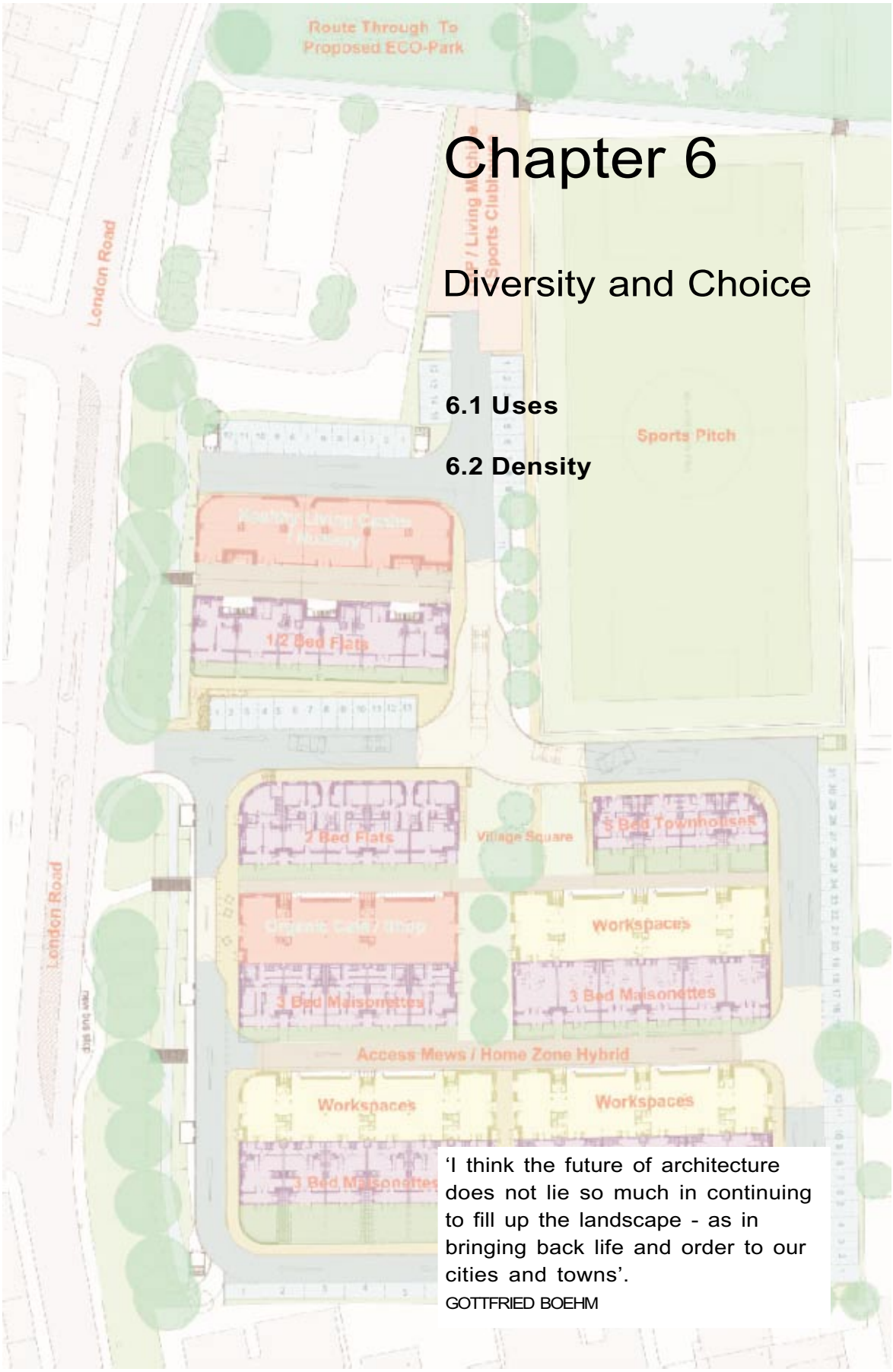


Chapter 6

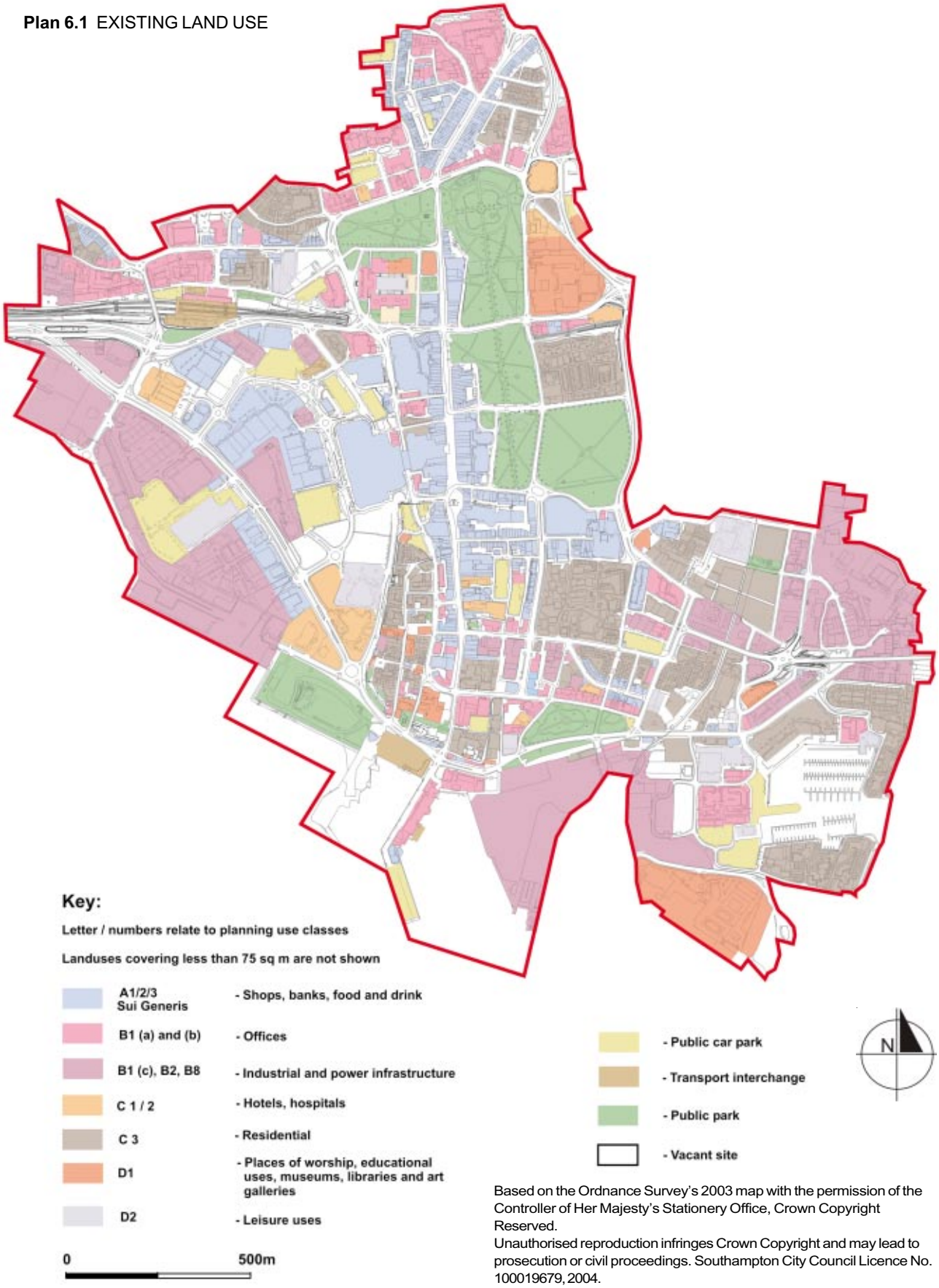
Diversity and Choice

6.1 Uses

6.2 Density

'I think the future of architecture does not lie so much in continuing to fill up the landscape - as in bringing back life and order to our cities and towns'.
GOTTFRIED BOEHM

Plan 6.1 EXISTING LAND USE



6.0 DIVERSITY AND CHOICE

6.1 Uses

Objectives

To seek the variety of facilities and opportunities people need within easy reach of housing by sustainable means of transport. To ensure lively, vibrant and safe public spaces.

