

# St JAMES'S AREA DOVER

## Planning Brief

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

**DOVER**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



## **1.0 Purpose of the Brief and Background**

- 1.1 Dover District Council is seeking to promote the appropriate development of this site which is intended to play a key role in both the regeneration of the St James's Area and the town centre as a whole. It is an unusual opportunity for large scale redevelopment in the town centre and lies adjacent to the A20(T), which is the main road to Europe's busiest port and is therefore highly visible. The location of the site is identified on Plan 1. It covers an area of approximately 3.2 ha (7.9 acres).
- 1.2 In its current condition, the site presents a poor image of Dover town centre and as a result people are less inclined to stop and visit the town centre. This in turn is considered to have a negative impact on the local economy. The Council sees the redevelopment of the site as a top priority and an opportunity to improve the appeal and vitality of the town centre.
- 1.3 The site has remained in this condition for a number of years and it is suggested that its comprehensive development has been held back by fragmented ownership, abnormal site costs, a poor image and certain activities that need relocating.
- 1.4 The Port of Dover handles more passengers and freight than any other port in Europe. In 2000 it was estimated that movement through the Port exceeded 16 million passengers. This provides a potentially vast catchment of people arriving on Dover's doorstep each year. In addition, the cruise liner terminal, which is the busiest in northern Europe, had a throughput of 143,000 passengers in 2000. Due to the increase in throughput, Dover Harbour Board has built a second terminal to double the capacity, which opened in April 2000.
- 1.5 The majority of these passengers pass the St James's Area along Townwall Street (A20), therefore an attractive development would improve the presentation of this key site, encouraging people to stop and explore the many attractions offered in Dover.
- 1.6 The Brief intends to encourage the comprehensive redevelopment of the site to enhance the site and the town centre as a whole, increase linkages with its surroundings and to secure environmental improvements. Its redevelopment is also one of the key aims of the Town Centre Strategy.
- 1.7 The site is currently owned by several different parties, therefore the achievement of comprehensive redevelopment will depend on site assembly and the relocation of existing uses. Every effort will be made to resolve land ownership issues through negotiation, but as a last resort the Council will be prepared to consider the use of its Compulsory Purchase powers. The Council already owns a significant portion of the site.

- 1.8 This Planning Brief has been the subject to considerable public consultation. It has been prepared to take account of a Retail/Leisure Study, completed in September 2000.
- 1.9 This guidance has been adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Dover District Local Plan and in particular, Policy AS9. It will be an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## **2.0 Objectives**

- 2.1 This brief has been prepared to provide planning guidance on the comprehensive redevelopment of this key town centre site.
- 2.2 The planning objectives which the Council is seeking to achieve comprise:
1. Comprehensive regeneration of this “brown field” site, thereby bringing a site of strategic importance back into full and effective use.
  2. Provision of a suitable mixed use scheme which will reinforce the role of the town centre and contribute to its vitality.
  3. Secure environmental enhancements through high quality design of new buildings and landscaping treatment.
  4. Secure townscape improvements of this highly visible location which reinforce this entrance to the town centre and enhance linkages between the core shopping area, sea front and neighbouring retail and tourism facilities.

## **3.0 Policy Context**

### *National and Regional Policy*

- 3.1 In accordance with national and regional policy guidelines, this brief seeks to encourage the comprehensive redevelopment of a “brown field” site, in a town centre location, in a sustainable manner with a quality design that respects and enhances its setting.
- 3.2 A key aim of the Kent County Structure Plan (adopted December 1996) is to support and improve the standard of environment and the quality of life in Kent, including the level of economic prosperity. Furthermore Policy EK3 of the adopted Structure Plan prioritises the need to address the economic problems of Dover and other areas.

## *Local Planning Policy*

- 3.3 The Brief reflects the policies of the Dover District Local Plan and seeks to provide more detailed guidance in achieving the aims of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 The adopted Local Plan covering the site is the Dover District Local Plan (2002). The Plan shows the site as within the designated Town Centre. Policy AS9 identifies the majority of the site for mixed use redevelopment including B1, retail, residential, leisure and tourism uses.
- 3.5 Plan 2 shows the boundaries of the site and the areas covered by Policy AS9. The additional areas fronting King Street and Woolcomber Street have been included to enable a comprehensive development capable of full integration with its surroundings. The Council is not currently progressing with the redevelopment of the Sports Centre and views development of the surface car park fronting Townwall Street as optional.
- 3.6 Policy AS9 states:

*The redevelopment of the St James's Area, shown in the Dover Inset of the Proposals Map, for a mixed use scheme including B1 employment, retail, residential, leisure and tourism uses will be permitted provided that any new development:-*

