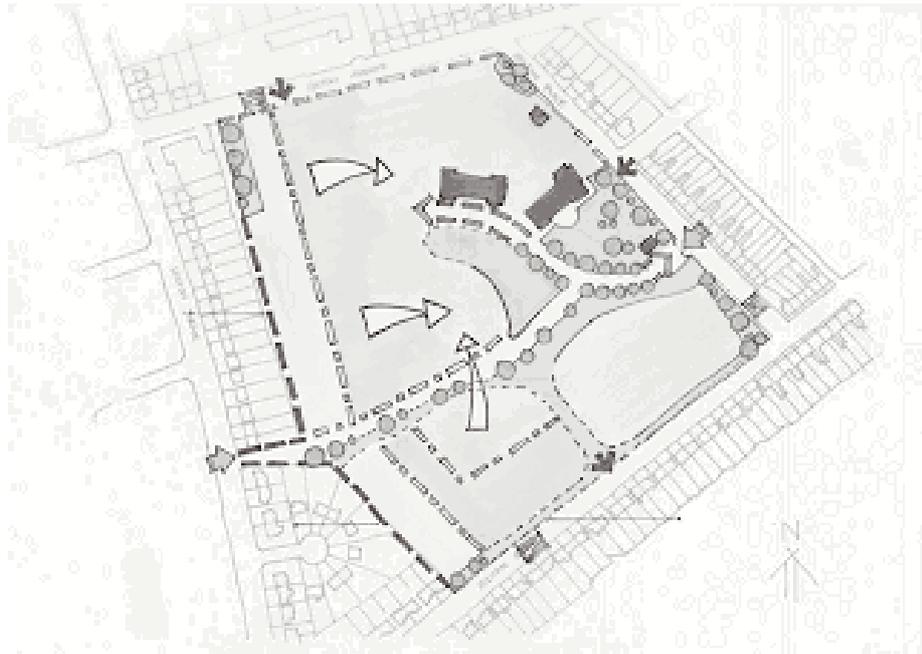




ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

City Development Services



Hilton Campus

PLANNING BRIEF

March 2003

Hilton Campus Planning Brief

Prepared on behalf of the University of Aberdeen in partnership with Aberdeen City Council.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Aberdeen University and the Northern College of Education formally merged in 2001. At that time, Aberdeen University assumed responsibility for the Hilton Campus with the intention that the faculty be moved to the main University Campus in Old Aberdeen. The Hilton Campus is expected to be totally vacated within a four year period and will soon be surplus to requirements and placed for sale on the open market offering a 10 Hectare brownfield site for redevelopment.
- 1.2 This Planning Brief has been prepared by Jenkins & Marr, planning and development consultants, on behalf of the University of Aberdeen and in partnership with Aberdeen City Council City Development Services. A consultation exercise was carried out with the local community and a

number of statutory consultees during the preparation of this brief.

- 1.3 Planning Briefs are produced as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan. They do not have the statutory status of the Local Plan. Any proposals that adhere to the principles of the Planning Brief will normally be received favourably by the Planning Authority.

