



MARGATE
RENEWAL BOARD
DRAFT

APRIL 2008

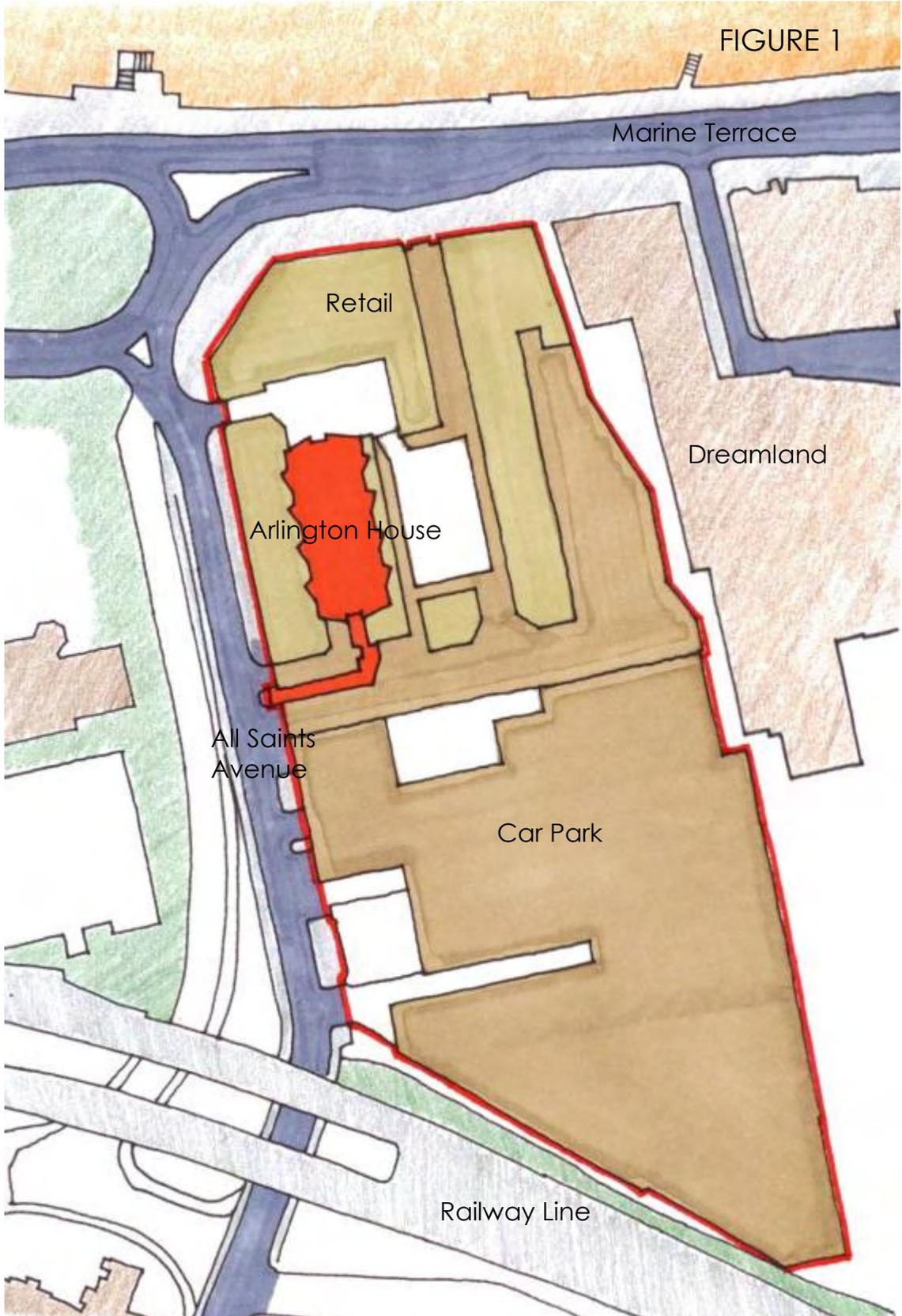


ARLINGTON PLANNING BRIEF

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ARLINGTON SQUARE SITE PLAN



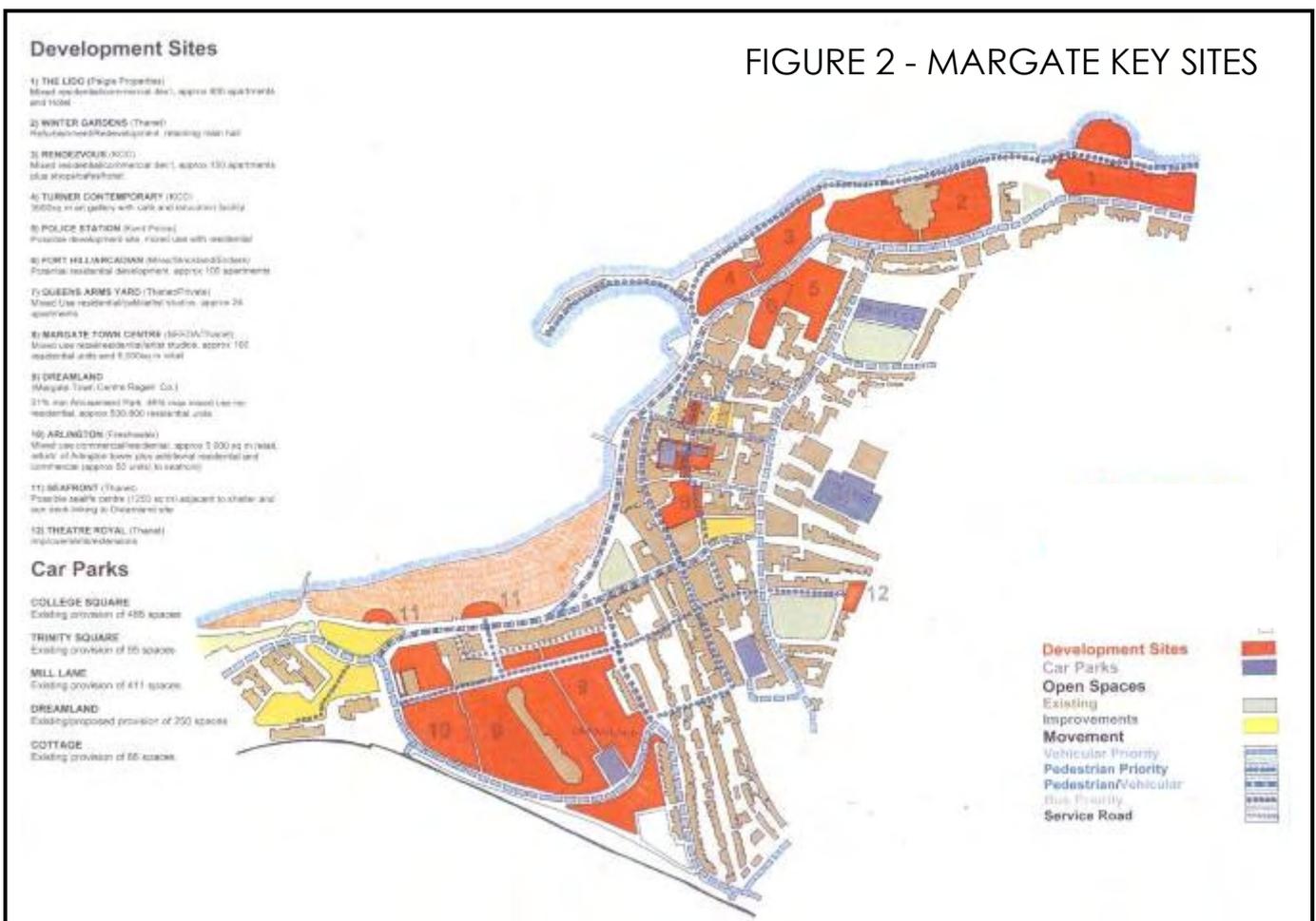
PURPOSE

Introduction

Thanet District Council's Corporate Plan 2007-11 includes within Theme 1 (economy) the need for the Council to work with the owners of Arlington and Dreamland to agree plans for the regeneration of the two sites. This brief assists that process, focusing on the Arlington site. It should be read in conjunction with a Planning Brief for the Dreamland Site approved by Council in February 2008.

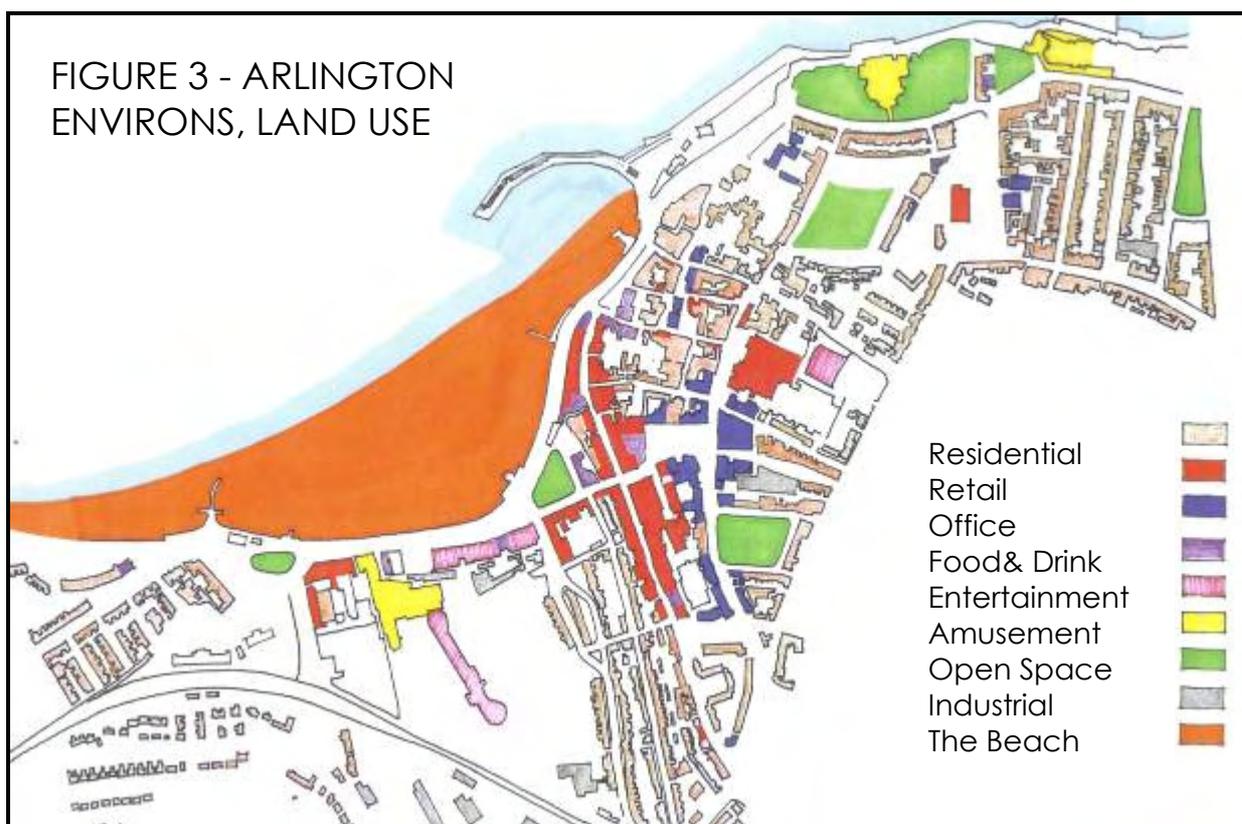
This brief has been prepared at the request of the Margate Renewal Board (25th April 2008), Thanet District Council's Cabinet, (12 December 2007) and Council (21st February 2008).

