



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016

Planning Guidance Note: Vinefields, East Close, Bury St Edmunds, Concept Statement

Adopted 2007



A Framework for Development

**REPLACEMENT ST EDMUNDSBURY
BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2016**

VINEFIELDS, EAST CLOSE, BURY ST EDMUNDS

**Proposed Housing Development
& Recreational Open Space**

CONCEPT STATEMENT

ADOPTED 2007

**Planning and Engineering Services
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PREFACE

This concept statement has been prepared by the Borough Council and provides guidance on how land at Vinefields, East Close, Bury St Edmunds, allocated in Policy BSE2 of the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016, will be developed. The concept statement has been prepared in accordance with Policy DS4 of the Plan and, subject to Full Council approval in October 2007, was approved by the Council's Cabinet as non-statutory planning guidance on 1 August 2007.

The concept statement has been the subject of consultation undertaken by the Borough Council. Comments received as a result of the consultation have been considered and, where appropriate, the concept statement has been amended to resolve these issues. The concept statement will guide the production of a masterplan, prepared by developers which will, along with the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016, provide a basis by which any planning application for development on the area covered by it will be determined.

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Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016 Concept Statement VINEFIELDS, EAST CLOSE, BURY ST. EDMUNDS

1. Introduction

The Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan identifies land at Vinefields Farm off Eastgate Street, Bury St Edmunds for housing development and recreational open space. The allocation requires the development to be guided by a masterplan which is to be prepared by the landowners / developers and this in turn is to be informed by a Concept Statement. This Concept Statement sets out the Borough Council's planning requirements for the allocated site and, provides a basis for the approval of the ensuing masterplan.



2. Concept Statements

A concept statement is a simple, clear expression 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 in statutory local plan policies or maps. The production of a concept statement for major sites is a key recommendation of the 1998 DETR publication Housing Layouts - Lifting the Quality. It suggests that the concept statement should begin the design process and be a forerunner to a planning brief. It should be imaginative, positive, ambitious, practical and open up design opportunities, and indicate how local plan policy and other guidance would be interpreted on a specific site.

3. Policy Context

Policy BSE2 of the Replacement Local Plan identifies 3.5 hectares of land for 50 houses and recreational open space. The supporting text, in paragraph 13.5, states that work must be 'carried out to manage noise from the nearby A14 and that the important views from the town centre to Moreton Hall are not harmed.'



Other relevant policies of particular importance in the Local Plan are:

- Policy DS3: Development Design and Impact
- Policy H3: Affordable Housing
- Policy H4: Housing Density
- Policy H5 Mix of Housing
- Policy L4: Standards of Open Space and Recreation Provision
- Policy HC6: New Development in Conservation Areas
- Policy NE1: Impact of Development on Sites of Biodiversity and Geological Importance
- Policy NE2: Protected Species
- Policy NE3: Protection of the Landscape

4. The Site

The site is the remnant of a field, once reaching down to the Abbey precincts, and is well situated to relate to the Eastgate approach into the town centre. Despite the presence of good soil and drainage, the current agricultural use is incongruous in relation to both its urban and amenity setting; development of this site can resolve this. The elevated southern part plays an important landscape role and is in view to and from the town centre. The northern half drops down behind the rear of the Conservation Area development fronting Eastgate Street.

The western boundary of the site is formed by the A14 dual-carriageway trunk road. To the north are rear gardens of houses fronting Eastgate Street and Josselyn's Court housing for the frail elderly. The north-eastern boundary of the site is formed by Davers Court, a residential home for the elderly and Scope's East Anglia Family Help Unit. The remainder of the eastern boundary is formed by Shaker's Lane, a footpath and cycleway that is part of National Cycle Route 51.

The southern boundary of the allocation is formed by a further footpath and cycleway linking the town centre with Moreton Hall. The cycleway is also part of National Cycle Route 51.

