

Maidencraig Masterplan

Non-Technical Summary



Bancon Developments

ARCHIAL



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1 Context

1.1 The Site

The proposed development area is made up of two parcels of land, identified in the Local Development Plan as OP43 – Maidenraig south east, and OP44 – Maidenraig north east. The two areas are bisected by the A944 (Lang Stracht) Road.

Maidenraig South East totals 29.8 hectares, is bounded by the A944 to the North and west, Summerhill to the East, and the Den of Maidenraig Local Nature Reserve to the South.

Maidenraig North East totals 22.8 hectares. The A944 bounds the South of the site, Sheddocksley lies to the East, woodland lines the North boundary, and to the West is the Dobbies Garden Centre.

Both sites slope gently South, with the Maidenraig South East site becoming steeper towards the Denburn and the Local Nature Reserve. The aerial photograph below shows the site (outlined in red) in context, along with listed buildings and tree preservation orders marked in yellow. The woodland to the north, and the Den of Maidenraig Local Nature Reserve to the south are shaded white.

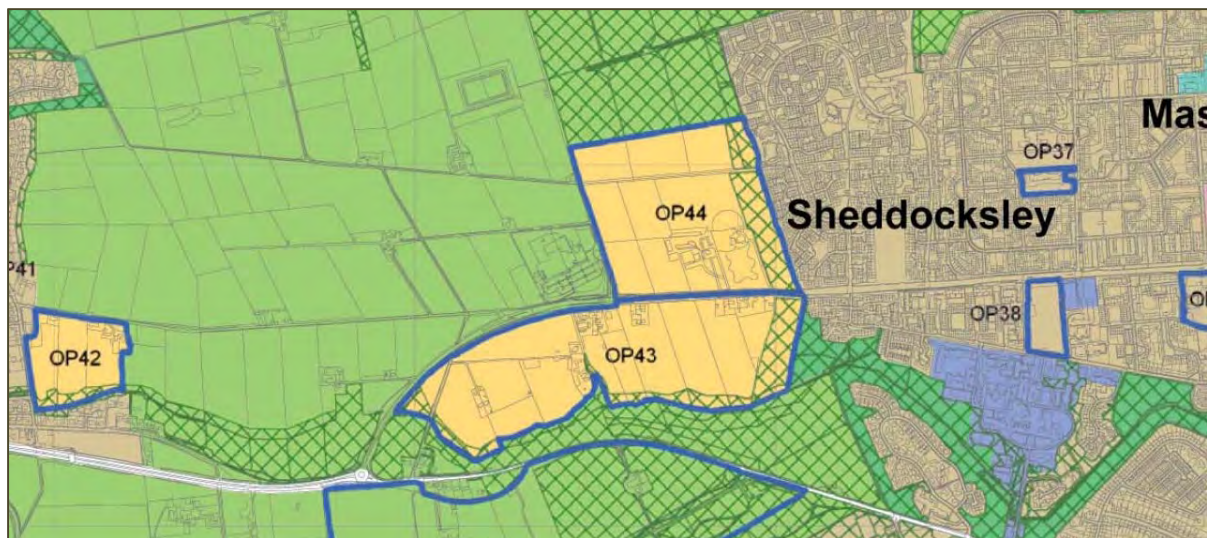


Maidenraig masterplan area.

1.2 Local Development Plan

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan, adopted on the 29th February 2012, aims to implement the broad growth strategy set out in the Structure Plan.

Site OP 43 Maiden Craig SE is programmed to deliver 450 homes by 2016, while site OP 44 Maiden Craig NE should provide 300 homes in the same time period. The Local Development Plan does not allocate employment land on the Maiden Craig site. These allocations are confirmed on the Proposals Map.



Aberdeen Local Development Plan zoning map excerpt

1.3 Site Analysis Summary

A detailed analysis of the site has been carried out. The opportunities and constraints to the development have been identified, as have the existing services and facilities. The following key points have been identified to inform the design and layout.

- Open sloping and irregular site, facing south and east
- Views to Local Nature Reserve and beyond
- A944 runs between the two site areas.
- Site abuts the existing urban edge which is quite 'hard' to the north of the Lang Stracht but more organic to the south of the road presumably due to the difficult contours.
- Wayleave through southern section of site for drainage from garden centre.
- Denburn forms the meandering southern edge of site.
- Existing field boundaries suggest a natural 'grain' to the landscape
- Sections of the site adjacent to the Denburn slope so steeply that development is precluded.
- Desirability of links to Sheddocksley