The brief establishes development principles applicable to the Arlington site located to the south of Margate Sands and Marine Terrace, to the east of All Saints Avenue. The site comprises a major landmark within the town and Margate seafront whose refurbishment and redevelopment form a key element of regeneration aspirations for Margate seafront.



It is one of the major sites identified on Margate seafront between the railway station and the former Lido (Figure 2) whose appropriate redevelopment will help drive the town's rejuvenation.

It is also within the main commercial area of the town (the red, pink and yellow notations on Figure 3) where retail and commercial development should continue to be focused in the interests of sustainability.



The brief requires consideration in the broader context of change for this coastal centre of Margate and its hinterland, which is the most deprived area in the South East, where the Margate Renewal Partnership, comprising representatives of Thanet District Council, Kent County Council, SEEDA, English Partnership, GOSE, English Heritage and other bodies, are leading change.

The brief has been prepared utilising ongoing research on retail, transport, parking, access, movement and site viability. There are no site specific policies within the Development Plan that relate to the site. There are however numerous contextual policies and relevant guidance within the Structure Plan, Local Plan, draft Regional Plan and Government statements. This brief draws upon these documents to provide a context for development proposals.

The brief balances planning policy with Margate's seaside town regeneration needs and the specific and pressing needs for site regeneration. It encourages pragmatic solutions to redress these problems in a financially viable manner.

Vision

To transform this key western gateway site to Margate to provide a positive landmark development including a mix of uses that will compliment adjacent sites and help regenerate Margate seafront and town centre.

Aims

To establish:

- A brief to be adopted for development control purposes establishing aspirations for the regeneration of the Arlington site and its relationship with adjacent sites as a guide to developers.
- Criteria to be addressed to ensure that development proposals are considered to compliment policy and guidance at national, regional, structure plan and Local Plan level.
- Criteria for establishing the appropriate level and type of enabling development to ensure the revitalisation of the Arlington site.
- Resolution of the environmental implications of site development.
- A mixed use destination including significant retail and commercial elements that regenerates this prominent seafront site providing a high quality built environment.
- A development that knits into the existing urban grain, complementing and enhancing Marine Terrace and All Saints Avenue.
- A development with strong, legible links to Margate station, Margate Sands, Dreamland the town centre and Old Town.
- The creation of new employment opportunities for the local population.

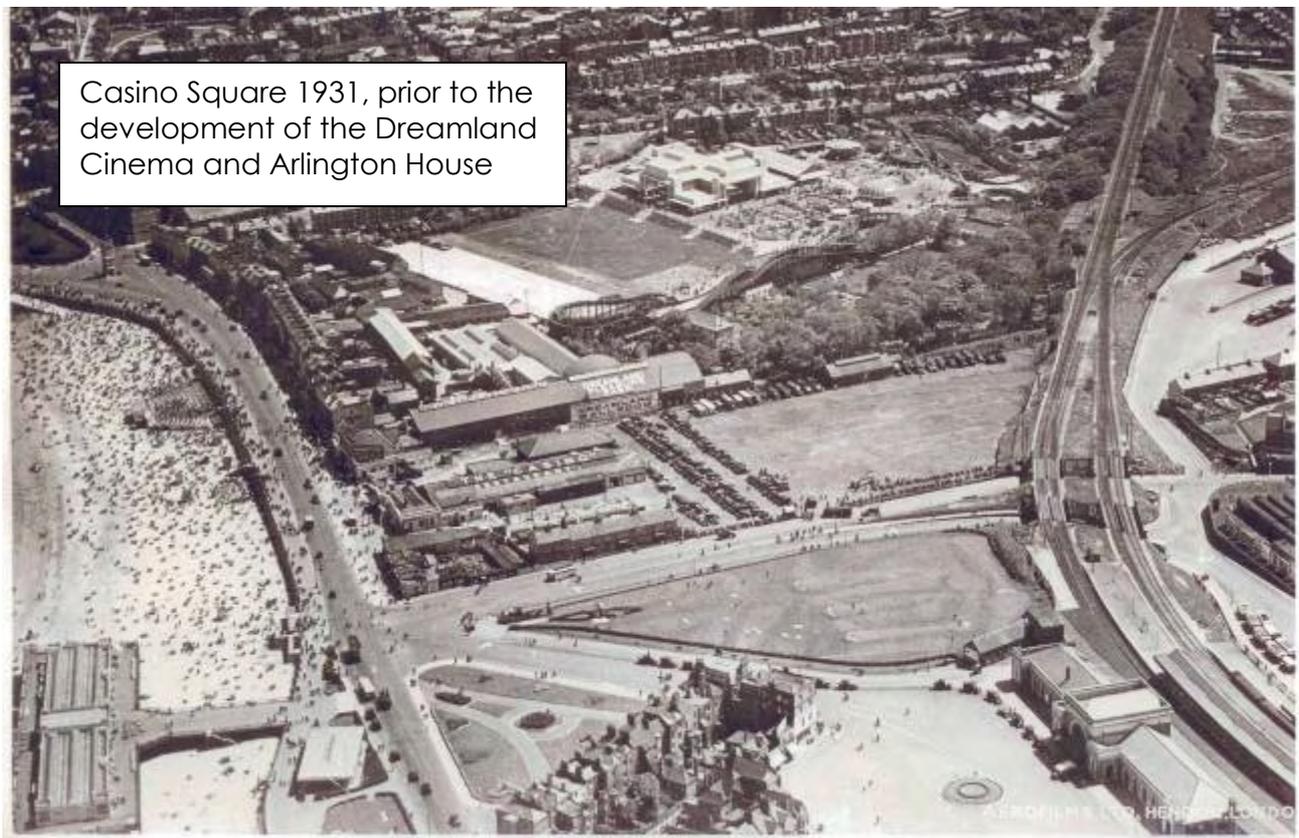
The brief encourages development proposals for Arlington that recognise the need for a scheme that reverses the image of Arlington House in the minds of the public and provides a landmark entrance strongly related to Margate sands, Dreamland and the town centre. It also encourages development that compliments proposals within the Margate seafront area, raises sufficient funding to enable substantial improvements to the existing built form and public realm. It promotes a high density residential, retail and commercial based mixed use scheme.

Historic Context

Arlington and the adjacent Dreamland site comprised a salt marsh inundated by the sea at high tide until the early 19th century. In 1809, a causeway and sea wall were built between Marine Gardens and Buenos Ayres, some 3.5 – 4 metres above the level of the surrounding land. Marine Terrace was built on this causeway as a series of houses with basements, and at each end were The Kent Hotel (now 'The Flamingo') and The Cinque Ports Hotel (now 'The Punch and Judy'). The terrace had been completed by 1835.

The Arlington Site

In 1846, the Arlington site was developed with a railway terminus by the South Eastern Railway, which functioned as one of the two main termini for Margate until 1926 when it was replaced by the present Margate Railway Station. Following the cessation of its use as a railway terminus, the site reverted to Margate Borough Council ownership, and the former station buildings were used for both catering and concessionaires. The adjacent land was known as Casino Square and was used for car and coach parking, and for occasional tented events.



In the early 1960s the Arlington Square development, comprising a residential tower, single-storey shopping arcade containing approximately 30,000 square feet of retail area, and a decked car park serving both the residential tower and providing parking for adjacent leisure and retail uses was constructed, opening in 1964.

Dreamland

In 1864, a railway terminus for a rival company was constructed immediately east of the terminus on the Arlington site. The company failed to secure parliamentary approval for the station, and the building was converted into a dance hall.



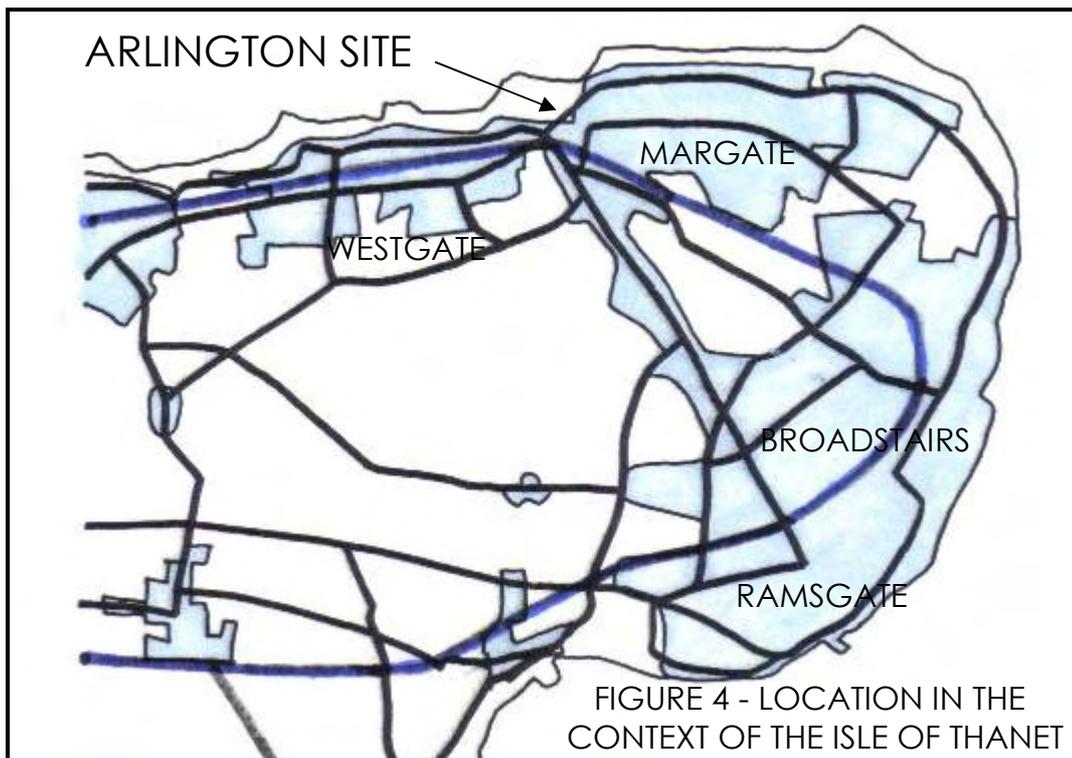
The Casino Building adjacent to the Dreamland Cinema, the Scenic Railway is to the top right of the picture

In 1867, the Reeve family, prominent figures in Margate society, bought the hall and the marshland which was progressively drained and turned into pleasure gardens with terraces, mock ruined abbey and boating lake.

