

PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Brighton: New England Quarter

The new England site lies in the heart of Brighton, a lively resort on England's south coast. The 21 acre site stands next to Brighton's fine Victorian Railway Station. It was originally a series of goods yards and a locomotive manufacturing works but had lain vacant for more than 30 years. The site is typical of many sites next to stations in the UK - where former goods yards have become surplus to requirements creating opportunities for high-density, transit oriented, development linked to the station and the other public transport networks that tend to focus on stations.

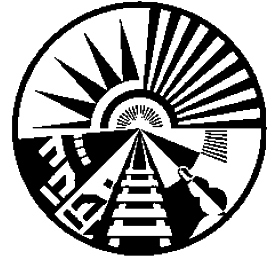
There were plans in the late 1990s to build a traditional supermarket on the site - essentially a large store surrounded by car parking. This was refused by the local planning authority following a very effective campaign by local community groups. As part of their campaign, the community argued that the site should be developed as a sustainable urban neighbourhood, siting a model that we had been advocating for a number of years. As a result the developer initially asked us to assess a scheme that he had started to develop to introduce a mix of uses on the site. Our response was critical because the scheme was still integrated into the surrounding urban fabric. As a result the developer asked us to look at the site, which at the time (7 years ago) was our first major masterplanning commission.

The masterplan was developed over the following three years. This retained the supermarket, however the store has been incorporated into the base of a residential block. Indeed because of the slope of the site the rear of the store is now at semi-basement level. The parking - about half that that would be expected for a store of this size - was accommodated at basement level beneath the store. This freed up the majority of the site for a high-density mixed-use development.

In addition to the 40,000sqft supermarket, the scheme uses includes 261 residential units, a language school with accommodation for 400 students, a four star and a three star hotel totalling 415 bedrooms linked to the station, a training centre, health and fitness club, offices, workspace and and community uses.

In the development of the masterplan, the key move was to realign the busy New England Street street that cut the site off from the town. This was looped into the site to overcome the edge condition caused by the railway tracks. This was extended into a street network along the contours of the steeply sloping site creating a new entrance to the station. This street network on the sloping site created the distinctive form of the plan, reminiscent of railway tracks.

Unfortunately the community opposition to the original scheme did not abate because they objected to the continued presence of the supermarket within the proposals. The community unfortunately felt particularly betrayed by ourselves for working on the scheme. The argument turned on whether it was right to defend the status quo of a traditional high street or to accept supermarkets as inevitable and to integrate them into a dense mixed use urban fabric. It was however because of the level of opposition that we were able to push the developers so far in making the scheme as innovative as it is. The scheme is thus an important model for the integration of large format retailing into urban areas - the first time this has been done outside London in the UK. The scheme was granted planning consent in 2003 and has been on site for 18 months. The new road is built and operational and the central site including 179 homes three shops and cafes, the supermarket and the training centre are about 50% complete.



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The aim of the masterplan was to create a mixed-use, high density masterplan next to the station that was fully integrated into the surrounding urban area.

Reversing urban disinvestment: Quite aside from the design of the scheme this meets an important charter principle is seeking to reverse the disinvestment in urban areas. Supermarkets have for many years been seeking to develop on the edge of urban areas. The refusal of a traditional supermarket scheme on this site, justified as it was, risked pushing the supermarket operator out of town. The development of a mixed use scheme has allowed the operator to invest in the heart of the city and created a model for this type of investment elsewhere.

Below are a range of charter principles met by the development:

The neighborhood, the district, and the corridor

- **Compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use:** The scheme achieves high densities and a very intense mix of uses.
- **Activities of daily living should occur within walking distance:** The scheme is within 5 minutes walk of a traditional high street and a mainline station. Everything is therefore within walking distance.
- **A broad range of housing types and price levels:** The masterplan includes 25% 'social' housing. It also includes a range of town houses and apartments.
- **Walking distance of transit stops:** It is a model transit oriented development because of its proximity to the station.
- **A range of parks:** The masterplan includes two public squares and a linear park along the line of the former railway line



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We have been involved in large scale private sector masterplanning for 7 years (having previously worked exclusively for the public sector). This was our first major project and has therefore been a learning experience from beginning to end. To a degree, its success is due to our naivety – not knowing that what we were proposing was not supposed to be possible.

