1.1
Choice of techniques

Graphics for urban design projects fall within four basic techniques. Deciding which to use in any given situation needs careful consideration of three things:

- type of information (the message)
- media (the means of communicating the message)
- style (the look and character of the message).

Graphic style attracts the viewer, who can then engage with well-edited and structured information.

Presentations (publications/ exhibitions/screen shows) should be coherent narratives built out of a series of visual images that describe the project vision. Presentations and visual techniques can be considered effective only if a clear message is conveyed and the intended audience accurately informed. This depends on the clarity and appropriateness of the message and how well this has been tailored to its specific audience.

Information is presented in or derived from one of four techniques:

- conceptual
- analytical
- measurable
- perceptual.

1.1.1 Conceptual techniques

These are used to encapsulate and convey a particularly important or strong idea. At its simplest it may be a cartoon, an ideogram or a visual sound bite. More complex means include painted artworks or mood boards, which convey atmosphere or precedent without committing to form.

Such techniques can present provisional and unresolved ideas in a way that encourages the audience to engage in their further development. They should aid thinking about the built environment in terms of concepts and aspirations rather than the familiar, concrete images which some participants may be more comfortable.
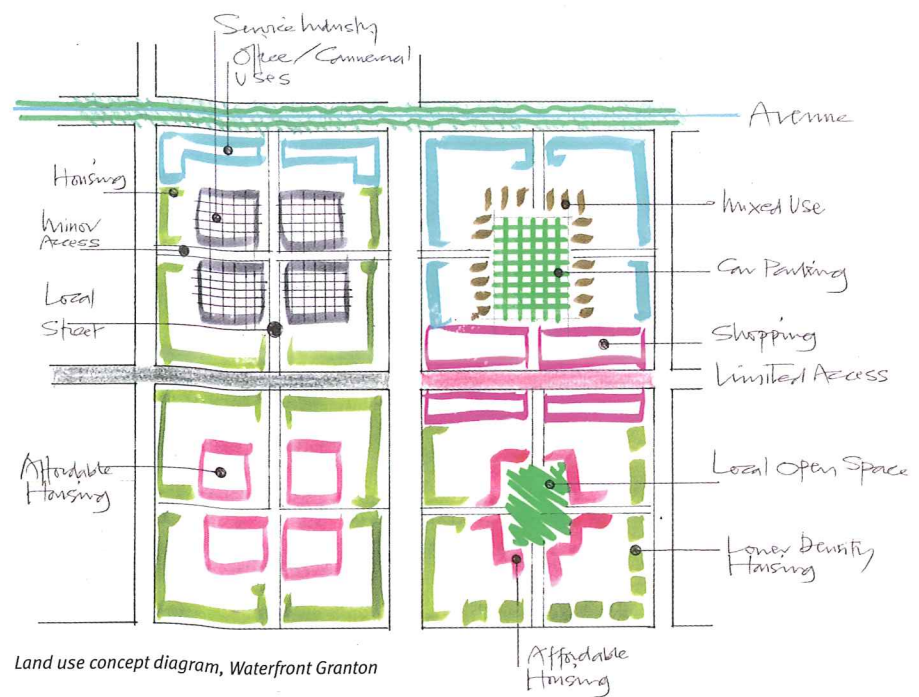
Land use concept diagram, Waterfront Granton

What it shows:

- range of alternative land uses within the grid format of a new quarter of Edinburgh, showing the inbuilt flexibility of the typical development block
- variety of street types and appropriate uses fronting them
- alternative uses for the core of the block, including employment, 'mews' housing and public space.

Why it is good graphically:

- shows the concept without being overly precise
- hand-drawn to emphasise the ideas stage
- informal annotation style appropriate.