An amusement park, has existed on this adjacent site since 1920 when John Henry Iles created a park based upon the Luna and Dreamland parks at Coney Island. Development of the site included the construction of the scenic railway in 1920, and the Dreamland entertainment complex on the site of the converted railway terminus between 1933 and 1935. Both of these buildings are Grade II Listed.

Location

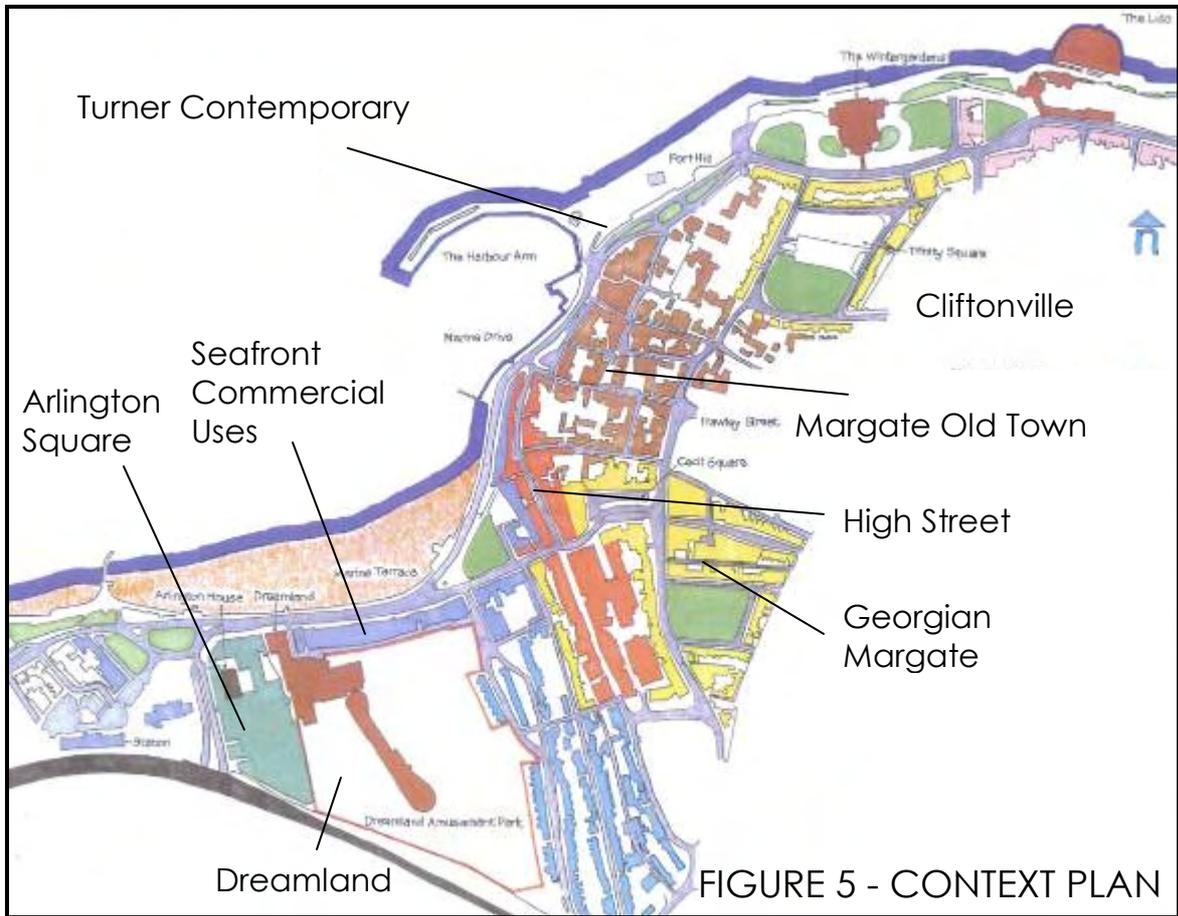
The Arlington site is located to the west of Marine Terrace, in close proximity to Margate Sands, the Town Centre, Margate Old Town and the proposed Turner Contemporary Gallery. It is within a short walking distance of both Margate Railway Station and Cecil Square, the principal local bus hub, from which the loop service serves Thanet's main towns and centres, including Broadstairs, Ramsgate and Westwood Cross. The local authority offices are based adjacent to Cecil Square, with the courts and library. There are three primary schools, St Gregory's, Holy Trinity and Salmestone in relatively close proximity. The nearest secondary school is Hartsdown College, to the south west of the site.



The Surrounding Area

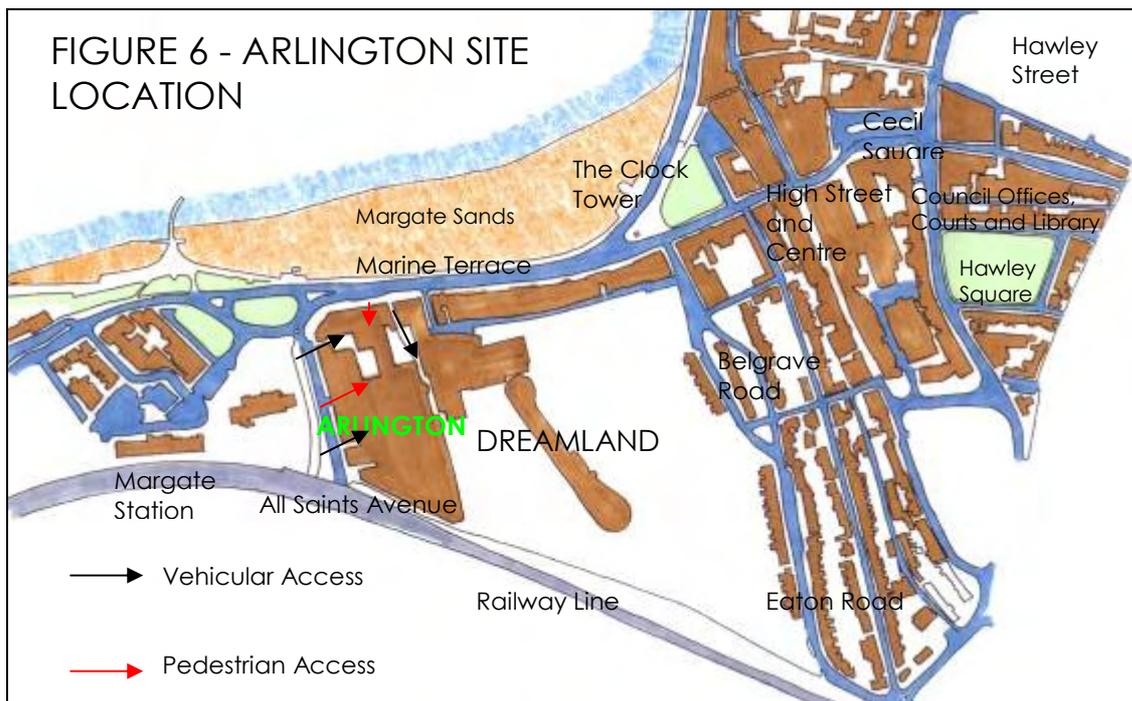
Margate has a relatively diminutive character, comprising terraces and grids of streets of between two and four storeys, the only real exceptions being to the east of the site, fronting the Parade, where some of the sea facing buildings are of 5 to 7 storeys and Arlington House itself, which rises 19 storeys above the seafront. The adjacent area is a mixture of the irregular mediaeval style, grid of Margate Old Town, the more formal streets and squares of Georgian Margate, the linear route of the High Street which formed the link between the Old Town and the then separate village of St Johns and the later modern large scale developments such as the Centre and Council offices.

Margate is presently undergoing significant change and regeneration led by the development of the Turner Contemporary gallery at the eastern end of the bay adjacent to the harbour arm (Figure 2 - Site 4 p. 2). The Turner Contemporary is a key element of the evolution of Margate Old Town. The need is recognised for the complimentary regeneration of the High Street, Georgian Squares and the seafront from the Lido to the east to the railway station to the west, which has been considered in the Locum Consulting – Margate Destination Strategy and Margate Master Plan. This approach will help redefine the retail and leisure offer of Margate following the development of a new town centre for Thanet at Westwood Cross.



Access

Marine Terrace runs to the north of the site and is the principal highway access from the west, running through Westgate and Birchington before joining the A299 Thanet Way at St Nicholas Roundabout. To the east it continues the coastal route toward Cliftonville. It carries a heavy load of both local and long distance commuter and tourist traffic. To the west of the site is the junction of All Saints Avenue with Marine Terrace.



All Saints Avenue serves the residential hinterland to the south and provides an alternative route to Westwood and Birchington. To the east is the Belgrave Road Junction. Vehicular traffic to Ramsgate and Broadstairs avoiding Margate Town centre uses this route, which also serves the local residential area. At the Clock Tower traffic heading to and from the town centre and Cecil Square bears right towards Queen Street. This route also carries heavy traffic. Vehicular access to the Arlington site is via junctions on All Saints Avenue. The pedestrian access to the largely vacant retail area is via Marine Terrace.

The Site

The Arlington site covers an area of approximately 1.8 hectares (4.5 acres), fronting All Saints Avenue which provides a vehicular link between the seafront and residential and commercial sites to the south of the railway line, which forms the sites southern boundary. To the east is the Dreamland site covering an area of 16.5 acres.