- (i) maximises the use of the upper floors of buildings;*
- (ii) is designed to reflect the site's important location, and the importance of views from Dover Castle and the Western Heights and the setting of Dover Castle and St James's Church Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- (iii) provides strong pedestrian and cycle links to the Market Square, Castle Street and Dover seafront;*
- (iv) provides adequate access and parking arrangements including provision of public parking;*
- (v) provides for an archaeological evaluation in advance of any planning decision, and for the consequent appropriate level of archaeological mitigation in accordance with the archaeological policies of this Plan; and*
- (vi) incorporates environmental improvements to the whole area, including the riverside walk.*

*In order to fully assess traffic implications any planning application will need to be accompanied by a traffic impact assessment.*

### ***Retail Strategy***

- 3.7 The site is included within the boundary of the Town Centre, in the Local Plan, this designation focuses on town centre shopping provision and the local hierarchy. The general policy, as it relates to Dover, seeks to:
- a) *concentrate new shops in the town centres of Dover and Deal;*
  - b) *provide for the needs of the local population as far as is practical, taking into account the limitations imposed by Dover and Deal's positions in the shopping hierarchy;*
  - c) *ensure that shops are accessible by a range of means of transport including walking and cycling; and*
  - d) *improve the quality of town centre shopping and its environment.*
- 3.8 In light of recent Government guidance, only proposals on sites outside the town centre will have to demonstrate need.

### ***Housing Strategy***

- 3.9 The Council's housing strategy seeks to direct provision of new housing to urban areas in the District. The scale of development envisaged for the site provides an opportunity to incorporate an element of residential development, including on upper floors. This will ensure that full and efficient use is made of the site and is in line with the modern emphasis on mixed use development bringing extra life and security to the town centre. Parking standards for the residential element could be relaxed to enable this. As the site is adjacent to a busy main road, noise will be a critical issue which should be addressed in any planning application. Additionally, any planning application should address relevant Local Plan policies.

### ***Economic Development Strategy***

- 3.10 The site lies within an area of the town centre referred to as the "Dover Town Investment Zone", which aims to:
- "... change the perception of Dover as purely a transit town, into a lively and attractive destination, by creating conditions that would:*
- *Attract investment into a range of areas and activities, encourage visitors to stay in the town and improve conditions for traffic circulation and parking.*
  - *Bring employment opportunities*
  - *Improve the quality of life and secure environmental enhancement"*

### *Other Relevant Guidance*

- 3.11 The site presents a genuine opportunity to action the aims of the “Making Mixed Use Happen” initiative, launched in 1997 by English Partnerships and the Urban Villages Forum. This was established to harness public and private resources to promote mixed use development on brown field sites in England.
- 3.12 In addition SEEDA’s Regional Economic Strategy, points to the development of the south coast and to the need for SEEDA and Local Authorities to “*work closely to identify vacant, derelict, brownfield and under used sites and buildings, to accommodate mixed use developments to revitalise town centres in a sustainable and cohesive manner*”.

## **4.0 The Site**

- 4.1 The site is located in the central southern area of Dover town centre. It comprises the majority of the area bounded by Townwall Street, Woolcomber Street, Castle Street and St James’s Lane.
- 4.2 Current uses on the site include a surface car park, a multi-storey car park, retail, hotel and offices, a bus servicing depot and vacant land. The site is dominated by a number of buildings with no particular townscape merit, including Burlington House, a 12 storey, vacant office building; The County Hotel, a six storey concrete clad building which adjoins Burlington House on the Townwall Street frontage; and to the rear is a 260 space multi-storey car park, which has subsequently closed. The bus servicing depot presents an unattractive appearance and its use is not complementary to other town centre uses. In addition its position in the western part of the site, prevents links with the Market Square and town centre.
- 4.3 In terms of topography, the site slopes down from west to east, such that the ground level abutting Russell Street and St James’s Lane is at approximately first floor level on Woolcomber Street. It also slopes down from north to south.
- 4.4 It is understood that all mains services are provided in close proximity to the site, however interested parties are advised to make their own enquiries to the relevant utility companies.
- 4.5 The site is bisected by Russell Street, which is an adopted highway and runs across the site from north to south. A limited traffic management scheme has been implemented in Russell Street and environmental improvements carried out along the frontage of the River Dour in the Mill Lane Area.
- 4.6 It is envisaged that categories of use listed in Policy AS9 could include the following:

- Retail – food and non-food uses that complement the existing town centre retail provision within the context of a mixed use development.
  - Leisure – various uses including cinemas, restaurants, pubs, family entertainment, health and fitness, and other quality operations that complement the existing facilities.
  - Housing – a mix of housing types, including private and affordable housing, available for sale or to rent.
  - Offices – a combination of traditional offices and studios/workspace.
  - Hotel – improved hotel facilities would be welcomed.
- 4.7 This brief is not prescriptive about the mix of different uses or the balance between them. It is intended that proposals will be considered on their merits and a flexible approach will be adopted. The overriding consideration is that the objectives set out in section 2.0 are met. Reference will be made to current best practice in the design and implementation of mixed use development schemes such as the recent English Partnerships’ publication “Making Mixed Use Happen”.
- 4.8 The following sections identify the key issues that a developer would need to address as part of any planning application, in summary these include:
- Access - a Traffic Impact Assessment
  - Design – a Design Statement
  - Archaeology - an archaeological assessment
  - Ground conditions - a ground conditions survey
  - Air quality – issues related to air quality need to be considered with the Council’s Environmental Health section

## **5.0 Access**

### *Vehicular*

- 5.1 It is envisaged that the principal vehicular access to the site will be in Woolcomber Street where the existing St James's Street access may be retained or a new one created to the north of the two listed buildings adjacent to the existing access.
- 5.2 Any proposal to retain the existing access into Townwall Street from Russell Street will require justification. Proposals should have minimal impact on the flow of traffic along Townwall Street, therefore it is unlikely that significant traffic generation will be permitted at this junction, however an "in" only access may be appropriate, subject to justification.

## ***Servicing***

- 5.3 Redevelopment of the St James's Area must cater not only for servicing of new development, but also ensure the rear servicing of surrounding properties.

## ***Pedestrian***

- 5.4 Pedestrian access to and from the site should be designed to ensure improvements to the pedestrian footfall serving the main retail areas of the town. The principal parking facility for the town's retail area is likely to be located within the St James's area and development should facilitate the pedestrian movement to and from the car park into Bench Street, King Street, Market Square and the south east end of Castle Street, as shown on Plan 3.
- 5.5 The proposed pedestrian gateway through Dolphin House is the most direct route between the St James's Area and Market Square. This linkage is vital to the effective integration of the St James's Area development into the town centre and to the effective functioning of the town centre as a whole.
- 5.6 Improvements to the pedestrian links with the factory outlet shopping centre, De Bradelei Wharf at Wellington Dock, should be encouraged.

## **6.0 Car Parking**

- 6.1 The St James's area is seen as the main car parking area for visitors to the town centre. The other existing small car parks to the north, can be difficult to find and consequently are used mainly by local drivers. Two car parks are currently located within the St James's Area. They are the multi-storey car park which accommodates 260 cars and the Russell Street car park which accommodates 237 cars. Development of the St James's Area must provide car parking and public transport facilities for the journeys generated by the development itself plus the number of spaces lost by any redevelopment of Russell Street Car Park or the multi-storey car park, within the context of a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA). Adequate provision of disabled permit parking is needed throughout the development to allow access to the facilities. Some short-term parking should be provided.

## **7.0 Urban Design**

### *Site Context*

- 7.1 The town centre lies within the bowl created by its surroundings. New development should have due regard to the high-level long-range views, as well as the townscape issues within the town centre itself.

- 7.2 Developers should adhere to the principles set out in Kent Design. In addition they would be required to submit a Design Statement which fully addresses the objectives set out in the latest DTLR urban design guidance.

*Relationship with the Town Centre*

- 7.3 The site lies immediately to the east of the southern part of the principal retail area of the town. Its development should assist the regeneration of the commercial heart of Dover and in this context it must provide complementary uses and create links between the site and Cannon Street/King Street/Bench Street and the Market Square.

*Townwall Street*

- 7.4 The town centre is not currently perceived from Townwall Street. The redevelopment of the St James's Area offers an opportunity to rectify this. Millions of visitors to the UK using the Ferry Port and travelling from it along Townwall Street pass the site. The configuration of the road approaching from the east ensures that any development on the corner of the site at the junction of Woolcomber Street and Townwall Street will be a focal point and due regard will be given to development proposals which exploit this opportunity to the benefit of the town.
- 7.5 Development fronting Townwall Street will necessarily address a harsh heavily trafficked environment and the significant scale of the Gateway flats on the opposite side of the road. The opportunity to shelter the site from traffic noise should be exploited and development could create a hard urban edge of sufficient scale to relate to the flats opposite while respecting the adjoining buildings in Townwall Street. The dichotomy between a continuous wall of buildings and the need to see into any new development could be resolved by exploiting views along and adjoining the River Dour.

