



Walsall Council

Supplementary Planning Document For Walsall Waterfront

8th November 2006

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Matters

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| Title of SPD: | Supplementary Planning Document for Walsall Waterfront. |
| Subject: | This SPD expands on “saved” policy WA12 of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan regarding the development of the site known as Waterfront in Walsall town centre. |
| Consultation: | Representations were made on this SPD and accompanying documents during two consultation periods from the 19 th September to the 24 th October 2005 and from the 1 st September to the 2 nd October 2006. |
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| Adoption: | The SPD was adopted by Walsall Council at its Cabinet meeting on the 8 th November 2006. |
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has published this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed planning, urban design, land use and marketing guidance for the future development of the area known as “Walsall Waterfront”. This will ensure that development proposals best reflect the aspirations of both the Council and WRC to deliver high quality, best practice urban regeneration.
- 1.2 The development of the first draft SPD involved the organisations represented by the Waterfront Committee, a sub-committee of the WRC Board. The Waterfront Committee is serviced by the Waterfront Steering Group, which includes representatives of the Council, the WRC, Advantage West Midlands (AWM), British Waterways (BW), and Urban Splash.
- 1.3 The first draft SPD was the subject of a 5 week formal consultation period, from the 19th September to the 24th October 2005, which included a public consultation event. Where possible, recommendations from the first consultation period and event were taken into account in the writing of a revised consultation draft. This revised consultation draft was the subject of a second month long consultation period from the 1st September to the 2nd October 2006.
- 1.4 The purpose of the SPD is to expand on Policy WA12 of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2005. The guidance in this document is intended to shape the quality of developments being brought forward, and is intended to give developers, local people and other interested parties further guidance and an understanding regarding the nature of development at Walsall Waterfront.
- 1.5 The current UDP is saved until March 2008. In due course the Council will develop documents through the Local Development Framework which will introduce new policies for the Borough, including Waterfront, to replace the detailed policies in the UDP. When replacement development plan documents are available for consultation, this SPD will be substantially reviewed to reflect the content of those documents.
- 1.6 This SPD is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal, which was prepared by the Council after the completion of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.7 The Council has also developed a statement on how the community was involved in preparing the SPD. Community involvement was carried out in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Statement (PPS 12), and the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement.
- 1.8 This SPD was adopted by the Council’s Cabinet on the 8th November 2006, and it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for development at Walsall Waterfront.
- 1.9 The content of this SPD is in conformity with the adopted Walsall UDP and the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, embodied in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11), and is consistent with national planning policy. Any

comments to the SPD received during the two consultation periods could only alter the SPD within the confines of this conformity.

- 1.10 This SPD has been prepared in line with the Local Development Scheme submitted to Government in March 2005.
- 1.11 During both consultation periods, comments or representations could only be made concerning the content of the SPD and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal; neither were an opportunity to review or alter Policy WA12 or any other policy within the UDP.

2. Development of this Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.1 Walsall Council has recently adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This SPD has been prepared in line with the SCI, and the procedure outlined within Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12): Local Development Frameworks (from paragraph 4.39). These documents both propose a number of stages in developing SPD:
- Community Involvement – key partners and stakeholders involved in Waterfront were important in preparing both the first and revised draft SPD through the Waterfront Committee and Waterfront Steering Group, and their involvement continued through to adoption. Furthermore, the first draft SPD was the subject of a five week formal consultation period, including a public consultation event, whilst the revised draft SPD was the subject of a month long consultation period. Where possible the recommendations from both consultation periods have been included in the SPD.
 - A four to six week formal consultation period. The Council opted for a five week consultation period for the first draft SPD, and a month long consultation period for the revised draft SPD. During these consultation periods, the public, statutory consultees and other interested parties were invited to comment upon its contents. The public was alerted to this by an advertisement in the local press, and by use of the Council's website and libraries.
 - A Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared to accompany this SPD. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was also completed, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2000/1/42/EC, to inform the SPD and Sustainability Appraisal.
 - Monitoring and Review – the Council will monitor the effectiveness of the adopted SPD in helping to develop Walsall Waterfront, and will review the SPD as necessary, especially during the drafting of replacement development plan documents. Details will be published in the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 2.2 National, regional and local planning policy and legislation has been central to the development of this SPD. Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6): Planning for Town Centres contains guidance for the promotion of the vitality and viability of town centres. Local authorities are expected to plan for the growth and development of existing centres, and where appropriate, to strengthen and regenerate town centres. Development plan documents can be used to make better use of existing land and buildings within town centres, and if necessary, to promote redevelopment of particular parts of town centres. The Walsall UDP refers to a number of town centre development opportunities, of which Walsall Waterfront is one, where appropriate and viable redevelopment is being encouraged.
- 2.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force on the 28th September 2004, introducing a new system for preparing and updating development plans. The outcome for Walsall is that the up-to-date elements of Walsall UDP 2005 will be

saved for at least the next three years. Among the saved policies is Policy WA12: Walsall Waterfront, on which this SPD is designed to expand.

- 2.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy (embodied in Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands - RPG 11), which is part of the development plan for Walsall, recognises that town and city centres are at the heart of communities throughout the region, and their future health and attractiveness will be a major determinant in the quality of life for everyone. Policy PA11 refers to a network of 25 town and city centres across the region, a network which includes Walsall town centre. These centres will be the focus for major retail developments, together with uses which attract large numbers of people including major cultural, tourist, social and community venues, and large scale leisure and office developments.
- 2.5 Policy PA2 in RPG 11 states that policies and programmes should focus investment in the region's Regeneration Zones, which includes the Future Foundations Regeneration Zone for the North Black Country and Southern Staffordshire. One of the major strategic priorities for Future Foundations is Walsall Waterfront. Additionally, policies in the Urban Renaissance chapter of RPG11 seek the creation of high quality living and working environments. In particular policy UR1 encourages local authorities, regional agencies and partnerships to work together to rejuvenate urban centres to act as a focus for regeneration.
- 2.6 Walsall UDP recognises a number of sites or areas within the town centre which have significant development or regeneration potential in Policy WA7, and it proposes that a comprehensive approach to development is encouraged at these sites. One of these sites is Walsall Waterfront, which is addressed more fully in the UDP through Policy WA12, itself quoted in full below.