The site is dominated by Arlington Tower, a 19 storey residential block containing 142 flats, topped by a myriad of telecommunications masts and equipment. The building has a pedestrian entrance onto All Saints Avenue. Externally the building is in need of considerable improvement work, it presently forms an unattractive landmark on the seafront. To the rear, fronting All Saints Avenue is a decked car park for approximately 575 vehicles, to the front, facing Marine terrace, is a single storey retail arcade, leading to a pedestrian square. The car park and retail area are mainly vacant, in poor condition, are visually unattractive and give a perception of dereliction to this area of the seafront.

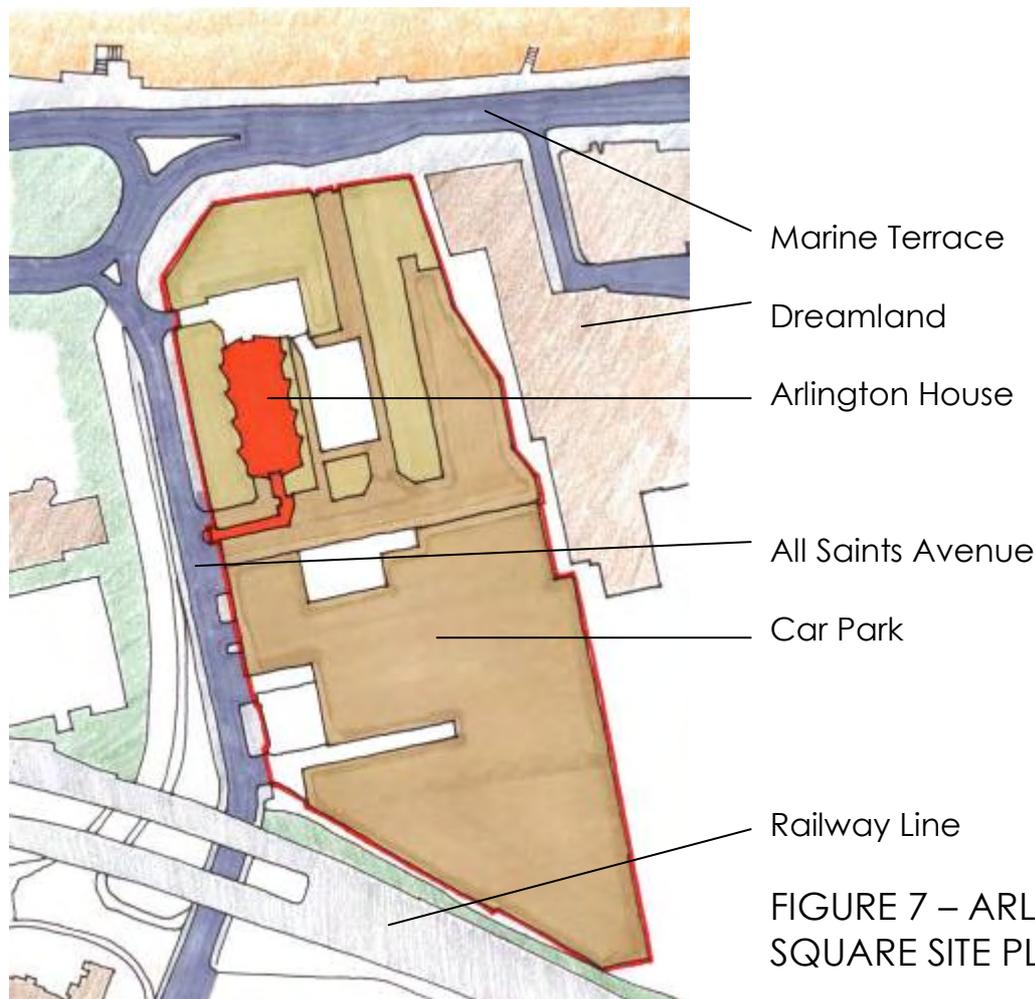


FIGURE 7 – ARLINGTON SQUARE SITE PLAN

POLICY

The future of the site requires consideration in the context of Government guidance and policy and policies within the emerging 'South East Plan', the 'Kent and Medway Structure Plan, 2006' and the 'Thanet Local Plan, 2006.'

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS 1 advocates urban regeneration to improve the wellbeing of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development and create new opportunities for people living in those communities. It promotes mixed use developments for locations that allow the creation of linkages between different uses, thereby creating more vibrant places.

It looks to provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access serviceable facilities on foot, by bicycle or public transport. It seeks to focus on developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development in existing centres, to promote their vitality and viability. It encourages planning to actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres, and near to major public transport interchanges. It also promotes the more efficient use of land through higher density mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings. It seeks to actively bring vacant and under-used previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use, as well as protecting the historic environment and townscape character.

Involvement in the community in developing a vision for its area is promoted, with local communities given the opportunity to participate fully in the process for drawing up specific plans and policies on proposals for development.

PPS 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development

This consultation paper published in December 2007, whilst in draft form, is considered relevant to this site.

It seeks to maximise job opportunities for all and build prosperous communities by promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation. It promotes a flexible approach to the supply and use of land and considers that economic development includes retail, leisure and office uses. It encourages making the most efficient and effective use of land and buildings and requires local planning authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach towards proposals for economic development. It considers that development control authorities should take full account of the longer term benefits of development, such as job creation.

PPS 6 - Planning for Town Centres

PPS6 focuses development in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them. It encourages Local Planning Authorities to manage change in town centres, and adopt a pro-active, plan-led approach. It deals with centres in decline, and recommends assessment of the scope for consolidating and strengthening centres, promoting the diversification of uses and improvement of the environment.

PPS6 promotes the management of change in town centres, increasing the density of development. If extensions are proposed, it is required that they are carefully integrated with the existing centre in terms of design, and to allow easy access on foot. Extension of primary shopping areas is considered to potentially be appropriate where the need for large developments is identified and these cannot be accommodated within the centre.

Local Planning Authorities are required to consider whether there is a need to rebalance the network of centres to ensure that there is more even distribution of town centre uses, and that people's everyday needs are met at the local level, including the need for investment and growth to strengthen other centres, particularly those needing regeneration. Higher density mixed use development is promoted, as is the provision of a high quality and safe environment. Tourism, leisure and cultural activities, which appeal to a wide range of ages and social groups should be dispersed throughout the centres.

A sequential approach to site selection is promoted. It is recognised that Local Planning Authorities need to make choices between competing development pressures in town centres, and should use allocation of new sites to strengthen and improve the performance of the centre, particularly in areas requiring regeneration.

The sequential approach seeks to give priority to locations within existing centres, with second preference to edge of centre locations, and with preference given to sites that are or will be well connected to the centre. Preference should be given to location, but best serve the needs of deprived areas. Consultation with stakeholders and the community to identify an appropriate range of sites to allow for a combination of need is recommended.

Considerations to be taken into account include the need for physical regeneration, additional employment opportunities arising – particularly in deprived areas – increased investments arising from the allocation and social inclusion arising from provision.

The South East Plan

The emerging **South East Plan Core Document, March 2006 – Draft Plan for Submission** has been through public consultation but is subject to change following the inspector's report in August 2007. Whilst it does not have the full weight of an adopted plan it carries sufficient weight to merit consideration. It recognises the priority to be given to the regeneration of the coastal towns as a result of the imbalance between them and more prosperous parts of the region. Policy TSR1 seeks to maximise opportunities to diversify the economic base of the coastal resorts, while consolidating and upgrading tourism facilities in ways which promote higher value activity, reduce seasonality and support urban regeneration. Policy TSR4 gives priority to improving the quality of existing attractions. It also promotes the location of new, regionally significant tourism attractions in the Priority Areas for Regeneration, which includes Margate. Policy TSR7 identifies the coastal strip as a priority area for tourism.

Policy TC3 relates to new development and redevelopment in town centres. It highlights the need to respect the historic character, environment and cultural value of existing centres and, where it would assist the regeneration of vulnerable centres, new investment of the appropriate level and scale should be promoted.

There is a requirement to consider the potential impact of development on the vitality and viability of town centres to support the sequential approach set out in PPS6, and to assess the capacity of a town centre to accommodate additional development appropriate to their role. It promotes a flexible framework for town centres, including the need for well-designed space and the promotion of tourism and related leisure uses to assist in the diversification of functions and services, and the reuse of land and historic and redundant buildings.

Policy EKA3 places a greater emphasis on new employment to the east of the region. It gives priority to regeneration through the use of previously developed land and existing buildings. Priority is given to the diversification and enlargement of the economy of the coastal towns.

Policy EKA4 encourages new economic impetus throughout the coastal towns, including regeneration measures to create high quality urban environments. It promotes the development of Thanet's economy through diversification and the provision of a full range of accessible local services.

The Kent and Medway Structure Plan

The Kent and Medway Structure Plan acknowledge the need to strengthen and diversify the local economy. Key Theme 2 seeks to foster prosperity by increasing economic opportunity and reducing economic disparities within Kent, working towards regeneration and improved economic performance in the coastal towns of East Kent. It seeks to address pockets of deprivation that occur within the County, and looks to secure employment-led growth, especially within areas of East Kent following regeneration.

Key Theme 3 seeks to secure quality, investment and infrastructure for regeneration and development. This includes regenerating Kent's principal urban areas through renewal and redevelopment, and improving key inner urban locations.

Key Theme 4 seeks to concentrate development at the major urban areas as the main focal points jobs, public services and transport facilities, and seeks to promote more mixed use development of the right pattern and density, but use land efficiently, increase accessibility, reduce the need to travel and meet social, cultural and economic needs.

The planned Spatial Strategy gives priority for previously developed land (Policy SS4). Within town centres, retail and leisure developments are given priority, and development should be mixed use at relatively high densities.

Policy SS5 states that outside of the core town centre, the diversity of land uses will be encouraged.

Policy TH1 relates specifically to Thanet. It considers that tourism and culture can play an important role in regenerating Margate, and that development must address longstanding economic and social problems of the area by strengthening and diversifying the local economy and employment base.

The Structure Plan also promotes the quality of good design, with particular reference to the Kent Design Guide. Policy QL2 encourages improvements in the appearance, design, safety and ambience of the Public Realm.

Policy QL3 supports the priorities and progress of pedestrian priority and reduced traffic speeds within town centres, and the provision of safe pedestrian and cycle routes.

Policy QL5 promotes the introduction of appropriate rates of uses into existing developed areas and on major sites, where this would lead to a better balance in the mix of development.