*Woolcomber Street*

- 7.6 Development fronting Woolcomber Street must respect and enhance the setting of the listed buildings at the St James's Street junction while improvements to the retail building at the junction with Castle Street, which respond to the scale and character of Castle Street, would be considered advantageous. The principal vehicular access to the site is likely to be in Woolcomber Street and an appropriate entrance into the site will be required.

*Russell Street*

- 7.7 Russell Street bisects the site running approximately north south between Townwall Road and Castle Street. The view into the site looking from Castle Street down Russell Street is important and development proposals should take account of this.

- 7.8 The northern end of Russell Street is fronted by villas, which are similar in scale and character to those lining Castle Street. On one side these terminate at the Castle Pub while on the other they stop halfway along this section of the street. Development in this section should pay due regard to the scale, character and form of existing buildings in the northern part of Castle Street. Little remains of the buildings which once lined the central and southern part of the Street and development within the site is not required to follow the old street pattern unless it is appropriate to do so.

#### *Castle Street*

- 7.9 The only part of Castle Street which has a common boundary with the development site is at the junction of Castle Street and Woolcomber Street. Castle Street is particularly attractive and redevelopment of the northern corner of the site which respects the scale and character of Castle Street would be welcomed.

#### *The River Dour*

- 7.10 The River Dour flows through the western side of the site. With the exception of two bridges serving secondary routes into King Street and Bench Street and another serving a service yard and parking area it separates the site from the adjoining commercial area. Redevelopment should seek to rectify this by exploiting and improving the existing links. It should also exploit the amenity value offered by the river flowing through the site through the provision of environmental enhancements and where appropriate the retention of existing trees.

#### *Scale and Form*

- 7.11 New development proposals will be required to be in sympathy with the scale and character of the existing surroundings. It is anticipated that while large scale buildings may be appropriate on the Townwall Street boundary and at the southern end of Woolcomber Street much smaller scale buildings will be required to address the northern part of Woolcomber Street and the Castle Street/Russell Street side of the site. The area alongside the River Dour offers the possibility of intermediate scaled buildings.
- 7.12 The form taken by the development should reflect the urban context of the site and to this effect it will be expected to create a series of linked pedestrian friendly public spaces. This permeability should encourage pedestrian access from all sides.
- 7.13 Importance is placed on the need to create a strong focal point at the Woolcomber Street/Townwall Street junction and to provide view(s) into the site from Townwall Street where appropriate. The need to park a significant

number of cars on the site suggests that a multi-storey parking solution may be required and the strategic location of this should ensure that the pedestrian footfall to the town centre ensures activity within the development site.

### ***Public Realm and Landscaping***

- 7.14 Redevelopment of the site should incorporate comprehensive and high quality landscaping treatment. In addition there is a need to provide features to improve the public realm, such as squares and open space.
- 7.15 Materials for hard landscaping should be in keeping with the quality adopted in the areas of improvement surrounding the site including granite sets, brick, and York stone paving. The quality of finishes and street furniture in Cambridge Terrace and New Bridge area is seen as a good example of the standard to achieve.

## **8.0 Archaeology**

- 8.1 The site falls within the Dover Town Centre Area of Archaeological Importance. Interested parties will be expected to conduct a detailed archaeological investigation prior to development.
- 8.2 A recent study has confirmed the likely importance of the site's archaeological heritage. In general, the approach will be to minimise disturbance and preserve in situ, however, where necessary it should also be possible to remove and record. For further information interested parties should contact Kent County Council's archaeology team.

## **9.0 Conservation**

- 9.1 The site adjoins and partly falls within the Dover Castle Conservation Area. Any proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of this Conservation Area. In particular, proposals must respect the character of Castle Street and retain the important views of Dover Castle.
- 9.2 Proposals must also respect the two listed buildings in St James's Street.
- 9.3 The north east corner of the site lies in close proximity to the remains of St James Church, Dover Castle and the Western Heights which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 9.4 Interested parties are advised to discuss the above conservation issues with English Heritage.

