

# Devonshire Square **Development Brief**

Charnwood Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document



March 2007

## Supplementary Planning Document Devonshire Square Development Brief

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# Foreword: A Development Brief for Devonshire Square

Loughborough is at a key stage in its growth and development and the next fifteen years will see further major changes. In addition to the planned growth as part of the Local Development Framework, the Town is being considered for additional significant growth as part of the Three Cities Growth Point in the East Midlands Regional Plan. The Town Centre has to develop and improve if it is to maintain its position within the Three Cities Sub-Region. Accessibility of the centre and the quality of its environment must be addressed and opportunities for new investment must be created.

Impressions of the Town are formed by the buildings and spaces that make up the public realm and townscape, the quality of its facilities and how easy they are to use and move between. It is through these impressions that people make decisions – whether to visit, or invest in the Town, what to do and how to behave when they come here. There are real social and economic benefits in ensuring that the Town Centre realises its potential at the heart of a thriving, vibrant and attractive Town that we can all take pride in. The successful, sustainable development of the Devonshire Square Opportunity Site is important to the creation of the Town Centre that Loughborough needs and deserves.

The Development Brief provides guidance on how this important site should be developed in line with the Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan, and relevant planning and design policies. It provides an indicative but flexible vision of future development form, and has been prepared in conjunction with the Masterplan.

Councillor Cameron MacLeod



Cabinet Lead Member for Planning  
Charnwood Borough Council

26th March 2007





# I. INTRODUCTION

## Background

This brief sets out the Council's planning requirements for the development of the Devonshire Square Opportunity Site, in the context of Policy CA/4a of the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, which identifies the site as a key development opportunity. Any proposals for the Devonshire Square site will also need to take account of other relevant policies of the Local Plan and guidance set out in the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents, as outlined in the Planning Policy section of this brief.

The Devonshire Square site is critical to the overall success of the Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan, an informal document which provides a clear vision for development over the next fifteen years. The Masterplan has identified the potential for the redevelopment of the site occupied by John Storer House and the relocation of those uses into a new building within the overall development site. This site is not included within the Local Plan allocation CA/4a, but is incorporated in this Development Brief.

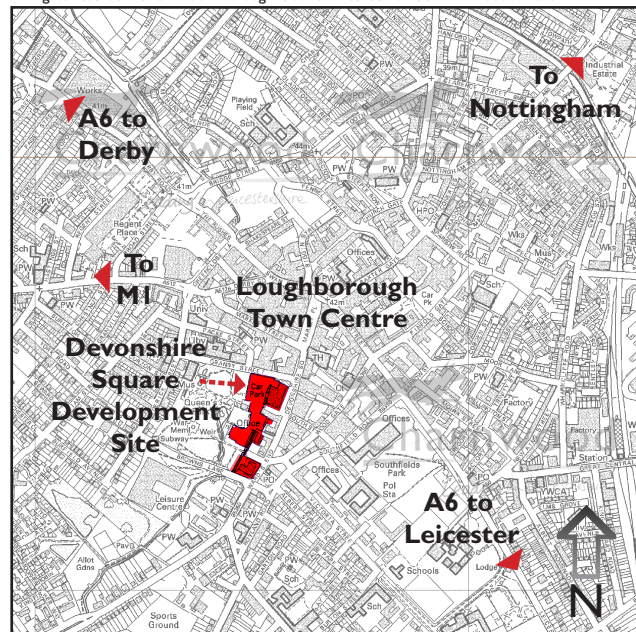
## The Site

The site is located within the southernmost part of Loughborough Town Centre, approximately 250 metres south of the A6. The M1 J23 is approximately 5 km to the west of the town centre and is connected by the A512.

The site is approximately 1.35 hectares and lies within the prime shopping centre of Loughborough, a buoyant Market and University Town. Queen's Park, a mature formal public park, adjoins the site's western boundary. The other site boundaries are Brown's Lane to the south, Ward's End and Devonshire Square to the east, and Granby Street to the north.

A traditional street market, which trades on Thursdays and Saturdays, extends into Devonshire Square. This public area also accommodates specialist street markets and Loughborough's historic annual November fair.

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## **Purpose of the Brief**

The brief provides guidance for an integrated, planned approach to the redevelopment of this key town centre opportunity site to:

- Ensure that any new development takes proper account of all relevant policies of the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan and acknowledges other guidance set out in the Council's adopted SPD and SPG, including the Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan;
- Ensure that any new development pays due regard to the site context and features, planning objectives for the area and existing amenities, whilst optimising site potential and development quality;
- Inform investment decisions, and land disposals and acquisitions by clarifying development constraints;
- Stimulate interest among owners, developers and prospective occupiers so as to bring the land forward for development;
- Encourage co-operation between owners;
- Ease the planning process for potential applicants, Council officers and Members by anticipating issues and offering greater certainty;
- Provide guidance to Council officers and Members to assist in the determination of planning applications.

## **Status of the Brief**

The new Planning Act introduces some major changes to the way the planning system operates. It sees the replacement of the old system of Structure and Local Plans with Development Frameworks (LDF) – a “portfolio” of documents to deliver the planning strategy for an area. The Devonshire Square Development Brief is being produced as part of the LDF and will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide the site's redevelopment in accordance with the Council's adopted Policy and other guidance. Once adopted as SPD, the brief will carry greater weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## **Vision**

### **The Council envisages:**

“A development of urban design and architectural excellence that will transform an existing discordant building and extensive surface car parking areas into a ‘vital’ part of the town centre offering a varied mix of uses, an innovative approach to the treatment of the public realm and Wood Brook, and a harmonious relationship with Queen’s Park.”

Of great importance will be the impact of development on Queen’s Park, which is a much cherished feature of the town. The Council’s vision for the park is set out in its Green Flag Management Plan:

“To preserve and enhance the beauty and heritage of the park. To improve the facilities and accessibility of the park ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of the local community, the wider population across the borough and encourages greater number of visitors to the town.”