The Thanet Local Plan

The **Thanet Local Plan** strategy promotes mixed use development with an emphasis on tourism and leisure use within Margate. There are also specific policies relating to the future development of Margate town centre and the Old Town that will influence the development potential of Dreamland.

Contextual Policy

Policy T8 refers to the Dreamland Site. The policy relates to the approximately 6.5 hectare site of the amusement park and includes the Dreamland Cinema. It is a two-part policy, Part 1;

- Resists proposals that would lead to a reduction in the attractiveness, leisure or tourist potential of Dreamland as an amusement park and permits proposals that increase its attractiveness as an amusement park.
- Allows development of a limited part of the site as part of a comprehensive scheme to upgrade the park **only** if it can be demonstrated that the park's future viability can be assured.
- Requires a legal agreement to ensure agreed park investment and new development is carried out in parallel.

Part 2 permits proposals for redevelopment if it can be proven through an independent professional assessment that it is not economically viable to operate an amusement park. Proposals may be acceptable subject to:

- Demonstrating economic viability and a sustainable contribution to Margate's economic wellbeing and rejuvenation.
- The predominant use must be for leisure purposes.
- An element of mixed residential development would only be permitted to support a comprehensive vision for site development.
- Compatibility with the context and proposals of a strategic urban design framework and integration with proposals for redevelopment/refurbishment of neighbouring sites.
- Delivery of a new road along the southern boundary and a contribution to the creation of a pedestrian priority environment along Marine Terrace.
- Retention of an operational scenic railway within an appropriate setting.
- Proposals supported by and complying with a traffic impact assessment to accompany the proposal.

Achieving compliance with part 1 of the policy is the Council's preferred option. It requires the retention of more than 50% of the site as an amusement park and retention of an operational scenic railway and the cinema, with supporting enabling development as part of a comprehensive scheme, covered by a section 106 agreement. This agreement will require that the development of the park and enabling development take place in parallel in accordance with an agreed phasing plan, and would ensure the future operation of the park. Other forms of development would need to fully comply with the requirements of part 2 of the policy. A planning brief has been prepared for the Dreamland site, providing more detail relating to the implementation of the policy. This brief should be read in conjunction with the Dreamland brief.

Policy T7 relates to the adjacent Marine Terrace frontage and Dreamland site and identifies it as an appropriate area for amusement arcades, but requires the retention of significant areas of seaside architecture.

Margate Sands is a major holiday beach where proposals for upgrading recreational proposals and facilities are supported through policy SR18.

Policy EC10 relates to Margate Old Town, encouraging its continuing regeneration as an area of cultural, artistic and high tech excellence. These uses, as well as hotels, residential and media development and cafes and restaurants, are considered as being appropriate for the area. Policy H10 identifies the Old Town as an area in need of special action where appropriate regeneration will be supported.

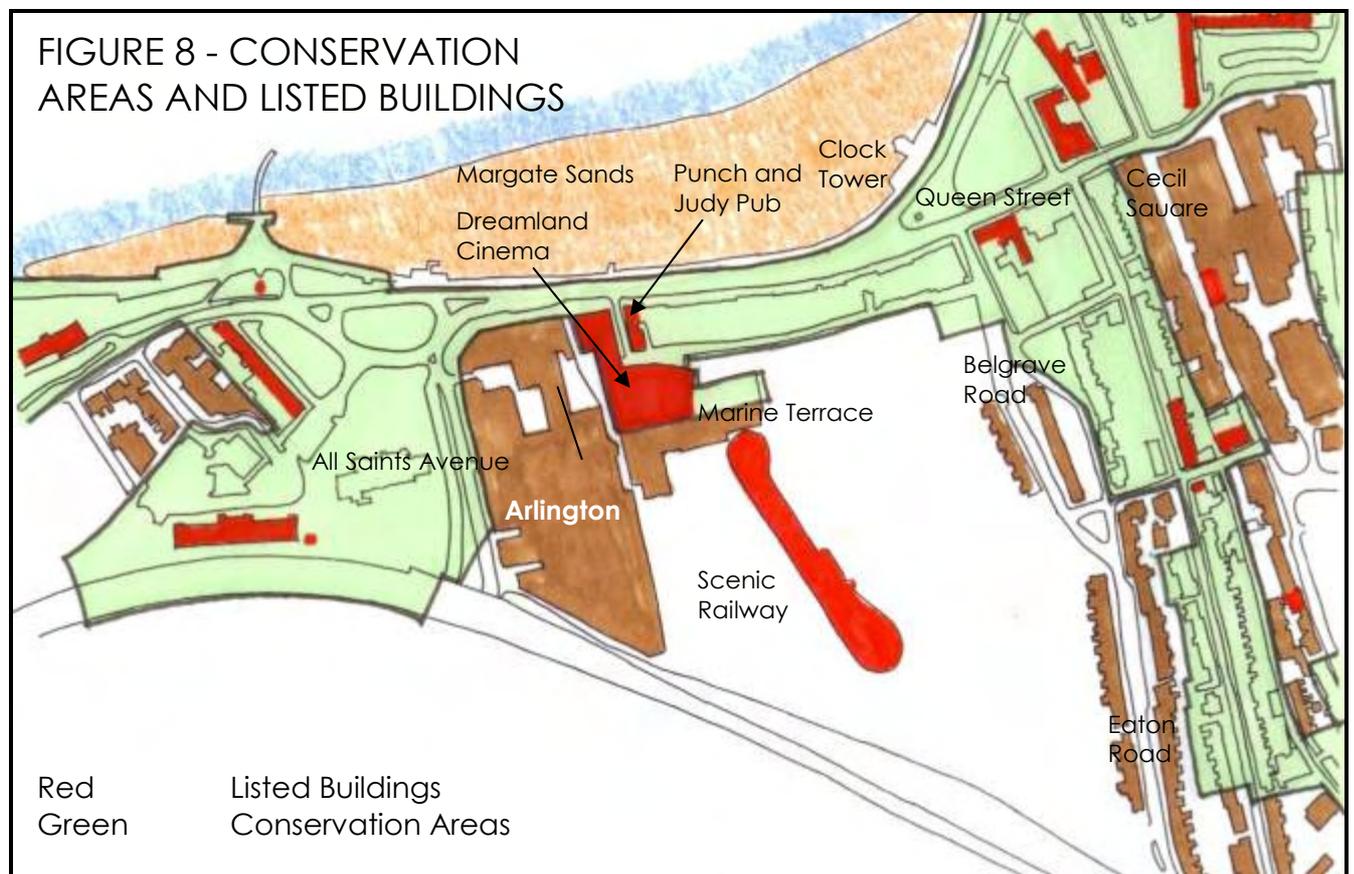
Site Related Policies

There are a number of potential site-related constraints that need to be addressed in any development proposals:

Conservation and Heritage

The site is adjacent to the Margate Seafront Conservation Area where policies HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE7 apply. These policies seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area including the buildings and spaces within them.

Adjacent to or in close proximity to the site are the Dreamland Cinema, the Punch and Judy pub and the Scenic Railway, all grade 2 listed; policy HE1 protects the buildings and their settings.

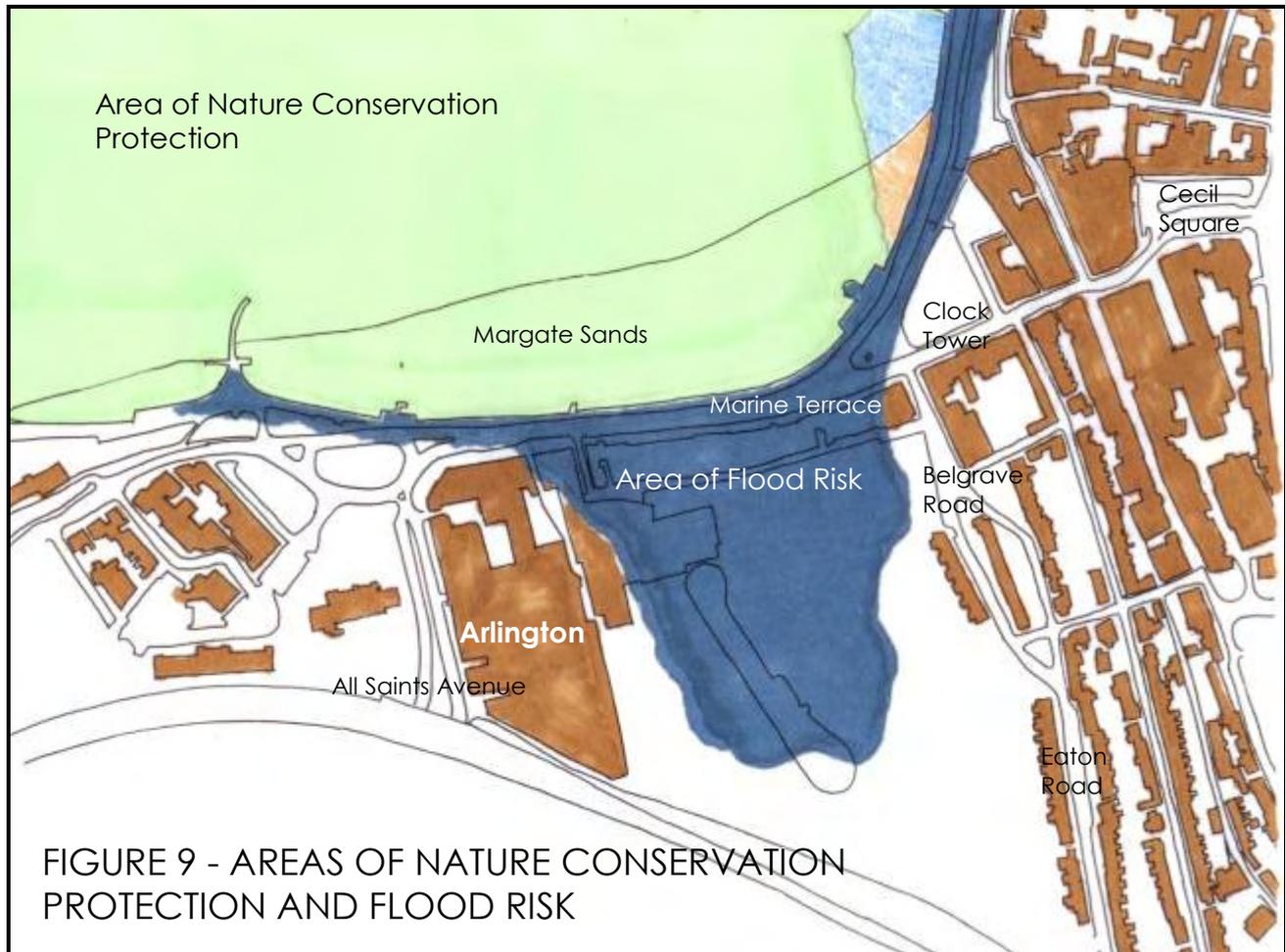


Nature Conservation

The adjacent beach is within a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These national and international nature conservation designations relate to the habitat provided for wintering and breeding birds, particularly the Turnstone, and the wide range of other habitats and geological features the area contains, policies NC1 and NC2 apply. Development likely to affect these areas is subject to rigorous scrutiny, which also applies to construction impacts. The potential impact of development upon the Turnstone caused by the development on its own, and in combination with other local development must be taken into account in accordance with the requirement of Government Circular 6/2005.

