

**REPORT TO:** POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 15 AUGUST 2005

**REPORT ON:** DESIGN COMPETITION FOR YOUNG ARCHITECTS -  
CONTEMPORARY AFFORDABLE HOUSING - GAP SITES

**REPORT BY:** JOINT REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND  
TRANSPORTATION AND DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

**REPORT NO:** 438-2005

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval in principle for disposal of several small awkward sites via a design and develop competition targeted at young local architects in association with developers, and to consult on draft briefs for the sites in question. The objective is to determine if there is a market for small awkward sites and also to set a design quality standard for similar sized developments in future. It is also hoped this will present an opportunity to gain positive national publicity.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee
- a agrees in principle to dispose of sites at Stobswell (Crescent St, Princes St), Hilltown (Rosebank St, Forebank Rd) and City Rd via a design competition for young local architects in association with developers, with land values set by the District Valuer at market value.
  - b agrees the draft terms of reference for the competition and remits the Director of Planning & Transportation to consult the relevant bodies regarding interest and sponsorship and to come back with proposals for the composition of a selection panel.
  - c approves the draft briefs for the sites concerned attached to this report for consultation purposes
  - d remits the Director of Planning and Transportation to consult with local representative groups and surrounding residents about the draft briefs and to report back to committee in 2 months time.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

- 3.1 The proposal is to dispose at District Valuer market valuation rather than auction them in order to provide a basis for selection on quality of design in this particular instance only, to set a standard for development in the future.
- 3.2 There might also be a small sum from the Department's revenue budget towards prize money, which will be determined following consultation with other potential contributors.

#### **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The draft briefs address two key themes of Dundee 21:
- a Places, spaces and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility;
  - b Diversity and local distinctiveness are valued and protected.

#### **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no equal opportunities implications associated with this report.

#### **6 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 There is concern that around the city there are small incidental areas of open space costing revenue to maintain but not actively used. Very often these sites are left over from demolition and other redevelopment proposals eg long term road proposals, and have been landscaped and forgotten. These could represent a potential windfall in capital receipts and small development opportunities. Inevitably these sites generally being left over are likely to be small in scale, difficult in shape and have sub soil difficulties. They might not appeal broadly to the private house building industry but there could be specialist interest. It will take some time to survey the city to determine overall potential. However to start the exercise a few inner city sites to stimulate regeneration have been already identified. It is proposed these should be used to both test the market and to set a standard.
- 6.2 There is concern about lack of provision of affordable new housing particularly for first time buyers. Dundee is a post -industrial city in the process of repositioning itself. A major part of its strategy is to build on the strengths of its two Universities. New business development based on the world renowned cancer research of Dundee University, and digital media development based on the acclaimed design school of Dundee University and the computer games school of Abertay University are but two examples. Fundamental to the problem of population loss and in relation to the new business development strategy is making a post industrial city appealing to recent graduates. Facilities and infrastructure targeted at this group is a key part of the strategy. Quality and affordability of appropriate housing is an important part of that infrastructure.
- 6.3 The Council is keen to promote Dundee as a place where design matters and a place where young talent is fostered. As Planning Authority the council is concerned at the dearth of imaginative architecture in private house building, in particular that which is intended to cater for the young first time buyer, at the cheaper end of the market. In such instance you might expect some radical rethinking of the design criteria that might appeal to the younger age group and their contemporary lifestyle expectations. For instance noise attenuation, space for guests or study, outdoor sitting or entertaining space, minimising or avoiding common maintenance problems such as shared stairs or open space, bike and car parking are all appealing features. Most of the new and exciting development, such as City Quay, is beyond the budget of most first time buyers or a young couple wanting to move on from their 1 bedroom tenement flat probably to a modest 2 bedroom house or a flat that is not in a tenement.