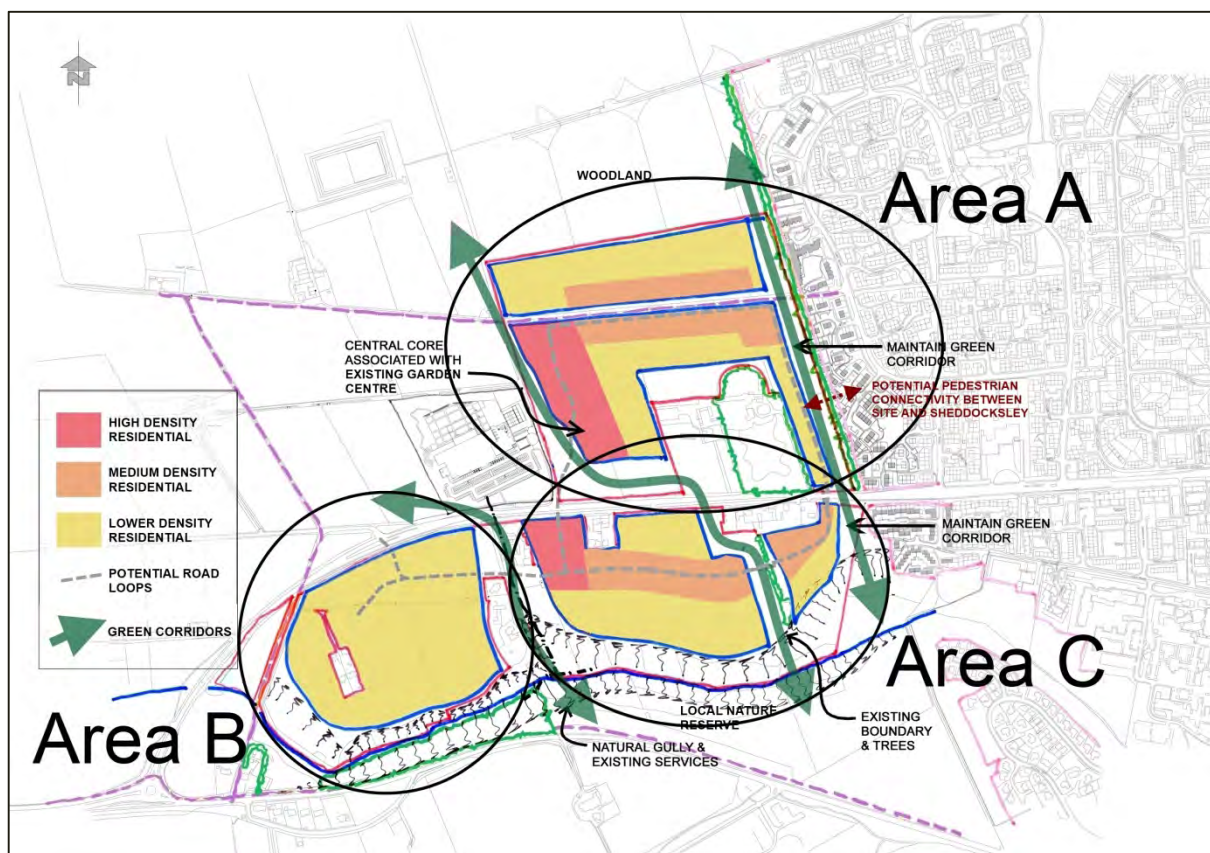
- Proposed Green Space Network around site
- Existing buildings on the site are generally small scale and traditional in character.
- Minimal vegetation due to agricultural/horticultural use with trees and shrubs restricted to property and field boundaries.
- Footpath (part of core path network) passes east/west through the north of the site.
- Proximity to wider footpath & cycle network
- Road access limited to the A944 corridor
- Public Transport available and actively promoted

2 The Vision for the Masterplan

Our Vision is to harness the advantages identified in the analysis to produce a vibrant, welcoming, attractive and sustainable community which is safe and easy to move around, while minimising the segregation which the Lang Stracht tends to impose.

The development will be highly landscaped – echoing and absorbing the surrounding landscape (of the Northern woodland, the Green Space Network, and the Den of Maidenraig), and highly sustainable, with a mix of uses and good connections to walking, cycling and public transport routes. Within this over-arching framework we will develop three distinct character areas containing attractive residential neighbourhoods where families can live, work and play.

We are looking to deliver this Vision by adopting the concept shown below. This concept diagram suggests linking the new community to the major environmental assets and areas of recreational open space which lie to the north (the woodland) and south (the Den of Maidenraig) of the site, and maintaining ready north – south connectivity by introducing three pedestrian and vehicular connections associated with broad wildlife corridors, so that the connectivity is visual as well as physical.