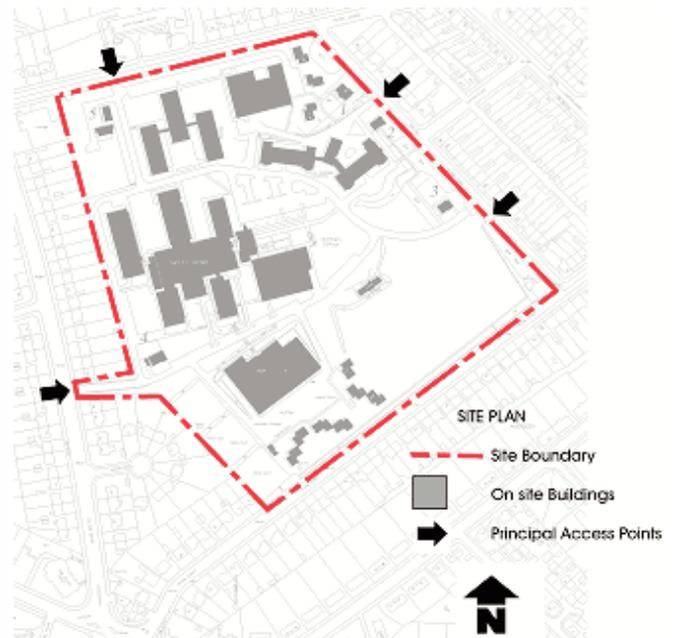


Figure 1 - Site Boundaries/Current Access

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The Hilton Campus lies approximately 2.5km north west of Aberdeen City Centre. It occupies a relatively secluded location despite the fact it extends to approximately 10.0ha. It is bound by Hilton Avenue to the North, Hilton Street to the South, Hilton Place to the East and by the backs of residential properties fronting Hilton Drive to the West. The site is accessed by vehicular and pedestrian traffic at three principal points; from Hilton Drive; Hilton Place and Hilton Avenue. No vehicular egress is permitted to Hilton Drive.
- 2.2 In topographic terms, the site generally slopes downwards from the north-west corner to the south-east

corner. From certain areas and buildings within the site, panoramic views can be obtained Southwards over parts of the city. There are a number of mature trees scattered throughout the site but the most notable examples of these can be found in the area of the site close to the Eastern entrance.

- 2.3 The site presently includes 22,500m² of academic floor space, residential accommodation for some 257 students and 5 members of staff, 20 self contained flats and a number of detached residential properties, located around the periphery of the site, providing additional staff and student accommodation, all surplus to requirements. Private leisure and sporting facilities are provided on the southern portion of the site. These are made up of a leisure centre, 25m swimming pool and football/rugby pitch.
- 2.4 The site boundary treatments comprise granite walls to the rear of existing residential properties. On Hilton Avenue a high granite wall bounds the site and screens it from view. Low granite walls with metal railings mainly bound the remainder of the site. To the rear of these, mature landscaping, particularly on Hilton Place and Hilton Street frontages, screen much of the site from localised views. The only frontage development to the site is three residential properties located on Hilton Place. For the most part the Hilton Avenue and Hilton Place frontages are at road level. The southern end of Hilton Place and along much of Hilton Street the site is elevated above the road
- 2.5 The campus site lies within a predominantly residential area. The majority of the residential properties bounding the site comprise privately owned granite semi-detached

properties of 1½ storey construction. A car showroom abuts the site to the Northwest on the corner of Hilton Drive and Hilton Avenue whilst a pre-school nursery occupies a location on Hilton Avenue opposite the site.

- 2.6 The wider area contains a mix of private and public residential properties of varying quality. New residential development in the form of flats and terraced housing has recently taken place nearby at the site of the former Hilton Academy. Limited local shopping facilities are available at the junction of Hilton Drive and Hilton Street.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 The site has been used for higher education since 1968 but the oldest buildings on site are the Clifton and Hilton Halls of Residence. These comprise two three-storey granite buildings built in the 1920s and subsequently joined by means of a covered link. The Campus itself was developed during the late 1960s and early 1970s and many of the buildings, particularly academic buildings, display an element of clutter having been extended and adapted over time.

4.0 Planning Policies

- 4.1 National planning policies, approved Structure Plan policies and emerging Local Plan policies promote the re-use of previously used sites (brownfield sites) for new uses. National Planning Policy Guideline 3: Land for Housing (NPPG3) requires that full and effective use should be made of previously developed sites within existing built-up areas, including redevelopment and conversions, to meet as much demand for new housing as possible. Priority should be given to brownfield sites in preference to greenfield sites,