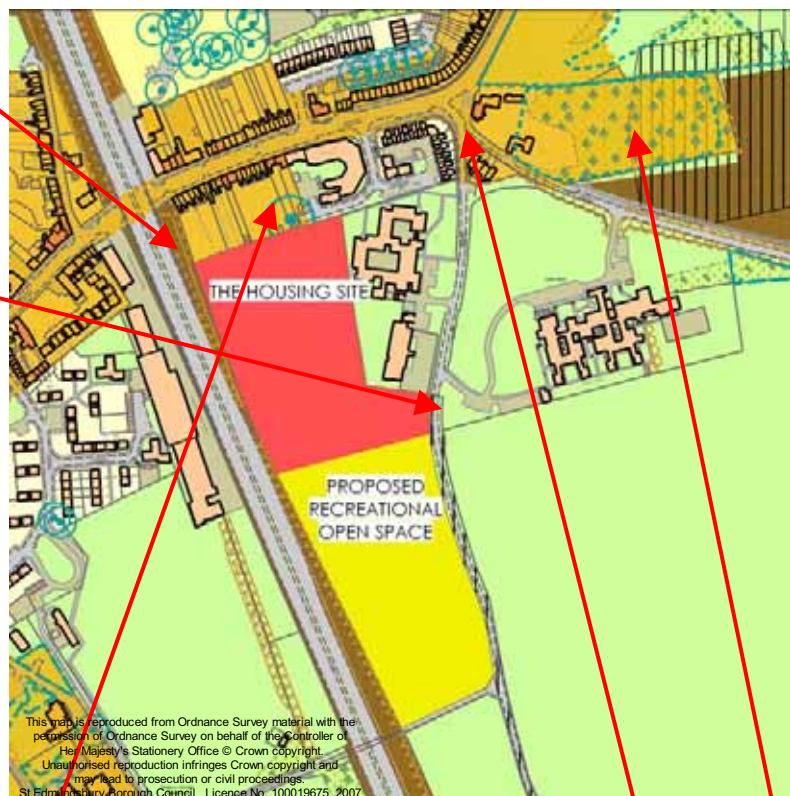
5. Constraints

There are no planning constraints on the allocated sites itself, other than those placed by Policy BSE2 of the Local Plan. However, there are a number of designations in the immediate vicinity of the site that must be taken account of in preparing development proposals.

- The verge between the western boundary of the site and the A14 carriageway is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.
- Shaker's Lane, from the southern boundary of the Scope property, is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. However, the Council has received a copy of a letter from English Nature to Savills dated 8 May 2006 that states:

"The special interest of Shaker's lane, the Barberry carpet moth, has not been found there since 1995, despite annual searches and the planting of more barberry bushes.....English Nature would not, therefore, object to development [on the allocated site] on the basis of its effect on the moth."

- A Holly tree adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is preserved by a Tree Preservation Order. The nearby Rowan tree should also be protected, unless it is absolutely necessary for its removal. There is a presumption in favour of keeping other existing trees and hedgerows on the site wherever possible.
- The boundary of the Conservation Area (*coloured light brown on the map*) runs along much of the northern boundary of the site and some of the residential properties to the north are listed Grade II.
- In the vicinity of the site, between Mount Road and Eastgate Street is a further SSSI (Glen Chalk Caves) which could place restrictions on the nature of development on this site.
- Developers will be required to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment and Archaeological Assessment.



6. Development Principles

Development proposals on this site should seek to deliver the following:

- Vehicular access should be gained from East Close;
- Emergency vehicular access to Shaker's Lane will be considered subject to the satisfaction of the highways authority and in consultation with SCOPE, Davers Court and Priory School. Consideration should be given to the minimal and regulated use of this access for construction vehicles;
- 40% of all housing should be affordable within the definition of Policy H3 of the Local Plan;
- Informal recreational open space should be provided at the southern end of the site and transferred to the Borough Council upon completion unless developers satisfactorily demonstrate to the Council at the masterplanning stage why the recreational open space should not be transferred; and
- If possible, a pedestrian and cycle link to Eastgate Street between the A14 verge and 103 Eastgate Street, extending through the site to Shakers Lane and the A14 footbridge at the southern end of the site.

7. Design Guidance

The housing development should draw upon the adjacent strong urban character whilst resolving presently exposed and untidy boundaries. The southern extent of the housing must not exceed the line indicated in the adopted Local Plan. There is potential to create contained views within the built form, contrasting with external vistas opened up to the south.

While East Close provides road access into the site, it is obscure and the indirect approach requires a focal point to make it inviting and setting the standard for the urban quality of the development beyond. The development should therefore create a high quality pedestrian friendly urban space that will provide a setting for high density housing around it as well as providing a sense of place that would be in keeping with the Conservation Area.

From the enclosure of the new space, a tree-lined avenue could present a vista out towards the informal recreation open space to the south while providing access to the remainder of the site. The carriageway should not be allowed to dominate the urban form and opportunities for shared surfaces should be explored with the highways authority. Designs should have particular regard to the guidance in the Government publication "Manual for Streets". A strong urban form would need to give way to a softer form of development as the site is traversed and relief given to linear patterns. The housing at the southern end should face and engage the remaining open field that in turn should be transformed into a landscaped but informal open space.



