

GRAINBANK, KIRKWALL

Development Brief: November 2011

introduction

This Development Brief sets out planning and design guidance for development of land at Grainbank Farm on the Western edge of Kirkwall within the context of existing planning policy, including the Kirkwall Urban Design Development Framework (KUDF) development zone 4 and sites KW-A, KW-B and KW-C from the Orkney Local Development Plan Proposed Plan .

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for potential developers in terms of opportunities and constraints, providing a framework on how the site can be developed in a phased and coherent manner.



Fig 1: Aerial View of Site (prior to development of adjacent Council Housing site)



Fig 2: Stromness Road



Fig 3: View from North West

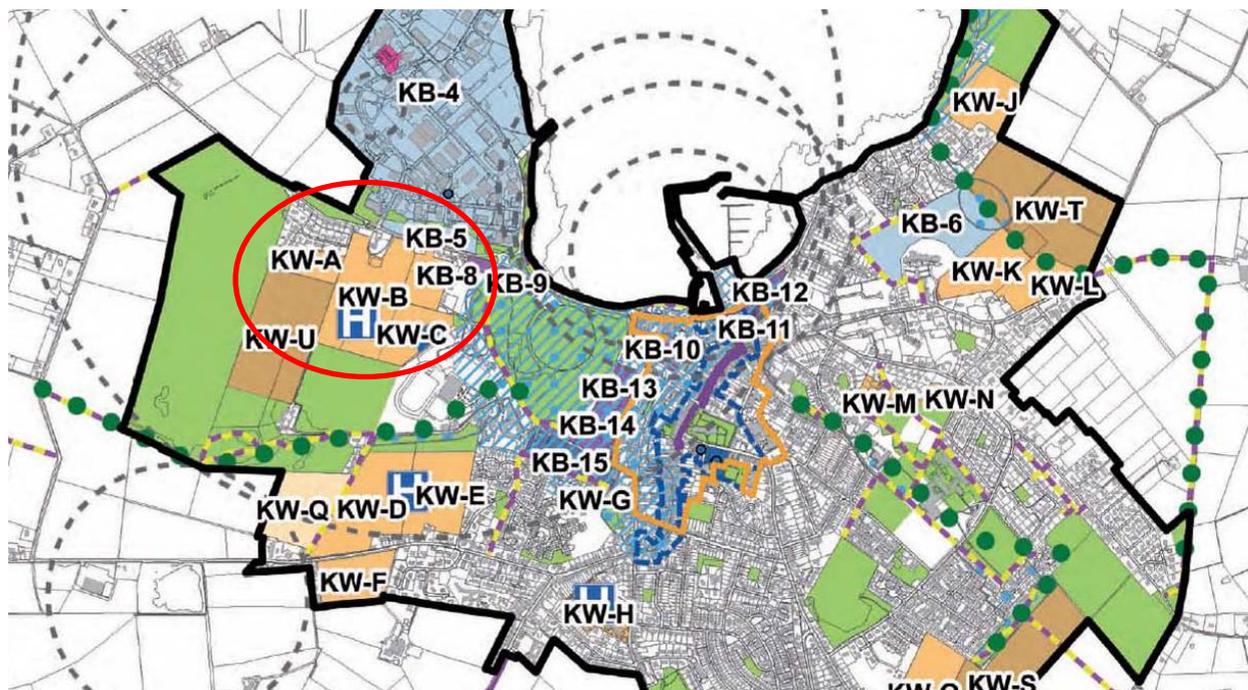


Fig 4: Extract from Orkney Local Development Plan – Kirkwall Proposals Plan (April 2011)



purpose of the development brief

The land fringing Kirkwall has seen a gradual spread of development over the past few decades. To date, there has been limited attention to ensuring a coordinated overview of development phasing or the establishment of parameters for building layout and design which reflect the sensitive setting of the sites. The Kirkwall UDF started the process of re-assessing the priorities for new development in Kirkwall. Critically, it established the overriding principle of ensuring that new development is contextually-sensitive, well-designed and of an appropriate quality to ensure it is a long term asset to Kirkwall. The purpose of this Development Brief is to provide more detail on the planning and design considerations which are critical to the successful coordinated development of the Grainbank Site.

