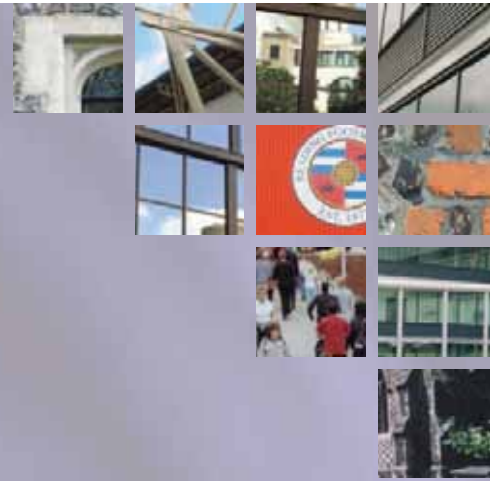


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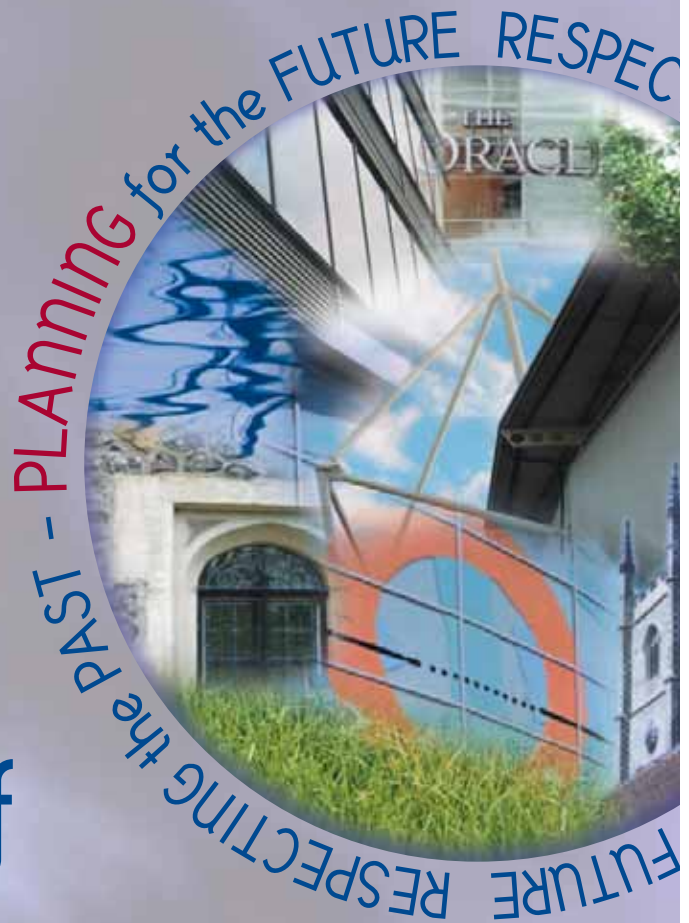
Revised Battle Hospital Planning Brief

Supplementary Planning Document

July 2005

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Foreword

This brief replaces the original planning brief for the Battle Hospital site, which was produced by the Council in 1995. This new document was based on the original and underwent widespread public consultation at the end of 2004/beginning of 2005 and was formally adopted by the Council's Cabinet meeting on 18th. April 2005.

The Battle Hospital site is arguably the most important "brownfield" site to come forward for redevelopment in West Reading in the last 15 years and it is up to all of us - Council, developers and local people - to produce a vibrant new sustainable community, which successfully integrates into this established Victorian/Edwardian residential area.

I am confident that this brief will set the standard for achieving a high-quality, dynamic new addition to the town, complete with a new neighbourhood spirit and community uses, including a much-needed health centre, in the heart of the Oxford Road Area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Howarth', with a long, sweeping underline.

John Howarth
Lead Councillor (Strategic Planning and Transport)

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A planning brief for the Battle Hospital site was adopted by the Borough Council in March 1995, and carried full Supplementary Planning Guidance status. This version updates and replaces that brief in the light of subsequent changes in Government guidance and further consultation.
- 1.2 In July 2002, the Borough Council issued outline planning permission for redevelopment of the Hospital site for 315 dwellings, 4,645 sq.m. food store, 4,413 sq.m. non-food retail units, fast food unit, petrol filling station, community uses, community car park, ancillary highway works and landscaping". Although at the time of writing, this is unlikely to be pursued, this is nevertheless a "material planning consideration".
- 1.3 The main purpose of this revised planning brief is to guide the comprehensive redevelopment of surplus land at Battle Hospital, in the context of recent land sales and anticipated forthcoming planning applications. This brief formulates specific planning principles for this site, which is being released for development at a time when work on the Local Development Framework (to replace the existing Local Plan) is still at an early stage. The revised Brief puts increased emphasis on design, sustainability and housing efficiency considerations, in line with Government advice and the Council's own policies.
- 1.4 It is expected that the land will be released in mid- 2005 as existing uses are transferred to other sites, but predominantly the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH), London Road, Reading. In March 2004, the Royal Berkshire and Battle Health Trust (RBBHT) sold 10.1 hectares of the site, retaining the northernmost part for its own use. Some of the rest of the land remains in the ownership of the Royal Berkshire Ambulance Trust (RBAT).
- 1.5 The area of the whole of the Hospital site is 13.1 hectares. There is potential for conversion of the most notable existing buildings. The Brief makes provision for a mixture of residential development, public open space, together with community facilities and commercial development (as an extension to the Oxford Road West district centre). The area covered by the Brief includes land along the frontage to Oxford Road, which does not form part of the Hospital site. It also gives guidance should the retained medical land fronting Portman Road including the ambulance depot, boiler house, laundry, etc. becomes available for redevelopment.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

Reading Borough Local Plan

- 2.1 The Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) was adopted in October 1998. The policies of the RBLP are effectively “saved” under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and remain part of the Development Plan for the purposes of Section 54a of the Principal Planning Act.
- 2.2 Policy COM1 (Hospitals) of the Local Plan proposes the redevelopment of surplus land at Battle Hospital for a mix of uses including residential, open space, community and retail facilities. The Plan identifies a site (Site 17) of 13 hectares for development for:
- Housing (at least 300 units)
 - Open space and play area
 - Enhancement of existing or provision of new community facilities
 - Environmental improvements to Oxford Road shopping centre, including a new public car park
 - One or more of the following:
 - Food store
 - Retail warehousing
 - Small retail units in-keeping with the Oxford Road
 - Uses within classes B1, B2 and B8, fronting Portman Road
- 2.3 The Plan envisaged that the development of the identified site would provide an overall target of 300 units. However, since the Plan was adopted, Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing) was issued in March 2000. This PPG advocates more efficient use of urban land and an increase in housing densities. It is acknowledged that following the advice in the PPG, the development of the site should produce more dwellings than originally envisaged in the Plan, although the other facilities sought in the previous brief still largely stand.
- 2.4 Other principle Local Plan policies which relate to the proposals contained in this Brief include the following:
- KEY 1: Equality of access to Development
KEY 2A: Conservation of the Environment and Natural Resources
KEY 2B: Conservation of the Built Environment and assets
KEY 3: The Role of Development in Improving the Town
EMP 3: Acceptability of Employment Development

EMP 6:	Units for Small Firms
EMP 9:	Implementation of Mixed-Use Development
HSG 1:	Housing Provision and Identified Sites
HSG 2:	Affordable Housing
HSG 5:	Residential Design Standards
HSG 9:	Location of Residential Development
HSG 10:	Housing for People with Disabilities
TRN 1-16:	[various Transport policies]
RET 1:	Development Outside Existing Shopping Centres
RET 2:	Food Stores and Retail Warehouses
RET3A:	District and Major Local Shopping Centres
RET 4:	Improvements to Local Shopping Centres
RET 7:	Petrol Filling Stations and other vehicle-related uses
CUD 1:	Works affecting Listed Buildings
CUD 4:	Setting of Listed Buildings
CUD 12:	Development Impact of Archaeological sites
CUD 13:	Preservation of Archaeological sites
CUD 14:	Standards of Design in Development
LEI3:	The Provision and Improvement of Leisure and Recreation Facilities
COM 1:	Hospitals
COM 7:	Community Meeting Places
COM 9:	Community Facilities
NE 5:	Trees, Hedges and Woodlands
NE 7:	Creative Nature Conservation
NE 8:	Environmental Pollution
NE 9:	Environmental Implications
WAT 7:	Development in the Flood Plain

Other RBC documents

2.5 In addition to Local Plan policies, the following RBC Supplementary Planning Guidance is relevant to the development:

- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (2004)
- A Developers' Guide: A Checklist for Good Environmental Building (1999) (produced by the Council to advise developers on sustainable construction methods)
- Space Around Dwellings (1994)

2.6 The Council has other initiatives pertinent to this area, including:

- The Oxford Road Single Regeneration Budget (SRB);
- The Oxford Road Community Forum; and

- The Community Strategy, “Reading 2020”.

- 2.7 The last of these initiatives now has increased importance in the planning system, by virtue of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004, Part 2 (Local Development) Section 19, which requires Local Development Documents (including planning briefs) to have regard to, *inter alia*, the Council’s own community strategy. Therefore, the aims of the LDD should reflect those of the community strategy. In particular, Chapter 8 of Reading 2020, entitled Quality Environments, sets out the quality of environment to be achieved in Reading and it is largely the planning system, which will deliver these aims.

Berkshire Structure Plan

- 2.8 The Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 (BSP) is at an advanced stage of preparation and will soon supersede the present Berkshire Structure Plan (which was adopted in 1995). There are several policies of particular relevance to this brief:
Other policies of the BSP would also be relevant to major planning applications on this site, in particular policies H6 (Residential density and Dwelling Mix) and the supporting text to policy DP4 (Provision of Infrastructure, Services and Amenities).