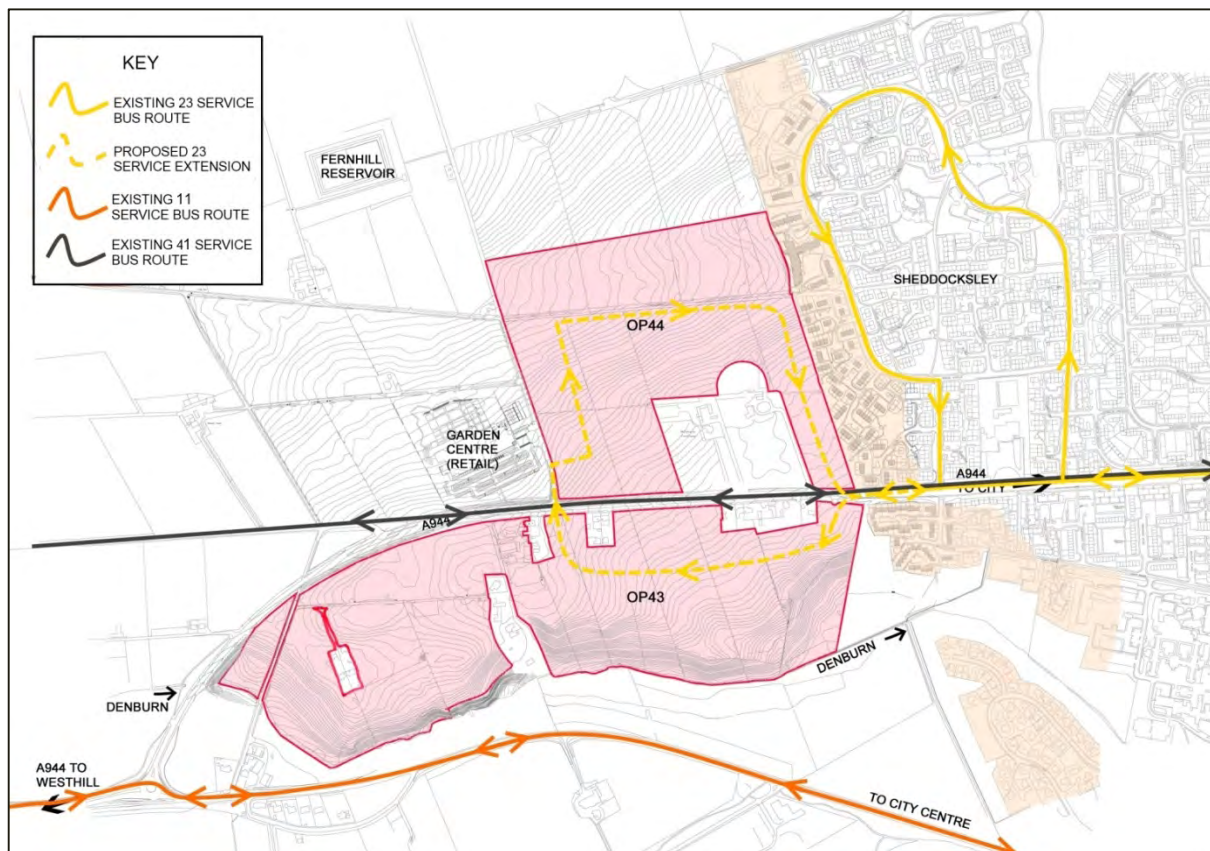


Concept plan

3 Developing the Masterplan

3.1 Over Arching Principles

The masterplan has been developed to encourage less reliance on private car use, and a modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport use. The area is well served by existing footpath and cycle routes, as well as a range of bus services. The masterplan ensures that the development will utilise and enhance these wherever possible to do so, and offer the greatest possible opportunity for residents to use an alternative to the car. It is proposed to extend the First Bus 23 service to loop through the site, offering a frequent (10 minute) service to Aberdeen City Centre.



Proposed extension to the First Group 23 service, and the other existing First Bus services.

Convenient access is proposed to alternative existing bus routes, such as the First Bus 11 service, and the Stagecoach X17/N17 service that run along Queen's Road to the south. Walking and cycling routes have been carefully designed into the masterplan, and the principles of Designing Streets adopted to seek to reduce traffic speeds and prioritise pedestrians and cyclists.

The site will be accessed by three principle junctions. Upon completion of the plan, the east and west junctions will operate as left-in/left-out only arrangements, with the central junction fully signalised to allow access in all directions. Pedestrian crossing points have

been designed into the plan to mitigate the barrier that the A944 creates between the north and south parts of the development.

The Council's Action Programme does not require a school on the site, and allocates pupils from the development to existing schools in the area. However, to maintain flexibility, the masterplan could provide land for a school in the future, should one be required, in place of housing - in either the north or the south. Similarly land can be made available to provide health care facilities on site if required. Discussions are ongoing with NHS Grampian and the Council in this regard.