*Top: Fig 5: View from west towards town centre (prior to development of adjacent Council Housing site)
 Below: Fig 6: View of lower site from south west
 Bottom: Fig 7: View of overall site from south*

guidance to applicants

This development brief recognises that the Grainbank Site will be developed over multiple phases by different parties over a number of years and as such should help ensure a “continuity of vision” by setting out framework of planning and design principles. This document should be used to inform any future Planning Applications for the site and form the base reference for the design of any future Applications. Adherence to its Design Principles should be demonstrated in any Design Statements submitted in support of a planning application.

The level of information that will be required will vary depending of the scale of the development proposed. For example, it is likely that small scale development (such as a single house or house extension) will require very limited information and that this will focus mostly on demonstrating that the chosen design complies with the principles set down in this Development Brief.

Larger developments consisting of multiple houses/flats or Hospital/Medical Premises etc will require a more comprehensive statement of how they relate to the Principles in the Development Brief and the Kirkwall Urban Design Framework. Such proposals may qualify as Major applications, and in these circumstances, prospective applicants are required to consult communities before submitting the planning application. If further information or clarification is required in this regard, please contact OIC Development Management.



site description

Location

Grainbank Farm though located on the Western edge of Kirkwall (and combined with Hatston forms the Western gateway to Kirkwall) is surprisingly central to the town centre. It lies to the South of the Hatston Industrial Estate and the Stromness Road, to the North of the Pickaquoy Centre and immediately to the east is the Peerie Sea with the Town Centre a short distance beyond.

History

The Site comprises of farmland and partly developed land around the old farmhouse and farm of Grainbank. The house, its ancillary buildings and Garden are category B listed and comprises of a hip roofed 2 storey over basement house with ancillary buildings/farm buildings attached to the rear North side. The house and Gardens were built around 1829 and due to its elevated position combined with a wooded surrounding garden, features prominently on the landscape. To the south of the immediate garden policies is a B listed walled garden. Beyond this are the old farm fields which tend to be square in shape approximately 10 acres in size and bounded by dry stone walling. The intention of the development brief is to develop the former farm land while preserving and integrating the house and its grounds meaningfully into any future development.



Above Right: Fig 8: Walking distances to town centre (from KUDF)

Right: Fig 9: 1832 map

Belo : Fig 10: 1882 Ordnance Survey map



Site Topography

The site has a general and comparatively constant fall from West to East. Towards its northern edge it is bounded by Grainbank House and an existing development dating from the 1950's onwards and ad-hoc ribbon development fronting the A965 Stromness Road. To the west is a new development consented for 18 house plots forming a continuation of the older Grainpark housing development. To the south and southwest it is bounded by open farmland and Kirkwall Golf Course respectively. To the east is existing housing which looks out over the Peerie Sea and to the southeast by a new Council housing development currently nearing completion. The development incorporates a scheduled ancient monument (the Pickaquoy Burnt mound and Settlement), resulting in a 30m no build zone around, which has been incorporated into an attractive open space with the natural woodland bordering the Muddiesdale Burn beyond. The site is comparatively sheltered by Orkney standards from the prevailing south westerly wind. With the exception of field ditches there are no watercourses across the land though there is the existing Muddiesdale Burn which lies close to the south eastern boundary.

Existing Access

There is existing vehicle and pedestrian access from the south east via Peerie Sea Loan and possible access from the sites northern edge off the adjacent main A965 Stromness Road. The 18 house plots mentioned above will be accessed from the existing Grainpark development with all construction traffic accessed by a temporary haul road linking into the Stromness Road. While there is good potential access to the site from major distributor roads as mentioned above there is a strong potential as outlined in the Kirkwall Urban Development Framework for pedestrian linkage across the site towards the town centre, Pickaquoy centre and nearby Glaitness Primary School.

Views

Due to its comparatively elevated position there are good views out across open farmland / playing fields, to the south towards the cathedral and town centre to the south east and the harbour and Kirkwall Bay to the east. Conversely there are views into the site from large parts of the town especially from the elevated eastern and south eastern parts of Kirkwall.

Scale of Adjacent Existing Buildings

To the north west and east of the site the surrounding housing tends to be single storey and storey and a half with some two storey buildings. Grainbank House itself is two and three storey and the existing housing fronting Stromness Road round to Peerie Sea Loan tends to vary from single to two storey. The adjacent Council housing development to the south east is nearly all two storey.