Policy DP5 (Quality of Urban and Suburban Areas) states:

- “1. *Urban and suburban areas, especially town, district and local centres and their surroundings, should include a variety of land uses in close proximity. These should include employment opportunities, services and amenities for the needs of the population that lives or works locally and a substantial element of housing, including a wide variety of housing types including affordable housing.*
2. *The development of urban and suburban areas should produce a relationship between buildings and open spaces, which provides an attractive sense of place, and ample safe public space for walking, recreation and other leisure or civic activity.*
3. *Urban and suburban areas should be characterised by buildings of good design which are accessible to all members of the community.*
4. *Movement around urban or suburban areas, especially around town, district and local centres, should be made safe and pleasant to undertake by foot or cycle. Movement around, to and between town, district and local centres should be made easy by public transport.”*

Policy EN8 (Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation) states that:

“All forms of development will maximise the opportunity to incorporate current best practice in energy efficiency and energy conservation into their design, layout and orientation”.

- 2.9 Policy INF4 (Development Design for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy) places increased emphasis on design briefs in setting out the goals for energy efficiency. Other policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan would also be relevant to major planning applications on this site, in particular policies H6 (Residential Density and Dwelling Mix); Policy T4 (Travel Impacts) and the supporting Policy DP4 (Provision of Infrastructure, Services and Amenities).

Policy T4 (Travel Impacts) states:

“All development will take appropriate measures to offset any adverse effects it has for the transport network. Development, which generates a significant number of trips should include the promotion of sustainable alternative modes of travel to the private car, and should take other steps, if required, to minimise the pressure on the transport network.”

Regional Planning Guidance

- 2.10 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) was approved in 2001. The RPG (paragraphs 5.5 - 5.10) emphasises the role of mixed use development in the renewal of urban and suburban areas. Paragraph 5.9 states:

“The design of individual developments will be a major influence on the extent to which they are sustainable. Aspects of sustainable design include:

- Use of waste prevention and minimisation techniques;*
- Installation of pollution abatement technology to reduce emissions to air and water;*
- Control measures for surface water drainage as close to its source as possible;*
- Building design which facilitates the use of renewable energy;*
- Energy efficient installations, including the use of grey water systems;*
- Use of renewable and recycled materials during construction and design to facilitate recycling systems, including combined heat and power and community heating systems; and*

- *Use of “soft” construction and maintenance techniques harnessing natural processes”.*

- 2.11 Policy Q2 (concerned with the quality of life in urban areas) seeks a general raising of quality of life in the urban environment, in order to counter trends of dispersal. This is primarily to be encouraged in Development Plans, but value is also placed on site-specific development briefs and the context set by other documents.
- 2.12 Policy Q3 (concerned with the efficient use of urban land) encourages local authorities to maximise the density of development, especially in the most accessible locations and to work closely with local communities and developers and produce briefs for housing or mixed use developments to guide developers.
- 2.13 The Regional Transport Strategy (as set out in the RPG) seeks to minimise the number and length of journeys wherever possible and promote a change in travel habits away from the car and towards public transport and cycling/walking. One of the ways this is to be done is by local authorities adopting maximum parking standards, in line with PPG13 (Transport).
- 2.14 Since the production of the RPG, the Regional Assembly produced a supplementary Regional Energy Strategy, which has been endorsed by the Government Office for the South East. This sets opportunities and targets for renewable energy generation in the region.

National Planning Policy

- 2.15 Providing quality environments is a core tenet of urban renewal. The Urban Task Force Report 1999 and the Urban White Paper 2000 provide advice and recommendations in terms of urban regeneration, identifying key issues such as dealing with the poor quality of life and lack of opportunity in some urban areas, and making sustainable urban living practical and attractive.
- 2.16 Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) states that; *“Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.”* (Paragraph 33).
- 2.17 The Council also takes account of “By Design” (DETR/CABE (2000)), and the Government’s companion guides to PPG1 and PPG3 in assessing planning applications. The increased emphasis on design in this brief is founded on the design policies in the Local Plan and this brief interprets these in the context of this site. The Council has also taken account of the recent work on Design Codes set out in the ODPM’s Sustainable Communities Plan, in order to provide greater certainty to the developer and set out clearly the Council’s aspirations for this major development site.

- 2.18 The Borough Council is committed to producing safe urban environments by design and the development should take account of the ODPM/Home Office guide, "Safer Places: the planning system and crime prevention" (2004).
- 2.19 National planning advice relevant to the development of this site includes that contained in the following Planning Policy Guidance Notes. Also of relevance are several recent draft Planning Policy Statements:
- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2004)
 - PPG3: Housing (2000)
 - PPS3: Housing, (draft 2003)
 - PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Development (1996)
 - PPS6: Planning for Town Centres (draft 2004)
 - PPS12: Local Development Frameworks
 - PPG13: Transport (2001)
 - PPG13: Transport (draft, 2003?)
 - PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)
 - PPG16: Archaeology and Planning (1990)
 - PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)
 - PPG 23: Planning and Pollution Control (1994)
 - PPG23: Planning and Pollution Control (draft, 2002)
 - PPG 24: Planning and Noise (1994)
 - PPG 25: Development and Flood Risk (2001)
 - PPG25: Development and Flood Risk (draft, 2004)
- 2.20 Developers should also be aware of the Council's Local Transport Plan 2001-2006, and in particular of the following three strategies contained within it:
- The Interim Cycling Strategy
 - The Walking Strategy
 - The Bus Strategy

3.0 SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Location

- 3.1 The site is located between Oxford Road (A329) and Portman Road, approximately 0.7 km west of Reading City Centre. The location is indicated on the Site Location Plan at the end of this brief. This part of Oxford Road is characterised by a mix of retail, commercial, community facilities and residential uses, which form part of the Oxford Road West District Centre.
- 3.2 To the east and west of the site and to the south of Oxford Road are predominantly Victorian/Edwardian residential areas of quite dense terraced housing. To the north of Portman Road is a large industrial estate.

History

- 3.3 The hospital site dates from the 19th. Century and was developed northwards from Oxford Road across the Battle Farm lands toward what is now Portman Road. The clinical facilities have occupied the older multi-storey buildings in the south and east part of the site and more recent single storey buildings in the central and west part of the site. Industrial-type support uses including a laundry, incinerator (disused), pharmaceutical preparation, sterilisation, ambulance depot, food preparation, storage and offices, are situated in an area of some 2.02 ha. fronting Portman Road. There is also some staff accommodation in the Eastern part of the site. The west part of the site includes open space at the rear of the Oxford Road/Chester Street properties and along Portman Road.
- 3.4 There are some attractive Victorian/Edwardian buildings within the complex, which are characteristic of Reading. None of the NHS Trust's buildings are currently listed as being of architectural or historic importance; however, the gatehouse and adjacent buildings including the adjoining terrace fronting Oxford Road are landmark Victorian buildings in the Oxford Road street scene and should therefore be retained. Several buildings adjoining the Oxford Road frontage are listed (see the Development Principles Plan). There is some well-established planting including mature trees within the older part of the hospital site. There are also prominent trees along the western boundary and along the frontage to Portman Road.

Access

- 3.5 Currently, there is a pedestrian access to the hospital from Oxford Road via the Gatehouse, however vehicular access is taken from Portman Road and Valentia Road/Audley Street (restricted).

Topography

- 3.6 The frontage to Oxford Road and the eastern half of the site is several metres higher than the land along Portman Road, part of which falls within the floodplain of the River Thames. There is an appreciable slope towards Portman Road in the northeast part of the site.

4 SITE CONSTRAINTS

- 4.1 The site is relatively unconstrained for future redevelopment. There is understood to be no requirement for re-use of the hospital buildings in an institutional form, therefore redevelopment is likely to include extensive demolition work.
- 4.2 However, the preceding appraisal of the site context, with Character Areas explored in further detail in Chapter 6, suggests that there are a number of key features considered worthy of retention on the site.
- 4.3 It is considered that the gatehouse, the attached terrace of houses and the building at the rear of the gatehouses should be retained for their historical importance as being good examples of the local vernacular building style and other buildings (or parts thereof) should be considered for re-use, where they are of notable quality. The settings of the library and No. 450 Oxford Road (both Listed Grade II) should be preserved or enhanced via the development (in accordance with Policy CUD4 of the Local Plan).
- 4.4 There are industrial-type uses associated with ambulance servicing and hospital facilities facing onto Portman Road. In the shorter term, these are expected to remain, constraining the area available for redevelopment. This constraint represents a necessity for development to back onto this area, which will have an influence on layout and the type of uses for issues of environmental sensitivity. Until such time as this land becomes available, there should also be a buffer of landscaping towards these uses.
- 4.5 A detailed site investigation will be required as part of a broader environmental assessment of the site before development is commenced. The west part of the site includes filled ground, and an initial desk study and reference to old maps indicate the possible presence of contamination from various sources. If there is any contaminated land, mitigating measures will be required (see PPG23: Planning and Pollution Control) and this will be the responsibility of the developers. The developers should also refer to the recent Guide to Developing Contaminated Land as prepared by the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities.
- 4.6 This site is partially located in Flood Zone 3, identified by the Environment Agency as a High Risk Zone. This refers to the fact that the probability of flooding is 1 in 100 years or less from river sources. Therefore depending on the type of development proposed, flood mitigation measures may be required and applications will be required to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) in accordance with PPG25: Development and Flood Risk.
- 4.7 Preliminary archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning and Policy CUD12 of the Local Plan, in relation to the previous outline planning application. The result of that evaluation was that it was unlikely that there were any archaeological

remains at the site and that there should be no further archaeological constraint on development.

