

Section 2: Policies

8. General Policies

- 8.1 As a practical expression of the spatial and design strategies described in Chapter 6, a number of specific development management policies are needed to guide development across the city centre as a whole. These policies aim to provide guidance that supplements the high-level principles set out in MK Council's revised *CMK Development Framework* (January 2013). Should any conflict occur between the Framework and this Plan, this Plan is the over-riding statutory development plan document once it is formally Adopted by MK Council.
- 8.2 These policies apply to the whole area of CMK, including the Campbell Park grid square.

List of General Policies

- G1 Public Realm Infrastructure
- G2 Heritage Buildings & Public Art
- G3 Landscaping & Open Space
- G4 Campbell Park
- G5 Green Frame
- G6 Mixed Use
- G7 Active Frontages
- G8 Block Structure
- G9 Design of Buildings
- G10 Residential Developments
- G11 Exceptional Developments
- G12 Planning Obligations

Public Realm Infrastructure

Aim of policy:

- » To protect the classic CMK infrastructure.
- 8.3 Part of the vision for the *CMK Alliance Plan* is to celebrate and promote the city centre's distinctive cityscape and high-quality infrastructure. As noted in Chapter 5 on economic growth, quality of life and quality of place are powerful magnets for attracting highly skilled workers and innovative companies. CMK has a strong identity as a place, and the *CMKAP* recognises and supports CMK's unique public realm as a key way to differentiate our city from others. This unconventional cityscape is unique.

- 8.4 The distinguishing feature of CMK¹⁴ is the extent, layout and quality of the public realm. This is the setting within which the more transient buildings and activities come and go over time. It is the public space that is the most important building of all in CMK. One of the key challenges for the Plan is to retain the distinctive and high-quality CMK infrastructure whilst encouraging more innovative and intensive development on the parcels of development land for which it provides both access and setting.
- 8.5 The infrastructure is to be protected because it is a unique framework for prosperity: no other contemporary city centre in the UK has a complete grid of boulevards, gates and streets designed and built as the framework within which buildings sit and activities take place. It is consistently detailed to a carefully considered modular design, stretching from MK Central Station at the west end, to the Grand Union Canal at the east end of Campbell Park.
- 8.6 The public realm is defined by a strong, clearly identifiable set of elements. These include:
- » A landscaped hierarchical grid of Gates, Boulevards and Streets that provides the setting for all buildings and activities;
 - » A parallel grid of 'slow streets', including North and South Rows, providing space for surface level parking areas for public use (variously one, two or four rows - the need varies according to adjacent uses, and the use of this public space for public purposes may change over time);
 - » The 'Green Frame' - the landscaped areas at the margins of CMK contributed by City Road corridors H5 Portway, H6 Childs Way and V8 Marlborough Street and, to the east, the Grand Union Canal;
 - » Wide day-lit underpasses with gentle gradients that connect main footpaths seamlessly under busy Gates and Boulevards;
 - » Porte cocheres that nudge pedestrians to the safest Boulevard crossing points;
 - » Linkages to neighbouring grid squares - Springfield, Fishermead, Oldbrook and Winterhill, Rooksley, Bradwell Common, Conniburrow and Downs Barn, either via wide underpasses or via overbridges;
- 8.7 Milton Keynes is renowned for its city-wide grid of City Roads which is draped over the contours of the land. In CMK the grid is given a formal geometry, and provides a very clear hierarchical movement system:
- » Granite retaining walls marking the entry points into CMK from H5 Portway and H6 Childs Way; and
 - » A carefully selected suite of modern street furniture and the use of silver grey granite for kerbs, planters and facings to retaining walls; silver grey stone chippings rolled into asphalt road surfaces on Gates and Boulevards; silver grey blockwork for streets; and Breedon Gravel in Boulevard medians.
- 8.7 Gates run north-south between H5 Portway and H6 Childs Way, acting as the entry points into CMK. Two of these – V6 Grafton and V7 Saxon Gates – are part of the cross-city grid;
- » Three Boulevards run east/west through CMK acting as the main spines for movement within the city centre (the central Boulevard - Midsummer - stops short of Campbell Park);

¹⁴ CMK includes the Campbell Park grid square

- » The Gates and Boulevards provide access, via the Streets and ‘slow streets,’ to development Blocks and Blocklets (‘slow-streets’ are block paved routes that run through and connect the parking areas, and form continuous routes through the parking areas around each Block); and
- » The Streets enable deliveries to business and residential premises – major uses have specially designed access points from Streets thus avoiding inconvenience to pedestrians and ugly delivery bays on main frontages.