Policy WA12: Walsall Waterfront

- (a) The land within this area represents the continuation of the second phase of the Town Wharf development: the possibility exists to consolidate the previous two phases and maximise the opportunity offered by the canal side location. Given the proximity of the area to the Art Gallery and the Wharf public house, both of which have received wide acclaim for their high quality contemporary design, the Council will require particularly high standards of design in this area. This should be reflected not only in relation to the future construction of buildings, but also in the relationship to the canal and the quality of the open space, with the aim that the development should provide a major gateway to enhance the town centre as a whole.
- (b) The area, on both sides of the canal, is considered to be the main location in the town centre for substantial leisure development to serve the Borough and surrounding areas. It should be developed principally for leisure uses which can serve all sections of the community, and examples of uses which would be particularly welcomed by the Council include a cinema, a family entertainment centre and an adventure activity centre. Associated bars/restaurants would also be encouraged, provided they form part of a comprehensive scheme to provide major facilities. Other appropriate uses will include hotel and conference

facilities, cultural facilities, and office/business uses (including small scale craft-based activities) to complement development primarily for leisure uses. Retail use, except small scale complementary activities, will not be permitted. Generally, the mix of uses and the arrangement of those uses should be such as to ensure the creation of the most attractive possible scheme for investment in leisure facilities.

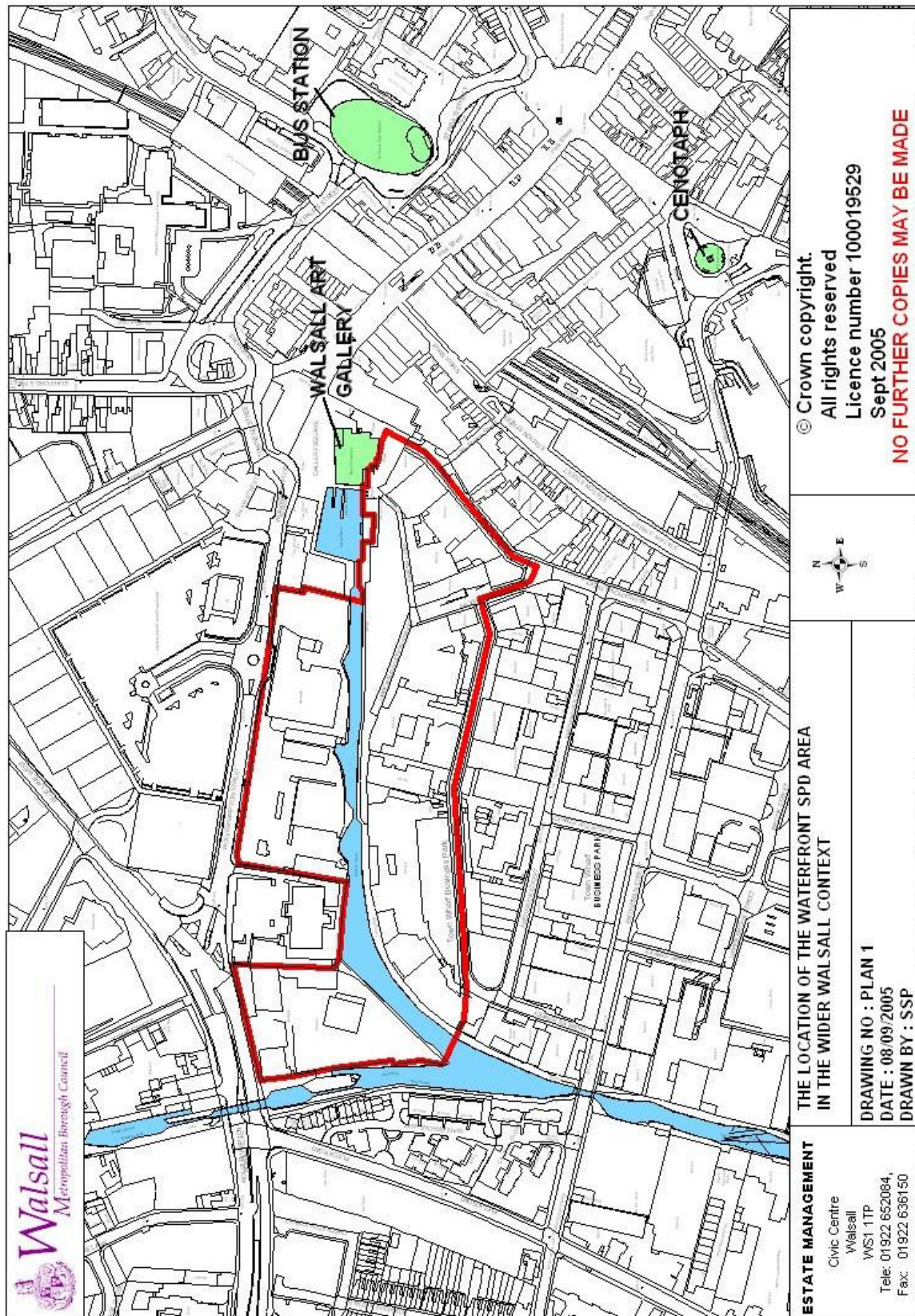
- (c) Residential uses may be acceptable in appropriate locations as part of a comprehensive scheme, but must also be able to provide an acceptable residential environment (in terms of Policy S8 in Chapter 5) without constraining the development of leisure and other commercial uses or the operation of nearby industry.
- (d) Should the existing industrial uses in the area south of the canal remain, they will be able to develop and enhance their existing properties – provided that this would not have any greater adverse impact on the development of leisure and other town centre uses around the canal. Where any new development opportunities might arise in the area – for example through the relocation of existing businesses – then the guidelines set out in this policy (and in any Supplementary Planning Document produced by the Council) will apply.
- (e) The emphasis within the area should be on redevelopment rather than refurbishment. However, within the Marsh Street/Navigation Street area there a number of buildings of local architectural interest which must be retained.
- (f) The development of the area should relate positively, in visual and functional terms, to surrounding area and particularly to the rest of the town centre. Strong and secure pedestrian linkages will be required both to and within the development to encourage maximum public access. In particular:
 - Public access must be provided along both sides of the Canal Arm, with a canal side promenade on the northern side and the retention and appropriate enhancement of the existing link along the southern side; and
 - At least one bridge should be provided across the Canal Arm to link the developments north and south of the canal – this should be designed so that navigation of the Canal Arm is not restricted unduly.
- (g) Development proposals should be brought forward in a manner which will ensure the comprehensive development of the area and should accord with a Development Brief and Design Guidelines produced by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document.