- 4.8 Access to the site will be constrained by the need to severely limit the amount of additional traffic using Oxford Road. Priority should be given to buses along Oxford Road and the development should assist in reducing the need to travel generally, and to encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling. Portman Road will be the major vehicular access to the development, although the Council may also consider a small pocket of residential development accessed from Valentia Road or Audley Street, in order to link part of the development directly with the existing streets. This would have no vehicular connection through to the remainder of the site.
- 4.9 There should be at least one through pedestrian/cycle access from Portman Road to Oxford Road and an east-west link through the site. The site is currently constrained by poor east-west links and indirect north-south pedestrian and cycle access. This issue will need to be addressed by development proposals and opportunities for links between Sherwood Street and Curzon Street will be investigated for potential as cycle and pedestrian entrances.
- 4.10 There is a main combined sewer running across the northern part of the site from east to west. This may constrain the location of buildings and roads in its vicinity and the developers should ascertain this themselves.
- 4.11 There are two areas of the site where there are notable changes in levels: towards the north/north-east and to the west of the community buildings near Oxford Road, although there are a number of smaller changes and escarpments. Development should respond sensitively to these level changes, using them to minimise the visual impact of development, where appropriate and the developers' masterplan should demonstrate this. The area proposed for the Civic Space is set at a lower level and material from demolished buildings from the site should be used to raise the ground level in this area to the level of Oxford Road.
- 4.12 Changes in level also afford limited views of features on the site. The library bell tower is clearly visible from Portman Road and acts as a useful marker to the location of Oxford Road. In a landscape which has few historic or landmark features, the library, along with its bell tower and at a lower level, the gatehouse assume an important role in distinguishing areas of the site and broader geographic location. As such their visibility should be maintained from further afield and from the Character Areas from which views are already available.
- 4.13 Residential development to the east and west of the site is a notable refuge from the noise and activity on Oxford and Portman Roads. Development will need to recognise and support this tranquillity, in particular through the

careful placement of movement routes on the site, including lorry routes and with regard to new access points to the site from these areas.

- 4.14 The rear elevations and gardens of properties of immediately adjacent properties are also important private spaces, the overlooking of which or intrusion through the removal of long range views is to be avoided.
- 4.15 Vegetation on the site is of varying quality however there are key areas that will positively contribute to an enhanced landscaped setting for the site. These include:
- Avenue of Lime Trees along the western boundary;
 - Horse Chestnut and Pine trees behind the Oxford Road gatehouse and main Victorian block; and
 - Willow trees along Portman Road.
- 4.16 Other trees are mainly ornamental species and only semi-mature. More mature Lime trees exist at the eastern boundary of the site close to Audley Street. All trees should be considered as constraints to development, until such time as the developers' masterplan/landscaping masterplan shows which trees would remain or be lost.
- 4.17 The Willow trees on Portman Road also form part of a wider green corridor along this major route. The role that trees have in this location will need to be viewed strategically as part of proposals.
- 4.18 A site survey prior to approval of any planning permission would indicate whether the site contains species, which are in the Biodiversity Action Plan, whose habitat it would be necessary to re-provide within the development.

5 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 A strong and clearly defined urban design structure is required which responds to the site's urban location and the predominantly Victorian/Edwardian character of the area. This is in line with the Council's planning policy for the standards of design in development as set out in Policies HSG5 and CUD14 of the Local Plan¹. The main design principles for the site are shown on the Development Principles Plan. The purpose of these Development Principles is to provide an indicative, but flexible vision of future development form for the Battle site.
- 5.2 Government guidance in PPG3 is clear that in designing new developments, strong links to local distinctiveness are required. But in larger schemes such as this, it is also necessary to provide changes in design *within* the development to aid orientation, emphasise a "sense of place" and successfully integrate the development into the local area. The outcome should be to create a group of distinctive neighbourhoods, which relate to each other, but also, to a certain extent, reflect and respect the area immediately adjacent.
- 5.3 In seeking to aid the delivery of well designed, harmonious development on the Battle site, the Borough Council is encouraging the use of English Partnerships' Design Codes as part of the developers' masterplanning process. These Codes are a recent concept, which set out a detailed framework for building design within each character-area and provide a greater degree of certainty for developers in the type of designs, which will be acceptable. The Codes would specify for instance, road hierarchies, urban block types, materials and other more detailed design features.
- 5.4 Several pilot projects are underway, the most advanced being Upton, a sustainable urban extension to Northampton, with another good example being Derwenthorpe, a new community headed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on the edge of York. More locally, Codes are also being used in the Masterplan for the Manor Farm site in South Reading.
- 5.5 The Council believes that Codes have a role to play in enabling the masterplanning process of the Battle site, where there is a need for sympathetic integration of design with the existing urban fabric, for this large redevelopment site within a Victorian area. Indeed, it is likely that the present Victorian area was built to a set of design codes of its time. Providing greater certainty in this way should guide the developer in providing sensitive design solutions and hopefully, speed up the planning process as a result. This section of the Brief will therefore set out the kind of things which should be used as Design Codes in the Masterplan.

¹ The context for the development ethos of the site is also set out in other Government design documents, including "By Design" (Cabe/ODPM, 2000)

- 5.6 It is important to create a sense of place by providing a clear structure for land use and movement with good links to the adjacent residential area, Oxford Road and Portman Road. Where appropriate and acceptable, the existing street pattern/character should appear to be “extended” to integrate the development with the surrounding area and to blend in with the existing urban fabric.
- 5.7 Considerable importance will be attached to the appearance of the development from the surrounding residential area, including Oxford Road, Portman Road and the neighbouring residential streets. The developers’ Masterplan should include a study of views (existing situation in the character areas; entrances; long-range views; etc.) and a serial vision sequence through the site, set out in, or related to a landscaping masterplan.
- 5.8 Notwithstanding the recent improvements to Oxford Road, environmental improvements to existing streets and open spaces near the site may be needed to achieve a satisfactory setting for the new development and to assist with integrating it into the surrounding area. This will depend on the nature of planning applications submitted, but is likely to include street furniture, entrance features to the site and measures to reduce the fear of crime, for instance good street lighting (which will also need to be designed to minimise unnecessary light pollution). Suitable improvements will be sought, in negotiation with the developers, as part of an environmental (financial) contribution in tandem with any relevant planning permission(s).
- 5.9 The Battle site should be developed to a higher density than that envisaged in the previous planning brief, or the extant outline permission. Density (and the eventual number of dwellings to be accommodated on site) will be the product of the design strategy set out in the developers’ masterplan. This will in turn flow from the capacities indicated in the Character Areas. However, this increase in density will also mean that the transport infrastructure and movement linkages for the hierarchy of modes should be considered at the outset.

Residential Use

- 5.10 The Battle site provides an opportunity to accommodate a range of dwellings, to help meet Reading’s continuing housing requirements. The density of housing development should reflect the urban-suburban character of the surrounding area by providing a good mix of house types (predominantly terraced houses with some maisonettes and flats). PPG3 ‘Housing’ (2000) suggests guideline densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare, but there is scope to increase these densities towards Oxford Road, at the points of highest accessibility within the site and around the park, in sympathy with the surroundings, where high-quality design allows, and taking care not to dominate public open space.

- 5.11 The aim in increasing densities should be to make the most efficient use of urban land, however, PPG3² warns that this should not be at the expense of the character of the area. This Brief does not wish to stultify design by imposing an upper limit on density; rather, it should be emphasised that density should be a product of good design, taking into account all the “usual” development control principles and the character of the area. In some cases, this may indicate that houses are required towards the edge of the site, to reflect the pattern of housing in the adjacent streets.
- 5.12 The creation of a socially integrated community requires a choice of dwelling types, which are interspersed, rather than grouped together by type. There should be a range of types of housing provided on the Battle site: flats, maisonettes, houses and a selection of special needs housing. This should reflect the following mix: predominantly, the dwellings should be houses. Given the context of the surrounding area is predominantly of terraced houses, it is considered that this is an appropriate mix. This mix should also hold for the Medical Support area, were this to come forward for redevelopment in the future, and any substantive departure from this would need to be justified.
- 5.13 Affordable housing (of a mix of tenures) should comply with the affordable housing requirements of the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance, ‘Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990’. Affordable housing should be equally represented in terms of location and dwelling type and there will be a particular need to provide affordable family houses. This will help ensure greater social equitability. If additional land on Portman Road is released, the target percentage for affordable housing should also be 50%, in line with the above Guidance.
- 5.14 Long-term adaptability is a central tenet of good design and longevity of the housing produced and the dwellings should be designed to be as flexible as possible, given the constraints of the character of each area. Detailed design considerations can make or break a scheme in terms of its eventual “liveability”, which in turn fosters pride in a community and encourages responsible behaviour.

Retail/ Mixed Use

- 5.15 National planning advice (in PPG6 and Draft PPS6) encourages the location of new retail development within town centres or on the edge of district shopping centres where it is accessible by a choice of means of transport and where that retail development is commensurate with the function of the district centre. Berkshire Structure Plan policies S1 and S2 generally support this approach, although major development proposals will need to be assessed against the specific criteria of these policies.

² Paragraphs 54 and 56

- 5.16 The Oxford Road West district centre is the town's largest district shopping centre. It fulfils the role of a 'walk-in' local convenience shopping centre for nearby residents, but also has a much broader role through the many specialist retail trades and service uses which serve both the West Reading area and the town as a whole. However, the centre has restricted public parking for some shops and services and there is no "anchor" store. In recent years the Oxford Road Single Regeneration Budget scheme has incorporated improvements to shop fronts, lighting, street furniture, parking and loading areas and traffic calming. These improvements have reduced traffic speeds and improved the environment for pedestrians.
- 5.17 The release of land at Battle Hospital for redevelopment provides an opportunity to connect the site with the Oxford Road West district centre, and improve the centre by providing the civic space. The Council considers that land at Battle Hospital and along the Oxford Road frontage could assist in enhancing the vitality and viability of the district centre by widening the range of local shopping opportunities, providing public parking for the centre as a whole, and where possible, through environmental improvements to the centre. The use of the superstore car park for combined trips to the district centre would also be sought.
- 5.18 The Council intends to improve or renovate the library, to include an access to the rear, in order to allow direct access to the building, including provision for disabled people. This will need to be a sensitive alteration, given that this is a Listed Building. This should face a new civic space, incorporating a small, short-stay parking area, to include spaces for disabled people and quality parking for cycles and motorcycles. Community safety will be an important consideration and the civic space should be well surveyed and be clearly visible from Oxford Road. This space and its access into the site should be well-lit, welcoming and should not provide alleyways or other places of concealment which could contribute to the fear of crime.
- 5.19 This brief seeks the provision of new retail/commercial development of an appropriate scale and type to complement and enhance the vitality and viability of the Oxford Road district centre, in line with Policy COM1 of the Local Plan, which allocates the site for *inter alia*, retail uses. The extant planning permission for the site approved two large stores and a group of small shops units (in outline). Therefore, a major retail store (or stores) should form part of the extension to the District Centre and act as an "anchor". This might include a food store and separate retail warehousing, or combination store.
- 5.20 Depending on the scale of development proposed, it is likely that a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) would be required to enable the Council to assess the likely effects on the remainder of the district centre, the City Centre and other local shopping centres in the Borough and inform the Transport Assessment.