8.8 The grid network has the advantage of providing flexibility of movement and minimising congestion by enabling the distribution of all forms of traffic through a wide variety of routes. It helps deliver one of the founding principles for CMK of ‘combining the vitality of traditional city centres with the unhindered accessibility of an out-of-town centre.’

8.9 The sub-division of development land is also derived from the overall formal geometry (see Figure 13 for block numbering system). Orderly Blocks of land fronting Boulevards are generally divided by Streets into four equal Blocklets, though this pattern is broken where development required it and permeability through the Block for local movement was secured in other ways. In creating larger development Blocks, the need for the necessary permeability was sometimes overlooked through later redevelopment. This is regrettable because movement in CMK is inhibited or diverted to the inconvenience of the public. The concept of a grid of movement corridors is to maximise choice and flexibility for all modes of transport. Once part of the grid is lost to development - or sold into private ownership without enforceable legal protection - the desired permeability is lost to the public for ever.

8.10 An objective of this Plan is to assert the need for a finer grain of development created by permeable networks for movement in CMK, especially through large development schemes extending over a whole Block or more.

Policy CMKAP G1

Classic CMK Infrastructure

The classic CMK infrastructure* is widely recognised as part of CMK’s heritage and as an important public asset that establishes a principle design framework for further development and future prosperity in CMK and its extent, layout and quality will be retained.

The exceptional circumstances which might justify alteration of the extent and layout of classic CMK infrastructure are set out in Policy G11.

*the ‘classic CMK infrastructure’ includes the grid of tree-lined Boulevards, Gates, Streets, tree-lined North Row and South Rows, and the space for one, two or four rows of ground level car parking that flanks them; the associated grid of pavements, with underpasses, bridges and porte cocheres; the function and position of linkages to the adjacent grid squares; use of silver grey granite facings, granite quadrants, planters, and kerbs; the use of silver grey stone chippings rolled into asphalt road surfaces on Gates and Boulevards and silver grey blockwork for streets; and the use of Breedon Gravel or similar in Boulevard medians.

Heritage Buildings & Public Art

Aim of policy:

» To protect the built heritage and public art of CMK.

- 8.11 The listing of the Shopping Building (currently trading as 'thecentre:mk') is national recognition that CMK makes a significant and distinctive contribution to contemporary British architecture and urban design. The Listing of buildings just over thirty years old is unusual; the Listing of a building complex designed primarily for shopping is unique.
- 8.12 Other buildings in CMK are also likely to be recognised in due course as heritage assets and should be considered for Local Listing and where appropriate, referred to the Secretary of State for statutory Listing.

8.13 Amongst these are some of the distinctive pioneering buildings in CMK designed and developed by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. They follow a common design philosophy and epitomise the Miesian architectural thinking in Milton Keynes in the 1970s and 1980s. They express a modernist and minimalist approach reflected through, for example, significant amounts of mirrored glazing, sleek building lines with simple massing, and extremely high quality detailing. Such buildings should be retained and adapted to new uses if possible.

8.14 Likewise there are a number of other distinguished buildings designed by other architects which respond in different ways to the context of CMK: they may be similarly worthy of protection and adaptation to new uses over time.

8.15 Commitment to investment in Public Art has been an explicit part of the development of CMK and is a major feature of local distinctiveness. Existing artworks should also be considered for local Listing, and should be retained in their current location unless a special case for relocation to an enhanced position can be made. The management and maintenance of the public art collection, and its extension by more acquisitions, requires a long term strategy of the type suggested by the city's Public Arts Trust.

Policy CMKAP G2

Classic CMK Buildings & Public Art

CMK Alliance shall support the preparation of a Local List by the Council, and periodic reviews to identify any assets that might be appropriate to be referred to the Secretary of State for statutory Listing.

Landscaping & Open Space

Aim of policy:

- » To protect the landscaping and open spaces which contribute to the classic CMK infrastructure;
- » To protect the historic sites of Secklow Mound and Common Lane;
- » To guide provision of new public space.

- 8.16 CMK's high quality of generous green landscaping surprises and delights workers, visitors and residents alike and adds interest throughout the seasons. It makes the city more attractive to potential investors and new businesses and is part of the city's living heritage which will continue adding to the city's appeal as the trees mature. It also helps to maintain air quality and moderate the local climate, and to enhance biodiversity.
- 8.17 Part of the vision of this Plan is to protect this investment and ensure that everyone will have easy access to high quality public areas, including green and open space.
- 8.18 Formal avenues of London planes define the Boulevards, horse chestnuts are used along the Gates and a variety of smaller ornamental trees such as cherries and whitebeams are generally planted along Streets. There are

also informal patterns of tree planting and soft landscaping in public gardens and small parks, and around underpasses in quadrant planters. Together they make a significant contribution to the townscape and structure of the public domain in CMK.

