

Special and Opportunity Sites

The area illustrated in the Local Plan as the FH4* site for future housing search is a beautiful site worthy of an appropriately high quality development and is marked A on the accompanying plan (fig. 28.5). The framework endorses the comments made in support of the site by its owner during the Local Plan consultation process, namely that it is a unique setting for high quality, sustainable, sensitive and low energy, aspirational homes. From that point of view it may be seen as being similar to successful housing developments located around golf courses located within the polices of country estates e.g. Letham Grange, by Arbroath (fig. 28.1). Such a development may have a level of formality in terms of layout and collective appearance along the lines of a planned village, or a series of steadings. Applecross Home's Cardrona development (fig. 28.3) is an example of such an approach and is alluded to in the accompanying sketch layout (fig. 28.5) and the townscape sketch (fig. 28.2). The development must be carefully located within the landscape and would sit above the one in two hundred year flood with level Keith Hall's main avenue acting as a backdrop behind it. That landscape and its constituent trees are protected. The scale of the development should be contained within landscape rooms, which should emulate the pastoral parkland qualities of this setting. The design of the layout, houses, boundaries, roadways and landscaping within this area will require detailed proposals, which will be closely scrutinised by the Council and Historic Scotland in accordance with the estate's listed status, the Local Plan, Planning Advice Note 44 – Fitting New Housing into the Landscape, Planning Advice Note 67 – Housing Quality and A Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Places.

The area marked B on the plan is above the one in two hundred year flood plain and may be capable of development (fig. 28.5), but the Local Plan zones this area as parkland. The authors of this study feel that this area is worthy of further investigation to achieve a number of goals, namely: to increase the sense of connectivity between Uryside and Inverurie, to provide the park with a sense of enclosure at its north end and to act as a sheltering development on this exposed side of the park. This could be achieved via a housing development in a similar vein to that on the FH4* site. A potential layout is shown on the accompanying illustration (fig. 28.4). That said the need for further housing and the site itself demands more detailed scrutiny. This area may also support similarly high quality leisure or sports related activities.

The approximate area marked C on the sketch is outwith the Local Plan boundary but may be located in an area which is relatively flat, discrete and below adjacent horizons. This area may be worthy of detailed consideration for new uses associated with future phases of Uryside in the next local plan post 2015. Its likely potential though may be factored into the primary road network of the current proposals and landscape provision to the south.



