



*Castle  
Manor  
Concept  
Statement*

**DECEMBER 2014**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council**



This draft Concept Statement has been prepared by the Borough Council following a community workshop held in October 2013 and public consultation carried out in July and August 2014.

Following this consultation, amendments to the draft Concept Statement were made as a result of comments received.

## **Introduction**

In 2012 Schools reorganisation was implemented in Haverhill changing from a three tier to a two tier education system. This coincided with the increase in the number of academies and all through schooling. Through reorganisation, the former Parkway Middle School became part of the Castle Manor Academy and a partnership was formed with local primary schools to form the Castle Partnership Academy.



It was also apparent that the disparate range of school building resulting from this change was not fit for purpose in providing for the needs of the local population.

The change in the education system coincided with the preparation of the Haverhill Vision 2031 document, which, provides the site specific planning policy framework for Haverhill and allows for the future growth requirements of the Castle Manor Academy to be taken into account.

## **Policy background**

National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in March 2012. Paragraphs 188 to 195 of the NPPF encourage early engagement with the local community and early consideration of fundamental issues.

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF provides a positive and proactive approach to meeting the need for school places including the expansion of schools.

Section 7 of the NPPF places significant emphasis upon the requirement for high quality design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces.

Policy DS4 of the adopted Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan introduced the requirement for masterplans on specific sites. This is being carried forward in Policy

## DM3 of the draft joint Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury Development Management Policies

The Haverhill Vision 2031 provides the site specific planning policy framework for Haverhill and Policy HV16 specifically allocates Castle Manor Academy for expansion and redevelopment for educational premises. The policy specifically requires the preparation of a masterplan for the site and introduces the potential for an element of residential development to facilitate the delivery of educational facilities.

### **Purpose and status of the Concept Statement**

This concept statement has been prepared by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to promote high standards of design and layout for the land identified by Policy HV16 of the Haverhill Vision 2031.

A Concept Statement is a simple, clear expression prepared by the council of the kind of place that a new development should create. It sets out how the policies and objectives of the Local Plan will apply to a specific site in order to deliver the best possible economic, social and environmental benefits. Concept statements are not detailed documents, but provide more information for developers and the community than can be contained within policies or maps and are used to inform the preparation of a more detailed masterplan.

### **Extent of the Study Area**

The study area covered by this concept statement includes the area covered by Policy HV16 of the Haverhill Vision 2031, which includes the Castle Manor Academy Castle Manor Academy Communications Building (former Parkway Middle School), which together now form part of the Castle Partnership Academy.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders in the Preparation of the Concept Statement**

This concept statement draws on the work of design workshops held with local residents and stakeholders and pupils in October 2013. Attendees formed groups to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the existing site and future aspirations for future development.

Groups outlined their vision for development and identified the following key objectives:

- Opportunity to address current residential disruption and traffic congestion.
- Development should create sufficient parking on the school site.
- Need to preserve the trees, wildlife and green space.
- Redevelopment will provide the opportunity to provide a range of community facilities to cater for all ages.
- Opportunity for further integration within the community.

These themes informed the development of the consultation draft concept statement. The document was further developed following the public consultation in July and August 2014.

The document has been prepared in accordance with the council's adopted concept preparation protocol and Statement of Community Involvement.

## **The Site**

The site comprises two adjacent parcels of land separated by Park Road and a public footpath located on the western side of Haverhill within established residential neighbourhoods. The land forms part of the valley side to the Stour Brook and rises from north east to south west. That part of the site to the south of Park Road (Parkway) forms a plateau at the highest part of the site. The land to the north of Park Road (Castle Manor), is more steeply sloping, but has largely been terraced to provide a series of level platforms.

The Parkway site contains a single storey low rise school building adjacent to its western boundary, which adjoins two storey residential development facing the site. The site adjoins an area of public open space to the south west and further residential development fronting Princess Way to the south east. The Princess Way development is separated from the school site by an established tree belt, giving good visual separation. Vehicular access is achieved from Park Road and public footpaths adjoin the site to all sides.

The Castle Manor site contains a range of multi storey school buildings at its north eastern side and is adjoined by established two storey residential development which backs onto the site. To the south west of the site is residential development accessed from Princess Way, screened by an established tree belt and separated by a public footpath. To the north west is modern residential development close to the boundary, but separated by a public footpath and a low hedge. The principal entrance and vehicular access is achieved from Eastern Avenue, with a secondary vehicular access to Cambridge Way. Footpath access is available from all directions.