### **Planning Objectives for the Area**

- Well planned development following an urban design strategy based on a clear structure of routes, public spaces, active frontages and new built form.
- A coherent, distinctive and attractive development which responds to the positive characteristics of its surroundings; creates ‘active’ frontages and relates sensitively to its neighbours. The excellent standard of urban design and architecture sought may be achieved through traditional or modern design approaches.
- A varied mix of uses that reflect the site’s Core Area location, augments the leisure / cultural quarter identified in the Town Centre Masterplan, and includes a significant residential content.
- Development that enhances key frontages to Queens Park, Devonshire Square and Granby Street and the ‘gateway’ John Storer House site.
- Development that adds to the quality and quantity of public space, including improved linkages between Queen’s Park and the Town Centre,

and makes a positive feature of Wood Brook.

- Development that follows the principles of Sustainable Construction and Design, has minimal impact upon the environment, has low or zero carbon emissions in its operation, and avoids any increase in flood risk to the Town Centre.

### **The Importance of Design and Access Statements**

Any planning application for new development on the site must be accompanied by a 'Design and Access Statement'. In the statement the applicant should demonstrate a clear understanding and sensitive response to the characteristics of the site and the context. Good design arises from a thorough and caring understanding of the place and context. Applicants will also need to demonstrate to the Council that the guiding design principles in the 'Development Brief', the 'Masterplan' and 'Leading in Design' have been considered and fulfilled. If they do this, determination of the application should be speedier by avoiding need for modifications. If they fail to do this, however, their designs will be unacceptable and will be refused planning permission.



## 2. PLANNING POLICY

### **National and Regional Planning Policy**

**The national policy context is provided by:**

- Planning Policy Statement 1 'Creating Sustainable Communities' (PPS1), which sets out overarching government policy and makes clear what constitutes good design;
- Planning Policy Statement 3 'Housing', which sets out the government's policy and guidance relating to housing;
- Planning Policy Statement 6 'Planning for Town Centres' (PPS6), which sets out the government's objective to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for the growth and development of existing centres and encouraging a wide range of services in an attractive environment, accessible to all;
- Planning Policy Statement 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation', which seeks to ensure that the potential impact of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation is fully considered;
- Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 and 16 set out the government's policy and guidance on planning issues relating to the historic environment and archaeology.
- Planning Policy Statement 22 sets out the government's policy and guidance relating to renewable energy and new developments.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) was adopted in March 2005. Policy 23 relates to 'Regional Priorities for Town Centres and Retail Development'. Other relevant policies include Policy 4 (Promoting Better Design), Policy 40 (Energy Reduction and Efficiency), Policy 41 (Regional Priorities for Renewable Energy), and Policy 49 (Sustainable Transport). The Regional Waste Strategy (Policies RWS 1 & 7) provides a policy context for sustainable construction and design.

### **The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan**

A number of general policies apply to all development within The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (adopted January 2004) and should be observed to ensure

development proposals are in compliance. The key planning policies relating to the Opportunity Site are outlined in Appendix I. Policy CA/4a is of particular significance and states that:

“Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of the Devonshire Square

Opportunity site provided the ground floor uses fall primarily within the following classes (as, defined by the Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987):

- i) shops (Class A1);
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2); and
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3).

And provided the development would:

- a) avoid partial redevelopment where such an approach would prevent or seriously prejudice the redevelopment of the remainder of the defined Opportunity Site;
- b) orientate primary frontages towards pedestrian preference areas where possible;
- c) retain buildings which make an individually important contribution to the existing townscape;
- d) create new areas of open space for repose and public interaction with pedestrian links to Queen’s Park;
- e) screen from wider view service areas and storage compounds;
- f) respect through design, scale, mass and materials, the local tradition of individual buildings sharing common building lines enclosing Devonshire Square;

and

- g) make a positive contribution to the vitality of the town centre; in particular elements of housing should be provided wherever possible and preferably at first floor level and above.

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to assist in the provision of those elements of the Loughborough Inner Relief Road necessary to service adequately the redevelopment proposal.”

### **Supplementary Planning Documents and Other Guidance**

- ‘Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan’: this informal document provides detailed guidance for the development and improvement of the town centre.

Proposals that directly affect the development site are:

- o Leisure / cultural quarter identified;
- o Opportunity for public realm improvements identified for Bedford Square, New Street, Wards End, Devonshire Square and Granby Street; and
- o John Storer House site identified as being part of a key gateway to the town centre, which is suitable for a landmark development. Any development affecting this important and exceptionally well-used community facility will need to ensure the future of JSH either within its existing site or on an appropriate site nearby.
- ‘Charnwood - Leading in Design’: adopted SPD which builds on Local Plan Policy EV/1. This design framework document explains the importance the Council places on good design and the principles of sustainable construction and provides guidance aimed to ensure higher design standards in development throughout Charnwood.
- ‘Shopfronts and Signs’: adopted SPD which supports ‘Leading in Design’ and sets out the general principles that should be followed in order to achieve good shopfront and sign design.
- ‘Making it Easy’: adopted SPD which sets out good practice in designing for people with disabilities.
- ‘Affordable Housing’: adopted SPD which expands upon existing Local Plan policies on affordable housing and clarifies the Council’s position.
- ‘Student Housing’: adopted SPD which sets out the Council’s approach to the student accommodation proposals within Loughborough.
- ‘Section 106 Developer Contributions’: emerging SPD, currently a Public Consultation Draft, in relation to the process for negotiations to secure planning obligations prior to and during the process of planning applications.
- ‘Public Art - Making Places Distinctive’: adopted supplementary planning guidance which encourages the provision of public art in new developments.
- ‘Queen’s Park Conservation Area Appraisal’: approved assessment of the qualities of the conservation area that affects the development site.