- provided a satisfactory residential environment can be created.
- 4.2 The approved Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 (also known as North East Scotland Together or NEST), Policy 11: General Housing Considerations, specifically requires that new housing throughout Aberdeen is of a high quality with appropriate densities, a choice of residential environments and housing types, and directs housing to brownfield locations. There is no limit to the contribution that brownfield development can make to the housing land supply.
- 4.3 If the site were to be developed for private sector residential use then a mixture of house types would be preferred. Developers of the site should be aware that the City Council has approved the Modified Finalised Local Plan for Aberdeen which, though not yet adopted, and subject to objection that has yet to be resolved through a Local Plan Inquiry, contains a policy to secure an element of affordable housing within all major residential developments. This is in line with guidance from the Scottish Executive (SPP3 Feb 2003) and the approved Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan. Housing layouts must ensure that any affordable housing provision is appropriately integrated with the development as a whole and be in accordance with the Development Guidance in Section 9.
- 4.4 In determining what constitutes affordable housing, the role of the University in providing student accommodation is recognised. This provision reduces the level of demand on mainstream rented accommodation. The effective contribution that new student accommodation can make towards the required element of affordable housing is currently being assessed.
- 4.5 The site is zoned in the Adopted Local Plan (1991) and the Modified Finalised Local Plan (2002) for further education and research (policies ER1 and CS7 respectively). These policies encourage retention for educational use but where the land is declared surplus to requirements, as in this case, then other uses are permitted. Any new use must be compatible with surrounding uses and both of these policies call for the preparation of a Development Brief, or Planning Brief, as they are now known. New uses that conform to that brief will be acceptable. There is also a requirement to compensate for loss of playing fields.
- 4.6 The Modified Finalised Local Plan also identifies Northern College as opportunity site N45 stating the preferred uses as Residential, recreation, community and open space uses.
- 4.7 Sport and Recreation Policy 3 (SR3) indicates that permission will not be granted to use or redevelop any playing fields, sports pitches or all other areas of open space for any use other than recreation or sports unless an equivalent and equally convenient area for public access is laid out and made available in the locality by the applicant for open space purposes. In all cases, development will only be acceptable provided that:
- there is no significant loss to the landscape character and amenity of the site and adjoining areas;
 - access links are either maintained or enhanced;
 - the site is of no significant wildlife value; and
 - there is no loss of established or mature trees.

- 4.8 SR3 is based on the national requirements as set out in National Planning Policy Guideline 11: Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space (NPPG11). NPPG11 is clear that, where a long-term excess of playing fields has been identified in the wider area, then it may be possible to develop underused or surplus playing fields for other uses.
- 4.9 Aberdeen City Council has produced a draft Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Strategy for Aberdeen that will be subject to consultation over the summer 2002. It indicates that Aberdeen has a significant number of public sports/recreation facilities with a high proportion per head of population. It specifically states that there is no demonstrated public need for any further 25metre swimming pools, local sports centres (except at Dyce and Cove), or grass football pitches and aims for “fewer but improved traditional sports pitches in the City”. However, the actual level of pitch provision will not be determined until a Playing Pitch Strategy is produced. This is scheduled for spring 2003.
- 4.10 Sportscotland have been consulted in this regard and have indicated that if the existing facilities were to be lost, they would expect this to be conditional upon measures to ensure that alternative provision of high quality sports facilities is made available for students. This could be achieved by providing replacement facilities, upgrading existing facilities or a combination of both.
- 4.11 Both adopted and unadopted Local Plans contain policies protecting open space in urban areas and providing guidance on the amount of open space required for new developments. The unadopted Modified Finalised Local Plan 2002 introduced new policies relating to the design and

layout of brownfield sites – H5 Protection of Urban Open Space; H6 Design and Context; and H7 Design and Amenity. Developers should pay due regard to these policies, or their substitutes, as they progress through the Local Plan adoption process, when considering the layout of any future development on this site.

5.0 Future Uses and Potential

- 5.1 Hilton Campus offers an attractive and secluded site for redevelopment. The retained buildings, the green avenue of trees and incidental open spaces provide an established character that can be built upon in future development. A number of uses could be acceptable. Large-scale retail and multi-leisure use e.g. a superstore or multi-screen cinema, are not appropriate in planning policy terms for this site. Residential, office or business, recreational uses, local retail or a mix of these uses, in principal, are acceptable but opportunity site N45 of the Modified Finalised Local Plan (August 2002) now favours residential as the principal use.
- 5.2 As an important residential development site, a mixture of house types and densities will be expected.

6.0 Site Coverage

- 6.1 The majority of the existing buildings are of no historical or architectural merit and need not be kept. Notable exceptions are the Clifton and Hilton Halls of Residence. Built in the 1920s, both are substantial, attractive buildings of granite and slate construction, which enjoy a pleasant elevated and open setting. Neither building is currently listed as being of architectural or historic merit but offer attractive conversion opportunities and should be retained. Historic Scotland has been approached

regarding listing these two buildings. Historic Scotland have informally indicated that the buildings are of listable quality.

