

# 7. Site appraisal

7.1 A shift to more sustainable forms of development will require a wider approach, embracing global as well as local environmental concerns and a lifecycle approach to individual schemes. Prior to submission of any proposal for development it is important that the wider context of a site is examined in a site appraisal which identifies both the constraints and opportunities for sustainable development. The site appraisal should examine both the site and its surroundings and include an assessment of accessibility particularly public transport, walking and cycling.

7.2 In terms of this guidance Site Appraisal shall mean "assessing the site with a particular emphasis on those attributes that can lead to a successful sustainable scheme". A good site appraisal is likely to reduce problems and conflicts at later stages in the planning process, see Figure 7.1.

7.3 Key decisions can be made at this early stage that can guide the whole course of the development. For instance a decision might be made to

orientate the access roads in a housing scheme along an East-West axis to facilitate the buildings facing south and therefore maximising passive solar gain.

7.4 Another example would be where the SUDS drainage strategy might be guided by the discovery of an area of water permeable ground. The need for a new cycleway could be identified early to link the site into the local network and help meet sustainable travel targets. If opportunities are missed at the Site Appraisal stage it may not be possible to go back as the scheme progresses.

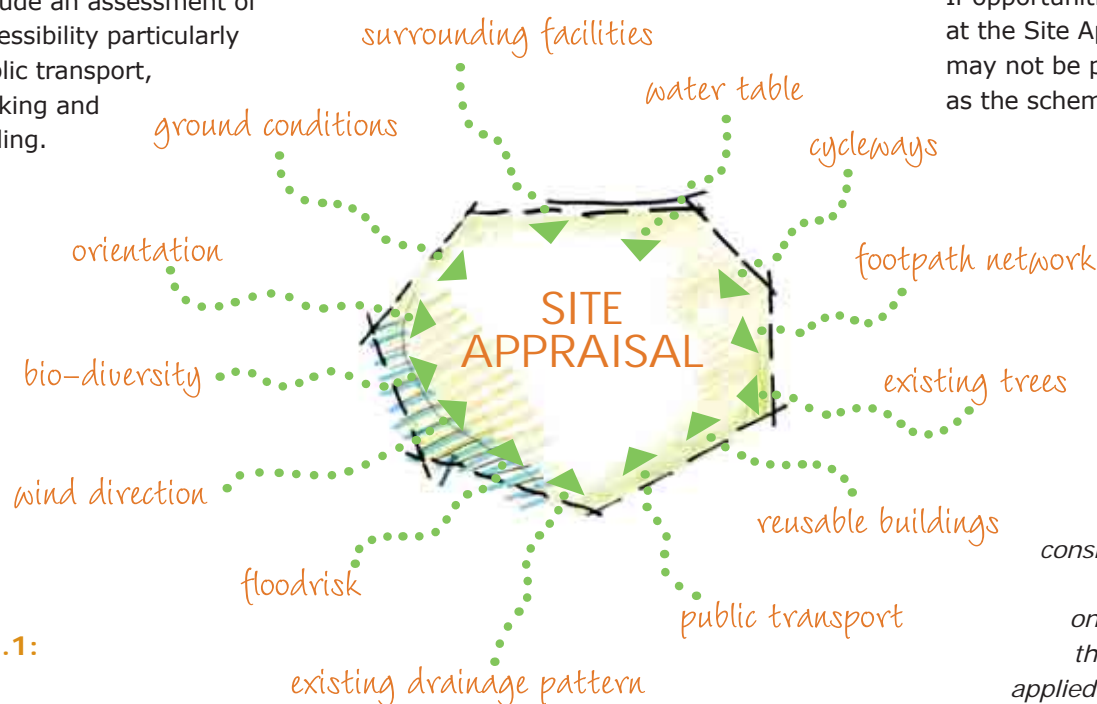


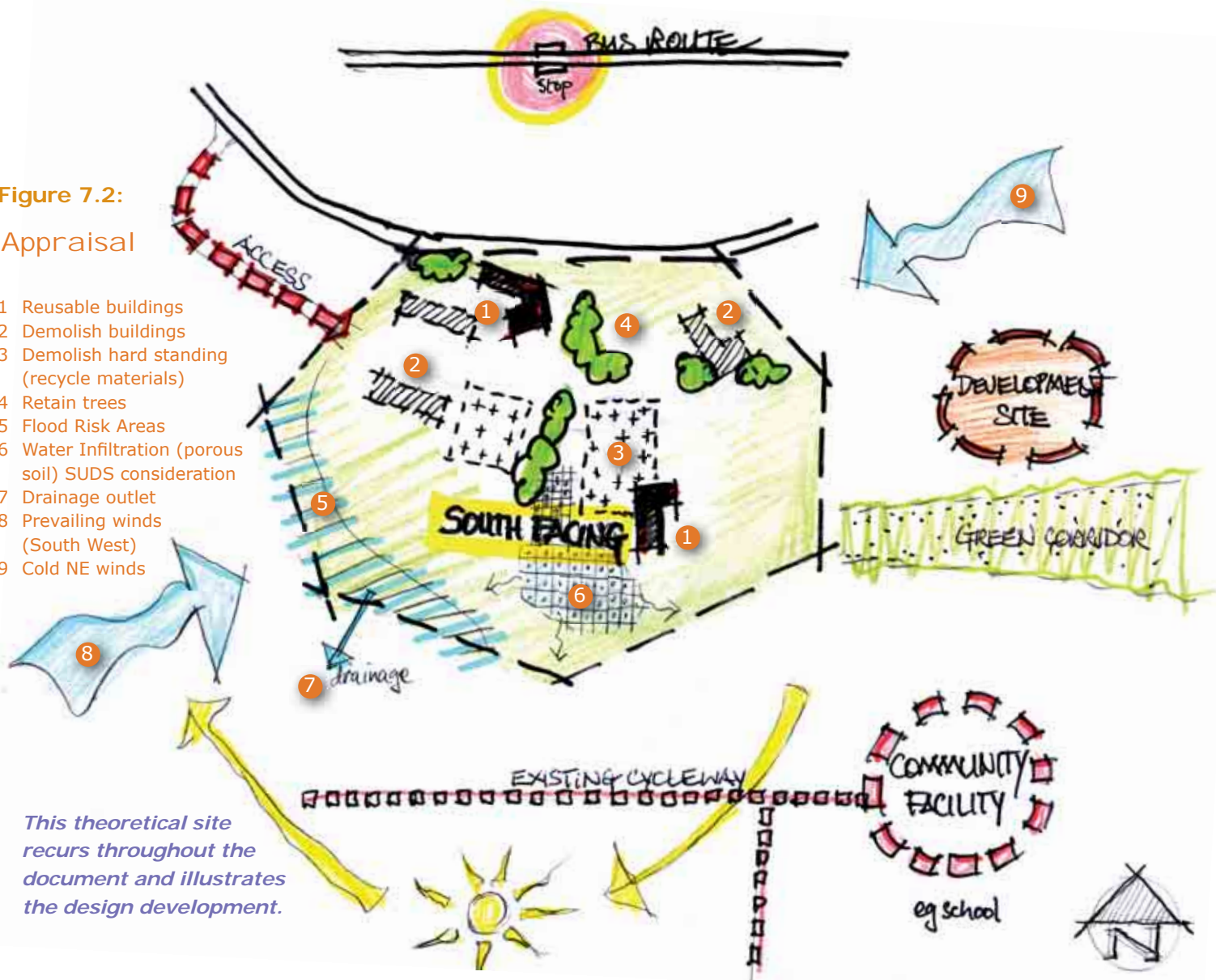
Figure 7.1:

Table 7.1 illustrates the typical factors to consider at Site Appraisal stage and figure 7.2 on page 32 shows how this approach could be applied to a theoretical site.



**Figure 7.2:**  
Appraisal

- 1 Reusable buildings
- 2 Demolish buildings
- 3 Demolish hard standing (recycle materials)
