

# NORTH END, STROMNESS

## development brief



aerial view of Stromness North End development brief sites



above - the retaining wall at North End Road  
below - the North End Road environment



### introduction

This Development Brief replaces the Stromness Mart Site Development and Design Brief adopted by Orkney Islands Council in 2005. It has been necessary to review that document and to bring it up to date in the light of proposed new developments in the vicinity of the site, current housing requirements and the policies and proposals set out in the Stromness Urban Design Framework (July 2009). This has resulted in expanding the Development Brief to include the wider 'North End' area. This revised Brief sets out the main opportunities and constraints associated with the sites, and provides an outline framework for the development of the area.



the former West Mainland Auction Mart site from Ferry Road

### purpose of the development brief

The North End of Stromness is identified in the Stromness Urban Design Framework as an important area for redevelopment. The former West Mainland Auction Mart Site is a key site in this area and is a major development opportunity for the town which could help to meet higher aspirations for improved retail provision, as well as potential new hotel/office/residential accommodation. Sites on North End Road can also deliver new residential development and contribute to the character of North End Road as a part of the historic street form which

makes Stromness so unique.

The sites are also at the main vehicular entrance to Stromness and close to the ferry embarkation point and are therefore vital in moulding first impressions of the town. The current derelict appearance of the Mart site and its proximity to the proposed new Stromness Primary School are other important factors which necessitate a fresh look at what might be achieved there.

## policy background and context

The site is covered by Policy LP/E6 (Mixed Use Areas) in the Orkney Local Plan 2004 and by Proposal R2 (Redevelopment Opportunities) covering the former West Mainland Auction Mart and adjacent areas.

In the Stromness Urban Design Framework (UDF) 2009, the sites are partly covered by First Tier policies (PO2) but predominantly by Fourth Tier policies (PO5). The design principles applying to the site are described overleaf (Design Principles section).

In addition, the Stromness UDF outlines specific proposals for the former West Mainland Auction Mart site which seek to structure future development through an outline configuration which includes the new primary school, new housing, a supermarket and safe pedestrian routes to the school.

While the new supermarket on the mart site would be the principal land use, the development could include additional uses such as hotel/office/residential. In addition to this, the area is covered by PR5 (Ferry Road – bridging the gap) which is a set of proposals aimed at creating a more attractive route between the

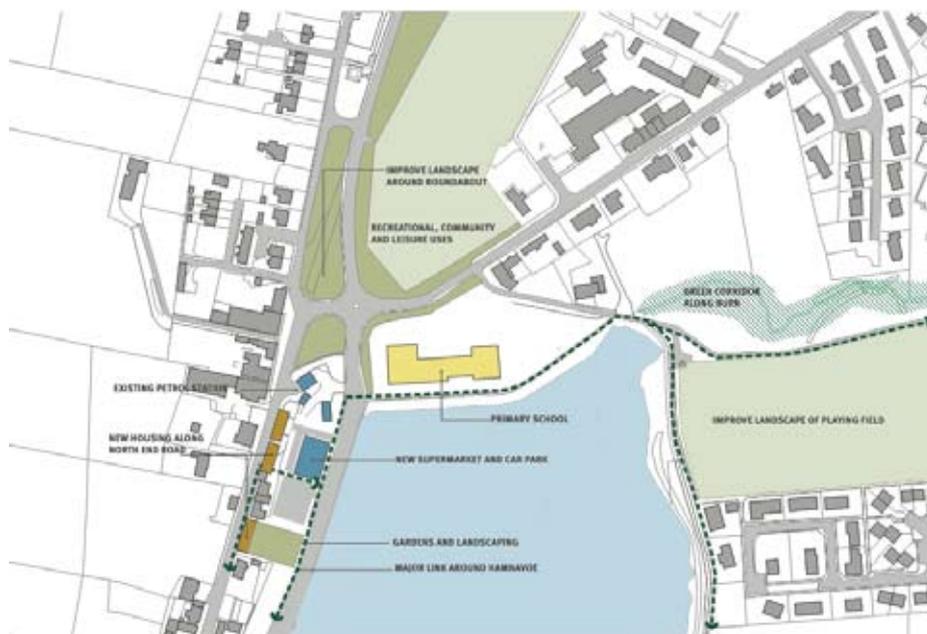


fig 1 - Stromness UDF proposals for North Hamnavoe showing the new Primary School location and linkages around Hamnavoe

Pierhead and North End. The site is also part of Policy LP/N3 National Scenic Area and therefore due regard will have to be paid to the visual qualities of new development. Further detail on these Policies and Proposals can be found in the Stromness UDF.

