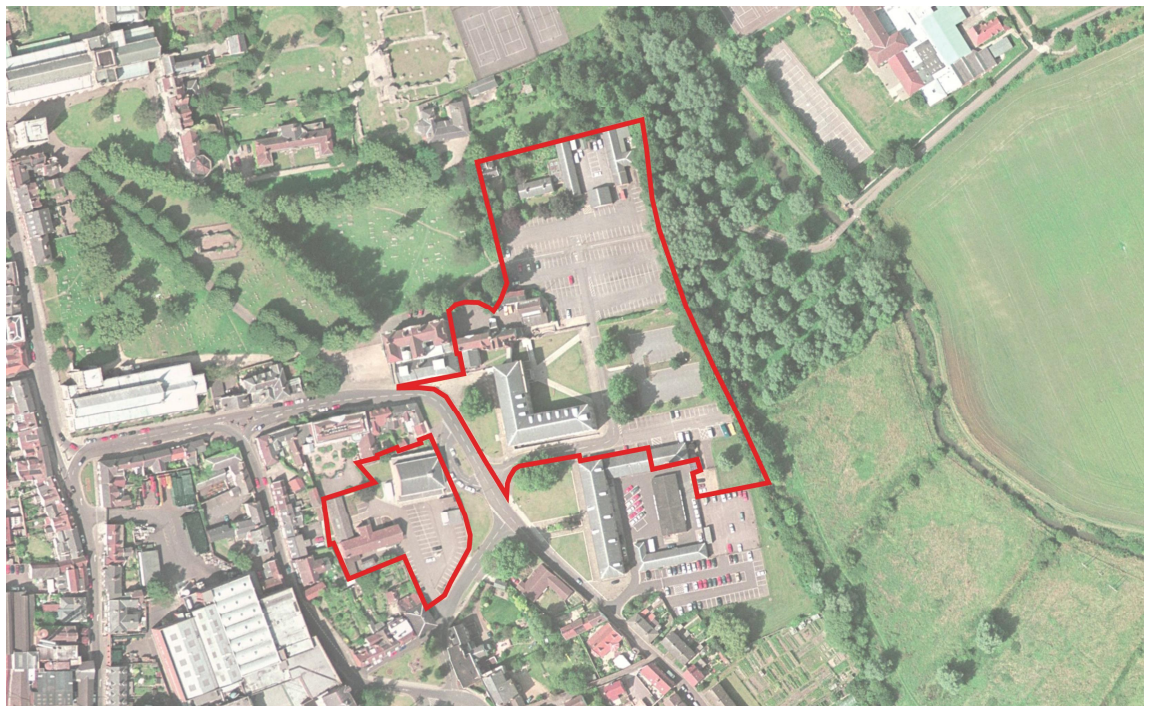


Development Brief

Shire Hall Complex, Bury St Edmunds

May 2008

BIDWELLS



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1 **PURPOSE AND STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT**

The purpose of the Development Brief is to inform on the physical and policy constraints operating on the site. These constraints are assessed to inform on opportunities as to how the site could be redeveloped. The Development Brief will not recommend a particular development proposal but will provide information to form appropriate potential redevelopment scenarios.

- 1.1 The adopted Development Brief will represent a key document for the disposal of the site to the market.
- 1.2 In terms of status, the Development Brief, once adopted as planning guidance by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, will represent a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications for the redevelopment of the site.

Site Location

- 1.3 There are two sites which make up an overall site subject to this Development Brief. The plan in Fig.1 indicates the sites outlined in red. The larger site will be referred to as the Shire Hall site (1.776 ha [4.39 acres]) and the smaller site will be referred to as the Weymed site (0.364 ha [0.9 acres]).
- 1.4 The operations currently conducted within the Shire Hall Complex will be relocated to the new Public Service Village planned to be completed on a new site at Western Way, Bury St Edmunds at the end of 2008. The preparation of the draft Development Brief is part of a process resulting from Suffolk County Council's relocation of operations to the Public Service Village.

2 **SITE INFORMATION**

Land Ownership

- 2.1 Both the Shire Hall site and the Weymed site are owned by Suffolk County Council (SCC).

Existing Land Uses

- 2.2 The existing land use of the site is predominantly office use with car parking and storage.
- 2.3 The existing site is occupied by a number of departments within Suffolk County Council and the current location of each department is indicated on the plan in Figure 2.

3 **PLANNING CONTEXT**

3.1 This section of the Development Brief includes reference to the physical/site specific constraints and the relevant planning policy constraints which would impact upon the redevelopment potential of the site in terms of setting the parameters towards defining appropriate redevelopment opportunities.