Below: Fig 11: Site Analysis

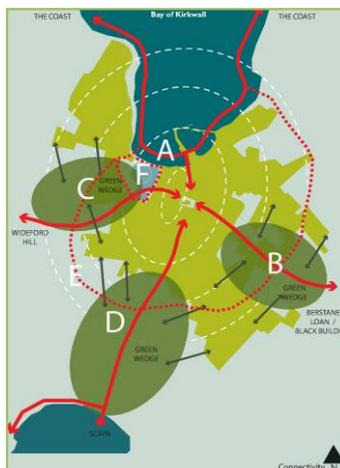


policy background and context

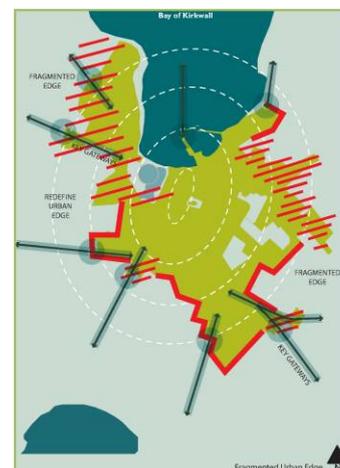
The Local Orkney Development Plan Proposed Plan Kirkwall Settlement Statement (April 2011) identifies three sites within the development brief area sites KW-A, KW-B and KW-C. The Settlement Statement establishes the requirement for a development brief to be prepared for the full extent of this combined site area. The settlement statement anticipates the potential for approximately 200 houses in the combined site area. It also identifies the possibility of the development Housing use is supported on the sites.. The potential for a health care facility is also identified for KW-C. This is reflected also in the Kirkwall Urban Design Framework where the site is referred to as strategic development site 4. It is also worth noting that there was a previous planning permission for the whole site for housing although this has now expired.

design vision

Without prejudicing possible future hospital use the aspiration for the site is to provide good quality new neighbourhood with a mix of housing tenure while preserving and incorporating the character of Grainbank House and its immediate surroundings. While following the best practice laid down in the Kirkwall Urban Design Framework (KUDF) the development will consolidate this part of Kirkwall's western boundary. The development will be designed to work with the sloping nature of the site, its aspect and the views into and out of the site. Consideration should also be given to using building form to create shelter and micro climates. The development should reinforce pedestrian links towards the town centre.

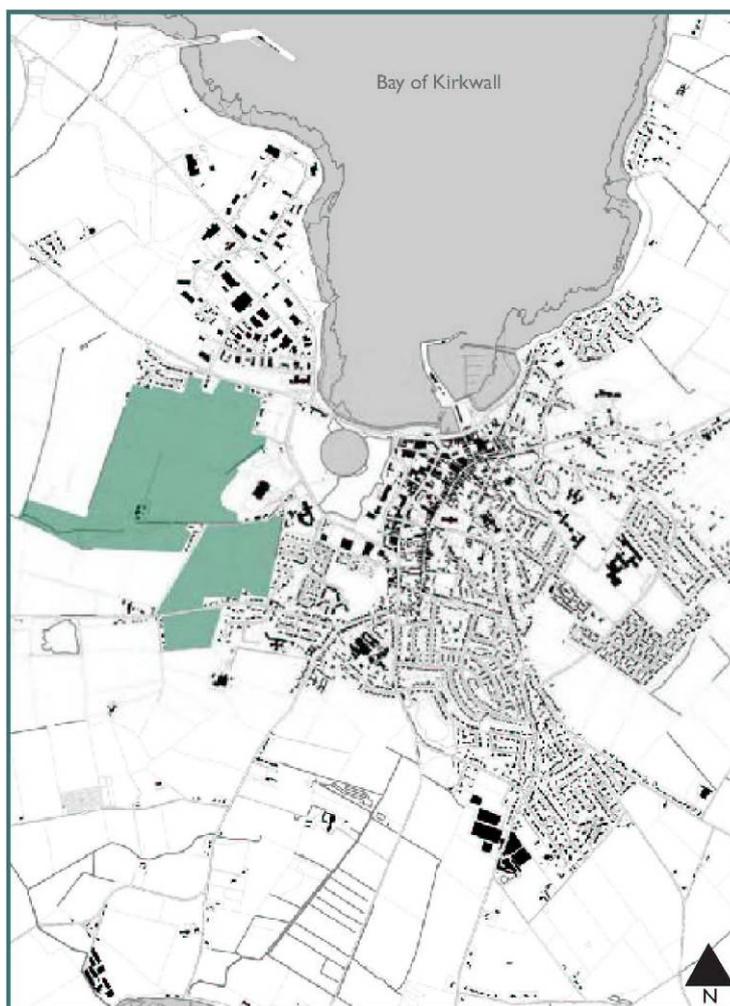


Above left: Fig 12: Connectivity Diagram from KUDF



Above right: Fig 13: Fragmented Urban Edge Diagram from KUDF

Below: Fig 14: Development Zone 4 (from KUDF)



the development brief strategy

The development framework has been designed to be sufficiently robust to provide a simple hierarchy of space, routes and amenity space while allowing for a sufficient flexibility to cater for varying housing by different parties over several phases. In other words sufficiently broad brushed to allow future flexibility in its implementation but sufficiently detailed to provide a new neighbourhood with cohesion and a strong sense of place.