- 4 Retain trees
- 5 Flood Risk Areas
- 6 Water Infiltration (porous soil) SUDS consideration
- 7 Drainage outlet
- 8 Prevailing winds (South West)
- 9 Cold NE winds



*This theoretical site recurs throughout the document and illustrates the design development.*

“Mixtures of deciduous and evergreen species planted as hedges demarcate boundaries, absorb noise and provide shelter. Studies show that hedges planted on north boundaries reduce wind speed substantially – and can cut heating bills in winter by between 10 and 25 percent, an important contribution to more sustainable living.”

Tony Kirkham,  
Head of the Arboretum,  
Royal Botanic  
Gardens, Kew



7.5

Particular attention should be paid to the site's vulnerability to the effects of future climate change by considering details of:

- Solar path information
- Wind speed and direction
- Temperature
- Flood risk
- Microclimate, soil type, water drainage and water table

7.6



Through pre-application discussions and negotiations, developers will be encouraged to submit a **site appraisal** which considers the factors in Table 7.1. These factors are likely to have a bearing on the determination of the planning application.



#### CASE STUDY: Allerton Bywater Millennium Community

Bywater Court uses a light steel frame system and has achieved an EcoHomes 'Excellent' rating with a range of highly energy efficient features, cycle storage and the potential for home office working. At least 75% of the timber and timber products are reused, recycled or come from renewable sources with a low environmental impact and during build construction waste was reduced by 50%.

The energy efficient features include; low emission gas boilers, solar hot water for domestic use and a sustainable drainage system. Bywater Court also aims to improve daylight reach within each home, improve noise proofing and increase fire safety measures.

*Designed by PRP Architects for Fleming Developments UK Ltd*