## guidance to applicants

This Development Brief sets out the planning and design principles for six separate development sites in the North End area of Stromness. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that their proposals respond to the Development Brief Strategy and the more detailed Design Criteria set out in this Development Brief. This evidence should be presented in a design statement which will be submitted in support of a planning application. Clarification should be sought from the planning department at the pre-application stage on the level of information required in a design statement.

## site context and description

**context:** The largest single development opportunity in the Stromness North End development area is the former West Mainland Auction Mart site and former coal sheds sites which are owned by Orkney Islands Council. Privately owned sites on the west side of North End Road, and adjacent to the former Mart Site at Ferry Road are also included in the Development Brief area.

The former West Mainland Mart Site occupies a prominent position on the approach to Stromness. It lies just south of North End Garage and is bounded to the east by Ferry Road and to the west by North End Road. The southern boundary lies adjacent to 22 North End Road and the long stay car parking associated with the Ferry Terminal. Ferry Road is the main vehicular approach to and from Stromness and the Ferry Terminal while North End Road is a smaller scale route

with a more pedestrian character and scale with good views out over Hamnavoe from an elevated position. The Brinkies Brae sites are located on the hillside which rises steeply from east to west from North End Road. North End Road has a number of business and civic premises including the Coop shop, Stromness Fire Station, the Police Station and smaller businesses including a veterinary surgeon. In contrast, Ferry Road is bleak with few points of interest until its southern extent is reached in the historic core of the town: it is industrial in scale – maritime and functional in character. The construction of the proposed primary school on the lorry park just south and east of the roundabout on the Ferry Road will change this character to an extent. However the predominant character will remain maritime and functional. The new Primary School will also deliver a new safe pedestrian route which is identified in the Development Brief to cross the former West Mainland

Auction Mart site and link the new school with a sheltered route to the town centre and south end of the town via North End Road.

**description:** The Development Brief area sites have a west and south orientation with open views east across Hamnavoe to Garson and south towards Hoy. They are very exposed to south and east winds but also relatively sheltered from the west by land rising steeply towards Brinkies Brae. There is an existing relatively informal footpath connection between North End Road and the Former West Mainland Auction Mart site adjacent to three residential properties at 30-34 North End Road – these properties utilise the change in level between North End Road and Ferry Road (i.e. they are single storey to North End Road and two storeys at the rear with gardens at the lower level). To the north, the Mart site connects to the North End Garage area via an asphalt ramp.

The Mart site contains various relics of its former use such as concrete floors, walls, gables and chimneys together with piles of rubble. More recent additions such as timber sheds and huts, bits of scrapped agricultural equipment, oil drums and gas canisters give the site a derelict and neglected character.

The site on the west side of North End Road is currently open land. There is a small stone built garage and well at the lowest part of the site with direct access to North End Road. The site is contained by a stone dyke which is a prominent feature in the wider landscape.

The potential to redevelop the privately owned site currently occupied by a wooden garage and (separate) private garden sites (both located next to the former Mart site) are identified in the Development Brief should these be brought

