

HATFIELD TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

REVISED PLANNING BRIEF
JULY 2002



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Executive Summary

A Planning Brief for 'Town Centre East'

This is an executive summary to accompany the development brief. Expanded details are contained within the development brief itself, together with illustrative material and Design Guidance.

Vision

Welwyn Hatfield Council and English Partnerships are the principal parties aiming to secure the regeneration of the Town Centre East site in Hatfield. The overall vision for this regeneration is the comprehensive and co-ordinated redevelopment of the Town Centre East site to ensure a viable and vital town centre. The vision is for a centre which realises its potential as a sustainable, attractive, safe, clean and lively place for those who wish to shop, work, reside or relax in it.

Redevelopment Area

The redevelopment area extends some 3.3 hectares (8.1 acres) and comprises the majority of the eastern end of Hatfield town centre.

Planning Policy

The Council with its partner English Partnerships has taken the opportunity, as part of the Review of the District Plan, to be pro-active in its approach to secure a redeveloped and revitalised town centre for Hatfield. The Review has set in place the necessary planning policies in order to comprehensively tackle Hatfield town centre's problems and opportunities. This development brief is the stepping stone between the District Plan Review and a planning application for the site.

Development Concept

The development concept focuses on creating a vibrant heart for Hatfield. It proposes a new town square surrounded by new retail, leisure, housing and community uses along with a pedestrian spine that connects the town centre to a new bus interchange, car parks and the existing Asda store. It is intended that routes through the town centre would converge at this focus in order to knit the development together and reinforce the centre.

Components of the Development

The principal objective of the Town Centre East development is to secure a high quality, mixed-use redevelopment. This will provide modern retail floor space with associated leisure, food and beverage as well as community uses. Housing, together with amenities for residents and shoppers such as car parking, public realm improvements and improved transport facilities will also be incorporated. It is anticipated that this mix will build on Hatfield's existing strengths and help regenerate the town centre by boosting its vitality and viability.

Retail & Leisure: It is considered that the Town Centre East site could accommodate a minimum of 11,000 sq m (120,000 sq ft) (net) of retail floorspace. Leisure uses will be encouraged in addition to the retail provision.

Offices: An appropriate provision of small office suites at first or second floor level would be acceptable as part of a mixed use scheme.

Housing: The Council and English Partnerships recognise the benefit of providing housing within the town centre and will expect to see the provision of new housing within the scheme as a means of bringing back life into the heart of Hatfield. Housing can support an after hours economy, improve safety within the town, add to the mix of uses and provide accommodation for a range of households. The scheme must include a proportion key worker and affordable housing to assist in addressing local housing needs.

Community Facilities: It is expected the developer will provide as part of their proposals for the co-location of community facilities currently located within the town centre, including the library, health centre, council offices and community meeting rooms.

Markets: It is considered that any development proposals should be focused around a new town square at the heart of the development, which could provide space for the existing markets.

New Bus Interchange: The Council and English Partnerships will wish to see a new bus interchange within the redevelopment area. The most favoured location is on the site of the existing Market Place.

Car Parking: In order to accommodate the amount of car parking required by a regenerated town centre, the Commons car park is likely to be in need of readjustment and enlargement.

Design Guidance

Development principles have been devised to form a set of practical design guidelines that will enable the new development to deliver a vibrant town centre. These are not a prescriptive guide to redevelopment, but a mix of examples and suggestions that meet the requirements of the Council and English Partnerships.

Implementation

The brief provides the basic parameters to guide developers in drawing up their proposals for the redevelopment. The Council and English Partnerships will work together to assist the nominated development partner to bring forward the new scheme.

Land Ownership: Both the Council and English Partnerships benefit from small pockets of freehold ownership on the redevelopment sites. These elements however only constitute a small proportion of the total site required for the redevelopment. Accordingly, in order to bring forward the redevelopment the existing land interests in the site will need to be acquired.

Existing Traders: Where possible the redevelopment should be phased in such a way as to minimise any disruption to the trading patterns of existing occupiers to be accommodated in the new development, including market traders.

Introduction

Purpose of the Brief

1.1 This brief has been produced to guide the formulation of development proposals for the redevelopment of the eastern sector of Hatfield Town Centre ("Town Centre East"), pursuant to proposed policies contained in the District Plan Review (June 2002). It forms a stepping stone between the provisions of the development plan and the requirements of a planning application.

1.2 The brief has been jointly prepared by Welwyn Hatfield Council and English Partnerships, with assistance from Hertfordshire County Council, Hatfield Town Council, external consultants and other relevant bodies and agencies. It has been prepared following extensive consultation with the community regarding the future of Hatfield town centre.

1.3 Once adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Council this brief will be a material consideration against which any planning applications submitted in respect of land covered by this guidance will be determined.

Vision

1.4 The Council's overall vision for the town centre is the comprehensive and co-ordinated redevelopment of the Town Centre East site to ensure a viable and vital town centre as a whole, a centre which realises its potential as a sustainable, attractive, safe, clean, lively place for those who wish to shop, work, reside or relax in it. The aim is to create a centre which not only serves, but is a proud asset of, its local community.

1.5 In the longer term, once the redevelopment proposals have given the town centre a firm footing, there is potential for further remodelling of the centre.

1.6 The Council's vision is of three locations - Hatfield Town Centre, The Galleria, and the district centre on the Aerodrome site - working *together* to serve Hatfield.

1.7 The Council's objectives for the redevelopment area are to:

- a) Secure new shopping development in the town centre, in order to enhance the quality of retail provision;*
- b) Encourage a greater mix and diversity of uses in the town centre, including leisure, restaurants/pubs/cafes and residential;*
- c) Provide new community facilities;*
- d) Improve access for pedestrians and cyclists to and from the town centre;*
- e) Integrate public transport facilities within the town centre;*
- f) Enhance the environment of the centre; and*
- g) Facilitate dedicated transport links between the Town Centre, The Galleria, Old Hatfield and the new district centre on the Hatfield Aerodrome site, and enable these centres to work together in providing services for Hatfield"*

1.8 The objectives have been developed over a number of years in the context of:

- ◆ the Council's planning policies that have developed in accordance with national planning policy guidance;
- ◆ advice from specialist consultants;
- ◆ local needs and aspirations expressed through on-going public consultation;
- ◆ Regeneration work undertaken by WHARP for the Hatfield area as a whole (see below).

Hatfield Town Centre & Surroundings

1.9 Hatfield is located in Hertfordshire, directly north of London, and only 5 miles from the M25. Hatfield Town Centre lies between, and equidistant, from the A1(M) and Hatfield train station, both at approximately ten minutes walk.

1.10 The Town Centre was built in the 1950's and 1960's as a shopping and service centre to meet the needs of the community of Hatfield new town. However, during the 1980's and 1990's, the town centre declined as a result of changes in shopping patterns, competition from newer centres, the restructuring of the Hatfield economy and the ageing of the town centre infrastructure. Recently, however, Asda successfully redeveloped its store at the western end of the town centre that now provides an attractive anchor within the town centre.

