- the developers will need to ensure that the development is served by buses at an early stage;
- bus routes should be protected from delay by appropriate use of bus only links, on-carriageway priority and segregated routes;
- development layout must incorporate an east-west route of sufficient standard to form part of the proposed Kent Thames-side Fastrack system;
- development layout must show how public transport access to the safeguarded South Thames-side Development Route corridor west of The Avenue and to London Road at Manor Road/ Craylands Lane can be achieved.

Estate Road Design

28. The road layout should discourage short car journeys and through traffic movements but should be designed to have sufficient capacity and allow for future extension linking east to adjacent development sites. Above all the roads must be safe with speeds kept as low as possible. This should be achieved by integration of urban and highway design and not by 'add-on' traffic calming. The appearance of the road should tell motorists how to drive.

Cul-de-Sac Limits on Development

29. Kent Design standards limit development from a cul-de-sac to no more than 100 dwellings or 300 dwellings from a circuit road (one point of access to the wider network). Development in excess of these limits may be permitted provided the development layout overcomes the problems normally associated with large cul-de-sac such as high traffic flows on feeder roads and poor access for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and service and emergency vehicles.

Car Parking

30. Car parking should be provided in such a way as to reduce the impact of the car within the community and to complement other measures aimed at promoting more sustainable means of travel.

Parking arrangements should minimise the intrusiveness of cars on the street scene, while ensuring that provision is convenient and safe. For example, parking courts and squares may be appropriate in high

density housing areas, but their design should ensure they are overlooked by neighbouring properties.

Residential parking should normally comply with the Council's standards. However there may be scope for:

- flexibility in its method of provision, particularly in relation to visitor parking; and
- innovative solutions to reduce parking demand, for example, by limiting the provision of on-plot parking in favour of shared, communal parking.

In certain circumstances, on-street parking may be acceptable. Where casual parking is likely to take place, roads and streets should be designed to accommodate it. Reducing off-street parking can help towards achieving higher densities. Proposals must, however, avoid merely encouraging residents to use on-street parking throughout the residential area. The priority should be that vehicles should not dominate the space or inconvenience pedestrians and cyclists. In all cases, the quality of the design solution will be of major significance in determining the level of provision.

Non-residential parking should be kept to a minimum, compatible with traffic management and safety considerations, in order to discourage car use as much as possible. Opportunities should be taken to provide shared public parking for non-residential uses. For employment uses, green transport plans will be required, aimed at minimising car use.

SITE FEATURES

31. The development should take account of the following features of the site:
 - Ingress Abbey and a number of other structures and features are listed as being of architectural or historic interest. They should be restored and suitably integrated into the scheme. Other identified garden features should also be retained where possible (see appendix). The Abbey could form the centrepiece of an avenue leading down to the River;
 - the river aspect - development should take full advantage of this. A landscaped riverside public walkway, cycle path and open spaces are key requirements. Consideration should also be given to the leisure potential of the River;
 - views - advantage should be taken of the grand vistas afforded by the site, in particular views of QE2 Bridge;

- cliffs - these cast a shadow and residential development should be sited away from them. Safety issues (i.e. dangerous cliff edge, falling chalk) should also be taken into account in the design;
- Trees - as many as possible of the mature trees are to be retained. The garden is covered by a tree preservation order;
- Greenhithe Conservation Area - development must relate well to this;
- the archaeological potential of the site - liaison with the County Archaeologist will be needed;
- the amenity of adjoining residential areas and the need for screen planting.

OTHER COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

32. The following provision will be required as part of the development:

- Social housing - 20 of total number of units, to be provided on site. The developer will be expected to contribute towards the provision of these dwellings. House types, mechanism for provision and management, number of low-cost market housing units to be agreed;
- Primary school: 2 ha site and 1 form entry primary school to be provided close to village centre to be operational upon completion of 400 dwellings
 - with capacity for expansion to 2FE as and when development of land to the east occurs. Contribution to secondary school provision to be agreed with County Council - probably in the order of 0.5m.
- Open space: It is not possible to be prescriptive about open space standards: the quantity required is of lesser importance than its quality, function and relationship to the layout. Elements will include the following:
 - Ingress Abbey gardens and adjoining woodland;
 - Landscaped riverside walkway;
 - An avenue leading from Abbey down to river;
 - A neighbourhood playground close to the village centre(0.6ha);
 - A local toddler playspace within 100m of most dwellings (0.2ha each - say, 3 or 4);
 - Other areas associated with pedestrians/cycle routes, nodal points along these routes, amenity areas etc;