- 6.2 The areas of open space shown on the Site Development Principles diagram provide an attractive setting for these two large buildings and should be retained as public open space. Further open space should be provided as shown on the Site Development Principles diagram to consolidate the setting of these two buildings. The avenue of mature trees lining the main access road offers an attractive route into and through the site and must be retained.
- 6.3 As the whole campus, including the playing field, has been declared surplus to requirements, the remainder of the campus may be developed subject to open space, car parking, roads and other relevant standards. The mature trees should be retained.
- 6.4 The University has a Strategic Plan to replace underused and traditional sporting facilities with modern recreational and sporting facilities in locations that suit the needs of their students. Replacement University facilities elsewhere will compensate for the loss of the Hilton playing field and fulfill the objectives of the University's Strategic Plan.

7.0 Open Space Requirements

- 7.1 The Council's current open space standards will apply. The areas of open space shown on the Site Development Principles diagram attached should be retained.

8.0 Access, Traffic and Car Parking

- 8.1 The site is well served by public transport with frequent bus services on Hilton Drive, Hilton Street and nearby Clifton Road. Hilton Drive and

Hilton Street are both main arterial routes and provide good linkages to the City Centre and to the A90 and A96 trunk roads.

- 8.2 The main vehicular access relating to new development should utilise existing access/egress points where possible. Of the existing access points, Aberdeen City Council's preferred option would be taking the main vehicular access from Hilton Drive with a second principal point of vehicular access from Hilton Place and preferably no access from Hilton Avenue. Suitable junction arrangements should be provided where necessary and may include the provision of some form of traffic control. Two principal points of access will be required for a development site of this size. Other access arrangements will be considered provided they meet the Council's adopted standards. A Safety Audit will be required for all of these proposals.
- 8.3 A transport assessment will be required and should address the requirements of NPPG17 with the primary aim being the delivery of accessible and sustainable transport to the development site. A 'Scoping Study' should be agreed with Road's officers prior to proceeding.
- 8.4 Roads within the development should be constructed to the Council's Standards and be subject to Construction Consent. The layout, car parking provision etc., should meet the Council's Standards.
- 8.5 Pedestrian access to the development and links with public transport, schools and other off-site facilities need careful consideration, due to an element of severance caused by traffic levels on Hilton Drive and Hilton Street. Suitable crossing facilities should be considered for these and

other affected roads, providing links to the wider community facilities.

9.0 Development Guidance

9.1 The Site Development Principles diagram indicates the guiding principles for development. These are based on this Planning Brief, current planning policies/designations and the opportunities for making best use of the site.

9.2 The following principles will apply:

- The redevelopment of this previously used site can help meet national and local policy requirements and augment the City’s housing land supply.
- Housing on this site is to be of a good quality design and contribute to the choice of housing types throughout the City.
- As a previously used site, and because of the nature and scale of that use, there is potential for higher density on parts of the site. The Site Development Principles diagram indicates that this higher density should be located toward the centre of the site and the scale of the buildings should be comparable with the existing halls of residence. The western and southern parts of the site should be lower density with scope for some medium and higher densities in the southern central section. Low-density housing should encompass houses with gardens. To the western boundary, the layout of new gardens should abut with the gardens of the existing houses on Hilton Street and Circle to maintain their amenity.

■ Indicative storey heights are as follows:

■ Low Density - 1½ to 2 storeys

■ Medium Density - 2½ to 3 storeys

■ Higher Density - 4 storeys or of a similar scale to the retained Hilton and Clifton Halls

■ Proposals will be required to protect the mature trees on site and surrounding the site. The tree lined main access road and adjacent areas of open space should be retained as a green axis.

■ Current open space standards will apply.

■ Development of this private site, including provision of public open space, will help improve open space provision in the immediate area and public access through the site.

■ Vehicular access should be taken from the existing access points where possible.

9.3 Surface water run-off should be dealt with using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) incorporated within the design of any proposals, and must be approved by the local planning authority, in consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water prior to the commencement of development. A drainage Impact Assessment will be required and developers should demonstrate that their proposals for foul and surface drainage are the best available in terms of Sustainable Urban Drainage.