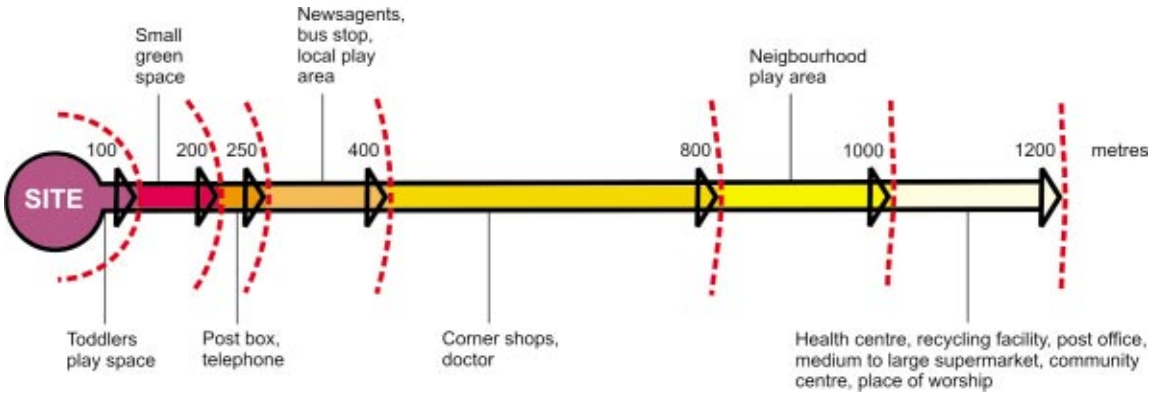
The Local Plan requires the creation of safe and sustainable places (SDP 10 and 13) and complimentary mixed use developments (SDP1.iii) with a suitable provision of affordable housing and variety of house types (H13 - 17). This section explains how mixed use will contribute to these objectives.

The rear of the Birmingham Mail Box development to the left provides residential accommodation above commercial and retail uses. The red brick building to the right has two floors of bars and restaurants with a hotel above.

6.1.1 Achieving successful mixed use places

The discredited post war planning policy of landuse zoning led to large areas of single use. This generated an increase in motorised trips and whole industrial districts that become dead and intimidating after dusk. Rather, we must evolve our city centre as a sequence of genuine urban communities.

Sustainable communities need a whole range of opportunities and facilities including employment, housing, shops, educational, health and spiritual uses to be close enough to make multi-purpose trips possible and walking and cycling attractive and safe. Localising facilities runs counter to most market and institutional trends but it is fundamental to sustainability that there is increased autonomy at neighbourhood scale.



This diagram indicates distances which should be aimed at when assessing the facilities available to a new housing development. Note that 250m is about 2-3 minutes walk, 400m is 5 minutes, 800m 10 minutes and 1200m 15 minutes walk.

Design Principle 6.i: Developers of large sites should address the need for appropriate infrastructure and service facilities.

The City Centre should be developed in a way which fosters a more even balance between homes, jobs and services. In addition to offering people the opportunity to live, work and shop locally this will also deliver a range of other benefits. Mixed-use places usually appear more consistently lively than single use areas. There are also more likely to be people around at any one time, in commercial uses during the day and residential during the evening. Thus for example more people 'living over the shop' in the central retail quarter would improve the perception of safety in this area at the beginning and end of the day. Several of the City Centre quarters (notably the Western and Central) suffer from loss of vitality as a result of the exclusion of housing from the mix of uses by past zoning policies. Plan 6.1 illustrates existing land uses and Plan 6.2 highlights land use proposals for specific areas and sites.

Mixed-use places also provide greater opportunities for social interaction, more visually stimulating townscapes and increased viability for urban facilities and small businesses like corner shops. The mix can be within different floors of one building, at the street scale (one use next to another) or at the neighbourhood scale.

Vertical mixed use in a high street location - Sainsbury's store (Camberwell, London) with cinema and health club above. The cinema also provides increased animation in the facade and enables the building to respond to the scale of the surrounding buildings.

Design Principle 6.ii: All schemes should retain or provide as great a sustainable mix of uses as is possible vertically within the building and horizontally within the block.

Mixing different housing types, sizes and tenures in an area ensures a healthy, diverse, inclusive community comprising different social groups. This will also free up the various housing markets and allow people maximum opportunity to select locations convenient to their needs, which might reduce the need for motorised trips. Achieving a balanced mix of housing tenure is not relevant to obtaining planning permission (excepting the local plan requirement for 25% affordable housing on sites of 5 units or more). Nevertheless the above is still advocated as good practice.