Figure 1 Gap between Eastgate Street and A14



Figure 2 - East Close

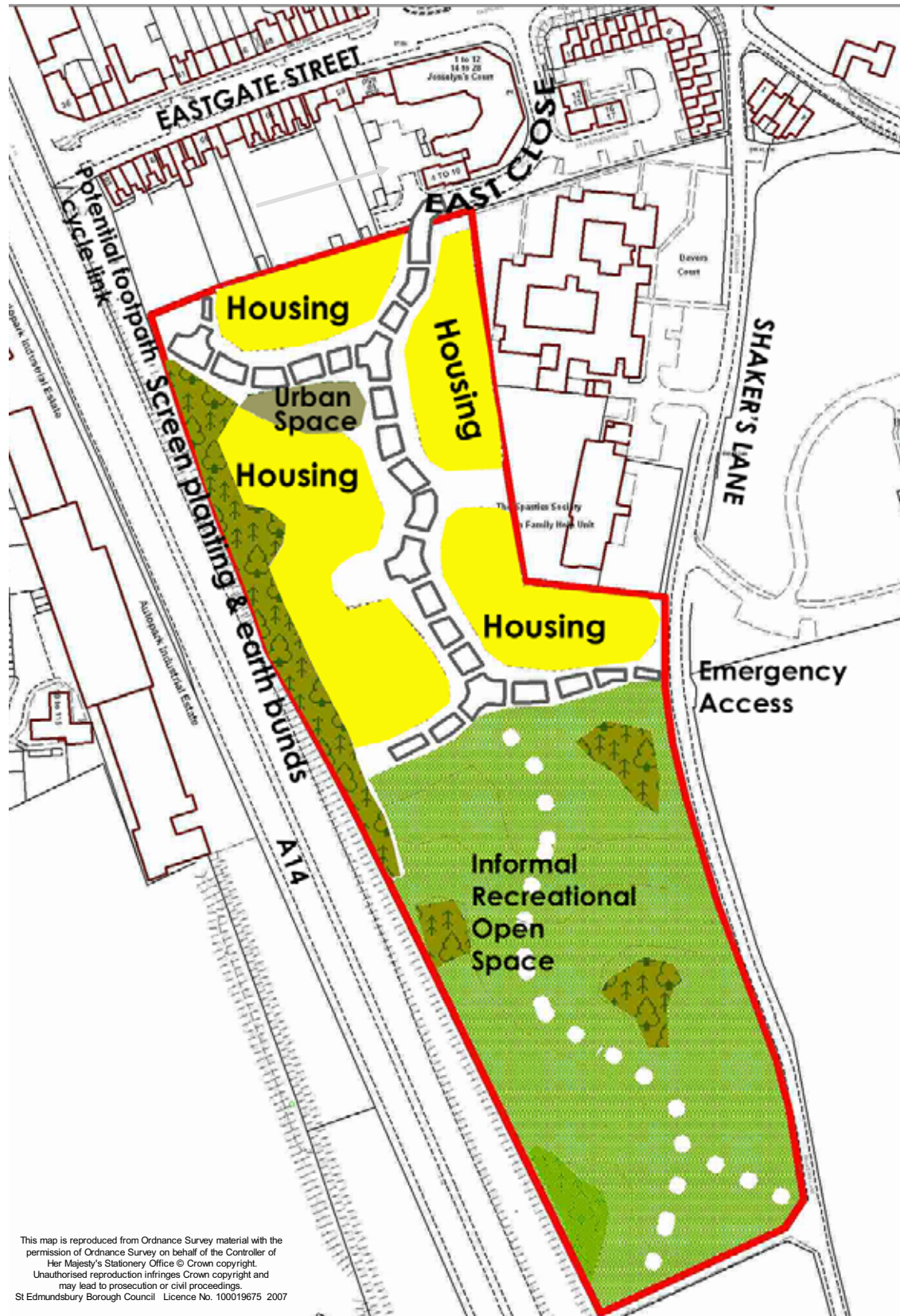
Routes through the development should extend to Shakers Lane to provide cycle and pedestrian links that could also provide emergency access. The western boundary requires to be protected from the A14 by-pass by incorporating acoustic fencing, earth bunds, planting and changes to building orientation. Opportunities to access existing Eastgate Street rear gardens to facilitate parking should not be ruled out.

Opportunities should be taken to enhance the wildlife as well as amenity value to existing landscape along both Shakers Lane and the A14 corridors.

8. Concept Layout

The main north-south axis for the avenue should be placed towards the eastern part of the site thus enabling a more varied orientation to the development pattern against the western edge. It is suggested that earth bunds with concentrated planting would provide a much-needed softening interface with the A14 and should be placed away from dwellings.

Housing blocks should be arranged to contain private space whilst creating an interesting yet continuous street frontage. At appropriate break points along the avenue, building dominant compositions should give way to a softer mix with landscape. Most importantly, the layout must engage the new open amenity space to the south by creating attractive open frontages. Road access is seen giving way to footpath routes extending into a more sculptured landscape using soil claimed from the development area.



The masterplan should demonstrate how proposals for high density living will not compromise quality or amenity. The provision and location of play spaces should accord with the Council's standards set out in Appendix E of the Local Plan. Similarly, the car parking standards in the Local Plan should be viewed as a maximum given the sites close proximity to the Historic Core.



**Planning Policy & Specialist Services
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