5.21 The following are requirements for retail development accessed via Oxford Road on the Battle site:

- A new civic space should be created as an extension to the district centre, framed by the rear of the library and the new Methodist Church (currently under construction). This space should be the focus for public art, act as a meeting place and provide a setting for the buildings;
- The Council will seek some small shop units (max 150 sq.m. per unit) with accommodation above, which will serve to frame a new civic space and link the superstore to the district centre;
- Residential units should form part of this space;
- A short-stay public car park of about 25 spaces should be provided to include disabled persons' spaces and good-quality covered cycle/motorcycle/scooter parking;
- The residential units in this area should have their own parking spaces, which are separate from the public car park and covered by a management scheme, although these spaces need not necessarily be allocated. The parking level will need to reflect the very accessible nature of this part of the site;
- The major retail development should have a commercial frontage to the new short-stay car-park/civic space, which should be in keeping with this aspect of the site in terms of its scale;
- This space should allow safe and direct pedestrian access through the larger store(s); to Portman Road and to the main public open space in the development. It should be well lit with good surveillance from Oxford Road; and
- The Council will seek to restrict the level of non-food floorspace provision to an appropriate level in order to strike an acceptable balance between the provision of convenience and comparison goods within the new retail development.

5.22 The following are requirements for major retail development accessed via Portman Road on the Battle site:

- The scale of any new retail facilities should be in-keeping with the district function of the Oxford Road West district centre;
- The retail aspect of the development shall be physically and functionally linked to the development of the site as a whole;

- The retail store(s) shall have a dual frontage in order to address Portman Road to the north and Oxford Road and the new civic space in the extension to the District Centre (see Development Principles Plan) and to provide a through-route via the store as an alternative to outside;
- The level of retail parking should reflect the fact that this is a sustainable location, as an extension to the District Centre, on a regular bus route and only a short distance from the City Centre;
- Attempts should be made to break up the area of car parking with the use of such materials as porous tarmac or block paving, in the interests of visual amenity and sustainable drainage; and
- The retail car park should also include an area for Council recycling facilities and consider parking use by non-retail users out of peak hours.

Community Use

- 5.23 Public consultation, including close liaison with the Oxford Road Community Forum, has established that there is demand for improved community facilities in the area, especially the retention of some kind of health facility. There should be provision for replacement community facilities if these are to be lost as a result of redevelopment as well as the securing of new facilities, as part of a balanced development where these are needed to meet local needs in the area.
- 5.24 The provision of land for additional (as opposed to replacement) community facilities will be investigated in detail at the pre-planning application stage when the balance of the various uses to be accommodated on the site is established through negotiation between the Council and the developers. This could involve an extension of the present Gatehouse Lodge buildings, to provide flexible accommodation, which may serve Council and economic support functions as well as community groups and childcare facilities. Additionally, there may be opportunities for the district centre extension to house certain community facilities as these can add to its vitality and enable one journey to serve several purposes thereby reducing the need to travel.
- 5.25 The following is a set of principles envisaged for the community facilities:

- The Borough Council will generally support a sympathetic extension to the existing Gatehouse Lodge buildings in order to provide additional community meeting space;
- An area of land has been set aside for the provision of a multi-purpose facility, including health-centre to be run by the Reading NHS Primary Care Trust. This facility should be sited towards Oxford Road and be close to either the community facilities or the extension to the District Centre. An area is shown indicatively on the Development Principles Plan. Vehicular access should be through the site, from Portman Road only. There should be limited parking for health centre staff and ambulances. Should the requirement of the PCT (either in terms of size or location of facility) change as the result of the forthcoming clinical needs assessment, their requirements will be considered on their planning merits;
- There should be limited parking to serve the community facility accessed through the Battle site from Portman Road only. This may be shared with the Primary Care Trust; and
- Both of the above should have direct and safe pedestrian/cycle access from Oxford Road.

6 CHARACTER AREAS

Introduction

- 6.1 The Character Areas will inform the scale and form of development within each distinct area. The Character Areas Plan shows the location and approximate boundaries of these areas.
- 6.2 The text below is not intended to provide a strict limitation on development and stultify design. It sets the parameters for development, so that designs come forward, which respect the context of each part of the site and its surroundings.

Portman Road

- 6.3 At present this area of the site is dominated by car parking with few notable buildings (temporary single-storey portacabins). The area is generally low-lying open ground towards Portman Road with the lowest part within Thames floodplain. This area has views towards the railway, with an open aspect and verges and is fairly distant from industrial scale buildings opposite.
- 6.4 Development will need to respect the generally open character of Portman Road:
- Any development should be no more than 2-storeys (or equivalent height);
 - Development should not disrupt the generally open aspect of Portman Road and structural landscaping should screen any buildings;
 - There will be the opportunity for other uses in this area, subject to the limitations set by PPG25 (Development and Flood Risk);
 - Car parking for the superstore should be broken up and screened, as far as possible, through structural landscaping and use of varied paving materials; and
 - The edge of the car park towards Portman Road should incorporate landscaping which has native planting used as part of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS).

Chester Street

- 6.5 The area is fairly low-lying and characterised by Lime trees to the west, which provide a substantial natural barrier to adjacent development. To the west bordering the site are the back gardens of long straight terraces. Presently there is a large medical block on a raised platform of land.

6.6 Development must be sensitive (in all its facets) to the residential area beyond. Additionally:

- There should be a mix of retail and housing in this area;
- The proposed civic space should frame a mix of uses and have a raised ground level, such that there is no appreciable drop from Oxford Road and could allow level (restricted vehicular) access from the proposed Methodist Church to the new short-stay car park;
- The civic space should be accessed from Oxford Road and contain buildings of a maximum of 2½ storeys;
- There is the opportunity for an architecturally exciting retail store within the area;
- The retail store should provide predominately active frontages to the north, east and south;
- Care will need to be taken to minimise the height and proximity of the building and the location of delivery bays and access roads, so as not to compromise the rear of properties on Chester Street and their gardens;
- There may be the opportunity for a continuation of urban form of Sherwood Street into the development from the west; and
- Although car access from Chester Street/Sherwood Street is not suitable, the Council will seek cycle/pedestrian access to the Battle site.

Valentia Road/ Close

6.7 This area is adjacent to the medical/industrial buildings to the north and east. The site has changes in levels, sloping down towards the north of the site. It has a variety of low-quality temporary buildings, and other buildings from the 1950s-70s. There are some trees, which are young and appear to be healthy.

6.8 The following development principles will be appropriate:

- Whilst a vehicular link to Audley Street/Valentia Road is not proposed, development in this area should nevertheless respond to the existing pattern of development in the adjoining residential area;

- Along the northern boundary opposite the medical/industrial buildings development may accommodate buildings of 4/5 storeys in height, dependant upon topography. Streets could respond to the contours of the land and the buildings could step gently up the hill, not uncommon in Reading;
- The rest of the area should be developed with terraced houses of a maximum of 2½ storeys;
- Particular emphasis has to be placed on building orientation, considering the neighbouring industrial buildings and also on possible future expansion of the site area to the north and east. Development should respond to the current situation posed by the industrial buildings, yet demonstrate how it would relate to development of the adjacent area, at a later date; and
- Parking for housing fronting Valentia Road should be contained within the Battle site.

Middle Spine

- 6.9 This is a plateau of land, which is relatively flat, occupied by the Victorian hospital buildings in a lawned setting. It is the centre of the site and despite its slightly elevated position; it should be the natural focus of higher-density development and a meeting area for routes within the site.
- 6.10 The following principles will be appropriate:
- This area should have a “green corridor” (open space axis) running from north to south and the proposed local park should link to this corridor. This part of the site should be the focus for the development as a whole;
 - The public open space should be usable, not solely ornamental and cater for a wide range of uses, including a toddlers’ play area and a quiet area for general relaxation;
 - There is the opportunity for good quality, high density residential development, which could predominately take the form of townhouses;
 - Development along the green corridor or adjacent to open spaces shall provide active frontages; and

- There will be the opportunity for innovative design in this area, although the overarching materials should reflect the local area being of brick construction and roofs of slate appearance. Historical design reference points in this Character Area should be the present Victorian buildings.

Access Curzon Street

- 6.11 This area is adjacent to 2-storey terraced housing to the east and the proposed mosque to the south. It comprises of an open car park on predominately flat land. The previous permission on this part of the site envisaged a small pocket of development accessed from Valentia Road, to link into the existing street pattern and this is also promoted in this Brief. Up to 25 terraced houses will be encouraged in this Character Area.
- 6.12 Future development needs to be sensitive to the existing built form and should include:
- A new street connected to Valentia Road opposite the Curzon Street T-junction;
 - New development that adjoins the terraced houses to the east should be orientated back to back preventing overlooking of the existing gardens and providing security;
 - New development should relate to the existing buildings in terms of eaves height, scale, materials, fenestration and building line, in order to provide a “seamless” link into the development;
 - There should be a particular commitment to using reclaimed bricks for the construction of these important “linking” buildings and an attention to detail, for example, specification in the Design Codes of bonding and pointing; and
 - The design of the mini health centre should relate to the character of this area.

Oxford Road Frontage

- 6.13 Oxford Road is a linear and relatively level street of mainly 2-storey Victorian/Edwardian buildings. There are a number of existing or potential civic uses including the Gatehouse, a large, Methodist church under construction in the south-west of the site and permission granted for a 3-storey mosque in the south-east corner. Notably, there is also the New Inn

public house and a Georgian terrace (Battle Terrace), which will be retained by the NHS Trust. The land behind has an escarpment west of the Gatehouse with some lawned, some overgrown.