fig 2 - site components

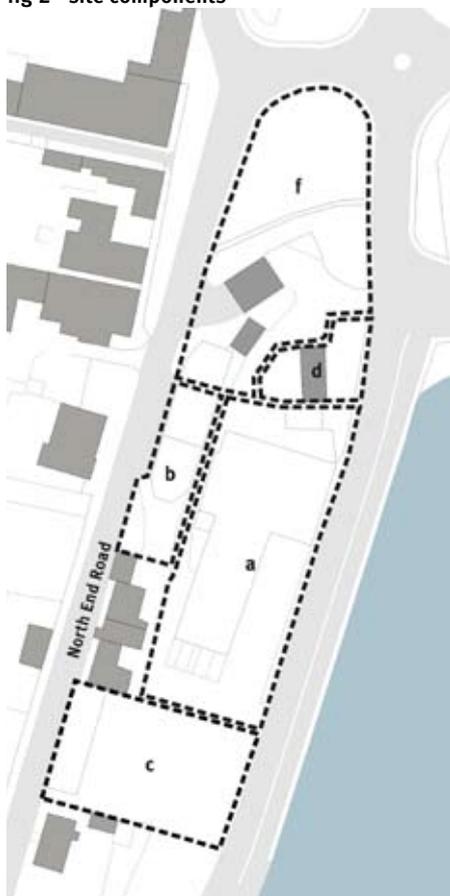
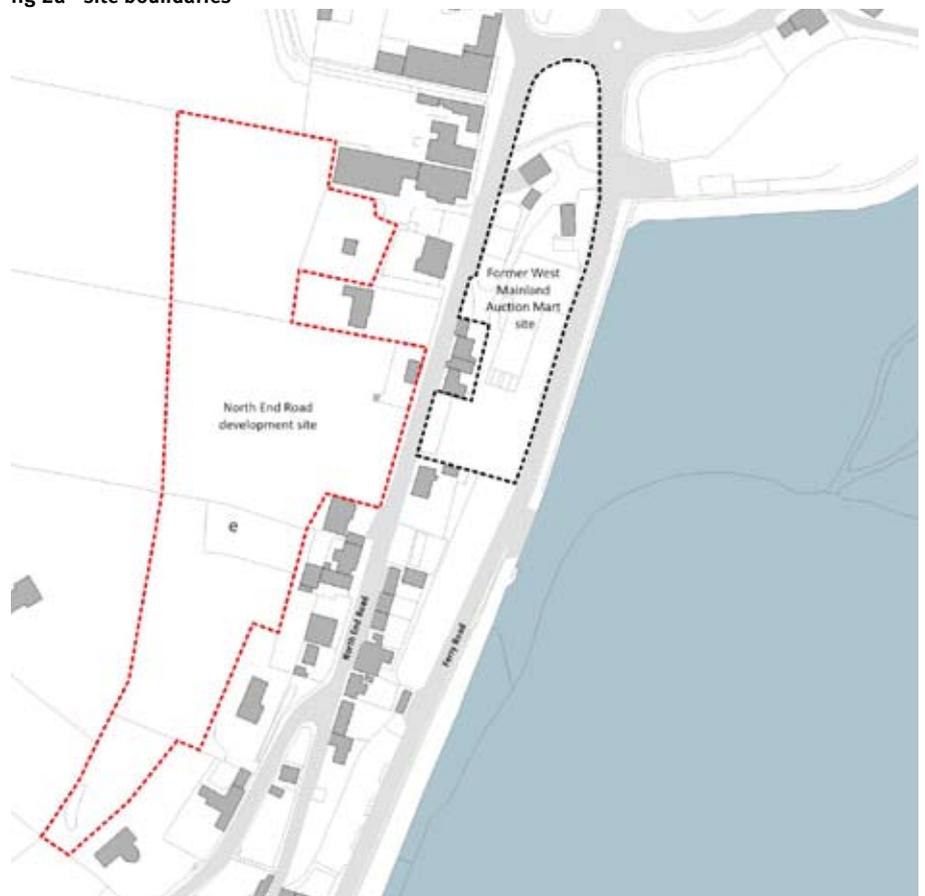


fig 2a - site boundaries



forward at a future date.

The Petrol Filling Station area has not been addressed in the Development Brief as this is an existing land use which is not likely to be changed during the lifetime of the Development Brief. Should this position change, it will be necessary to update this Development Brief to include the garage site.

## the development brief strategy

The spatial aspiration for the North End area is that the development should create a more appropriate urban form for this important entrance to the town. To achieve this, the following strategic priorities should be addressed through new development:

- The development of individual sites must respond to the very different characteristics of North End Road and Ferry Road effectively. For example, the functional, vehicular aspect of Ferry Road should be fully utilised, while development should seek to reconstruct parts of the more traditional street frontages along North End Road, reflecting the more pedestrian scale of that street. This will ensure there is coherence introduced to this fragmented part of the town, and ensures North End Road is prioritised as the physical and visual extension of the historic core.
- Development must address flood risk. This should specifically address the mitigation measures outlined in the Addendum to the Stromness SFRA and at DC8 below.
- Development must take advantage of the site’s important location on the Hamnavoe with its excellent views over the surrounding landscape.



