

Table of Contents

Preface	3
Section 1	
Introduction	4
Background	4
Enquiry by Design Methodology and Process.....	6
The Village as an Ecosystem.....	8
Vision Statement.....	10
Sub-regional Context.....	12
Local Context	14
Section 2	
Masterplan Evaluation	18
Final Masterplan	20
Detail - Harbour Options Masterplan	22
Detail - The Mill Masterplan	24
Detail - The Church Masterplan.....	25
Detail -Main Street and Traill Street Improvements plan Masterplan.....	26
Heritage & Regeneration.....	28
Landuse.....	30
Landscape & Ecology.....	32
Street Hierarchy.....	38
Section 3	
Masterplan Strategies	40
Section 4	
Next Steps	42

Preface

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment has been invited as part of the North Highland Initiative to facilitate a forward planning process known as Enquiry by Design for the area of Castletown and Castlehill in Caithness, the north eastern part of Scotland.

With the support of the Highland Council and the Castletown Community Council, The Prince's Foundation first held a Scoping Day at the beginning of July 2007 which provided the opportunity to identify stakeholders and key issues relating to Castletown. A three day Enquiry by Design workshop followed between the 30th July-1st August 2007 which helped to formalise a vision for the Castletown and Castlehill area resulting in a masterplan and a heritage and regeneration action plan.

The report presents the findings of the Enquiry by Design workshop.



The aerial photograph of Castletown - Courtesy of Alan Moar

Section 1

Introduction

Background

As a part of the North Highland Initiative, established by HRH the Prince of Wales, the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment has been working in partnership with the Prince's Regeneration Trust in order to facilitate an Enquiry by Design workshop for the area of Castletown and Castlehill in North East Scotland.

The Prince's Foundation

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment (TPF) - an educational charity established by HRH, The Prince of Wales, exists to improve the quality of people's lives by teaching and practising timeless and ecological ways of planning, designing and building.

The Foundation has been involved in over 60 masterplanning, urban design, architectural, regeneration and heritage projects, contributing to the enhancement of their design and build quality as well as greater community involvement in the planning process.

North Highland Initiative

In August 2005 HRH Prince Charles launched his North Highland Initiative.

In the first instance the Initiative will market beef, lamb and mutton from the North Highlands but will be widened to include other foods, as well as helping to promote tourism and the area's historic buildings.

It has 3 main objectives:

- *To improve distribution and access to UK markets (and beyond) for food and other produce*
- *To encourage sensitive and sustainable tourism*
- *To breathe new life into the rich and diverse built heritage, in turn aimed at improving tourism prospects.*

The third element of the Initiative, which involves economic regeneration through restoration of the built environment, has as its

objective the compilation of an inventory of properties, particularly farm buildings, and, with targeted assistance, to identify those suitable for restoration and re-use as economic units.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust

The Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT) undertakes activities in pursuit of the preservation, regeneration and re-use of buildings of architectural or heritage value at risk.

It achieves its mission through acting as an adviser and enabler; a facilitator; a consultant; a partner; or a principal and aims to focus on areas of social or economic need and provides for an inclusive approach, involving communities in close collaboration with owners and local authorities. They seek to act in partnership with the public, private and charitable sectors to deliver sustainable regeneration of heritage buildings.

All PRT projects aim to release the regenerative energy of derelict and abandoned historic

buildings to create places where people can live, work and enjoy themselves.

The buildings that are adopted have to continue to work for a living and inspire others to follow our example.

Wherever they can, PRT works with the Prince's family of patronage and charities to deliver links between the historic environment, education, craftsmanship, creativity, community and commerce.





A photograph of the beach at Castlehill; a future key tourist destination of the area

Enquiry by Design Methodology and Process

"The Enquiry by Design process brings together the key stakeholders in a proposed development to collaborate in articulating a vision for a site or place through an intensive workshop, facilitated by a multi-disciplinary design team."

The Process

The process is not just a means of informing the community about a planned development but actively engages them in the planning and design of their community, helping to build up the confidence and collective enthusiasm to allow the vision to be taken forward after the workshop has been completed.

Because the Enquiry by Design process relies on extremely concise and concentrated effort over a relatively short period of time, assembling the right information is critical. The whole exercise normally includes extensive preparation and a lead-in period of five or six months to the actual workshop is usual.

The list of information typically gathered prior to the workshop includes technical information from the scale of the site to the regional level, and relating to relevant policy, economic, social and environmental conditions and constraints detailed studies of the local/historical built form and street patterns, sometimes assembled in the form of a Pattern Book.

The Enquiry by Design is preceded by a number of preparatory sessions, to begin to explore key issues and to familiarise key stakeholders with the process ahead of the main workshop.

In general, the Enquiry by Design workshop structure will include:

Day One

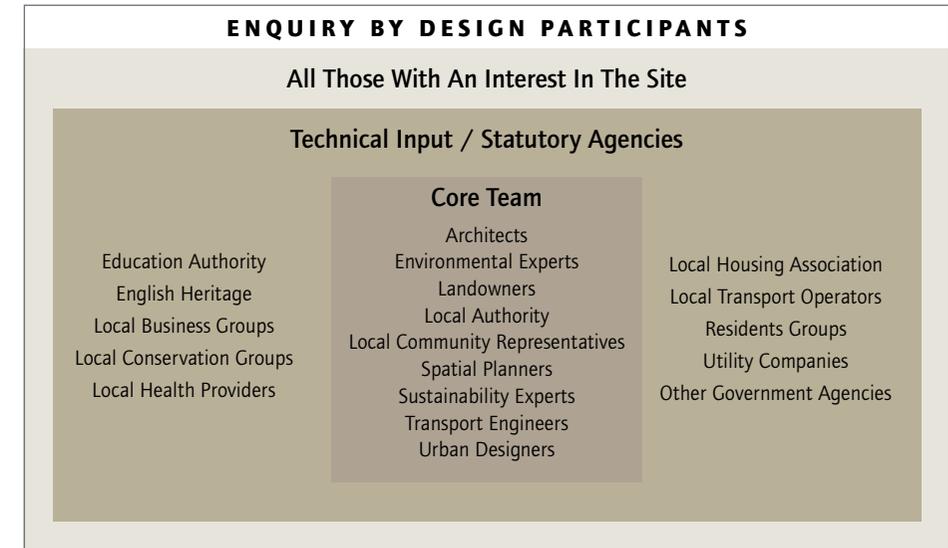
- *Exploring key issues*
- *Technical briefings*
- *Site -tour*
- *Initial Structure Plan*

Day Two

- *Testing of initial concept*
- *Multiple Masterplans*
- *Point of maximum confusion*

Day Three and Four

- *Development of vision*
- *Sign-off of vision*
- *Consolidation of plan*
- *Specialist strategies*



Day Five

- *Production and final presentation*
- *Resolution of outstanding issues*
- *Production of final plans*
- *Communication to general public*

The number of participants in a workshop can range from around twenty through to several hundred and this varies at different points throughout the workshop.

Without the backing of the key decision makers the exercise would not be so reliable. Along with the Foundation's design team these parties form the Core Team for the workshop and attend all sessions.

The Scoping Day July 2007

The Prince's Foundation with The Prince's Regeneration Trust started the process by holding a public open evening and Scoping Day in Castletown in the beginning of July. The meetings were well attended by members of the community, The Highland Council and other stakeholders from the area.

The aim was, initially, to introduce The Prince's Foundation and The Prince's Regeneration Trust by providing an understanding of our design principles and an insight into how our work might be of benefit to the village. Secondly, the meetings aimed to gather information relating

to Castletown, Castlehill and their immediate surroundings from the local authority and community representatives.

Attendees of the Scoping Day were taken on a tour of the area which helped identify key sites for regeneration and potentially developable areas, they were then split into groups and given a map of Castletown and asked to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the village as well as aspirations for the future of Castletown and the Castlehill area.

A wealth of information was gathered concerning which areas people thought should be celebrated, which areas had failed in the past and what changes people would like to see in the future.

Key themes emerging from the Scoping Day included the need to establish a stronger connection between Castletown and Castlehill, the reuse and adaptation of the redundant building stock, rejuvenation of the harbour area, jobs and facilities for local people, affordable housing and the need for any new development to protect and enhance the character of the village.

The Enquiry by Design August 2007

The Enquiry by Design workshop was held from 30th July to 1st August at the Drill Hall in Castletown with the aim of drawing up a vision for the sustainable growth of the village and to reuse and integrate redundant buildings.

The workshop brought together all the key stakeholders and interested parties. This included the Highland Council, The North Highland Initiative, Castletown Community

Council, Castletown Heritage Society as well as other local groups and residents.

The first day was spent listening to a series of technical briefings related to the site including planning, housing, community facilities, tourism, business, landscape and ecology, heritage and local identity.

Attendees were then split into different groups to analyse the essential characteristics of the village in more detail in terms of the hierarchy of movement, walking distances and village structure.

The groups subsequently focused on four different aspects of the emerging masterplan, including a sub-regional strategy; village structure; ecology and sustainability, and development around heritage buildings.

Throughout the second and third days, the groups continued to refine, test and redraw proposals through discussion with local people and local architects.

The final products of the three days included a masterplan framework for the Castletown and Castlehill area, a landscape strategy, a movement strategy, a heritage and regeneration action plan and a phasing plan, accompanied by illustrative sketches.



Local residents during the Scoping Day



An exploratory diagram of Castletown drawn during the Scoping Workshop with local residents

The Village as an Ecosystem

Integrating Tradition and Sustainability

By Hank Dittmar, Chief Executive, The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment

The new century has been called the time of the biological and natural sciences, with innovation and insight coming from the study of nature and the study of life. It is therefore appropriate to ask what lessons we might learn from a better understanding of nature and man's interaction with the natural world. And further, how might this knowledge teach us to build in a way that is more ecological, so that global urbanisation might be seen as part of the answer to problems of poverty, malnutrition and ecosystem change?

The fundamental premise is that our settlements are in fact part of nature, as is man, and that thinking of cities as artefacts of natural processes might inform the way we plan and design. Cities might be planned to evolve organically, rather than in a mechanical fashion. What are the implications of such an approach for the quality of people's lives?

First, we might begin by defining the properties of healthy ecosystems, and look to apply those properties to the conscious process of city making. A series of attributes emerge from the study of complex systems.

Basic typologies which change slowly, but are highly flexible and adaptable, built in redundancy as a way of ensuring reliability, and feedback loops as a way of responding to change. Anthropologist and systems theorist Gregory Bateson called for "a single system of environment combined with high human civilization, in which the flexibility of the civilization shall match that of the environment to

create an ongoing complex system, open-ended for slow change of even basic characteristics."

The notion that human settlements are composed, like ecosystems, of basic types, which change slowly, but are flexible and adaptable, is being applied in the Foundation's work.

We are beginning to understand that part of the problem in our settlements is that we have been fundamentally altering basic structures – movement patterns, the role of neighbourhoods in the town structure, the size of blocks – to accommodate short-term trends like retail packaging. A better understanding of the basic types that compose the city is needed in order to define ways to accommodate urban "fashions" like big box retail in a flexible, and adaptable way.

At the same time an ecological approach to urbanism depends upon moving away from the mechanistic approach to transport and movement, which led to the predict and provide model of transport and ultimately to

the insane notion that adding road space could cure congestion – a theory akin to the idea that one can cure obesity by loosening one's belt! And this leads to the opposite concept of cities as places for exchange, and as places whose inherent advantage is accessibility to other people, to goods and to services – what might be called location efficiency. This means a fundamental rethinking by environmentalists about villages and towns. Traditionally being green has been about embracing wilderness, about opposing development, and cities were seen as soul destroying, noisy, smelly and dirty places. But a closer look reveals that if we look at cities and towns in terms of per capita environmental burden, rather than on an area wide basis, they are far more environmentally friendly than sprawling suburbs.

The combination of scale, density, street connectivity and mixed community makes all the difference.

Scale means understanding the role of buildings, streets, neighbourhoods, towns and regions in a complex system. Regions are about the interaction of complex systems: markets, institutions that regulate them, and the transport that creates access to them. Regions are made up of a system of walkable neighbourhoods, interconnected by streets and transport networks, each serving its own function.

Scale makes it possible to efficiently operate public transport systems, providing a meaningful alternative to the automobile. Scale also allows the provision of environmental infrastructure such as sustainable urban drainage or combined heat and power that are

more cost effective at the neighbourhood or district level.

An interconnected street network provides for a better distribution of traffic, lessening congestion on major roads. The avoidance of 'wiggly worm' cul de sacs allows for the creation of walkable neighbourhoods that accommodate the automobile but celebrate the pedestrian.