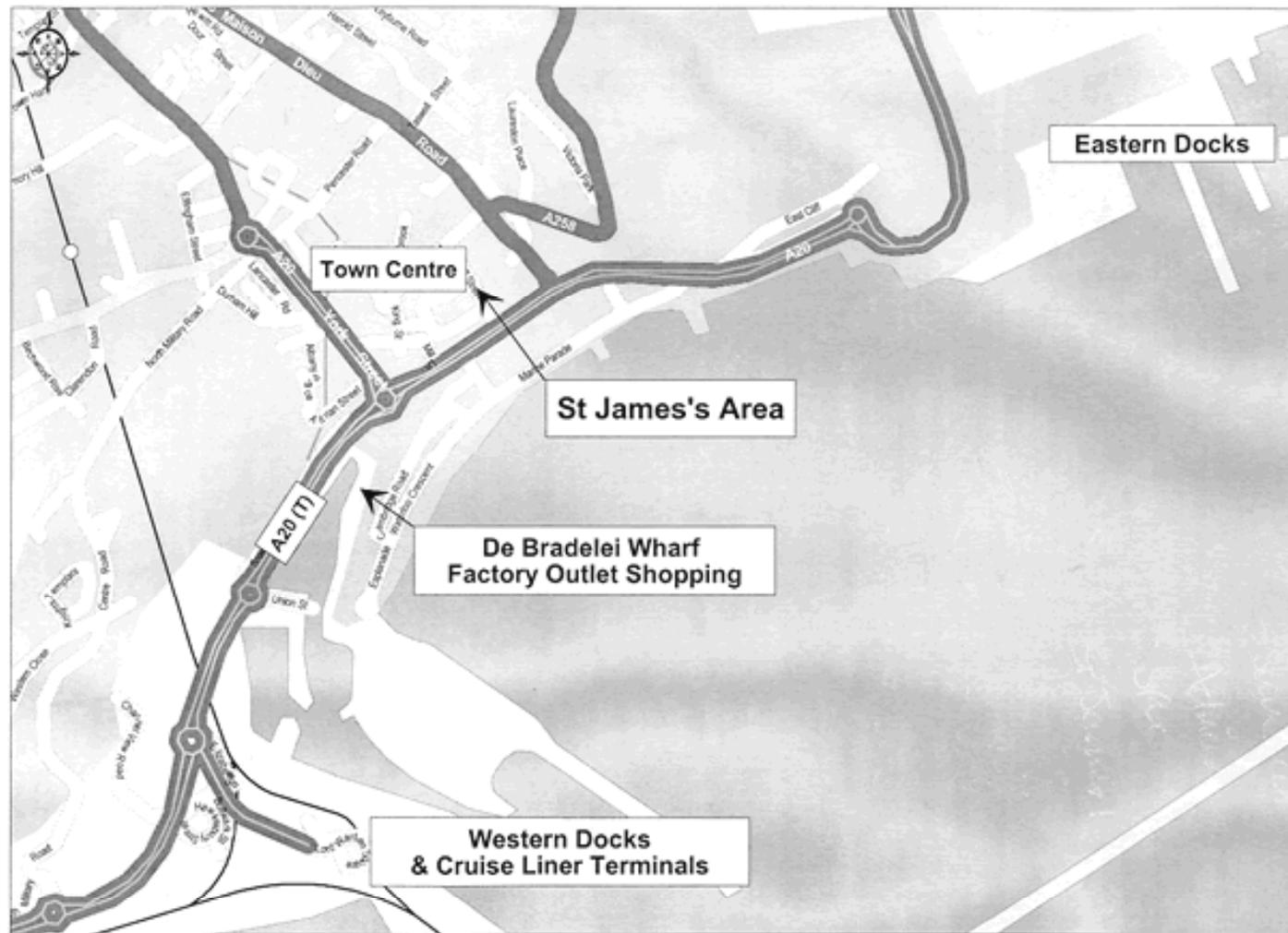
## **10.0 Implementation**

- 10.1 Any applications made in outline should include details of access and siting. Early contact with Council development control officers is advised.
- 10.2 This guidance has been adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance to Policy AS9 of the Dover District Local Plan, and will be an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## **Appendices**

