

Loughborough University East Park

Supplementary Planning Document:

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Gujarati

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Bengali

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Hindi

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Foreword: A Masterplan for Loughborough University East Park

The new Planning Act introduces some major changes to the way the planning system operates. It sees the replacement of the old system of Structure and Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks- a “portfolio” of documents to deliver the planning strategy for an area. One of the documents the Council has produced as part of the Local Development Framework is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the refurbishment and redevelopment of the East Park campus area at Loughborough University. This guidance sets out a masterplan to guide further development of the East Park area in accordance with the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan Policy CF/4.



Councillor Cameron MacLeod
Cabinet Lead Member for Planning

Introduction

- I.1 The purpose of this Loughborough University East Park Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide guidance for the comprehensive redevelopment of the East Park campus on Epinal Way, in the context of Policy CF/4 of the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.
- I.2 Policy CF/4 of the adopted Plan states that:

Planning permission will be granted for University and College developments for academic and ancillary uses (Class D1) and for student accommodation (Classes C1, C2 and C3) within the campus area identified on the Proposals Map provided:

- i) segregated facilities are provided for cyclists and pedestrians affording attractive and direct linkages into the cycleway and footpath network;*
- ii) the overall design and layout of the development remains compatible with the established character and appearance of the campus as defined by the massing, scale and form of any neighbouring development;*
- iii) complementary hard and soft landscaping measures are employed to define and contain the development within a high quality environment; and*
- iv) significant trees, open space or other features important in defining the amenities of the locality would not be lost.*

Development for other purposes within the campus will not be permitted unless it can be shown to satisfy the above requirements and provided it would not:

- a) unreasonably constrain opportunities for the further expansion of the University or College; or*
- b) result in, or remove an opportunity to rectify, a local deficiency in recreational space.*

- I.3 Any proposals for the East Park area will need to take account of other relevant policies on the Local Plan, in particular Policy EV/1 Design and Policy EV/27, Protection of Floodplains.

Need for an SPD

- I.4 The adopted Local Plan policy provides broad guidance on the range of uses that can be accommodated within the University Campus and sets out a series of criteria to guide further development. There is some concern that recent developments on Campus have been somewhat piecemeal. A masterplan to guide future refurbishment and redevelopment should ensure that the design and layout of any redevelopment that takes place makes full use of the opportunities available whilst remaining compatible with the character and appearance of the Campus and neighbouring areas.
- I.5 For the University, the need for a plan for the East Park was shown in the last University Estates Strategy Review (dated 2000), which is currently being reviewed. The masterplan

for the East Park will be fed into this review. An assessment by the University has found that a number of buildings on this part of the campus are nearing the end of their useful life and are not fit to meet current academic requirements let alone to allow for limited growth. The University is particularly short of postgraduate space. It recognises that the quality of the buildings and spaces around them does influence students' decisions in choosing between Universities. It is the intention to review the East Park campus facilities, and to update them as necessary, in a manner which reflect its high academic standards over a range of study areas.

Context

- 1.6 The Council as local planning authority is producing this masterplan to provide a framework to guide the consideration of future redevelopment proposals in accordance with Policy CF/4 of the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan. It will also help the University in making decisions as and when funding opportunities at the University arise. Policy EV/1 of the Local Plan outlines general design principles that the Council will expect to be applied to the University East Park area. More detailed guidance on design is set out in the Supplementary Planning Document, Leading in Design.
- 1.7 Whilst the whole masterplan will not be realised for many years, it will prevent the piecemeal development that has characterised some of the campus' development in recent years. The Plan will look forward over the next ten years. It is not a blueprint, but instead aims to provide a framework against which the Council can consider any future planning applications in the area and the University can formulate detailed funding bids.

Objectives

- 1.8 The main objectives of the masterplan are:
- 1) To allow for redevelopment of a number of buildings on the East Park campus that are outdated and unsuitable for modern academic needs and to provide space for new initiatives;
 - 2) To cater for medium term academic expansion and residential accommodation needs, together with rationalisation of the estate;
 - 3) To achieve the most efficient use of land and buildings and allow for additional floorspace on the site, whilst also improving the environment;
 - 4) To provide a more welcoming presence to Epinal Way, that currently largely consists of blank elevations of substantial sporting facilities at the main gateway to the campus;

- 5) To create a more pleasant pedestrian environment for users of the campus and reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflict;
- 6) To reduce vehicular travel distances on the campus;
- 7) To improve the visual and functional coherence of the campus so that visitors and newcomers can orientate themselves, both as car users and pedestrians;
- 8) To allow for a flexible phasing of development to respond to prioritisation of academic needs and availability of funding;
- 9) To provide new buildings that adopt sustainable energy efficient design principles;
- 10) To ensure the continued development of the site in an environmentally sustainable manner, taking into account such factors as flood risk, drainage and biodiversity.