1.11 The Galleria outlet shopping and leisure centre straddles the A1(M) and also lies 500m or 10 minutes walk away. The Galleria currently provides factory outlet retailing and leisure facilities, which serves Hatfield but also draws on a catchment beyond the district boundary.

1.12 Just to the west of The Galleria is the Aerodrome site. The Aerodrome site is being developed for mixed uses including: a new Hertfordshire University campus, including 1,600 student residencies; new business floorspace, approaching 200,000 sq.m. (part of which has already been acquired by T-Mobile as their Headquarters); and residential (at least 1,600 units). A local centre and parkland are also features of the development. The new local centre on the Aerodrome site will provide local convenience retailing and some leisure facilities to serve the new residential development on the site. The transportation links, including public transport and cycle/pedestrian routes, will be created between the Aerodrome site and the rest of the town, in particular to the town centre.

1.13 The town centre along with The Galleria will provide the higher order shopping and leisure facilities to serve the new Aerodrome site development.

1.14 In response to the declining role of the town centre, Welwyn Hatfield Council has been drawing up a regeneration strategy for Hatfield. It has set up a partnership (known as Welwyn Hatfield Area Regeneration Partnership – WHARP) to work with public, private and voluntary sector agencies in the town on employment, training, community development, education, and physical infrastructure projects. A key part of this is a strategy for the redevelopment of the town centre.

The Redevelopment Area – “Town Centre East”

1.15 The extent of the redevelopment area is shown within the red line on the plan on page 6.

1.16 The area extends to some 3.3 hectares (8.1 acres) and comprises the entire eastern half of Hatfield town centre. It covers approximately one-half of the town centre’s total area. It is bounded on three sides by Wellfield Road to the north-east, Queensway to the south-east, and The Common to the north-west. There is potential for other adjoining land within the town centre to be included in the site, if this would result in a more comprehensive and integrated development scheme.

1.17 The redevelopment area currently functions as an integral part of the town centre, providing a variety of retail units. As such it comprises a mixture of buildings, pedestrianised areas and car parks, with limited amounts of landscaping in raised beds. A range of residential accommodation exists over retail premises overlooking White Lion Square. The majority of buildings are two storey in height, though The Arcade, for example, is single storey, and White Lion House is four storey.

1.18 The town centre and surrounding land are largely flat, with no prominent geographical features of note in the immediate vicinity.

Partnership

1.19 Welwyn Hatfield Council and English Partnerships are the principal parties aiming to secure the regeneration of the Town Centre East site. Invaluable assistance has also been gained from a wide range of public and private organisations.

1.20 Taking the lead role, the Council’s key responsibilities lie in the facilitation of the development and advice on planning, property, transport and environmental issues.

1.21 English Partnerships is the national organisation delivering regeneration and development. It works in partnership to create new jobs, housing and investment through sustainable economic regeneration and development in the English regions. It also helps to provide quality places for people to live and work, to the highest standards of design, sustainability and environmental benefit.

1.22 A suitable private sector developer will be nominated by the two parties to bring together the funding and expertise to complete the land assembly, development and operation of the facilities. The most appropriate mechanisms to achieve these objectives are to be established in due course.

Land Ownership

1.23 The land ownership pattern in the town centre is fragmented. Whilst the Council and English Partnerships have limited ownership in the redevelopment area, the rest of the land is held by a variety of local and national owner occupiers, institutional and smaller scale individual investors.

1.24 The Council and English Partnerships anticipate working closely with their development partner to assemble all the land required to bring forward the redevelopment. This is considered further in Part 6 ‘Implementation’ of this brief.

Public Consultation

1.25 An integral part of the Council's consideration of the redevelopment area has been its commitment to inform and consult with the public. Some of the key stages in the consultation process to date have been:

- i). WHARP awareness event in Hatfield town centre on 10/11 March 2000, which attracted over 1500 people, produced 160 written comment slips and 60 volunteers. Regular meetings with the resultant Community Panel have followed.
- ii). An exhibition on the draft Development Brief in the town centre on 1st December 2001, which was attended by over 1,400 people.
- iii). Working with young people on a regular basis to gain young people's views.
- iv). Meetings with traders, residents and landowners of Hatfield town centre in January and November 2001.
- v). District Plan Review placed on deposit at the end of January 2001, with direct communication with interested bodies and press coverage about the plan, including the redevelopment proposals for Hatfield town centre. The revised Plan was placed on deposit in June 2002.
- vi). Regular letters sent to all known residents, landowners and businesses in the town centre.
- vii). Publication of a regular news leaflet about the town centre redevelopment, posted direct to all those with a legal interest in the town centre and made available for local residents.
- viii). General press coverage throughout.

1.26 A separate Consultation Statement is available summarising in more detail the stages of consultation which have been undertaken.

The Redevelopment Process

1.27 The following flow diagram indicates the process towards redevelopment.

October 1998

Vincent and Gorbng undertook an "Assessment of Retail Floorspace Requirements" in the District, which was updated in October 2001. In summary, this work suggests that there is capacity in the catchment to accommodate an additional 14,900 sq m of retail floorspace.

June 2000

WHARP appointed DTZ to advise on the potential for the redevelopment of Hatfield town centre. DTZ, in their report, "A Redevelopment Strategy for Hatfield Town Centre", found that there was sufficient demand to support a redevelopment of the eastern end of the town centre, and that a scheme was viable.

January 2001 - 1st Deposit Version

Draft District Plan Review published, which set in place the planning framework for the redevelopment proposals.

Summer 2001

Building Design Partnership and DTZ commissioned to work alongside the District Council, English Partnerships, Hertfordshire County Council, Hatfield Town Council and other partners, in order to prepare a development brief for the redevelopment site.

November - December 2001

Published Draft Development Brief published for consultation.

December 2001 - January 2002

Responses considered.

March - April 2002

Site marketed to developers.