The site sits between areas identified in the Local Development Plan as Green Space Network. These are valuable areas for wildlife habitats, ecology and informal recreation. The masterplan seeks to ensure these areas are not fragmented, by providing additional landscaped corridors between the established areas of Green Space Network.



Green Space Network remaining after development of the site.

The masterplan has been carefully designed to utilise the existing topography, with the minimum amount of alteration to the levels required. The steepest parts of the site have been avoided, both in the interests of sustainability and visual impact. Considerable areas of landscape planting are proposed around the site to aid its visual integration with the surrounding area.

The principles set out in *Designing Places* and *Designing Streets* have been adopted as central to the design process. With regard to the urban design and to the street design, the masterplan is distinctive, safe and pleasant, easy to move around in, welcoming, adaptable and resource efficient.

The development is also designed to be highly sustainable, with modern house construction techniques incorporated into attractive designs with traditional proportions. Various measures to reduce the carbon emissions of the development have been explored, and the most suitable solution will be identified through the detailed planning process.

3.2 The Three Character Areas

Three distinct character areas have been identified on the Concept Plan. These are as follows: -

Area A sits to the North of the Lang Stracht, and is identified as site OP44 in the Local Development Plan, suitable for 300 houses. The image below shows woodland to the North, and areas of Green Space Network both to the east and west of the area. The layout exploits this relationship and by drawing the landscape into the scheme, opening up ready access to this resource and providing attractive views, and settings for the residents.



Area A

Area B forms the western section of Local Development Plan site OP43, to the south of the A944 Lang Stracht. The Denburn runs along the southern side of the site in a deep gully.

The image below shows the Den of Maidenraig running to the south and south west of the area. The layout exploits this relationship in 2 ways. Firstly by drawing the landscape into the residential area through a series of landscaped courtyards on the south side. There are no gardens backing on to this boundary (so no long line of fences facing the Den), and the courtyards will be designed to maximise these attractive views – including gable windows. Secondly by opening the whole of the south-western boundary (where there are no houses on the Den side of the road) up to the Den.



Area B

Area C forms the eastern part of Local Development Plan site OP43. Sloping from north west down to the south east and the Den of Maidenraig Local Nature Reserve. A group of existing houses adjoining a stream and a deep gully mark the western boundary of this area. It was logical to strengthen this wildlife corridor by adding a swathe of Green Space Network on its eastern edge to improve screening, landscape setting, and avoid undermining the character which the houses currently enjoy.

The steep slopes of the Den of Maidenraig define the southern boundary of the area, and the layout responds to this by drawing the greenery into the housing area through landscaped courtyards. None of the houses in this area back on to the Den (to avoid long lines of garden fencing) and the courtyards are designed to maximise views – including the inclusion of gable windows where appropriate.



Area C

Overall, the masterplan has been developed to provide a sustainable community that responds appropriately to the landscape and the surrounding residential communities, whilst providing the opportunity for new services and facilities which will benefit the existing population as well as the new residents.



The masterplan

4 Delivering the Masterplan

The main report considers in detail the phasing and delivery of the Maiden Craig masterplan, including the required facilities and infrastructure set out in the Council's Action Programme. It also identifies specific strategies for the disposal of foul and surface water drainage, provision of servicing to the site and the incorporation of affordable housing into the development. The phasing plan is shown below, identifying the pattern of development, from east to west.



Phasing diagram (above) and associated numbers (below)

| Phase | Number of Units | Number of Affordable Units |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Phase 1a | 88 | 22 |
| Phase 1b | 78 | 78 |
| Phase 2a | c. 131 | c. 35 |
| Phase 2b | c. 138 | |
| Phase 3a | c. 88 | c. 23 |
| Phase 3b | c. 114 | c. 19 |
| Phase 4 | c. 104 | c. 11 |
| Phase 5 | c. 78 | c. 16 |
| Totals | c. 816 (330 North and 486 South) | c. 204 |

5 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, the masterplan report details the proposals for a highly sustainable, attractive, and distinctive development on the western edge of Aberdeen. The proposals are deliverable, and are flexible enough to ensure that requirements for education and/or healthcare facilities can be accommodated in due course if required. The masterplan is respectful of the sensitive areas that bound the site to the north and south, and to the established residential communities to the east. Below are some artists impressions of the development.



Left – an image from the eastern edge of phase 1b, with the landscape buffer on the right between the housing and the existing Sheddocksley area.

Right – residential courtyards are designed to open out into the principle open space areas such as the Den of Maidenraig to the south of the site.



Left – the principle bus route through the site will be appropriately traffic calmed, and will provide safe and convenient facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Landscape planting will create an attractive and safe character.