## **Constraints**

There are no planning constraints on the site itself, but there are a number of issues which must be taken into account in the preparation of any development proposals.

- The principal access to the site for both vehicles and pedestrians is located in Eastern Avenue, a traffic calmed, residential through road, providing a key link between Burton End and Withersfield Road. This currently results in traffic congestion in and around Eastern Avenue at peak times.
- The sloping nature of the site provides significant challenges in providing a level platform for the provision of buildings or outdoor sports fields.
- The Parkway site is located at the brow of the hill making it prominent in the landscape and visible from wide area.
- The public footpath linking Park Road with Allington Walk bisects the two sites and needs to be publically accessible at all times.

- The overgrown nature of the footpath between Park Road and Allington Walk presents an obstacle to potential users.
- The proximity of residential properties to the boundaries of the site presents a challenge in balancing the opportunities for development with maintaining residential amenity.
- Although there are no known archaeological sites within the site, parts of the site are located within 100 metres of archaeological sites.

## **Opportunities**

- The site is already established in education use.
- Footpath access is already available from all directions and provides an opportunity for enhancement, providing safe and sustainable access.
- Reconfiguration of the access arrangements provides the opportunity to manage and remove traffic from a congested area.
- The prominent position of the Parkway site provides potential for a high quality landmark building or buildings.
- Sustainable location for the provision of a wide range of community facilities above and beyond the existing education facility.
- The site contains existing mature landscaping, which could mitigate the impact of new development and assist in providing a landscaped setting.

## **Design Principles**

Any residential development within the site will be permitted as an exception to policies which seek to safeguard educational establishments. As such, it will be restricted to the minimum necessary to enable funding of the delivery of new educational facilities and will be restricted to areas within the existing school building footprint. No loss of playing field to housing will be permitted. Any detailed proposals will need to satisfy Sport England's policy 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' and advice contained within Paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Any new housing development within the site must respect the character and scale of adjoining residential development and maintain the residential amenity of existing properties. Consideration will be given to not only the visual impact of development, but also to other impacts such as noise and light. In order to inform decision making, particularly in respect of the location of noise sensitive premises, an Environmental Noise Assessment should be undertaken to determine the impact of any existing activities in the vicinity of the development. Appropriate mitigation measures can then be included at the design stage, if required.

The nature of the existing use and its proposed redevelopment is one which generates significant amounts of movement. Advice within national and local policies is that such forms of development will require the preparation of a Transport Assessment and implementation of a Travel Plan. The assessment should illustrate accessibility to the site by all forms of transport and the likely proportion of each form of transport using the site. It should also give details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling and to maximise opportunities for promoting the use of pedestrian and cycle routes.

The travel plan is the key tool in resolving the transport issues highlighted by the transport assessment and should include the physical and management measures necessary to address the transport impacts arising from the development.

The topography of the site requires sensitive consideration of any development proposed, taking particular account of views into and out of the site. This includes potential impact upon the immediate area around the site and the wider views from across the valley. Particular care will be required in respect of any development on the Parkway site or the higher parts of the Castle Manor site which sit in a very prominent position visible from a wide area. This will require careful consideration of the potential impact of all forms of development, but provides an opportunity for the provision of high quality landmark buildings.

The existing mature landscaping within and around the site has an important impact upon the townscape setting of the site, nature conservation and serves to soften the impact of the use of the site upon the surrounding residential neighbourhood. Existing planting should be retained wherever possible and be used to help to inform and shape of development. Any development must protect the existing ecological corridors and features including the adjacent Local Wildlife Sites, with sensitive landscape management. Ecological surveys will be required to assess the likely impacts and describe suitable mitigation.

Consideration will need to be given to the range and layout of facilities proposed and any security requirements arising from community use of the site. This could be influenced by the need to retain unobstructed, the public footpath which crosses the site, thereby providing a natural division and focus for public access.