A mixed community is built around the form of streets, blocks and building and the types of buildings rather than type of land use. It allows for employment and retail within close proximity of residences. Mixed communities also provide a range of housing types and sizes, accommodating affordable housing through pepper potting rather than in monocultural disconnected estates.

These characteristics add up to something called location efficiency. Location efficiency, which can be quantified, is the combination of greater residential density, increased pedestrian and bicycle friendliness and access to public transport. Improved location efficiency results in reduced vehicle travel, lower carbon emissions and reduced household transportation expenses.

Residential densities allowing for exchange, interconnected street patterns, public transport systems and mixed use: these are characteristics of traditional urban communities, and properly designing for sustainability means being grounded in an ever-evolving tradition. If one views tradition rather than self-conscious newness as a foundation for sustainability, then the challenge is one of reconnecting with adaptation to place.

The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment has begun to evolve tools and techniques for urban design and community involvement that embrace the twin challenges of sustainability and improved quality of life, and simultaneously respond to the challenges of a changing marketplace. Such tools as Enquiry By Design, an interdisciplinary stakeholder-driven approach to planning developed in our longstanding collaboration with English Partnerships, and design coding through the use of urban pattern books promise to provide for a close integration between local identity and sustainability.

We clearly do not have all the answers to the challenge of creating sustainable communities, or of adapting traditional building and urbanism to a world of peak oil, global climate change and possible sea level rise. While traditional urbanism may reduce travel, and it seems to be clear that traditional approaches to building solid walled buildings that can respond passively to climate are proving relevant today, tradition must evolve to respond to changed conditions. This evolution, in an era of production building, presents a challenge – a challenge that can be met by a partnership with green architects and builders.

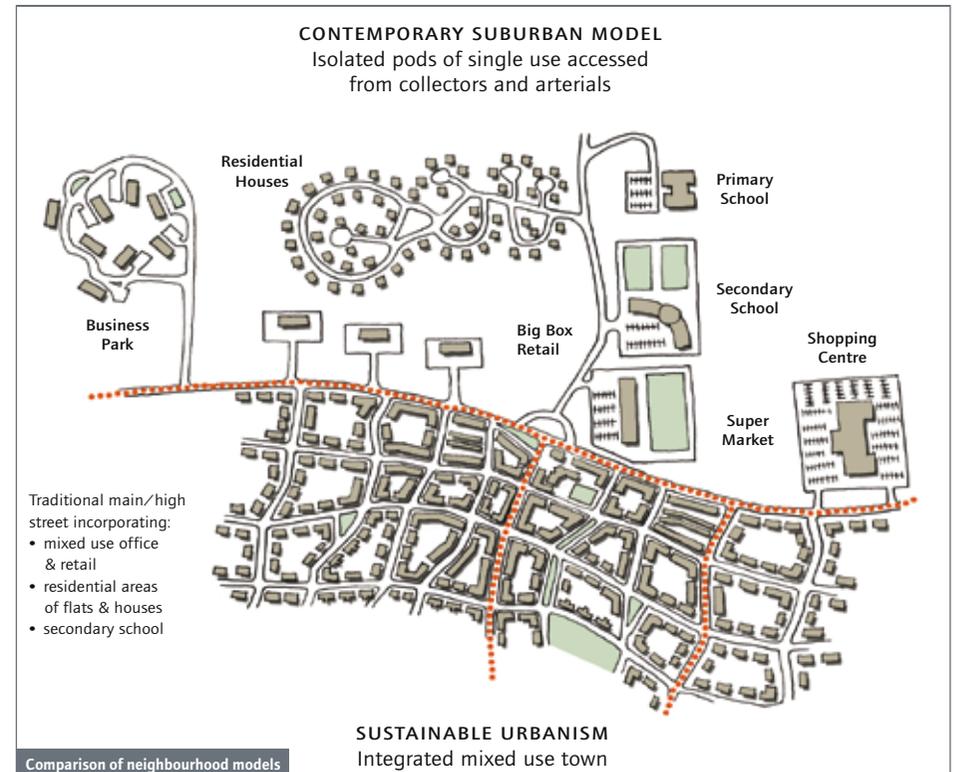
The goal is to produce towns and cities that embody the complexity and richness of places that have evolved organically, in an era of planning allocations, publicly traded house building companies, and net present value. The challenge, as Christopher Alexander has pointed out, that places embodying "wholeness" and "life" must be planned and built in the right order, through what he calls

generative coding. The payoff, if we can get it right, is that those places will then be able to evolve organically, adapting in a robust manner to an uncertain future.

As defined by the Brundtland Commission, sustainability means "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It is through this marriage of tradition and ecology that we link past, present and future generations, and demonstrate that far from being a fad, green urbanism is truly about taking the long view.

Our President, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, is someone who takes the long view, and has campaigned for more sustainable accounting standards. HRH recently received the Vincent Scully Prize from the US National Building Museum for his contribution to architectural and urban practice, theory and criticism. In his acceptance speech, he called for a union of tradition and modernity, beyond the tyranny of "traditionalism" or "modernism":

"To find new solutions for these major global issues it is essential that we combine a thorough understanding of how past civilizations ordered themselves, using minimal resources, together with new science and technologies so that we really can have our 'cake and eat it.' Modernism has led us to seek answers in a host of technical "fixes". Traditionalism often only pays it lip service. Real traditional thinking has always tried to see the whole picture."



Features of "sustainable urbanism"

- *mixed use: while the schemes will be predominantly residential, they will also contain a mix of other uses such as retail, business and community;*
- *mixed tenure: a variety of income groups and occupations;*
- *mixed housing type: to support movement within the neighbourhood and thus encourage community stability;*
- *good public transport connections: to encourage walking and cycling and reduce car dependency;*
- *walk able neighbourhoods: community and*

- commercial facilities accessible by foot, and a street layout which is well interconnected and avoids cul-de-sacs and so encourages a range of routes for pedestrians (and vehicles);*
- *relatively high net densities : high enough to support the viability of mixed use areas; and convenient public transport;*
- *well integrated open space: this should have a clearly defined use and a long term management regime, as well as being easily accessible;*
- *opportunities for a range of work /lifestyle choices: accommodating economic as well as residential activity.*

A photograph of a village with a large field in the foreground and a row of houses in the background. The field is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses. In the background, there is a long row of houses with brown roofs and white walls. The sky is overcast and grey. The foreground is partially obscured by green foliage on the left side.

Vision Statement

"Castletown can become a model of village regeneration and sustainable development, uniting past achievements, present needs and aspirations for the future."

Building upon themes raised at the Scoping Day, the Enquiry by Design workshop brought together a diverse group of residents, business people, farmers, planners and others with an interest in the village and the area, to help forge a new, holistic vision for Castletown, which would unite the rich heritage of the village with opportunities for housing, business, tourism and improved quality of life.

Castletown and Castlehill share the same origins and are essentially parts of the same whole, however, the perception of them today remains as distinct places. Castletown is the living village, umbilically linked to the wider area by the main road, whereas Castlehill and the former Traill Estate, once with access to world markets from its harbour, lies largely derelict and abandoned. A central aspect of the vision sees Castletown and Castlehill more strongly connected, helping to bring new life to Castlehill whilst conferring wider benefits to the rest of the village.



Sub-regional Context

Castletown's Economic Base

The flagstone industry put Castletown on the map and as such the village has played an important part in the quality of the built environment across the United Kingdom and beyond.

However, by the First World War the flagstone industry had almost completely declined. For the last 30 years, the pioneering Norfrost factory has been the main business in the village and remains one of the most significant private employers in Caithness, although the workforce is now significantly smaller than at its height. The number of shops and trades found in the village is also far fewer than in previous generations, partly due to greater car use.

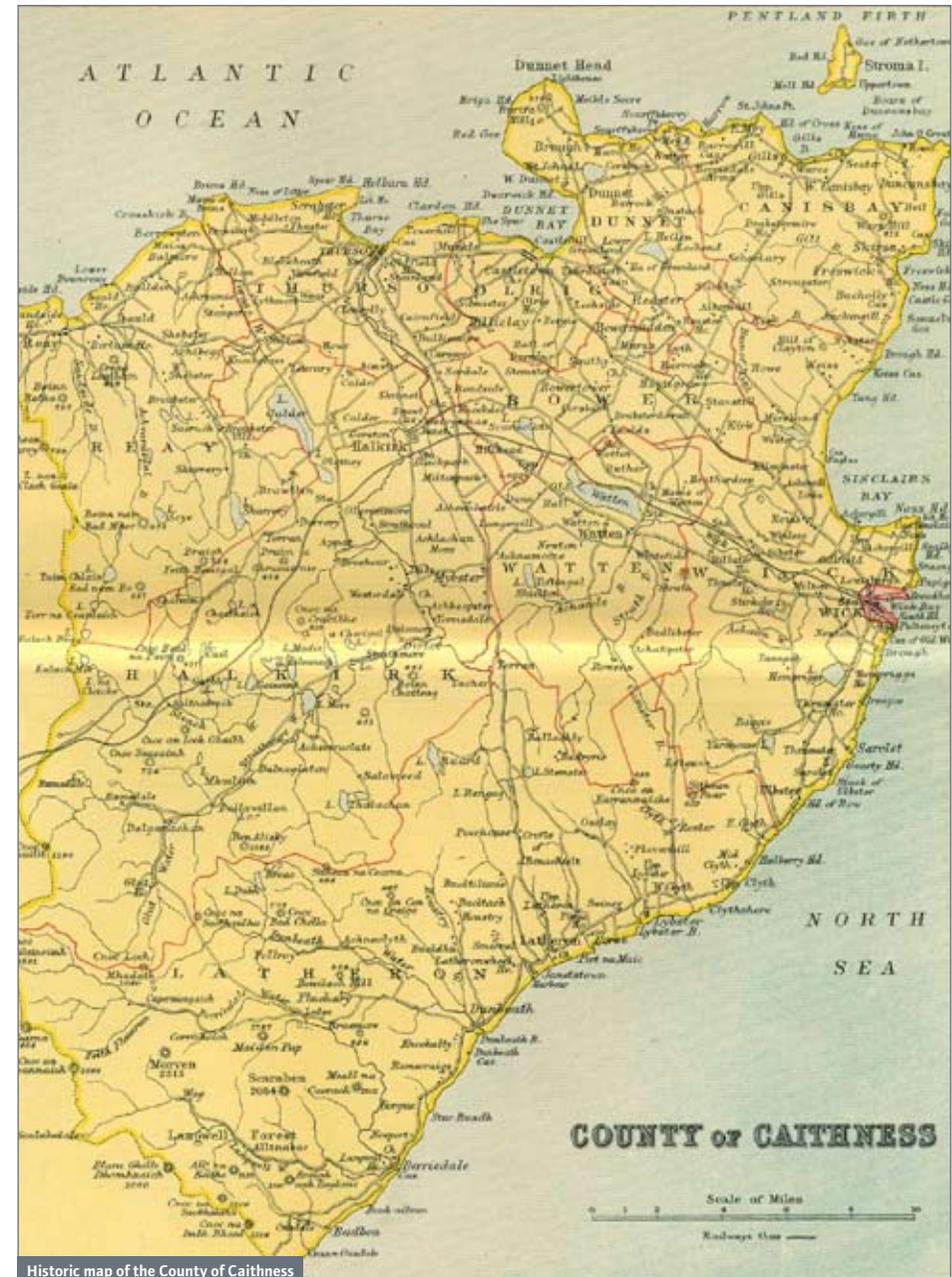
In order to prosper again and to withstand economic change in the future, Castletown must develop a more diverse economic base. Tourism and leisure are significantly underdeveloped in the village, and can build upon the community's heritage assets and remarkable natural setting.

There is significant potential for Castletown to derive greater benefit from its hinterland. During the first day of the Enquiry by Design a group worked on a sub-regional strategy.

It highlighted a number of opportunities:

- *Castletown is well placed on the tourist route between Thurso and John O'Groats.*

- *Improved signage and markers within and around the village are needed, including gateway signs heralding "the Flagstone Village".*
- *The village could act as a base for a number of activities, including bird-watching, walking, cycling, loch and river fishing, farm tours, botany, horse-riding, shooting and stalking.*
- *Dunnet Beach is an under-promoted asset with potential for diverse pursuits such as sea angling, sand-yachting, wind surfing, kite surfing and sea kayaking, in addition to more conventional beach activities. The former mill may provide a suitable base for beach accommodation and a centre for beach pursuits, subject to further feasibility studies.*
- *Surfing is in its early stages of development in Caithness but is expected to grow considerably, partly due to improvements in wet suit technology. The surf of the area is among the best in Europe and Castletown is well-placed to benefit with favourable conditions both to the east on Dunnet Beach and to the west at Murkle. Lessons could be learnt from places such as Newquay where surfing has contributed*



Historic map of the County of Caithness

Local Context

Local Plan

Caithness Local Plan

The current Caithness local plan was adopted by the Highland Council in September 2002. It serves to co-ordinate the detailed development and use of land in Caithness over the next 5 to 10 years. The earliest likely review of the current local plan would commence towards the end of 2009. The main functions of the Local Plan are to:

- Allocate sites for new homes, industry and business, shops, schools and leisure to guide developers and assist with determination of planning applications.
- Integrate the planning of these uses with proposals for public services and infrastructure networks.
- Protect important natural and man-made heritage features and identify the scope for local environmental improvements.
- Provide local people and other stakeholders with the opportunity to participate in the planning of each community.