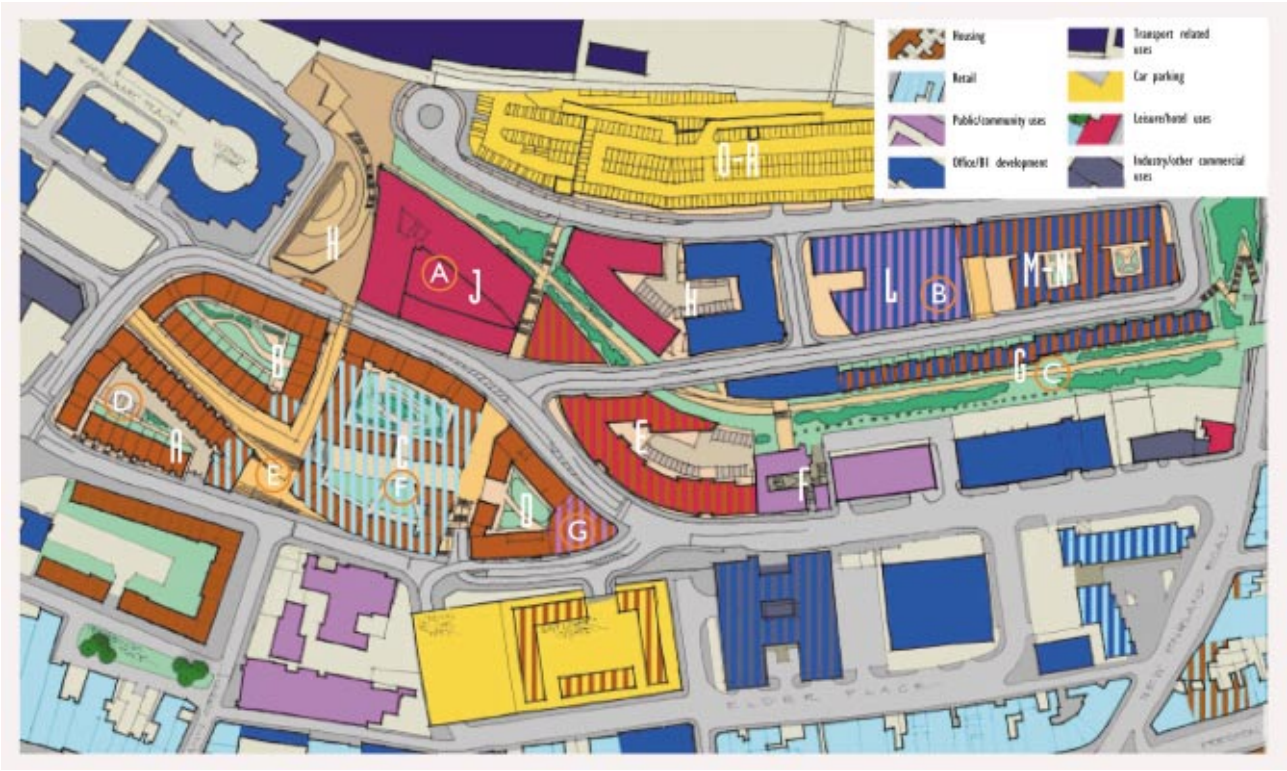
Live/work development: Westferry Studios, Limehouse, London.

6.1.2 Location of housing, jobs and facilities

The clustering of facilities in local centres outside of the retail core, along public transport routes and at crossroads is encouraged. The distribution of uses should assist people to orientate themselves. Civic functions, which help to encourage a strong sense of community and identity, are best located in prominent positions. The transition zone between the central retail core and the City Centre edge has great potential for enhanced mixed use. Speciality retailing, cultural uses and live-work facilities would be suitable in this zone. Shops, workspaces, storage yards and houses can exist together.