3.2 In summary, Fig.3 indicates the various constraints which operate on the site both physical/site specific and policy. It is important that each of the constraints is examined in turn to inform the reader of how the constraints may set limitations for redevelopment.

Physical/Site Specific Constraints

Flood Plain and Flood Risk

3.3 Using available data, a Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken of the existing flood risk to the site from surface runoff, groundwater, artificial drainage and fluvial sources in accordance with PPS25. Based on the potential for general redevelopment of the site, the potential risk of flooding as well as the impact that the development will have on flood risk elsewhere, has been assessed.

3.4 Mitigation measures have been suggested to reduce the flood risk associated with the development.

3.5 A summary of the assessment is as follows:

- The main source of flood risk is considered to be the two local water courses, the River Linnet and River Lark, both located close to the site.
- Records show that flooding occurred in Bury St Edmunds in 1968 over an area including at least part of the site in question. It is unclear to what degree the site was affected.
- Part of the site is within the area that would be affected by the 1 in 100 year flood event (including the effects of climate change). However, this area is concentrated close to the River Linnet and would not include any proposal for redevelopment other than landscaping or car parking.
- Based on the EA data, a majority of the proposed development lies in the medium and low flood risk zones (Zones 1 and 2).
- The site is not at significant risk of flooding from groundwater, overland flow, or from sewer flooding.

- Surface water drainage shall be designed using a Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) methods where feasible. Due to the location of the site (partly in an inner groundwater protection zone), only roof runoff can be drained using infiltration. An oil/silt interceptor is required to treat runoff from other hardstanding areas.
 - All proposed buildings will need to be constructed with finished floor levels above 31.98m AOD in order to mitigate the flood risk. This figure takes into account the 1 in 100 year flood event (including the effects of climate change) and a 300mm freeboard.
 - Where current levels are below the 1 in 100 year flood event (including the effects of climate change) of 31.68m AOD, no structural development will occur unless it is deemed appropriate (ie car parking). This is to ensure the volume of the functional floodplain is not decreased.
 - Surface water runoff rates will need to be attenuated in order to restrict runoff rate to a rate that does not exceed that from the current development.
- 3.6 A detailed design philosophy would determine the potential layout of development. The development concept is indicative only. However, it is unlikely that any new build development other than that shown on figure 5: development concept could take place within flood zone 1 within the development brief area. A sequential test will therefore need to be undertaken to demonstrate the site satisfies the sequential test even in this sustainable brownfield location. The parameters of the sequential test will need to be agreed with the EA and SEBC.

Archaeological and Historic Background

- 3.7 The area of the Shire Hall Complex has been archaeologically evaluated by SCC in April 2007 by way of a detailed desk-top study, supplemented by geophysical survey of the main car park area and minor trial trenching. The archaeological conclusions are adequately indicative of the quality and preservation of the site and are robust. (A copy of the Archaeological Assessment report BSE 291 can be obtained from the SCC Archaeological Service.)
- 3.8 The Shire Hall Complex lies partially within the Precinct of the Medieval Abbey, and partly within the area of the known Late Saxon and Medieval town. A section of the Abbey Precinct Wall (which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument of national importance) bisects the site.
- 3.9 The town of Bury St Edmunds has origins in the 7th century AD, developing into a Saxon town with royal connections. With the expansion of the Benedictine Abbey in the 11th century the town became the principal centre for the County of West Suffolk, and still exhibits the grid plan of a new town laid out at the time of the Norman Conquest. The Medieval Abbey was one of

the largest and wealthiest in the country and had national significance until its Dissolution in the 16th century. The Shire Hall site lies within the identified archaeological site of the Late Saxon and Medieval town and over half of it lies within the boundary of the Abbey.