Castletown

The demand for housing requirement over the next 10 to 15 years is likely to increase, related with the upsurge in demand in the Thurso housing market area and restrictions in building in the open countryside. Opportunities are identified in the Plan for 150 to 200 houses to be developed in phases over the next 15 to 20 years.

- There is a requirement for new affordable housing and a shortage of suitable housing to rent for incoming workers.
- Projected Housing requirements for the next 10 years:
 - Castletown/Dunnet
 - 2000-2007 = 60
 - 2008-2017 = 65
 - Total = 125

- Development and Housing
- Housebuilding in the village in recent years has been suppressed through a lack of serviced sites for individual development. This has transferred demand to the surrounding countryside.
- It is now necessary to release more land within the village and apply more restrictive policies in the countryside. Existing gap or infill sites in the village only allow for 15 to 20 houses.
- Outline planning permission has been obtained for 45 houses in and around the Castlehill steadings.
- Surrounding farmland is important to the village setting and is intensely worked. Protecting this land from piecemeal development will assist the proper

development of the village.

- Existing landscape and planting is currently used to help contain development in relation to the village.
- Securing public access in association with development would help complete a loop of remote paths around the northern part of the settlement and reduce conflicts with continued farming activities in other areas.
- A more readily available supply of land and wider range of housing opportunities in all tenures in a choice of locations will help support the attraction of further jobs to the village.
- There is need for a range of house types to cater for different household sizes, particularly smaller households.

Employment

- Major sources of employment are in Thurso, at Dounreay, and, to a lesser extent than previously, at the local Norfrost freezer manufacturing plant.
- Additional land for business and light industrial needs to be identified
- At the west end of the village, the worked out area of the Upper Castletown quarry is identified and the grounds of the former Castlehill house offers potential in this regard.

Tourism

There is the potential to attract more visitors exist i.e. in the development of heritage centre, restoration and appropriate reuse of the old Castlehill mill, harbour, steading and wooded policies.

- Restore and reuse buildings in the Castlehill area for tourism.

- Restoration of old mill for a mix of tourism, business and retail.
- As with the Enquiry by Design, the Local Plan highlights considerable opportunities for tourism for Castletown, as it lies on an important tourist route to John O'Groats.
- More local benefit can be derived from the Dunnet Bay area
- These could be supported by additional interpretation of the flagstone industry, tourist facilities and quality accommodation.
- If tourist potential is developed in association with housing the service role of the village could be greatly enhanced.

The Need for Facilities and Improvements

- There is local support for the development of a bowling green
- Upgrade village centre
- Upgrade playarea and open space
- Castlehill;
 - Hostel/bunkhouse
 - Restaurant
 - Craft industry
 - Chalets
 - Swimming pool
 - Cycle routes

Environment

Castlehill and Stangerhill woodlands are also important to the landscape setting of the village and offer potential for informal recreation.

- Needs protection of surrounding farmland from piecemeal development
- Needs development close to Castlehill that assist the regeneration/preservation of that area.
- The path network needs to be improved

- Environmental enhancement of former quarries
- Extension of public access to surrounding area

Following the key issues, the Local Plan suggests following policies:

Village Centre

- Commercial development and community facilities are encouraged along the Main street frontage and in between Traill and MacKay Street
- Infill housing development or redevelopment is favoured particularly where vehicular access can be taken to Traill Street and Murrayfield.
- Land extending 0.1 ha at the south east end of Traill and Main Street is available, possibly for housing association.
- A bowling green may be suitable on one of the open spaces between Traill Street and the Main Street. Alternative locations are: open area to the north east of MacKay Street if not allocated for housing or east of Stangergill Burn.

Housing

Infill development is encouraged on the following sites: West of the Traill Hall, east of Castlehill Place, west of the playing field and north east end of Stangergill Crescent.

- The grounds of the former Castlehill House have scope for residential development, as a part of a Masterplan with mixed use. Development in this area and in the walled garden are preferred to additional development within the woodland. However, limited development may be allowed, subject to minimal loss of trees. A high

standard of building design will be required to complement existing and proposed development in the Castlehill and Mill area.

- Housing development immediately on land outside the village boundary or safeguarded open space is discouraged.
- Ribbon development along all public roads out of the village and between Castletown and Castlehill will not be permitted.
- Land between the village and the Ruthermyre area may have potential for housing development in the very long term.

Expansion

- Land allocated for longer term planned expansions:
 - East of Stangergill Burn, capacity for 140, including a mix of house sizes and tenures including affordable housing with community/leisure facilities. There's potential for up to 3 road accesses and creation of traffic calmed environment. Path links should be made to the village, Castlehill and Dunnet Bay via woodlands, burn sides and open space. A range of open space/play area, bowling green and playing fields are required.
 - South of Castlehill Steadings, capacity 20-25, including a play area, mounding, screen tree planting and improvements to the road towards the village.
- Development Guidelines for new housing:
 - Materials: Incorporate the use of flagstone; include in gateway, low stone wall, traffic calming measures and features of houses.
 - Density: Should not exceed 10 dwellings per hectare.

- Plot Ratio: Maximum plot ratio of 30%
- Building Lines: 10 from rear/front of house to rear/front boundary.

- Form: Rectangular plan, 1-2 storeys, southerly orientation encouraged, porches/extensions to have similar proportions to the house

- Gable, Roof Pitches & Roof Design Features: 45° is preferred, slate or artificial slate with blue/grey/black finish, box dormers not acceptable, chimney stacks to be located on gable walls.

- Walls: Window & door opening to have vertical emphasis, windows to be small and set back from the face of the wall.

- Boundaries:

- The layouts and building designs should contain a strong element of traditional or vernacular style features to complement the Castlehill buildings and include use of the Caithness flagstone.
- Shelly Hill is discouraged from development in the interest of safeguarding archaeology, agriculture and amenity, and essentially to maintain the separation between Castlehill and Castletown.

Developers should be prepared to tie in with restoration proposals for the Castlehill area, undertake necessary infrastructure improvements and servicing, provide landscaping and secure woodland management, footpaths and public access.

Planning Permissions

- Planning permission was granted in 1999 for the restoration and rebuilding of the Castlehill Steading to provide 16 houses

and 4 self-catering units on an area of 0.55 ha.

Business

Restoration of the former Castlehill Mill to include a mix of business, tourism and retail uses will be favoured. A feasibility study is considering the potential for a heritage centre, crafts/produce from Caithness outlets, low budget tourist accommodation, performance and community space.

- Potential in the Castlehill steadings for a restaurant in the former Pilot's House
- In the Castlehill House grounds stand alone developments or mixed use schemes will be favoured including: business/high technology industry, horticulture, tourist accommodation and residential units.
- The Traill Hall is considered to have potential as a heritage and visitor centre for the village

Industry

- There are potential for expansion for industrial use on the Norfrost land.
- The western section of the former Upper Castletown Quarry is considered for small business, light industrial and storage purposes.

Section 1 | Local Context

The Enquiry by Design Framework Plan and the Local Plan

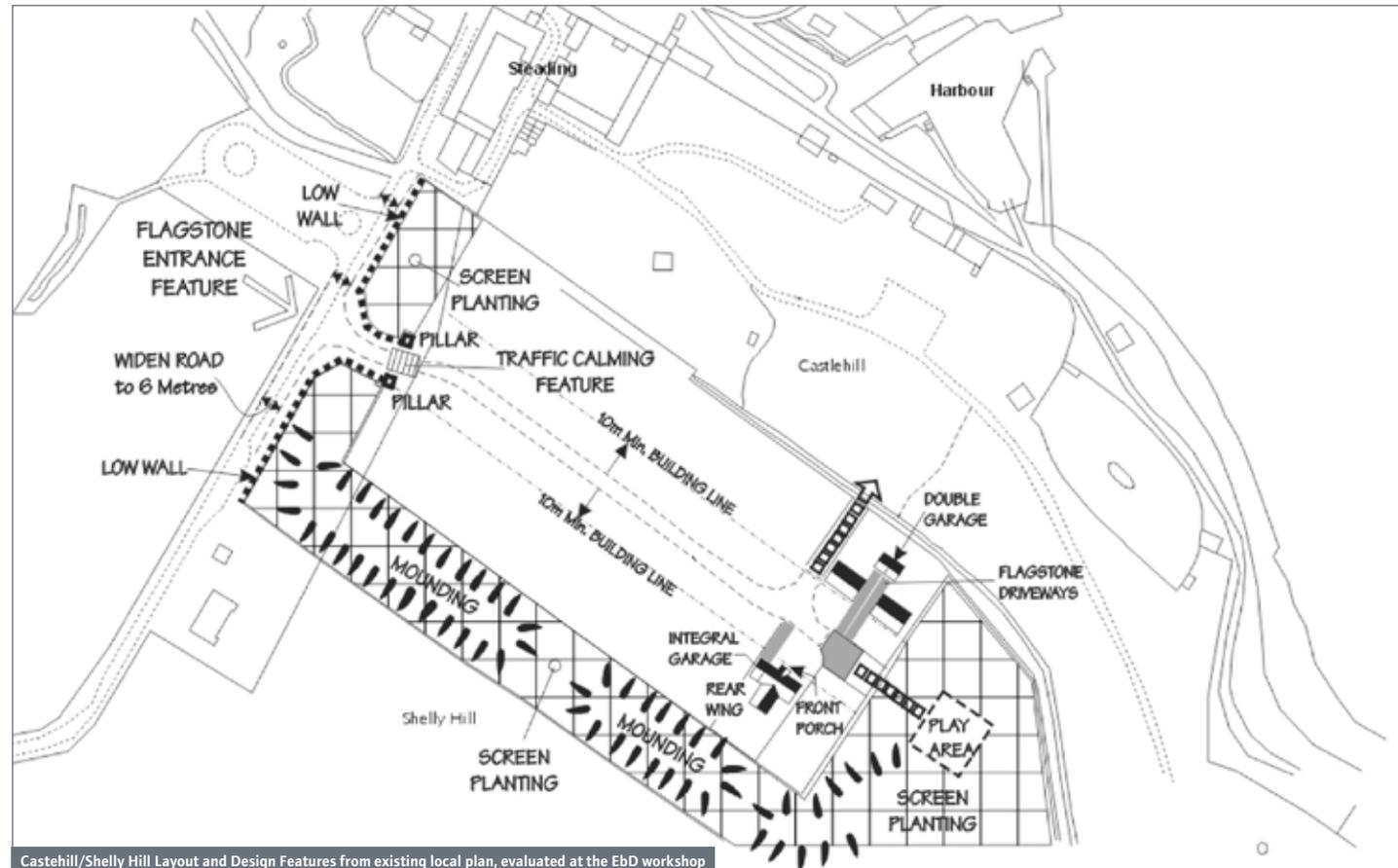
- Many of the issues, objectives and policies set out in the Local Plan accord closely with the findings of the Enquiry by Design workshop, such as recognising the potential of Castletown's existing assets, both natural and built heritage; also, that there are improvements needed within the village centre and the potential for infill development. The Local Plan, however, appears to suggest that the former Parish Church may be demolished for access to the land behind for housing in contradiction with provision calling for retention of heritage structures.
- The EbD workshop allowed the interests of various stakeholders in the village to be brought together under a unified vision to maximise the benefits to the village as a whole, underpinned by principles such as walkable proximity to the village centre, analysis of movement patterns and landscape considerations.
- One of the key design moves of the EbD masterplan vision was to propose the linking of development in and around Castlehill (already encompassed within the Local Plan) directly with new development immediately adjacent to the village centre on open land looking towards Castlehill (not currently indicated in the Local Plan). This essential tenet of the EbD proposal generated a key difference of emphasis over long-term proposals for growth. Whilst the EbD plan proposed a ribbon