Fig. 28.1 Letham Grange



Fig. 28.2 Townscape Development



Fig. 28.3 Cardrona



Fig. 28.4 Opportunity B

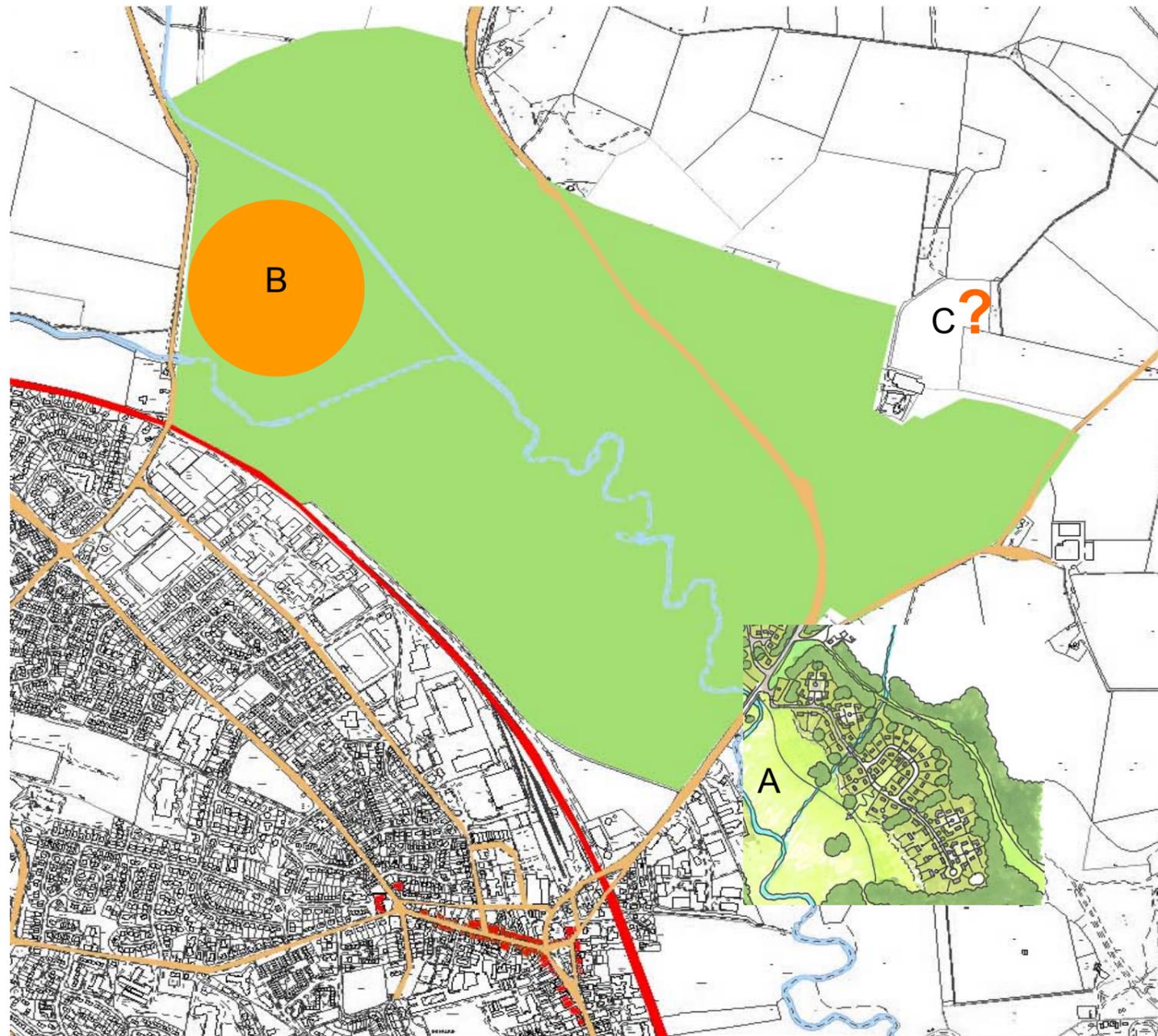


Fig. 28.5 Special and Opportunity Sites



The Community School

The new primary school is an essential element of the new development.

It is proposed that the school will have capacity for all the children from the new housing. The capacity required is likely to be some where in the region of 400.

In the framework masterplan, the school is sited to the north east of Oldmeldrum Road, close to its original location on the Structure and Local Plans within a 3 hectare site. It sits equally between Barratt's phase two development and land currently owned by Portstown Farm.

This location gives the school an urban face and helps it become the community focal point we would all like it to be. The school in combination with the other components of the central node (small scale shops, creche/nursery, hairdresser, offices, etc.) form a square facing the street, which will be deliberately urban in form. The square and the school will be integrated with the surrounding boulevard tree planting and softened by areas of lawn. Its boundary treatments will compliment its urban setting and will seek to tie the school architecturally to the adjacent housing developments.

The internal and surrounding roads will all be traffic calmed with the possibility of a 20mph speed limit and supporting speed cameras.

The central location and wide choice of pedestrian routes should make walking to school the easiest option which is both environmentally friendly and provides good exercise. (This is currently the focus of a government health advertising campaign). 'Walking buses' which have worked successfully at other school can be organised to help those parents who can't be at the school around 9am every morning. To that end the school site has been designed to integrate with the surrounding pedestrian network of green spaces and to the Uryside Park to the south of Oldmeldrum Road.

Realistically some parents will need to use a car, and for this eventuality a generous drop off area has been provided. A secure perimeter to the school would mean parents do not need to hang around till the bell (or have to drag a young sibling from the car seat in order to wait by the school gates) every day. Children from further than 2 miles away will arrive by buses which will have their own drop off area.

Car parking for teachers will be screened within the shelter belt.