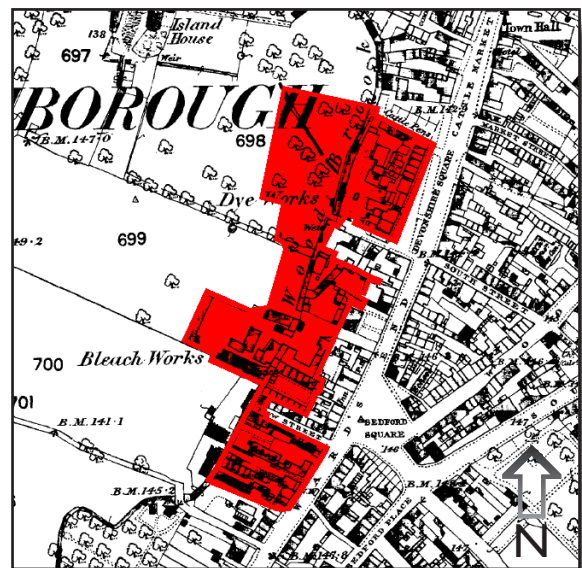
### 3. SITE INFORMATION

#### Site History

Devonshire Square is named after the Devonshire Militia who drilled there when they were stationed in Loughborough to quell the Luddite Riots in the early nineteenth century. It is one of a series of linked public spaces that are of great significance to Loughborough's history, form and character.

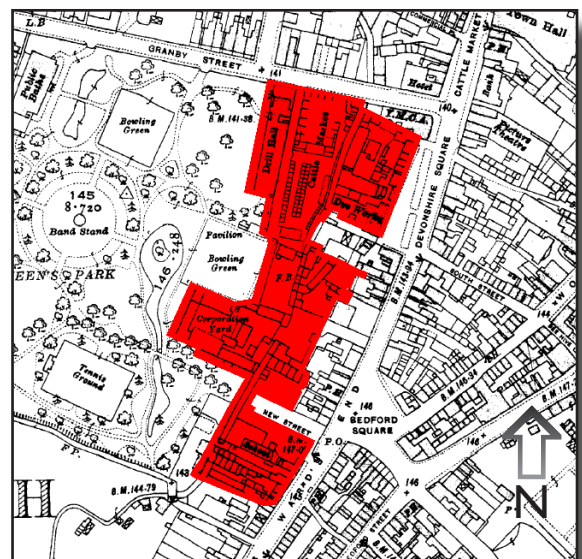
#### Devonshire Square: 1884 – 1886

This red area on the adjacent map shows the approximate location of the present development opportunity site. At this time the stream, Wood Brook, acted as the edge between built form and open fields to the west. The old Cattle Market was the dominant feature in the north of the site but little of the built form from this time remains today.



#### Devonshire Square: 1915 – 1921

Major changes to the area occurred by this time with the creation of Queen's Park, the development of Granby Street and the introduction of new development extending west onto the other side of Wood Brook. The Cattle Market was relocated to the west of the brook and several of today's key buildings fronting Devonshire Square were built.



In the 1960s the Devonshire Square frontage was redeveloped for a supermarket and six smaller shops and a multi-storey car park, accessed off Granby Street, was constructed to the rear, adjacent to Queen's Park. Recent years have seen the demolition of the multi-storey car park and an adjacent park depot that had become redundant, and the assembled area has become a surface car park providing about 170 spaces.

### **Current Uses and Ownerships**

Existing site uses are principally as follows:

- Granby Street public car park, which occupies most of the site;
- A number of retail units facing Devonshire Square;
- A small number of commercial units and lock ups;
- John Storer House (Voluntary Action Charnwood VAC);
- Eastern areas of Queen's Park (including a bowling green and park compound).

Queen's Park and the Granby Street public car park are owned by Charnwood Borough Council. The rest of the site is in multiple private ownerships and tenancies as is a strip of land on New Street. John Storer House is owned by a charitable foundation and the 1960s block facing Devonshire Square is in private ownership with individual units let on tenancies. Land and property adjacent to the site is in multiple private ownerships and tenancies.

### **Site Constraints**

A number of planning constraints that affect the site can be identified from the 'Borough of Charnwood Local Plan' (adopted January 2004). These have been outlined in the Planning Policies section above but particular attention is drawn to:

- Potential flood risk identified by the Environment Agency;
- The southern part and western edge of the site are affected by the Queen's Park Conservation Area;
- The following buildings, which are immediately adjacent to the site, are included on the Council's local list of buildings of historic or architectural interest:
  - 18 Devonshire Square;
  - 'The Mart', Devonshire Square; and
  - Former mill building, Devonshire Lane.



- The site is of archaeological interest in that it lies on the fringe of the historic core of Loughborough. Leicestershire County Council's Archaeology Section will be consulted on any development proposals.

## **Flood Risk**

Much of the development site lies within an area of flood risk related to Wood Brook. In such areas the Environment Agency normally opposes:

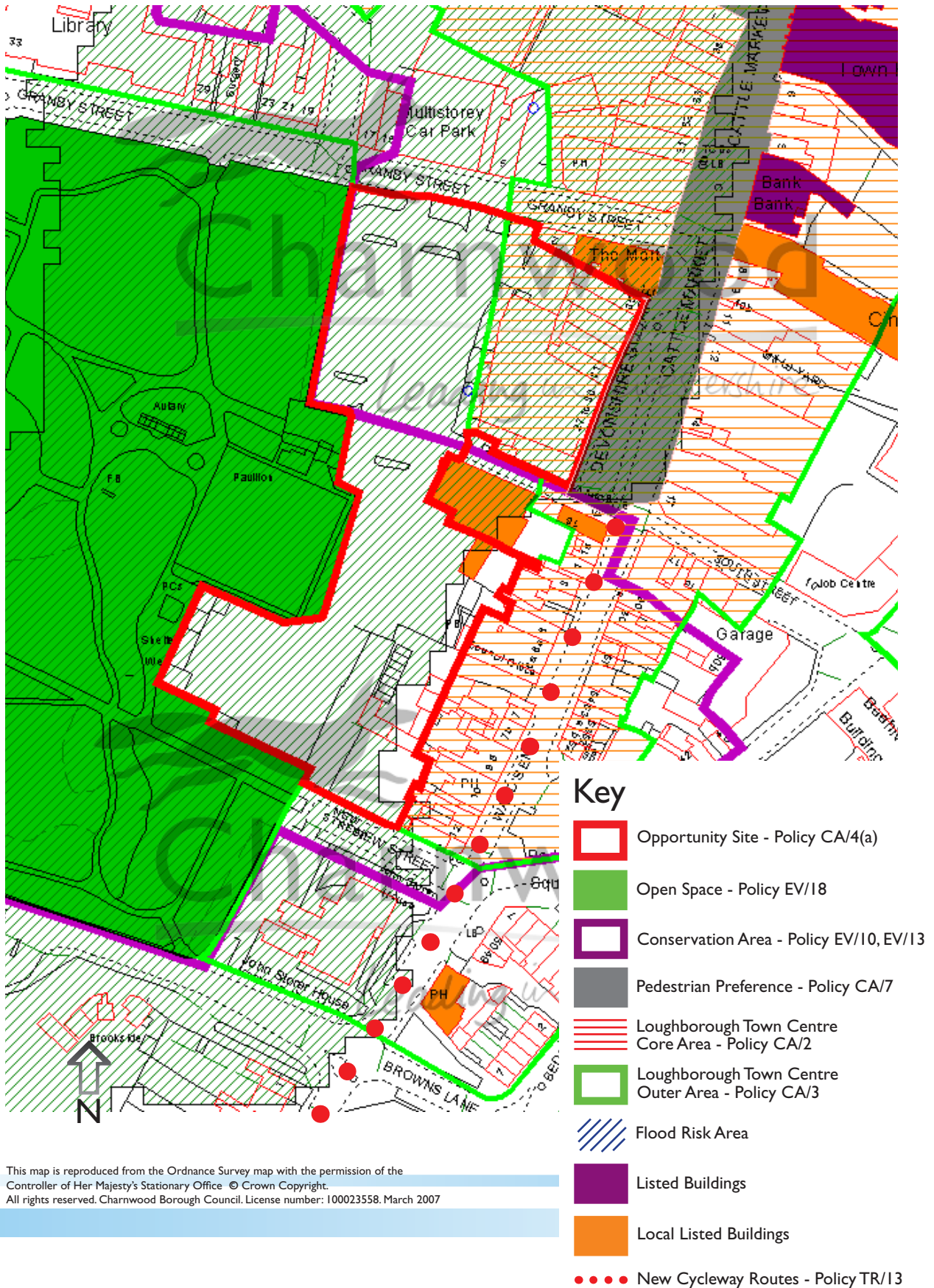
- Culverting of, or building in close proximity to a main river.
- An increase in building footprint within the floodplain (unless compensatory works are possible and are undertaken).
- An increase in the rate of surface water run-off.
- Residential development in the floodplain unless it is of flood resilient construction and provided with a good level of protected access.

The Borough Council is preparing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Wood Brook with a view to alleviating risk in the town centre. However, that work has yet to be completed and at this time the viability of proposals in terms of flood risk is difficult to determine.

One of the development options for the site would be to realign the Wood Brook to the park boundary or, possibly, within the park related to existing water features. However, the acceptability of this would depend on the outcomes of the SFRA referred to above and on ensuring that it could be done without damaging the special character of the Park. The Environment Agency has expressed its support, in principal, to improvements to Wood Brook but has indicated that the final built form of the development and alignment of the watercourse must remain flexible until the outcome of the SFRA is known. Wood Brook is a designated 'main river' and the Agency will only consent to its diversion under Section 109 of the Water Resources Act 1991 if current flood defence and biodiversity standards are met. The Agency will require evidence that proposals, including those emerging from the SFRA, will improve these issues on the channel before giving any preliminary agreement to realignment. However, the Agency acknowledges that the realignment may provide an opportunity to create increased flood storage in Queen's Park that could alleviate flood risk in the wider area of Loughborough Town Centre.

In any scheme relating to a 'main river' the Agency normally requires an 8m 'buffer strip' on both sides of the channel. This strip is not just for access but may need to contain biodiversity features or flood defence measures. Furthermore, in any realignment of Wood Brook, a replacement trash screen will be required upstream of Granby Street, details of which will require a Land Drainage Consent from the Agency.

# Constraints Map



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## 4. SITE AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

### **Site Character**

The development site is generally level and is traversed from south-south west to north-north east by the course of the Wood Brook, which is within a culvert beneath the public car park and, in the northern part of the site, open but hidden by vegetation. The extensive, open car park provides a poor interface between the mature Queen's Park and the shopping area of Devonshire Square/Wards End, which provides a primary retail frontage to the town's Core Area. The adjacent buildings turn their backs to the car park; creating an unattractive built edge and a poor image for a key point of arrival to the Town Centre.

The existing building fronting Devonshire Square dates from the early 1960s and was originally a supermarket with six smaller shop units. This building is effectively single storey and is unsympathetic to its surroundings in its design and use of materials. It detracts from the character of Devonshire Square, which is one of a series of historically linked open spaces important to the form and character of the town centre. The apron in front of the shops is used for car parking on non-market days. Outside the site, abutting its northern boundary is 'The Mart', which represents a significant traditional building within the streetscene and has been included on the Council's local interest list. Immediately to the south of Devonshire Square, there is diversity in the style and use of buildings within the street frontages of Wards End and Bedford Square. These properties range from nineteenth century shops and offices, which are largely domestic in scale, to a substantial converted late-Victorian mill building and Atherstone House, a building of the 1930s. This frontage is within the Queen's Park Conservation Area.

At its northern end this attractive frontage is terminated by New Street, a tree lined street, which is the approach to Queen's Park's principal entrance. To the north of New Street is John Storer House (VAC), a 1960s, two-storey building which contributes little to the character of the area, in terms of architecture or landscaping. The site is located on a key route into the Town Centre but the building quality does not currently reflect the site's importance. However, it is a valued and exceptionally well-used community facility, whose use has outgrown the amount and quality of activity that the current building can accommodate.