Due to the possibility that part of the site could be developed as part housing and part hospital, or could be developed wholly for housing, a development brief strategy plan has been developed with an option for both.

For the avoidance of doubt, there is no specific decision to locate a health care facility on this site. Other site options, including the Corse West site, remain under consideration. However, in order to respond to the historic planning policy context which has for some time identified potential for healthcare facilities at Grainbank, this development brief presents an option to include health care facilities so that this issue can be fully explored through the consultation process.

Both options incorporate the following design principles:

- To leave a substantial area of open land around Grainbank House, its policies and walled garden, to preserve its character and to provide large central open space as a hub to the whole development.
- To establish an amenity wildlife and pedestrian green space linking all the different phases of the site while improving connectivity between town and country
- Reinforce the existing small pocket of planting around Grainbank House with further tree planting.
- Providing a network of pedestrian and cycle routes to maximise permeability.
- To provide a simple hierarchy of spaces reinforced by access roads and 'homezone' shared surfaces.
- Identify approximate building lines and appropriate building heights and massing.

The above framework of principles are shown in the following two development strategies, Option 1 showing the site completely developed out as housing and Option 2 developed as a mix of housing and hospital use. Also enclosed are notional aerial views illustrating how the finished neighbourhood could look.



Fig 15: Grainbank House

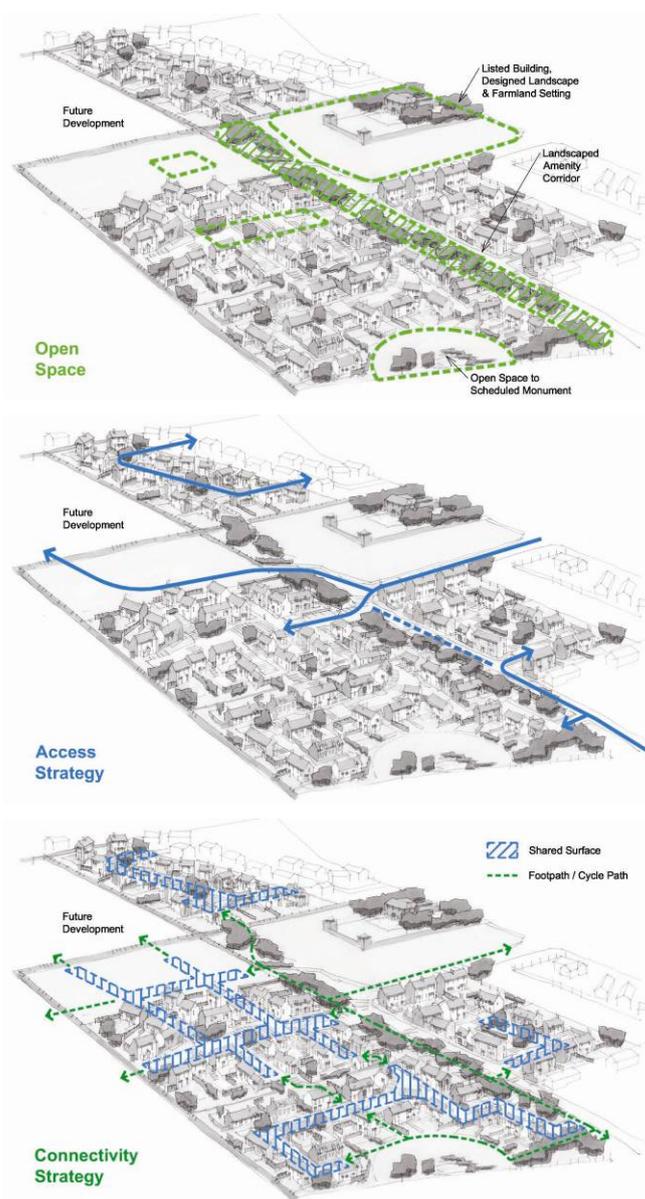


Fig 16: Peerie Sea Loan



Option 1

Shows the housing option dividing the site into 4 distinct phases, indicating areas zoned for social housing and potential access to future sites to the South West. The site is organised around a central landscaped spine of open space running across the site from west to east and incorporating tree planting, suds ponds and footpaths and cycle tracks. The spine also acts to tie together the various phases with Grainbank House and the existing fields around it. Road access is from the existing Grainpark Development at the top westernmost site. The middle part of the site is split into 2 phases as defined by the split in the field boundaries will be accessed from a new road off the Stromness road and the lower easternmost part of the site will be access from Peerie Sea Loan. OIC Roads Service have advised that these roads should not be linked, however there are opportunities for pedestrian, cycle, and public transport connections and these should be employed to enhance connectivity and permeability.