- 6.14 The principal public views into the site are likely to be from Oxford Road. Therefore it is important that development on this frontage respects the scale and character of the existing streetscape, respects the character of the existing Victorian/Edwardian buildings and protects or where possible enhances the setting of the Listed Buildings. Specific design elements which are appropriate should include:
- A maximum of 2 1/2 storeys on Oxford Road with modest, single dormers set within the roofspace, if required;
 - Use of red-orange brick, possibly with cream brick decoration;
 - Slate or imitation slate roofs;
 - Brick chimneys;
 - Pitched roofs to reflect the existing built form;
 - Sash windows with fanned soldier-courses and set-backs for doors and windows; and
 - Doors to include fanlights above.
- 6.15 Environmental improvements, related to the development of the site, will be required. This will in part be achieved through removal of advertisement hoardings, tidying up of the land and improvements such as hard/ soft landscaping and street furniture (while ensuring satisfactory access for disabled people) and these will be negotiated as part of a planning application, were planning permission likely to be forthcoming.
- 6.16 Other development principles will be as follows:
- Of the NHS Trust buildings, the Battle Hospital Gatehouse, the adjoining terrace along Oxford Road and the buildings to the rear of the Gatehouse have been transferred to RBC. It is anticipated that these buildings will be extended and refurbished and the entrance arch and gates renovated.
 - Vehicular access to the civic space will be required via an in/out arrangement to the east of the library. The two principal points of access for cyclists and pedestrians should be to the civic space and through the Gatehouse arch (as at present) (see the Access and Movement Plan).
 - Development to the south east of the site should take account of the outline permission for the new mosque, which would be a 3-storey building.

6.17 A significant corner building is required on the site of the former Elm Park Hall. This would need to serve the following functions:

- Provide a mix of uses, to include retail and residential;
- Act as a significant building on Oxford Road, whilst still giving prominence to the Curzon Club and Battle Library as important landmark buildings;
- Be of a good-quality contemporary or sympathetic style to the Oxford Road street-scene, with a particular emphasis on scale, architectural details and appropriate materials; and
- Servicing should seek to minimise disruption of the function of either the Oxford Road frontage or the civic space frontage.

Medical Support (Future Development)

6.18 This area is built at low-level with a mixture of utilitarian buildings from single-storey sheds to an incinerator tower and ambulance parking areas. Virtually all this land is completely within the floodplain.

6.19 This land is currently industrial in nature and in the short term, will continue to be used as support services for the Hospital Trust. However, this land is anticipated to be released for development (from 2008 at the earliest) and the following development principles will be appropriate if the land becomes available:

- If this additional land is released for development, it should primarily contribute to meeting housing needs in Reading Borough;
- The density of residential development in this area would be dependent on the future level of public transport access along the Portman Road strategic access route. However, proposals for development on this land will need to take account of any possible contamination arising from existing or previous uses and the risk of flooding (in accordance with PPG25), which may affect the capacity of this area to deliver housing; and
- There may be a possibility of providing a number of live-work units in this area. This would help to provide a transition of land-uses in this part of the site, which is at the joining of a residential and industrial area and would provide flexible employment floorspace.

7 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Character

7.1 Any tablatures or other markings of historical significance of the present development should be retained and incorporated into the redevelopment of the site. The present wards on the Battle site are named after English painters. Local consultation has indicated a wish that that the eventual street names should reflect these. The following principles should be noted:

- The built form should incorporate a distinct character and points of emphasis at gateways, corners and junctions;
- The location of principal buildings should be at nodes of travel and at gateways to various character sub-areas; and
- The proposed local park should form a focus for the residential area. The adjacent buildings, routes and spaces should be designed to relate to and define this open space.

Height and Scale

7.2 The site provides an opportunity for an assessment of buildings which are higher than present in the locality including an analysis of the vistas/views, (to be included as part of the developers' masterplan) which will inform the location of these. Building heights should respond to the topography of the site, the clustering of buildings within the proposed development and the context of the surrounding buildings. Below is a set of criteria by which the height of buildings will be judged. The varying heights of buildings will be considered on their merits, taking into account such factors as:

- Ability to function as a new landmark/provide a "sense of place";
- Ability to respond to the topography of the site;
- Impact on the Oxford Road street-scene;
- Effect on long-range views; and
- Impact on nearby properties through overshadowing and overlooking (both within and beyond the site).

Permeability and Movement

- 7.3 A clear access and movement strategy should set out the system for vehicular servicing of the development. This should aim to reduce traffic speeds and give priority to cycling, walking and public transport, with design ensuring that car use is reduced.
- 7.4 The development of this site is likely to increase traffic in the area and should include road junction and other improvements in the vicinity, commensurate with the level of development proposed. A Transport Assessment (TA) will be used to justify the extent of measures proposed. In particular, there will be further pressure on the nearby Cow Lane Bridges, which are already operating beyond capacity. Given the amount of commercial floorspace and housing development likely to come forward, this Brief requires that commensurate contributions are provided towards the cost of these works.
- 7.5 To minimise impact on traffic levels on Oxford Road and to protect the amenities of local residents, the amount of short-stay and residential parking accessed from Oxford Road will be limited. The principal access for superstore customers, servicing and main residential access will be from Portman Road only.
- 7.6 The access strategy set out in the masterplan for the site should include the establishment of a clear and legible/recognisable street hierarchy for servicing the development. This should link to the type and number of dwellings serviced and relate to the landscaping masterplan.
- 7.7 Vehicular Access principles:
- The development of this site will be expected to mitigate the impact of the extra traffic on the surrounding road network;
 - The major part of the development area should be accessed from a single vehicular access on Portman Road (see Plan 3). There should be no vehicular through route between Oxford Road and Portman Road;
 - The most suitable form of access is likely to be a light-controlled junction on Portman Road, to be funded by the developer, in negotiation with the Highway Authority (RBC). This improved junction will need to account for the need to include a cycle/pedestrian crossing and must not prejudice any future development of the Strategic/Local Access Route along Portman Road;
 - Additional traffic attracted along A329 Oxford Road to/from the short-stay parking area should not prejudice the Borough's transport objectives for bus priority along the Oxford Road primary route and Quality Bus Corridor;

- Access to any non-residential uses from Portman Road should consider the need to minimise disturbance to the existing and proposed residential areas. Any related petrol filling stations should not cause nuisance to residential properties via noise or fumes;
- There should be limited access to a pocket of residential development from Valentia Road. In order to integrate development into the surrounding street pattern of Valentia Road, vehicular access will be permitted although this should not exceed 25 units;
- Access roads within the development should be designed to keep vehicle speeds at or below 20 mph and the majority of dwellings should be reached by shared surfaces/"home zones" where the design speed should be at or below 10 mph; and
- The design of the streets should be seen as secondary to the design of the built form and preference should be given to freedom for pedestrian and cyclists ahead of the ease of car movement through the site.

7.8 Parking and parking standards

- Parking for family houses shall be 1.5 spaces (unallocated) for all houses;
- Parking for open-market flats shall vary from 1.2 spaces (unallocated) in the least accessible parts of the site to 1 space per flat in the most accessible;
- Parking for Housing Association flats shall vary from 1 space (unallocated) in the least accessible part of the site to 0.5 spaces per dwelling in the most accessible;
- There may opportunities for underground parking and this is likely to be most appropriate where residential densities are highest;
- Parking areas need not necessarily be immediately adjacent to their respective dwellings, although they should be visible from the dwelling, to allow for natural security;
- The retail parking standard applied will need to respond to the fact that the site is in an accessible location, near the City Centre and on a frequent bus route. Therefore, the maximum parking standard shown for retail in PPG13 'Transport' is unlikely to be appropriate;

- The retail parking standard will be tempered with any particular considerations relevant, for example the percentage of home deliveries via the Internet or the percentage of food/non-food split;
- The Council will expect the retailer(s) to commit to a Green Travel Plan (GTP) and to no parking for employees, although facilities for secure, lockable employee cycle parking and showering/changing rooms will be required.

7.9 Walking and cycling

- As part of the access strategy, a safe and direct layout of cycle routes and footpaths should be created to link the various parts of the development and the surrounding area;
- It is envisaged that the proposed local park will provide a convenient place for several routes to meet;
- Main pedestrian routes should be suitable for joint use with cyclists, designed to minimise conflict;
- Cycle and pedestrian access should always be well overlooked; and
- There should be access for all, to include dropped kerbs, where needed.

7.10 In particular, direct links should be provided between:

- Oxford Road and the existing cyclepath on the North side of Portman Road (with the developer supplying a cycle/pedestrian crossing);
- Cycle/pedestrian movement east to west across the site accessed only from Valentia Road and Sherwood Street;
- Directly to bus stops; and
- The developer of any major new proposal would be expected to fund the provision of Toucan Crossings on Oxford Road.

7.11 Public transport

- There should be convenient public transport access to all the new retail development. Any access proposals along Oxford Road must not prejudice bus priority measures;
- Areas of higher density housing should be related to walking distances to bus stops; and
- Access from all residential routes to the proposed retail area and Civic Space should be as direct and convenient as possible.

Landscape/ Public Realm

- 7.12 The ODPM/Cabe emphasise the importance of integrating landform, natural features and ecology in developments³. The development of this site should therefore be related to the present landscape character and features and build upon them, to produce a development, which relates to its host environment naturally and not attempt to overlay a design, which is alien.
- 7.13 The Battle site is currently covered by a temporary Area Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This protects all trees on the site and will stay in place until such time as agreement is reached on the developer's masterplan and landscape masterplan, such that those trees identified for retention can be separately protected. A detailed landscaping masterplan should accompany the developers' masterplan. The landscaping masterplan should identify the landscape features on site and produce a strategy for enhancement, which will integrate with the building solutions chosen within the Character Areas and incorporate a study of vistas through the various areas of the development. This study should range from impact on long-range views: skylines, gateways, nodes, etc., down to thresholds, boundaries and barriers.
- 7.14 The landscaping masterplan should range from general principles, to identifying elements within the site and identifying details, down to street furniture specifications. Again, these will depend on the individual character area. The landscaping masterplan should also set out the long-term management principles for the landscaping including special provision for SUDS schemes.
- 7.15 In the case of the Battle site, there will be a particular need for landscaping to be at times Victorian⁴ in design and appearance and at other times,

³ See Section 7 of "By Design: better places to live"

⁴ There are species of plants which are non-native, which were commonly used in the Victorian era, for ornamental reasons. Such plants may be appropriate in formal situations, for instance, as in providing decorative planting for the setting to a public building.

locally distinctive. Landscaping requires commitment at the initial design stage and not just as an afterthought and will be a major integrating factor in the cohesiveness of the development.

