



Land
Adjacent
to the
Sovereign
Centre,
Prince William
Parade



Planning
Brief



Land Adjacent to the Sovereign Centre, Prince William Parade Planning Brief

Supplementary Planning Guidance
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Planning Policy Unit
Economy, Tourism and Environment
Eastbourne Borough Council
68, Grove Road, Eastbourne,
East Sussex, BN21 4UH

Tel: 01323 425250
Fax : 01323 641842
Minicom: 01323 415111
e-mail: lisa.rawlinson@eastbourne.gov.uk

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CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	Page 1
2.0	Description of Site	Page 1
3.0	Planning History	Page 1
4.0	Planning Policy	Page 2
5.0	Covenants	Page 2
6.0	Development Guidelines	Page 3
7.0	Consultations	Page 7
8.0	Plans Accompanying the Brief	Page 7
9.0	Contacts	Page 8

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The land immediately adjacent to the Sovereign Centre is identified in the Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011) as being a possible development site for an indoor leisure facility. In addition the Council's Draft Seafront Strategy (updated in January 2003) recognises the potential the land has to become a prestigious leisure facility.
- 1.2 Therefore, the Council has taken the decision to look at the land and its surroundings to assess what scale of development could be accommodated on the site, should an application for planning permission be received.
- 1.3 This Planning Brief will look at the planning constraints associated with the site and provide advice to any future prospective developers.

2.0 Description of Site

- 2.1 The site has an area of 1.166 hectares and occupies a prominent position on the Seafront. It is located on the inside of a shallow concave sweep of the Promenade. Due to the relatively undeveloped aspect of this section of the Promenade, long views to the site are possible, particularly from the western end.
- 2.2 The site currently comprises an area of public open space and a hard surfaced car park which serves the Sovereign Centre (swimming pool and leisure complex). As part of any development proposals for the site, the Council will seek to ensure the retention of a skateboard and rollerblade park.
- 2.3 The site has varying levels. Adjacent to Prince William Parade there is a steep grass bank, which effectively screens the lower lying car park from the dwellings opposite. Thereafter the land rises gradually up to the Promenade and the difference in levels is as much as 3 metres in places.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 Various discussions have taken place over the years about possible uses for the land. To date, no planning applications have been submitted for development on the site, however, two applications for planning permission have been submitted for the formation and retention of a skateboard and rollerblade park on land immediately adjoining the site. (EB/1999/0501(LA) and EB/2003/0088(LA)).

3.2 When planning permission was originally granted for this development in February 2000, it was subject to a condition which made the use only temporary and required the development to be removed and the land reinstated to its former grassed condition on or before 28 February 2003. The subsequent planning permission granted in March 2003 was also for a temporary period and expires on 31 March 2006.

4.0 Planning Policy

4.1 The following documents make up the "Development Plan" for Eastbourne:

- East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan (1999-2011)
- Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011)
- East Sussex Minerals Local Plan (1999)
- East Sussex Waste Local Plan (draft 2002)

4.2 However, only the first two will apply to any development proposed on land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre.

4.3 The site is identified on the Eastbourne Borough Plan Proposals Map as being the "site adjacent to the Sovereign Centre" where Policy LCF12 applies and as being within the Partly Developed Coast Zone. The Structure and Borough Plan policies considered relevant to any proposal for development are detailed in Appendix 4.

4.4 In addition to the Development Plan policies, the Council's draft Seafront Strategy (updated in January 2003) includes a section on the land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre (paragraph 8.22) and recognises the prestigious and strategic value of the site. The Strategy recommends that a Planning Brief will be prepared to ensure satisfactory development of the site.

5.0 Covenants

5.1 The majority of the proposed development site is subject to various restrictive covenants, one of which prevents the land from being used "as a school or for any educational purpose or as a public house or beershop..." (Covenants – Appendix 5).

5.2 The formal consent of the Chatsworth Estate for any proposed development in contravention of the restrictions would therefore be required.

6.0 Development Guidelines

- 6.1 It has always been envisaged that the land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre would be developed for a substantial leisure facility, which would complement the existing swimming pool. Indeed over the years the development of an ice rink has been suggested. However, it is unlikely that this will ever be financially viable. As part of any leisure proposals for the site, it is considered that an ancillary restaurant/bar could be provided. This would not only provide an enhanced leisure offer, but would also be of benefit to local residents as there is a shortage of food and drink establishments in the immediate locality.
- 6.2 The proposed development of the site for any purpose other than an indoor leisure facility with an ancillary restaurant/bar would be contrary to the Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011).
- 6.3 Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that:-
“where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.
- 6.4 The proposed development of the land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre for any use other than a leisure facility with ancillary restaurant/bar, would therefore be a departure from the development plan and as such would have the potential of being called in by the Secretary of State.