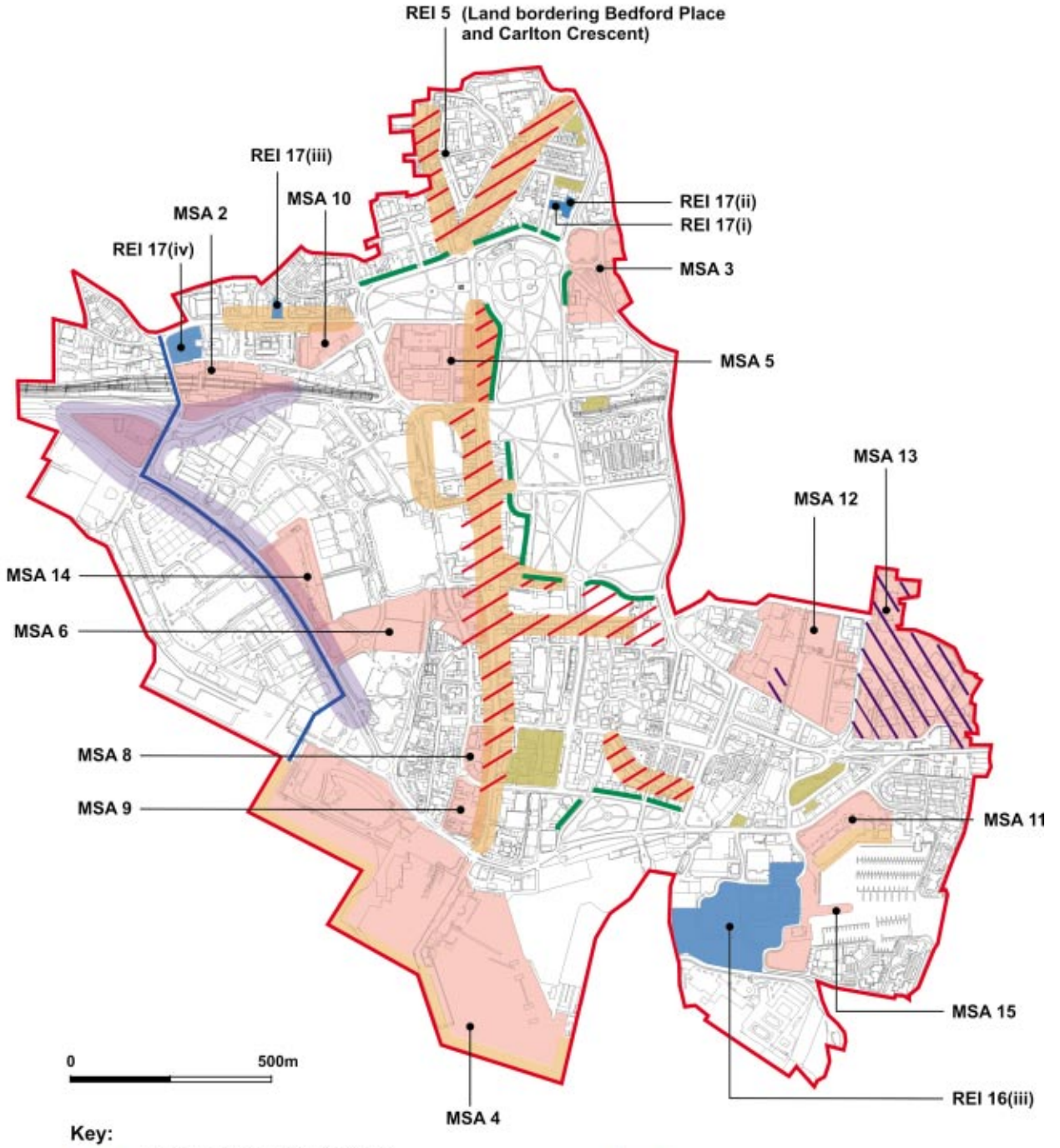
Mixing tenure type is best done across a block as opposed to across a street.

Housing developments should also be assessed in terms of their proximity to local facilities. If for example a housing site, which has poor access to free capacity in facilities such as a secondary school or health centre, was developed, then extra public transport investment might be required as a prerequisite to a planning consent. Major trip-generating uses should have good access by public transport. They should be concentrated at or between public transport nodes. Uses with relatively few employed people but significant freight movement should have access to the main road system and preferably to access by rail or water.



Mixed use development at Brighton Goods Yard: Block B includes a few retail and cafe units, together with 25 two-bed flats, 13 three-bedroom flats and 9 four-bedroom town houses at a density of 119 units/Ha. Block C includes a 4180m2 supermarket, with flats above, including four one-bed; 54 two-bed and 36 three-bed flats at a density of 146 units/Ha. Block D includes a 1858m2 training centre, 10 one-bed flats, 34 two-bed flats and 12 three-bed flats at a density of 142 units/Ha.