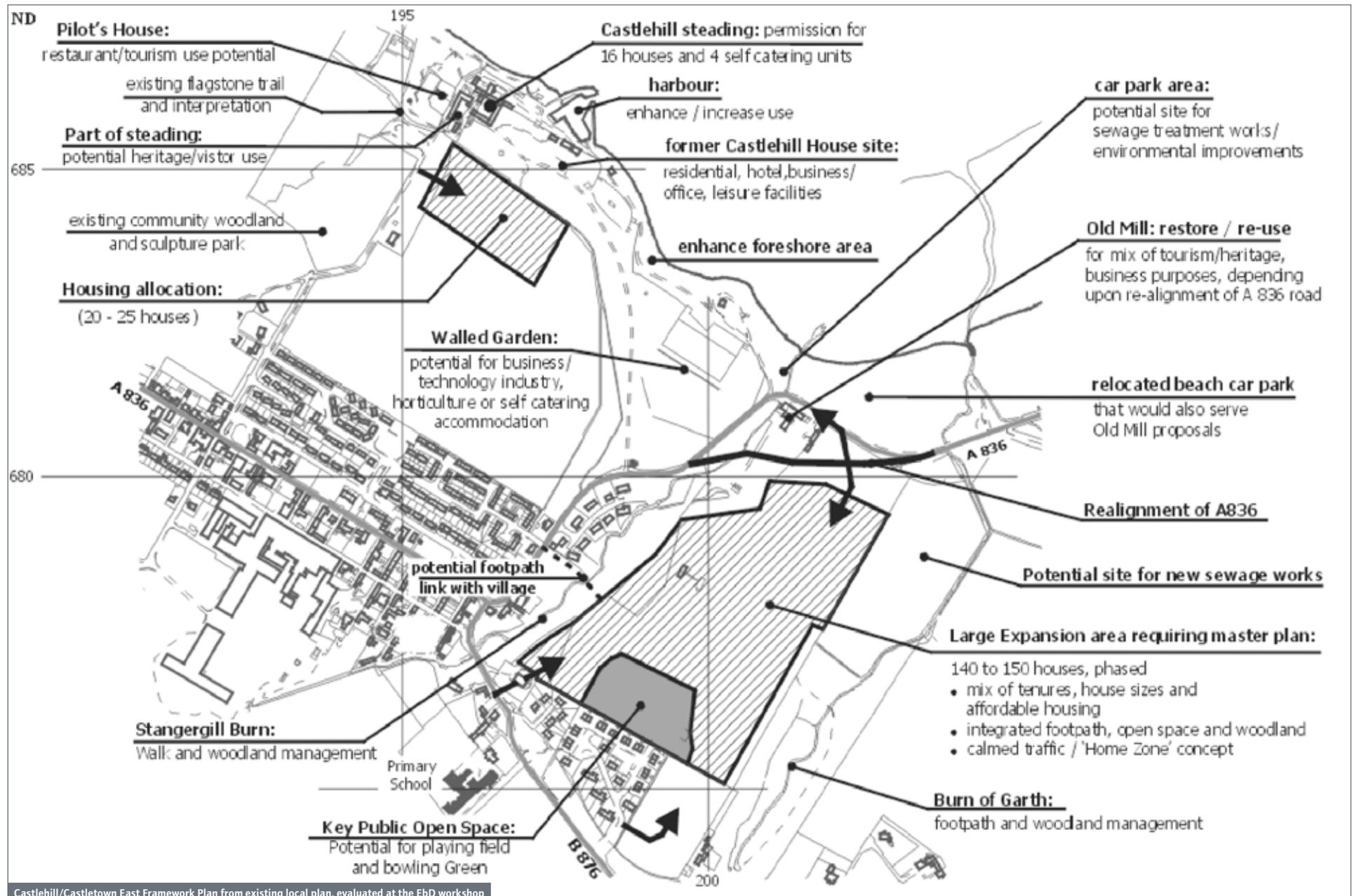
of development, linking the former Parish Church with the disused mill, there was consensus through the workshop that more substantial development of the land beyond Stangergill Burn over the next 15-20 years would be imbalanced, drawing benefit away from the village and causing substantial visual impact to the environmentally sensitive land to the east.

In addition, proposals for development in the woodland in Stangergill Burn was felt to be incompatible with the local plan and undesirable from an ecological standpoint.

- It was therefore the conclusion of the Enquiry by Design workshop that over the longer term, emphasis should be given to development between Castlehill and

Castletown to maximise the benefit to the established village and its services, as well as bringing Castlehill back into the lifeblood of the village.





Castlehill/Castletown East Framework Plan from existing local plan, evaluated at the EbD workshop

Section 2

Masterplan Evaluation

Preliminary Plans

Several preliminary design exercises explored town structure, walkable neighbourhoods and connectivity prior to the final masterplan.

Walkable neighbourhoods are a core ingredient of villages, towns and cities and the first part of masterplanning always includes drawing up a structuring plan of the area, including walkable neighbourhoods, which means that many daily needs should be supplied within a five-minute walk. Preliminary plans also include exploring new physical links, both vehicular and pedestrianised, and making sure that the site is well-connected.

Option A

1. A common theme in all the preliminary plans was the new connection between town and harbour in the form of a green corridor, as it was recognised that the harbour and the former quarry works were a disconnected part of Castletown.
2. The main idea in option A was to extend the High Street eastwards.
3. In addition to the extension it was proposed to deviate the entry road into Castletown via a

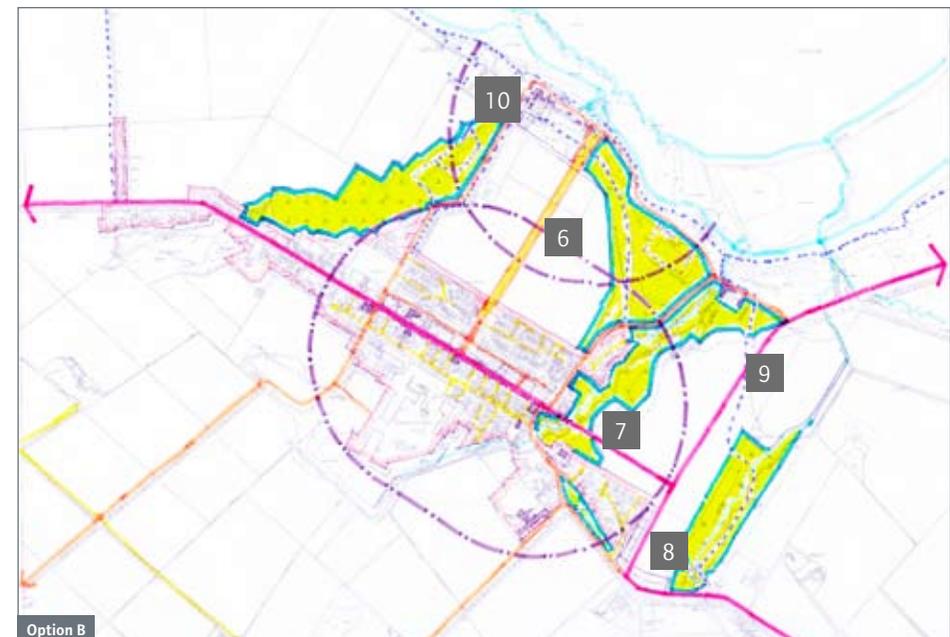
hard northerly bend through the burns.

4. The option also proposed a new road connecting the new extended High Street with the John O' Groats approach, east of the wasteland and the old mill.
5. The opportunity to associate all new development with the existing heritage buildings.

The benefits of cutting through the burns due to the deviation of the entry road and the necessity of road construction with the proposed road from the John O'Groats approach were considered to be minor and would not justify the construction cost and the sacrifice of the existing burn.

Option B

6. The common theme of connecting the existing town with the harbour.
7. The extended High Street is still prominent as in option A.

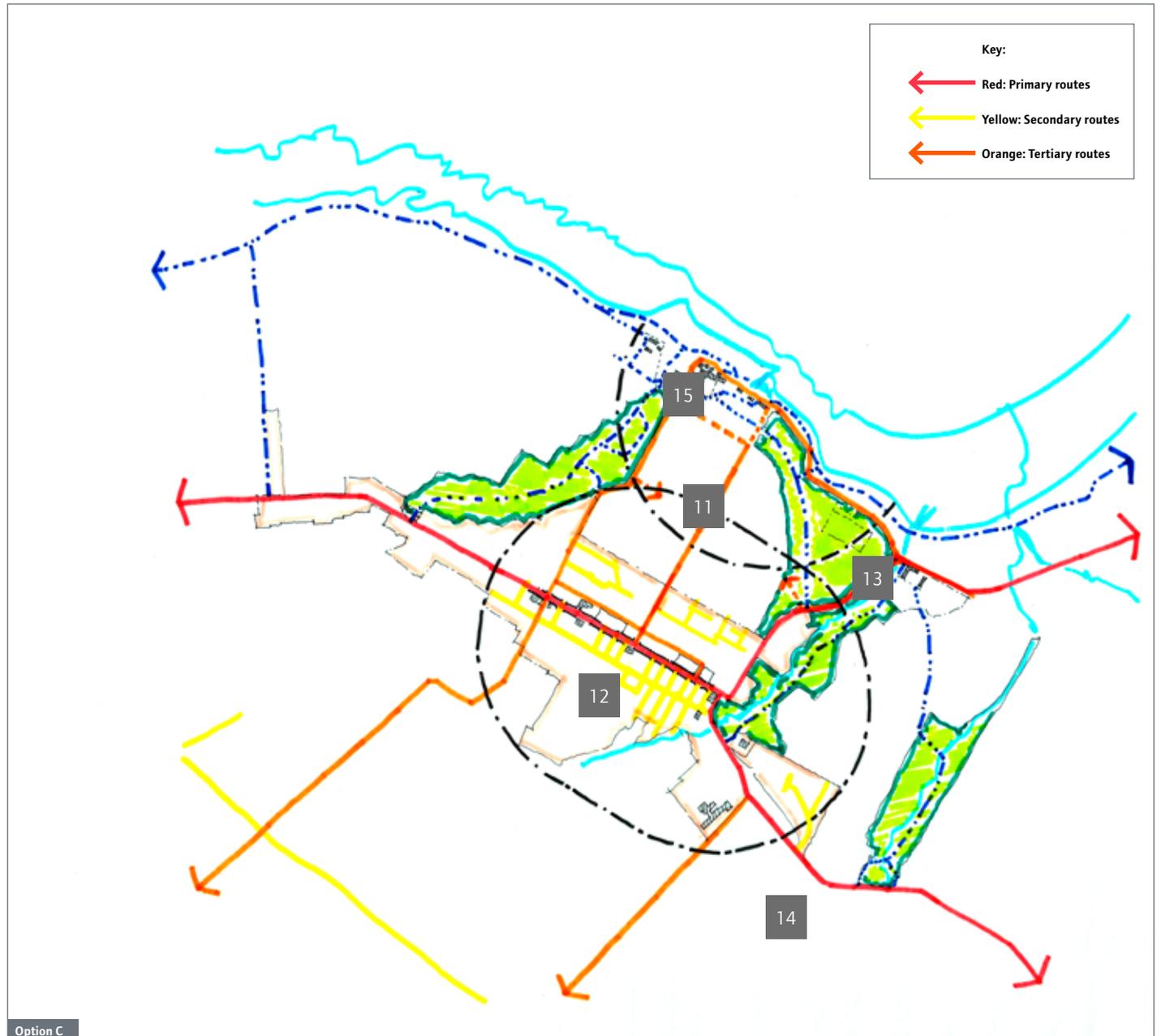


8. The idea of deviating the entry road into Castletown also exists, however, in this option the new road makes a sharp right turn just after the burn, as the ecological quality associated with the burn was recognised.
9. The new road connection from the John O' Groats approach is connected to the entry road into Castletown after the burn.
10. The opportunity to associate all new development with the existing heritage buildings.

As in Option A the benefits of extending the High Street eastwards were considered to be minor and the necessity of road construction with the proposed road east of the burn connected to the John O'Groats approach could not be justified.

Option C

11. The common theme of connecting the existing town with the harbour.
12. In Option C the High Street keeps its existing length.
13. The proposal for a new road connection from the John O'Groats approach has been dropped and the idea is now only to improve the mill junction.
14. It was decided to keep the existing entry road passing by the school as it was believed to have a natural traffic calming effect causing people to drive more rationally through town.
15. The opportunity to associate all new development with the existing heritage buildings.



Option C

Final Masterplan

The Enquiry by Design Masterplan for Castletown was designed to provide a place where people would like to live, work and shop and to breathe new life into the rich and diverse built heritage and in turn aim at improving tourism prospects in the area.

It does this by taking the following into account:

1. Residents in Castletown commented that currently there are very poor public transport facilities, therefore people are used to walking and would consider a seven minute walkable neighbourhood rather than just five minutes. Therefore the main shopping facilities are, as existing, focused around the High Street. New units have been proposed, many will be allocated on the gable ends of the "backies" where they originally were. Some of the infill sites, aligned with the High Street, will have allocated housing including affordable and accommodation for the elderly.
2. The green corridor linking the centre of Castletown to the harbour is the initial idea. The connection takes the form of a green landscaped boulevard for pedestrian, cyclists and vehicles. The importance of connecting Castletown to Castlehill is to link the two parts of town physically but also to reinforce the social cohesion of the communities. The pedestrian and cycle

link continues to the harbour where as the vehicle link turns just before the new development on Castlehill.