Margate Flood Risk Area

A small corner to the north east of the site is within the flood risk area where policy EP11 applies. Up to date information on precise boundaries and constraints can be obtained from the Environment Agency, who must be consulted with respect to development proposals at an early stage. Development proposals will have to be tested fully against criteria detailed in PPS 25 relating to flood risk areas.



Generally Applicable Policies

Retail Policy

The Local Plan acknowledges that Thanet's traditional town centres, including Margate, are unsuitable for the location of the major multiple retailers of today due to locational difficulties. In order to address the decline that this has caused in Margate, there has been an emphasis upon culturally led regeneration, encouraging mixed use into the Old Town.

Policy TC1 of the Local Plan states that the preference for new retail development will be in the core commercial centres, such as Margate. Outside of these defined core areas, applications for retail development will need to demonstrate the need for the development, and that there is no sequentially preferable location, that the development is of an appropriate scale, that there is no unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres, and that the location is accessible.

Policy TC7 states that the Council's aim is to adopt a stronger role in leisure, culture, heritage and tourism as part of an holistic approach to regeneration, and that new development or change of use that supports the same will be permitted subject to satisfactory design, access and, where appropriate, parking and servicing arrangements. It states that the management of public spaces and land use aspects of the town centre management will be supported to create an attractive and vital town centre environment.

Tourism

Policy T1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that upgrades tourist facilities or increases tourist attraction in Thanet.

Transport

Policy TR1 states that development generating high levels of travel demand will be permitted only within the urban area in locations which are or will be made highly accessible on foot, by bus and public transport, with priority given to established town centre locations where the scale and nature of development would be compatible with their role as high density centres of mixed use activity.

Policy TR2 seeks to channel traffic into the most appropriate routes of the road hierarchy through road improvements, junction improvements and appropriate Traffic Management Schemes.

Policy TR3 seeks to ensure proper provision is made for transport infrastructure and, if necessary and relevant to the development to be permitted, with proposal assessed in terms of their impact upon capacity and safety of the network, together with their social and economic impacts.

Policy TR5 requires new development proposals in town centres to demonstrate adequate off-street servicing.

Policies TR11, TR12 and TR13 promote safe and convenient access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Policy TR15 expects the submission of Travel Plans in support of developments generating significant travel demand.

Policy TR16 requires development proposals to make satisfactory provision for the parking of vehicles. Parking standards for cars, goods vehicles, motor cycles and cycles for Kent are detailed in SPG 4 to the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. Policy TR16 appendix G includes local variations and establishes maximum standards for car parking of 1 space/20 sq metres for food retail, 1 space/30 sq m for non food retail and 70% of KCC vehicle parking standards for residential development.

Contaminated Land

Development Proposals must address contaminated land issues, should they arise, as required by policy EP4.

Archaeological Heritage

Any development proposals will be referred to the County Archaeologist for consideration; policies HE11 and HE12 apply.

Design

New development must comply with the design parameters set out in policy D1 and **The Kent Design Guide** (December 2005) and be supported by a design statement which covers each of the following parameters: sustainability, context, connectivity, landscape, ecology, measures to address crime and disorder issues and the inclusion of public art, as required by policy D4. Policy D8 relates to seafront architecture and is also relevant. Policy D3 establishes criteria for landscaping proposals.

Employment

Adjacent land to the south of the railway line is covered by policy EC1 which retains specific sites within the district for economic development.

Housing

Policy H1 states that residential development will be permitted where there are no conflicts with other policies. Policy H8 requires that a mix of dwelling sizes and types to meet community needs be provided, including a minimum of 15% lifetime homes. Policy H14 requires that affordable housing is provided on developments of more than 14 dwellings. Negotiation starts at 30% provision.

Open Space

Development proposals should address the applicability of open space requirements for residential development detailed in policies SR5 and SR6 taking into account the form of development proposed and the relationship of the site to the beach and amusement park.

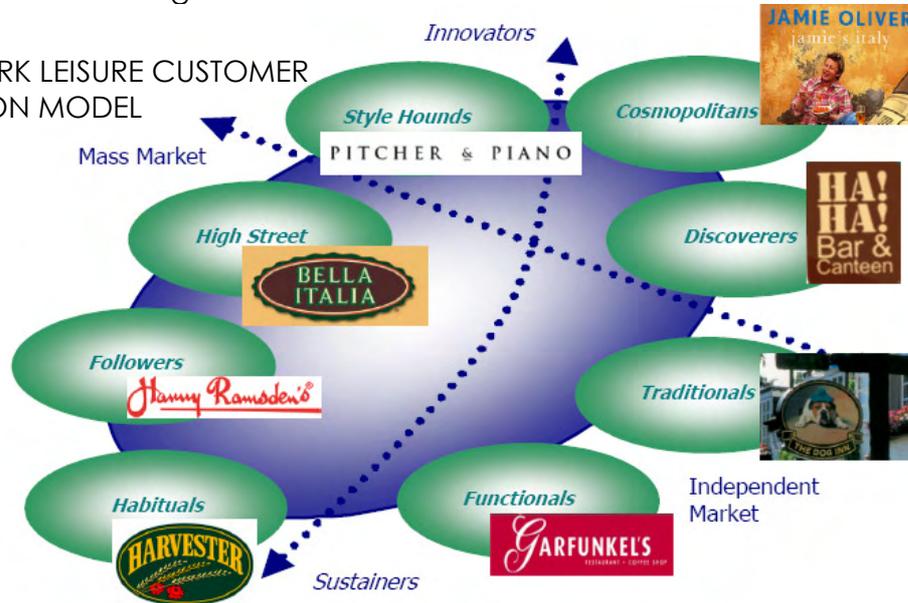
Community Provision

Policy CF2 requires contributions towards community facilities including transport infrastructure, education, recreational facilities etc.

Margate Destination Strategy

Locum Consulting (Leisure Destination Consultants) considered the particular character of the commercial centre of Margate, which included Dreamland, the High Street and the Old Town. Locum Consulting used a customer segmentation model called Ark Leisure, which categorised people into eight groups according to their leisure behaviour. The model is shown below in Figure 10.

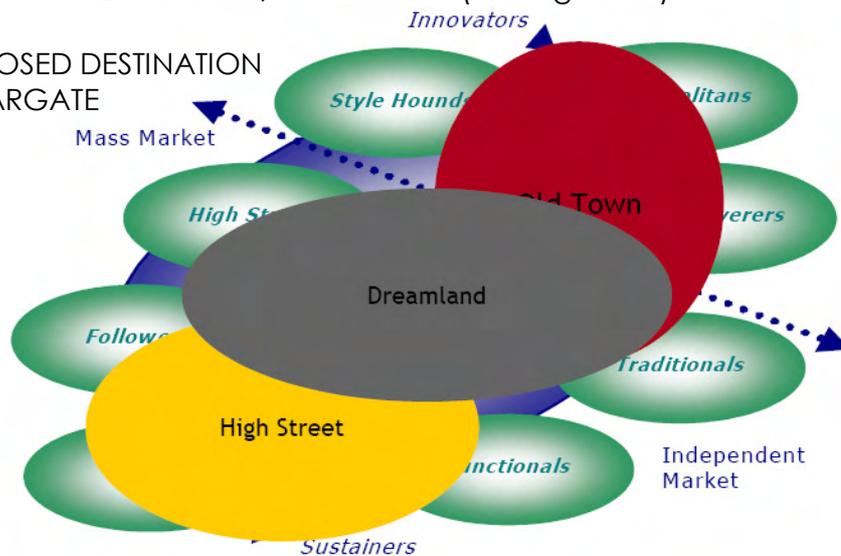
FIGURE 10 - ARK LEISURE CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION MODEL



This model identified the present offer to be unbalanced and unsustainable, requiring radical action to improve the quality of the retail offer. This action comprises a three pronged approach:

- The attraction of value brands and independents to the High Street.
- Attraction of quality independent and niche brands in a distinctive characterful environment to Margate Old Town.
- Attracting a cluster of mid to upper end brands and a family orientated mainstream attractor offer to Dreamland/the seaside. (See Figure 11)

FIGURE 11 – PROPOSED DESTINATION STRATEGY FOR MARGATE



While this document does not have any policy status it demonstrates the peculiar and varied character of Margate seafront which does not conform to the usual town centre pattern of uses. This context makes it less appropriate to employ the sequential criteria outlined in PPS 6 – Planning for Town Centres.

Margate Master Plan

The 'Margate Master Plan,' (Tibbalds 2004) was commissioned in 2003 to provide an urban design strategy for Central Margate. It identified parameters for design led regeneration initiatives and was the subject of public consultation. It was not amended following consultation or adopted in any form; it therefore carries little weight. It does however provide a useful context in terms of urban design aspirations that should be taken into account in the preparation of development proposals for the Arlington site.