- 3.10 The Medieval Abbey of Bury St Edmunds was contained within a formal Precinct defined by a substantial boundary wall. The Abbey Church and all the major elements of the monastery were contained within the Precinct, together with substantial open areas such as the monastic burial ground. The circuit of the Precinct survives, largely complete, in the form of a flint and mortar wall and is a major element of the visible Historic Landscape of the town.
- 3.11 Large parts of the Abbey site are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Suffolk Monument 2) and protected by Statute (the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act). Included are the site of the Abbey church, the claustral buildings, the gateways, the standing sections of the Precinct wall, the Abbot's Palace and some of the open land within the Precinct. Within the Shire Hall site there are two lengths of Medieval Precinct wall which are Scheduled.
- 3.12 The land within the Medieval Precinct is of national importance and is to be treated as though it were a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Therefore no new development would be acceptable in this area, other than rebuilding on the existing footprint of buildings. That part of the Shire Hall site which lies north of the Precinct wall lies within this area.
- 3.13 The setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (or site of National Importance) is a material consideration in both Planning and SAM consent. The setting of the Precinct wall is particularly significant. The medieval wall is well preserved throughout and (together with the medieval gridded street pattern) is a defining feature of the historic landscape of the town. Its essential nature, a linear feature defining a large boundary, requires the retention of its visibility from a distance with a significant length available in a single view. Without this provision its setting would be unacceptably compromised.
- 3.14 The high potential for archaeological deposits related to the use of a localised part of the site in the medieval period by a senior Monastic Officer (The Cellarer) outside the Precinct has been demonstrated by desk-top evaluation. This area is likely to be representative of rare or generically unusual deposits. As such they may warrant preservation *in situ*.
- 3.15 The high potential for archaeological deposits related to the Saxon and Medieval urban areas throughout the Shire Hall Complex has been demonstrated by desk-top evaluation. Where these exist outside the Precinct a case can be made that they are unlikely to be representative of rare or generically unusual deposits or to be significantly well preserved. As such they are

unlikely to warrant preservation *in situ* and an adequate mitigation strategy involving recording by prior archaeological excavation is likely to be acceptable.

Conservation

- 3.16 The Shire Hall site and Weymed site lie within the Bury St Edmunds Conservation Area. An appraisal has recently been prepared for the area and has been adopted as planning guidance, but little is said about the site's contribution other than a brief reference to the space in front of Shire Hall where Honey Hill and Raingate Street meet.
- 3.17 Despite this, the site is important and multi-layered in its significance. English Heritage is an important consultee for the site, which includes the potential impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings, the affect on character and appearance of the conservation area of new development with major changes in use, and the impacts on listed buildings of national significance such as the Manor House.
- 3.18 English Heritage has advised that the existing buildings, Precinct walls, substantial trees, changes in levels and views across and out of the site comprise a distinctive townscape quality despite the incursion of car parking.
- 3.19 The Shire Hall buildings are not listed save for St Margaret's and 6 The Churchyard, but they have social as well as architectural and townscape significance. They represent a time of great aspirations for Bury St Edmunds and the former West Suffolk County. The purpose built complex includes the Record Office (to the north of the Weymed site) and the buildings to the north of the Precinct wall such as the original caretakers' houses. Their individual and group contributions to the Conservation Area should be identified and the parameters for decisions on changes of use, alterations to their fabric and new buildings within their settings should be laid out.
- 3.20 Upon the advice provided by English Heritage and the SEBC Conservation Officer, a Character Assessment has been undertaken to take stock of the important physical features, on and adjoining the site and to inform how the important features can be incorporated positively into any redevelopment proposal. The Character Assessment is included in Appendix A.

Listed Buildings

- 3.21 English Heritage is especially interested by the potential impacts on the settings of the nationally important listed buildings. The settings and inter-relationship of all the listed buildings in and around the site and their vulnerability to change should be considered. The listed buildings in and around the site are indicated on Fig.4.

Topography and Hydrology

- 3.22 The Weymed site slopes from north west to south east and the Shire Hall site slopes from west to east down towards the River Linnet.

Trees and Vegetation

- 3.23 All existing trees on both sites are protected by the Conservation Area designation. There are several significant trees, one at the front of the Shire Hall building, two to the south of the Shire Hall building and three to the rear of the Shire Hall building. In addition there is a bank of trees along the boundary between the site and the river and a number of smaller specimens in the vicinity of existing buildings to the north of the precinct wall. The impact of trees on the Weymed site is also of importance.

Roads, Cycleways and Footpaths

Vehicular Access

- 3.24 Vehicular access to both the Weymed site and the Shire Hall site exists off Raingate Street which is a one-way street directing traffic in a southerly direction between the two sites.
- 3.25 Vehicular access to the Weymed site is via the southern tip of the site and entrance to an existing car park and there is a right of way (which needs to be maintained) to the Manor House on the northern side of the Weymed site.
- 3.26 Vehicular access to the main Shire Hall Complex is immediately to the south of the Shire Hall building with access over a combined sewer then continues to the central area of the site to the existing Shire Hall Complex car park. The existing vehicular access continues through a gap in the precinct wall to emerge into an additional car parking area also currently serving the County Council.
- 3.27 The County Highways Authority confirms that a Transport Assessment will be required to be undertaken by the developer. This should present data on existing flows in the vicinity of the site, and estimations of flows on completion of the development. The data will be used to estimate the effects on nearby road junctions.
- 3.28 The Highways Authority advises that there is existing highway capacity to accommodate up to 100 dwellings on the Shire Hall Complex site and up to 50 on the Weymed Site. Dwelling numbers reflect the highway capacity only and do not represent the dwelling numbers that may be delivered. However, additional public car parking facilities on the site may impact on

dwelling capacity depending on whether the parking facilities are long or short stay. This issue would be considered within the Transport Assessment.