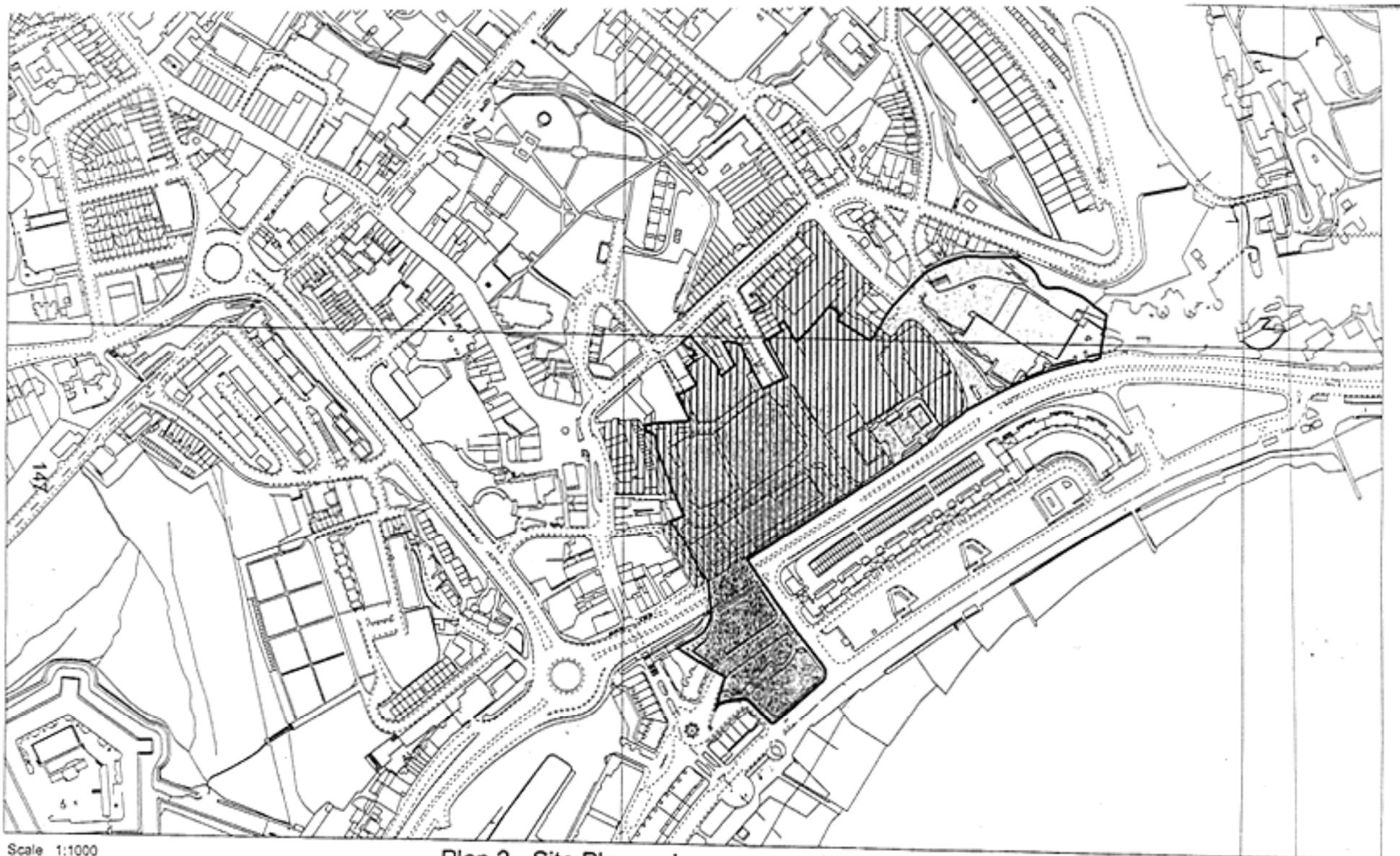
- Plan 1      Location Plan
- Plan 2      Site Plan and area covered by Policy AS9
- Plan 3      Opportunities and Constraints Plan
- Plan 4      Cross sections
- Plan 5      Site photograph

# St James's Area, Dover Location Plan



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(Scales other than at Survey Scale should not be used for accurate measurement). Business occupancy data ©2000 Thomson Directories Ltd.