May - October 2002

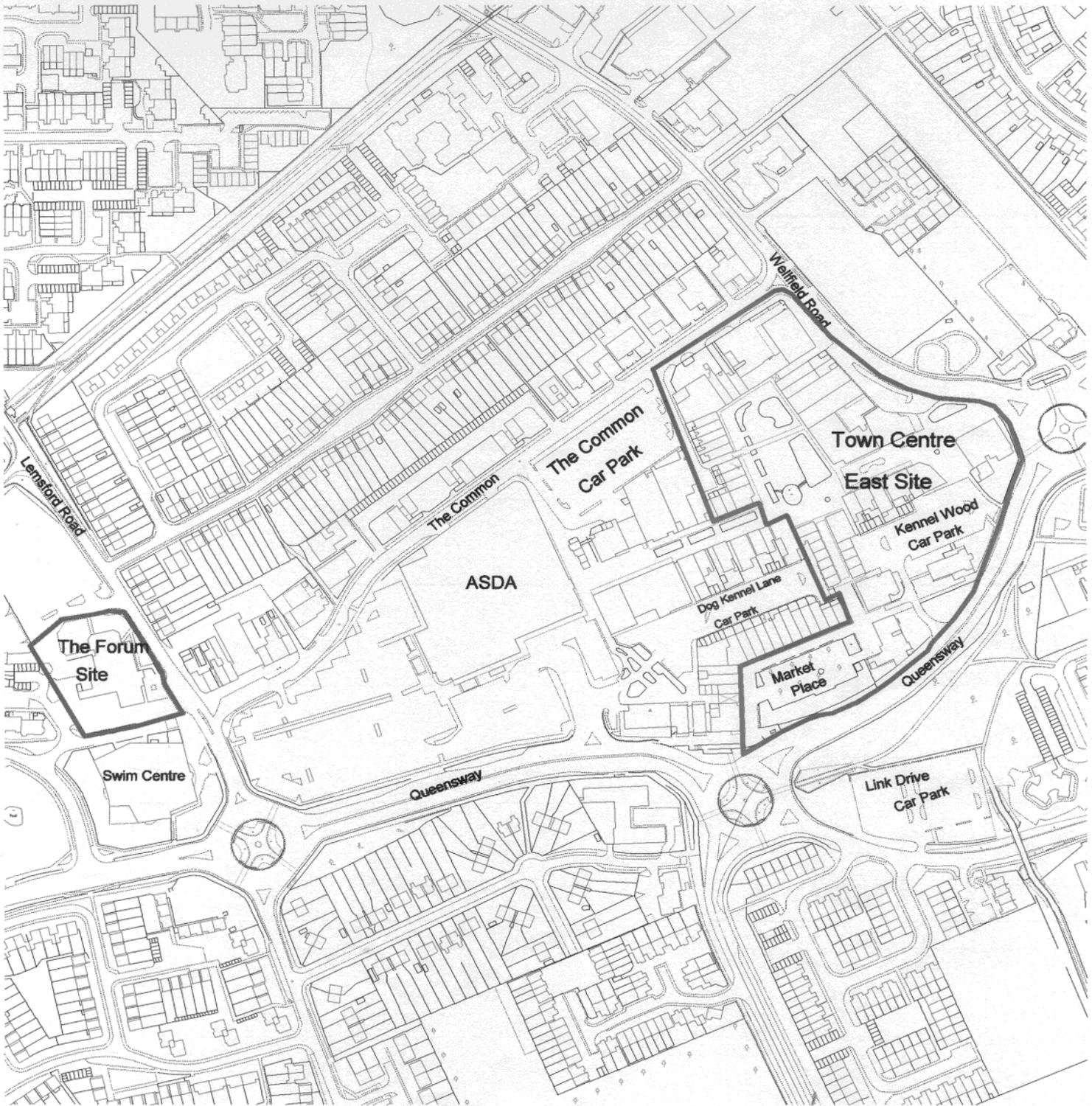
Developer selection.

Mid 2003

Planning Application

2004

Earliest that development likely to commence



Hatfield Town Centre Redevelopment
Site Plan
July 2002

Planning Policy

National and Regional Planning Guidance

2.1 The Government's Urban White Paper (2000) seeks to make towns and cities vibrant and successful.

2.2 The Paper acknowledges that the quality of the environment in town and city centres has an important impact on how people see these areas and, in turn, whether they feel comfortable using them. *"If we are to revitalise town and city centres we need to ensure that they are welcoming, safe and convenient"* (page 70). A key aim of this development brief is to revitalise Hatfield Town Centre in order to achieve many of the goals of the White Paper.

2.3 The Government's Planning Policy Guidance for Town Centres is largely contained within PPG 6 "Town Centres and Retail Developments" (1996).

2.4 The key features of PPG 6 are;

- ♦ *an emphasis on a plan-led approach to promoting development in town centres, in particular for retail and leisure;*
- ♦ *promotion of mixed-use development in town centres, which compliment each other and add variety, including residential;*
- ♦ *emphasis on the importance of a coherent town centre parking strategy in maintaining urban vitality, through a combination of location, management and pricing of parking for different user groups; and*
- ♦ *promotion of good urban design, including attractive and secure car parks.*

2.5 PPG 13 "Transport" (March 2001) promotes easy accessibility to shopping, leisure facilities and services, and at the same time aims to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. Investment and redevelopment proposals for town centres, which increase accessibility and reduce the need to travel by car, would be compatible with PPG13.

2.6 The Council is confident that this development brief, and the associated policies contained within the emerging District Plan, are compatible with all of the above government objectives.

2.7 Policy Q5 of Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (March 2001) reaffirms the guidance given in PPG6.

Development Plan: Hertfordshire Structure Plan

2.8 The Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review (1998) identifies town centres as the preferred location for developments that attract many trips. Policy 4 "Town Centres" states, in part, that the priorities will be to;

- ♦ *Secure an appropriate range of shopping and service facilities;*
- ♦ *Improve accessibility to those facilities, recognising the particular role that passenger transport can make with the centre as a hub;*
- ♦ *Improve security and safety;*

- ♦ *Encourage housing and mixed-use developments;*
- ♦ *Provide for a range of cultural, leisure and social facilities; and*
- ♦ *Provide a high quality environment.*

2.9 Policies 16 and 17 of the Structure Plan further seek to promote viability and vitality of town centres, including listing Hatfield as a recognised 'town centre' in the retailing hierarchy of Hertfordshire.

2.10 With respect to transport, policies 22, 23 and 29 of the Structure Plan are relevant. These aim to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and encourage the building up of networks and facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. The latter policy aims to ensure that, as part of any development proposals, the traffic and road safety implications are considered.

2.11 The Council is, therefore confident that the proposals as set out in this draft development brief are entirely compatible with, and help to achieve, the aims and objectives of the Structure Plan.

Development Plan: Welwyn Hatfield District Plan

2.12 The adopted Local Plan is the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review Alterations No. 1 which was adopted in 1998. Policy HAT3 encourages proposals for redevelopment in Hatfield Town Centre. However, no substantial proposals were forthcoming.

2.13 As such, the Council has taken the opportunity, as part of the Review of the District Plan, to be proactive in its approach to secure a redeveloped and revitalised town centre for Hatfield. The Review has set in place the necessary planning policies in order to comprehensively tackle Hatfield town centre's problems and opportunities.

2.14 The proposal for a comprehensive redevelopment of the eastern end of Hatfield Town Centre was introduced as a formal planning policy proposal (Policy TCR14) as part of the first deposit Plan Review (January 2001).

2.15 A limited number of representations were made to the first deposit Plan with respect to the above policy, most in support but also 9 in the form of formal objections. The Council has considered those objections and some changes have been made to the policy. The revised Plan was published in June 2002; the revised Policy TCR14 is set out at paragraph 2.20. The Council aims to adopt the District Plan Review by 2004.

Local Transport Plan

2.16 Whilst not forming part of the formal 'development plan' for the area, Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (July 2000) contains provisions for improvements to the transportation network in the County. Of particular relevance to Hatfield are the transportation measures outlined within the "Mid-Herts Package" element of the Local Transport Plan. Proposals for Hatfield town centre will need to make reference to this document.

Purpose, Scope and Status of the Brief

2.17 The purpose of this Brief is to provide guidance, supplementing, elucidating and exemplifying the policies of the District Plan Review. Further details of its purpose and scope can be found in DETR's "Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice".