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- 6.4 This target group of buyers is more likely to want to be close to the centre rather than be in a suburban location.
- 6.5 The proposal is to foster a better approach by promoting a design and development competition aimed at young Dundee architects (35 years of age or younger working from a DD postcode). The City Council will make available a small group of sites in 3 inner city locations to be available at an agreed price (District Valuer market valuation). Each project has to be capable of being built and sold, and to set a standard for others to follow, therefore normal commercial rules must be employed. Architects/developers will be expected to indicate the sort of retail prices they intend to target for affordable housing. It is anticipated these might be a sale price of up to £75,000 for a single person unit (typical salaries locally for the 20's age group is around £20,000- £25,000 at best), and for a unit for couples £100,000. The sites will be challenging in shape and location. As well as helping promote good design this is also expected to help stimulate regeneration.
- 6.6 With Dundee's legacy of tenements, the housing for couples will be houses, not flats, to improve choice, though this could be in a garden flat format. Single person housing can include flats, but could also be a house.
- 6.7 The Dundee Local Plan policies with regard to flats and garden sizes will be flexibly applied in anticipation of imaginative solutions that will demonstrate how quality of environment can be alternatively achieved. The Local Plan (ref 11.7) allows for this - "It is recognised that in certain very small scale development proposals, compliance with Appendix 1 is not practical. In such instances some flexibility will exist where the proposal is of exceptional quality."
- 6.8 It is intended that this be a live development project not merely an ideas exercise. Architects participating will be expected to develop (build and sell) their proposal if it is selected. They could either be the development company or work in association with a builder/developer, but this will be their responsibility. Selected designs will require to be submitted for planning approval within 2 months of selection and development started within 4 months of planning approval.
- 6.9 To ensure the target groups are reached there will be arrangements, permitting sale only to prospective owner occupiers, not someone buying to let, and a claw back on any profit if there is onward re-sale within say 3 years.
- 6.10 To ascertain how welcome such a venture might be 5 leading architects' practices in or around Dundee were contacted, plus the chair of the Dundee Institute of Architects. All these practices have young architects and good contacts in the housing development industry. Every one agreed it would be a stimulating exercise, there would be real interest in participating, it would generate good publicity for the city and be a helpful way to showcase local young talent and help some careers to mature.
- 6.11 Each group of sites will have an architect/developer team chosen on the basis of the best design solution. The prize for the winners will secure the site concerned and will also get a modest cash prize put forward by the sponsors (to be determined). There will also be attendant publicity.
- 6.12 A selection panel will be needed. In addition to a Council representative, potential sponsors and local representative structures could be another source along with a

champion of young people and graduate welfare. These sources will be investigated and reported upon.

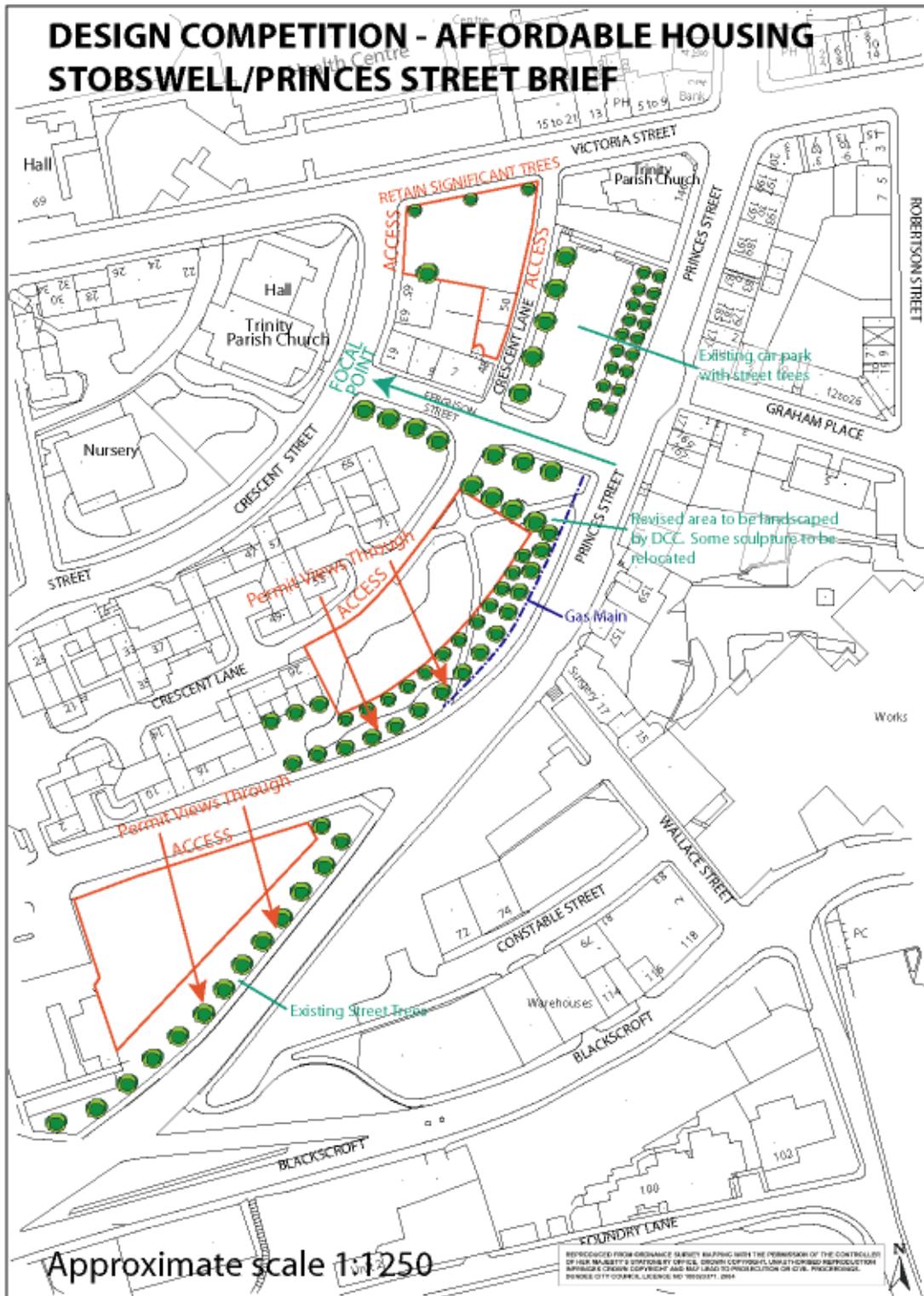
- 6.13 It is expected that at least there will be exposure in the local press and the Scottish press including the Sunday property supplements. There might also be coverage in the architecture and planning press. The possibility of more extensive coverage will be investigated.
- 6.14 Very basic draft briefs are appended for approval. Assuming approval in principle of the proposal for the, the usual consultations will be undertaken including the local representative structures and all residents surrounding the various sites consulted. This will be vital since in most cases the sites might have taken on a local perception of permanent open space.