### **Surrounding Character**

The western edge of the development site is shared with Queen's Park, which is a mature, well-treed and dignified open space, much valued by the local community and a major feature of Loughborough. Although the space is not large, surrounding

# Site Analysis Map

## Key

- Development Opportunity Site Boundary ( Local Plan )
- Additional Development Opportunity Site
- Existing Buildings
- Key Buildings / Feature
- Good Quality Built Frontage
- Poor Quality Built Frontage
- Private Car Park
- Public Car Park
- Pedestrianised Town Centre
- Active Edge
- Inactive Edge
- Pedestrian Routes
- ▼ Vehicle Access
- Woodbrook ( Open )
- Woodbrook ( Closed )
- View of Carillon Tower



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buildings relate to the Park in a passive manner, which adds to the sense of openness. The Park is at the heart of the Queen's Park Conservation Area and within it is the Carillon; a Grade II listed building and significant landmark, and the Charnwood Museum, an attractive Victorian building originally built as public baths. Many architectural styles are reflected in the fabric of this part of the town centre although the principal themes are provided by property dating from the latter half of the 19th Century, vernacular in style and domestic in scale, and from the 1930s in the Art Deco style. Particularly fine examples of the latter occur in Market Street and along the A6 corridor. However, the town also retains a legacy of buildings dating from the 1960s and early 1970s, which are, almost without exception, utilitarian in design and contribute little to the overall character and appearance of the town centre



## 5. DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

### **General Principles**

Development proposals will need to follow the guidance set out in the Council's adopted SPD 'Charnwood - Leading in Design', which aims to encourage developments that:

- Are appropriate to their context in respect of scale and compatibility with their surroundings;
- Secure positive improvements to the landscape, streetscape or place where they are located;
- Create safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime do not undermine quality of life;
- Encourage strong and positive relations between people from different backgrounds within neighbourhoods;
- Make efficient and prudent use of natural resources;
- Address the needs of all in society.

The Opportunity Site might reasonably contain a mixture of compatible uses but the overall aim should be to achieve a scheme of appropriate scale which reflects the existing character of this part of the commercial centre of the town and adds vitality and interest to the streetscene. The nature and purpose of the development should seek to complement and expand upon the facilities of the established town centre, including its cultural and leisure interest.

### **Appropriate Uses**

The principle of developing the area for a mix of uses is encouraged. Local Plan Policy CA/4a, provides for ground floor uses falling primarily within the following classes:

- 1) Retail uses (food & non-food) (Class A1);
- 2) Financial and Professional services (Classes A2);
- 3) Food & Drink uses (Class A3);

Residential use above ground floor is encouraged. Any proposal incorporating 15 or more residential units will be required to provide at least 30% affordable housing, predominantly for rent, within the development.

In addition consideration must be given to the site's potential to accommodate activities that will complement the concentration of Leisure/Cultural uses in this part of the Town Centre, as identified in the Masterplan. This should include