2.18 This Brief:

- ◆ *Will ensure that the site is developed in a cohesive and comprehensive manner.*
- ◆ *Confirms the type, form and mix of new development to be achieved on the site.*
- ◆ *Sets out the key design principles that will set the quality of the environment to be created.*
- ◆ *Identify those matters which the developer must have regard to.*

2.19 This document has been prepared by Welwyn Hatfield Council in accordance with the provisions of the currently Adopted District Plan of 1998, and the emerging District Plan Review, to constitute supplementary planning guidance in line with the advice provided in paragraphs 3.18 and 3.19 and Planning Policy Guidance note 12 (PPG 12) – “Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance”.

2.20 The District Plan Review has not yet been adopted and therefore it is not an approved development plan for the purposes of s54a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. However, the Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation and in accordance with advice given in paragraph 48 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), “General Policy and Principles”, the Council will attach considerable weight to Policy TCR14 in determining development proposals for the redevelopment site.

POLICY TCR14, Revised Deposit District Plan Review, June 2002

Redevelopment of Land at Eastern End of Hatfield Town Centre

Land at the eastern end of Hatfield town centre, as defined on Inset Map 1, is identified for comprehensive redevelopment for a mixed-use retail-led scheme. Development should only be carried out in accordance with a planning and development brief for the site, to be subject to public consultation and approved by the Council as supplementary planning guidance, which will give detailed guidance on the amount of floorspace, mix of uses, design, access and servicing.

The Development Strategy

Introduction

3.1 In line with government advice for the planning of town centres the principal objective is to secure a mixed use redevelopment of the Town Centre East site. This will provide modern retail floor space with associated leisure, food and beverage, community uses and housing, together with amenities for residents and shoppers such as car parking, public realm improvements and improved transport facilities. It is anticipated that this re-development scheme will build on Hatfield's existing strengths and help regenerate the town centre by boosting its vitality and viability.

Town Centre Opportunities

3.2 Hatfield currently has many of the basic ingredients to make a successful town centre. There are already some reasonable quality buildings and mixed use developments in the heart of the town. There are a number of established attractions such as Asda, the Swim Centre, and the highly successful and popular monthly Farmers Market that can be used to promote the town and generate more footfall in the Town Centre. Furthermore the Galleria and station are only ten minutes on foot from the town centre, and offer the opportunity of encouraging linked trips. The new University Campus on the Hatfield Aerodrome site will also introduce a large number of students within 15 minutes of the town centre. A new transport interchange, envisaged by the proposals set out in this brief, will improve accessibility into the town centre day and night, establish an evening economy and create a gateway to the town centre.

Development Concept

3.3 The development concept focuses on creating a vibrant heart for Hatfield. It proposes that routes throughout the town would converge at the centre in order to knit the development together. A heart could be reinforced by creating a new town square and pedestrian spine that connects the town centre to the bus interchange, car parks and existing Asda store. These extend to include existing routes to the Galleria and station. It proposes a development of mixed uses that provide activity, vitality, visual interest, surveillance and vibrancy throughout the town centre.

Components of Development

3.4 The Town Centre East site is defined by the red line boundary shown on the map on page 6. In line with the Development Concept, a high-density mixed-use scheme, focused around a new town square is considered to be the most appropriate solution to the redevelopment. It is expected both in terms of value and design quality that the following approaches and components should be incorporated into the scheme in order to create a more sustainable town centre with an extended evening economy and longer hours of activity. By achieving this, a more vital, successful and commercially viable scheme will be produced.

3.5 Retail & Leisure: It is considered that the Town Centre East site could accommodate a minimum of 11,000 sq m (120,000 sq ft) of retail floorspace. Over and above this, the maximum limit of floorspace will depend on a number of factors including car parking, highway capacity, design and the mix of other uses, including the quantum of residential, offices and leisure. Within this a wide range of unit sizes should be included to reflect the needs of town centre retailers and shoppers. The provision of smaller units will be important to enable existing town centre traders, who want to relocate within the redevelopment area, to have an opportunity to do so.

3.6 It is envisaged that redevelopment will make provision for at least one large retail unit capable of accommodating a retailer of sufficient note to successfully anchor the eastern end of the Town Centre East site. This will balance the strength and high customer turnover of the present Asda store and help to benefit new and existing shops by generating an increased footfall.

3.7 In addition to traditional retail uses, it is recognised that increasingly, leisure forms part of town centre development schemes. The Council and EP therefore welcome mixed retail and leisure proposals for the redevelopment site. In particular, the Council and EP will wish to encourage more A3 uses, such as restaurants and cafes, pubs and wine bars, which can add to the vitality of the town centre, spill out into the town square and public spaces and create activity beyond conventional shopping hours.

3.8 To demonstrate flexibility and to encourage innovative proposals, the Council will not prescribe the precise nature or proportion of retail, A3 and leisure services to be provided on the redevelopment site. The Council will treat all proposals on their merit, although it wishes to emphasise that the main objective of the redevelopment is the provision of retail and will, therefore, expect to see a predominance of retail uses within the proposals.

3.9 It will be important to demonstrate as part of any proposals for the site that, as far as is practically possible, the disruption to trade in the town centre will be kept to a minimum. The phasing of development to permit traders within the redevelopment area to maintain a presence throughout the redevelopment period will be sought by the Council.

3.10 *Offices:* The Council is keen to retain and encourage new small business occupiers in the town centre. The town currently benefits from a variety of small local businesses occupying accommodation on, mainly, the upper floors of retail floor space.

3.11 The main focus for new office provision in the area is however, at the Hatfield Aerodrome site currently being developed by Arlington. It is considered therefore that office floor space should not form a major component of the redevelopment.

3.12 An appropriate provision, however, of small office suites at first or second floor level would be acceptable as part of a mixed use scheme, particularly where residential development may not be appropriate.

3.13 *Housing:* The Council and English Partnerships recognise the benefit of providing housing within the town centre and therefore will wish to see the provision of new housing in the redevelopment scheme as a means of bringing back life into the heart of Hatfield. Housing can support an after hours economy, improve safety within the town, add to the mix of uses and provide accommodation for a range of households.

3.14 Although the site is unlikely to be suitable for traditional family housing, it is considered that the redevelopment offers a major opportunity to provide a variety of dwellings that can be fully integrated within the scheme and with the rest of the town centre. It is anticipated that the scheme will provide a minimum of 100 dwellings.

3.15 Any residential elements to the redevelopment should be located on the upper floors overlooking the town centre and on the edge of the site to create an active frontage to the town centre addressing Wellfield Road and Queensway. Design issues such as this are of critical importance in securing the long term success of the town centre, and the Council will require any redevelopment scheme to achieve high architectural and urban design standards as outlined in section 5.

3.16 In accordance with the policies set out in the emerging District Plan Review, the local housing needs in the district and the government's objectives for key worker and affordable housing in the south-east, the Council and English Partnerships will require an appropriate element of affordable housing as part of the scheme, including some key worker housing. The revised District Plan Review expects 30% of units to be affordable for rent; in addition 10% of units are to be key worker housing. Therefore a total proportion of 40% will be expected from the site for affordable for rent and key worker housing. It is advised that early contact is made with the Council's Housing and Planning departments to determine how this should be provided, including arrangements for grant funding and the selection of preferred RSL partners. A list of the Council's preferred RSL partners is attached at the back of this brief.