Top: Fig 17: Indicative Aerial View of Option 1

Above Right: Fig 18: Open Space Strategy

Middle Right: Fig 19: Access Strategy

Bottom Right: Fig 20: Connectivity Strategy

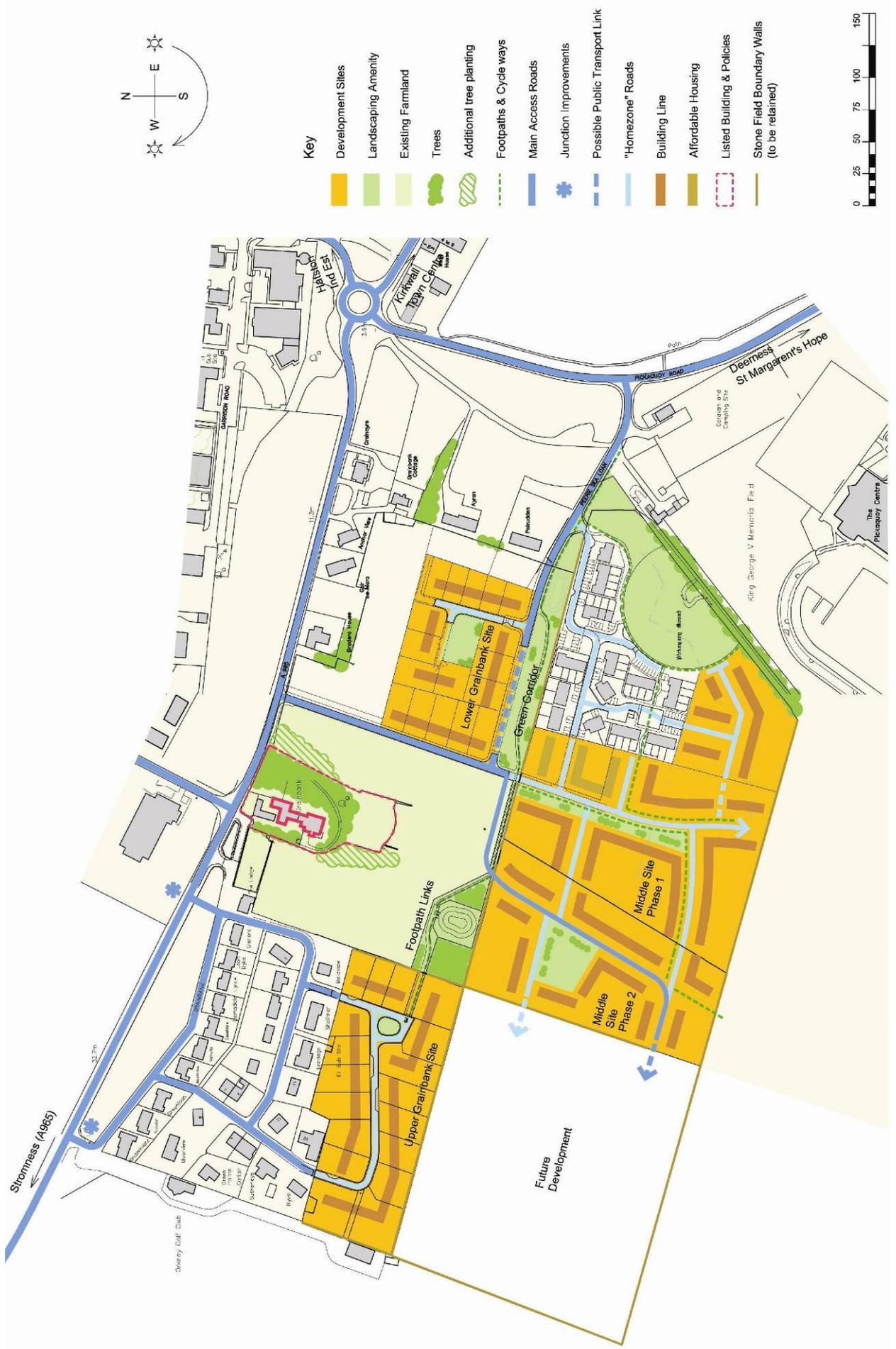


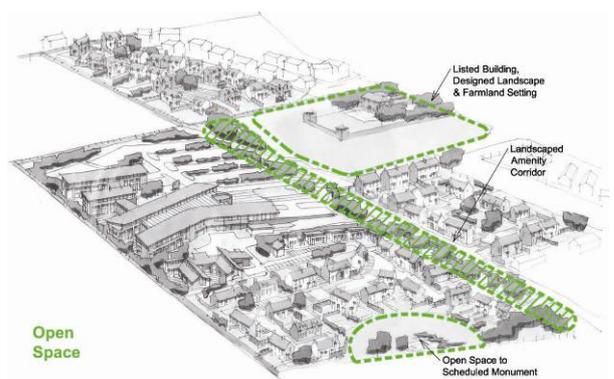
Fig 21: Development Brief Strategy Plan – Option 1



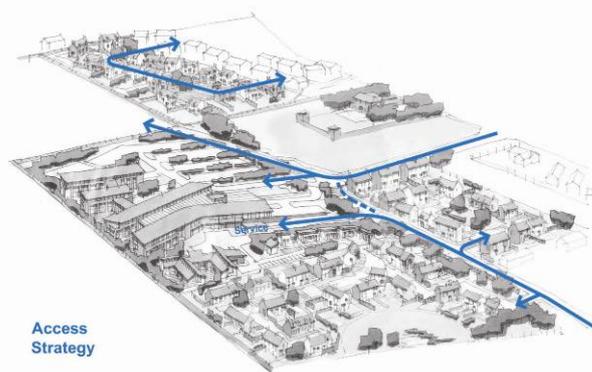
Fig 22: Indicative Aerial View of Option 2

Option 2

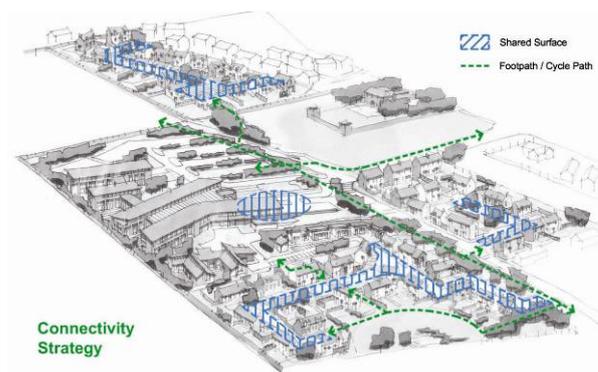
Option 2 adopts a strategy of Housing to the West and East (top and bottom) ends of the site with the proposed new community Hospital and Care Facility centrally placed.. There is an amenity landscaped corridor and open space around Grainbank House which links to the upper and lower parts of the site with all development organized around it. The Layout allows for the Hospital to be serviced from both the Stromness Road and Peerie Sea Loan allowing the flexibility of separating out servicing/deliveries from visitors and staff access etc. These 2 access roads could be linked in some controlled manner, potentially for Bus and or emergency vehicle use only, but not to form a potential through route for general traffic. The hospital fits easily on site and allows for future potential expansion and related use to the West of its site. Though located adjacent to the Hospital it is important that the Care Facility is perceived as “stand alone” and related to the adjacent Housing Development, and possible be accessed via this housing. The area of the site lying to the North of Peerie Sea Loan, with its good connectivity to the town centre and outlook over the central amenity corridor makes an ideal location for housing.



Open Space



Access Strategy



Connectivity Strategy

Above Right: Fig 23: Open Space Strategy

Middle Right: Fig 24: Access Strategy

Bottom Right: Fig 25: Connectivity Strategy

the design criteria

Layout

- In general the layout should adopt best practice in the delivery of good quality public realm.
- In terms of design of streets, traffic calming and allowing for a variety of links i.e. vehicular, cycle and pedestrian, the development will comply by best practice as laid down by the Scottish Governments “Designing Streets – A Policy Statement for Scotland” and also by the criteria laid down by the KUDF.
- The site layout in both options is clear and straightforward with a hierarchy of spaces reflected in both the roads layout and open space. The phases are largely defined by the historical field boundaries which are constructively integrated into the development.
- Where possible the roads are shared surface “homezone” type with the main access roads of more conventional design.
- All footpaths and open space should be overlooked for passive supervision and amenity.
- The Layouts and spaces should be legible and clearly define public and private realm.
- The layout allows for and anticipates future development to the South West (Site KW-U).