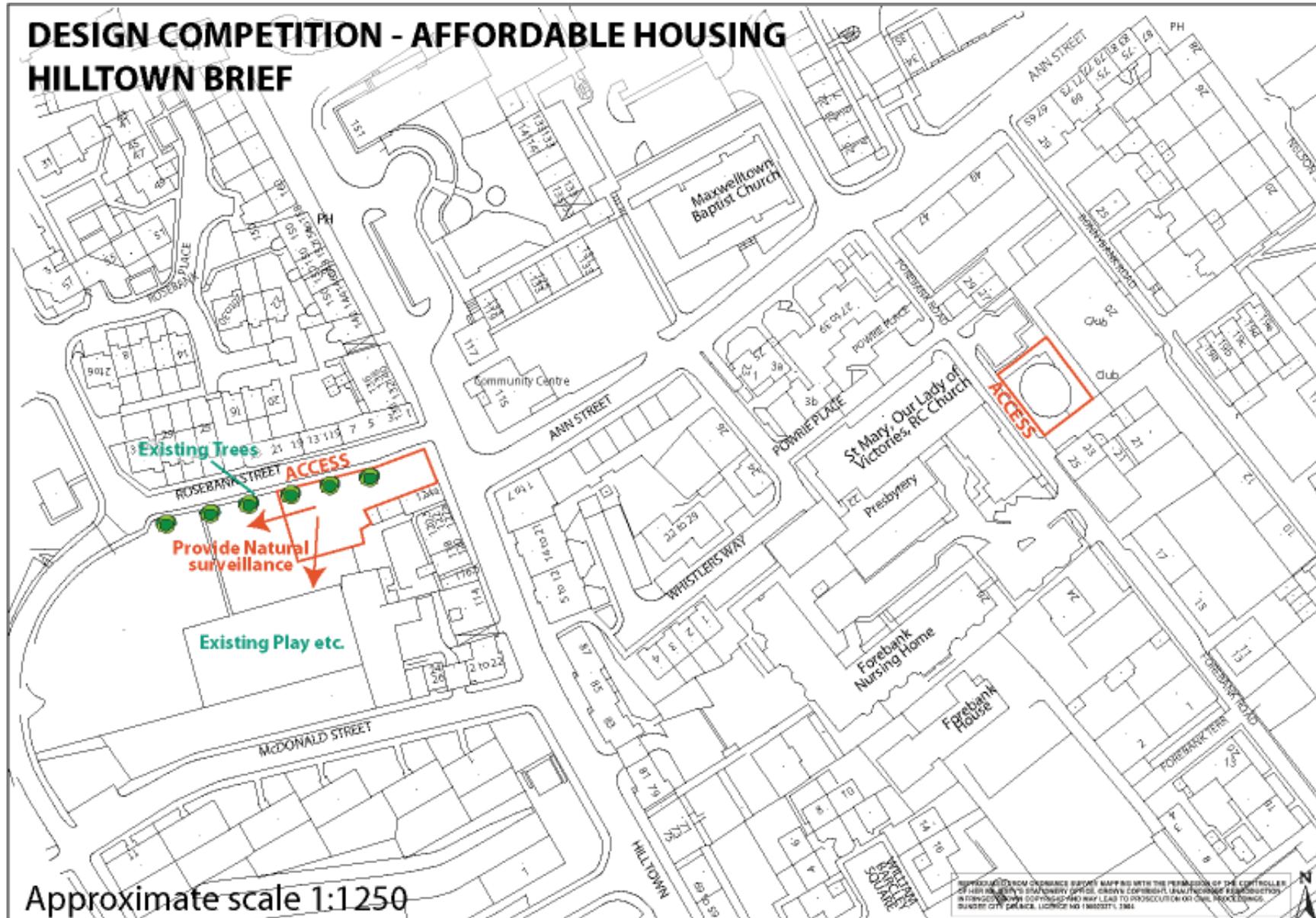


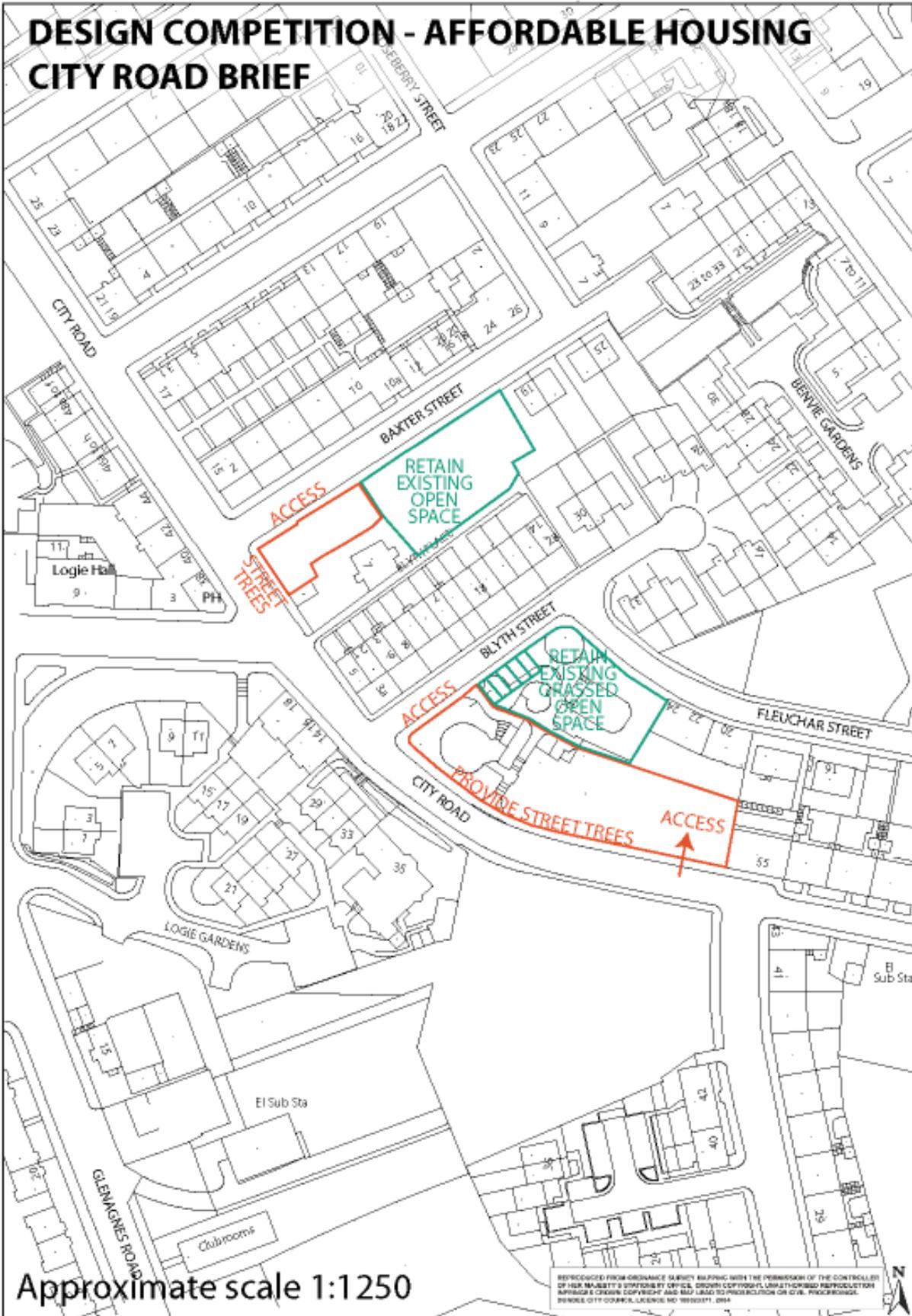












**7 CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 As well as the Director of Economic Development and the Principal Architectural Services Officer, the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning), five architects practices and Dundee Institute of Architects have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

**8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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Mike Galloway  
Director of Planning & Transportation

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Ian Mudie  
Head of Planning

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Doug Grimmond  
Director of Economic Development

IGSM/LB/EB

5 August 2005

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