3.17 Community Facilities: As part of the redevelopment, the developer must provide for the co-location to one site of those public service facilities currently located within the Town Centre. This includes the library, health centre, Council housing office, Town Council offices and community meeting rooms. The total floorspace requirements for these facilities would be approximately 2,750 sq m, of which approximately 1,600 sq m would need to be on the ground floor, including some 550 sq m for a library. Consideration should be given as to whether this building would be better located on the Forum site adjacent to the town centre and on the strategic link to The Galleria or within the redevelopment site itself. The Forum site is shown by the blue line boundary on the map on page 6.

3.18 In addition, other facilities which are an important part of community life but which are currently deficient in the town centre, such as Post Office facilities, will be encouraged to be provided and to a high standard to meet the expectations of the community.

3.19 The Markets: Any proposals must make provision to accommodate both of the existing markets operating in the town centre – a twice weekly market (60-70 stalls) and a monthly farmers market (50 stalls) – currently an important part of the retail offer and life of the town centre. It is expected that the markets would be located outdoors within the new town square and the pedestrian malls running from it, although consideration may be given to an indoor market hall for the weekly market. Outdoors the town square and other spaces would need to be designed to function as high quality, public spaces when empty and to accommodate stalls and kiosks on market days.

3.20 Contact at an early stage with the Council regarding space requirements for each market (approximately 6,500 people visited around 50 stalls at a recent farmers market) and any development proposals should look to provide currently lacking facilities for the traders, such as water, electricity and toilet facilities. New development should front on to the new town square, maximise retail frontage and provide an active façade.

3.21 During the construction phase or phases, there must be an appropriate provision made to enable both markets to function as 'normally' as possible. Discussion with the Council as to how this may be achieved will be necessary.

3.22 Bus Interchange: The bus interchange is intended to be a landmark facility that helps to integrate town centre activities and create an arrival space. It should provide a public amenity that helps to overcome present negative perceptions of public transport services. It is proposed that a structure be created within the space to accommodate public facilities and an information point. The existing trees within the interchange space should be retained to provide a mature and attractive setting. Materials within the space should be robust and of a high quality that complements the palette of those used in the construction of the rest of the development. Street furniture and signage provide interest and identity for the street. Lighting should be positioned strategically in order to maximise security and surveillance with 'feature' lighting in key spaces.

3.23 The Council's most favoured location is on the site of the existing Market Place. This location provides convenient vehicular access from Queensway and encourages strong pedestrian links to the town centre from the south. The design and layout of the bus interchange will need to carefully take into account surrounding land and property uses, in particular the Market Place shop units.

3.24 Further advice on the interchange, and other transportation matters, are discussed in Part 4.

3.25 *Refurbishment*: It is anticipated that much of the Town Centre East site will be demolished to make way for the new development. Consideration will however be given to the possibility of refurbishment of certain properties if it can be demonstrated that the retention and refurbishment of those buildings will not be detrimental to the overall potential quality that is achievable. The most likely candidate is White Lion House where, due to its robust floor plan, adaptability and location within the town centre, it could be refurbished and/or extended as a mixed-use block.

3.26 A second potential candidate is Kennelwood House (home to Hatfield Town Council), which has interesting architectural features that could be emphasised by the removal of the arcade to its western façade and the reintroduction of the original façade.

3.27 *Density, height & scale*: In order to justify the capacity of the proposed development and provide a sustainable solution to the redevelopment of the town centre, high density will be appropriate. This can be achieved through efficient space planning, robust building typologies and an increase in height. Development around the town centre should relate in scale to the public realm. Buildings of 3-5 storeys in height around the central square may be appropriate subject to evidence that an acceptable environment can be achieved in terms of light and shadow.

3.28 *Public Realm*: The town centre currently possesses a generous arrangement of public open space, but much is in need of upgrading. It is anticipated that the development would create a new town square as a focal point for the scheme and the town centre, linked to the bus interchange, car parks and other parts of the town centre by a series of pedestrian malls and spaces. Therefore, to create a high quality of public realm throughout the centre, the new development should provide for the enhancement and management of existing public spaces outside of the redevelopment area, in particular the route between Asda and the new development and other approaches to the site. High quality street furniture will be vital in ensuring a quality public realm throughout the town centre. Any prospective developer is advised to discuss this matter with the Council.

3.29 Art can play a valuable role in improving the quality of the built environment. Accordingly, it is considered that the redevelopment of the Town Centre East site offers an opportunity to introduce an element of public art into the town, such as in the new town square.

3.30 *Car Parking*: In order to accommodate the amount of car parking generated by a regenerated town centre, The Common car park is likely to be in need of enlargement, possibly as far east as Wellfield Road. This area should not be seen as a 'sea of cars' but as an extension to the public realm and will need careful consideration as part of any development proposals. Well designed, decked or multi storey parking will be considered. The potential for residential developments fronting on to this space should be explored.

3.31 Private car parking and designated parking should be provided for residences within the town centre.

3.32 Further details on car parking requirements are given in Part 4 of this brief.

Transport & Parking

Existing Situation

4.1 Hatfield town centre has been pedestrianised since the 1960's. The pedestrian area, as well as the most convenient car parks, are on an isolated island within a ring of over-designed carriageways.

4.2 Pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre, from outside the ring of carriageways formed by Queensway, Wellfield Road, The Commons and Lemsford Road, is difficult. Access by car is easy, but convenient parking close to the shops, is hard to find, due to the predominance of long stay parking in the best locations.

4.3 Bus services for the town centre are less than ideal, as the stops are not centralised in one location. A considerable walk can be required, including crossing Queensway, to find the appropriate stop. Identifying the appropriate stop in the first place can be difficult.

4.4 Servicing of the majority of the retail and office units takes place from car parks, resulting in an undesirable mix of heavy traffic and pedestrians.

4.5 The redevelopment of Hatfield Town Centre East site offers an opportunity to positively tackle some of the above issues.

Bus Interchange and Taxis

4.6 A new bus interchange is required as an integral part of the scheme. The preferred location is in the position of the existing Market Place. Indicative layout plans are available from the County Council's Passenger Transport Unit.

4.7 The following specific requirements need to be accommodated:

- (i) Provision for at least 4 stops, with space for a minimum of two additional buses (either as layover space or as double stop lengths).
- (ii) Design to be high quality, including surfacing/choice of materials/types of shelter.
- (iii) Design to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements, including wheelchair access.
- (iv) Covered passenger area or bus shelters that are highly visible
- (v) Seating areas.
- (vi) Provision for paper and electronic information systems.
- (vii) Public telephone and nearby toilet facilities.
- (viii) CCTV.
- (ix) Ease of operational access to and from Queensway.
- (x) Integration with main pedestrian routes and safe management of pedestrian crossing movements.

4.8 It is likely that the exit from the bus interchange will require signal control, with bus priority, to facilitate the right turn out of the station. This is likely to necessitate the alteration and incorporation of the existing pedestrian crossing facility, between Link Drive car park and Market Place, in the new arrangements.