Scale 1:1000

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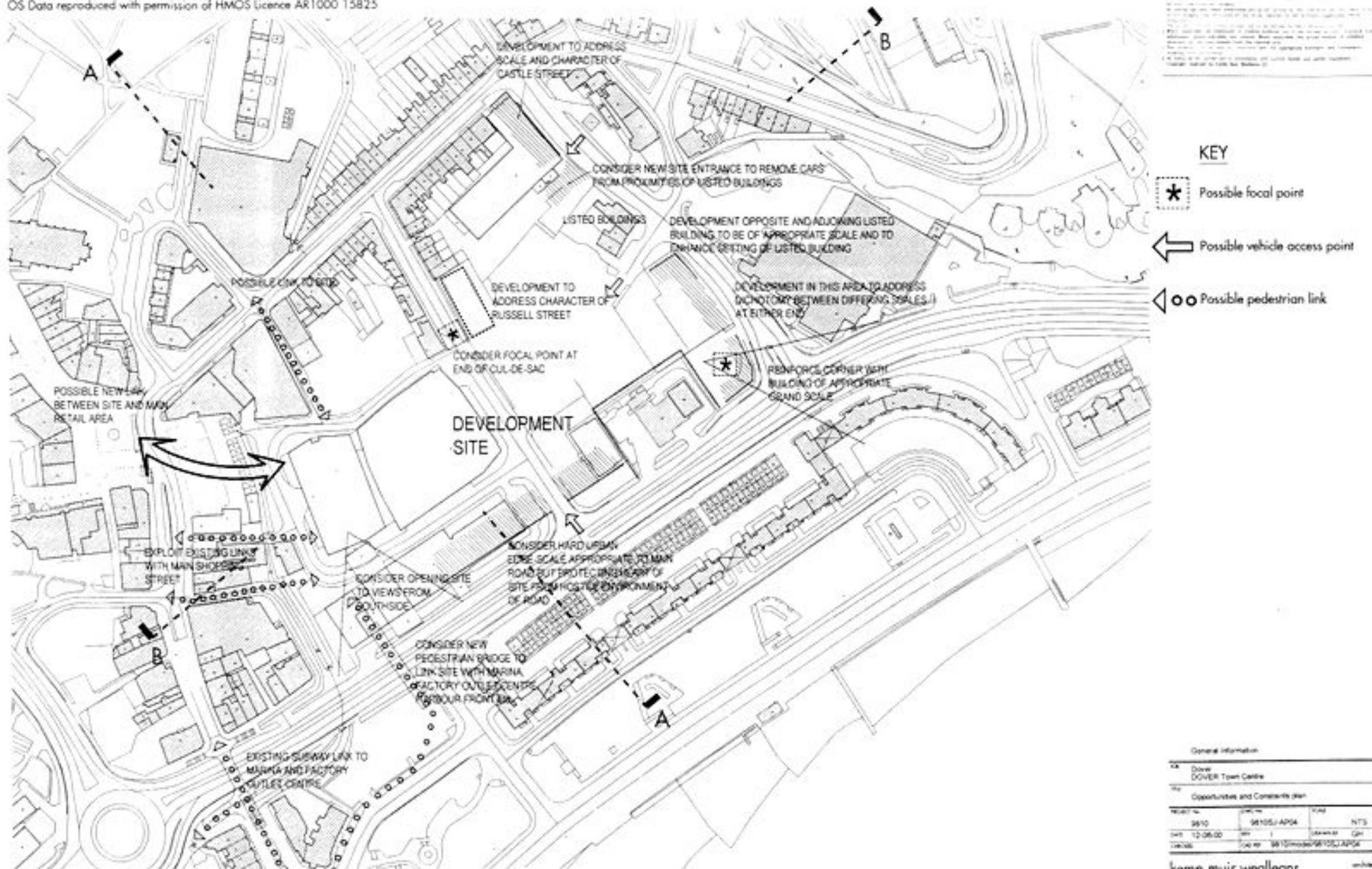
Plan 2 - Site Plan and area covered by Policy AS9



Area covered by Policy AS9

Area covered by Planning Brief





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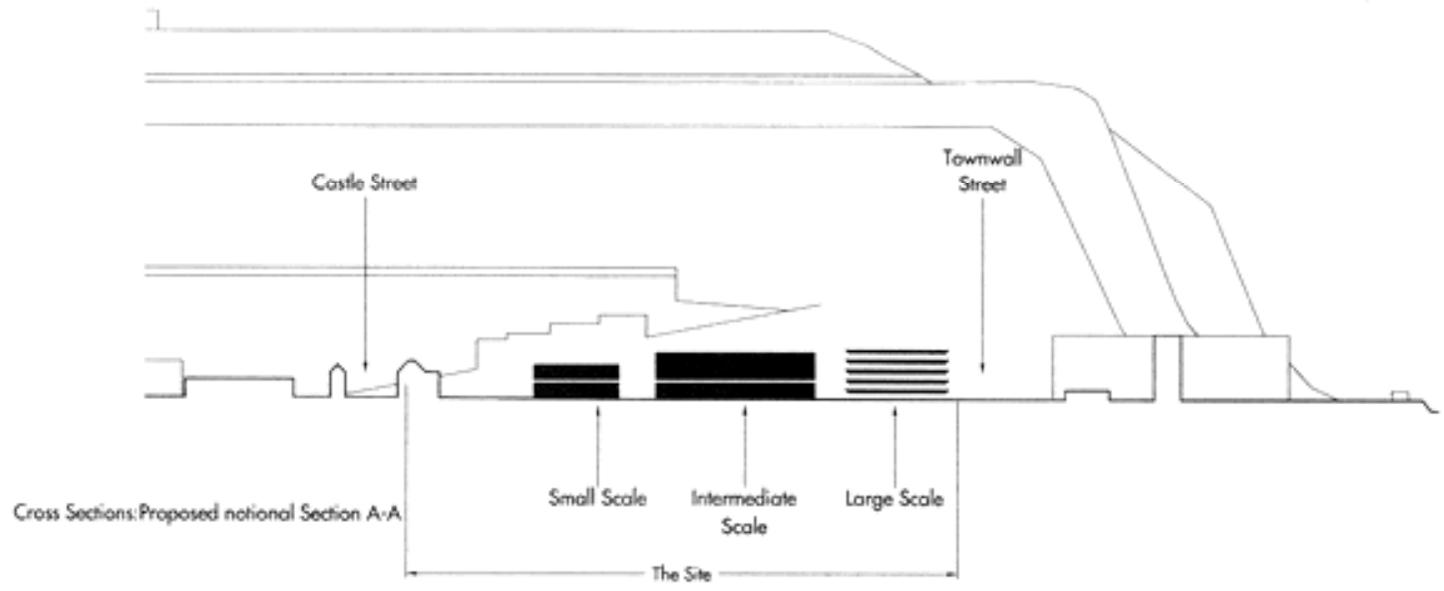
**KEY**