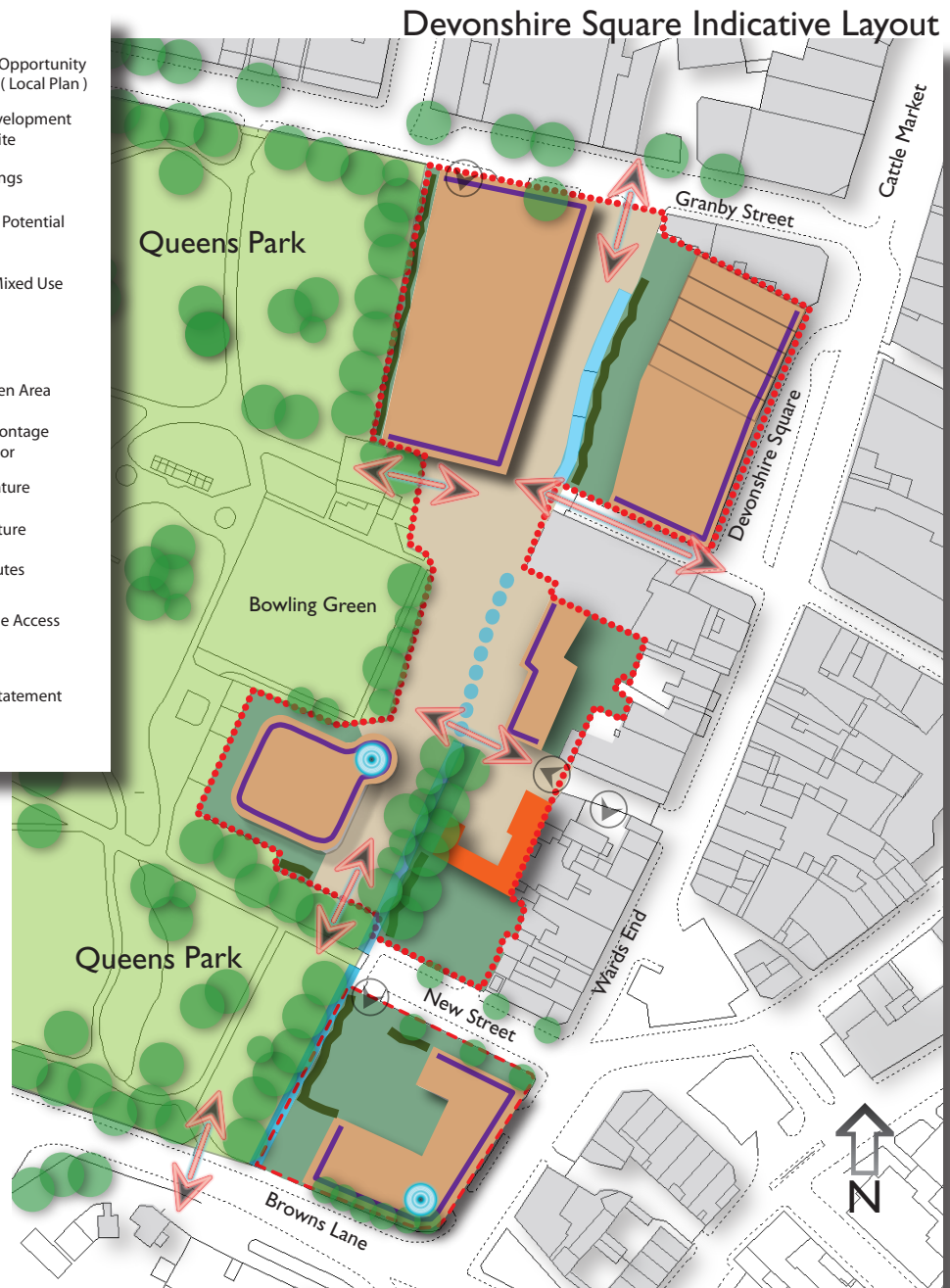


consideration of Masterplan aspirations to improve facilities for John Storer House and to develop an Arts Centre. Other related facilities which will add to the cultural/leisure offer, such as a new library, may be considered.

## Suggested Layout Principles

**Key**

-  Development Opportunity Site Boundary ( Local Plan )
-  Additional Development Opportunity Site
-  Existing Buildings
-  Buildings with Potential for Conversion
-  Buildings for Mixed Use
-  Public Realm
-  Service / Garden Area
-  Active Use / Frontage on Ground Floor
-  Landscape Feature
-  Landmark Feature
-  Pedestrian Routes
-  Possible Vehicle Access
-  Woodbrook
-  Possible Reinstatement of Woodbrook



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### **Devonshire Square:**

Uses facing onto Devonshire Square and Devonshire Lane are to be predominantly shops at ground floor with residential uses at first and second floors. An Arts Centre with associated community uses could be accommodated within the western half of the development. Live-work units may also be acceptable in this location above ground floor uses.

### **Central Development:**

This part of the site, which overlooks the Park, may be an appropriate place to relocate John Storer House to. Additional development is to be predominantly residential.

### **Southern Development:**

This site is considered most suitable for residential or office accommodation but uses that can add to the Town Centre's leisure and cultural offer may also be appropriate. Any development affecting John Storer House will need to ensure the future of this exceptionally well-used community facility either within its existing site or on an appropriate, easily accessible site nearby.

### **Built Form and Layout**

The Devonshire Square development should be designed to continue the urban form of the town as seamlessly as possible, reflecting the lines of movement, landmarks, vistas, grain, character and scale. Proposals should be based on a thorough contextual appraisal, which must form part of the design and access statement accompanying any planning application. The Council seeks a development that creates a strong sense of place based upon the character of the Town Centre and the site's close relationship to Queen's Park.

The excellent standard of urban design and architecture sought may be achieved through traditional or modern design approaches. However, traditional design approaches should relate to clear local influences, not pastiche. The embellishment of development with randomly applied historic elements should be avoided. In any event the Council seeks excellent contemporary, distinctive design appropriate to a vibrant Market and University Town.

The built form must satisfy three key aims:

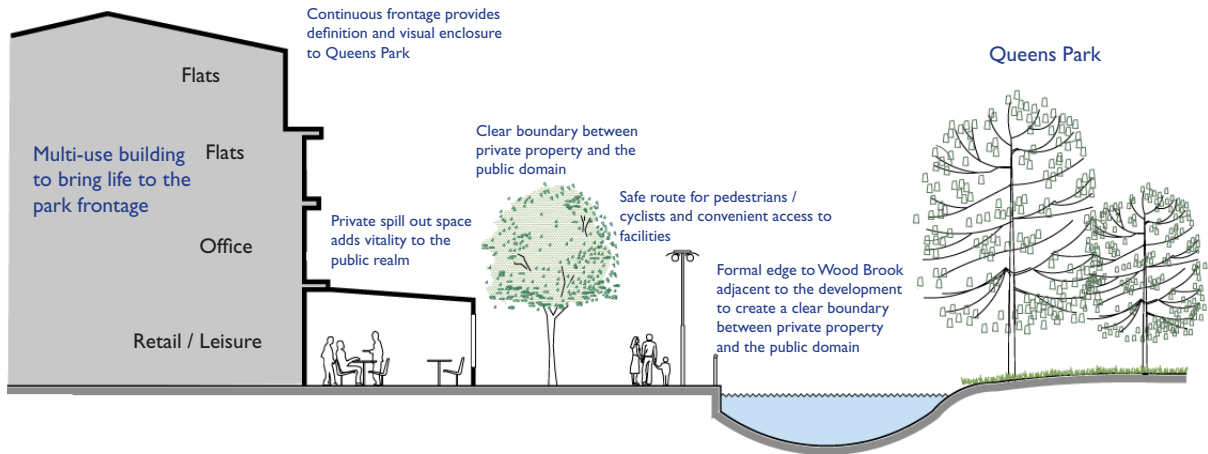
- To provide high quality, 'active' frontages onto Devonshire Square and Granby Street.
- To create an active, attractive and respectful development frontage to overlook Queen's Park and the enhanced, existing or realigned, channel of Wood Brook.
- To provide a building of landmark quality to replace John Storer House.

The layout of buildings should where possible be joined to form continuous street frontages and enclosed spaces, including along the new pedestrian route connecting Devonshire Square and Queen's Park. Buildings should be placed to create a public frontage and should be aligned to create a prevailing building line close to the back edge of the footway, in order to provide definition and enclosure to the street. The reinstatement of the building line where it has been lost (e.g. the John Storer House site and Granby Street) or its creation where none currently exists (e.g. Queen's Park) is essential. Private backs should adjoin private backs. No blank gables should face public spaces, parking areas or pedestrian routes. Surface car parking is discouraged where it will constitute an inefficient use of a town centre site and will fragment the building form.