4.9 It is required that a formal taxi rank should be provided within the redevelopment area. This rank should be designed to accommodate a minimum of eight taxis, and be located close to, but not within, the bus interchange.

4.10 This above list is not exhaustive. Other significant S.106 contributions towards passenger transport are already in place as a result of development on the Hatfield Aerodrome site and the recent Asda development in the town centre and these will be progressed in conjunction with the proposals envisaged in this brief. Further details on these are available from the District Council.

Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities

4.11 Pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre must be improved. This will involve specific proposals to be implemented in conjunction with the development and contributions for improvements to further links.

4.12 Specific pedestrian / cycle crossing locations to be provided in conjunction with the development are: -

- (i) Lemsford Road at junction with The Commons.
- (ii) Wellfield Road, just North of Queensway roundabout.
- (iii) Queensway, just West of the Queensway/Wellfield Road roundabout. This crossing connects with the pedestrian route along French Horn Lane to the railway station.

4.13 Contributions towards the improvement of pedestrian and cycle links for the town centre should cover links to / from: - the Railway Station (including a crossing on French Horn Lane), University Campuses, Alban Way and South Hatfield.

4.14 This list is not exhaustive and other S.106 contributions (from Hatfield Aerodrome and Asda) will have to be taken in to consideration when developing these routes. The overall aim will be to try and establish a full network of routes.

4.15 Any amendments / alterations to the crossing by Market Place in conjunction with bus priority proposals will have to include provisions for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.16 Cycle parking in the town centre also needs to be considered in the light of the proposed cycle routes. Applicants are advised to refer to the relevant standards as contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Parking Standards published by the Council.

Car Parking

4.17 An assessment of the car parking required for the redevelopment area will need to be carried out as part of any development proposals. The actual figure appropriate will vary dependant upon the gross floor area and the use mix finally agreed, taking into account both the loss of existing floorspace and the remaining floorspace in the town centre (other than Asda).

4.18 To aid the preparation of development proposals, the following information is supplied.

Parking standards

4.19 The following car parking standards have been taken from the Council's Parking Standards which are consistent with the Hertfordshire standards. Developers are advised to research these standards separately, as the following can only be regarded as a guide.

New Food Store	1:18 sq. m. gfa
Other new retail units	1:40 sq. m. gfa
New A3	1:40 sq. m. gfa
Remaining existing retail/ A3/office (excluding Asda)	1:40 sq. m. gfa

4.20 A discount of 25% for a town centre location can be applied to the total figure arrived at using the above standards (excluding residential parking). This is in accordance with Hertfordshire Structure Plan policy, and is due to the central location of the development site.

4.21 Additionally, a discount of 15% is to be applied to take account of more efficient parking (due to the introduction of management of the car parking in the town centre where no management exists at present), improved public transport and increasing use of the Asda car park. This calculation will then provide a base figure, to form the basis of discussion with the District Council / County Council.

Estimated Requirements/Provision

4.22 With the aid of illustrative development schemes drawn up by Building Design Partnership, the following guidance for car parking provision have been established. As stated above, the actual requirement and distribution will be dependent on the amount and type of floorspace mix actually proposed.

4.23 The following indicates existing provision:

- (a). The Commons Car Park 187 public spaces
- (b). Dog Kennel Lane Car Park 64 public spaces
- (c). Link Drive Car Park 149 public spaces
- (d). Kennelwood Car Park 58 public spaces
- (e). Wellfield Road /
The Gun Car Park 27 public spaces

4.24 The redevelopment area would mean the loss of Kennelwood and Wellfield Road / The Gun Car Parks. This therefore reduces availability to car parks (a) to (c), with a total of 400 spaces.

4.25 Additional car parking will be required to serve the new floorspace proposed. This should be calculated by applying the standards and methodology referred to in paragraphs 4.19-4.21 above, plus an extra 85 spaces to replace those lost from car parks (d) and (e) above (and (a) if any part of the Commons car park is incorporated in the redevelopment), less a figure for any spare capacity which exists in car parks (a) to (e) at present.

4.26 In considering the location for any new car parking, developers should note the following points;

- (a). The capacity of the existing Link Drive car park could be increased by approximately 20 spaces. This additional amount can be used as part of providing the car parking requirement.

- (b). An additional 15 (approximately) short stay spaces could be located on The Common road frontage, if the redevelopment layout permits. These can also be included within the total car parking figures.
- (c). The location within the Town Centre East site considered most suitable for additional public car parking is thought to be the North / North Eastern side of the redevelopment site, i.e. adjacent to The Common. This is compatible with the recommendations and suggestions as set out in parts 3 and 5 of this development brief.
- (d). The Dog Kennel Lane car park is to remain as it is, and designated as a long stay car park once management of car parks has been introduced. If some of the public car parking is lost (due to conversion to, for example, private parking to serve residential development), then the amount lost would need to be re-provided elsewhere within the scheme.
- (e). The Forum car park (to the west of the town centre) is not to be included in the calculations for parking provision for the redevelopment site, due to its remoteness from the site. However, the Council acknowledges that it could provide a valuable 'overspill' car park on particularly heavy car parking demand days, such as Farmers Market day.

4.27 The potential effect on adjacent roads, due to the potential transference of parking from controlled car parks, needs to be considered in conjunction with the Council.

4.28 The potential conflict between car parking provision and servicing of units will also need to be carefully addressed.

4.29 Residential Parking: Parking for residential property in the town centre (both new and existing within the redevelopment area) is not to be provided in the public car parks. Dedicated residential parking for 2 bed (or smaller) properties should be provided close to the dwellings they serve, on the basis of 1 space per unit.

4.30 Community Buildings: The provision of community buildings is likely to require a limited number of dedicated, managed car parking spaces, in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards. This provision will depend on the nature, scale and location of the community buildings provided.

4.31 Car Parking Management: It is envisaged that the new (as well as existing) public car parks will be controlled and managed. Within the town centre as a whole, this will involve a mix of short and long stay parking areas. It is envisaged that the Council will retain the freehold of all of the car parks, but lease them to the developer to equip and manage. Further discussion will be required on the details of this arrangement, which will need to be compatible with the management of other Council car parks in the town and will be subject to terms to be specified in the development agreement.

Transport Assessment

4.32 A full Transport Assessment must be carried out for the development based on guidelines set out for Traffic Impact Assessments by the 'Institution of Highways and Transportation'.

4.33 This guidance should be followed until such a time as new guidelines are released by the DTLR.

4.34 Before any assessments are prepared discussions should be sought with Hertfordshire County Council and Welwyn Hatfield Council to agree the issues to be covered.

4.35 Specific points for consideration in the assessment include: -

- (a). Showing how it is planned to achieve an increase in the proportion of trips to the town centre by passenger transport, walking and cycling to substantiate a reduction in car parking requirements.
- (b). Vehicular accesses to the town for shoppers, visitors and service vehicles in conjunction with the considerations on car parking.
- (c). Improvements to the junction of The Common and Lemsford Road, particularly when a pedestrian crossing is provided on Lemsford Road.