These lessons fall broadly into 3 areas:-

1. **Working with a major supermarket:** The way in which a supermarket can be incorporated into a dense mixed-use urban quarter. The development of housing over supermarkets has happened in London but this is the first example outside the capital. The operator is one of the top three supermarket chains in the UK and has since developed the ideas in the scheme on other schemes in the UK.
2. **Community engagement:** It is very difficult winning over an angry community. URBED prides itself in its approach to community involvement and consulta-

tion. We went through a full process of involvement and workshops as part of the preparation of the masterplan. This was at times uncomfortable but we did succeed in winning over a proportion of the local community. However the organised community group that had opposed the original store application remained opposed which, for us, was an uncomfortable position to be in.

3. **Implementing the plan:** The third lesson was the means to translate a masterplan into a form that can guide development over the 6 years that it will take to develop. Drawing on the US model, we adapted the idea of a regulatory plan to enshrine the key urban design parameters in the planning consent. This has allowed different architects to bring forward each part of the masterplan in line with the original concept. The process has worked very well and the scheme has been built exactly as designed.

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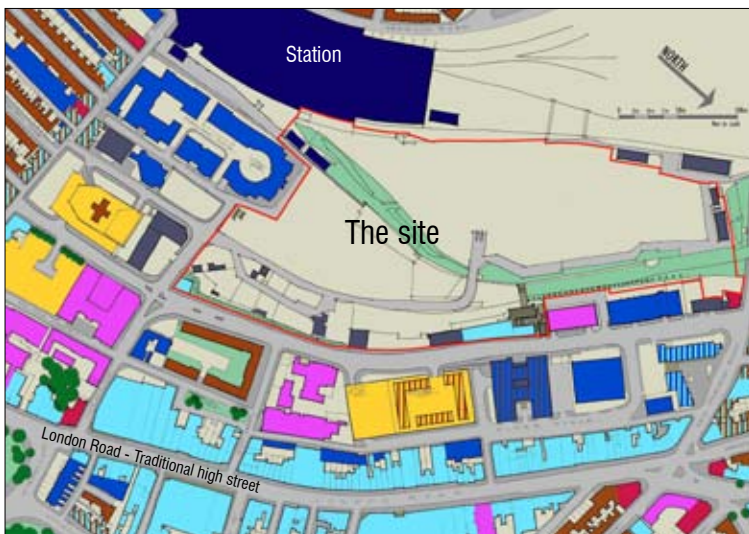


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Step 1 - Divert New England Street into the site to reduce the edge condition and create a link to the upper level (there is a 15m fall across the site).