Siting and Design Principles

- 6.5 The development site adjacent to the Sovereign Centre occupies a prominent position on the Seafront. It is therefore essential that any new building(s) is/are carefully sited and designed.
- 6.6 The design and appearance of the rear of the Sovereign Centre is considered most inappropriate, given its attractive Seafront setting, with uninteresting square shaped flat roofed buildings constructed of buff brick with little or no architectural detailing. It is therefore considered that any planning application for development on the adjacent site should include proposals to improve the appearance of this elevation, whilst ensuring the seaward views from the pool areas are maintained.
- 6.7 Any new development sited to the east of the Sovereign Centre will need to be positioned away from the Centre’s existing service area and footpath. The new building(s) should take full advantage of the double aspect fronting the Promenade and Prince William Parade. However, such a development would be subject to a number of restrictions.
- 6.8 It is considered that the building line of any new development facing the sea should not extend any further forward towards the Promenade than the existing building line of the Sovereign Centre. This would protect the openness of views towards and along the Seafront, enable the rollerblade/skateboard park to be retained and ensure land is available

for maintenance of the coastal defences (Appendix 6). If any linking paths are to be constructed in this area, they will need to be designed to a standard in order to be capable of withstanding the weight of construction traffic.

- 6.9 If any external seating area/patio is to be provided, it should be enclosed by a wall. This would have the benefit of providing some degree of privacy from Promenaders and some protection from the wind, whilst ensuring long range views of the Seafront and the Downs are retained.
- 6.10 The eastern extent of the site is the boundary with Sovereign Park, a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Bearing in mind the area available for development, it is not considered that any development will need to be sited adjacent to the Park. This will ensure the site's attractive setting is maintained (Appendix 6).
- 6.11 Furthermore it is considered that preventing development from being sited adjacent to Sovereign Park will ensure that the open view of the Seafront from the residential properties on the northern side of Prince William Parade is largely maintained.
- 6.12 In terms of the height of any new building(s), the top of the roof of any new structure should be no higher than the level of the existing flat roofed building with blue fascia panel at the rear of the Sovereign Centre (Appendix 2). Due to the site levels this would mean a lower building fronting the Promenade than that facing Prince William Parade. The area of the site facing Prince William Parade could probably effectively take another floor giving a two-storey to eaves frontage. In order to achieve this, it is acknowledged that it may be necessary to build into the existing bank. However, any material that would have to be removed from the site should be kept to a minimum i.e. only that which is required to accommodate any proposed building.
- 6.13 A topographical survey has been undertaken of the site and cross-sections indicate that a two-storey building sited at the existing car park level would be likely to have an eaves height similar to that of the residential properties opposite in Prince William Parade. Furthermore, the survey indicates that a single storey building sited at the level of the skateboard and rollerblade park would also be likely to have a similar eaves height to residential properties opposite.
- 6.14 The topographical information and cross-sections referred to above are shown on drawing no. 01031/AF/01 dated 11 September 2001, which is available for inspection at the Council offices at 68 Grove Road, Eastbourne.
- 6.15 The extent of any development facing Prince William Parade must not project any further forward than the front of the Sovereign Centre building. This is approximately halfway across the existing car park (Appendix 6).

- 6.16 It is considered that any new building should be of a modern style and reflect the seaside location. It should be of a light and airy design that adds interest and a focal point in the landscape.
- 6.17 Finally, it is considered that all of the open areas of the development site should remain free from clutter. If any external seating areas are proposed it is felt they should contain furniture and fittings, which are uniform in design and appearance.
- 6.18 Furthermore, if any external play areas are proposed, any equipment should be kept to a minimum and constructed of natural materials in order to maintain the attractiveness of the Seafront and respect the setting of the adjacent Sovereign Park.

Community Safety

- 6.19 It is important that community safety is considered when planning and designing the building. Therefore the developer should consult and liaise with the Community Safety Officer when formulating the proposals for the site. It should be remembered this is a relatively remote site and needs to be planned using the principles of "Secure by Design". Regard should therefore be given to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance "Designing Out Crime" (2003).

Lighting

- 6.20 The use of light could play an important part in contributing to the design of any new building(s).

Advertisements

- 6.21 It is accepted that a commercial development on the site will require some signage in order to attract visitors. However, care needs to be taken to avoid unnecessary clutter of advertisement material. Development on the site will be visible when driving in a southerly direction down Princes Road. However, when travelling along Lottbridge Drove, the site is obscured by the Sovereign Centre, but becomes increasingly visible when driving around the roundabout. It is, therefore, felt that a signboard could be erected on the easterly section of the front elevation of the Sovereign Centre, on the large expanse of brickwork.
- 6.22 It is considered that advertising along the Seafront should be kept to a minimum and it is suggested that the traditional seaside use of flags and flag poles could be used to effectively signal the presence of the development.