4.36 All proposals for new / improved junction access and highway works must comply with current Hertfordshire County Council standards and guidelines. Safety audits will be required for alterations to the highway and new crossing points.

4.37 Any application will need to be supported by a Green Travel Plan. Further guidance is available from either the District or County Council.

Design Guidance

Introduction

5.1 The Council commissioned Building Design Partnership (BDP) to produce a range of potential urban design solutions to assist in the regeneration of the town centre.

5.2 To achieve this, BDP analysed the current situation and formulated a series of development concepts. These concepts evolved into coherent and viable design solutions for the regeneration of the town centre, which were illustrated in the draft Development Brief published in November 2001 and previously circulated to developers at stage 1 of the selection process. As a result, the Council is fully confident that upon the redevelopment of the Town Centre East site, and by utilising various design principles, a successful and attractive town centre can be effectively created.

5.3 Section 3 of this brief sets out the principal elements sought in the redevelopment proposal. However, the possibilities to achieve those requirements are not limited, and will be partly dependant on the aspirations and requirements of the developer. The Council and English Partnerships intend to work very closely with the developer to ensure all parties can achieve a successful scheme.

5.4 This section of the brief considers the design principles and guidelines for the scheme based on the work undertaken by BDP. Whilst it should not be regarded as a prescriptive guide, the design principles and guidance set out would meet the requirements of the Council and English Partnerships. Proposals coming forward that would significantly deviate from these principles and guidelines would need to be fully justified. Other parts of this section consider various other design criteria, which will serve as a useful guide to developers.

Development Principles

5.5 The following development principles have been devised to provide parameters for successful places. They form a set of practical guidelines that will enable the new development to deliver a vibrant town centre that improves the quality of life for all stakeholders. The following should be demonstrated in any future proposals for the site.

5.6 Density: An increase in density from that at present is required to sustain a variety of uses adding to the vitality and viability of the town centre. Increasing residential densities within the town centre will improve perceptions of personal safety by adding evening surveillance of public space. High density around the new town square and connecting streets will also reduce the need to travel and create a focus for activity.

5.7 Mixture of uses and forms: successful places have a mixture of uses and built forms that create a varied townscape. A mixed-use scheme in Hatfield will improve the vitality of the town centre by extending the hours of activity. A mix of building forms within the town centre will aid in creating an interesting and rich townscape experience.

5.8 Movement and Permeability: It is important that the town centre should be accessible to all users. Routes to and from the scheme are important in helping to create a vibrant town centre with active retail frontages, and respond to natural connections and pedestrian desire lines. From the new town square there should be direct routes to the Asda store (along the old St Albans Road), the bus interchange, to Queensway and beyond (to provide a direct route to the station) and to The Common car park. Routes should avoid excessive meandering and should be along streets where there is both ground level activity and overlooking from upper floors. Within the town centre, a high level of retail activity at the eastern end of the town centre should help to draw shoppers from Asda along the old St Albans Road, thereby creating a 'dumbell effect'.

5.9 Character and quality: character is key to achieving the right quality for the town. Proposed schemes should relate in a contemporary fashion to the local context of Hatfield. Public realm and the built environment schemes should be consistent and of a high quality.

5.10 Vistas: the creation of high quality vistas into the heart of the town centre will be vital, to help illustrate the function of the land as one of an active and attractive town centre and to encourage people to enter into that town centre.

5.11 Robustness relates to the ability to redevelop part or all of a building without the need for total redevelopment. Proposals should encourage robust building plans that promote flexibility and that can be divided horizontally and vertically to allow for future uses to change, expand or contract.

5.12 Legibility is concerned with how easy it is to find your way around the town. Landmark buildings, gateway structures and strong spatial characteristics should be promoted to improve the urban environment.

5.13 Microclimate: working with the natural elements (sun, wind and rain) to provide a quality environment and to use resources efficiently. Proposed development should position building forms, uses and public realm schemes efficiently in order that shelter and sunlight be provided effectively. This does not necessarily imply covered streets, but selective shelter that protects in the worst of weather and creates added warmth on milder days. At the same time, the effects of overshadowing should be given careful consideration – particularly for the residential elements of the development.

5.14 Value underpins a successful town centre. It is essential to understand where value exists and in areas where it can be created. The value generated in commercial uses (retail/leisure/housing) across Hatfield town centre should be used to encourage improvements to the public realm.

5.15 Safety and security is a key part of encouraging people back to use the town centre. Good urban design and the installation of features such as effective street lighting can help to improve security and safety. Overlooking by residential properties over retail premises can provide 24-hour surveillance to the town centre.

5.16 Sustainable Development is at the heart of the emerging District Plan Review and its principles (social, environmental and economical) must be adhered to in forming proposals for the town centre. Clear guidance on these matters is included in the District Plan Review and evidence to show that these measures have been considered and incorporated where appropriate and possible must be demonstrated by the developer. Developers should also submit an undertaking that they will abide by EP's adopted Environmental Briefing Standards in respect of residential accommodation (EcoHomes and NHER) and any office buildings (BREEAM 98).

Building Briefs

5.17 This section of the brief interprets the design principles previously outlined. It suggests detailed treatment of the redevelopment of Hatfield town centre as discussed in section 3 and reflects the design aspirations of the Council and English Partnerships.

5.18 It is intended that this section should be viewed as an approach to redevelopment that expands on the previously outlined principles. Other equally successful solutions that meet with the aims and objectives of the Council and English Partnerships could be appropriate to future redevelopment and will be considered.

5.19 General Principles

- ◆ Materials should be of a high quality, reflect their locality and complement the palette of those used in the rest of the development.
- ◆ Buildings with large footprints present an opportunity for development above them, and the provision of amenities, such as roof gardens, should be considered.
- ◆ Service yards should be concealed by well-designed gates at their entrance
- ◆ Entrances to uses above ground level should be positioned at frequent intervals along the street
- ◆ Thresholds should be incorporated between public and private building uses wherever possible.
- ◆ Landscaping should be considered as a means of defining car parking spaces and creating an extension to the public realm
- ◆ Balconies and large windows should be frequently positioned to provide surveillance, encourage a vertical emphasis and to provide amenity
- ◆ Blank facades should be minimised to encourage surveillance
- ◆ Residences should have entrances onto the street wherever possible
- ◆ Appropriate roof forms & pitches to the rear of the single aspect housing should be considered to maximise solar gain & sunlight
- ◆ Private driveways and car parking spaces should wherever possible be located at the entrances to residential properties
- ◆ Development over service yard entrances should be explored
- ◆ As well as the provision of residential accommodation above retail uses to provide upper floor interest and natural surveillance, strong residential frontages to Queensway and Wellfield Road will provide an appropriate and stimulating edge to the new development and, at the same time, provide screening to service yards and car parking
- ◆ New ground floor uses should address the Old St. Albans Road
- ◆ The massing of the new buildings adjacent to the old St Albans Road should be sympathetic to the existing older properties, forming part of the original high street
- ◆ Side elevations should be visually interesting and open, with few blank façades
- ◆ Dual aspect housing should be considered on upper floor levels around the new town square
- ◆ Building mass around the new town square should increase to relate to adjacent blocks
- ◆ A mixture of retail unit frontages that address the new town square should be encouraged
- ◆ Canopy treatment around the new town square should be considered as a means of providing shelter and visual interest

- ◆ Frontage onto the new town square should have a clear identity, be aesthetically stimulating and create variety as well as respond to adjacent blocks
- ◆ Building forms should create gateways that frame the new town square vista at the north and south corners as well as respond to the adjacent blocks
- ◆ Create a landmark building that terminates the vista along Old St. Albans Road
- ◆ Buildings at the pedestrian entrances to the scheme should have a distinct architectural form that create gateways and arrival points to the town centre from the surrounding areas.