10 Construction Arrangements

- 10.1 Any construction works should be carried out in such a way that no existing tree that is being retained within or immediately adjacent to this site is harmed. Trees should be protected in accordance with British Standard 5837 (1991).

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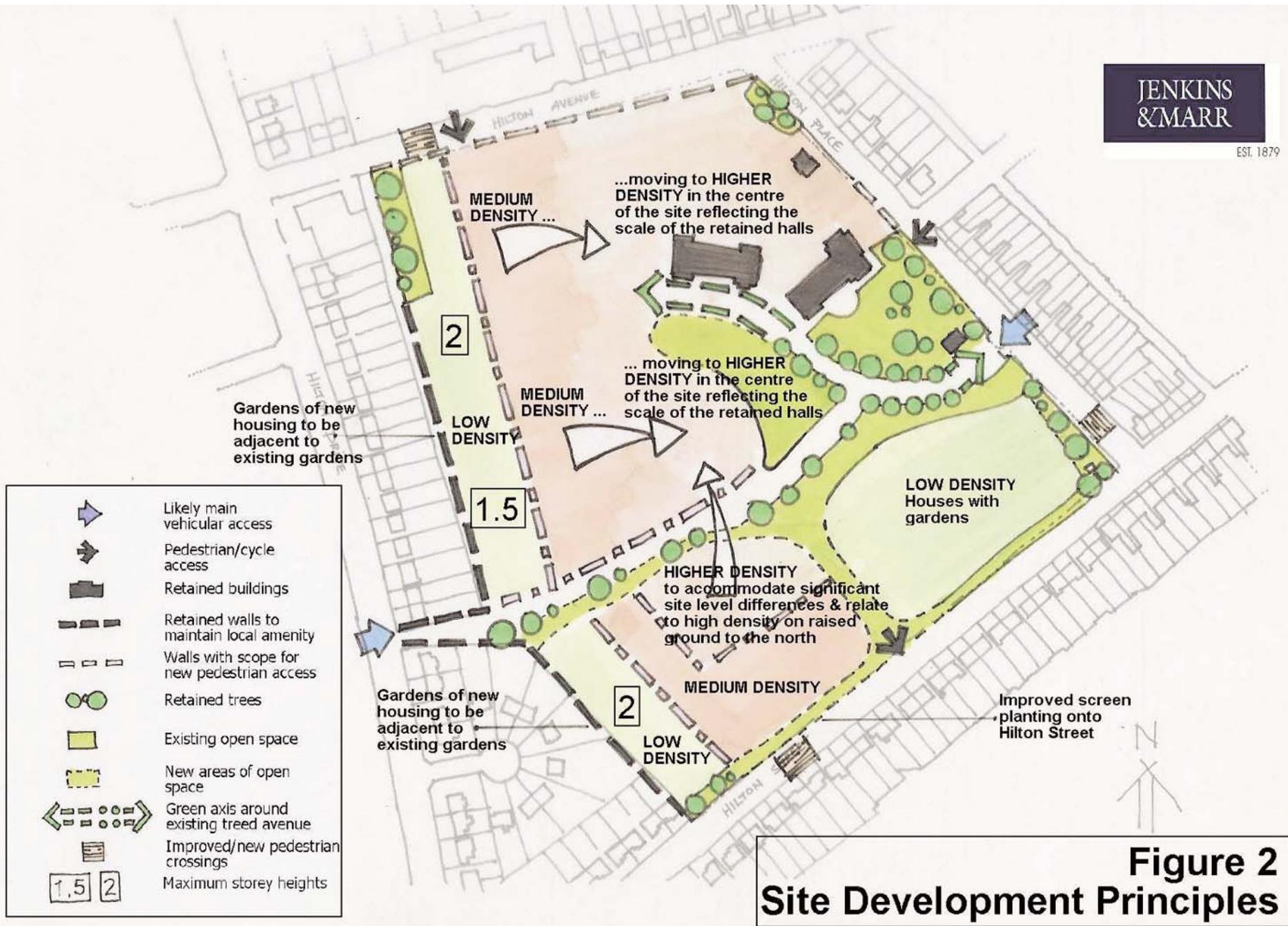


Figure 2
Site Development Principles