2.7 In the guidance that follows, Policy WA12 is expanded upon to reflect the current position. Detailed consideration is given to the site and its location, “The Vision” for Waterfront, appropriate land uses, prime gateway opportunities, the character of the area, access and public transport, urban design principles, massing and layout principles, environmental issues/ground conditions, heritage issues, phasing, and planning obligations. These issues are explored to guide prospective development during the current saved period of the UDP.

3. The Site

- 3.1 The Waterfront area comprises approximately 6.9 hectares (17 acres) of land including the water-space and associated towpaths and accesses. The site, which falls within the WRC boundary, consists of a variety of ownerships located adjacent or in close proximity to the Walsall Canal and the Walsall Town Arm. The site is included within the Town Centre Inset Plan of the UDP and therefore possesses good linkages to the town centre and surrounding areas.
- 3.2 The geographical area covered by the SPD is situated immediately to the west of the town centre, and is adjacent to Town Wharf Business Park and the leather heritage area, the Manor Hospital, and the ring road/Wolverhampton Road corridor linking Walsall town centre with junction 10 of the M6. The location of the area and the extent of its designated boundaries are shown on plan 1.
- 3.3 British Waterways (BW), which owns the canal on which Walsall Waterfront is located, is the custodian of the canal environment and is concerned to engage in detailed consultation to ensure that the quality and nature of adjacent development is appropriate in the context of their statutory duties. BW offers advice on design, planning and technical issues, and reference should be made to the BW documents “Engineering Code of Practice for Works Affecting British Waterways”, “British Waterways and Development Plans” and “Waterways Access to All”.

Plan 1: The location of the Waterfront SPD area (edged red) in the wider Walsall context.



4. “The Vision” for Waterfront

- 4.1 The intention of partners is to create an exciting and vibrant addition to Walsall, providing greater breadth to the attractions of the town centre through the creation of new, complementary and linked uses and drivers of economic growth whilst maintaining and enhancing the unique character of the area.
- 4.2 Key elements of the Vision include:
 - 4.2.1 The encouragement and control of proposed land-uses which will ensure that a thriving mixed use development (appropriate mixed uses are set out in section 5) is delivered, therefore enabling the creation of a thriving, sustainable city living quarter which is accessible to all and that will form a new gateway and destination for Walsall. It will provide a place that people will want to live in, work in, and visit, as a key destination with attractions for all ages.
 - 4.2.2 The creation of a new gateway to the town centre and the New Art Gallery civic space from the south and west, which is centred on the junction of the canal corridor and Wolverhampton Street.
 - 4.2.3 Maximising the dynamism and character of the historic canal frontage through appropriate public realm improvements, creating an accessible canal and water-space with a series of linked focal spaces and waterside routes connecting to the wider town centre. The public realm must be accessible for all and integrated with the wider transport network, especially cycling and pedestrian networks.
 - 4.2.4 To use the canal to provide major, sustainable pedestrian and cycle routes on both sides of the canal that will provide the Pleck and Manor Hospital areas to the south and the residential areas to the north with heavily used, safe and popular public thoroughfares linking to the town centre.
 - 4.2.5 To highlight and confirm Walsall’s position on the ‘National Waterway Map’ and to encourage greater use of the canal by providing an attractive and safe visitor destination, especially for visiting boaters. This will help to enhance the Black Country tourism offer, and reference should therefore be made to the Black Country Canals Tourism Strategy 2004.
 - 4.2.6 Achieving the delivery of ‘world class’ architecture and public art within a scheme that reflects the unique waterside, cultural and urban character of the area.