Plan 6.2 ENCOURAGING MIXED USE



Key:

- Uses with active fronts to be retained, enhanced or introduced
- Uses encouraged in the long term that will generate high quality buildings
- Live - work developments encouraged
- Residential accomodation on the upper floors of shops and offices to be encouraged
- Land to the west of this line is excluded from the local plan proposals map for the City Centre
- Park frontage where new residential developments to upper floors would be encouraged
- Major development sites
- Office sites identified in Local Plan
- Local Plan housing allocations

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT SITES MARKED ON THE PLAN OPPOSITE

Local Plan Policy No.	Site Name	Type of Uses Desired
MSA 2	Central Station	Mixed use: transport interchange, offices, hotel and ancillary food and drink uses
MSA 3	Charlotte Place	Mixed use: office, health, hotel,residential community, education and sports
MSA 4	Royal Pier and Town Quay	Residential dominated mixed use with hotel, office, food and drink,transport links
MSA 5	Civic Centre and Guildhall Square	Mixed use: office, cultural, civic, residential, shops, food and drink
MSA 6	West Quay Phase 3	
MSA 8	Habitat Block	Mixed use: shops, food and drink, health, residential
MSA 9	Lower High Street	Mixed use: including cultural and educational
MSA 10	Mayflower Plaza	Mixed use: office, residential, leisure, shops, food and drink
MSA 11	Canute's Pavilion	Residential dominated, mixed use
MSA 12	Chapel	Mixed use: residential, business use, sport, leisure, community and education
MSA 13	Town Depot	Mixed use: residential, waterside and associated leisure use
MSA 14	Pirelli Site	Mixed use: leisure, office or hotel
MSA 15	Promontory Site/Ocean Village	Mixed use: leisure, hotel, office, marine related events, and limited residential

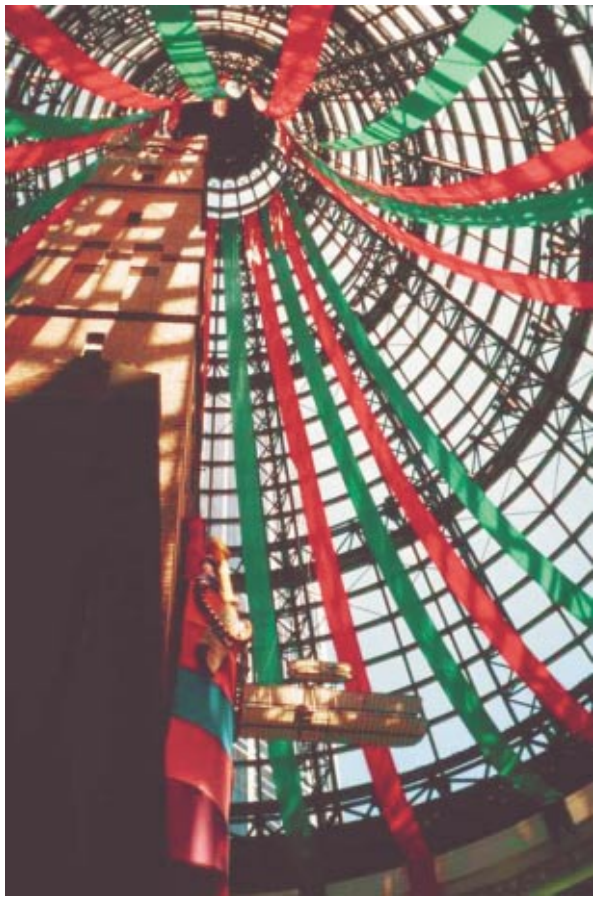
REI 5	Bedford Place/ Carlton Crescent	**REI 17(ii)**	Diamond Road/ Dorset Street
REI 16(iii)	Eastern Docks	**REI 17(iv)**	Nelson Gate
REI 17(i)	Kings Park Road		

The BedZED scheme: sustainable mixed use development (see illustration p.133). If this building system was applied to Southampton City Centre the development statistics might be as follows. Sixty three flats are provided at a density of 100units/Ha. Areas of non - residential uses: public square 538m² and space within the residential units for 1695m² of workspace. Courtesy - Bill Dunster Architects.

Conversion of a warehouse to residential use - Auckland.