- 8.19 A distinctive feature of the historic Bradwell Common upon which CMK is built was Common Lane, a rural route that in part is believed to have followed the ancient track Port Way. Common Lane ran across the Common from Loughton to the Secklow Mound (behind Milton Keynes Library), and from there east to Willen and beyond. Remnants of Common Lane, and its hedgrows and trees, are a heritage asset and should be conserved (see Figure 15).
- 8.20 As a dominant feature of the classic CMK infrastructure, the London planes along the Boulevards, and horse chestnuts along the Gates, and street trees, will be protected from development under Policy G1. MK Council's adopted *Street Trees in CMK: Guidance on the Development Process*, which outlines how street trees should be dealt with in accordance with nationally recognised good practice, will apply.

- 8.21 Future landscaping must continue to reinforce this planting strategy. It is to be designed in accordance with the guidance contained in the latest edition of the *CMK Handbook*. This sets out landscape principles and species within the streetscape of CMK.
- 8.22 Whether green or paved, public open space is particularly important to the quality and sustainability of urban life. These are spaces for busy workers to relax and enjoy lunch in the fresh air; for mums and toddler groups to meet and exchange stories, for informal sports and recreation, and community events. Provision can also be made in some public green spaces for communal gardens, community orchards, wild flower meadows and more formal seasonal planting displays. Overall, a wide variety of public open space is an essential feature of CMK for visitors and the local community alike.
- 8.23 CMK benefits from some substantial areas of public open space, such as Campbell Park, Fred Roche Gardens and Station Square. There are smaller public gardens to be found in Grafton Park, Bouverie Square, around the Saxon meeting place of Secklow Mound, and by MK Gallery.

8.24 A number of previously public spaces have become semi-public or private. Midsummer Place, which has been built across the line of Midsummer Boulevard, has limited rights of public access. The CBX Winter Garden has been sold into private ownership and the public are not admitted. The great enclosed Middleton Hall and its reciprocal open space of Queens Court, and the small City Square opposite the Civic Offices are now in the ownership of thecentre:mk. The owners of all these former public spaces are encouraged to continue to promote their use for public activities and enjoyment as much as possible.

8.25 The provision of private or semi-private incidental open spaces within new developments is welcomed. The provision of any new public open space should be accessible and of a usable size and shape. It should be capable of a range of activities, across a range of age groups and disabilities. Changes to the public realm - whether alterations to the older assets, or the creation of new ones - must always be sympathetic with and respectful of CMK's unique structure and cityscape.

8.26 Overall, however, despite the wide variety of open spaces within CMK, there is no definable public space which local people feel they could readily identify as the 'heart' of the city centre

for public assembly - a public urban space or 'civic square' for demonstrations, celebrations, and entertainment (see Policy SS3).

Policy CMKAP G3

Landscaping & Open Space

- a) Retention of landscaping: the structural tree planting and landscaping forming part of the classic CMK infrastructure is protected by Policy G1. Remnants of Common Lane (Figure 15), and its hedgerows and trees, are a heritage asset and shall be conserved.
- b) Existing public open spaces to be retained (Figure 15): these amenity assets are integral to the design and successful enjoyment of CMK and a reduction in quantity, quality and usefulness shall not be acceptable other than for exceptional developments as defined within Policy CMKAP G11.
- c) Existing semi-public spaces: a reduction in quantity, quality, use and public accessibility of all or part of Bouverie Square, Ashton & Norfolk House Square, Middleton Hall, Queens Court, Midsummer Place, City Square, and Exchange

Square to make way for new development shall not be acceptable other than for exceptional developments as defined within Policy CMKAP G11.

d) Creation of new public space: voluntary proposals are welcome for the creation of new public or semi-public open spaces on the Blocks or Blocklets of CMK beyond that which already exists. They will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i. Long term maintenance: arrangements must be made for long-term management and maintenance.
- ii. Imaginative uses of open space and the public realm for various activities, from quiet enjoyment to large assembly as appropriate, will be encouraged. The provision of water features and other animations which change throughout the day or through the seasons create special interest and attract return visits and will be encouraged.

Campbell Park

Aim of policy:

- » To protect Campbell Park as one of the finest contemporary urban parks in Europe;
- » To guide development along the Grand Union Canal at the eastern edge of Campbell Park.

8.27 Campbell Park is of national and international importance, being one of the largest and finest contemporary urban parks in Europe: it is the jewel in CMK's crown, beautifully maintained and managed. The extent of Campbell Park is defined in Figure 15. Urbanisation of the Park with permanent buildings will not be permitted.