- A village square;
 - Dual use of school playing fields will be sought;
 - A central open space spine running east to west;
- Unrestricted public access to these spaces will be required by way of legal agreement;
- Restoration of Abbey:
 - structure to be made safe as soon as possible.
 - external walls to be restored as far as is practicable. Missing external features and roof to be replaced to an appropriate basic standard.
 - rebuilding of the interior is to respect the basic plan form as far as practicable, including the staircase hall.
- Garden features
 - detailed programme for restoring or rebuilding garden features required.
- Historic Landscape
 - detailed historic landscape assessment required
 - development is to respect that landscape as far as is practicable
- Setting of Abbey
 - the design and proximity to the Abbey of new development should be such as to provide an appropriate setting.

RELATIONSHIP OF OPEN SPACE TO EXISTING BUILT AREAS

33. Particular attention needs to be paid to the following pedestrian/cycle routes into the site:

- from Greenhithe High Street
- from The Avenue (north of Worcester Close)
- from Lovers Lane (subject to its possible use as a temporary access for construction transport or public transport).

These are critical 'gateways' into the site, and should form an immediate introduction to a riverside linear park, and to the central open space. Attention must therefore be paid to the creation of opening vistas at their entrances. By this means the residents of Greenhithe and Knock hall would be more likely to perceive the whole of the public open space provision in the development as being available for their enjoyment - either as attractive routes to the proposed new village centre, or as recreational amenities in their own

right.

34. Further, the central spine of open space should be conceptually extended westwards to embrace the open area alongside Eagles Road. The whole area could be landscaped to form a continuous linear park linking new with existing, via the footpath north of Worcester Close. There may be scope for further limited development fronting onto the new open space.

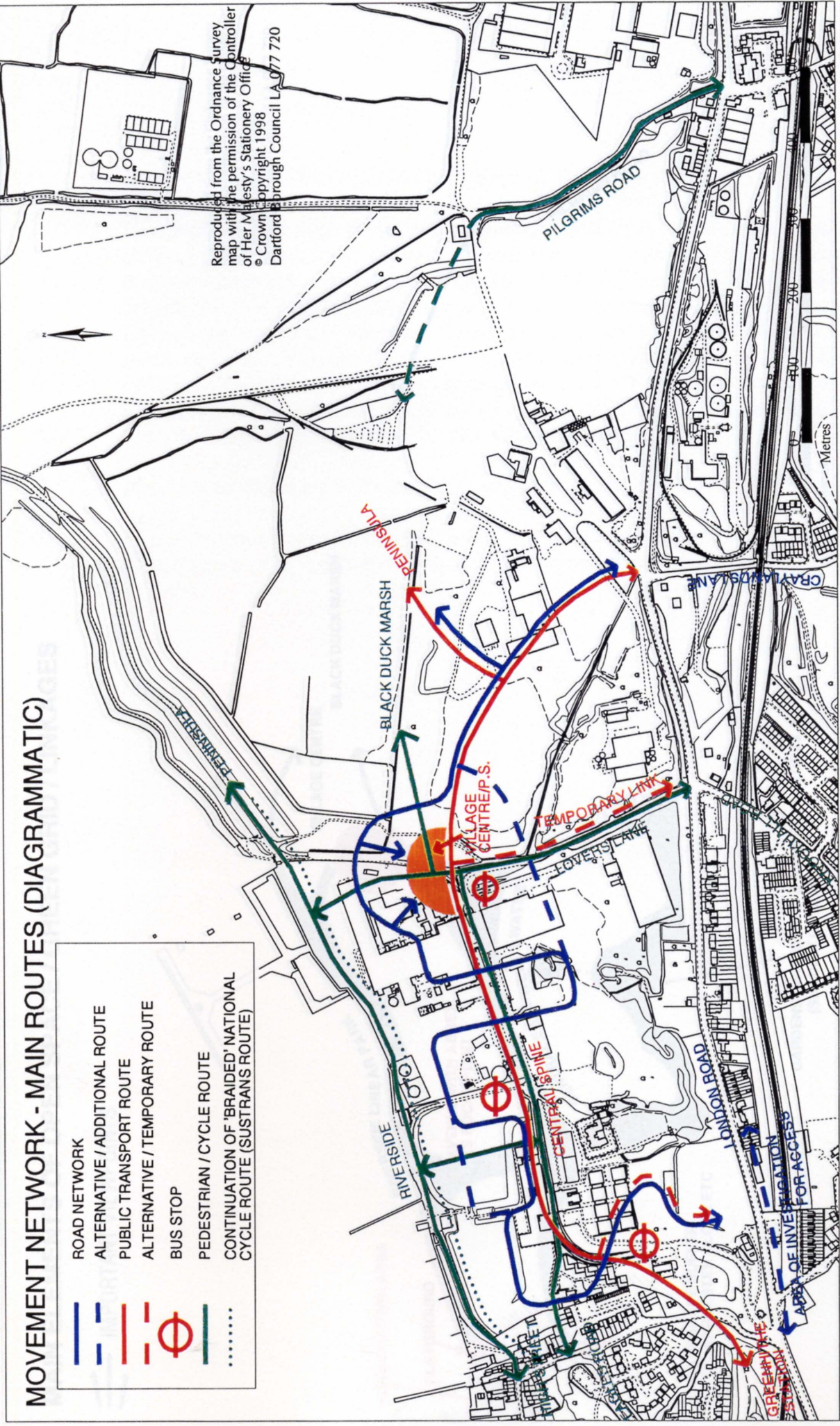
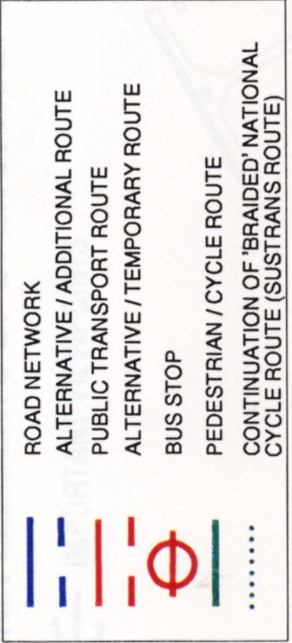
GREEN GRID