fig 3 - illustrative Development Brief Strategy plan: Former West Mainland Mart site configuration

- Development must recognise the importance of its context and that it can be seen as a linear northern extension of the historic core of Stromness. It is therefore expected that great effort should be made to integrate the new development in the surrounding townscape and landscape, pay due regard to existing features and local ways of building, provide a reasonably sheltered environment and set new standards of building and external space which are appropriate for the 21st century and meet the aspirations of the Stromness community.
- Whilst it is anticipated that the area will be developed in

several phases, the whole area will be connected by a shared public realm – in particular the pedestrian linkages between Ferry Road and North End Road, and car parking.

The illustrative Development Brief Strategy plans (figure 3 and figure 4) identify six separate development sites within the Development Brief area. The following strategic priorities should be addressed through the development proposal for each of these sites:

- **site a:** The northern part of the former West Mainland Auction Mart site should accommodate a supermarket and car parking. The

most practical configuration for the supermarket is to be built as a stand alone building.

- **site b:** There is the opportunity for residential units to be developed fronting onto North End Road. The split level of the site will allow for vehicular access and car parking for the new housing at the lower level from Ferry Road.
- **site c:** The southern part of the former West Mainland Auction Mart site can accommodate a range of land uses – including hotel, office and/or residential uses and associated car parking. In all cases, the site should be developed to take advantage of the level difference between Ferry Road and North End Road, and should provide for an access/egress onto North End Road.
- **site d:** The wooden garage site on Ferry Road could be redeveloped to accommodate either commercial or residential uses or a mixed use building. In all cases, development should directly address the public space which will act as a landing point for the new primary school crossing of Ferry Road.
- **site e:** the spatial aspiration for the site to the west of North End Road is a residential development which works sympathetically with the steep east facing hillside of the site and provides a built frontage to North End Road.
- **site f:** Planning Permission has recently been granted for a new retail unit associated with the Petrol Filling Station at North End Road. There are no specific proposals to relocate the Petrol Filling Station at this time. If this position should change in the future then it would be necessary to update this development brief to include site f. As a starting point it is considered that a range of land uses, including a mix of commercial and/or residential



Site A looking north

uses, would be appropriate replacement uses for this site (subject to contamination issues etc).

## the design criteria

In addition to the Development Brief Strategic Priorities, planning applications must address each of the following criteria:

### DC 1: buildings and placemaking:

The design requirements and content for each of these elements are quite different and are set out below:

- site a** - supermarket: there should be an acknowledgment that a supermarket is a product of contemporary culture and should not be disguised as a large house, a traditional Orkney building or an enlarged suburban community centre. However, it is important that a high quality building is developed on this landmark site. An individually designed, distinctive building, which responds to the maritime /harbour side location, will therefore be required for this site. The building design must pick up on the visual link to the Pierhead and accommodate the key pedestrian links outlined on the illustrative Development Brief Strategy plan at Fig.3.
- site b** - residential development: this should consist of terraced housing or town houses over two/three storeys (storey height including Ferry Road Basement level). Given the central location, buildings must be individually designed to respond effectively to the character of the area
- site c** – hotel/office/residential: it would be possible to accommodate a high quality hotel on this site. Alternatively, an office or residential development could be accommodated in various forms including student or key worker housing. Building heights should take reference from existing buildings directly neighbouring the site. This is likely to allow for development of up to two storeys plus roof, however, care should be taken to ensure that the eaves and verge heights of neighbouring properties are not exceeded. Given the central location,



fig 4 - illustrative Development Brief Strategy plan

buildings must be individually designed to respond effectively to the character of the site, with a main frontage onto North End Road

d) **site d** – commercial/residential: A modest building could be accommodated on this site, which

could benefit from its proximity to the main pedestrian route linking the development site to the primary school development and the rest of the coastal footpath. Building heights of up to two storeys are likely to be acceptable. There are opportunities for this development to compliment the

Primary School and other development of sites b and c in terms of materials and form.

e) **site e** - North End Road - this steeply sloping site is an opportunity for quality housing with a particularly high standard of design and relationship to context. Given the highly sensitive location when viewed from the north, it is important that development is carefully orientated to respond directly to the landform and topography, avoiding deep plan buildings and excessive excavation. New buildings must establish a consistent height line which responds to this topography and neighbouring buildings. Buildings directly fronting onto North End Road could be up to two storeys.