3. The new development around the new green connection linking harbour and town will take precedence in the existing gridded neighbourhood which can be found on the south eastern part of Castletown.
4. The existing quarry buildings close to the harbor are taken into account and are a part of new proposed blocks, made up of smaller courtyard styles blocks to house mixed use and tourist linked facilities.
5. Existing woodland has been respected and taken into consideration in connection with new development. They will all be optimised in terms of access for both pedestrians and cyclists.
6. Existing pedestrian paths will be optimised in terms of access and surface material.
7. The harbour and the existing buildings should be used as an anchor in the

development and should have uses closely related to the existing town and its residents. These new uses must be appropriate to the special historic character of the buildings. Most ideas contained a new hotel allocated on the existing grounds of the former Castlehill House or in the near vicinity. Castlehill Steadings possess another great opportunity to celebrate the flagstone history of the area. A Heritage Centre is underway situated in the already refurbished buildings and the surrounding buildings could provide the opportunity for potential employment as well as residential space and a restaurant.

8. There are also potential regeneration opportunities for the Castlehill walled garden, including its original purpose and by incorporating conference facilities in any new built.
9. The old mill has enormous development potential with possible uses anticipated to include residential use, retail space and a restaurant. The John O' Groats approach to town includes the upgrading of the Mill junction and a proposal for a new road linking to the church as one enters Castletown. It was felt to be important that the junction near the old mill be managed properly.
10. The new road by the old mill connecting down to the church consists of more detached development and smaller blocks and courtyards.
11. The church could be preserved and regenerated. It is a substantial building

of quality that could potentially support a number of beneficial uses as a key gateway site to the town.

12. New detached housing has been proposed along the entry road into Castletown to give the town a proper gateway.

Key:

- Existing
- Proposed
- Heritage



Detail - Harbour Options Masterplan

The Harbour

Several options were discussed for the harbour site; the former site of the Castlehill House.

Option A

Option A maintains the footprint of the former Castlehill House and proposed a more formal and extravagant building composition with a formal garden at the front and two side wings. A hotel is proposed in the main buildings with the use of the kitchen garden as a resource for growing fruit and vegetables and a restaurant in the vaulted cellar. The side wings form the walls around a courtyard facing the harbour.

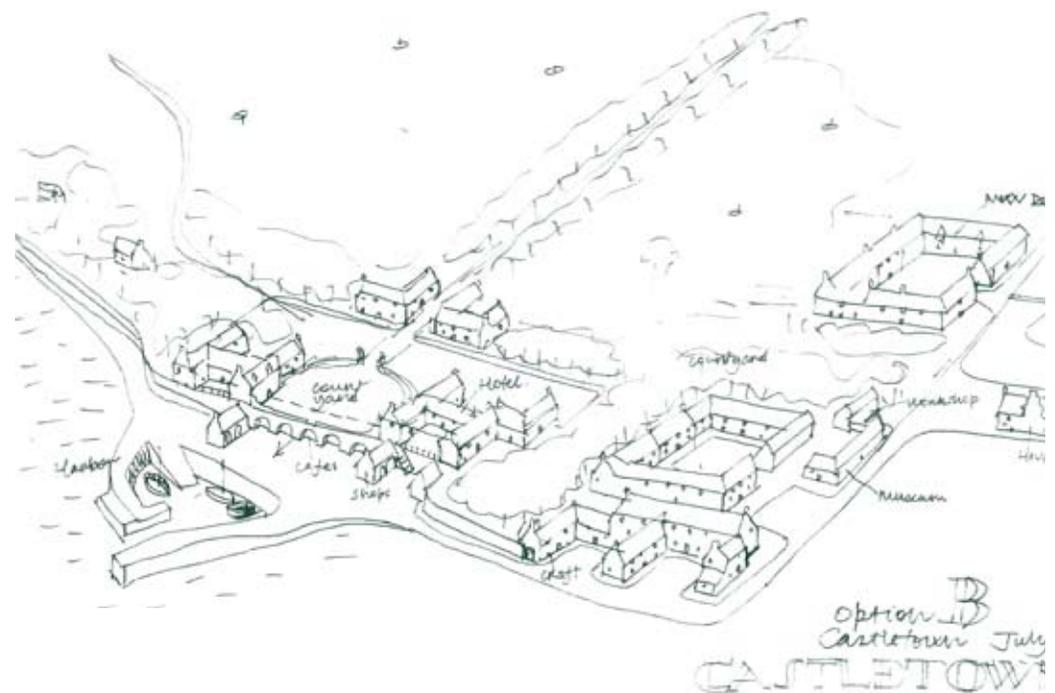
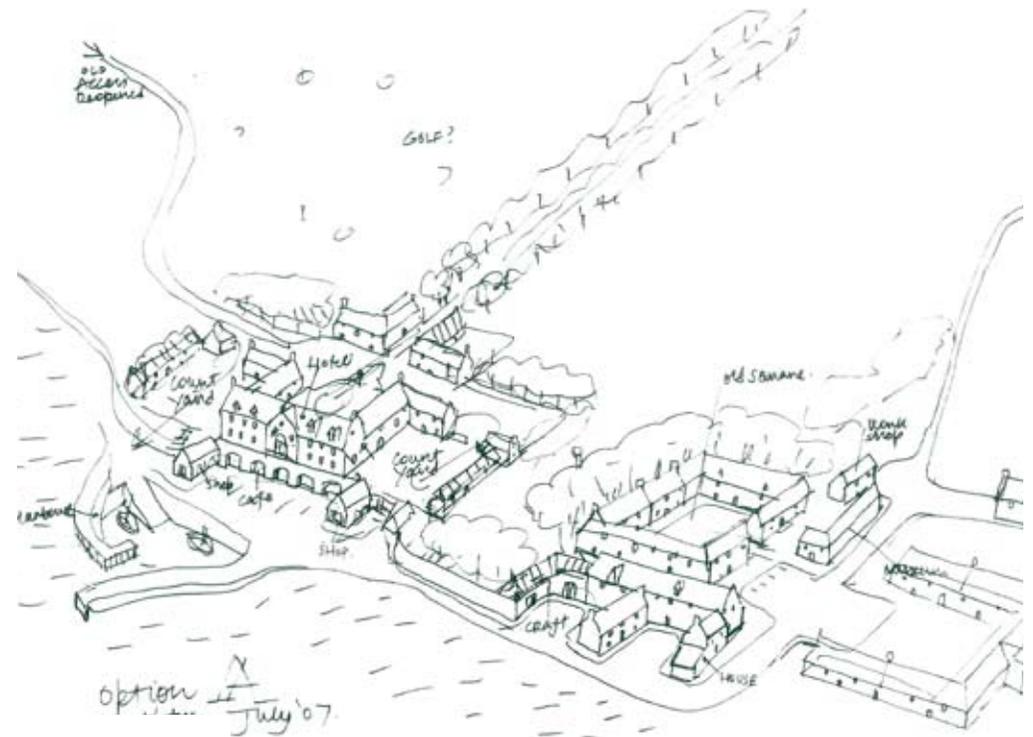
Option B

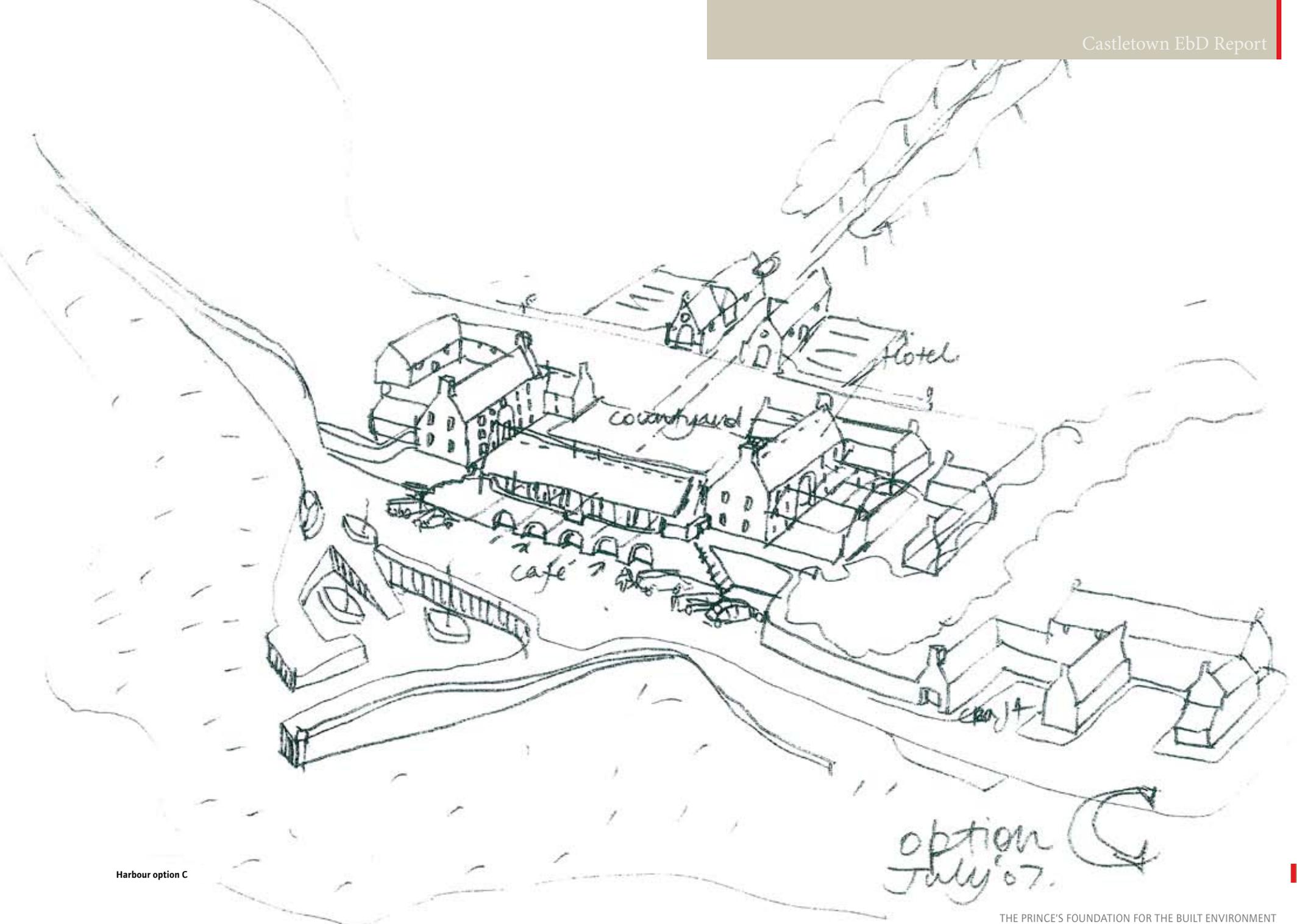
Option B maintains the view from the village down to the harbour and buildings are proposed at each side of the former Castlehill House site with a courtyard in between. In this option it is proposed to split the hotel into the two smaller courtyard buildings. The former cellar of the house is still proposed as a restaurant/cafe'.

Option C

Option C proposed something in between Option A and B with lower buildings on the former Castlehill site to maintain the views from the village, wings to each side, forming edges to two courtyards and the vaulted cellar for restaurant/cafe' uses.

Other options include a B&B style hostel at the harbour at the back of the complex near beautifully restored shops and café, the use of the harbour heritage buildings as sports/surfers hostel and golf clubhouse and the suggestion of a community area on part of the land between Castlehill and the village for growing fruit and vegetables.





option
July '07.