Floorspace Capacity

- 1.9 The following table demonstrates current, required and proposed levels of net floorspace (sq.m.) at East Park and Loughborough University School of Art and Design (LUSAD), in the draft Plan.

Current Net Floorspace	25,000
Academic Floorspace requirements to 2008	30,500
Net increase required	5,500
Academic floorspace Allowed for in Plan:	33,000
Residential student bedspaces provided in Plan:	up to 450

- 1.10 The additional academic floorspace and bedspaces proposed could have an impact on the surrounding highway network. Planning applications for redevelopment within East Park will need to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment to provide a detailed assessment of the traffic implications of the development.
- 1.11 The proposed provision of additional student bed spaces within the East Park forms part of a wider proposal by the University to provide some additional 2,500 student bed spaces on seven sites on the University Campus. . This additional provision will increase pressure on the existing health centre facilities provided on campus to cater for student needs. The Council will seek to negotiate contributions towards the expansion or improvement of the health centre in accordance with Policy ST/3 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.

The Redevelopment Scheme

I.12 The key features of the plan are:

- Creation of a focal point/point of arrival, in both the vertical and horizontal planes to Epinal Way. This to be accompanied by subsequent improvement to the Epinal Way frontage, by the removal of existing roads and on street parking areas and replacement by substantial landscaping.
- Provision of a substantial central area, mainly pedestrianised and surrounded by academic buildings. Existing wildlife/nature areas will be retained and enhanced.
- Development of a collegiate building form of substantial, but individual buildings that can provide a wide variety of academic space including offices, workshops and laboratories.
- A new multi storey car parking to free up land and reduce areas devoted to surface lined car parks.
- Provide for additional academic floorspace.
- Allow for up to an additional 450 bed residential building adjacent the existing Butler Court in East Park. This would be in addition to the existing 724 bedspaces in Butler Court and The Towers.
- Building heights to reflect surrounding residential and academic buildings, both on and off campus; and, to create a sense of place and arrival.

I.13 The Plan indicates that there is insufficient space to accommodate further large sports buildings on East Park, without sacrificing academic or residential space, or the quality of the environment.

Detailed Design Considerations

I.14 Policy CF/4 of the adopted Local Plan makes provision for academic (and ancillary) uses and student accommodation within the campus, subject to a number of detailed development control criteria. Whilst the masterplan is not a blueprint for redevelopment it must guide future development and planning applications in a way which enables it to achieve its objectives.

I.15 The Council's Supplementary Planning Document "Leading in Design" provides further guidance on issues of design including design for energy efficiency, reducing crime and promoting community safety. In developing detailed proposals for East Park consideration should be given to guidance in "Leading in Design".

- I.16 The redevelopment and refurbishment of East Park provides a real opportunity to adopt innovative approaches to energy efficient building design. The Borough Council will expect new buildings within East Park to incorporate energy efficient design in accordance with the guidance in Leading in Design.
- I.17 The detailed development control criteria within Policy CF/4 relate to the following material considerations:
- Cyclist and Pedestrian Provision;
 - Character and appearance and relationship with neighbouring development;
 - Hard and soft landscaping and the creation of high quality environments;
 - Retention of trees open space and other important features.
- I.18 As part of the site falls within an area of floodplain, proposals for new development will need to take account of any flood risk. Early discussions will be needed with the Environment Agency to discuss the likely impact on flooding in relation to the redevelopment proposals.
- I.19 As part of trying to create a more coherent building form, the proposed redevelopment of East Park has been redefined into specific zones. All are designed to interact, but importantly to create a sense of place, particularly for pedestrians. Each zone raises different issues within the context of the detailed development criteria of Policy CF/4, and which need to be addressed as part of providing a framework for future redevelopment. Plan I identifies these zones and the key design issues.

Residential Zone

- I.20 With the creation of additional student accommodation on East Park, it is possible to achieve two outcomes. Firstly it helps to reduce the current deficit in purpose built student accommodation. Secondly, it will create a defined residential area, linking the existing landmark building, the Towers, and Butler Court. Buildings should be between 4 – 6 storeys. This aims to reflect the heights of existing student accommodation at Butler Court and their location towards the edge of the campus, whilst recognising that the taller building form at the Towers and location towards the heart of the East Park can accommodate a slightly higher form of development.
- I.21 The enhancement of the existing dining, informal leisure/sports facilities and open space to support this accommodation will add to the sense of place, of a small 'student village'.