7.16 The following requirements set out the aims of the landscaping masterplan:

7.17 Soft landscaping functions

- Integrate the protected trees on site and hedges/stands of younger trees, where possible;
- Consolidate landscaping along lines of protected trees to form buffers and avenues of planting, for example, the line of protected Lime trees on the western boundary;
- In particular, a buffer towards the medical support buildings along Portman Road should be produced;
- Consideration should be given towards providing a water feature or a swale system within the landscaping to minimise surface water run-off and recycle where possible;
- Structural planting should create at least one “green corridor” through the site and include locally-native species to create habitats for wildlife. The types of habitats which will be appropriate will be those set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Care should be taken to ensure landscaped areas are not or will not become areas for concealment or anti-social behaviour;
- There should be an avoidance of strips of green landscaping (less than 1.5m in width), which would be difficult to manage and ultimately, de-value the scheme;
- Produce landscaping within the superstore car park which breaks up the area of hard standing; and
- Provide adequate buffer landscaping between land-uses, when necessary.

7.18 Hard landscaping functions

- The identification of gateway features to each of the Character Areas. These could be pillars or designs on an end gable, or a more subtle feature, for example, a change in road surface texture;
- Respond to the context set by the Character Areas and state detailed designs for street furniture, signs, fittings, etc.;
- Indicate design solutions to avoid clutter and exposed cabling;
- Specification for lighting design and standards, paying particular attention to minimise light spillage and producing a strong, unified design for the most public areas of the development (in line with the street hierarchy);
- State hard surfacing treatments for each of the Character Areas, distributor roads, cycle and footpaths and civic spaces. This should include tree grilles and cages; and
- Specify the detailed hard landscaping elements for the proposed local park and toddlers play area.

7.19 Public Open Space functions there is a requirement for on-site provision of open space in the redevelopment of this site and a contribution towards off-site enhancements to facilities (the precise level will be part of a comprehensive plan for improving facilities, to be discussed in consultation with the Council's Arts and Leisure Department). The following facilities will be sought:

- A public local park (to be adopted by the Borough Council) of at least 0.6 hectares with toddlers' play facilities (a Local Area Equipped for Play (LEAP)) is required to meet the neighbourhood recreational open space needs of the development and to complement existing provision in the local area;
- The park should be set within the context of at least one "green corridor" running through the site and link to the aims of the landscaping masterplan;
- The park should be accessible (and ideally visible) from Oxford Road;
- The park should be integrated, not overly fragmented open space (in terms of its area and in relation to its topography);
- The spaces should not be severed by roads; and

- The facilities should be accessible to all.

7.20 Suitable examples of public art should be provided in accordance with the Council's Art Policy.

Diversity and Legibility (Mixed Use/ Layout)

7.21 The following principles will promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs on the Battle site.

7.22 Mix and tenure

- A minimum of 50% of the dwellings are to be houses to help meet Borough housing needs and Structure Plan housing allocations;
- Subject to the limitations implied in the identified Character Areas, areas of higher density housing will be acceptable within the development in locations at or adjoining the extended district centre, towards the park or at places with the best access to bus stops;
- New build social rented units shall not dominate any one development site within the estate, but rather be “pepper-potted” or pocketed in various areas of the development in groups of no less than 10 units and in individual floors in blocks of flats, for ease of management; and
- Individual gardens should be appropriate to the nature of the
- Dwellings proposed, having regard to the Borough Council’s Space Around Dwellings SPG (1994) and Government advice in PPG3. There should also be a mix of provision, for example, there should be some family units with one or two larger, south-facing gardens (to allow for a limited number of vegetable plots).

7.23 Layouts/house-types

- Enclosed perimeter blocks are an efficient use of land, can produce strong frontages for new streets in the Battle development and clearly separate the public and private realm. They should form part of the design solution where higher density is appropriate;
- Townhouses with integral garages accessed from the street shall not form more than 10% of the total dwellings on this site and should be grouped in terraces no greater than 6 houses in length, in order to maintain active frontages within the residential street;
- Innovative housing and parking arrangements, such as mews courts and courtyard developments should be used in various parts of the site, as a means of raising densities, providing active and safe streets and reducing traffic speeds by design. Small parking courts should not be divorced from housing, but immediately overlooked by those dwellings to which they relate;

- Whilst certain standard house layout types may be possible, a standard external finish across the site will not. Materials will need to conform to the relevant Design Codes set in the masterplan for the Character Areas;
- As far as possible, the development should make use of reclaimed existing materials on site and a strategy for achieving this shall be included within the construction method statement. The use of sand-faced bricks, where new bricks are required, should be avoided in favour of red-orange bricks, which show more natural qualities of the clay. Contrasting bricks (for decorative effects at corners and around doors and windows) should be cream in colour;
- Garages should only be used for some of the family houses and a minority of the other dwelling types. Garage blocks or parking areas distant from housing areas are liable to vandalism and anti-social behaviour and will not be appropriate; and
- Standard street surfacing materials are to be brick shared surface with setts to add interest and slow vehicular traffic.

Continuity and enclosure

7.24 The development shall create an environment which will aim to curb anti-social behaviour by avoiding creating alleyways, providing active frontages and allowing natural surveillance.

7.25 Liveability and detailed design issues

- Building lines are to be established which set buildings back from the back of the pavement. This provides a setting to the buildings and is considered appropriate in the context of this Victorian area;
- All windows to buildings which have a public frontage shall be set-back behind the front wall, to provide relief to the façade of the buildings and the windows are to be of sash appearance, except where a contemporary design would dictate otherwise;
- Where a front garden or amenity space is provided, there should be delineation of the public space from that which is private, by appropriate means such as dwarf walls and railings;

- All windows and doors should be set back from the building line, with projecting sills and soldier courses, to reflect the local building design;
- Bay windows at ground floor level should be used in many of the public streets, as a means of reflecting the local vernacular and allowing good levels of natural peripheral surveillance up and down the street. These should have lean-to roofs of slate appearance;
- Courtyards and mews courts should not be gated, but designed in such a way as to allow natural surveillance both into and out of the courts;
- Blank gable walls should not face the street “unprotected” as these inevitably become targets for graffiti and ball games;
- Entrance doors should face the street to create an active frontage and clearly mark the transition between public and private space. These should incorporate small, recessed entrance porches and panelled doors. The porches of houses could incorporate bin/recycling stores; and
- Sparing use should be made of balconies. These are only likely to be appropriate to courtyards or overlooking the public open space and are unlikely to be appropriate in the new streets or on the Oxford Road frontage.

Sustainable Design

- 7.26 The Borough Council is committed to producing a sustainable urban scheme on this site, in line with Government guidance and Council policies⁵ to achieve its planning and socio-economic goals for this part of the city.
- 7.27 A particular opportunity is that the Battle site is relatively level to be able to maximise solar gain, whilst still being able to maintain a street pattern which is sympathetic to the urban context. For instance, part of the design solution, which is encouraged, is to produce terraced streets, with substantial glazing facing south, whilst maintaining sufficient distance for the northern houses to benefit from the sun. In constructing to a higher density, courtyards may be used in certain parts of the site, as these are the most efficient use of land. The developer should provide detailed justification for how this resource is to be best harnessed in the masterplan.

⁵ (Green City, Reading Community Strategy and Policies CUD14 and KEY2A of the Local Plan)

7.28 Listed below are a series of sustainability attributes, which will be expected to be reflected as sustainability commitments in the Design Codes for the developers' masterplan and incorporated in the design of schemes later submitted for planning approval. These are not considered to be onerous requirements, but measures which should be built-in to the scheme at an early stage, in accordance with good practice:

- Communal recycling areas for flats and a "green waste" facility/composting;
- Measures for minimising surface water run-off through grey water recycling/sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) rainwater recycling;
- Commitment to the use of local labour and local sourcing of materials during construction (to be set out in a construction method statement);
- Investigating the possibility of re-using any of the existing buildings, in full or part, or by re-using their materials on-site;
- Using the clear potential of solar water heating;
- Exploration of opportunities for "green" or "brown" roofs, and the provision of other habitats within the construction for species which are identified in the Bio-diversity Action Plan and have been found to be present on the site;
- Consider the appropriateness of incorporating natural venting and cooling systems; and
- Explore the opportunity for CHP/energy transfer between the different land-uses.

7.29 In line with Policies KEY1 and CUD14 of the Local Plan, the Council will expect all public areas and buildings to be accessible to disabled people. Disabled access provision for housing should accord with the Council's standards, i.e. 4% of the dwellings shall be constructed so as to be wheelchair-adaptable. No gradients should exceed 1:20 and all public areas and public buildings should be fully accessible.

7.30 Residential sustainability - In line with Government advice and Council policy, the Borough Council seeks housing on this site, which meets high standards for energy efficiency/thermal insulation and energy generation.

All residential development should therefore meet the following specific minimum standards:

- Adoption of Lifetime Home Standards, Assistive Technology and SMART homes where appropriate;
- A minimum of 70% of homes to be built using Modern Methods of Construction;
- All new build housing to achieve a 'Very Good' Ecohomes rating. 25% of the open-market housing should achieve an 'Excellent' rating;
- All new build housing to achieve National Home Energy Rating (NHER) of 10/10;
- Energy and resource efficiency should be demonstrated throughout the construction and use phases;
- Innovative proposals for energy generation and efficiency are sought through design, layout and orientation of buildings, including passive solar gain;
- All houses with a roof facing within 40° of south must have a solar thermal system linked to the main heating system;
- All housing to achieve Secured By Design certification;
- The design of the site should avoid the need, where possible, for restrictive conditions for noise suppression;
- There should be a degree of "adaptability" built in to dwellings, for example, lintols built into walls, to allow easy removal of partitions to enlarge some rooms;
- There should be good use (or possibility of future use) made of attic spaces in the new dwellings, to maximise available floorspace; and
- There should be a proportion of family housing built which offer scope to add modest extensions in the future and these should be represented in each of the Character Areas, where possible.