- 3.29 The points of access for these sites may be taken from the existing locations from the public highway.
- 3.30 The widths and layout of both vehicle and other links serving the developments should be informed by the Suffolk Design Guide (SDG), and the recent publication by DfT, Manual for Streets. Good quality access for cyclists and pedestrians will form a key element of the layout here. Turning areas at ends of roads shall be of at least the dimensions shown in the SDG.
- 3.31 It is recommended that all roads, cycle and footway routes are constructed to the current adoption standards, in order they may be dedicated as public highway and avoid the need for private management.
- 3.32 Parking provision within the developments shall be in accordance with the current guidance as issued by Suffolk Local Authorities.

Cycleway

- 3.33 National cycle route Number 51 continues from the Cathedral through the Abbey Gardens and through the site to the north of the precinct wall (over the River Linnet) to join Shakers Lane beyond St James' Middle School. The route is a public highway and is adopted and maintained by the Highway Authority. It is expected that links from the development will connect to it.

Footpaths

- 3.34 The only public footpath into and across the site is from the Abbey Precinct grounds across the northern part of the site to the north of the Precinct wall, across the River Linnet to meet with No Man's Meadows Local Nature Reserve and onwards past the school to Shakers Lane.

Statutory Providers

Surface and Foul Water Drainage

- 3.35 Anglian Water records show that there are public water mains, public foul/surface water sewers within the boundary of the site.
- 3.36 The existing water mains/public sewers should remain under highway land or under open space (not in private gardens) to ensure access for maintenance and repair and must be a consideration when considering site layout. If this is not possible, the diversion of the water main/sewer is an option and this cost will be at the developer's expense. A formal application

must be made to achieve this under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991 for a diversion to be considered.

Water Supply

- 3.37 Anglian Water is able to accommodate the redevelopment of the site via offsite works to provide a water supply. To supply 100 properties the installation of a 180mm mains extension with a connection of the existing 6 inch main in Schoohall Street and a connection back to the 3 inch main is required. To supply 50 properties the installation of a 125mm mains extension with a connection of the existing 6 inch main in Moulton Road is needed.
- 3.38 The present potable water network does not have spare capacity to supply this proposed site. A re-zoning in Bury would be needed costing the developer approximately £20,000; this figure should be used for budgeting purposes only. This figure does not include onsite mains (approximately £50 per metre), connection or infrastructure charges. Any offsite reinforcement works could take considerable time and therefore advised to contact Anglian Water at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.39 It is envisaged, following initial investigations, that foul flows can be accommodated based on gravity flows from a maximum of 150 dwellings. A full appraisal of the site would need to be undertaken for this to be confirmed. A model is currently being constructed for Bury and is expected to be available in April 2008.
- 3.40 The preferred method of surface water disposal would be soakaways. Surface water disposal from the Shire Hall site would need to discharge direct to the river and this will need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority/Internal Drainage Board and Environment Agency.
- 3.41 Service pipes, private sewers and drains are generally not shown in the plan provided by Anglian Water and it is advised that a private survey of the area should be carried out. Large species of trees should not be planted within five metres of Anglian Water apparatus/assets to reduce the possibility of damage from roots. To avoid incurring costs arising from damage or disturbance the use of manual rather than mechanical excavation to ascertain the depth of apparatus/assets is recommended. If excavation is more than 450mm, or activity is likely to cause ground movement or vibration, contact should be made with Anglian Water.

Electricity (including Sub-station)

- 3.42 There is an established sub-station on the Weymed site which serves the overall Shire Hall Complex. There is a possibility that this could be relocated elsewhere within the Weymed site, within 30m of its existing position, and EDF have advised that a budget of £50,000 should be allowed for this. A new sub-station would occupy an area of 4m x 4m and would need to be

close to vehicular access. This requirement will need to be incorporated into the proposals for the site.