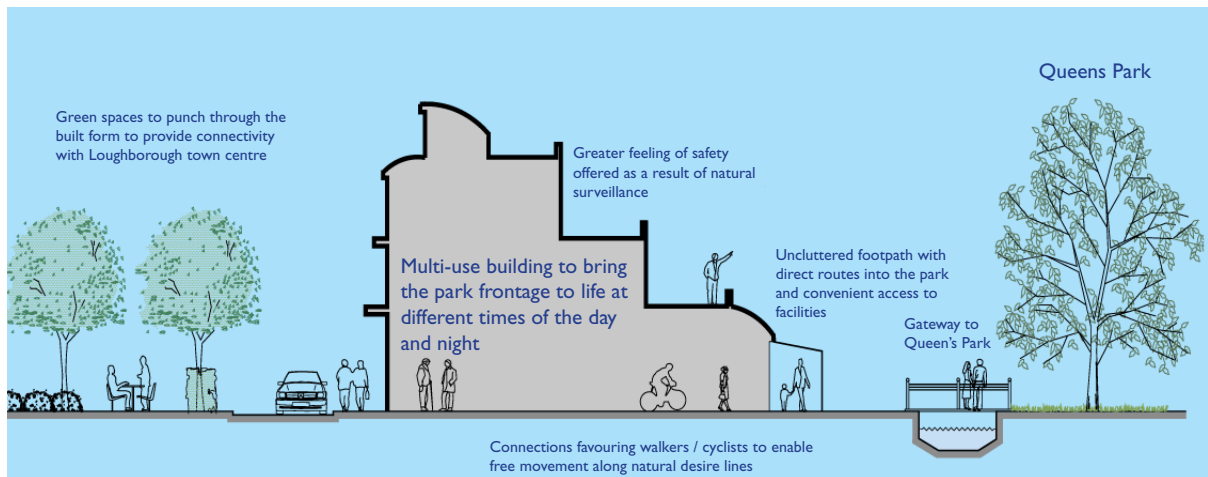
An abundance of windows and doors should be placed in façades to enliven and overlook streets and public spaces, supporting the active frontages provided by commercial ground floor uses. In the case of apartment development, the number of front doors onto the street should be maximised. Ground floor flats should generally have their own entrances from the street, separated from the entrances to the accommodation above. This arrangement allows people more control and offers flexibility and greater scope for adaptation, for example, future conversion to other uses such as shops or the creation of live-work units.

Illustrations on the next two pages supporting this text show how principles of 'enclosure', 'permeability', 'layering' and 'connection' might be adopted to enhance development and to help buildings of scale fit into the context. They are particularly relevant to the treatment of the Queen's Park edge. The proximity of the proposed development to Queen's Park provides an opportunity to incorporate green designs which will blur the edge of the development with that of the Park. This includes potential for green roofs, which present an opportunity to add much needed green space and wildlife habitats as well as providing an effective way to reduce run off speeds from buildings and so reduce flooding risks. Other green measures that will help enhance the development's relationship with the Park include living walls and roof gardens.

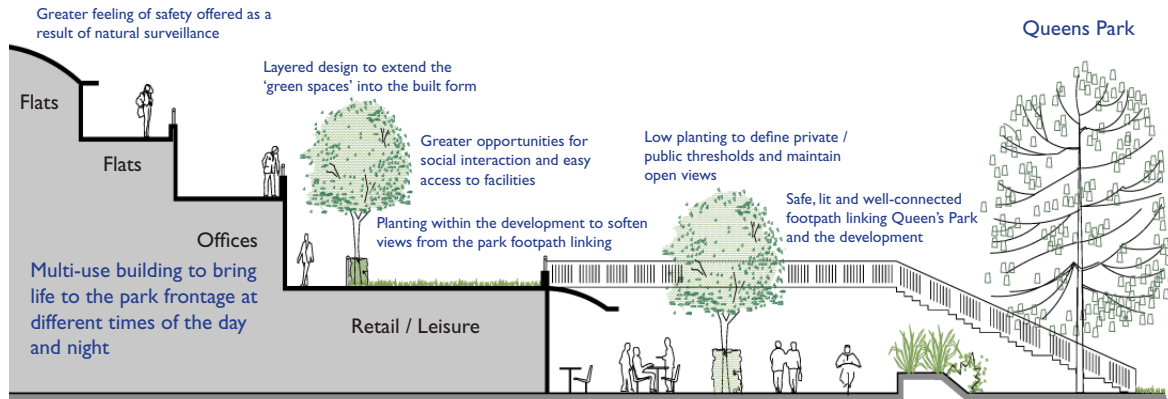
# Enclosure



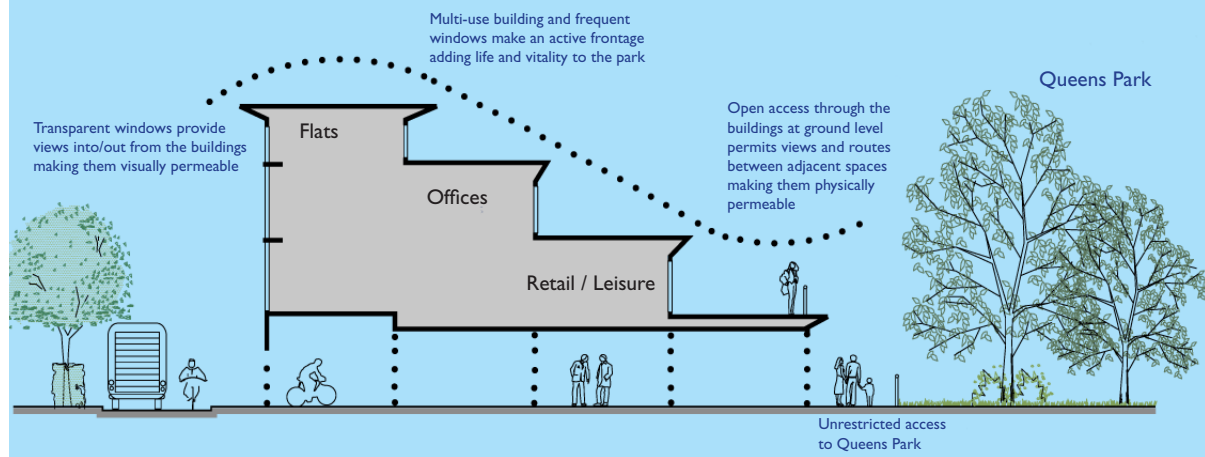
# Connecting



# Layered



# Permeable





In order to facilitate development, the potential to divert Wood Brook to the west of its current alignment should be considered. This will enable the creation of a positive water feature overlooked by high quality development. It will also help overcome objections from the Environment Agency with regard to culverting the existing water course (see 'Flood Risk'). However, the potential for diversion will also be influenced by the findings of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and it will be essential to be sure it can be done without damaging the special character of the Park. Early consultation with the Environment Agency is essential to clarify the scope and design considerations relating to any diversion of the watercourse.