8.28 Most of the Blocks across the Boulevards surrounding Campbell Park have yet to be developed, but in the fullness of time it is destined to become one of the most popular areas in the city centre and increasingly a visitor destination. As a feature of an outline planning permission granted to itself by English Partnerships some years ago, a 'park extension' linking the Park to an adjoining Grid Square has been completed (it connects with Springfield). Three more are planned at present and as each 'Park extension' consumes more than a significant part of a

Blocklet, now appear to be a questionable use of development land and the appropriateness of the commitment should be reviewed when Reserved Matters applications are brought forward for those Blocklets, or if wholly new planning applications are made.

8.29 The Grand Union Canal is a major amenity of Milton Keynes, the eastern boundary of CMK,

and is a very attractive aspect of Campbell Park Grid Square and its parkland network. Long vaunted proposals for a boat basin in Blocklets H3.1 and H4.1 in the south east corner of the Campbell Park grid square, with marina facilities and a public slipway, would be welcomed subject to detailed design and content and to having good connections to the existing public footpath route on the west bank of the canal.

Policy CMKAP G4

Campbell Park and its Setting

- a) Campbell Park (Figure 15) shall be retained and protected. It is of national and international importance, being one of the largest and finest contemporary urban parks in Europe.
- b) The development of buildings within the public green space of Campbell Park will require special justification. The design of any building proposed and justified on an exceptional basis shall be appropriate to the character area of the Park within which it is proposed and be of the highest architectural standard, demonstrably enhancing the quality and function of the Park.

- c) The development of buildings on development land adjacent to the public green space of Campbell Park in Blocks G3 and H3 must be worthy of their outstanding setting.
- d) Proposals for a boat basin in Blocklets H3.1 and H4.1 in the south east of the Grid Square, with marina facilities and a public slipway, would be welcomed subject to detailed design and content and to having good connections to the existing public footpath route on the west bank of the canal. The design of developments adjacent to the canal will be required to enhance the appearance of the waterway and to provide active elevations facing the waterway.

Green Frame

Aim of policy:

- » To guide development within the Green Frame;
- » To ensure the overall character of the Green Frame remains one of a green setting.

8.30 The Green Frame is the landscaped corridor around CMK on either side of the H5 Portway, H6 Childs Way and V8 Marlborough Street grid roads, and the Grand Union Canal: it acts as the gateway into CMK and provides the city centre with a green setting (Figure 15).

8.31 One of the significant design characteristics of Milton Keynes is the dense planting along the grid road reserves which separate often heavy traffic from adjacent development, reducing the effects of noise and pollution. The landscaping has itself become a source of delight and pleasure to local residents, who observe the passing of the seasons as they travel around their green city. Now increasingly valuable wild life corridors, the reserves have become an essential part of the Milton Keynes heritage, the city of trees.

8.32 From time to time there is pressure to extend development into the Green Frame around CMK. Development in the Green Frame must either derive from the function of the City Road corridors – uses such as petrol stations or utility substations – or improve the safety of the linkages and places of connection between CMK and the surrounding residential grid squares. Even then the functionality of the City Road corridor should not be compromised. For example, room has been left to give future generations the opportunity to route forms of public transport not yet designed – that future proofing should not be lost by developing too close to the road surfaces of today.

8.33 South of Block B4, along H6 Childs Way, the Green Frame has been removed. This should be re-instated when the Block is developed.

8.34 Carefully justified interventions in the Green Frame for public or civic purposes (there is already one war memorial that has been beautifully accommodated) or for quiet public recreation, would be welcomed.

Policy **CMKAP G5**

The Green Frame

Development in the Green Frame (Figure 15) will only be permitted if:

- a) It is located at places of connection with adjoining grid squares where it can be clearly demonstrated that it has a public benefit in terms of improving the quality and safety (as well as perception of safety) of pedestrians and cyclists using overbridges and underpasses, and ideally will occur on both the CMK and adjoining grid square sides;
- b) It does not harm the capacity of the city road corridors to accommodate the movement needs of future generations, including public transport;
- c) The overall character of the Green Frame is still predominantly one of a green setting, only occasionally punctuated by high quality developments at ‘points of connection’ or by special interventions such as public art and memorials.

Mixed Use

Aim of policy:

- » To ensure a diverse mix of activities across CMK, including the Campbell Park grid square;
- » To encourage a mixture of uses within developments;
- » To minimise adverse impacts of mixed uses.