- 3.43 Alternatively this sub-station could be retained and work could be undertaken to enclose this facility.
- 3.44 EDF have further advised that residential development on the overall Shire Hall site would trigger a requirement for a new electricity sub-station. We have been informed that the provision of associated high and low voltage infrastructure and services for up to 150 non-electrically heated dwellings on the site is likely to cost in the region of £120,000 plus VAT. Similarly, this would need to be considered within the proposals.

Communications

- 3.45 BT confirms it is able to accommodate the redevelopment of the site. At the northern end of the Shire Hall site overhead plant and three BT poles are present. There are many distribution points within and in close proximity to the site. Underground plant is present mainly to the South (Raingate Street) and West (Swan Lane) of the Shire Hall site.
- 3.46 Should any developer wish to develop on the site any proposed method for serving the properties would need to be discussed further with BT following an order for telecommunications services. Subject to archaeological assessment the LPA would encourage any new BT apparatus to be underground.
- 3.47 If it is requested, BT will conduct a free of charge site survey to determine the amount and extent of apparatus especially if a precise location of apparatus is required on site. Where a proposed development will affect existing BT apparatus, the cost of any protection or diversion work required will be borne by the developer.
- 3.48 When a schedule of progress is achieved, BT requires a letter stating the timescale of development and a scaled layout map which is to be sent to a BT planning department. BT requires three months' notice to plan its works.

Gas

- 3.49 National Grid confirms it is able to accommodate the redevelopment of the site. Plans indicate pipes owned by National Grid in its role as a Licensed Gas Transporter (GT). Gas pipes owned by other Gas Transporters and also privately owned gas pipes may be present in the area.

Relevant Planning Policy Constraints

National Policies

3.50 Section 38(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The site is not allocated for any specific land use in the Adopted Local Plan. This Development Brief will help inform proposals for the site in advance of a planning application process.

3.51 National Planning Policy Guidance particularly relevant to this site is set out below.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005

3.52 PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies in relation to the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. PPS1 emphasises the Government's commitment to creating sustainable communities where planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of development including:

- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment;
- Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design;
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

3.53 Paragraph 27(viii) states that planning authorities should seek to:

"Promote the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings. Planning should seek actively to bring vacant and under-used previously developed land back into beneficial use to achieve the targets the Government has set for development on previously developed land."

3.54 PPS1 seeks to emphasise the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development where Paragraph 35 states:

"High quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process.... Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are clearly factors in achieving these objectives, securing high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. Good design should:

- *address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;*
- *be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environment;*
- *be an integral part of the process for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive towns;*

- create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from a full range of opportunities available to members of society; and,

- consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment."

- 3.55 Paragraph 36 of PPS1 advises that development proposals should seek to optimise the potential of sites to accommodate development and should respond to their local context and seek to improve the character and quality of an area.

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing (2006)

- 3.56 The content of PPS3 is an extension to the Government's general aims and objectives for sustainable development as set out in PPS1. In this respect the content of PPS3 repeats the intent of PPS1. PPS3 seeks to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford and in a community in which they want to live.

- 3.57 PPS3 promotes the provision of a range of high quality housing and mixed, sustainable communities in suitable locations. Housing proposals should be targeted in areas where a good range of employment, infrastructure and community facilities and opportunities exist. In this way, development is encouraged towards existing urban areas, particularly on previously developed land.

- 3.58 PPS3 suggests a minimum density target of 30 dwellings per hectare should be employed for residential proposals although the density of development should have regard to the character of its surroundings. No indicative density ceiling is advised, however, densities close to the centre of major settlements can accommodate significantly higher densities if imaginatively designed, in a manner which responds to and enhances the character of the area.

- 3.59 PPS3 places a strong emphasis upon delivery and deliverability of housing in response to market requirements and requires Local Planning Authorities to ensure that they maintain a sufficient supply of deliverable sites to provide for housing needs. In this respect Paragraph 54 of PPS3 is important as development sites must be deliverable in that they should be available, suitable and achievable.

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) September 1994

- 3.60 This PPG represents the Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. It explains the role played by the planning system in their protection.