Harbour option C

Detail - The Mill Masterplan

The Mill

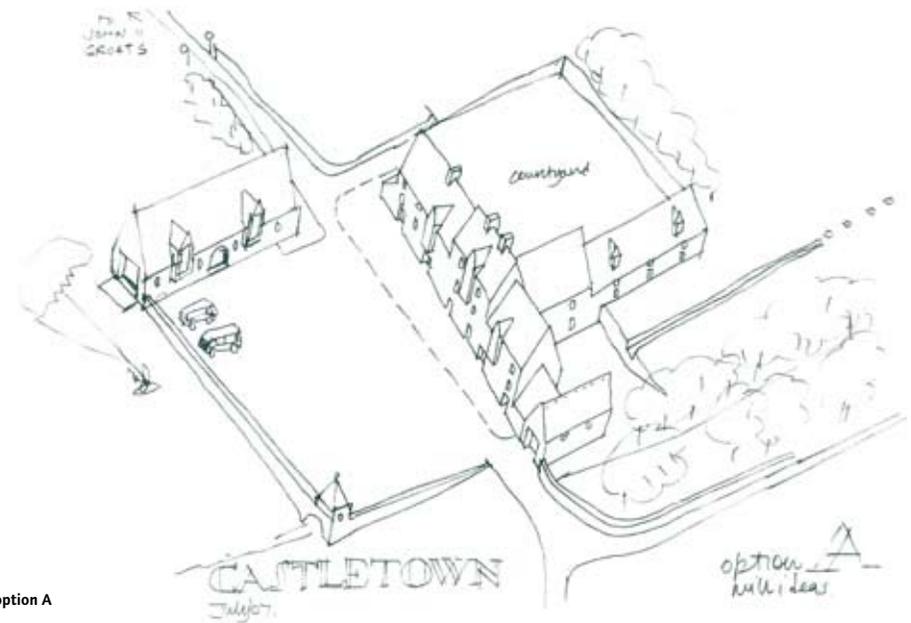
Of heritage importance and in need of restoration is the Castletown Mill, listing category B, which is seen to be an important landmark and gateway into the village.

Option A

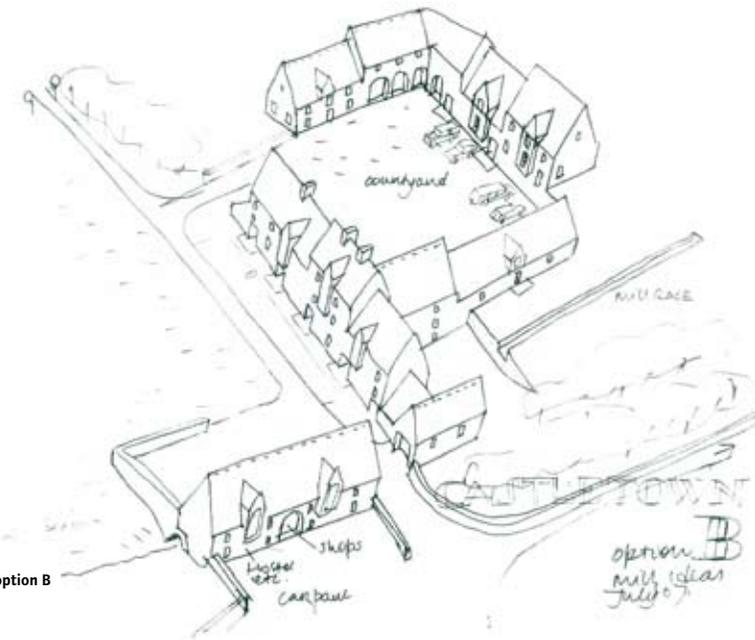
Option A proposes restoration of the existing buildings of the mill complex. A new car park with an additional building is proposed at the front of the mill which could be linked to it, including retail space, residential units and a restaurant as well as serving the new tourist linked activities in connection with the beach and the re-use of the former Quarry buildings and the harbour.

Option B

Option B offers a more built-up version with the existing buildings as well as new proposed buildings edged around an inner courtyard with car parking. An additional car park is moved further west, closer to the harbour than in option A, and proposes likewise new buildings containing shops and other facilities linking to the tourist trade.



Mill option A



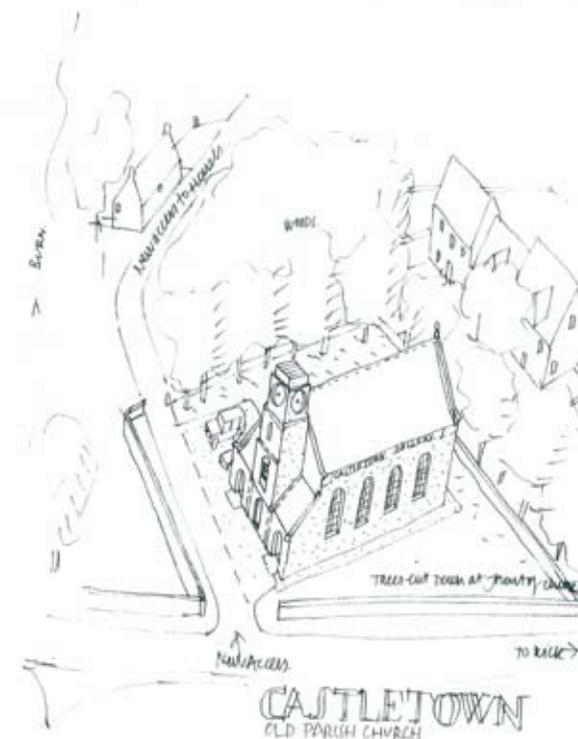
Mill option B

Detail - The Church Masterplan

The Church

The parish church is a key landmark building, allocated at the South eastern entry point to Castletown.

The Parish Church is of some heritage importance and should not be demolished as proposed, but retained and refurbished, subject to the identification of a viable and sustainable re-use that will be of benefit to the community.



Proposal for the refurbishment of the old Parish Church

Detail -Main Street and Traill Street Improvements plan Masterplan

The High Street

Castletown needs to 'capture' passing trade by slowing traffic, easing parking and improving the quality of the public realm at key points along the main road.

It does this by taking the following into account:

1. *Some of the shops are currently hard to access from Main Street, so improved access to Traill Street and Castlehill Place will improve trade. More shops are also proposed for the High Street to create enough shopping facilities for the catchment population of Castletown. It is believed that there used to be up to 30 shops along the High Street and that they were allocated at the gable end of the terraced houses in the gridded end of Castletown.*
2. *The High Street could be further regenerated by developing the war memorial area and the possible location of a café to take advantage of a viewpoint to the harbour.*
3. *It is proposed to build more housing and accommodation for the elderly on the infill sites along the High Street as well as mixed facilities for young and elderly people in the centre of town.*
4. *The existing car park is to be turned into an urban square to create a market square for the town by a change in paving materials, street furniture and additional lighting.*



Existing conditions



Proposed new town square

Key:

- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Buildings
- Surfaces: Public Realm Improvements



Main Street & Traill Street improvements

Heritage & Regeneration

Key Issues

Castletown has a rich heritage including historic street patterns, significant heritage buildings, a traditional housing stock which includes a variety of distinctive features such as roofing, chimneys and walls as well as the use of local building materials. These should be properly conserved and any new developments could be appropriate in terms of materials, scale and detail and should draw inspiration from the historic character of the existing buildings. Heritage can make a major contribution to the regeneration of the village.

Within the village there are buildings of distinctive historic and local character including the St. Clair Hotel, the Drill Hall, the former Co-op, the council houses by the square and the "backies". There are many buildings with significant heritage importance such as the Traill Hall, the harbour buildings, the old mill, the Pilot's House, Castlehill Steadings, the old Parish Church, the backies and the old windmill. The Prince's Regeneration Trust led a heritage group which identified a number of key buildings and conservation related issues that could contribute positively to the regeneration of the town.

Following on from the Enquiry by Design, The Prince's Regeneration Trust will seek the support of the Local Authority, the community and other key stakeholders to:

- Improve the quality and condition of the heritage buildings which might include supporting the Local Authority should it require to use its enforcement powers, although economic investment will be the key driver to bring about improvement
- Explore options to protect and re-use the Parish Church
- Seek to ensure that any new development is appropriate and sympathetic to the existing historic building stock
- Establish a building preservation trust (BPT)



The "Backies"

- and/or work with existing BPT's to find new and sustainable uses for some of the heritage buildings at risk in the town
- Explore the potential for the designation of a Conservation Area, pre-empted by a Conservation Area Appraisal which could actively involve members of the local community



Proposal for Castlehill Mill



Proposal for harbour and steadings

- Promote the conservation of "the backies"
- With The Prince's Foundation, open to discussions with the owner of the Mill about developing proposals for its conservation and re-use, accepting that some enabling development will be required on the adjoining land
- Undertake further work to bring about the successful regeneration of the harbour and Steadings

In addition, The Prince's Regeneration Trust will work with The North Highland Initiative to explore opportunities that the Built Environment phase of the Initiative can offer for the historic buildings of Castletown and the wider area.

In particular, there appeared to be several conservation and regeneration opportunities for the buildings in the village including the Traill Hall, Castletown Mill, the old Parish Church, the Harbour and Castlehill Steadings and the Castlehill House Site.

Of key importance and believed to be the



Castletown parish church

first in line for immediate attention was the Castletown Mill. Due to its location it was seen to be an important landmark and gateway into the village.

It is a building of a large scale, in poor condition, which has become noticeably more dilapidated since the team's last visit this year. The old mill has enormous development potential with possible uses anticipated to include residential use, retail space and a restaurant.

The other key area in need of regeneration offering a lot of potential is the Castlehill Steadings and harbour. It is clear that the flagstone history of the area should be celebrated as this is unique to the area.

The Heritage Centre is already underway offering a museum and craft workshop and will create a new focus and attraction for tourists.

The surrounding buildings could provide the opportunity for potential employment as well as residential space and a restaurant. Further ideas for the buildings include a sailing/surfer visitor attraction, a possible café-bar or studios in the Castlehill House vaults. There are also potential regeneration opportunities for the Castlehill walled garden.

The Parish Church is also a key landmark building which should not be demolished as proposed but retained and refurbished for new community based purposes.

The Traill Hall building is important for the survival of the community and The Prince's Regeneration Trust supports the current proposals to explore its conservation and re-use for various community purposes.

Following on from the Enquiry by Design, The

Prince's Regeneration Trust is looking at the following:

- *A Conservation Area to cover the Backies, Parish Church, Traill Hall and School sites.*
- *A Design Guide to ensure that all new developments and alterations to existing heritage buildings are appropriate.*
- *Establishing a Regeneration Trust to lead a project to conserve and regenerate the Parish Church for community uses, including employment, and exploring options with the North Highland Initiative. This building is favoured because it is in Council ownership and subject to it developing feasible proposals, it can be transferred to the new Trust.*
- *Opening discussions with the owner of the Mill about developing proposals to conserve and re-use it, accepting that some enabling development will be required on the adjoining land.*
- *In view of their deteriorating condition some of the heritage buildings require surveying and stabilisation as a matter of urgency.*
- *Commence studies of options at the harbour and steadings.*



Castletown Mill



The Traill Hall

Landuse

Key Issues

The Enquiry by Design masterplan recognises the importance of catering for a mix of uses, so that Castletown will not only be a place to live, but also a desired place to shop, work and to visit tourist attractions.

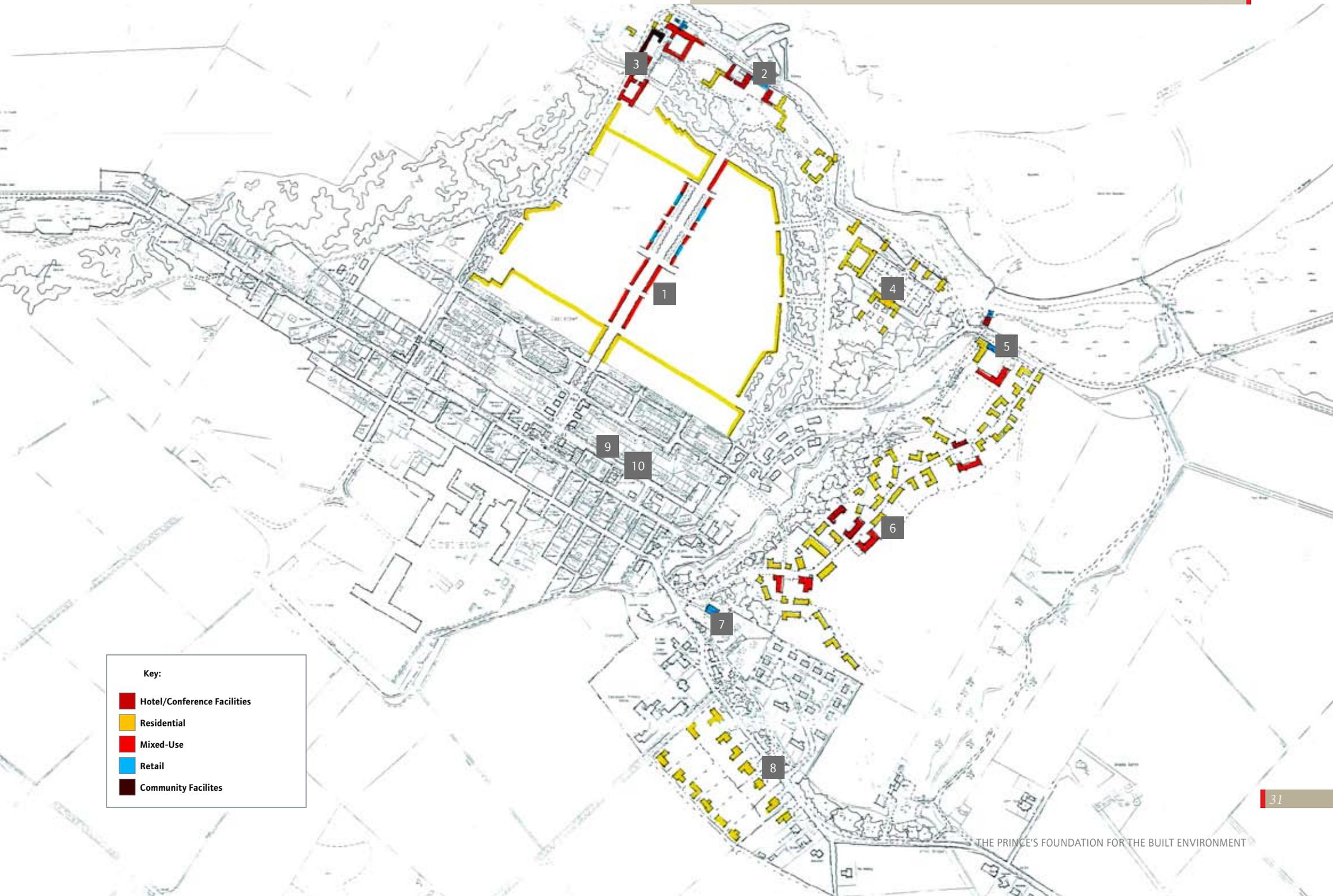
To do this, the existing town and the new development need to have a broad range of daily activities alongside good quality appropriate housing and the right distribution of uses within its different areas and within walking distance from community facilities. It should provide a range of housing types and sizes, accommodating affordable housing through pepper potting rather than in monocultural disconnected estates.