8.35 The success of CMK has resulted in part from its flexibility in responding to opportunities, market conditions, and the need to support growth in the past. This has led to a good mix of uses within some Blocks and more recently in mixed-use developments, and this flexible and mixed-use approach will be further encouraged.

8.36 Mixed use can be defined in two ways:

- » **Vertical or side by side mixed use:** dividing blocks into different but separate buildings having different uses, for example the Civic Offices, the Library, the flats and community centre, and Lloyds Court - all separate buildings within the D1 Block, being the traditional form of mixed use found in cities throughout history;
- » **Horizontal or floor by floor mixed use:** dividing a single building into layers of different uses, such as Lloyds Court having banks, shops and restaurants on the ground floor, as well as offices on the upper floor.

8.37 Either form of mixed-use is encouraged for all development so as to move away from the monotony and limited types of activity in districts dominated by one use, and from Blocks and buildings containing only one use.

8.38 The provision of offices or homes on upper stories of development is particularly encouraged, subject to detailed design and management considerations. The potential for privacy issues arising across mixed-use buildings that are set close together must be minimised through careful design.

8.39 Drinking establishments and a range of complementary evening and night time uses that appeal to all sections of society, and contribute to the 24-hour welcome, will be encouraged, but will remain subject to local licensing processes.

8.40 Careful consideration needs to be given to mixing of night time economy uses and residential uses.

Policy CMKAP G6

Mixed Use

- a) Mixed-use is encouraged for all development proposals to create interest and vitality throughout the day and a sense of security at night.
- b) Late night uses should be readily accessible to late-at-night transport provision, including hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