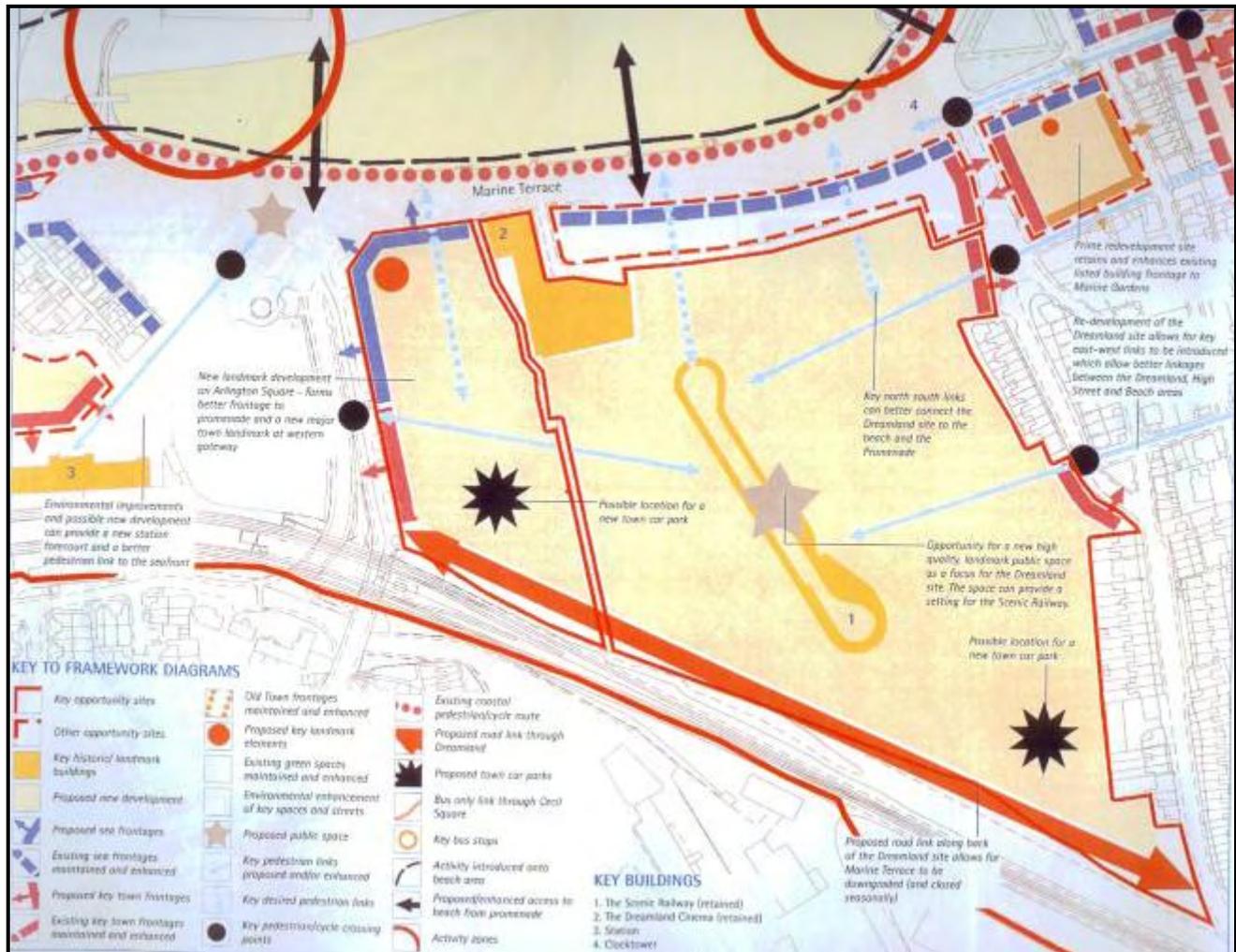


FIGURE 12 - MARGATE MASTERPLAN EXTRACT (Source Tibbalds 2004)

Within the Margate Master Plan the Arlington site is referred to as part of the 'Central Development Area', occupying a key position between the town centre and Western Approach immediately behind the prime seafront area. This area also encompassed the adjacent Arlington and Marine Terrace areas.

The Master Plan perceived a need for the central area to achieve a step-change in quality of environment and quality of experience, identifying the key issues as:

- 1) The negative influence of the visually prominent Arlington site, which dominates visitor perception of Margate on arrival from the west.

- 2) Integrating Dreamland into the wider context so that it is no longer a backland site with limited access, but part of a wider urban form and townscape of Central Margate with a situation and outlook that warrants high quality proposals;
- 3) Identification of appropriate leisure/recreation/tourism-based uses that could anchor a development of the Dreamland site;
- 4) Resolution of the future of the listed Scenic Railway;
- 5) Addressing changes in level between Marine Terrace and the Dreamland site, and issues of potential flooding due to the low level of the site;

The Master Plan considered that, to come up with proposals that create a high quality environment the future of the Arlington sites and Dreamland should be considered together as neither site, considered in isolation, was capable of delivering the desired transformation and quality.

The Master Plan identified the following opportunities for development:

- (1) The opportunity to create a new vehicular link road from All Saints Avenue to Eaton Road to the south of the Arlington and Dreamland sites, reducing seafront traffic and providing vehicular access to the Dreamland site;
- (2) The provision of public car parking, accessed via the new link road, to serve visitors to the beach and wider central area, town centre users and on-site uses.
- (3) A mixed use urban form of development based around leisure, recreation and tourism uses, with residential or other uses on upper floors, to give an appropriate scale of built form.

It must be stressed that these proposals do not form part of the Council's policy base, but in general terms remain proposals to which the Council aspires. There are no specific policies relating to the Arlington site that justify consideration of the Arlington and Dreamland sites as one site in policy terms.

PROPOSALS

Prior to considering in detail issues to be addressed as part of the site development process, the following list summarises the opportunities that exist and constraints to be resolved.

Opportunities to Grasp

- Refurbishment and realignment of Arlington House and its setting in the public perception as a positive landmark building at the gateway to the seafront
- The demolition of existing car park and retail areas and their replacement with high density mixed use retail and commercial led development, improving the environment through the improved quality of the built form and meeting the needs of Margate residents and visitors
- Increased employment opportunities addressing high deprivation levels in the adjacent areas
- Provision of a high quality public realm as part of a legible and permeable network of pedestrian and cycle links encouraging attractive accessibility to Dreamland, Margate seafront and sands, Turner Contemporary, Margate Old Town and the High Street including a strong pedestrian/cycle route along Marine Terrace
- The provision of an alternative traffic route to the south of the site adjacent to the railway line

Constraints to Resolve

- Providing a viable development that enables the successful refurbishment and reinvention of Arlington House as a positive seafront landmark building taking account of the high costs of site clearance and renovation
- Limited access opportunities and links to adjacent sites, particularly Dreamland, by foot and cycle
- An eyesore site which is a source of crime and safety concerns
- Potential risk of tidal flooding
- North facing and exposed to strong northerly winds
- Noise from the railway line to the South of the site
- Heavy vehicular traffic flows hamper access to the sands to the north
- Adjacent nature conservation habitats must be protected
- The setting of the adjacent listed buildings and conservation area must be respected

The major issues relating to site development are considered in more detail below:

A Scheme to Achieve Regeneration

A major element of the Arlington development is the flexibility to provide additional retail development outside of the Town Centre Core area identified in the Local Plan recognising the particular characteristics of Margate Seafront as identified in the Locum Consulting – Margate Destination Strategy. The rationale for this approach is outlined below:

Sequential Justification

- There is no core town centre site of an appropriate size that is suitable.
- The town centre is a conservation area, clearance to provide such a site is not an option.
- Sequentially the only site closer to the town centre is Dreamland, where there is a policy presumption for the retention of an amusement park (Local Plan policy T8) which is supported by an approved planning brief. The site also needs to be developed in a manner that reflects and compliments the adjacent dense and diminutive residential urban grain.

FIGURE 13 - MARGATE SEAFRONT ILLUSTRATIVE IDEA

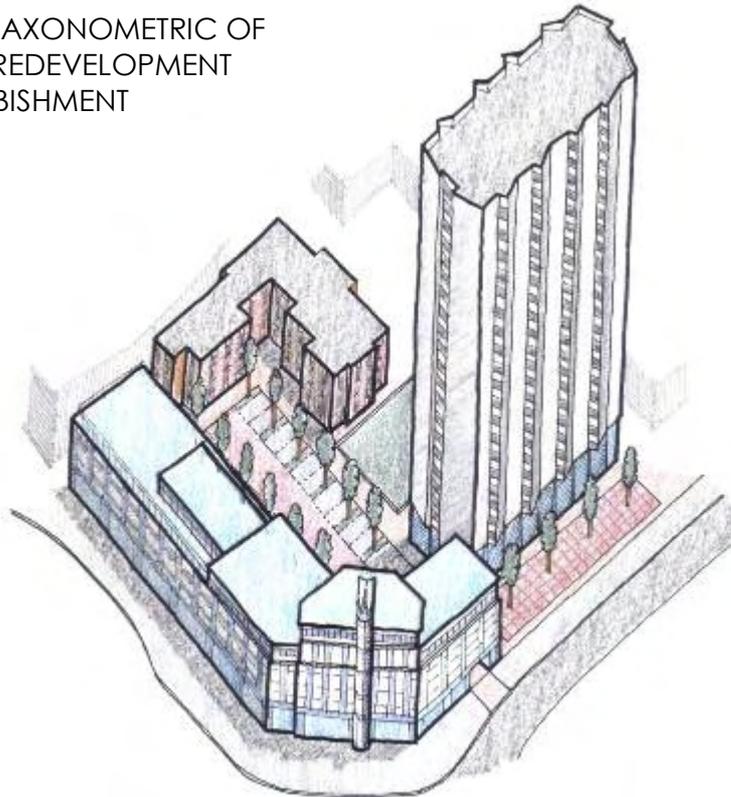


Regeneration Rationale

- Arlington is well related to the station and public transport links.
- Arlington is within the Margate Central area where there is a need for comprehensive regeneration.
- Arlington is in a less environmentally sensitive location, where a large unit would not look out of place.
- A large retail unit would provide enabling funding for the improvement of an eyesore landmark building at the gateway to Margate seafront, which would otherwise not be possible.
- The development of the site in conjunction with Dreamland would enable a comprehensive, much better connected development of the seafront, meeting regeneration objectives.

- The development would provide improved facilities at the heart of an area identified as the most deprived in South East England.

FIGURE 14 - AXONOMETRIC OF POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT AND REFURBISHMENT



Retail Need

- The comprehensive regeneration of the area outlined in the masterplan for central Margate (Figure 2 - p. 2) will increase both the population and average retail spend per head, thereby providing a need for additional convenience and comparison retail.
- There is already approximately 30,000 sq ft of retail space within Arlington Square.
- The significant additional residential, tourist and cultural development on Dreamland, the Sea Bathing Hospital, the Rendezvous site, Margate Town Centre site, the Lido site, Fort Hill and Queens Arms Yard, will result in increased population numbers and retail spend.