Fig. 29.1 Sketch Proposals

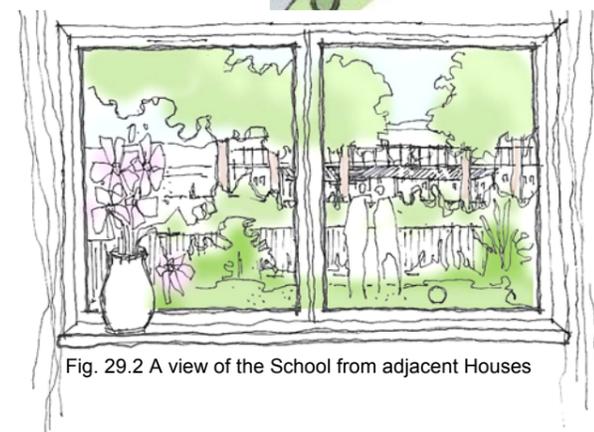


Fig. 29.2 A view of the School from adjacent Houses

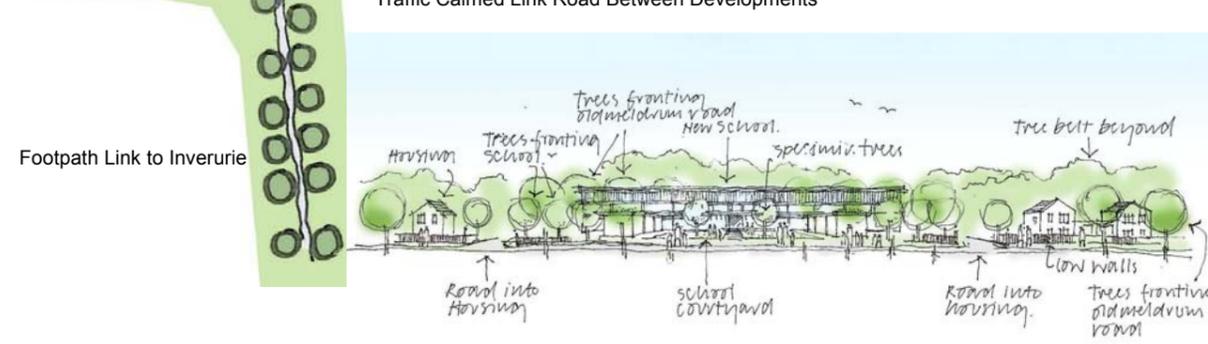


Fig. 29.3 View of the School from the adjacent Playing Fields



Fig. 30.1 Glazed Roof Allowing Natural Light into School



Fig. 30.2 Veranda



Fig. 30.3 Outdoor Classroom Areas



Fig. 30.4 Inviting Environment at Night

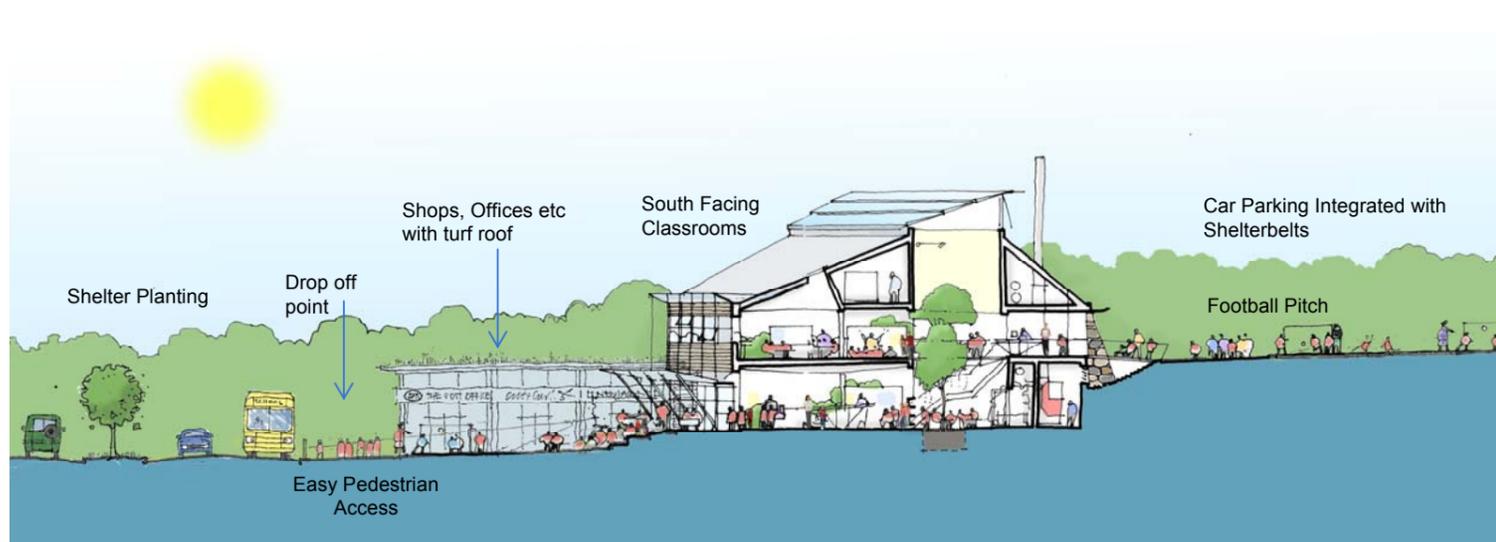


Fig. 30.5 Integrating the School in the Site and Community

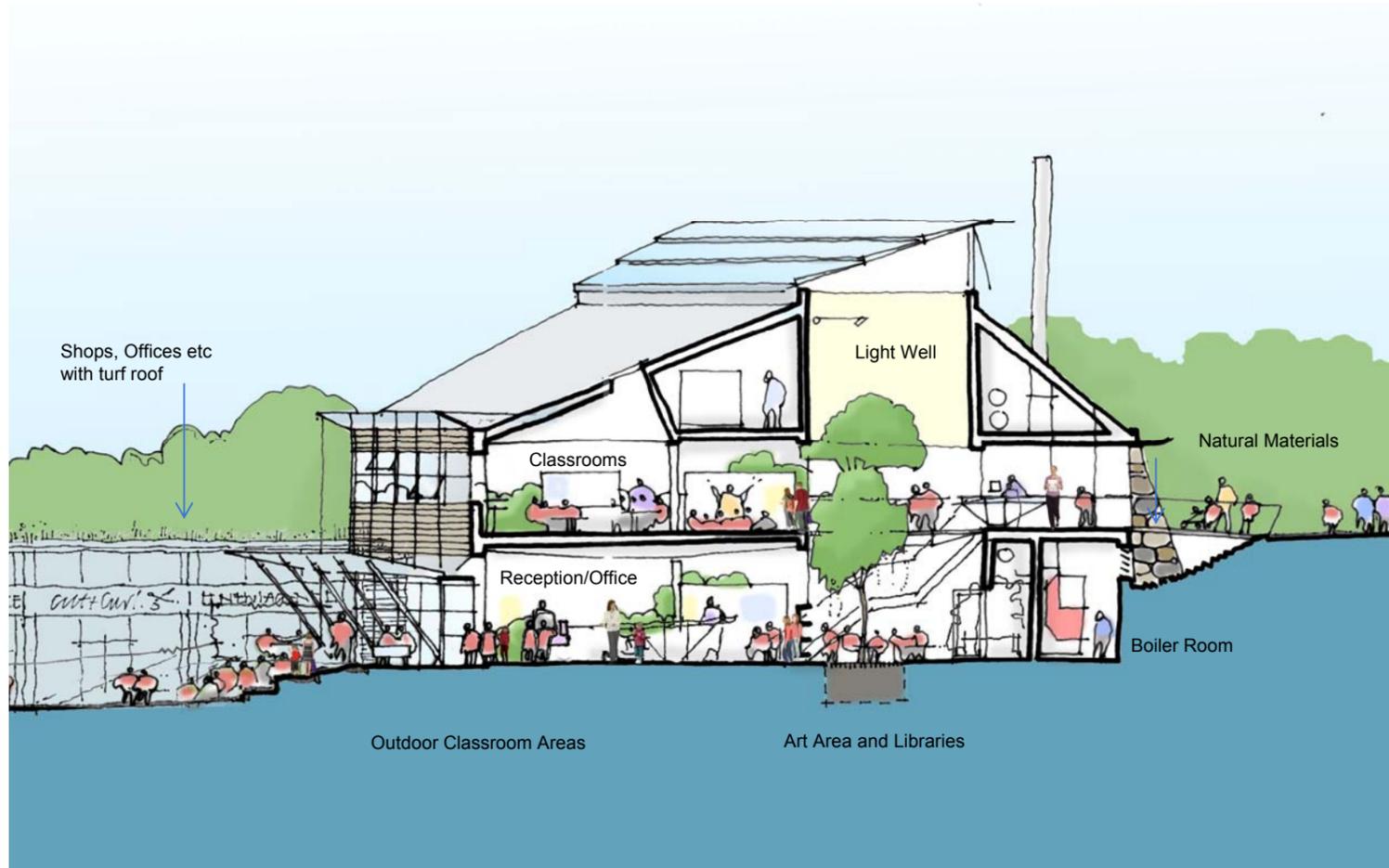


Fig. 30.6 A Sectional Response

The Community School

The school building itself is likely to be cut into the hillside. This will minimise the import or export of fill material and will also have the benefit of reducing its visual impact from the surrounding housing (fig. 30.5) as per the objectives of Index 21.

The building itself should be as eco-friendly as possible, both in its construction and day to day running. For example using materials from local sources where possible and those with a low environmental impact. Recycled materials are to be maximised.

Some of the following aspects could be considered in greater detail to create a school which is an educational tool related to the environment in its own right:

- Use of solar power to base heat water
- Bio mass heating
- Heat Recovery
- Natural ventilation
- Surface water recycling
- Controlled natural daylighting
- Could the school be carbon neutral?
- District heating possibilities

The school, as a key building in the development, should have environmental credentials which both make a real difference, improving the overall project's index 21 score, and also set a positive example to other developers.