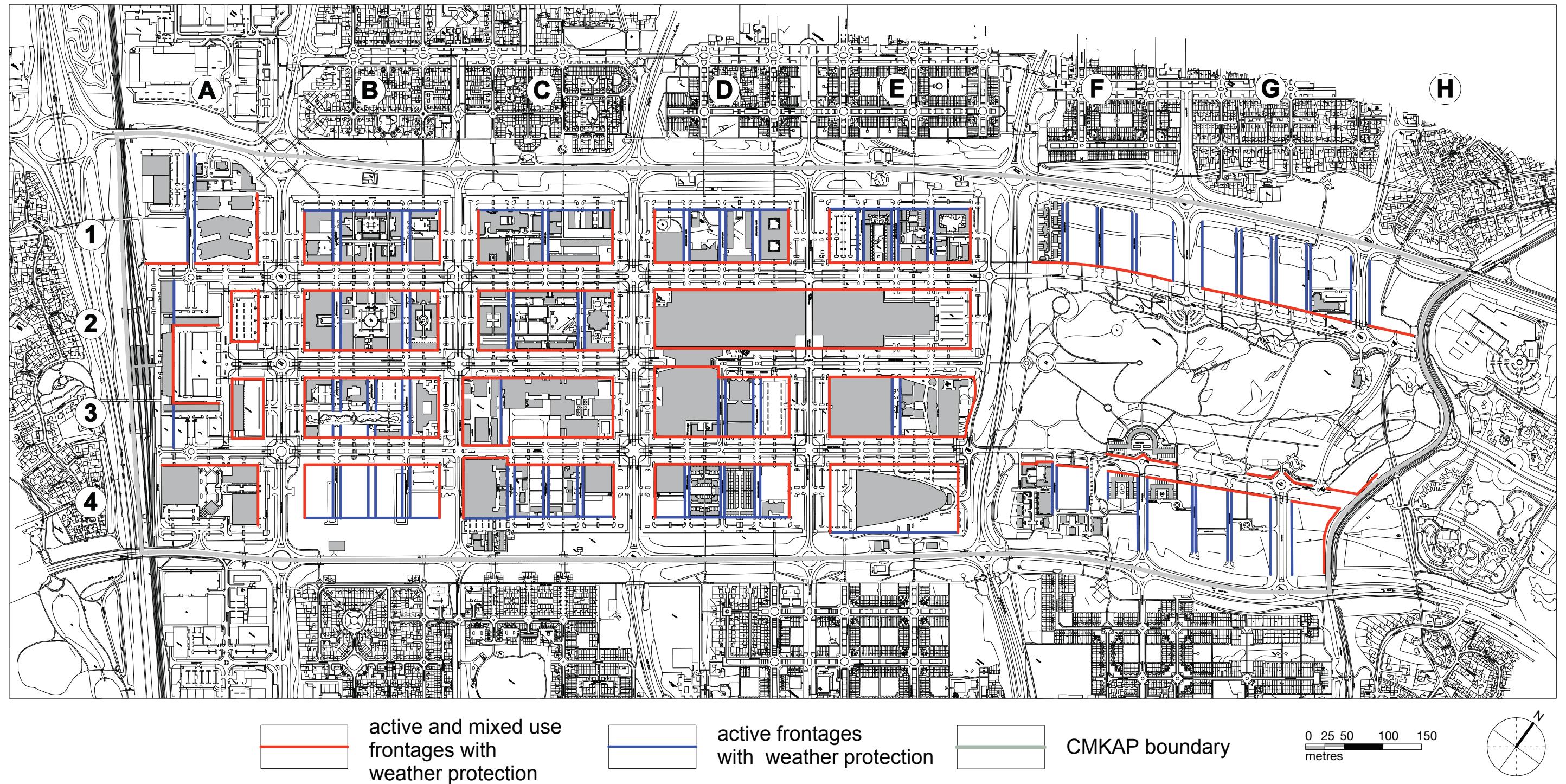


Figure 10: Active Frontages

Active Frontages

Aim of policy:

- » To enhance the pedestrian experience;
 - » To maximise pedestrian safety and perception of safety.
- 8.41 Active frontages at ground floor level of all Streets, Gates and Boulevards are essential features in creating the impression of a vibrant and safe city centre, and in ensuring that locations are places people want to visit and spend time in.
- 8.42 Active frontages can be achieved by locating primary entrance doors (not service doors) within the elevation, and also windows. The creation of significant lengths of blank wall and wide service yard gates will not be permitted.
- 8.43 Views into buildings not only provide interest to passers-by, but also enable casual surveillance from within the building, which increases pedestrian safety and the perception of safety through 'eyes on the street.'

- 8.44 The commitment to active frontages is extended along the Boulevards and Gates to encourage active uses and animations, such as shops and retail showcases, cafes and restaurants, service providers, civic and cultural uses and artistic animation – in other words, a mix of uses that will generate high footfall, interest and activity, many 'comings and goings' throughout the day and preferably late into the evening.
- 8.45 To improve weather protection, all developments are required to provide shelter on plot along Gates, Boulevards, and Streets to act as an extension of the open public footpaths and to be kept available as part of the public thoroughfare. Care is to be taken that frontages are not separated from the pedestrian routes with a clutter of steps, plinths, planters and other obstructions; however, appropriate privacy for residential developments will be permitted.

- 8.46 Building frontages generally should be at the back of pavement, unless there is some functional reason for set-back, or a gain of public space or amenity.
- 8.47 It is essential that the Boulevards and Gates have active uses at ground floor level as this will help enhance the quality of the public realm through animation and activity, and provide natural surveillance of the street scene.

Policy CMKAP G7*Active frontages*

- a) Ground floor blocklet frontages facing the public realm and identified in Figure 10 shall be expected to provide predominantly active frontages including offices, shops and retail showcases, cafes and restaurants, service providers, civic and cultural uses and artistic installations, subject to viability. Design facilitating passive surveillance will be encouraged.
- b) Weather protection: Development comprising blocklet frontages shall normally provide continuous weather protection and shelter with a depth of at least two metres at the same level as the adopted pavement.
- c) Porte cocheres: where buildings comprised within development proposals abut porte cocheres, direct and sheltered access shall be provided from them to the entrances of the proposed buildings.

Block Structure

Aim of policy:

- » To enhance the pedestrian experience;
- » To maintain pedestrian permeability;
- » To define criteria for amalgamating Blocklets through the removal of Streets.

- 8.48 The design of CMK creates twenty-six development Blocks, bounded by Boulevards and Gates, including the three Blocks north and three Blocks south of Campbell Park (see Figure 13 for block structure and numbers). The Blocks are further divided into Blocklets, defined by Streets running north to south.
- 8.49 Policy is offered to guide the development of this unique arrangement.
- 8.50 Sub-division of Blocklets to provide a greater degree of permeability, and enable a finer grain of development and land use activity, is encouraged in this stage of development in CMK. It will increase the quantity and variety of buildings in CMK and create a finer grain for movement and the townscape.

Policy CMKAP G8

Development Blocks and Blocklets

- a) Development is generally preferred to be in the form of perimeter development on Blocks and Blocklets with frontages facing the surrounding public realm, and private facilities such as servicing and parking yards located in the core of the development.
- b) Development is to clearly define the edge of the public realm. Frontages shall be designed to appear continuous, without significant gaps save those which enhance the public realm by providing views through to landscaping or by providing pedestrian access to development behind.
- c) Routes through Blocklets which are designed to act as public thoroughfares should provide access at all times, with rights secured by legal agreement, having regard to other material considerations.
- d) For large developments requiring large buildings, linked buildings, or secure campuses, the assembly of several Blocklets or parts of Blocklets may be justified, which may omit the creation of, or require the closure of, one or more Streets. In such circumstances, alternative arrangements for equivalent public accessibility and permeability of the Block shall be provided.