Public Realm Briefs

New Town Square

5.25 The new town square should be the focus of the Town Centre. It is envisaged that activity levels within the town square would be enhanced by pavement bars and cafes, street performances and exhibitions. Street furniture, lighting and banners that complement the surrounding buildings and that are consistent with those used in the rest of the town will be encouraged. Materials within the space should be of a high quality and complement the palette of those used in the construction of the rest of the development. It is intended that this part of the town centre be hard landscaped.

Bus Interchange

5.26 The bus interchange is intended to be a landmark facility that helps to integrate town centre activities and create an arrival space. It should provide a public amenity that helps to overcome present negative perceptions of public transport services. It is proposed that a structure be created within the space to accommodate public facilities and an information point. The existing trees within the interchange space should provide a mature and attractive setting. Materials within the space should be robust and of a high quality that complements the palette of those used in the construction of the rest of the development. Street furniture and signage provide interest and identity for the street. Lighting should be positioned strategically in order to maximise security and surveillance with 'feature' lighting in key spaces.

Old St Albans Road

5.27 Old St. Albans Road provides the key link between Asda and the development area and should therefore reflect the high standard of the new development and help to draw people between the west and east end of town. The street needs opening up. The existing arrangement of planting, lighting and street furniture needs re-organising/removing to provide a cohesive and accessible pedestrian route. Lighting, sculptural banners and tree planting should be encouraged to reduce the existing horizontal emphasis of the street and surfacing should be consistent with the rest of the development. Canopies and consistent signage should be introduced in order to correspond with those used at the east end. It may also be feasible to consider providing space for market stalls along the length of the street.

Common Car Park

5.28 The Common car park should be seen as an extension of the public realm and similar to the transport interchange, should aim to change public perceptions of a permanently car dominated environment. It should be landscaped appropriately and surfaced using both functional and high quality materials and organised to provide a 'space' capable of holding a variety of events when required. Lighting should be provided at frequent intervals in order to maintain a high level of safety and security. If it is proposed to be decked or developed for multi-storey car parking then a strong edge treatment will be required.

Link Streets

5.29 The link streets between the interchange, station and the Commons car park should be of a more intimate nature to the town square and Old St. Albans Road. Materials should still be of a high quality and similar development principles should apply. Public realm improvements should respond to the building lines and uses surrounding them. Lighting, signage and street furniture should be encouraged appropriately.

Implementation

The Development Partnership

6.1 As stated in Part 1 of this brief, the Council and English Partnerships, through a “town centre redevelopment partnership”, seek the expertise of a private sector developer to bring forward the redevelopment.

6.2 This brief provides the basic parameters to guide developers in drawing up their proposals for the redevelopment. The Council and English Partnerships will work together to assist the nominated development partner to bring forward the new scheme.

Land Assembly

6.3 As noted in Part 1, the redevelopment site is held under a variety of land ownerships.

6.4 Both the Council and English Partnerships benefit from small pockets of freehold ownership on the redevelopment site. These elements however only constitute a small proportion of the total site required for the redevelopment. Accordingly, in order to bring forward the redevelopment the existing remaining land interests in the site will need to be acquired. Both the Council and English Partnerships are willing to assist in advanced acquisitions to facilitate the redevelopment.

6.5 To assist in the implementation of the redevelopment the Council will consider seeking the appropriate powers to pursue a compulsory purchase order if necessary.

Phasing

6.6 As noted earlier in this brief, a number of the site’s existing occupiers may wish to take space in the new scheme. The Council and EP and their development partners will work together to achieve this aim where appropriate.

6.7 Where possible the redevelopment should aim to be phased in such a way as to minimise any disruption to the trading patterns of existing occupiers to be accommodated in the new development, including market traders.

Planning Applications

6.8 Planning applications will be considered on their merits having regard to this Brief and the Local Plan.

6.9 Demonstrating any proposals and giving reasoned justification for them is a key element of any submission for planning permission. As part of this, Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) “General Principles” identifies the importance of design and sustainability in making decisions about planning applications. The emerging District Plan expects the submission of both a design statement and a sustainability statement alongside the planning application.

6.10 It is also anticipated that an Environmental Impact Assessment needs to be submitted with any application for planning permission. Early discussion with the Council is encouraged in this respect. The requirement for a Transport Assessment is covered in Part 4 of this Brief.

6.11 Also, developers are encouraged to discuss with the Council at early stage the proposed means of consulting on detailed planning application proposals, both as part of and in advance of applications being submitted.

Additional Redevelopment Opportunities

6.12 There may be opportunities to extend the development area into other sites within the town centre.

6.13 Redevelopment of existing buildings or groups of adjoining sites/buildings may provide opportunities for landowners to contribute to the regeneration process. Refurbishment/rebuilding of adjacent buildings to upgrade their appearance and overall quality is also encouraged.

Planning Obligations

6.14 In accordance with government guidance and the policies in the District Plan Review, the Council and English Partnerships will expect proposals for redevelopment to make provision for the necessary infrastructure, services, facilities and improvements required as part of the scheme, to support it, integrate it with the surrounding area and to minimise any adverse impact that it may have on the existing community. Such provision may include the bus interchange, highway or other transport improvements, community facilities, environmental improvements, public art and affordable housing. These and other such provisions may be secured through planning obligations under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or other legal agreements as may be appropriate.

Town Centre Management

6.15 The Council wishes to see a town centre management scheme established to co-ordinate the future promotion, management and maintenance of the redeveloped town centre. It is expected that this will cover both the redevelopment scheme and the existing areas of the town centre and be established by the developer in partnership with the Council, existing traders and businesses and other interests. Possible arrangements and models for this should be discussed with the Council at an early stage.

Contacts

For further information on the redevelopment proposal please contact the following Welwyn Hatfield Officers:

Planning & Other General Matters	Mike Hayden	(01707) 357269
Highways	Mike Beckham	(01707) 357556
Estates	Alan Holt	(01707) 357457
Housing	Darren Welsh	(01707) 357660

Preferred Registered Social Landlords

The following Registered Social Landlords are approved by the Council as its preferred partners for the provision of affordable housing. For any scheme for which grant or support for grant funding is being sought from the local authority, the Council will require the scheme to be delivered by one of the following, to be selected by the Council on the basis of competition.

The Genesis Housing Group

Stort Housing Association

The Guinness Trust

Waldwick Housing Association

Moat Housing Group Ltd

Paradigm Housing Group

Circle 33