It is intended that the building will be designed for multiple use for community and evening activities, again this is an economical strategy and may perhaps reduce the need for a hall to be built elsewhere.

The school should be a light, airy and fun place to learn. A building which is well connected to its local environment. It is well known that learning from practical experience can be very successful whether it be studying the changing course of the River Urie or viewing, from the classroom, the hillfort on Mither Tap, identifying local flowers or counting earth worms in the adjacent Tulloch Mor Woodland.

The school needs to be built on land provided by the Uryside developers. The provision of the school must be fully funded by the developers, if this cannot be achieved the school will not be capable of being delivered.

The Business Park



Fig. 31.1 Grianan



Fig. 31.5 Scale of Farmacyard Buildings



Fig. 31.2 Conversion



Fig. 31.6 Conversion



Fig. 31.3 Conversion

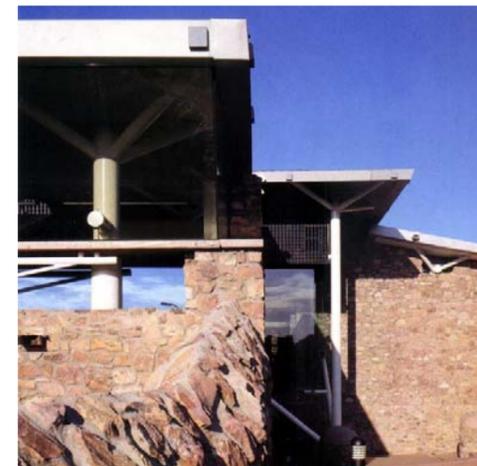


Fig. 31.7 Grianan



Fig. 31.4 Grianan



Fig. 31.8 Grianan



Fig. 31.9 The Business Park

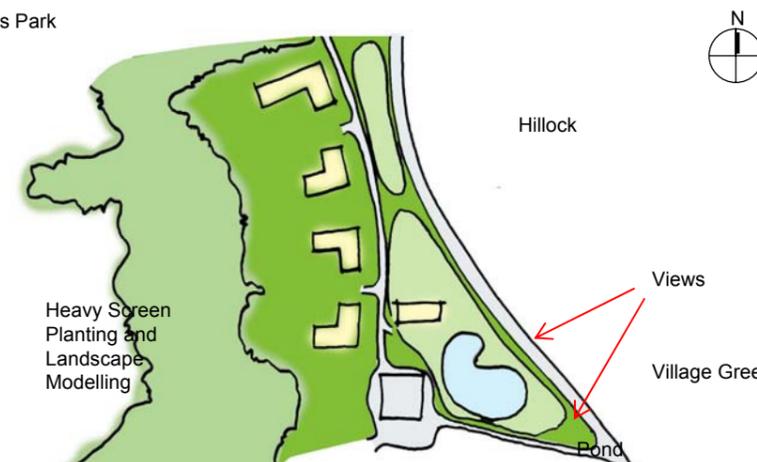


Fig. 31.10 Shelter and Focus



Fig. 31.11 View of Business Park and Pond

The Business Park is a high quality gateway into Inverurie serviced from the eastern roundabout of the north link road which should be developed in accordance with a Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Places. At its heart are selected buildings to be investigated for conversion, which currently form Portstown Farm (fig. 31.9). These elements will form a core of development and provide an immediate scale which already fits within the landscape as a background for future development.

Views are opened up to this area from Oldmeldrum Road across a proposed pond (fig. 31.11). Further north the road is separated from the business park by means of a berm forming a hillock. New units face the new access road and grow from the existing geometry of the steading. Carparking is discretely located towards the rear of the units set within landscape rooms, which are sized to permit expansion of both the building and carpark areas. It is intended that each unit is interlinked by a series of single storey stone walls, above and behind which a modern building appears, providing the business park with a high quality public elevation. These walls should be constructed with the infrastructure of the business park in an effort to control development and deliberately borrows from the architectural approach of Nicoll Russell Studios' Grianan Building (figs. 31.1 to 31.8) and numerous steading conversions to business use.

The accompanying photographs illustrate the quality, range of materials and architectural approach which will be encouraged. Opportunities exist for two further developments to the east of the steading (with carparking located between them) and for a higher quality feature block beside the pond. That will be an important site as it will effectively be seen in the round, with carparking located to the north within a bermed and landscaped environment allowing its elevation to the pond to be uncluttered. The existing trees and stone walls around the steading will be protected.

The business park will be restricted to office users and provides some 18,000 square metres of accommodation predominantly in new build two storey accommodation or to a lesser extent in converted existing buildings.