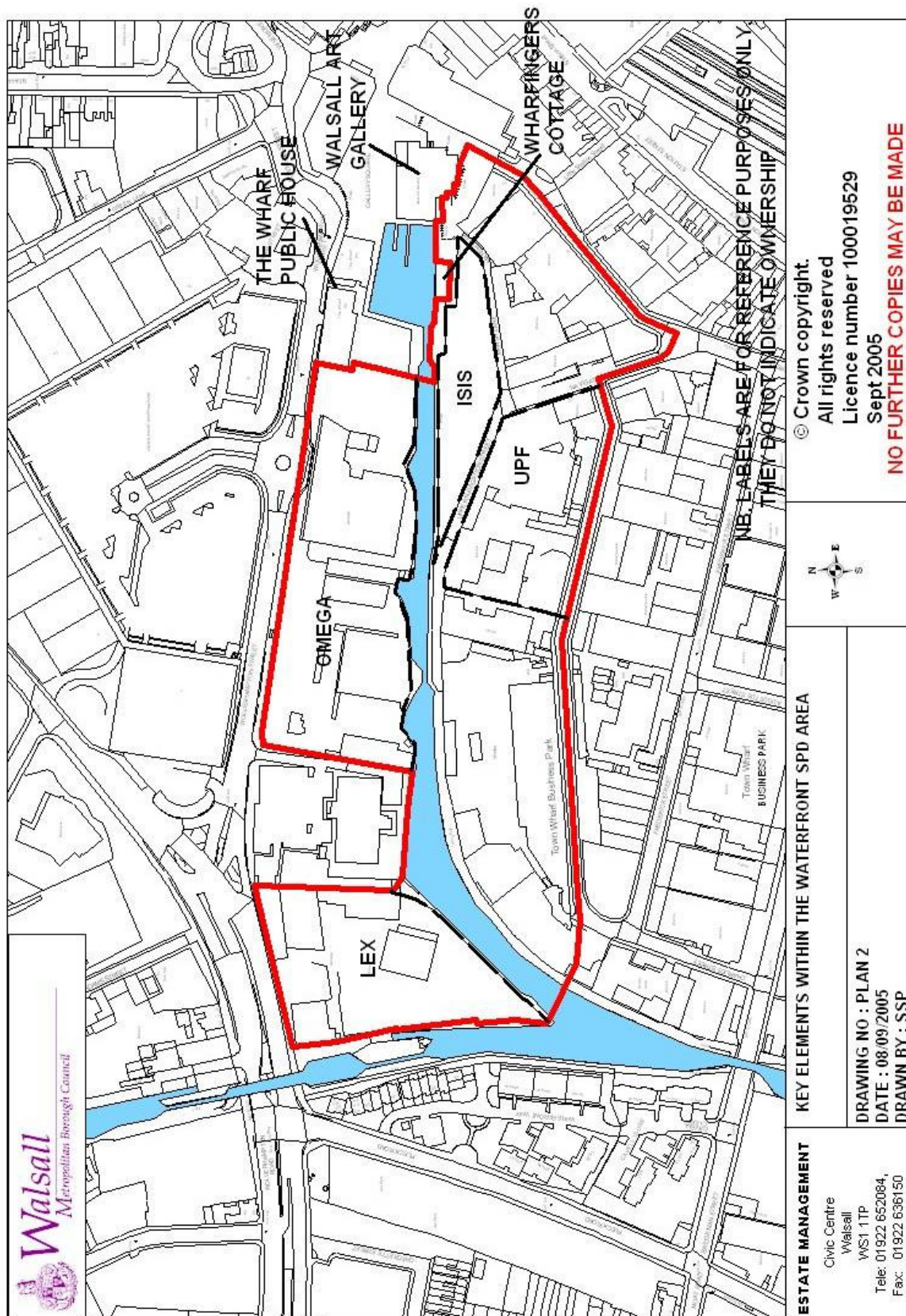
5. Appropriate Land Uses

- 5.1 The site should be developed in line with the policies contained in the Council's UDP, particularly WA12, and the aims, aspirations and objectives of the WRC's "Prospectus for Growth", published spring 2006.
- 5.2 Appropriate uses for development within Waterfront should, subject to feasibility and funding if required, include:
 - 5.2.1 Leisure – as per policy WA12, the area on both sides of the canal should be developed principally for leisure uses. A cinema, family entertainment centre and adventure activity centre would be particularly welcomed. Other leisure uses could include places of worship, health facilities, community facilities, training centres, cinemas, concert halls, conference facilities, sports facilities, casinos, bingo halls, theatres, nightclubs, health and fitness centres and other commercial leisure such as bowling centres. Bars, cafes and restaurants will be encouraged, provided they form part of a comprehensive scheme to provide major facilities.
 - 5.2.2 Residential – an appropriate mix of units is required (including larger format accommodation), all of which should demonstrate high design standards and an adherence to best industry practice (refer to Section 9). It should not constrain the development of leisure or other commercial uses in the development.
 - 5.2.3 Offices – both B1(a) other office uses and A2 (Financial and Professional Services) will also be welcome to complement development principally for leisure uses. B1(b) research and development uses, or small-scale craft based activities will also be considered appropriate.
 - 5.2.4 Arts/ Culture – the provision of a cultural attraction strategically located in a 'gateway' location will be promoted, as will the provision of public art work across the Waterfront area.
 - 5.2.5 Hotel – any such development must be a leader in high quality design, setting the standard locally for other developments in this sector.
 - 5.2.6 Retail – some small scale, complementary food or non-food retailing will be acceptable.
 - 5.2.7 Water-space – the potential for waterborne activity, including visitor facilities, moorings, and other essential boaters' facilities and services, should be considered if they are compatible with other development aspirations. Any such works should be undertaken in accordance with the British Waterways document "Code of Practice for Works Affecting British Waterways".
 - 5.2.8 Other uses will be considered on their merits, and judged on their contribution towards the overall vision for Waterfront and the vitality of the town centre.

6. Prime Gateway Opportunities

- 6.1 The importance of the gateway site at the junction of Wolverhampton Road and the canal should be acknowledged and maintained as the vehicle gateway to the town centre from the west. The juxtaposition of the canal and road demands the creation of a 'landmark' building on the northern element of the former 'Lex' site (see plan 2), visible from both the canal and road, creating a drama and interest at this entrance to the town centre. The design of this 'landmark' building should take into account the historic Smith's Flour Mill opposite.
- 6.2 The canal forms an important route into the town centre and in a similar manner, a 'landmark' building at the southern point of the former 'Lex' site, to identify and reinforce the junction of the main Walsall Canal and the Walsall Town Arm, is also needed.
- 6.3 The development of the former Isis site (see plan 2 for location and boundaries), needs to reflect its proximity to the land on the south side of Marsh Lane, where it is envisaged that residential developments will be coming forward. Building form and massing should maximise the restricted nature of Marsh Lane to enhance the dynamism and positive interaction between the two sites.
- 6.4 The approach to sites possessing dual canal and street frontages, and their potential to generate connection and secondary gateways within the area, should be the subject of a rigorous design approach.
- 6.5 The retention of the "Wharfinger's Cottage" on the former Isis site is required, and it's use has been the subject of an international design competition to transform the building to accommodate A3 and A4 uses. The integration of Gallery Square as a prime interface and public link between Waterfront and the town centre is pivotal.
- 6.6 The location of all elements mentioned above are shown on plan 2.