It does this by including the following:

1. *Buildings along green corridor: mixed use including retail, commercial and residential units.*
2. *Possible new hotel on former Castlehill House site including residential units.*
3. *Steadings to include potential employment, residential units, restaurant and community facilities. Further ideas include a sailing/surfer visitor attraction, a possible café-bar or studios in the Castlehill House vaults.*
4. *Residential units with the possibility of regenerating the walled garden for vegetable growing.*
5. *The old mill with residential, retail and possible hotel/conference facilities.*
6. *New development to include both residential and mixed use units.*
7. *The church to be refurbished for community based purposes.*
8. *New residential detached housing.*
9. *Mixed facilities for young and elderly people on infill sites along High Street.*
10. *Additional range of housing.*



The site between existing Castletown and the harbour suggested for development



Key:

- Hotel/Conference Facilities
- Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Retail
- Community Facilities

Landscape & Ecology

Key Issues

For purposes of the report, human ecology is brought under the larger ecological rubric. All systems to be functionally of mixed use.



The forrest corridor

Stream Corridors

1. *The Stangerhill Burn corridor: The whole corridor is of great scenic and hydrological ecological value, and must be cobbled together legally as permanent Preserve.*
2. *The Millhill Bridge area: The whole area by the road is to be further developed as the head of a linear park. The existing dams are to be modified or repaired with properly graduated "key" openings, so to regulate the flow of retention, and all other historic infrastructure is to be carefully preserved. Judicious and minimal clearing is recommended, but just beside the road.*
3. *The forest corridor: This whole area, along with a new suspension bridge, is ideal as an informal recreation zone for 10-16 year olds: as a protection to the natural systems, the paths through the woods are to be paved, narrow but cyclable, with added pedestrian branches that go down to the natural canopies created by trees along the stream. The cross-drainage grain of the paths is to be made robust by either following the scenic (military) crest or plunging though the topographic contours, if necessary with steps. A stepping stone bridge, or a suspension bridge, is recommended further up, within the woods.*
4. *The water treatment field: The Stangergill Burn preservation corridor continues north of the forest along the edge of an active ditch/marshy field with naturally dammed borders. The hydrological function of this field as a natural flood overflow area should be reinforced, with the northern edge banked as a detention zone.*
5. *Marsh treatment: The centre of the field should be developed as tertiary water treatment area of the planned sewage plant. As the Burn flows out to the highly sensitive beach area, this marsh should be designed as a fallback regulator for any irregularities in the sewage plant. To this purpose, the low central part of the field is to be dug out so that the main channels bend tightly along the contours. Rush is recommended as the cleansing/fixing agent and a diversion damn is necessary to maintain minimal water flow. The rest of the field can be reserved, as the current wet sheep meadow with cyclable paths following the high edges. These edges are to be fenced and kept "rough" with weeds, yet seeded to form hydric forest corridors. The fences should not be renewed once this is accomplished, though low edge walls may be substituted.*
6. *The hillock: Along the eastern path, a nearby grove on a tiny hillock (on the east) should to be included in the preservation zone, with the water treatment located nearby. The approach will be by extended a scenically narrow country lane. Adding a small informal parking lot and a rain shelter along the edge of the view from the hillock is recommended; this will require a small plan. There should be no separate access road to the future treatment plant.*
7. *The dune preserve: Bridges and connections are to be repaired for continued access to the beach, with dune field access developed to prevent all erosion from footpaths. The low areas behind the dune field are currently preserved, yet further Scenic*



20

18

19

17

23

16

25

24

15

4

12

7

22

21

5

14

11

13

10

8

9

Castletown

6

1

3

2

Section 2 | EbD Outcome

Corridor restrictions along the entire visual watershed are necessary to keep inappropriate forest types and buildings at bay. The building restrictions require the development of vernacular code (Transect Zone 2) parameters.

New Urban Edges

All urban extensions need a reinforcement of current patterns of connectivity and recreation so as to concentrate use and minimise impact. They

also need con-comitant development of the current pattern of water transport, cleaning and filtration. Both are systems to be structured on current patterns and executed in a robust, sustainable and vernacular (regional) fashion. The water and connectivity systems should always be interlinked.

8. *The Burn of Garth Corridor: The whole length of the Garth floodplain is to be legally zoned for preservation. All further buildings and artifacts along its edge are to be designated*



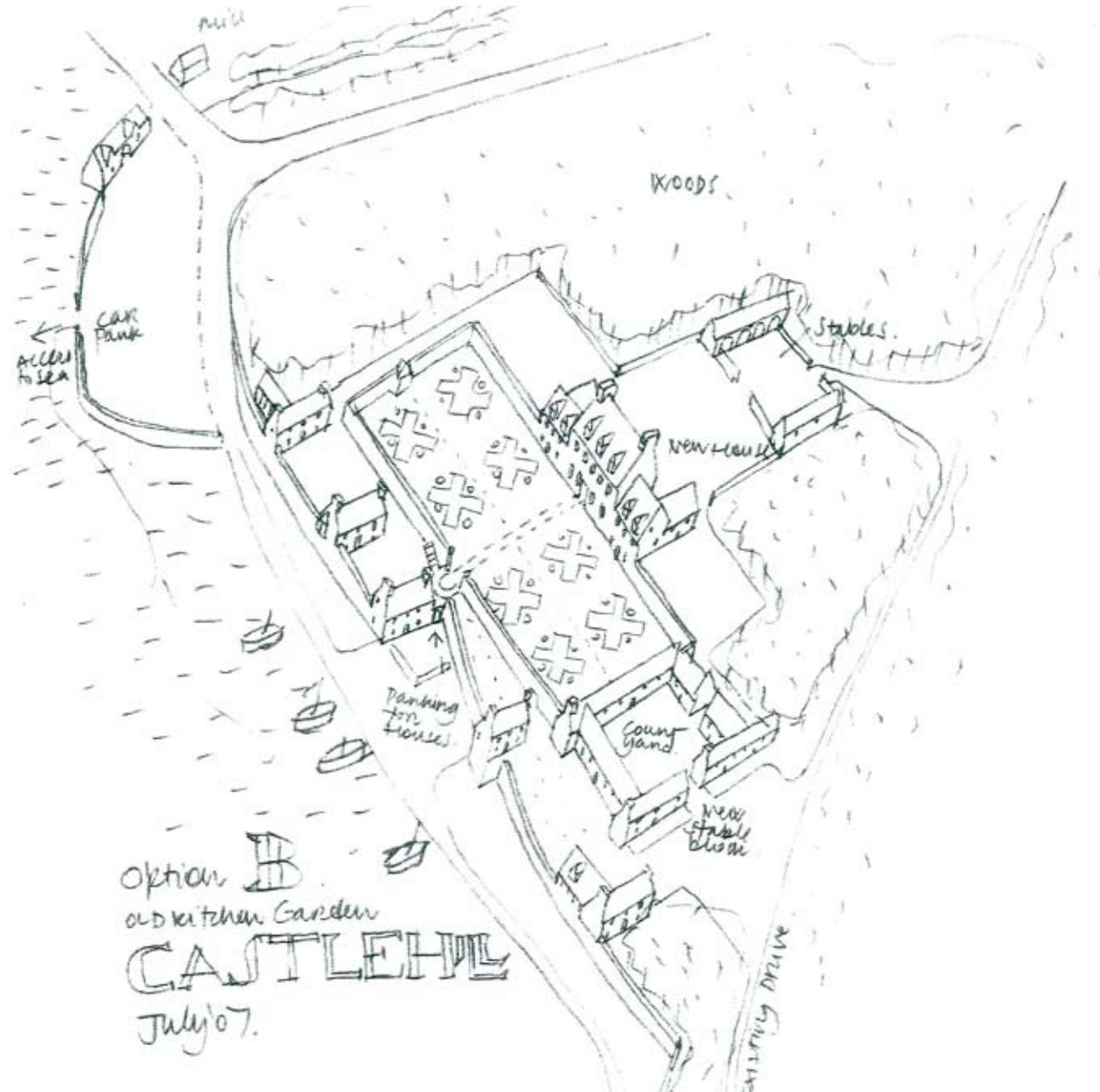
The existing field for the mill development proposal



Castle Drive

as part of its Scenic Corridor, with the adjacent road designated as a Scenic Drive. Portions of its sidewalks need to be widened and parts of its traditional stone footwalls need repair.

9. Pathways: The current trace of a path across to the new development to the east is to be reinforced as a vital connection between the new urban developments. Its crossing point should be over the current utilities pipe. The piers that cross the burn should also be refurbished as a detention system to mitigate future flooding. Any concrete fibres should be reinforced (without steel) and clad by stone or flagstone.
10. The Mill development: New development beside the mill will be low density and with low impact, and the new road edged with very shallow swales. Walled perimeters and tree planting will be required for this development but legal covenants shall be made to eliminate or limit fertilized areas of turf. Bringing the adjacent field adjacent to the urban edge under organic certification is necessary, though something as simple as pasture is recommended. The traces of peripheral paths along all the edging woods must be paved.
11. The Mill: The preservation of the grain mill is to include partial reconstruction of its waterworks. These are particularly suited as a SUDS, since the difference in levels can be exploited as a flowing oxygenating course that leads to a still marsh that cleans the mill's drainage water just before it joins the sensitive beach. Building an adjoining stone terrace is recommended.





Historic ditches as drainage

12. *The Shore Node: This area is part of an important scenic node that includes an important prospect at the end of the road; access to the shore from the general area, and the beach spillway of Garth Burn. The current parking lot is to be further hidden behind the dune. A landscape plan is needed that develops it: it is best to conceptualize the objective as providing access, shelter and sociable space for surfers, as this function also covers all other uses. A stone fire pit is also recommended, and the informal damming of the adjacent stream is to be made permanent as part of pedestrian-permeable spillway. Only thick local flagstone should be allowed for this placement.*

Castletown Extension Woods

13. *The eastern pathway: The current path to the west of the road is to be developed as an important forest promenade that skirts the future extension. Future connections are to be made to walks that prolong the streets of the new urban extension. The path must bridge and reinforce the boggy zone, which is to be enhanced and connected to the ditch at the base of the slope.*
14. *Castlehill drive: The gate and gatehouse are to be preserved, with the castlehill drive paved to connect with the kitchen garden, the new development, and the street framework of the extension.*
15. *The kitchen garden: Adjacent to a new formal development, the old kitchen garden is to be restored as a public demonstration garden. Trees and paths are to articulate the vegetable ornamental, and gardens such*

of the era of Villandry may be taken as an inspiring precedent for the combination of vegetables and form a path. The front drying area is to be developed as a terrace overlooking the coastline and beach. Stairs, inside and outside, will be needed.