The Retail Park

The site of Northburn Properties' proposed Retail Park is an important stepping stone between Uryside and Inverurie. It was suggested during a period of negotiation that it would be beneficial to minimise the number of road access points to Oldmeldrum Road by using a route along the adjacent private road and to promote a restaurant unit in the site's north eastern corner to activate and self police pedestrian routes after store closing times. Although the developer noted that negotiations with adjoining proprietors to advance such an approach had not been successful, the project has been granted Planning Approval with conditions, one of which is the resolution of this form of access. This arrangement is also adopted by RSK Ens's Master Plan of the riverside park which seeks to extend the park towards Inverurie to minimise the impact of the retail park. That said, it is accepted that these negotiations may ultimately be fruitless and will then put a greater onus on the steps described below. (Fig. 32.2 and Appendix A).

Due to the advanced nature of the then Planning Application discussions between the developer, Aberdeenshire Council and the authors of this report were therefore restricted to enhancements to Oldmeldrum Road and steps to maximise connectivity between this site, the park and Uryside beyond (figs. 32.1, 32.3 and 32.4). These aspects were discussed with a view to deliver the Executive's objectives set out in a Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Places, PAN 77 – Designing Safer Places and PAN 76 – New Residential Streets. Elevationally it was considered important that the rear elevation of the block fronting Oldmeldrum Road was enhanced and screened with planting, boundary walls and high quality gates, as it would otherwise be highly visible and would create an unattractive and at night threatening pedestrian environment. The proposed enhancements would mitigate these effects.

Similarly it was proposed to enhance the gable elevation facing Oldmeldrum Road to match the scale and treatment of the main public elevations of the development to create a cohesive and unified public realm and to form a gateway to the development. Importantly that gable should have active windows to populate and self police this pedestrian route. The site's elevation to Oldmeldrum Road also benefited from negotiated enhancements in terms of urban tree planting (avenues in selected areas) and a walled enclosure to the area of carparking nearest the road to minimise the impact of carparking on this public edge. These objectives are in line with the Executive's guidance in PAN 44 – Fitting New Housing into the Landscape which have shaped the wider framework proposals. The developer agreed to promote pedestrian routes through his site (past the shop fronts) under canopies and potentially into the park on this site's northern boundary. He also accepted that there may be scope to develop two small scale shop units to fully enclose the pedestrian route at its western corner.