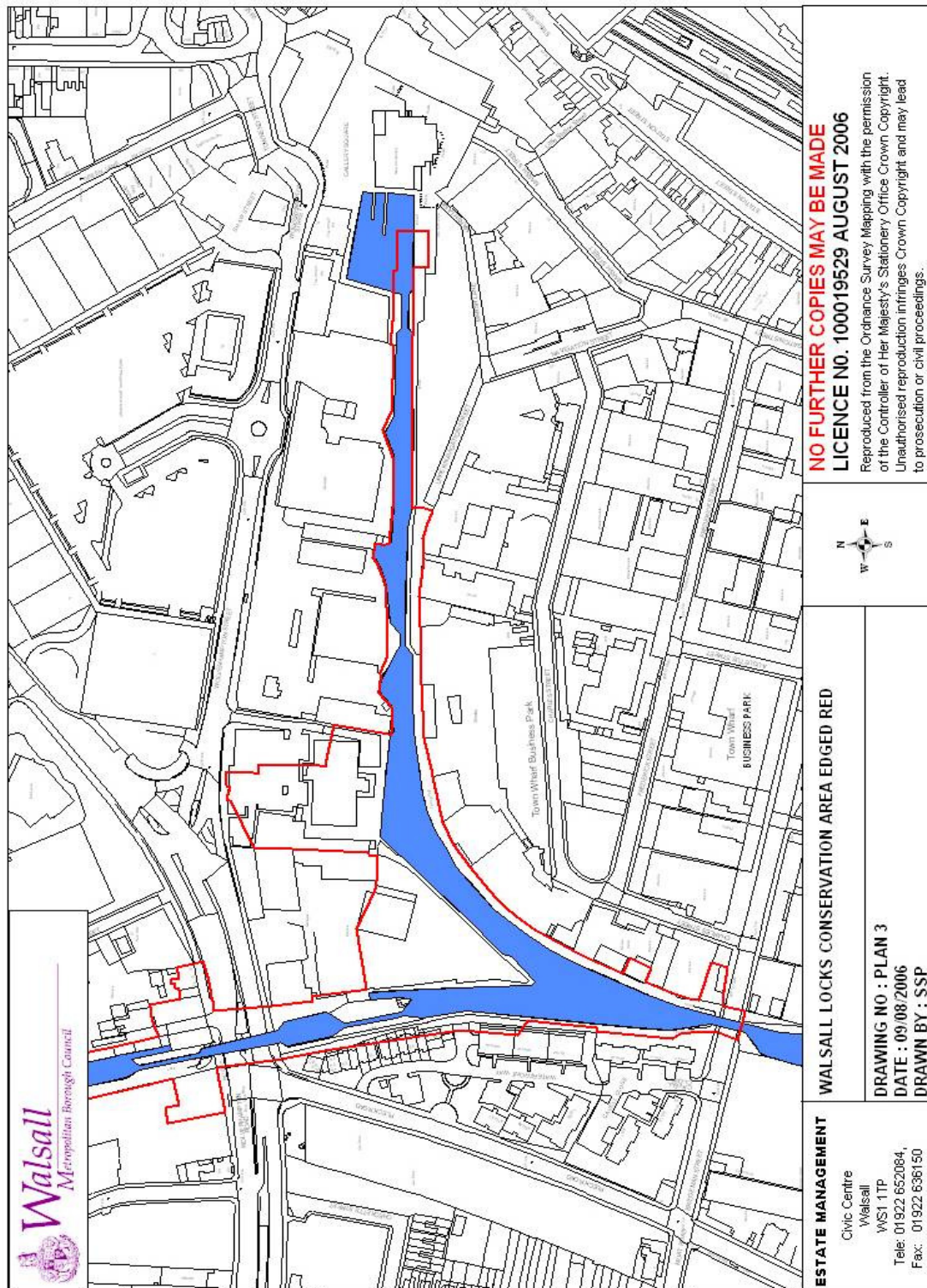
Plan 2: Key elements within the Waterfront SPD area. Please note that the labels are for reference purposes only, they do not indicate ownership.



7. The Character of the Area

- 7.1 The Waterfront area occupies a prominent location on the western side of the town centre with its eastern and western edges bounded by Gallery Square and the main Walsall Canal respectively. Wolverhampton Street and Charles Street respectively form the northern and southern boundaries to the site area.
- 7.2 The Gallery Square, containing the iconic New Art Gallery, will continue to function as an important civic space providing an interface and link between the town centre and the Waterfront areas.
- 7.3 The importance of maintaining and enhancing clear and exciting views from and toward the New Art Gallery is pivotal, notably along the axis of the Town Arm.
- 7.4 To the south-east of the Town Arm, traditional 4-5 storey industrial buildings are much in evidence linking the Waterfront with the historic leather heritage area of the town and the Town Wharf Business Park. The initial stages of regeneration in this area are exemplified by the recent conversion of the original Crown Works into high quality residential apartments, and its subsequent extension with similar quality proposals in Marsh Street and the surrounding areas are expected to be seeking and obtain similar planning consents. However, some of the leather heritage buildings are listed or locally listed, and reference should be made in these circumstances to the relevant policies in the UDP (Policies ENV27 and ENV28).
- 7.5 In contrast, the land to the north of the Town Arm at Waterfront is characterised by lower rise, modern buildings typified by the adjacent Crown Wharf Retail Park and the new Holiday Hypermarket building which occupies a prominent canal-side location within the Waterfront boundary.
- 7.6 The Town Arm Canal is the major unifying element within Waterfront creating linkages both within the site and with adjacent areas, and particularly the Town Centre. In addition, the potential of the canal to operate as a linear urban space should be maximised. The Town Arm Canal, tow-path, canal-side banks and the Wharfinger's Cottage are included in the Walsall Locks Conservation Area (see plan 3), and due regard must be paid towards UDP Policy ENV29 regarding Conservation Areas (see section 9 for further details). Furthermore, developers should give consideration to the Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan documents, which offer policy guidance for sites adjacent to the canal.
- 7.7 It is proposed that a series of new public spaces and routes are incorporated within the development proposals, complemented by the provision of a number of new pedestrian bridges located at key nodal positions on both the Walsall Canal and Town Arm to enhance linkages, legibility and public accessibility.

Plan 3: Walsall Locks Conservation Area (edged red).



8. Access and Public Transport

8.1 The area is readily accessible and well served by the public transport network:

- bus routes run along Wolverhampton Street and Pleck Road with stops immediately adjacent to the site at Gallery Square and Crown Wharf, whilst Walsall bus station is in close proximity;
- the proposed Metro “link” is currently designed as having “halts” in close proximity;
- the mainline railway station is only 250 yards from the Waterfront area, with journeys to Birmingham New Street and Wolverhampton taking only 25 and 15 minutes respectively.

8.2 The area has good pedestrian links with the streets and routes within the surrounding areas; but some are poorly used and all should be maintained and enhanced. Additional routes and linkages should be created to enhance pedestrian and cyclist permeability within Waterfront and with neighbouring areas. The link between the town centre and the hospital along the Town Arm is of particular importance and should be encouraged and reinforced on both sides of the canal. Figure 1 below provides an aspirational image of how Waterfront may look in terms of linkages with surrounding areas and the canal, and the massing and scale that would be expected in the development of Waterfront.

8.3 Car parking should be provided to meet the Council’s parking standards and should be in line with the Council’s emerging Parking Strategy (public consultation expected March 2007). Large areas of surface car parking should be avoided; other options including well-designed multi-storey or underground solutions should be explored as alternatives to this approach. Only in the short-term should vacant sites be considered as appropriate in providing temporary car parking solutions. See also section 14 for further considerations.