Fig 27: KUDF: Example of contemporary interpretation of vernacular forms



Fig 28: KUDF: Example of contemporary interpretation of vernacular forms

Building & Placemaking

- The buildings should adopt a contemporary vernacular style which responds to traditional built forms in terms of clustered groups of buildings.
- The buildings will relate to each other and where possible be linked by walls and hedging to create shelter and microclimates
- While privacy is important in housing the feeling of identity, townscape and sense of place is equally important. Overlooking issues often leads to house windows being placed 21m apart often leading to an unsatisfactory suburban layout. Developers will be encouraged to be more imaginative in avoiding overlooking by angling houses to each other and the judicious use of walls etc to try to create a tighter more urban feel.
- Consideration to aspect, layout, construction and materials in terms of sustainability and energy efficiency will be required to be demonstrated.
- Buildings will have a simple form with pitched roofs and to conform to KUDF.
- Buildings should where possible follow the contours of the topography and avoid excessive under-building
- Any proposed housing should use a common and limited palette of materials and colours to emphasise an overall cohesion. Generally building finishes/colours should be: Dark grey roof, white render walls and timber windows. Exceptions to this may be justified provided that they form a coherent part of the overall design principles of the development and contribute to the cohesion of the wider area.

Gateway

- There is the opportunity for the walling and trees typified on the Grainbank side of the Stromness road to be repeated on the Hatston side as part of the stated robust landscape framework for Hatston and to reinforce the “gateway” into Kirkwall. Where the new access road joins the Stromness road the existing wall should be repaired and terminated with Cairns of same design as to the adjacent Grainbank House.

Tenure

- As the development will be built out over a number of phases a mix of different tenures is anticipated and welcomed. This mix will probably include self build plots, speculative built houses and social housing in a mix of detached, semidetached and terraced houses providing a balanced new neighbourhood.

Boundaries and Edges

- A sense of enclosure, continuity and cohesion should be enhanced by linking frontages with a variety of low and high walls and enclosing front gardens with walls/hedging of consistent height
- Existing drystone field dykes will be retained and repaired and will be used to define distinctive phases within the development. Any new natural stone walling within the development will match this walling in height and appearance i.e. approx 900mm high with a tapered section and natural stone ragstone coping. Cut stones to be kept to an absolute minimum.
- Public and Private space should be clearly defined (using best principles of defensible space) Front gardens should be enclosed with 900mm high walls and hedging and the linking of buildings using higher walls should be encouraged to give a continuous urban space and maximise shelter and microclimates.
- While natural stone walling as per the above is preferred, hedging and rendered block walls with Natural ragstone cope will all be permitted for front garden boundaries. Hedging to front gardens should be planted at a minimum density of 9 per linear metre and incorporate a 900mm high post and wire fence with strainer posts. To encourage the sense of cohesion front garden boundary treatment must be consistent and considered i.e. not a random and haphazard mix of any of the above 3 treatments
- The existing woodland around Grainbank House should be extended to form the background setting and edge to the development.

- The use of brick walls and individual decorative gateways will not be permitted. Timber fencing is only permissible to back gardens.

Grainbank House and Farm

The preservation and integration of Grainbank House is a key component in the development strategy.

- The house and adjacent farm buildings will be fully repaired and restored.
- A woodland management system will be implemented for the adjacent wood.
- The former walled garden will be repaired and replanted with fruit trees and the surrounding wall repaired.
- The character of the adjacent field will be retained.

Open Space, Amenity and Landscaping

The Brief identifies major open space at the heart of the development which links the whole development together. There will also be smaller open spaces within each of the housing phases to maximise amenity and biodiversity.

- Generally open space will be kept as soft and informal as possible with a mix of species rich meadow grass, shorter mown grass closer to the housing and indigenous tree planting as per the recommendations of the Orkney Woodland Group
- The central spine will incorporate a pedestrian and cycle network providing a link between the edge of town and the Peerie Sea and a safe route to school.
- A long term maintenance plan of these spaces will be developed with the council. Reference should be made to policy SD3 infrastructure delivery and developer contributions.