35. The Green Grid concept is also important: 'an interlinking web of high quality landscape - a framework of green spaces, areas of open land and green corridors - with both individual and collective importance to the local community for landscape and visual quality, ecological and wildlife value, access and recreation. In this context east-west open space linkage is sought through to Black Duck Marsh, and north-south linkage from the waterfront through to Lovers Lane. Consideration should also be given to the nature conservation value of the site.

PLANNING APPLICATION/MASTERPLAN

36. A planning application must be accompanied by a Masterplan, in order to facilitate the statutory public consultations. It will be expected that the Masterplan will include an Urban Design Code, which will be made up of sub-codes relating to details of:
 - Infrastructure e.g. nature and design of roads, treatment of street furniture (grilles, gullies etc).
 - Urban form e.g. hierarchy of street forms; enclosure ratios, massing, building heights, space connectivity.
 - Architectural e.g. materials, boundary treatments, fenestration.
 - Public realm e.g. treatment of public spaces, street furniture, seats, lighting, character and quality of planting.
37. The exact nature, content and perhaps timing of the above codes will need to be discussed but it is important that the public are able to reach a coherent understanding of the likely character and form of the proposal at the earliest stage possible.

MOVEMENT NETWORK - MAIN ROUTES (DIAGRAMMATIC)



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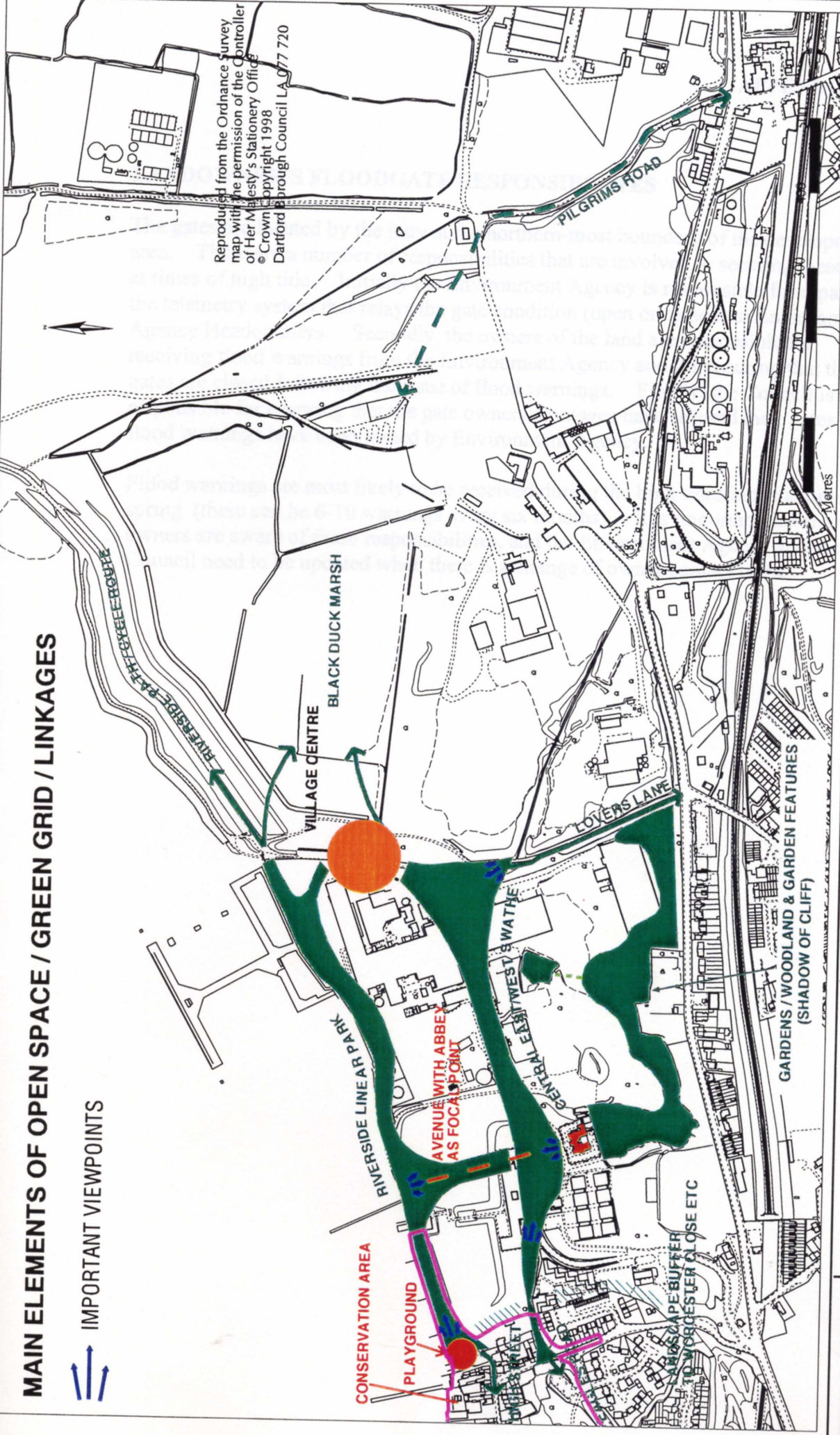
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DARTFORD
 Borough Council

THAMES
 gateway

MAIN ELEMENTS OF OPEN SPACE / GREEN GRID / LINKAGES

▶▶▶ IMPORTANT VIEWPOINTS