Academic Zone

- I.22 The primary function of East Park has been and will for the foreseeable future be academic. A number of different departments currently exist on this part of the campus, in inefficient, outdated buildings. The purpose of their redevelopment is to both upgrade the academic facilities and to make more efficient use of space.
- I.23 Redevelopment of East Park will allow the more efficient use of facilities. It will enable different departments, which often have similar technological needs, to be located where they can best take advantage of each other's facilities, preventing unnecessary duplication in some instances.
- I.24 The redevelopment of the Towers Bungalows is a particularly sensitive site, being located close to neighbouring residential properties. As such buildings should be no higher than three storeys and should be oriented to ensure that their mass, scale and form is such that these residential properties do not suffer a significant loss of amenity as a result. Buildings should allow views and light through the building form but at the same time be designed and positioned sufficient distance from this southern boundary so as to avoid overlooking.
- I.25 Further into the heart of the East Park it may be possible to accommodate higher buildings. The current masterplan only relates to buildings of 3 –5 storeys as that is all that is required to meet the University's current and medium term needs.
- I.26 As part of making the East Park a more attractive environment, the existing car parking areas, which are numerous and often indiscriminately placed, will be replaced by a multi storey car park. This car park would be up to a height of five decks, which will cater for all the academic and visitor needs of the East Park, without the need for the current tortuous and inefficient route around the perimeter of this part of the campus.
- I.27 The car park should be positioned in an unobtrusive location and related to other new buildings, to protect both key vistas into the campus and amenities of surrounding residential properties.

Campus Focal Point/Cultural Zone

- I.28 Recent sports developments have resulted in essentially a blank façade to Epinal Way, with buildings without a road frontage. One of the aims of the masterplan is to create a welcoming entrance and a new focal point, with key vistas into the East Park as one enters from Epinal Way. This will provide for an enhanced pedestrian and cyclist access from Epinal Way.

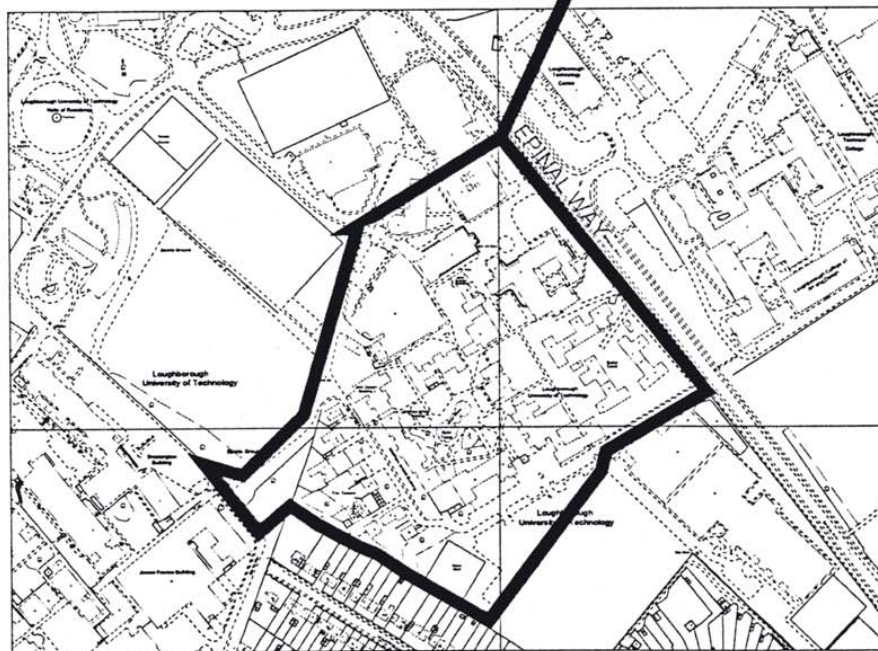
- I.29 The redevelopment and extension of existing buildings need to create two good quality landmark buildings to define this entrance and open up the University with its public interface.

Open Space/Nature and Informal Leisure Zone

- I.30 A network of nature areas and footpaths already exists on East Park. By enhancing this network, through the residential areas and towards the cultural zone, it will be possible to provide vital linkages between and through zones.
- I.31 The importance of hard and soft landscaping in creating a coherent image cannot be underestimated. Landscaping can also have functional purpose, such as proposed around the Towers as a turbulence inhibitor. The use of open spaces and their relationship with the buildings located within them must interrelate to create a collegiate building form, which works as a whole. Whilst development may not take place in one phase, but rather incrementally, it should do so in a planned way. Hard and soft landscaping of open spaces and the natural environment should form an integral part of the design rather than an afterthought for 'left over' areas of land from development.