Design of Buildings

Aim of policy:

- » To achieve a high standard of building design;
- » To guide development of taller buildings.

8.51 The focus in the *CMKAP* is on flexibility of land use and built form. This pragmatic approach has been a significant contribution to the successful growth of CMK. However, many of the buildings in CMK are mediocre and have a poor relationship to the public realm - hence the emphasis in the Plan on CMK infrastructure and the quality of pedestrian routes.

8.52 Therefore part of the vision for CMK is to welcome developers with distinguished architects to help create a distinctive high quality environment. The vision is of a modern, intensive, well designed, well connected, highly accessible urban development with first class open spaces and other public realm appropriate for a modern and exciting city centre. The role of excellent design in achieving the vision for CMK is therefore clear.

8.53 Investors, and their design teams, need some guidance to ensure their developments contribute to the making of CMK. The aspects emphasised in this Plan are ground floor uses and frontages, storey heights, and roof-scape.

8.54 Note: sustainable construction principles and policies are set out in the adopted *Core Strategy* (Chapter 12: Tackling Climate Change and Building Sustainable Communities) and Local Plan Policy D4.

Policy **CMKAP G9**

Design and Height of Buildings

- a) New development should respect the existing CMK grid layout, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, with frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards ease of movement through and around CMK.
- b) The building's form, details and materials and associated public realm should be well considered and of high quality and the design should demonstrate an appreciation of and response to the wider context of the site.
- c) Buildings capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances and new uses are particularly welcome.
- d) Buildings on Gates and Boulevards are encouraged up to eight stories – the approximate height of the tallest trees (the London planes).
- e) Proposals for taller buildings in excess of eight storeys above natural ground level, will be tested against these criteria – that they:

- i. Offer outstanding economic and social benefits to CMK and Milton Keynes;
- ii. Avoid any adverse impact on:
 - » The microclimate, caused for example by increasing wind speeds, by overshadowing and by restricting daylight both in the public realm and in adjacent developments;
 - » Telecommunications;
 - » Adjacent developments by overlooking them and reducing privacy;
 - » Adjacent developments when illuminated;
- f) Taller structures, which are not buildings, but which are in excess of the equivalent of eight storeys above natural ground level shall not be acceptable unless they have a necessary function (e.g. chimneys or communications masts) or are civic interventions (such as memorials and public works of art);
- g) Advertisements and corporate signage are not encouraged in the CMK skyline, which is considered public domain.

Residential Developments

Aim of policy:

- » To guide residential development;
- » To ensure a mixture of tenures and unit sizes across CMK.

8.55 It is one of the objectives of MK Council's adopted *2005 Local Plan* and adopted *Core Strategy* that many more people live in CMK.

8.56 This Alliance Plan seeks to accommodate this housing, but not on land more suited for the regional status of CMK (i.e. for offices, retail, commercial leisure and civic uses). This has led provision to be encouraged on upper floors of all commercial uses and the quieter back parts of Blocklets away from Gate and Boulevard frontages in the most intense areas of CMK activity, and in various locations enjoying an aspect over Campbell Park or wider landscapes. Detailed design and layouts which minimise conflicts between residential and other uses such as night clubs will obviously be essential.

8.57 The Plan focuses on the needs of households that might not have children – younger and older people, and possibly transient households such as new economic migrants to Milton Keynes or people on work placements to local companies. Many other areas in Milton Keynes are designed to meet the needs of families raising children, so whilst the city centre will remain family-friendly, housing provision in CMK will focus more on the needs of these other groups of residents.

8.58 The adopted *Core Strategy's* planned number of homes in CMK and the Campbell Park grid square, when related to the quantity of development land in Blocklets as now proposed in this Plan (the *2005 Local Plan* presumed homes would be built on car parking areas and other parts of the public realm), causes residential developments to have be built to an average density of around 250 dwellings per hectare (dw/ha) in CMK west of Marlborough Gate and 100-200 dw/ha in the Campbell Park grid square. For reference, Eaton Mews in North Thirteenth Street, which consists of four story blocks with communal private gardens, is 90 dw/ha; the Hub is 250 dw/ha; and the new Campbell Square development is 200 dw/ha.

- 8.59 This fits with the Plan's vision of well designed, urban housing with a strong sense of community and shared responsibility for communal areas, with an emphasis on self-management. It could also lead to much taller buildings, though the provision of amenity space for residents becomes more challenging as densities rise, and will require careful scrutiny when planning applications are made.
- 8.60 Purpose built units that provide alternatives to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) will be encouraged, with strong and accountable management.