-  Possible focal point
-  Possible vehicle access point
-  Possible pedestrian link

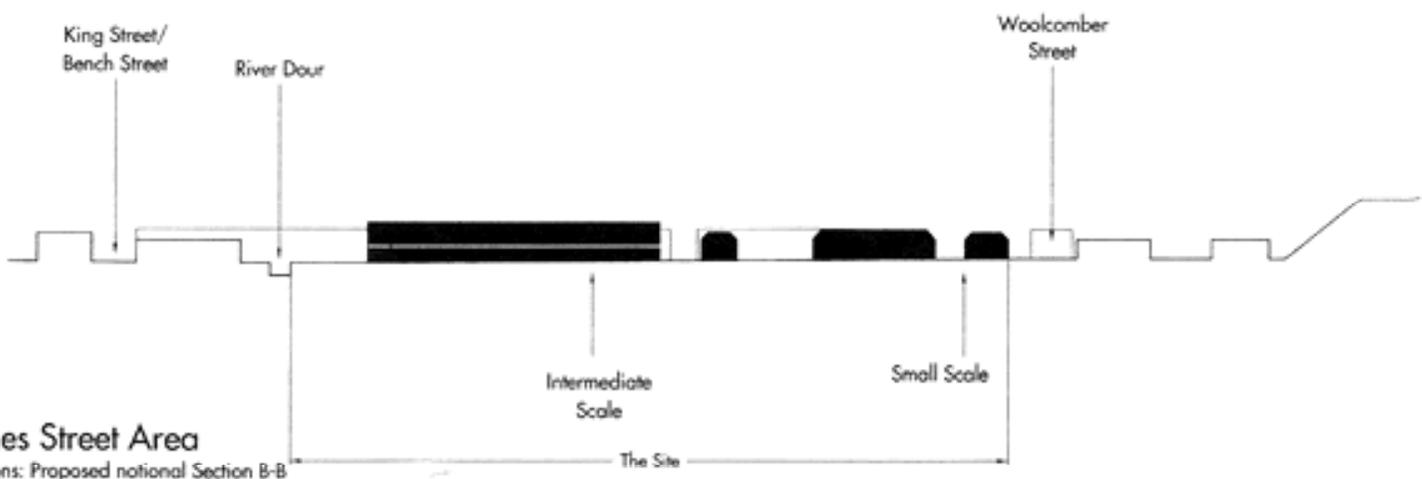
**St. James's Area**  
 Opportunities and Constraints Plan  
 Not To Scale

General Information			
Site	Dover DOVER Town Centre		
File	Opportunities and Constraints plan		
Sheet No.	9810	981001-AP04	NTS
Date	12-06-00	Rev	1
Drawn	kemp muir wealleans		
Checked	kemp muir wealleans		
kemp muir wealleans architects designers 84 Great Portland Street, London W1N 3AU T: +44 (0)20 7325 1000 F: +44 (0)20 7325 1001 www.kempmuirwealleans.co.uk			

1. All work shall be in accordance with the current Building Regulations.  
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Cross Sections: Proposed national Section A-A



**St. James Street Area**  
 Cross Sections: Proposed national Section B-B  
 Not To Scale

General Information			
Site	DOVER Town Centre		
Section	Cross Sections		
Project No.	0010	0010L-AP05400	1/15
Date	12-05-00	Rev	04
Client	0010L-AP05400		
<b>kemp muir wealeans</b> architects <small>designers</small> 66 Great Portland Street, London W1N 5AQ T +44 (0)20 7434 1418 F +44 (0)20 7434 5221 <a href="http://www.kmw.co.uk">www.kmw.co.uk</a>			



ST. JAMES'S AREA