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THAMES
gateway

DARTFORD
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INGRESS PARK AND EMPIRE MILL PLANNING BRIEF

APPENDIX 1

LANDOWNER'S FLOODGATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The gates are located by the jetty at the northern-most boundary of the development area. There are a number of responsibilities that are involved in securing these gates at times of high tide. Initially the Environment Agency is responsible for repair and the telemetry system that relays the gate condition (open or closed) to Environment Agency Headquarters. Secondly, the owners of the land are responsible for receiving flood warnings from the Environment Agency and for ensuring that the gates are closed following the issue of flood warnings. Finally, the Council is responsible for ensuring that the gate owners/frontages have secured their gates after flood warnings have been issued by Environment Agency.

Flood warnings are most likely to be received during the high tides in the autumn and spring (there can be 6-10 warnings every six months). It is important that the new owners are aware of these responsibilities, and the Environment Agency and the Council need to be updated when there is a change of owner/contact name.

APPENDIX 2

Listed structures (all grade II)

1. Ingress Abbey
2. Terrace wall to north of Ingress Abbey
3. Stable block to east of Ingress Abbey
4. Lovers Arch
5. Flint Cave
6. The Cave of the Seven Heads
7. The Grange
8. The Monks Well
9. Lodge to Ingress Abbey
10. Wall, gate, piers, railings at London Road/The Avenue
11. Flint-walled garden tunnel
12. Brick lined tunnel

Other garden features to be retained

13. Retaining walls north and south of rose garden
14. Tudor earth mounds
15. 'Ruined Limekiln' folly