- 3.61 The Shire Hall site contains a section of the Abbey Precinct wall, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument of national importance.
- 3.62 There are two listed buildings within the Shire Hall site and there are a number of listed buildings surrounding the northern, north western and southern parts of the Weymed site.
- 3.63 Both the Shire Hall site and the Weymed site fall entirely within the Bury St Edmunds Conservation Area.
- 3.64 On the basis of the archaeological and historic context of the Development Brief site much of the content of PPG15 is highly relevant. In essence, the key advice from PPG15 is to ensure that any development proposals for the redevelopment of the site must give a high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character of the Ancient Monument, listed buildings and the character of the Conservation Area. If any proposed development would conflict with this objective there is likely to be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission. There is no requirement in legislation that Conservation Areas should be protected from all development which does not enhance or positively preserve. Whilst the character and appearance of the Conservation Area should always be given full consideration in planning decisions, the objective of preservation can be achieved either by development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance, or by development which leaves character and appearance unharmed.
- 3.65 Paragraph 2.14 of PPG15 advises that the design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general, it is better that old buildings are not set apart but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community. This can be done, provided that the new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials. This does not mean that new buildings have to copy the older neighbours in detail; some of the most interesting streets in towns and villages include a variety of building styles, materials and forms of construction, of many different periods, but together forming a harmonious group.
- 3.66 Perhaps the most important strategic advice from PPG15 to intending developers is Paragraph 2.11 where the Secretary of State attaches particular importance to early consultation between Local Planning Authority and the developer on historic sites. This is to ensure that there is scope for refinement and revision of proposals before plans become firm and timetables inflexible. The principle of early consultation should extend to English Heritage.

Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16), November 1990

- 3.67 This PPG sets out the Government's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded. Details relating to the site's archaeological and historic background have been set down earlier in this Development Brief, however, Paragraph 8 of PPG16 advises that where nationally important archaeological remains exist, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. In this case this applies to land to the north of the Precinct wall.
- 3.68 With respect to land to the north of the Precinct wall, Paragraph 12 of PPG16 is relevant where it advises when important remains are known to exist or when archaeologists have good reason to believe that important remains exist, developers will be able to help by preparing sympathetic design using, for example, foundations which avoid disturbing the remains altogether or minimise damage by raising ground levels under a proposed new structure; or by the careful siting of landscaped or open areas. There are also techniques available for sealing archaeological remains underneath buildings or landscaping, thus securing their preservation for the future even though they remain inaccessible for the time being.
- 3.69 With respect to land north of the Precinct wall, the County Archaeologist has suggested a positive input into the definition of the landscape scheme to integrate this area with adjoining landscape in respect of views in and out across the adjacent water meadows along the eastern boundary of the site where it meets No Man's Meadows, which are medieval in origin.
- 3.70 The County Archaeologist would agree a programme of archaeological work where redevelopment is possible, however, there would be a strong probability that there would be full archaeological excavation in advance of any development being implemented. If the Local Planning Authority recommends planning permission for a redevelopment proposal, the County Archaeologist would wish to secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains. In this way, a suitably worded Condition such as that set down under Paragraph 30 of PPG16 which states:

"No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority."

Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25): Planning and Flood Risk

3.71 PPS25 promotes a sequential approach to the selection of development sites and management of flood risk. The sequential test proposes that preference should be given to locating new development in Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk). Development can only be directed to higher risk Flood Zones before lower risk Flood Zones if a site meets the requirements of the Exception Test. To pass the test a set of standards must be met.

3.72 PPS25 requires developers to promote designs that reduce flood risk to the development and elsewhere by incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and, where necessary, flood resilience measures. Developers are also responsible for providing a Flood Risk Assessment.

Government Guidance on Urban Design

3.73 Although the Development Brief is not a design guide the Government places importance on good design in any new development proposal. The following non-statutory national guidance sets out the considerations and standards which will need to be addressed in any development proposal for the site.

Building in context: new development in historic areas (2001)

3.74 A joint publication by English Heritage and CABE which aims to stimulate a high standard of design for new development in historic areas. It states that a successful project will:

- relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land
- sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it
- respect important views
- respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings and
- create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

'By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice' (2000) (By Design)

3.75 This document provides good practice urban design guidance and serves as a companion to national policy. Local authorities should have regard for its advice in seeking to achieve good quality design.

3.76 The guidance sets out seven key objectives for good urban design:

- **Character – a place with its own identity.** Planning should promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

- **Continuity and Enclosure – a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished.** Planning should promote continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
- **Quality of the Public Realm – a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas.** Planning should promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.
- **Ease of Movement – a place that is easy to get to and move through.** Planning should promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.
- **Legibility – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.** Planning should promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.
- **Adaptability – a place that can change easily.** Planning should promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.
- **Diversity – a place with variety and choice.** Planning should promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible development and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

By Design – better places to live (2001)

- 3.77 This publication provides guidance on implementing the approach to planning for housing set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG 3). It is based on an examination of historic and contemporary practice, drawing from a study of residential environments from across the country. Whilst PPG 3 has been superseded by PPS 3 the guidance is still relevant and is set out in PPS 1 as good practice.