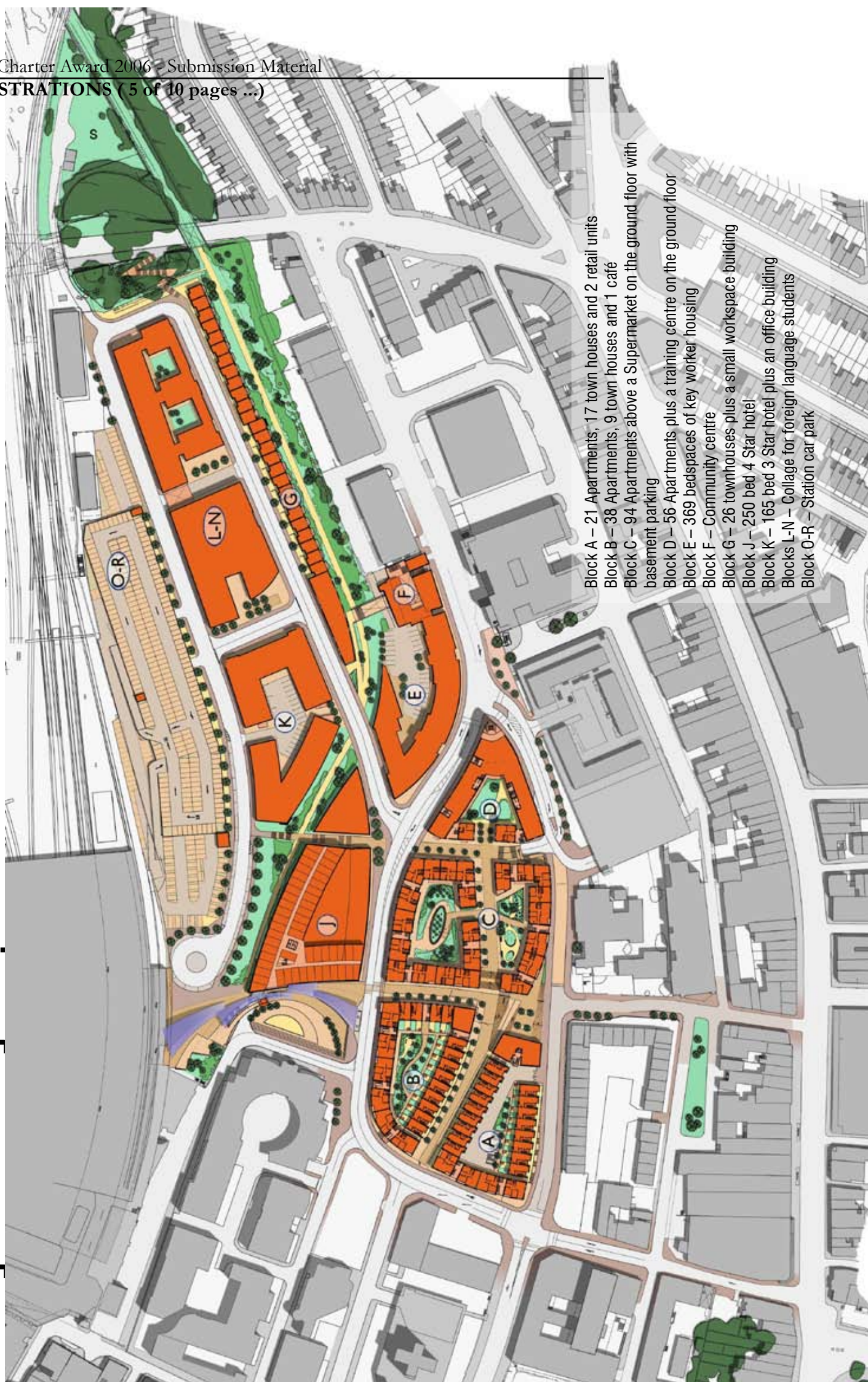


Step 2 - Create a permeable pedestrian movement system to establish a strong block structure.



Step 3 - Create masterplanning structure molded by the movement patterns and the topography of the site.