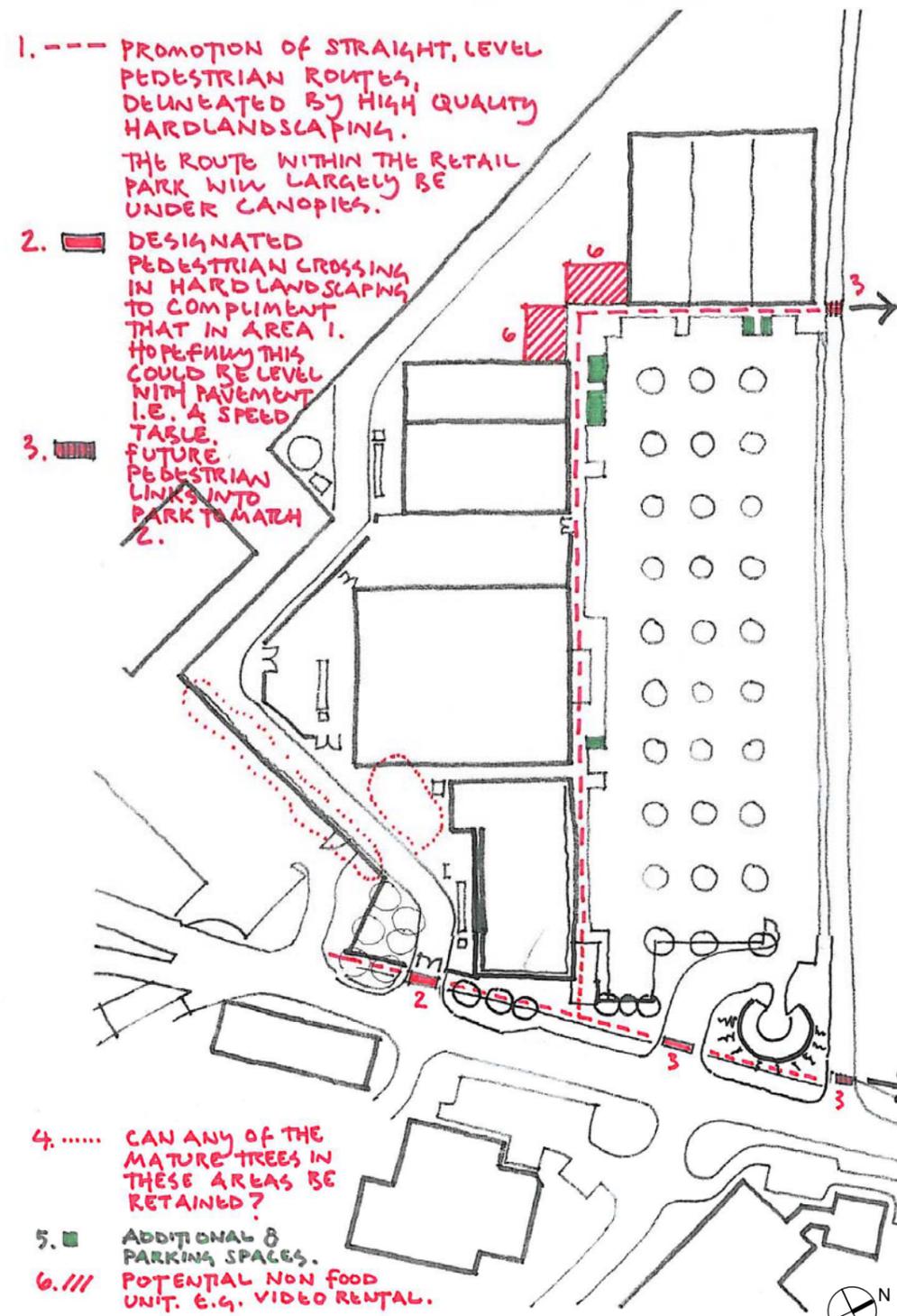


Fig. 32.1 Annotated Site Plan



Fig. 32.2 Original Concept and RSK Ens's Park Masterplan

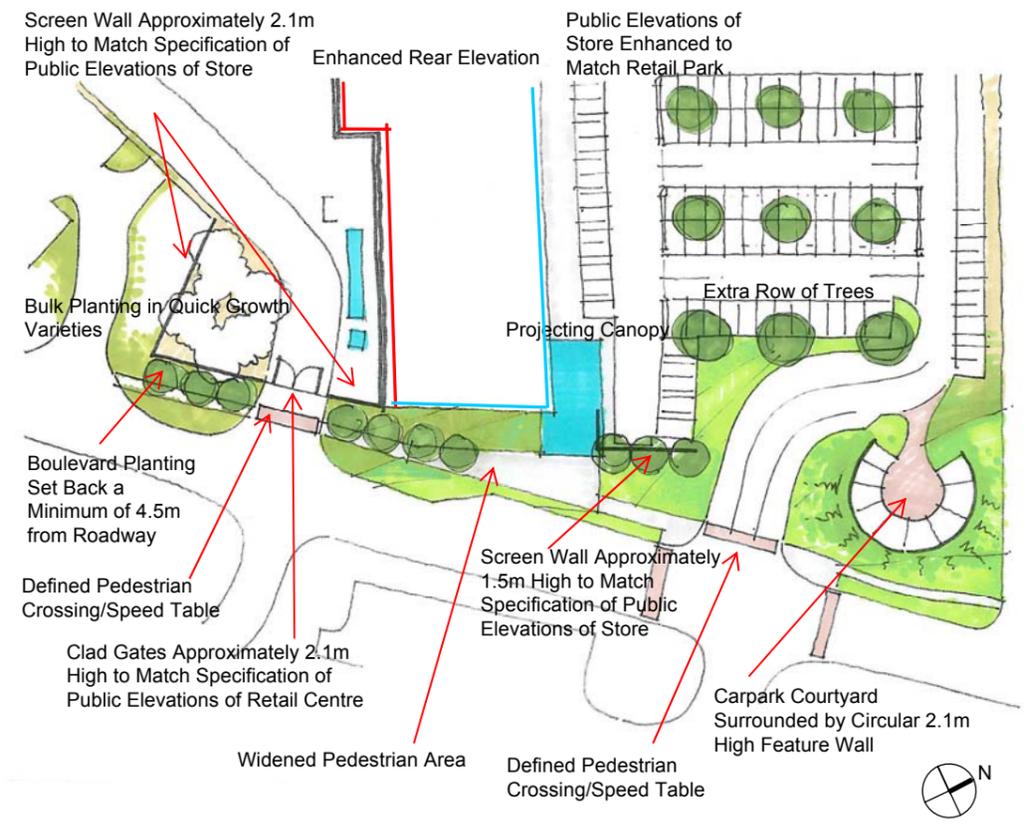


Fig. 32.3 Interface with Oldmeldrum Road

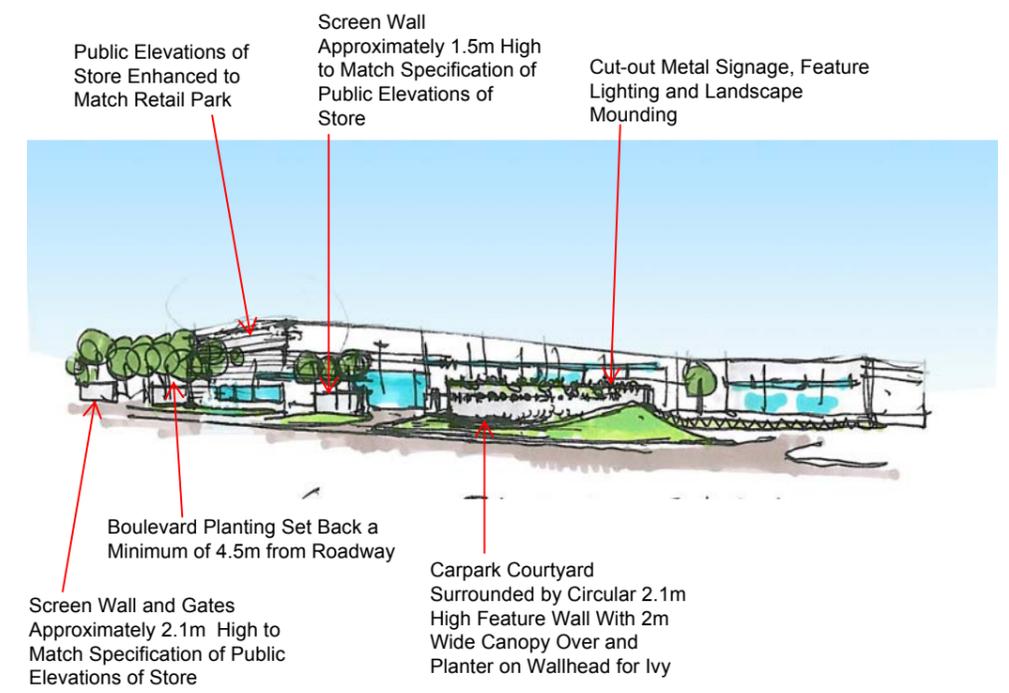


Fig. 32.4 Sketch Perspective from Street

Links to the Town

The area between the railway and Uryside is an important one. Comments on the adjacent retail park and potential improvements to its site access have already been covered in some detail on the preceding pages. The objectives of the framework masterplan in this area are borne by the realisation that this effectively out of town area will very quickly become much more of a town centre location, steps should be taken to reflect this evolving status both in terms of environmental improvements and future developments if the objectives of a Policy Statement for Scotland – Designing Places are to be delivered.

Landscaping should be used to immediately improve the area, provide it with cohesion and tie it to the appearance of Uryside beyond. Changes to the perception of this area will no doubt encourage further development or changes of use/tenants within the business park. This possibility was corroborated by comments made by certain developers during the consultation process. Change should be encouraged where it will compliment the framework masterplan. From that point of view developments should create a unified street frontage, should overlook, populate and self police the street, parking should be created discretely in courtyards to the rear of the properties and the quality of this location should be reflected in the architectural proposals of the buildings themselves. Steps should be taken where possible to simplify the road network and make it more pedestrian friendly, partly through the elimination of road junctions.

The existing recycling centre will in the near future feel rather out of place in such a prominent location and should be considered for redevelopment to reflect the new value of this site. It is an excellent opportunity to extend the business park which would enable, the enhancement of the elevation facing the Urie and the landscape beyond. A joint approach with the owners of the business park should be encouraged to produce a coherent overall appearance and to enable access to be achieved from that site.

The land on the other side of the Oldmeldrum Road, which is subject to a Planning Application as a retail park, should contribute to these objectives in a similar vein.

The park should link Uryside to the town and of course these developments. Pedestrian desire lines should be acknowledged by straight, secure, safe and self policed tree lined avenues in line with the guidance provided by PAN 77 – Designing Safer Places. Colony Park's sports pavilion and playing fields will be set within a series of landscape rooms to mitigate their impact and to self police certain routes (fig. 33.2 and Appendix A). Boulevard trees should be proposed to line Oldmeldrum Road to the north across the floodplain to protect this pedestrian environment and visually tie it to Uryside.



Fig. 33.1 Annotated Site Plan

Fig. 33.2 Sports Facilities in Landscaped Rooms