8.4 In light of the mix of uses envisaged, developers are encouraged to promote a sustainable transport approach; it is possible that developers will be required to explore and enter into a ‘car parking management strategy’ – potentially on an area-wide scale. Any parking regime will need to be compatible with that for the town centre as a whole and the emerging Parking Strategy. Developers will be required to undertake travel plans and transport assessments when submitting planning applications.

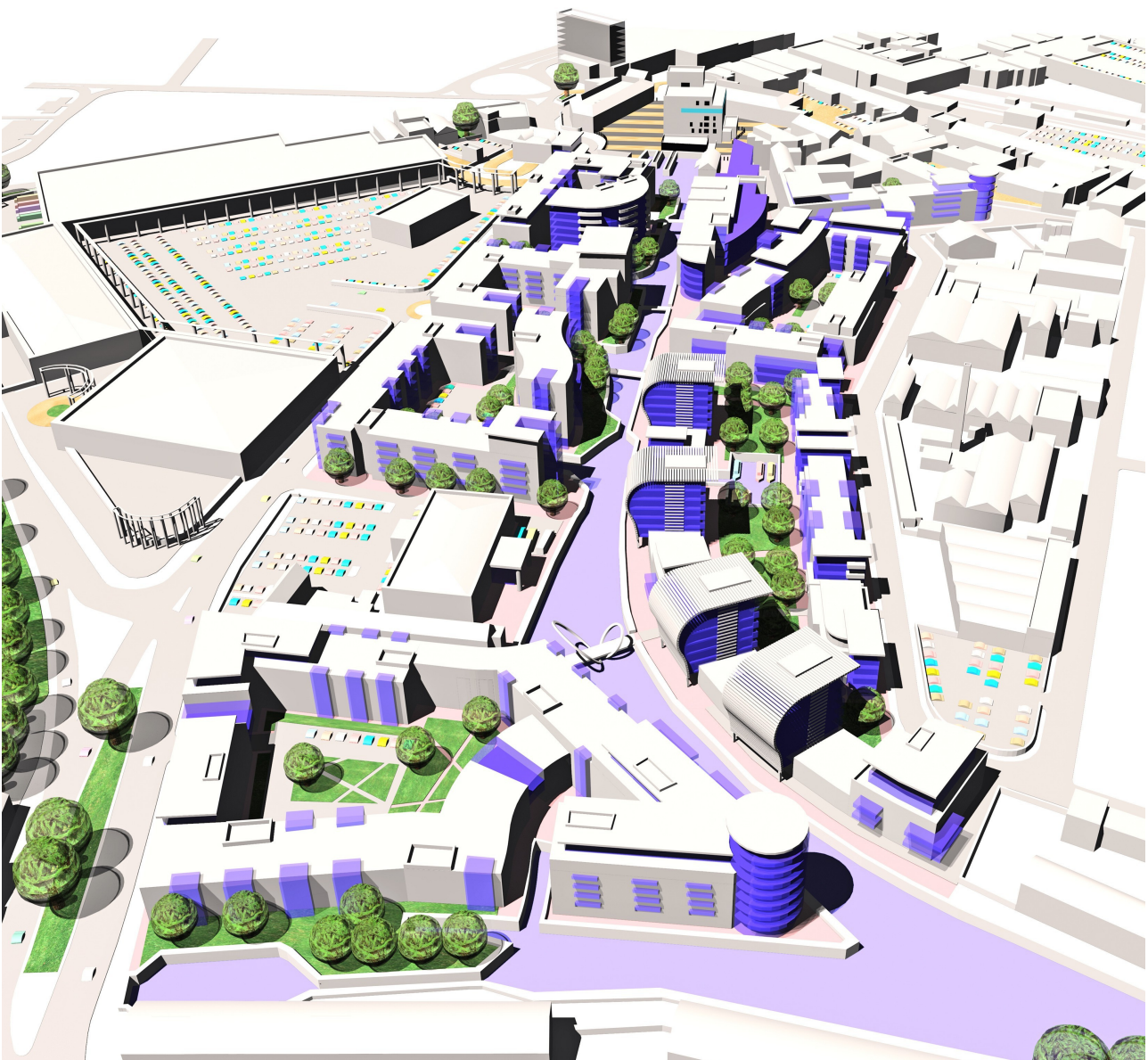
8.5 Deliveries and servicing will require careful treatment and should be incorporated as sensitively and unobtrusively as possible, particularly if close to residential properties.

8.6 A safe environment should be created for both pedestrians and cyclists, with secure storage facilities provided for the latter.

8.7 The operational requirements of BW should be considered within the design and aspirations of developments adjacent to the canal, both in terms of boating

operations and 24 hour over-land access to the canal for maintenance operations. There should also be an adequate provision of public space adjacent to the water-space.

Figure 1: An aspiration image for Waterfront in terms of permeability, massing and scale, and relationship with the canal. Please note, this image is indicative; it is not intended as a sketch design proposal.



9. Urban Design Principles

9.1 The overall aims of the development of the Waterfront area are to:

- 9.1.1 Realise the creation of a new mixed-use urban quarter for the town (in accordance with the uses set out in section 5) in order to provide a sustainable, balanced mix of leisure provision coupled with community/public, business, cultural and residential uses that all combine to form a logical extension to the current town centre.
- 9.1.2 Achieve a high quality, transformational mixed use development incorporating several, coordinated landmark buildings or structures demonstrating a hierarchy of scale with particular emphasis on the key 'gateway' positions.
- 9.1.3 Create a series of developments of a high, aspirational design quality and standard, which encourage the use of modern materials and innovative and exciting design approaches, whilst recognising the historic context of the Walsall Canal, the Town Arm and the leather quarter.
- 9.1.4 Recognise that schemes delivering high quality residential accommodation (in both design and spatial terms) which have already been developed within the locality have set a precedent that future proposals will have to build upon. Developers will be expected to maintain this impetus and quality standard by liaising and consulting with the Council to bring forward schemes that include an interesting and varied mix of units, in terms of design and unit size, in order to reach a "benchmark" agreement at an early stage in the design process. This could be achieved through liaison with the Council's Development Team and WRC.
- 9.1.5 Enable, if necessary, residential accommodation to be located in close proximity to other uses. Careful consideration should be taken in respect of the following issues to safeguard against loss in residential amenity to both existing and future residents through:
 - Design layout
 - Construction methods – notably insulation and sound attenuation
 - Orientation of units
 - Location of service yards and circulation cores
- 9.1.6 Enable the strengthening of the pivotal interface between the Waterfront and Gallery Square; the two spaces need to be linked in an appropriate and imaginative manner allowing each to display its character.
- 9.1.7 Provide a destination with a highly legible identity that builds upon the public routes between the retail core, the hospital area and the residential areas beyond. Where possible, ground floor uses should be active frontages which encourage pedestrian footfall, permeability, visual security and public safety.
- 9.1.8 Encourage and enhance pedestrian and cycle access throughout Waterfront and its linkages with the surrounding areas, including the provision of new bridges.
- 9.1.9 Create dynamic and enhanced public realm and landscaping strategies that encourage footfall along the canal corridor, around the basin and through