7.31 Commercial sustainability- Any large retail stores proposed would provide a wide range of opportunities to incorporate sustainable attributes as part of their design, from a Green travel Plan for staff to water and energy

recycling. Innovative architecture will be encouraged, but the design of any buildings should incorporate the following:

- Consideration of visual impacts on Oxford Road and the opportunity to provide a high standard of design, within the context set by the Listed Buildings and the new Methodist Church;
- Functional integration with residential on site, for instance, flats over the store;
- Minimisation of visual intrusion on surrounding residents;
- Location of delivery areas to be designed as far as possible to minimise disturbance to residents, especially those living in existing housing adjacent to the site;
- Zero car parking for staff;
- Showers and changing rooms for staff who cycle;
- Buildings to achieve a “Excellent” (BREEAM) rating for energy efficiency; and
- Grey water recycling/SUDs drainage.

8 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.1 An outline planning permission exists for the site, granted in July 2002. This comprises 315 dwellings, retail development comprising food store (4,645 sq.m.), non-food retail (4,413 sq.m.), fast food unit, petrol filling station, community uses, car park, together with ancillary highway works and landscaping. Whilst (a) full application(s) is/are strongly encouraged, were an outline submitted, means of access and siting of development must be indicated. Any substantial changes to the outline proposal will require further updated impact assessments (e.g. transport and retail) and proposals for part of the site are unlikely to be able to be considered without the same.
- 8.2 All proposals will be expected to be accompanied with a phasing plan, in order that the public benefits for the site can be secured as the commercial and residential elements are realised and not delivered at a later date.

Contributions

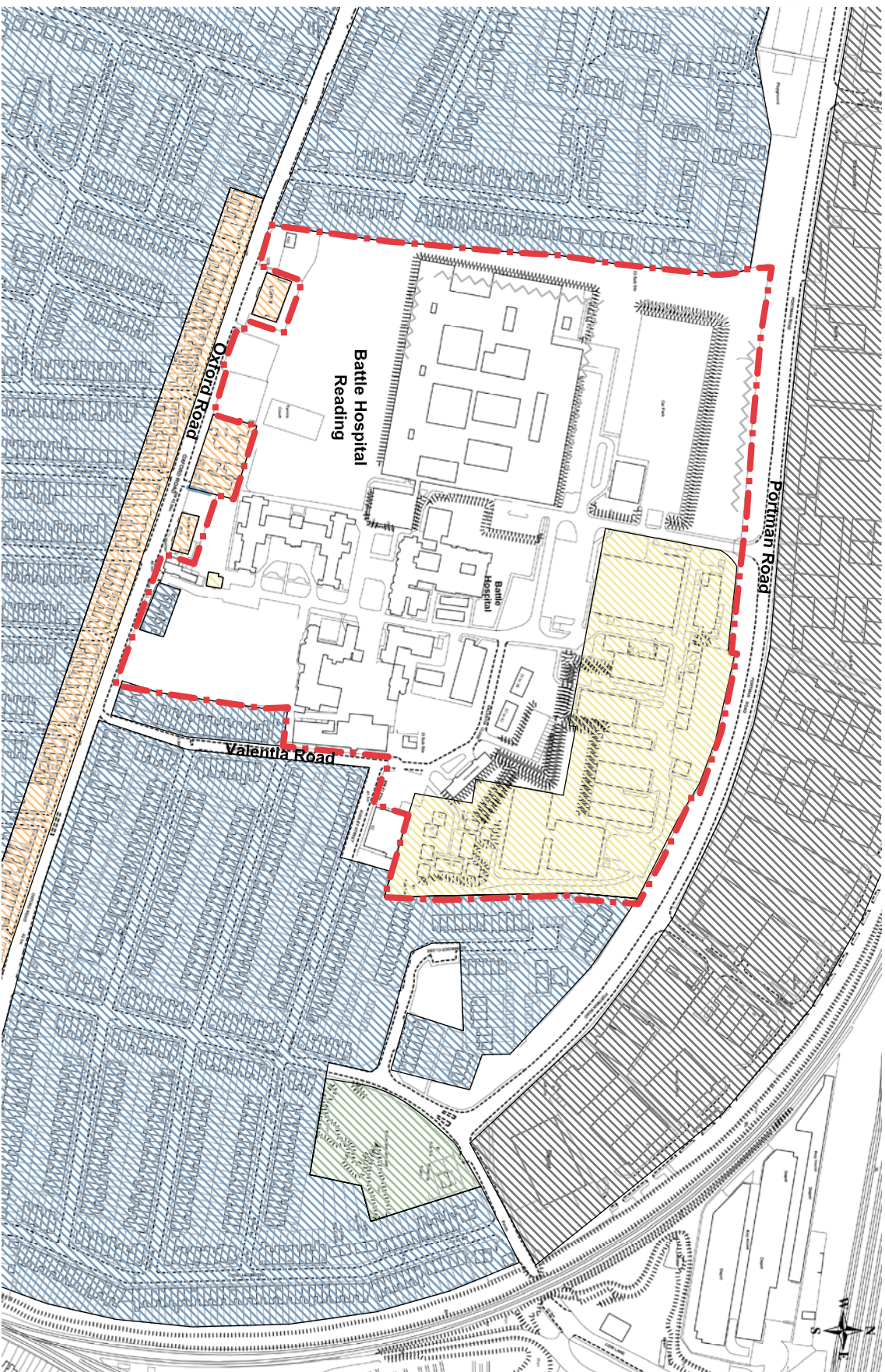
- 8.3 The Council will seek contributions towards education infrastructure improvements, integrated transport, leisure improvements, environmental enhancement, and possibly community uses. The impact on infrastructure is required to be mitigated by policies KEY3, TRN1 and LE13 of the Local Plan. Exact requirements will emerge when the form, scale and impact of the proposal is known, but the developer should refer to the Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (July 2004). This will form the basis of contributions, which will be sought.
- 8.4 The Council operates a considerate contractor scheme to which future developers, main contractor and any subcontractor are urged to subscribe. Details of the scheme can be obtained from the Council's Building Control Section.
- 8.5 The success of environmental enhancement is dependent on its on-going management and maintenance. It is expected that the developer will set up management regimes responsible for the future maintenance of public areas and landscaping; financial contributions for a 20-year period will be required towards maintenance of public areas by the Council. The maintainability of the public areas will be critical in determining the acceptability of those areas. This also applies to any Percent for Art proposals, which should be simple and economic to maintain. In general and where appropriate, proposals will be expected to use surface materials that will prevent or discourage graffiti.

Contributions - Education

- 8.6 At the primary level, the three local schools (Wilson Road Primary, Battle Primary and Oxford Road Primary) are, however, experiencing pressure and have limited redevelopment capacity. The nearest secondary school (Prospect School) is not under enrolment pressure, although the Education Authority needs to redevelop this site in response to forthcoming legislation. On the basis of the above, there is considered to be a need at both the primary and secondary levels and the Borough Council will seek contributions towards education facilities in line with the levels set out in the recently approved Planning Obligations SPG, which will be used to improve infrastructure at existing schools in the local (West Reading) area.

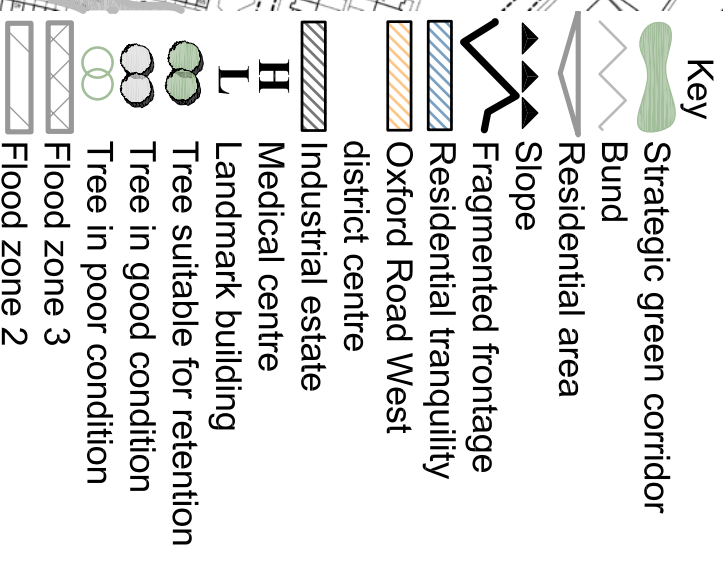
Strategic Environmental Assessment

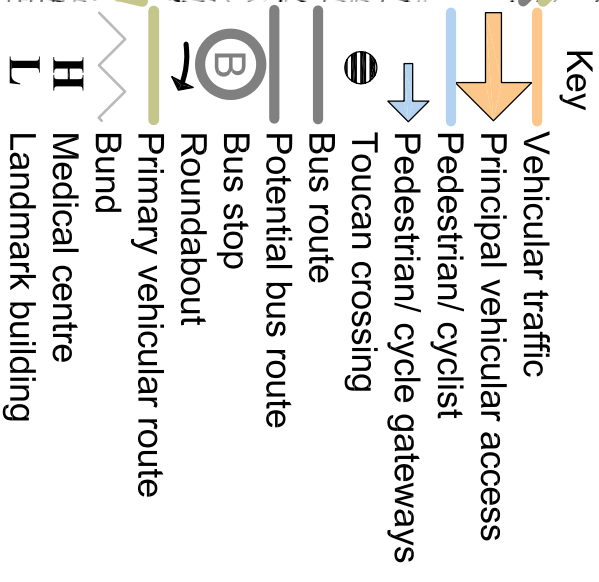
- 8.7 A Sustainability Appraisal (which is derived from the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) is required as the Brief is to form an integral part of the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), to replace the current Local Plan and is set out in a separate document.
- 8.8 The Sustainability Appraisal Report will indicate those effects for which continuous or periodic monitoring will be required during and following completion of the development.
- 8.9 On 2 March 2005, the Secretary of State gave notice via a Screening Direction that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would not be required for development of 10.83 hectares of land at the Battle Hospital site for a mix of uses, predominantly retailing and residential. Given this Direction, it is therefore unlikely that EIA would be required for redevelopment of the whole of the brief area.