Safer Places – the Planning System and Crime Prevention (2003)

- 3.78 This guidance encourages designers to give greater attention to the principles of crime prevention and gives practical advice about how these can be applied in the design of developments.

Planning and Access for Disabled People: A good practice Guide (2003)

- 3.79 This guide describes how to involve all those who deliver physical environments which can be used by everyone. It encourages Local Planning Authorities and developers to consider access for disabled people, and stresses the importance of early consultation with disabled people.

Manual for Streets: Department of Transport (2007)

- 3.80 Manual for Streets (MfS) supersedes Design Bulletin 32 and its companion guide Places, Streets and Movement. MfS applies formally in England and Wales and comprises technical guidance focussing on lightly-trafficked residential streets.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (RSS14)

- 3.81 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England is currently at an advanced stage and once adopted (planned for the Spring of 2008) will guide development in the East of England to 2021.

- 3.82 In December 2006 the Government produced its proposed changes to the Draft East of England Plan. Within the proposed changes document replacement policy SS3, which refers to key centres for development and change, Bury St Edmunds was identified as one of the key centres at which new development should be concentrated. More particularly, the proposed changes document presents new policy BSE1 for Bury St Edmunds which states:

"Provision should be made at Bury St Edmunds for further employment, service and housing development that reflect its role as an important service centre and location on the transport corridor between Cambridge and Ipswich. Employment growth should be of a scale to minimise the volume of long distance out-commuting from the town.

Priority would be given to the development of vacant and under-used land in a manner that respects and enhances the historic town centre and promotes the shift to non-car modes of travel."

- 3.83 The above Policy may change on the basis the RSS is still to be adopted.

Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016, adopted June 2006

- 3.84 The adopted Local Plan and the Regional Spatial Strategy (once adopted) will represent the Development Plan for the area and will be material considerations in the determination of any planning applications for the site.

- 3.85 The Adopted Local Plan needs to be read in the round to provide the overall planning policy context for the site. An extract of the Inset Map from the Bury St Edmunds adopted plan indicating policies relevant to the site and the surrounding area is at Figure 4. However, there

are a number of relevant policies important to any redevelopment proposals for the site. These are as follows:

Policy HC6: New Development in Conservation Areas

Proposals to New Development within the Conservation Area must have regard to the special architectural or historic character or appearance of their setting in the following respects:

- i the scale, height, massing, alignment, style and material of the existing buildings;
- ii the form, function and manner of construction of the existing buildings;
- iii the relationship between dwellings and spaces;
- iv plot divisions and boundary treatments.

Policy DS3: Development Design and Impact

Proposals for all development will be considered favourably where they:

- Address townscape/landscape character and local distinctiveness
- Maintain or create a sense of place
- Preserve and enhance the setting of, or views into or out of a Conservation Area
- Incorporate designs and layout which are safe and take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety
- Seek to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles
- Incorporate the use of appropriate building materials and techniques which respect local tradition, including aspects of details
- Incorporate necessary and appropriate street lighting and furniture and public art
- Incorporate energy conservation features, water and waste storage collection and recycling arrangements.

Policy H3: Affordable Housing

Developers will be expected to ensure that 40% of the proposed number of dwellings constitutes affordable housing. The Local Planning Authority will consider issues of development viability and mix, including additional costs associated with the development of brownfield sites and the provision of significant community benefits, and may be willing to negotiate a lower percentage of affordable housing.

Policy H5: Mix of Housing

The redevelopment of the site will need to include a mix of house types and sizes, including smaller properties and contribute towards a balanced community structure including meeting the needs of specific groups such as the elderly, the disabled and young, single people.

Policy H7: Special Housing Needs

Elderly persons' flats, sheltered housing or similar specialist accommodation will be acceptable on sites appropriate for residential development provided that the proposed development is designed to meet the specific needs of residents including requirements for disabled persons where appropriate; the location of the development is close to community shopping and services and public transport facilities and the proposed development does not create an over-concentration of similar accommodation in any one street or area.

Policy E1: Existing Employment Land and Premises

The redevelopment of existing employment land and premises for existing employment and alternative employment uses will be supported, subject to satisfying other policies in the Plan.

The loss of industrial, warehousing, office and business land or premises for any purpose other than those uses will not be permitted unless:

- a) It is evident that the existing use has created overriding environmental problems; or
- b) It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not diminish unacceptably the existing local supply of land or units available.

Criterion (a) does not apply to residential development or mixed use development incorporating an element of housing.