Policy CMKAP G10

Residential Development

- a) The density of residential developments will generally be 250 dwellings per hectare (dw/ha) between the Station End and Marlborough Gate, and 100 – 200 dw/ha in the Blocks surrounding Campbell Park.
- b) All proposals for residential development within CMK will be required to offer a mix of unit sizes.
- c) Proposals for new residential development within CMK will be required to demonstrate how possible noise conflict with nearby uses is to be minimised, and the impact of unacceptable levels of noise from road traffic is to be mitigated.
- d) Proposals should demonstrate that good standards of daylight and sunlight are achieved in compliance with BRE standards, and that there is no overlooking causing unreasonable loss of privacy.
- e) Residential developments in the centre will contribute to the provision of affordable and social housing in line with the adopted *Core Strategy* and relevant SPD. A mixing of tenures throughout CMK is encouraged.
- f) Developments will contribute to additional community facilities required in line with the scale of their impact in accordance with the Planning Obligations SPD.
- g) The creation of communities within developments should be fostered by establishing communal facilities, such as shared open space.
- h) Large units are prone to subsequent conversion to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) which can have negative impacts on neighbours. The supply of HMO's will be closely monitored and approval will not be granted if the monitoring indicates that Blocklets are becoming dominated by HMO's.

Exceptional Developments

Aim of policy:

- » To provide flexibility in applying *CMKAP* policies for exceptional development opportunities.

8.61 One of the key challenges for the Plan is to protect CMK's distinctive identity and quality of place, whilst providing appropriate flexibility to future development opportunities. The policies of the *CMKAP* seek high standards for all developments. They should bring offers that the city centre currently lacks, contribute to the economic, social, cultural and other strategic objectives of the Plan, and be designed to high standards of architecture and sustainability, in a way that complements CMK's distinctive identity.

8.62 Thus if flexibility is to be permitted, it has to be carefully considered, to enable an exceptional development to take place and not the ordinary. In general, over 50 hectares (120 acres) of developable land in CMK will more than meet the requirements of economic growth for the next 15 years. But it is not in the interests of CMK to turn away major, exceptional investments because some of the policies of the Plan might be breached.

Policy *CMKAP* G11

Exceptional Developments

Policy G1 may be applied with some flexibility if an exceptional development is proposed. An exceptional development would demonstrably raise the profile of Milton Keynes nationally or internationally, would make a substantial contribution to the economic, employment, social, cultural and other key objectives of the Plan and city prosperity, and would enhance CMK's distinctive identity.

Proposals are expected to show that:

- a) options have been considered that do not breach policy, with a detailed analysis of the pros and cons of each relative to the original proposal, including an alternative, or further options, put forward by the local community, if forthcoming; and
- b) pre-application engagement has taken place with stakeholders and the public to evaluate the options and with independent opinion surveys based on well informed samples to assess public support for the original and next best option.

Planning Obligations

Aim of policy:

- » To ensure there is adequate physical and social infrastructure;
- » To ensure that all development in CMK contributes to the strategic objectives for the city centre as set out in *CMKAP S1*.

- 8.63 To implement this Plan, revised planning obligations – under Section 106 agreements and under the Community Infrastructure Levy when implemented - will need to be adopted by MK Council following consultation.
- 8.64 The following comments are set out in this Plan to assist the Council in making those revisions.
- 8.65 Developments are to contribute to the provision of cultural, sporting and community facilities, and an indicative list for CMK is included in the Proposals Plan. If due to changing circumstances, it is agreed that a facility is not achievable, then a similar one is to take its place.

- 8.66 Contributions arising from planning obligations should be brought in line with other developments in Milton Keynes, as CMK and the Campbell Park grid square currently receive significantly lower amounts than elsewhere in the Borough.
- 8.67 Developments are to contribute to transport related projects, both towards capital and revenue costs.
- 8.68 A contribution towards public art is to remain as at present, with an open and transparent method of procurement to involve relevant stakeholders.
- 8.69 Social housing in residential developments is to be provided in accordance with the policies of the adopted *Core Strategy*.
- 8.70 Projects to be delivered using planning obligations are to be prioritised and implemented in an open and transparent way, engaging relevant stakeholders, particularly the local ward councillors and town council, and in all stages of a project's development.

Policy CMKAP G12

Planning Obligations

To deliver the policies and strategies of the Plan, the system of planning obligations (including Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy) applied by MK Council for CMK during the life of this plan shall include support for the provision of social and physical infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area.