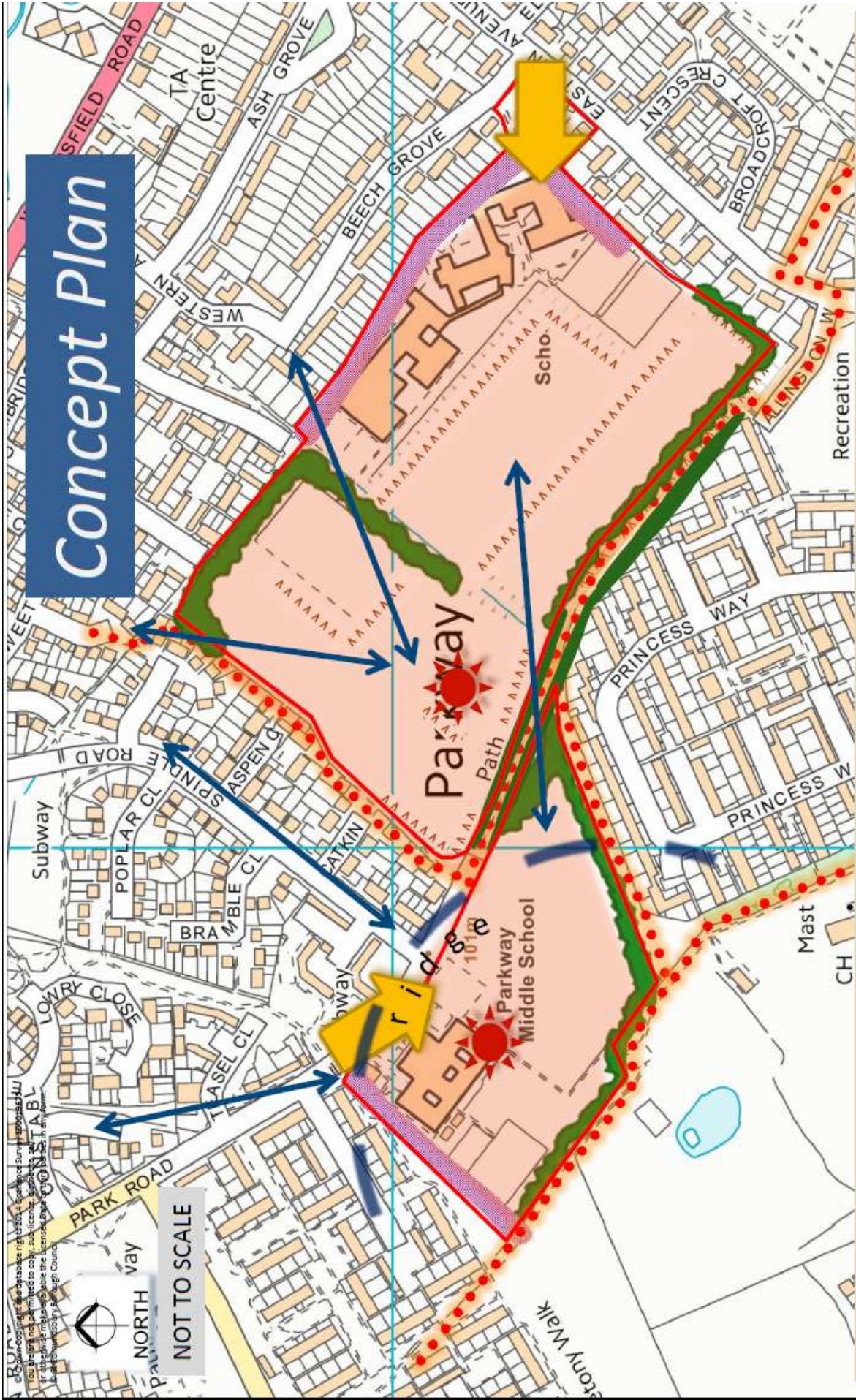
Schools and housing constitute a sensitive end use, so an assessment should be carried out to identify any contaminated land, as well as an air quality assessment.

A surface water assessment should be carried out to demonstrate that any proposed development will not create an increased risk of flooding from surface water. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as green roofs, ponds, swales and permeable pavements can be used to reduce surface water run-off.

All development will need to have regard to the value and significance of the historic environment, preserving in situ any archaeological sites of national importance and recording and advancing understanding of any heritage assets or finds identified in the process of archaeological investigation.



# Concept Plan



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NORTH

NOT TO SCALE

-  Site
-  Public footpaths
-  Sensitive frontage to existing homes
-  Long views in and out of site
-  Terracing
-  Existing principal vehicular access
-  Potential for high quality landmark buildings