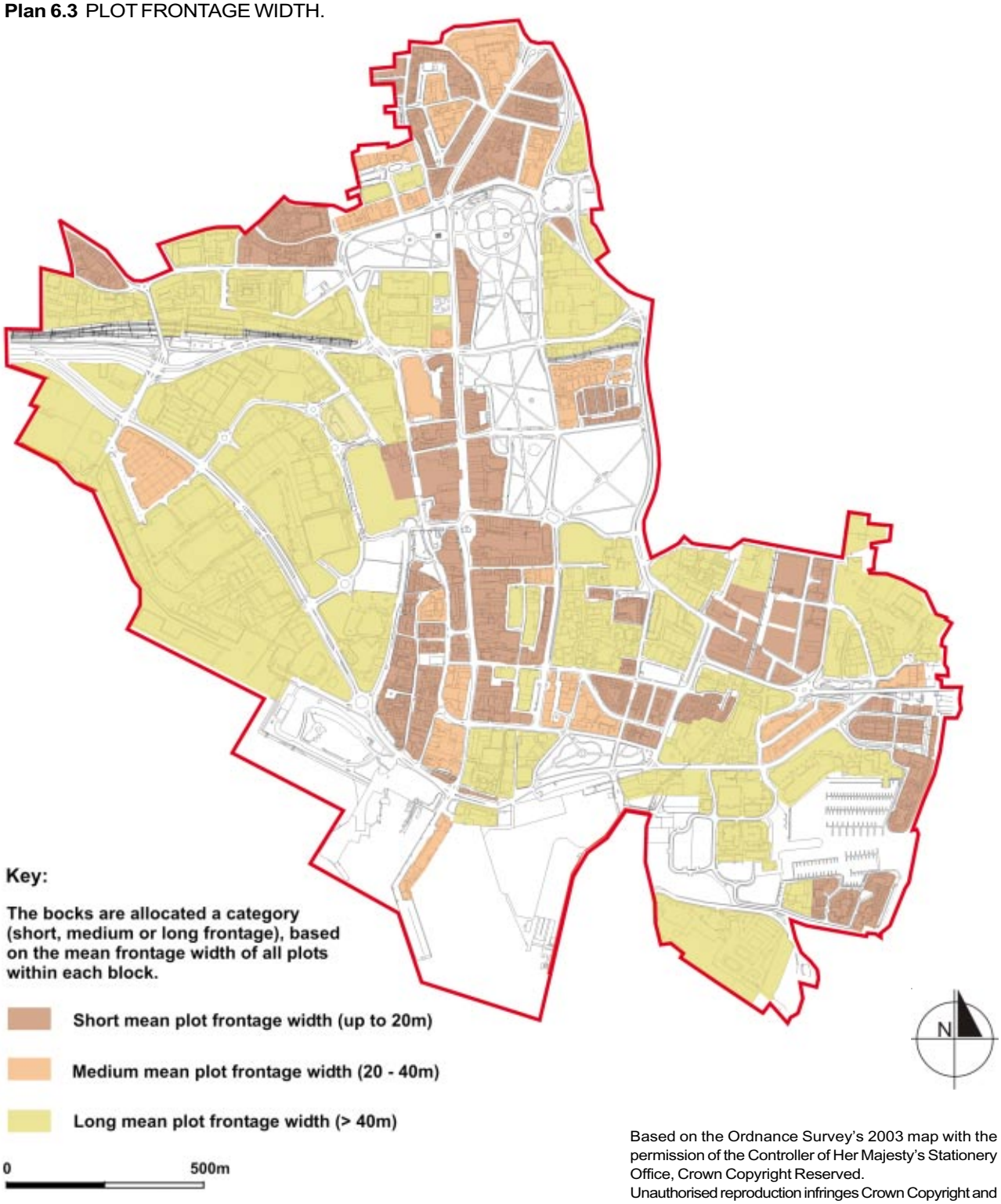
6.1.3 Re-use of existing buildings

Vacant existing buildings should be reused wherever possible. They tend to command lower rents than new buildings and thus support more economically marginal uses such as specialist shops, which considerably enhances the choice and vitality of the city centre margins. Buildings also contain considerable embodied energy (the amount of energy consumed in the extraction, manufacture, transport and assembly on site of building materials). Unless the insulation standards of existing buildings are very poor and cannot be improved during refurbishment then it will probably be more sustainable in energy terms to reuse than redevelop. Policy H1 of the Local Plan enables re-use of redundant commercial premises for housing.



Melbourne Central Shopping Centre incorporates an old building into the new complex.

Plan 6.3 PLOT FRONTAGE WIDTH.



6.1.4 Plot size diversity

Areas with a short or medium mean plot frontage are likely to provide the potential for a reasonable degree of mixed use and future large development should optimise plot size diversity and the number of small plots. In addition to providing the potential for mixed use this also helps maintain visual interest and an active frontage.