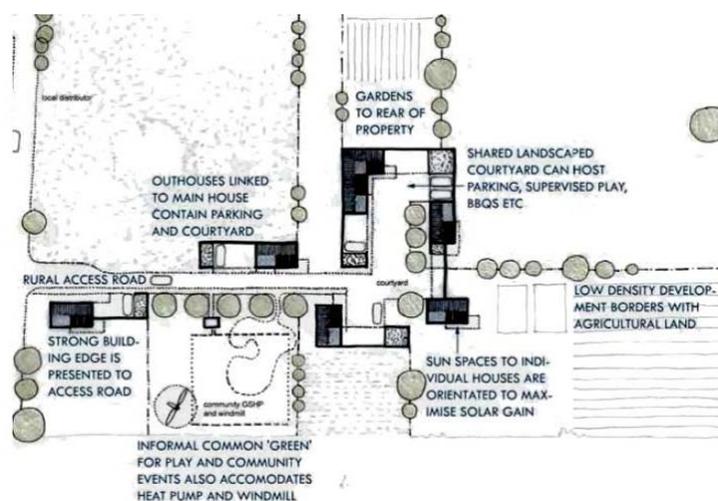


Fig 29: KUDF: Example of Location Specific Development

Access, Roads and Movement

The development brief strategy plans identify a hierarchy of routes and spaces which will ensure that access and roads are not designed in isolation and are rather an integrated element of the overall design. This is in line with the strategic vision of the Kirkwall UDF. Access Roads should be designed with natural traffic calming features as shared multi-purpose surfaces. Reference should be made to the Scottish Government's Designing Streets – A Policy Statement for Scotland and the Council's Roads Development Guide.

The Kirkwall UDF also identified that it would be necessary to undertake a Traffic Impact Assessment prior to the development of zone 4. Further to this, OIC Roads Services have advised that developers will be required to provide Traffic Assessments for each of the development sites identified within the development brief in order to identify the impact that each of these phases would have on the existing road network and transport infrastructure. It will therefore be necessary to prepare a traffic Impact Assessment to support planning applications for each phase of development.

The current standard for parking provision is 2 spaces per dwelling plus 25% visitor parking. This reduces to 1.5 to 1.75 spaces per dwelling plus 25% visitor parking for Communal Parking. These should be explored further through the Traffic Assessment. Parking design to:

- Avoid front garden space being utilized for Parking
- Where communal parking is used, parking should be overlooked for passive supervision to the front of the houses, located reasonably close to all front doors and integrated with any open space in a meaningful way.
- Careful use of good quality materials to delineate parking areas and driveways

Developers should engage with OIC Roads Services at the earliest opportunity to determine requirements for roads and related infrastructure. Reference should be made to Policy SD3 – Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions.

Contact should also be made to establish requirements for Traffic Assessments.

Reference should also be made to the Active Travel Audit for Kirkwall.

Water Resource Management

The Grainbank area is located within the Kirkwall Settlement boundary. There is therefore a requirement that all development is connected to the public foul sewer. Developers should make early contact with Scottish Water to determine any infrastructure upgrades which may be required to facilitate development, and a Drainage Impact Assessment will be required for any proposals which could have a significant effect on the existing water and wastewater networks.

The fall across the site from West to East means it drains naturally into the nearby Muddiesdale Burn which in turn drains into the Peerie Sea. This is augmented by a ditch which runs along the South boundary into the Burn. The site lies out with the SEPA Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) and area of flood risk identified by the Kirkwall Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. As a result it is not envisaged that a detailed assessment of flood risk will be needed to support applications. However, because the site will drain towards the Peerie Sea, where there have been flooding issues for a number of years, development must provide appropriate SuDS for the area.

SuDS should be designed to not only accommodate each individual phase of the development but give consideration at an early stage of the project to the long term provision for the whole site. It is envisaged that as part of this SuDS ponds may be required and should be located preferably within the amenity corridor. While meeting the requirements of SEPA and Scottish Water care should be taken to make the ponds as naturalistic and visually attractive as possible to allow them to contribute positively to the amenity corridor's appearance. Developers will be required to provide SuDS Assessments, and details will be agreed with the Council at the Planning application stage.

Reference should be made to PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, and SuDS for Roads and must be designed to meet the specifications as detailed in Sewers for Scotland (2nd Edition) if the developer wishes the surface water system to vest in Scottish Water.

A water body buffer will limit development to 6m from the edge of the burn and opportunities for ecological enhancement should be investigated.

For further information, please contact:

Development Management

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