associated public spaces, and which also demonstrate a high level of consistency in terms of materials, components and fixtures utilised.

- 9.1.10 Maintain and enhance the views down, and the legibility of, the Town Arm as a vital visual component of the area. It is also a primary route through the area and a visual link to the town centre, and developers should use the Art Gallery as the eastern focus of this crucial vista.
- 9.1.11 Protect the extent of the current canal as an integral unifying element of the development area, and if practical, to encourage the creation of additional “linked” water-space, for example by the re-opening of pre-existing canal basins in the area. BW has produced a guidance document entitled “Waterways Access for All” which should be considered in the design of individual schemes. Reference should also be made to UDP Policy LC9, which encourages “the provision of secure moorings, other canalside facilities and environmental improvements to enhance the attractiveness and recreational potential of the canal network” in particular important locations, including Waterfront.
- 9.1.12 It is worth reinforcing that the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This includes development proposals within or outside conservation areas, which affect the setting of, or views into or out of, conservation areas. As the SPD area includes the Walsall Locks Conservation Area, all development proposals should take this legislation into consideration, whilst reference should also be made to the Walsall Locks Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

10. Massing and Layout Principles

- 10.1 The site should be developed incorporating a variety of uses which will combine to create lively and attractive frontages to both the canal and surrounding streets; frontages should be well defined with clear boundaries and edges.
- 10.2 Contemporary, aspirational building designs are expected, although both the historic fabric of the area and the waterside location should be respected and enhanced. In particular the setting of the New Art Gallery, the basin and retained building(s) should be improved.
- 10.3 Developments should combine to create a new townscape which is legible, varied, interesting and safe – storey heights appropriate to each particular setting should be adopted, and should reflect both the context and the human scale of the public realm.
- 10.4 The creation of ‘landmark’ buildings/structures at key locations will be required; in particular at the interface of Wolverhampton Road and the Walsall Canal junction (see section 6).
- 10.5 The views within the Waterfront area are seen as critical urban design elements to complement the unique townscape of the area. The retention of the views along the Town Arm to the New Art Gallery, and of the canal from the New Art Gallery, are pivotal, as are the creation of vistas through and across the site.
- 10.6 Development should be sensitive to adjacent uses; including the existing canal side apartments, the New Art Gallery and the potential for moorings along the canal corridor. Particular reference should be made to ensure that there is compatibility between specific projects, including the Marsh Lane and Isis developments, and generally with businesses located within Charles Street.
- 10.7 The development(s) should incorporate a high standard of both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ landscaping and design features that should be appropriate to both the urban and waterside contexts. A co-ordinated and consistent approach throughout should be demonstrated.
- 10.8 The location of new bridges across the canal, and their associated public spaces, is of particular importance to the success of the quarter, as is their relationship with adjacent developments. Pedestrians must be able to move freely through the development and onto the wide, surrounding network of public squares, spaces and streets within the town centre.
- 10.9 External envelope/facing materials should be of consistently high quality and the specification of low maintenance products will be encouraged in areas where future access may be problematic, ie immediately adjacent to the Canal.
- 10.10 These principles provide an approach as to how to achieve an attractive, viable and accessible (for cyclist and pedestrians) Waterfront Quarter. However, it is noted that there may be alternative design solutions that will be equally acceptable.

11. Environmental Issues/Ground Conditions

- 11.1 A significant proportion of the Waterfront area has been subject to some degree of site reclamation, but it is expected that further work will be required to bring these sites up to a suitable standard for development.
- 11.2 In consideration of the historic land use context, developers and their consultants should undertake due diligence to ensure that the implications of the prevailing ground conditions are understood, and that the level of remediation identified for specific proposals is appropriate in terms of the uses proposed.
- 11.3 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which concentrated on ecological and nature conservation issues, has been undertaken for this SPD. The overall conclusion of the SEA (Christopher Betts Environmental Biology Limited, July 2006) was that "Except for insects found in the brownfield parts of the site, the impacts of the proposed development scheme were assessed and considered to be of negligible impact magnitude on a site of local Ecological and Nature Conservation Importance, thus the impacts were judged to be of no significance". Though the development of the site will remove the transitory plant communities of the brownfield parts of the site which attract the current range of insects, similar sites will be created in the locality in the future and the construction of green/brown roofs and use of annual plants will mean that impact of the loss of such sites is considered to be only slightly adverse.
- 11.4 The SEA proposed that certain mitigation measures should be introduced to enhance the nature conservation significance of the site, details of which are available to prospective developers. However, in summary developers will be expected to take the following measures into consideration when developing proposals:
 - 11.4.1 The provision of green/brown roofs on some buildings and the development of areas of native tree species and annuals to provide foraging habitats for black redstart, other birds, bats and invertebrates. Early succession type vegetation could be introduced to maintain the attraction of invertebrates.
 - 11.4.2 The provision of sites suitable for roosting or hibernating bats and nesting redstarts will encourage their presence on the site. This should include the use of bird boxes, bat roosting boxes or flat roosting boxes which can be attached to or incorporated into building structures
 - 11.4.3 The provision of bays to increase the width of the canal to create boat free areas which can sustain aquatic and riparian vegetation should be considered. Coir fibre rolls, pre-planted with aquatic plants considered to be important to water voles, may also be considered.
- 11.5 The natural environment, including the canal habitat, should be respected and enhanced within all new development schemes. In particular, it should be noted that the canal is a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, and is protected in the UDP by Policy ENV21, and it is possible that the canal may be reclassified in the future and up-graded to a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (UDP

Policy ENV19). A survey and proposals, including pre-site clearance checks and scheduling of works to avoid nesting seasons, will be required for each development. Larger schemes may be expected to undertake environmental impact assessments and all schemes will be expected to complete Nature Conservation Management Plans which are approved and initiated before development commences.