*Note: as detailed above site f has not been addressed in any detail at this stage.*

**DC 2: access and parking:**

All developers will require to liaise with Orkney Islands Council Roads Support Team in the preparation of proposals for each of the development sites. The Council’s standards should serve as a guide for the form of development on the site but should be flexible enough so as not to inhibit the design of an innovative layout which respects the character of the area.

There will be a requirement for a Traffic Assessment to be undertaken to

looking north over Site A



accompany planning applications for each site, in particular to address car parking issues and to assess potential impact on the existing road network.

The main access to Site e will be from North End Road. The gradient of the site is likely to be a constraint to developing the full potential of the sites and it will not be appropriate to undertake significant excavation of the site due to landscape impact. Nonetheless, it should be possible to deliver a high quality development proposal for site e, with access and car parking areas appropriately sited in relation to new buildings respecting

the natural topographical constraints of the site.

**DC 3: sustainability and energy efficiency:**

The development of each of the sites should demonstrate efficient use of energy and resources in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply and consideration should be given to the use of sustainable materials. It will also be necessary that any development proposed takes cognisance of the emerging proposals for a district heating system.

**DC 4: materials:**

Materials should be chosen to respond to the character of the area that the development is to be inserted into. Preferred options of each site are detailed below:

a) **site a** - supermarket – a high quality designed finish to this building is essential. This could be achieved through a range of material choices including metal cladding. Glazed areas at ground floor level will be important to activate the pedestrian routes and mark the entrance to the building.



looking south over Site A

looking east over the Hamnavoe



b) **site b** - residential development – predominant materials should be stone and/or buff render, slate roofs.

c) **site c** - hotel/office/residential – predominant materials should be stone and/or buff render, slate roofs

d) **site d** – commercial/residential – predominant materials should be stone and or/buff render and slate roof.

e) **site e** - residential development – predominant materials should be stone and/or buff render, slate roofs.

### DC 5: boundaries and edges:

a) **site a** - the supermarket. Planting in this locale would be out of character with the prevailing maritime character of the site. Suburban detailing such as timber fencing would sit uncomfortably with the strong character of Ferry Road and are not appropriate. Boundaries should reflect the character of the area, for example where required, metal railings. If external storage areas are proposed, these should be screened off with an appropriately sized stone wall built using traditional methods. This is particularly important on the northern boundary to the site in order to contribute effectively to the character of the new school and the proposed crossing point at Ferry Road or to provide an appropriate boundary to any future development of site d.

b) **site b** - the residential development will create its own edge along North End Road by the position of the building line at the heel of the footpath along the street. The boundaries of the development to north and south will be the gable ends of the building and particular care should be taken over the treatment of these in terms of materials and details.



Site C

c) **site c** - the development will create its own edge by positioning the building line at the heel of the footpath – with a direct access being required onto North End Road. The boundaries of the development to north and south will be the gable ends of the building and particular care should be taken over the treatment of these in terms of materials and details. There is also the need to ensure that new buildings do not have a significant impact on the level of daylight enjoyed by neighbouring properties. Planning applications must therefore be supported by an appropriate daylight survey to address this potential issue.

d) **site d** – the development will be bounded to the south by the stone wall associated with the service area of the supermarket. The east boundary should not be defined at the school route crossing landing point, and

development should open onto this space.

e) **site e** - the development will create its own edge along North End Road but where there are no buildings or access point, there should be an appropriately sized stone wall to define the street edge. Other boundaries of the site should be planted as indicated the Illustrative Development Brief Strategy plan on page 6. This should be hardy native hedgerow species similar to adjacent existing planting on North End Road.

Boundaries to the parking areas associated with sites a and c (adjacent to Ferry Road) should be defined by metal railings or alternatively have no boundary treatment in order to work with the prevailing maritime character of the site.

## **DC 6: pedestrian access requirements:**

The construction of a new primary school for Stromness in the vicinity of the site (see Fig 1) necessitates clear and safe routes to the school from the surrounding area. The specific requirement for the development of the former West Mainland Auction Mart site is that this should include safe routes for children and other pedestrians from North End Road to Ferry Road through the site as indicated on Figs 1 and 3.