Comprehensive Development

The Arlington site is strongly related to the Dreamland site and there is a strong preference for a scheme that demonstrates how a total development of both sites can be achieved although it is acknowledged it may not be possible to bring forward these sites together. If separate schemes come forward for individual sites they must demonstrate that they have respected the development potential of adjacent sites and illustrate how the development of any one site in isolation can form part of a future comprehensive integrated enhancement of the seafront environs and improve the Arlington sites present poor relationship with surrounding development.

Comprehensive Access

Development proposals for the Arlington site must be designed to enable improvements in permeability, allowing for the provision of legible access to and from the site from All Saints Avenue and Marine Terrace. The proposals should also ensure that an east/west path through the site permits access to the Dreamland site enabling a link with Eaton Hill and improved access to the High Street. Access proposals must be based upon the principles of 'Manual for Streets' (Department for Transport, March 2007), the 'The Kent Design Guide' (December 2005), 'Streets for All' (English Heritage, 2004) and 'Paving the Way' (DDPM/CABE, July 2002).

Any development would be subject to a Transport Impact Assessment. It is the aspiration of both the District and County Councils that a new access road to the south of the site between All Saints Avenue and Eaton Road is created. The present highway network is unlikely to be capable of accommodating significant vehicular traffic from additional development along the seafront corridor, including the future development of the Arlington site and proposals that may come forward for Dreamland, without the provision of this new access. The access will also enable improvement to Marine Terrace, to make it more pedestrian friendly, improving pedestrian access between the Arlington site and Margate Sands. The resultant impact of additional vehicular traffic using All Saints Avenue and Eaton Road will need to be addressed.

Road provision within the boundary of the site will be a prerequisite for any Arlington development proposals. Any planning proposal must demonstrate that the road proposal can be provided within the Arlington site, and be capable of being extended through the Dreamland site. The Council in its role as planning authority will support measures to facilitate the provision of the total road to local distributor standard. The Council will work with other stakeholders to assist in the assembly of land to enable provision of the road to ensure wider regeneration benefits and strategic transport initiatives are secured.

The potential to create a new seafront public space, through highway alterations including the stopping up of the seafront leg of the "roundabout" fronting Arlington Square is also proposed as part of a comprehensive improvement of the public realm and improvements to connectivity.

Site Integration

Improved connectivity to adjacent paths and development that knits into the existing urban grain and provides improved links between the site, the seafront and town centre will be an essential element of site development. Proposals must show how these links can be achieved and how legible connections are proposed within the site and through to adjacent sites. Priority must be given to pedestrian movement, followed by cycles, public transport and the private car.

Creating a high quality townscape relationship between the Arlington site and Dreamland and improving the relationship of the development to Marine Terrace, to improve its visual impact, accessibility and legibility in a manner that embraces the principles of Kent Design.

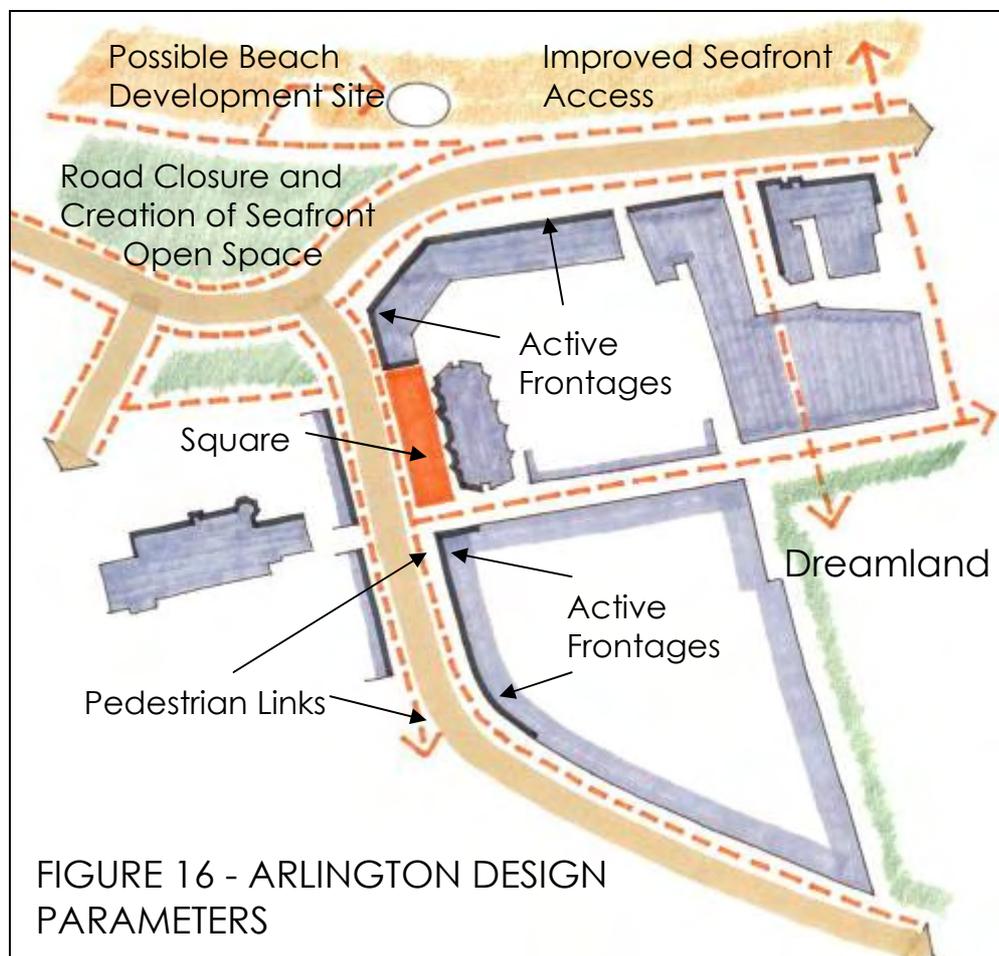
A secure development that clearly distinguishes between public and private areas and adheres to the principles of 'Secured by Design', and 'Design in Context' (English Heritage), utilising a perimeter block approach and avoiding the exposure of rear private areas to easy public view and access, both within the site and in terms of the relationship of development to surrounding development.

A development that embraces the principals of sustainability, in terms of construction methods, the use of alternative energy sources where appropriate, and encouragement of the use of means of travel other than by private car. In this respect an offer from Network Rail to discuss improved links with the station are drawn to interested parties attention.

Detailed Design Considerations

Figure 16 identifies parameters which will be applied to the detailed design of the development. These parameters are based upon the above criteria for this prominent site.

The main aims are to create new spaces to the seafront and fronting Arlington House, with strong pedestrian links between those spaces and new mixed use development that faces those routes and provides interest that makes people want to use them. It is anticipated that the scale of the development and its design will be dictated by its proximity to Dreamland Cinema, a Grade 2 listed building and the scale of other existing development adjacent to the Arlington site.



Development Phasing

One of the main aims of the brief is to secure the high quality external refurbishment of Arlington House for the benefit of both the residents of Arlington House and the public perception of Margate seafront. It will therefore be expected that the agreed external refurbishment of Arlington house will be substantially completed prior to the occupation of any new development of the site.

It will also be a requirement that comprehensive proposals are permitted for all of the remainder of the site and a contract in place for comprehensive redevelopment of the total site.

The new road and pedestrian connections within the Arlington site must be in place prior to substantial completion, a new entrance square to the building including associated landscaping and possible parking/drop off facilities to Arlington House should be provided and completed prior to completion of the external refurbishment.

The closure of part of the roundabout and beach access will not be required to form part of the Arlington redevelopment, but comprise a public regeneration project to be pursued in parallel

Environmental Issues

The north east corner of the site lies within a Flood Zone 3a where there is high probability of flood risk. Advice must be taken from the Environment Agency relating to the potential need for a flood risk assessment as detailed in PPS 25 to be undertaken. A flood risk assessment must show the development is safe and contribute to an overall reduction in flood risk. Mitigation and avoidance measures to prevent inundation of the sewerage system may be required. Surface water management and maintenance must be considered; options include sustainable drainage systems (SUDS).

Establishing that there is adequate capacity within the existing sewer and water distribution system and taking into account existing sewers traversing the site. If the nearest sewer or water main has inadequate capacity it will be a requirement to requisition a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity.

Advice on these matters must be sought from Southern Water Services and the Environment Agency.

The relationship of the site to the listed scenic railway and Dreamland Cinema buildings must be taken into account in design proposals.

PLANNING APPLICATION

A screening opinion will be needed to assess whether any planning application needs to be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as it comprises an urban development project exceeding 1 hectare in area, as defined by Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact, etc.) Regulations 1999. The application may need to be supported by the following studies and information:

- Transport Impact Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Retail/leisure Impact assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Contamination assessment
- Ecological Impact assessment
- Archaeological study
- Sustainability impact assessment
- Visual Impact/urban landscape assessment
- Assessment of impact upon listed buildings and conservation areas
- Economic impact assessment
- Development phasing
- Proposed section 106 heads of terms

In addition a "Design and Access" statement will be required which must include a character analysis of the site context including assessment of:

- Key views
- Heritage assets
- Street pattern and urban grain
- Scale and mass, rhythm and design
- Interface between old and new buildings
- Building height relationships

If it is intended to submit an outline planning application for development the supporting information must be accompanied by parameter plans and documents that establish the scale and level of development proposed. The plans will comply with the requirements for outline applications detailed in circular 01/2006 and show:

- The location of and floor areas/densities of particular uses
- Detailed access proposals
- Building heights and frontages
- Design Codes for street types within the site

Section 106 Agreement and Development Funding

Work in support of the preparation of this brief has included an investigation of the costs of refurbishment of Arlington House. These investigations indicate that there are significant abnormal costs associated with that refurbishment.

In order to enable consideration of development proposals that take into account these abnormal costs it is recommended that they are accompanied by a detailed viability study to define the costs and values derived from the development to enable an independent analysis of their viability. This would enable an assessment of the ability of the scheme to contribute to both environmental and community needs directly generated by the development. Contributions towards these identified needs will be sought within a section 106 agreement.

Consultations

Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Councils adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The results of consultation on the Brief will be taken into account in consideration of any future planning application.

The following bodies will be included in those consulted with regard to any subsequent planning application:

- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Kent Highway Services
- Environment Agency
- CABE
- Statutory Undertakers
- The Emergency services
- Network Rail
- Kent Police "Secure by Design"

In addition, as part of the notification process the views of other interested parties will be sought on development proposals.

The Council as Local Planning Authority would welcome the opportunity to establish a development team and enter into a planning performance agreement with prospective planning applicants to deal with pre application discussion and subsequent application negotiation relating to proposals for the site.