- 11.6 Developments should demonstrate a full commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency and should address issues such as sustainable urban drainage, flood risk assessments, using materials from sustainable sources, life cycle costs, recycling and waste management in a pro-active manner.
- 11.7 BW aims to improve the water quality of the canals in Walsall and developments should be designed to assist in this regard. Potential measures including water movement/aeration techniques, which aid the prevention of stagnation and weed growth, should be considered. In addition, any redundant pipes or drains running into the canals should be sealed off and removed.

12. Heritage Issues

- 12.1 The development site is of historic interest and an 'archaeological assessment' should be undertaken to assess significance and associated likely statutory obligations at an early stage in the preparation of development proposals.
- 12.2 Originally, there were five canal basins connected to the Town Arm, and consideration should be given to re-opening these structures as integral elements within proposals where considered advantageous. Alternatively, proposals should incorporate historic reference through interpretation.
- 12.3 In light of the industrial heritage of the area and the existence of the Walsall Locks Conservation Area (see plan 3), efforts should be made to retain important buildings. The Wharfinger's Cottage building adjacent to the basin has been identified for retention, and due to its location, reference should be made to Policy ENV29 regarding Conservation Areas. Efforts should also be made to retain all locally listed buildings in the SPD area, and additional buildings may be added if appropriate. Reference should be made to UDP Policy ENV28 regarding locally listed buildings in this respect.
- 12.4 The canal infrastructure within the Waterfront area, including the towpaths, locks and waterway walls are to be retained, and any historic materials and artefacts found during works should be considered for re-use. Guidance for the conservation and incorporation of these features within new developments should be sought from the Council as early as possible in the design process. It should also be noted that all the locks on the Walsall Canal, including those adjacent to the SPD site on its western boundary, are grade II listed structures.

13. Phasing

- 13.1 Given the extent of the area covered by this SPD, and the multiplicity of ownerships, it is expected that development will occur in discrete and distinct phases over the medium term.
- 13.2 To ensure that the 'Vision' for the area is maintained, developers will be requested to demonstrate how individual proposals will fit into and contribute towards the comprehensive development of Waterfront. Pivotal elements in this respect will include the suitability of the mix and density of uses proposed, the co-ordination and applicability of public realm elements, pedestrian access and vehicular strategies, and the overall approach to design.
- 13.3 In some instances, developers may be requested to work together to secure comprehensive redevelopment.
- 13.4 Development is envisaged to progress incrementally from the east and north of the site in line with the current emerging pattern. More isolated proposals brought forward in advance of this process, possibly towards the southern and western boundaries of Waterfront, will need to demonstrate as a priority, both an appropriate mix of uses, and their connectivity to, and legibility within, the Waterfront area.

14. Planning Obligations

- 14.1 Policy GP3 in the UDP regarding planning obligations refers to the use of such tools “to secure the provision of any on or off-site infrastructure, facilities, services or mitigating measures made necessary by a development; ensure the implementation of an agreed phasing scheme; or otherwise ensure that development takes place in a satisfactory manner in accordance with the policies of the Plan”. Recent central government advice, encapsulated in ODPM Circular 05/2005 “Planning Obligations”, provides revised guidance on their use.
- 14.2 To ensure that the developments within Waterfront enhance the area, and support the “Vision” and underlying principles detailed in previous sections of this document, the Council will seek to control development through the use of both conditional planning consents and legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These may be applied in respect of various factors including:
- 14.2.1 Securing the nature and phasing of development for particular uses identified and sought by the Council and WRC.
- 14.2.2 Environmental and public realm improvements – including canalside works, the opening of canal inlets and the provision of bridges over the canal.
- 14.2.3 The creation of new public spaces and linkages, including leisure space.
- 14.2.4 The provision of off-site open space, as sought through the Urban Open Space SPD, which seeks a contribution towards certain open space provision from schemes involving residential elements.
- 14.2.5 Traffic management strategies including car parking, servicing and highway improvements. The car parking requirements will vary with the type of development (see Policy T13 of the UDP for details). A residential led scheme will require 1 parking space per residential unit, and a leisure scheme 1 parking space per 22 sq m of development. The situation will be different for office led schemes, where current policy is against the provision of car parking spaces for commuters. For office developments, a minimum amount of parking will be sought, the UDP seeks 1 space per 30 sq m, and this parking should be made available for other uses, for example retail and leisure during off-peak periods. Different car parking management options will be considered, for example private provision or provision within the public domain, to ensure convergence with the emerging Parking Strategy.
- 14.2.6 Affordable housing provision – reference should be made to the Policy H4 of the UDP and the recently adopted Affordable Housing SPD, both of which support a policy of 25% affordable housing in developments of over 1ha or 25 dwellings. There is a strong presumption in favour of shared ownership affordable housing being provided on-site, and in anticipation of the type of residential developments likely to come forward at Waterfront, a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments will be considered appropriate.

- 14.2.7 Residential developments may be required to contribute towards education and primary health care provision if considered necessary, subject to paragraphs 8.8 and 8.9 of the UDP.
- 14.2.8 Contributions towards public art installations may be required on-site or in the vicinity of each element of the Waterfront development.
- 14.2.9 The enhancement of surrounding highways, public transport provision and the provision of pedestrian and cyclist facilities may be required both on-site and off-site. Developers will be expected to undertake transport assessments and produce travel plans
- 14.3 This list of obligations is not exhaustive – contributions may be required towards other facilities or services to fulfil UDP Policy GP3.

15. Monitoring and Review

- 15.1 The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the adopted SPD in helping to develop Walsall Waterfront, and will review the SPD as necessary. Details will be published in the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 15.2 The current UDP is saved until March 2008, and in due course the Council will develop replacement policies through the Local Development Framework, which will replace detailed elements of this SPD. Therefore, the SPD will be substantially reviewed to reflect the content of future development plan documents as they come forward.