Ground Conditions

- 6.23 Two historic soil investigation reports which the Council has completed for this area identify localised pockets of landfill, although these are not located within the area immediately adjacent to the Sovereign Centre. Nevertheless it is proposed that any grant of planning permission will be

subject to a condition requiring site investigation and ground exploration works to be undertaken, and any remediation works carried out, prior to commencement of development.

Access, Parking and Servicing Considerations

- 6.24 A Transport Assessment will need to accompany any planning application, to allow full consultation with East Sussex County Council Highway Officers. In addition, and in accordance with the advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG 13) (2001), a Travel Plan will also need to be submitted.
- 6.25 The Sovereign Centre is currently served by a 9 metre wide vehicular access off the Royal Parade roundabout. A Transport Assessment would have to establish whether it would be acceptable to serve any proposed development on adjacent land from the existing access or whether highway improvement works would need to be sought and secured by planning condition or legal agreement.
- 6.26 The existing Sovereign Centre barrier controlled car park, which contains 280 spaces, is currently underused. There may therefore, be an opportunity to absorb some of the apparent surplus parking as part of a development scheme. However the parking provision will need to be fully assessed as part of the scheme and it may be necessary to provide additional parking elsewhere on site.
- 6.27 In order to assess the level of on site parking provision required to serve any proposed development, it will first be necessary to establish the amount of parking required to serve the existing Sovereign Centre, in accordance with East Sussex County Council's adopted standards. This assessment will have to take the following into consideration:
- the size of the various pools
 - the fitness suite
 - the sports hall
 - the café and
 - existing staffing levels.

Extracts from the adopted parking standards are attached at Appendix 7.

- 6.28 The parking required to serve any new development can then be calculated and this must include provision for disabled people and cyclists.
- 6.29 Should the existing on site car park remain, either in part or in full, it will be necessary to amend the layout, in order to provide improved safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.
- 6.30 Furthermore, serious consideration will need to be given to the management of the on site car parking. There will be a need to prevent the general public, wishing to gain access to the Seafront, from parking

on site as it would result in a shortfall of spaces being available for visitors to the Sovereign Centre and the proposed development site.

- 6.31 Any Transport Assessment will need to consider public transport access requirements and it will be necessary to amend the existing car parking arrangements at the front of the Sovereign Centre, to provide a turning area and stopping place for buses with a regular service link into the Town. There will, therefore, be a need to provide additional parking spaces elsewhere on site to compensate for those lost.
- 6.32 There is an existing cycle track which forms part of the National Cycle Network, which runs along the eastern side of the Sovereign Centre. This links the Promenade to the south, with Lottbridge Drove to the north (Appendix 1). Development on land adjacent to the Sovereign Centre may therefore necessitate the diversion of this cycleway link.
- 6.33 As part of any development scheme, improved pedestrian links between Prince William Parade, the Sovereign Centre and the Promenade will need to be provided (Appendix 6). The Sovereign Centre currently has a service road on the eastern side of the building, which allows vehicles to deliver direct to the kitchens and stores. A Transport Assessment will need to establish whether the existing servicing arrangements can remain as they are and essentially serve both the Sovereign Centre and the development site, or whether additional/alternative arrangements will need to be secured. This will, of course, depend on the layout of any proposed development. However, it is considered that a shared, centrally placed service area would be preferable as it could be screened from public view from both Prince William Parade and the Promenade.
- 6.34 Finally, the development site lies within the Indicative Tidal Floodplain. Therefore as part of any planning application, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 (PPG25) "Development and Flood Risk", to confirm the coast protection meets the requirements of the Government guidance.

7.0 Consultations

- 7.1 Should a planning application be submitted for development on the site, extensive consultations would be undertaken. The application would be advertised in the local press, a notice would be posted on site and occupiers of nearby residential properties would be informed in writing. In addition, consultations with East Sussex County Council's Highways Division, Sussex Police, the Environment Agency and other organisations likely to be interested in the development, would be carried out.

8.0 Plans Accompanying the Brief

- Appendix 1 - Location Plan
- Appendix 2 - South east elevation of Sovereign Centre
- Appendix 3 - North east elevation of Sovereign Centre
- Appendix 4 - Planning Policies

- Appendix 5 - Covenants
- Appendix 6 - Site plan indicating maximum extent of any new development
- Appendix 7 - Extracts from adopted parking standards
- Appendix 8 - Photographs
- Appendix 9 - Status of Supplementary Planning Guidance (PPG12)

9.0 Contacts

- 9.1 Should you require any further information or wish to discuss this Planning Brief in more detail, please contact Miss L. Rawlinson, Principle Implementation Officer at 68 Grove Road, Eastbourne. Tel. No. 01323 415250.