Vehicular, Pedestrian and Cycle Movement

- I.32 An important feature of the masterplan is to create a more pleasant pedestrian environment. At present, there is little sense of place so that visitors and newcomers can find it difficult to orientate themselves. At their arrival point, buildings should be orientated to enable visitors to have views into and through this part of the campus, so that they can easily make route choices.
- I.33 Internal roads should be downgraded to slow down traffic and give pedestrians and cyclists priority. At the new main entrance for East Park, it will be important to segregate pedestrians and cyclists, linking in with the existing pedestrian and cyclists footpath network, which characterises the existing nature areas. Linkages between the different zones for those on foot in particular are important to provide a sense of place and to create a cohesiveness about the redevelopment as a whole.

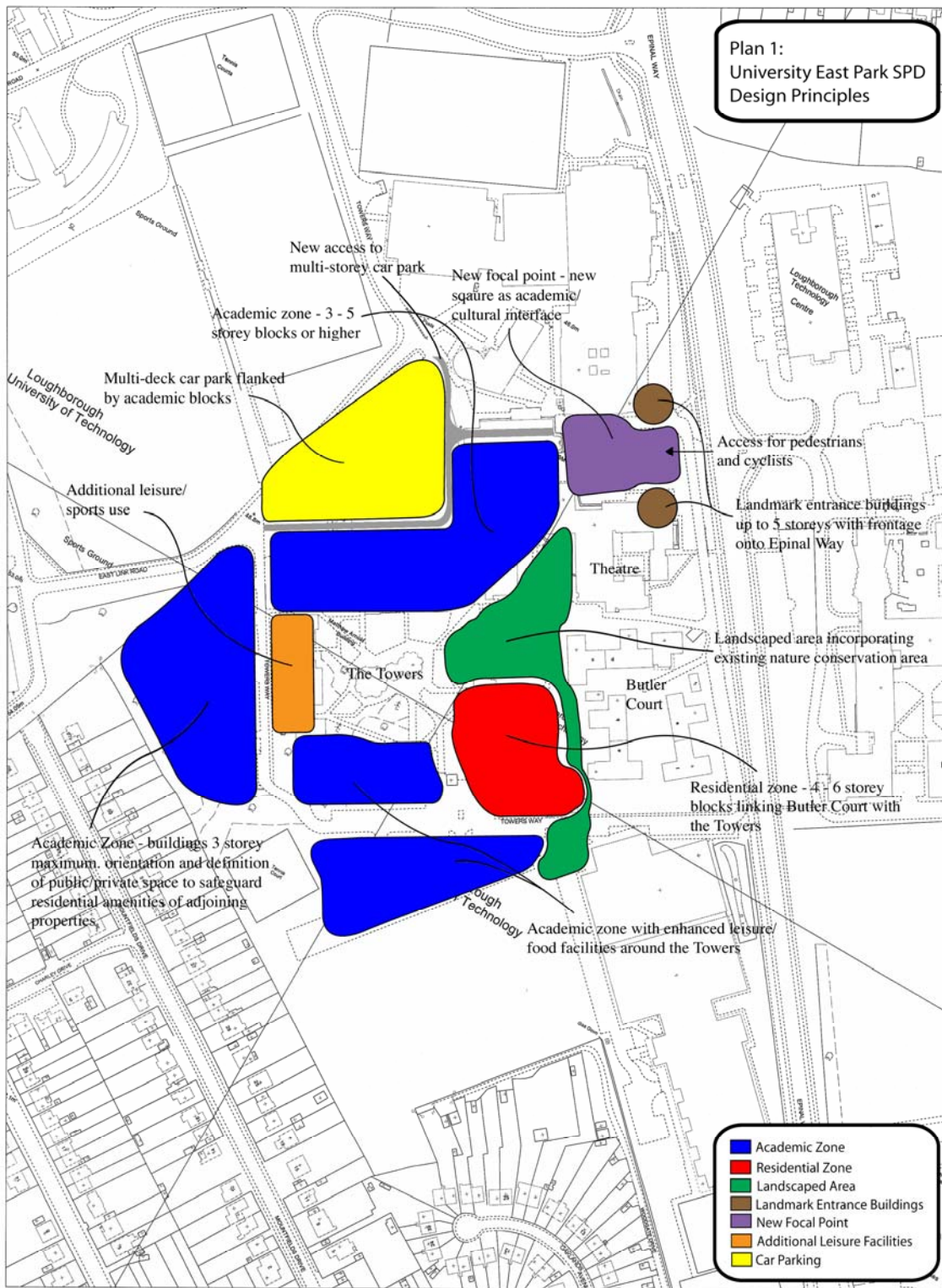


LOCATION PLAN - Loughborough University East Park Masterplan Area

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