6.2 Density

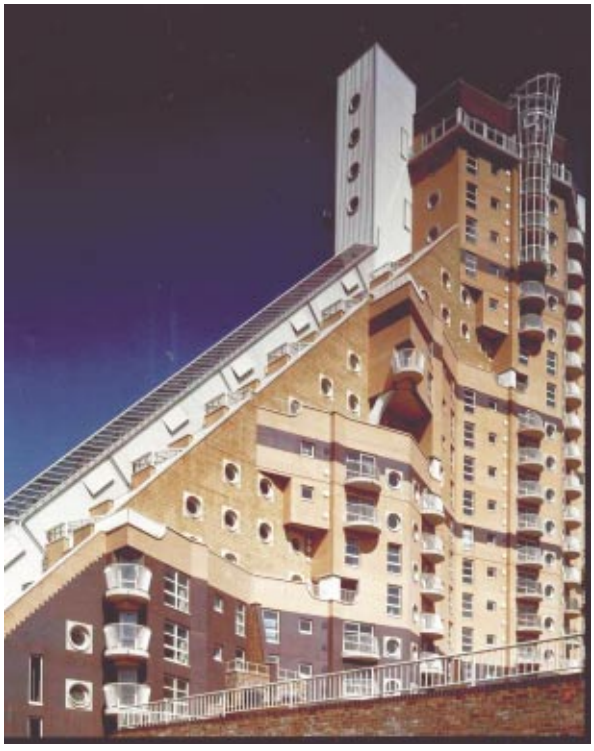
Objective

To provide sustainable, vital and safe settlements through the benefits of medium to high-density development designed in a way that avoids the negative implications of 'town cramming'.

This is rooted in Local Plan policies SDP 1 and 13, H 11 and 12 regarding the overall quality, sustainability and density of development.

6.2.1 Historical context of the density debate

Government research (1998) has shown that there is no correlation between urban quality and density. Examples such as the grand apartments of Paris, mansion houses of Kensington and lofts of Manhattan also show that high densities don't have to mean cramped living spaces. In the twenty-first century sustainability concerns have forced local authorities to reconsider the limits they set on density. PPG13 requires councils to *"set standards to maintain existing densities and where appropriate increase them."*



High density living - Cascades, Isle of Dogs, London.

6.2.2 The benefits of higher densities

Car ownership and reliance has been shown to be influenced greatly by density independently of income variations. A vibrant and safe environment is fostered by higher densities, which facilitate walking, cycling and public transport, in the process reducing vehicular traffic and parking demand. Higher densities also enhance the viability of services and facilities, supporting greater mixed-use and diversity. More densely developed brownfield sites in Southampton will conserve greenfield sites elsewhere in Hampshire that might better be used to produce food and provide a habitat for wildlife and recreation. They will also enhance the viability of development by reducing the cost of land per unit and delivering economies on infrastructure costs. All the additional sustainability benefits of 'connected buildings' as described in 3.1 Building Pattern will also usually apply to high-density developments.

6.2.3 How density is measured

Density can be expressed in several ways. For commercial and mixed-use development plot ratio may be most appropriate. Sites of a more residential nature can be judged using the number of dwellings or habitable rooms per hectare. There are also the terms net and gross density. Net residential density is the concentration of housing excluding other associated land uses such as open space and allotments, roads, schools and commerce in relation to an area of land. Gross density is the overall density of an area of land including the area taken up by all those ancillary uses.

6.2.4 Creating a sustainable density

Achieving the benefits of higher density is crucial to the vitality, equity and sustainability of the City Centre. However if these benefits are to be won without risking the perception that the centre is being crammed, then there needs to be a rise in net densities whilst gross densities are kept low enough to provide sufficient access, open space, and other

Gross Density = $\frac{\text{no. of units}}{\text{Total site area (outlined in red)}}$

= $\frac{98}{0.88 \text{ ha}}$

= 111 dw/ha

Net Density = $\frac{\text{no. of units}}{\text{Area of private space (outlined in red)}}$

= $\frac{98}{0.441 \text{ ha}}$

= 225 dw/ha

Sustainable densities involve addressing the need for open space. High density housing in Potsdamer Platz, Berlin - architect, Richard Rogers Partnership.

requirements. The Local Plan requires a minimum net density standard for purely residential use of 100 dwellings per hectare or 395 habitable rooms per hectare. Maximum density standards will be controlled by contextual constraints and will be agreed on a site-by-site basis. Sufficiently high density is also important for non-housing building such as commercial uses (see also 3.2 Scale and Massing).

6.2.5 Varying the density

Densities should be varied across developments, focussing the highest densities of residential and other uses along public transport routes.

Design Principle 6.iii: Planning permission for housing will only be granted for new development at a minimum net density of 100 dwellings/Ha, which is achieved without sacrificing public space. Densities for non-residential development will be set on a site-by-site basis.