16. *Southern woodland: The walls and the areas of open woodland are to be mapped previous to any development in support of the new development, which will require adjacencies, parking, etc. These are to connect to the shoreline drive be connected in a triangular intersection to the east of the harbour where the drive bends inland. A further lane is to connect through the quarry buildings. The woodland to the west of the new development has a strong and coherent character that must be mapped and protected.*
17. *Drainage: Conventional SUDS are to be avoided, as there currently exists a series of historic ditches at the base of the slope that are perfectly positioned as interception and filtration ditches for the future development. Future street drainage flows in the extension should be kept on the surface, with channel drainage points brought into these ditches for sheeting infiltration. The old hedging material adjoining the ditches is wonderful and must remain undisturbed, with the adjacent informal paths reinforced and provided with small footbridges. Further drainage from the new development will require some processing further down the slope, but conveying these to a very shallow swale adjoining the coast road should be considered.*

18. *The shoreline drive: The road along the shoreline requires a Scenic Corridor designation to preserve its current character. The road itself must not be widened or altered, even after development, though sensitive interventions in segments should preserve the continuity of very shallow swales is advised.*
19. *Castlehill: The harbour is to be kept intact as preservation, with the few modifications necessary for the use of boats. No parking lots shall be permitted in the open, but only informal parking on currently paved areas. The bulk of the parking to the new development must be hidden behind the wall, with access via new connecting lanes east and west of the historic area. Paths to and from the new development will become necessary through breaks in the wall and these should be gated with natural stone or wooden beams.*
20. *Shoreline drive extension: The most important objective in the potential recreational development implied by the market for the extension must be the securing of the existing lane stretching along the shore west of the reconstructed quarry buildings. This shoreline drive must be paved as a single multi-use lane with the preferred focus on bicycle movement. This lane shall be extended westward along the coast, opening up a beautiful landscape all the way to the historic node of the next cove. The new route will provide a better scenic alternative to the bicycle lane planned along the main road though the larger portion of this extension must be secured as a public concession by private property owners and must be protected as a Rural Scenic Corridor with a viewshed that extends up the currently unspoiled slope up to the main road.*
21. *Western Road: As the extension develops, a parallel pavement with a planting strip will become necessary along the road that borders its planned western fringe. Large urban trees such as Planes are recommended, as they will act as a final windbreak to the projected urbanisation of the extension. The recommended intersection of this road into the extension shall be a "Y" at the bend.*
22. *The quarry park: The tradition of great Scottish shelterbelts should be maintained, and the edge of the mixed woodland of the park needs to be further reinforced. Inter-planting the existing edge landscape with overlapping copses of large native deciduous trees is recommended, as it outlines their architecture picturesquely with occasional evergreens. Planted young, these copses will provide protection for the formal tree line along the road, with both tree groups maturing by the time the extension is built. The interior of the park would also benefit from the creation of a sequence of varied play spaces, especially as it nears the town. Small groups of tree-sheltered benches with a clear view corridor to a variety of spaces attractive to different age groups is recommended since, in this context, they would add little to the current level of maintenance.*
23. *Quarry park extension: The quarry park should be eventually extended to the other side of the town, but only by manipulating the current landscape so that it maintains its sustainable low maintenance. Access and views should be secured, and a lane may be carried out to link with the back of the town.*
24. *The ropewalk: Rehabilitation of the historic ropewalk requires raising and flagging the current path. The new hardscape is to be carried level through the intersections that will be eventually traffic calmed. Drainage shall be to the sides of the new surface, which is super-elevated on a fibre concrete base. The space of Ropewalk corridor has been crowded by vegetation, and the current shrubbery must be pruned, especially for height. Inter-planting a new allee of trees outside the planted lines is recommended, and this urban landscape armature may be carried beyond to become part of the rehabilitation of the historic centre.*
25. *Castletown extension: The street armature through the new extension is in the report but the central axis shall be a tree lined avenue that will provide the all-important pedestrian connection between town and shore.*
26. *Castletown avenue: The new avenue should be thought of as a garden avenue that has been modified. A French allee of four lines is recommended, as this landscape artifact was one of the glories of historic Scottish improvement schemes. Four tree lines are recommended. A wide centre to delineate, secure and frame the view from Castletown, and this should be turf ed with a central path. The side bays shall harbour narrow lanes for circulation as well as parking. Prevailing winds dictate that it not be planted until houses are constructed along its western side and this constraint will naturally limit the length of the avenue to the slope. There is a variety of French precedents for this, and it is recommended that the circle on the slope that was utilized at St. Cloud is widened.*

Street Hierarchy

Key Issues

A street hierarchy for Castletown was developed during the Enquiry by Design.

The plan opposite illustrates the variety of streets and new connection.

1. *The main route through town is still the High Street, the John O'Groats road and the Wick approach.*
2. *A new main route is introduced as the green corridor linking existing Castletown to the harbour. This street will have the character of a wide and green boulevard with street trees where both pedestrians and cyclist are prioritised.*
3. *New secondary routes include the new north-south link east of the mill and the upgrading of the existing route through the woodland into Castlehill. An additional route, parallel to the route through the woodland might be introduced in a later phase to give access to the the new residential blocks facing the woodland.*
4. *A new pedestrian and cycle network makes Castletown an even more pedestrian friendly and well connected place which can take advantages of the already existing heritage trails and hereby help to attract more visitors into the centre of Castletown.*

Additional issues were discussed during the Enquiry by Design:

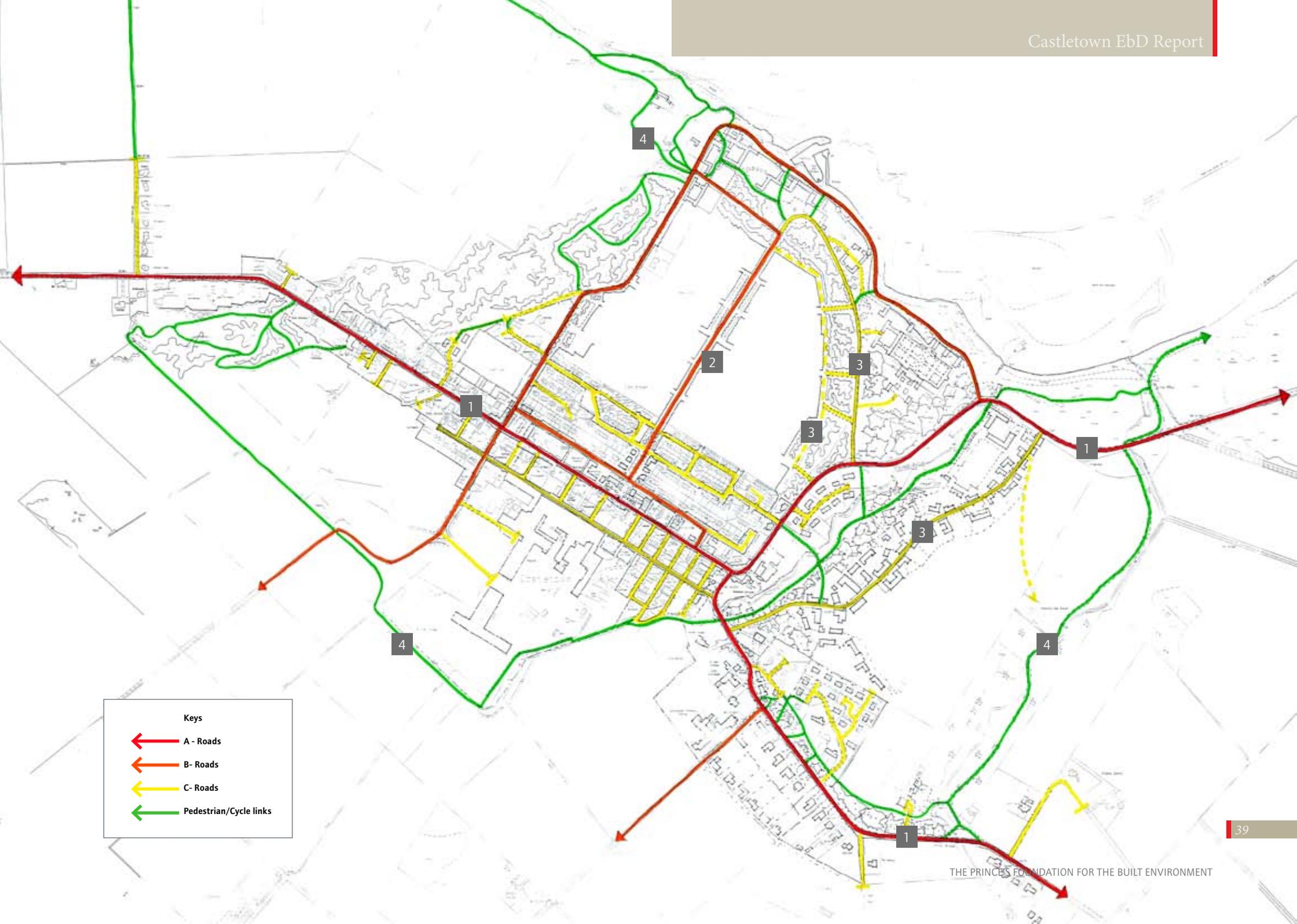
- *Access to public transport facilities is very poor in Castletown and a new bus link should be considered*
- *It was felt that there was a need for traffic calming elements along the high street and that wider pavements would benefit pedestrians.*
- *New pavement along harbour front and back into town.*



Traffic calming elements and wider pavements would benefit the High Street



Better pedestrian facilities along the harbour would make the area more accessible



Keys

-  A - Roads
-  B - Roads
-  C - Roads
-  Pedestrian/Cycle links

Masterplan Strategies

Affordability

- Meet Highland Council's affordable housing goal of 25 percent through a "pepper-potting" strategy, mixing market rate for sale housing, shared equity and rented accommodation
- Grow Castletown to provide housing for families and seniors
- Strategy of infill for senior and sheltered housing in walking distance to shops
- Provide a diverse range of house types and price levels: houses, semis and paired villas, terraces and courtyards and housing for single people.

Sustainability

- Protect woodland and riparian areas for recreation, amenity and water quality.
- Mixed use walkable development to lessen reliance on the automobile, and encourage physical activity and social cohesion.
- Investigate biomass Combined Heat and Power at the neighbourhood scale.
- Architecture, urbanism and landscape design that builds upon local traditions and materials, and integrates resource and energy efficiency.

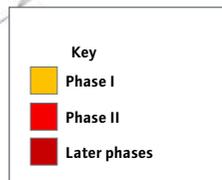
Phasing

Phase One (early success enables later ambitions to be realised):

- Castlehill Steadings and associated quality new build (OPA granted) 40-50 new houses, plus conversion reuse of steadings
- The Prince's Regeneration Trust will seek to prevent the demolition of the Old Parish Church and work with others so secure a viable re-use
- Main Street streetscape improvements, possible conservation area
- Completion of Heritage Society building, publication of Castletown green strategy and subregional assets brochure
- Linkage between Castletown and Castlehill
- Design guide for Main Street, could be associated with NHI Pattern Book
- Emergency stabilisation and detailed implementation plans for heritage properties with enabling development

Phase Two (concept development and planning begins immediately):

- Castletown Mill reuse as restaurant/retail and enabling mixed and residential development (development approval should be linked via required master plan to Mill project)
- Harbour development for visitors and water-based recreation, not yet included in local plan
- New mixed use development adjacent to Castletown, not yet included in local plan



Section 4

Next Steps

Since the Enquiry by Design, the Masterplan framework has undergone some minor modifications relating to development to the south of the Castlehill steadings in order to better respond to the topography; this has been achieved by an additional traverse route with the urban blocks re-orientated accordingly. The footpaths and green corridors still serve to improve connections between Castletown, Castlehill and the harbour.

Next Steps

The Prince's Foundation, The Prince's Regeneration Trust and colleagues from The North Highland Initiative will continue to work with the Castletown Heritage Society, Castletown Community Council, the Highland Council, landowners, developers, the wider community and other stakeholders, to help ensure that the vision established by the Enquiry by Design workshop is followed into reality.

The key next steps in implementing the masterplan vision and realising heritage opportunities are to:

- *Identify current planning applications and proposals, and work with developers on design development.*
- *Help with strategies to regenerate key heritage buildings and assets such as the former parish church, the mill, Castlehill steadings and associated buildings, "the backies", Castlehill estate and Traill Hall.*
- *Identify partners for the redevelopment of the village centre and for the production of an associated design guide.*
- *Liaise closely with the Highland Council Planning department on the long-term phasing strategy.*
- *Provide input into the Core Paths Planning process for Caithness and coordinate with tourism agencies to help deliver the sub-regional strategy.*
- *Seek sponsorship and funding partners to help fully implement the masterplan vision and support the regeneration of Castletown.*

The Enquiry by Design workshop marked the launch of the North Highland Initiative Built Environment Programme, the aim of which is to effect real change across the region. It is hoped that Castletown will become an exemplar of what can be achieved in both the sensitive reuse of heritage buildings and sustainable new development.

Key

- Existing
- Proposed
- Heritage