Policy IM1: Developer Contributions

Planning permission for development will be granted only where applicants can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority and in accordance with the criteria in Circular 5/05 that the infrastructure required to service and support the proposed development can be provided.

The local planning authority will expect such infrastructure provided by the developer, either on or off the site, to be an integral part of the development. Alternatively, it may be secured by means of financial contributions paid by the developer to the appropriate service providers and/or by the provision of land for the infrastructure.

The requirements of this policy will be met either by the imposition of appropriate planning conditions on a planning permission or by means of obligations contained in legal agreements

in accordance with planning guidance and any subsequent replacement Supplementary Planning Document on developer contributions.

4 REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Principles

4.1 The identification of the physical and policy constraints operating in and around this site sets the principles for redevelopment opportunities. These principles are set out below to guide future development proposals.

Principle 1

4.2 Redevelopment proposals should seek to present the historical features on the site in a positive way.

Principle 2

4.3 Redevelopment proposals should relate well to the lie of the land, geography and history of the place as well as the pattern and scale of existing development.

Principle 3

4.4 The proposed development should respect important views and where possible create new views. New views should have a positive impact.

Principle 4

4.5 New development proposals on site must seek to protect the privacy and amenities of existing properties in the vicinity of the site. Development proposals which would have a detrimental impact on amenity will not be supported.

Principle 5

4.6 Residential proposals which may include very sheltered accommodation should seek to create a neighbourhood, which is socially mixed and inclusive. Whilst the majority of residential units are expected to be apartments, the LPA will seek a proportion of family dwellings in the residential mix to help ensure a balance of household types.

Principle 6

4.7 Redevelopment proposals should seize the opportunity to develop this site as a new high quality residential quarter and ensure the constraints to development, including the retention of mature trees which make a positive contribution to the townscape, form an important element of overall development proposals. Attention would need to be given to the

management of open space, communal areas and trees and responsibility for maintenance of historic features/monuments.

Principle 7

- 4.8 To address flood risk redevelopment proposals should seek to reduce the impermeable nature of the site as much as possible. This could be achieved by ensuring that external car parking areas are permeable. Further measures such as depressed parking areas and internal parking courts at semi-basement level may be suitable, subject to archaeological constraints.

Principle 8

- 4.9 . Any redevelopment proposals relating to the Swan Lane / Raingate Street frontage will need to make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

Principle 9

- 4.10 Proposals could aim to retain the main Shire Hall building for conversion. Any proposal for replacement of the existing Shire Hall building should not encroach forward (west) into the area of open space and should respect its juxtaposition with the adjacent listed building.

Principle 10

- 4.11 Due to the archaeological significance of the site, new building development within the Medieval Precinct will not be permitted. Rebuilding on the footprint of existing buildings may be appropriate subject to other constraints.

Principle 11

- 4.12 The potential impacts on the setting of listed buildings and the relationship with the listed buildings in and around the site and their vulnerability to change should be given careful consideration. The LPA will seek high quality, efficient and innovative design which respects the character of the conservation area and Listed Buildings nearby.

Principle 12

- 4.13 Development shall respect the attractive riverside setting and proximity to the Local Nature Reserve should be used to best advantage for the future residents of the development and for existing local residents.

Development Concept

- 4.14 A basis for redeveloping the site is illustrated in Figure 5 showing the site and a proposal set within the context of the surrounding area.

- 4.15 The massing proposal in this scenario respects not only the constraints of the site but also very importantly the pattern and scale of existing development.
- 4.16 Key views to the Precinct wall are retained as well as to the Abbey Precinct. Views to the River Linnet and No Man's Meadows Local Nature Reserve are respected.
- 4.17 The Protected Open Space and significant trees, including the major trees to the west, south and east of the Shire Hall are retained, along with the riverside tree belt. New development proposed will take advantage of the setting and views over green space and be designed so that the character of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Buildings and Conservation Area are preserved, and generally make a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance.
- 4.18 In the Shire Hall site, north of the Precinct Wall either refurbishment or development within the footprint of existing buildings is proposed so that the archaeological remains are not harmed. The refurbishment of two buildings in the north east corner is suggested along with new build/refurbishment of the other buildings to a courtyard development.
- 4.19 It is suggested that the New Shire Hall should be refurbished and converted to flats, with new build of townhouses or flats to the east forming an open courtyard in conjunction with the Shire Hall. Potential for further flats/apartments may exist to the east taking advantage of views across the river. It is suggested that the buildings to the immediate north of New Shire Hall have potential to be converted to residential use.