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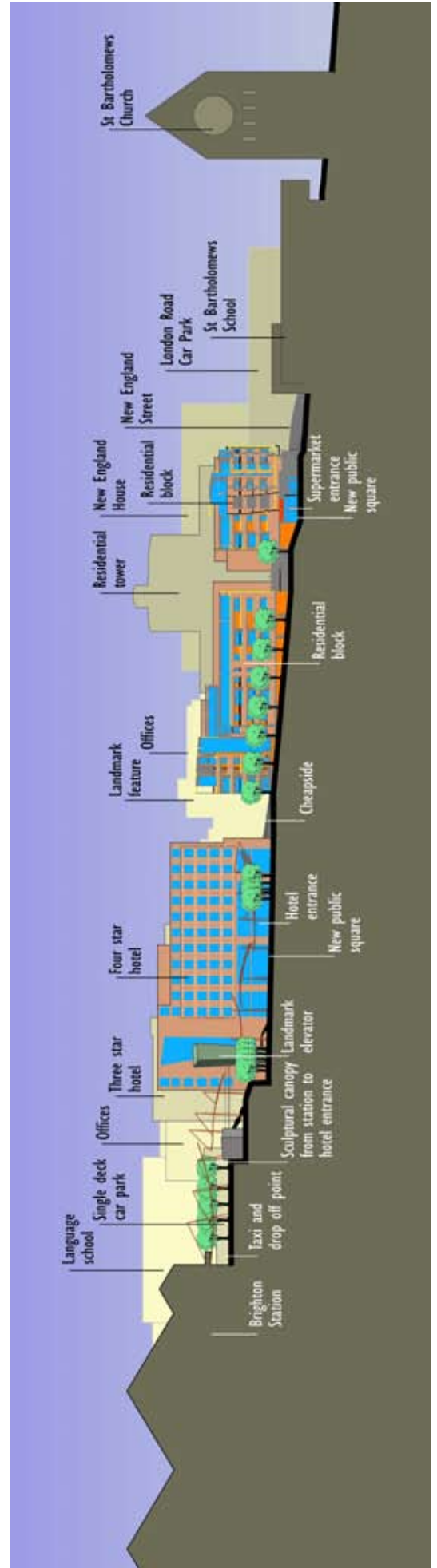
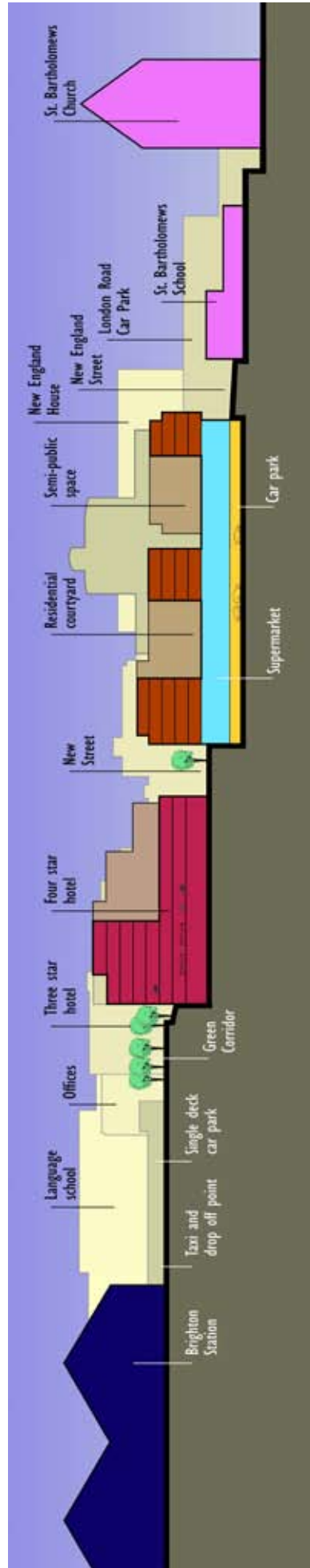
- Block A - 21 Apartments, 17 town houses and 2 retail units
- Block B - 38 Apartments, 9 town houses and 1 café
- Block C - 94 Apartments above a Supermarket on the ground floor with basement parking
- Block D - 56 Apartments plus a training centre on the ground floor
- Block E - 369 bedspaces of key worker housing
- Block F - Community centre
- Block G - 26 townhouses plus a small workspace building
- Block J - 250 bed 4 Star hotel
- Block K - 165 bed 3 Star hotel plus an office building
- Blocks L-N - Collage for foreign language students
- Block O-R - Station car park



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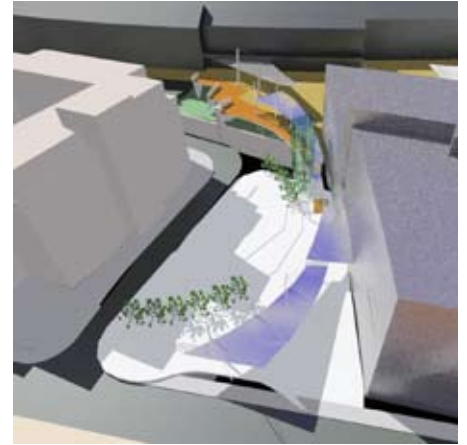
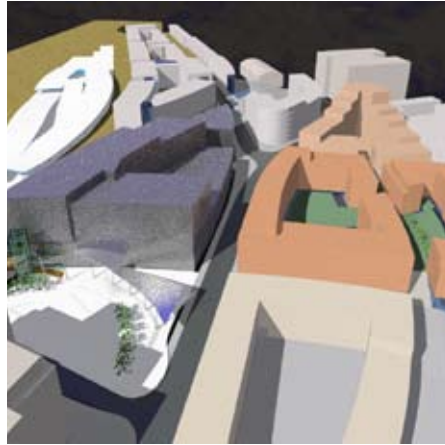


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Position December 2005



Aerial photo Summer 2005

DIGITAL IMAGES x 6

Captions



1.
01 BNEQ.Aerial perspective.jpg.
Brighton New England Quarter Aerial sketch of the masterplan

2.
02 BNEQ Aerial photo.jpg.
The site prior to development

3.
03 BNEQ materplan.jpg.
The Masterplan

4.
04 BNEQ Computer view.jpg.
Computer view of scheme

5.
05 BNEQ model.jpg.
Physical model of the scheme

6.
06 BNEQ Aerial view construction.jpg.
Aerial view under construction