- Key**
- Residential area
 - Oxford Road West district centre
 - Industrial estate
 - Retained hospital uses
 - Public open space

Site Location
Battle Hospital Reading
Reading Borough Council
1:2500 @ A3



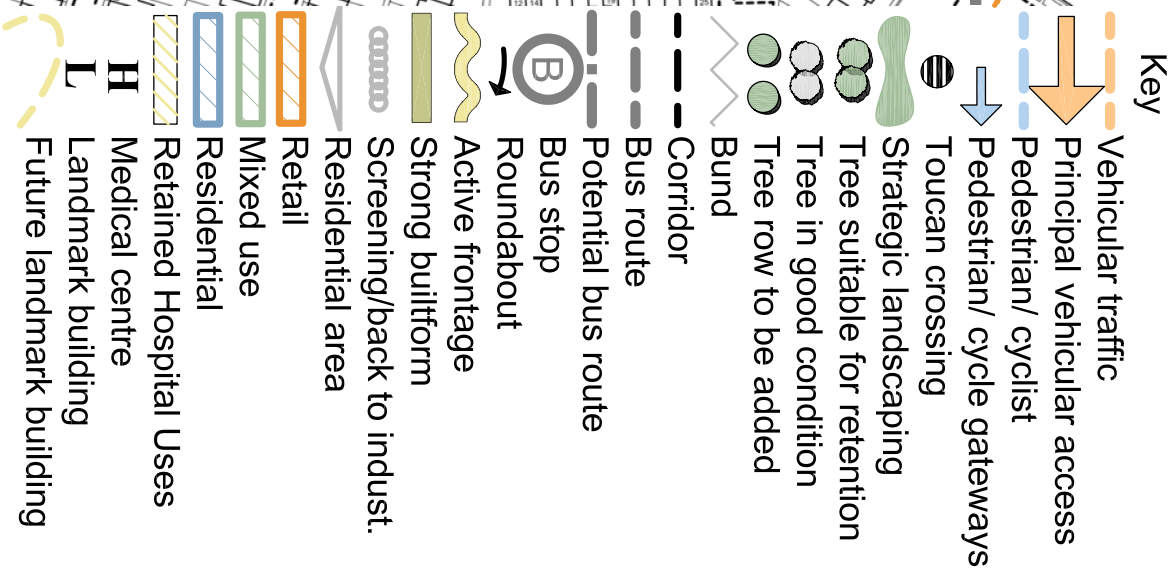




- Key**
- Strategic landscaping
 - Tree suitable for retention
 - Tree in good condition
 - Tree in poor condition
 - Tree row to be added
 - Bund
 - Medical centre
 - Landmark building
 - Corridor

Open Space
Battle Hospital Reading
Reading Borough Council
NTS @ A3





Development Principles
Battle Hospital Reading
Reading Borough Council
NTS @ A3

- 8.5 The West Berkshire Trust has been drawing up proposals for the rationalisation of its facilities in Reading. These proposals have been the subject of discussion with the Council and are supported.

POLICY COM 1: HOSPITALS

- 8.6 **THE COUNCIL WILL GIVE FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION TO PROPOSALS FOR THE RATIONALISATION OF HOSPITAL SERVICES IN READING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING GENERAL PRINCIPLES:**

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW HOSPITAL PRECINCT BASED UPON THE SITE OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL (SITE 82) EXTENDED;

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF SURPLUS LAND AT BATTLE HOSPITAL (SITE 17) TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

AT LEAST 300 HOUSING UNITS OF WHICH A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER ARE TO BE AFFORDABLE;

A PLAY AREA TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOUSING;

AT LEAST 2 ACRES OF USABLE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE;

ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING, OR PROVISION OF NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES;

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO OXFORD ROAD SHOPPING CENTRE, INCLUDING PUBLIC CAR PARKING.

REMAINDER OF THE SCHEME MAY COMPRISE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

FOODSTORE;

RETAIL WAREHOUSING;

SMALL RETAIL UNITS IN KEEPING WITH THE OXFORD ROAD;

USES WITHIN CLASSES B1, B2 AND B8, FRONTING THE PORTMAN ROAD

CONTINUE TEMPORARY USE OF PROSPECT PARK HOSPITAL (SITE 67) FOR HEALTH AUTHORITY OFFICES UNTIL APRIL 1994 AND ITS REDEVELOPMENT THEREAFTER. ANY AREAS BECOMING SURPLUS TO HEALTH TRUST REQUIREMENTS BE

DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND OPEN SPACE.

Reason for the Policy

- 8.7 To provide the relevant Trust with certainty of the Council's position with regard to their rationalisation proposals.
- 8.8 The Battle Hospital site has potential for a number of land uses in combination. The Council has identified the site as having potential for at least 300 housing units with a substantial number of such units being affordable. At least 250 housing units should be provided on the area south and west of the laundry/boiler house/ambulance depot as indicated in the Council's Planning Brief. In addition there should be a children's play area associated with the housing and a minimum 2 acres of usable public open space.
- 8.9 The Battle Hospital site adjoins the Oxford Road West district centre and comprehensive redevelopment of the site should be accompanied by environmental improvements within the District Centre, the provision of an element of public car parking provision to serve the District Centre, and either the provision of new or enhancement of existing community facilities. The Council considers that a food store and/or retail warehousing and some small shop units within the site could be capable of complementing the shopping function of the district centre (see policies RET 1 and RET 2).
- 8.10 If after meeting the total housing requirements of the policy, additional land in the vicinity of the laundry/boiler house and ambulance depot becomes available for development, small scale commercial uses including B1, B2 and B8 may be acceptable subject to no adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents.

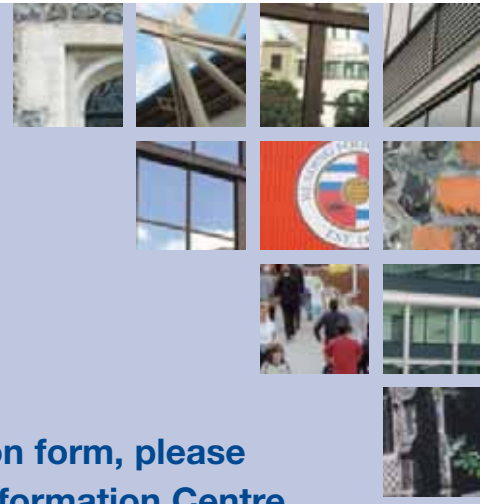
How it will be carried out

- 8.11 The Council will work with the relevant Trust to produce an overall master plan for their proposals. In the case of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, this would include: buildings to be removed; new buildings proposed; arrangements for car parking, vehicular access and landscaping including the protection of existing landscape features; access by public transport; provision for protecting the listed buildings on the site and maintaining and enhancing their setting. Subject to their agreement to this master plan, the Council will support it through its development control powers. The Council will also consider whether the establishment of more formal joint working arrangements would help in the carrying out of these proposals.
- 8.12 The Council has prepared additional guidance for the redevelopment of the Battle Hospital site in the form of a planning brief and proposals for redevelopment will be considered against the brief.

- 8.13 In the event of the redevelopment of Prospect Park Hospital (site 67) for housing, the Council will expect a significant proportion of that housing to be affordable, as described in Policy HSG 2.

Health Care Facilities

- 8.14 The trend for general practitioners is to operate as group practices, rather than as individual doctors. While this can produce a more efficient service for patients, it can also have a larger impact on the environment, because of the amount of activity it creates.
- 8.15 Similar trends can be seen in dentists and some other health services. While it is generally convenient for such practices to be located within or near residential areas and they can often make good use of larger houses no longer suitable for single family use, it is also in these areas that their impact can be most disruptive.



**If you need help to fill in this planning application form, please
call 0118 939 0587 or 0118 955 3717, or visit the Information Centre
on Level 4 of the Civic Offices.**

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਪੱਤ੍ਰ (ਪਲੈਨਿੰਗ ਐਪਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ) ਦਾ ਫਾਰਮ ਭਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0118 939 0587 ਜਾਂ 0118 955 3717 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ, ਜਾਂ ਸਿਵਿਕ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਦਫਤਰ ਦੇ ਚੌਥੇ
ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਫਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਓ।

Punjabi

إذا احتجتم لمساعدة لملئ هذه الاستمارة التخطيطية ، الرجاء منكم الاتصال بالأرقام التالية :
0118 939 0587 أو 0118 955 3717 ، أو تقدموا لزيارة مركز الاستعلامات المتواجد في
الطابق الرابع للبلدية .

Arabic

**Ne qofte seni nevojë për ndihmë që të mbushni këtë formë të aplikimit plani, ju
lutemi telefononi 0118 939 0587 ose 0118 955 3717 ose vizitoni Qendren e
Informacionit në katin e 4 të Bashkisë Civic Offices.**

Albanian

اگر آپ کو پلاننگ کی درخواست کے فارم پُر کرنے کے سلسلے میں مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی
0118 939 0587 یا 0118 955 3717 پر ٹیلیفون کریں یا سوک دفاتر کی چوٹی
منزل پر واقع مرکز معلومات پر تشریف لائیں۔

Urdu



Planning Section, Planning & Transport, Director of Environment, Culture & Sport,
Reading Borough Council, Reading RG1 7TD
Tel: Freephone 0800 626540 Email: planning.info@reading.gov.uk Web: www.reading.gov.uk
July 2005



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