In addition, due to the potential for flooding on the site, it is necessary that a safe raised route is provided for across the site – in particular for sites a and d – which can act as a viable access or egress point to North End Road in the event of flooding. It should be noted that there is an existing right of way which cuts across the site b development site. The southern part of the site b is in private ownership and may not be developed for the foreseeable future. This could limit the short term delivery of the identified safe route to school identified in the illustrative Development Brief Strategy plan. It is therefore necessary that the existing informal route across site b is improved and formalised as part of the development of sites a and b. The longer term aspiration will remain to establish the more direct route through site b as illustrated in the Strategy plan. In a similar way. Site c must provide a safe access/egress directly onto North End Road.

## **DC 7: open space and landscaping:**

A number of pedestrian routes are identified throughout the Development Brief area. These should be delivered through the development of related sites and must be landscaped to a high standard and be attractively and well lit. Where possible and appropriate,

measures should be incorporated to ensure shelter.

A landscaped open space, including a seating area, should be provided at the landing point of the School crossing on Ferry Road. This should be investigated through the provision of the school crossing and development site d.

In the case of site b, it may be possible to construct terraced spaces to the rear of the property overlooking Ferry Road. In the case of site e, the existing well should provide a focus for any open space at the back of the development fronting North End Road.

## **DC 8: water resource management and flooding:**

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) completed in support of the Stromness UDF identified potential flood risk on the Former West Mainland Auction Mart site.

A SFRA Addendum has been carried out alongside the drafting of this Development Brief, and although the UDF highlighted that strategic flood infrastructure improvements may require to be put in place, this more up to date and detailed study makes clear that this is not required and that flood risk mitigation measures may be dealt with on a site by site basis.

It will therefore be necessary that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is undertaken for sites a, b, c and d. This must take into account the proposed development, and consider free board, wave action, defences etc for the individual site. The Flood Risk Assessment should also determine minimum floor levels of new buildings. As a starting point, a topographical survey of the former West Mainland Auction Mart site area showed that the site level is roughly constant at

a height of +3.0m OD (N). This is significantly lower than Ferry Road at a level of +3.47m OD (N) and so any excess water from the road would flow towards the site. The strategic defence level of the Ferry Road pier wall is around +3.55m OD (N). In the 1 in 200 year storm event this would not prevent flooding of Ferry Road. Flood mitigation measures will need to be considered in the design process for any development on Ferry Road, including for new built development, raising the ground level of that area of the site to the estimated flood level of +3.97m OD (N) and ensuring that the floor level includes a suitable freeboard allowance. It will be necessary that all new development on the Mart site has access to a safe, viable access/egress to North End Road during flood events.

Flood risk may also limit the use of ground floor levels on the site c to non-residential uses or elements of a hotel building. Site c must also provide for a viable access and egress point during flood events; linking the Ferry Road and North End Road levels of any new buildings.

Scottish Water should be consulted at an early stage in the planning application process in order to determine requirements. Site c has a pumping station directly to the south of the site and direct contact with Scottish Water will be required to establish a solution to accommodate this alongside the development.

## **SuDS**

Surface water drainage must be considered throughout the development of the North End development area and appropriate consultation with relevant statutory consultees should be undertaken. As a starting point, development of all sites must be supported by a SuDS

Statement and should target full on site attenuation where possible. Because there will be public open space and a large area of car parking created within the Mart site, these spaces should be utilised to overcome drainage issues.

### **DC 9: Contaminated Land**

Due to the history of the Former West Mainland Mart site, it is likely that certain areas will have issues with contaminated soils. It is the role of the Planning Authority to ensure that any risks to human health or to the environment are negated prior to development and it will therefore be necessary that assessments be carried out to any land to be redeveloped and that the appropriate remediation measures are taken prior to the commencement of any reuse of the land. In order to ensure that the appropriate measures are taken to address any issues regarding contamination of the site, the Council's Environmental Health Department and Scottish Water will be consulted in relation to any application for planning permission to develop land within the Stromness North End development area.



For further information, please contact:

**Development Management**  
**Development and Environment Services**  
**Orkney Islands Council**  
**School Place**  
**Kirkwall KW15 1NY**  
**Tel 01856 873535**