Materials for new buildings and public spaces should be selected for high standards of visual attractiveness, durability and environmental performance, not economy. Preferably materials should be natural and relate to the town's historic palette. Detailed design must pay attention to all elements of the building (e.g. elevations, corner treatment, roof lines, entrances and windows etc.) and must maintain the interest and richness of the town centre scene.

### **Scale of the Development**

New buildings should sit happily into their particular context, respecting the height and pattern of neighbouring buildings, avoiding overbearing or overshadowing relationships. Any proposal for a high building will be subject to careful consideration of its effect on key and local landmarks, its impact on the skyline, the quality of its architecture and the particular relationship to adjacent buildings and spaces, existing and proposed. Relationships between developments of different scales may be resolved by 'wrapping' large spaces with smaller buildings; 'stepping' a large mass down to its neighbour; and ensuring that the ground level is as active and interesting as possible. Where 'stepping down' is adopted the change in height should arise out of the requirements of the designer's brief and should avoid a lopsided appearance in the new building, which merely emphasises the difference in height between it and the neighbouring building. The following guidelines are provided for the different parts of the site:

**Devonshire Square:** A building height of three storeys must be achieved to overlook Devonshire Square and should be stepped up to four storeys to overlook Queen's Park (see Enclosure, Permeability, Layering and Connection illustrations).

**Central Development:** A building height of four storeys is required for the northern half of the development to match the adjacent existing built form. This can be reduced to three storeys towards the southern half of the development.

**Southern Development:** This development is required to be three/four storeys high. The requirement to provide a 'landmark' quality building to replace John Storer

House relates principally to the need for high standards of architecture and landscape treatment, not merely building height.

### **Shop Fronts and Signage**

Shop fronts and advertisement displays throughout the development should be considered as an integral part of the design of the buildings. In the interest of preserving and enhancing a lively and stimulating pavement level shopping frontage unique to Loughborough it is considered desirable that shop fronts respect the proportions, character and appearance of the overall buildings. Further advice is provided in the Council's 'Shop Fronts and Signs' SPD.

### **The Public Realm**

#### **Queen's Park:**

A diverted Wood Brook would create the opportunity to improve the park's eastern boundary by creating a more attractive edge with better pedestrian connections and visibility from the commercial part of the Town Centre.

The redesigned eastern boundary will require the following to be considered:

- Remodelling / relocation of the play area in the Park's south-eastern corner.
- Relocation of the Park compound.
- Protection of the existing bowling green from encroachment and overshadowing by new development.
- The retention of significant trees.
- In the case of any realignment of Wood Brook, soft landscaping proposals to assimilate sensitively the new watercourse with the park.

#### **Pedestrianisation:**

Traffic proposals connected with the Town Centre Masterplan have determined that Devonshire Square and the eastern section of Granby Street could be pedestrianised. This also enables the pedestrian preference area to extend south from the Cattle Market. The removal of traffic from this area will be subject to securing appropriate Traffic Regulation Orders. A proper assessment of the implications of displaced traffic will be required to identify the volume and nature of vehicles transferred on to South Street to ensure they can be safely accommodated on this constrained route. The design of the comprehensive streetscaping scheme envisaged for Devonshire Square, Devonshire Lane and Granby Street will need to

accord with the public realm guidelines set out in the Town Centre Masterplan. Devonshire Lane is proposed to lead into a new public square that links directly into Queen's Park via a new pedestrian route. The development should contribute to and link with the Town's existing fine grain network of pedestrian and cycle routes, in order to increase pedestrian convenience and encourage walking and cycling.

Routes should be designed to be convenient, attractive, comfortable and conspicuous. The proposals create the opportunity for a public route along the full length of the eastern boundary of Queen's Park's, connecting Brown's Lane and Granby Street, and possibly overlooking a realigned Wood Brook. It is proposed that this link should be designed to accommodate cyclists as well as pedestrians.

### **Access for Servicing and Car Parking**

Any development replacing John Storer House will be accessed via New Street and parking is to be accommodated within an internal courtyard. The treatment of New Street deserves great care because it provides a tree-lined, principal approach to Queen's Park and an attractive vista of the listed Carillon. The central part of the development may be accessed from Ward's End via an unnamed street and parking for the development will be accommodated within the internal parking courtyard. The northern part of the development is to be accessed from Packe Street via Granby Street and all parking / servicing is to be accommodated internally. The Town Centre Masterplan proposes a rationalisation of existing public car parking provision at Granby Street and the nearby Charnwood Leisure Centre. It is proposed to ensure appropriate strategic parking provision in this part of the town centre with improved links to the Town Centre on foot. This is likely to involve the removal of surface parking at Granby Street and its replacement with multi-level parking as part of any redevelopment scheme together with improved provision at Brown's Lane, fronting the Leisure Centre. Any public car park provided within the development should be designed in accordance with the requirements of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Safer Parking (Park Mark) Scheme ([www.safeparking.co.uk](http://www.safeparking.co.uk)).

Car parking serving residential development should be under surveillance from principal rooms and connected directly with entrance doors. This can be achieved without harm to the creation of active street frontages by designing apartment accommodation that alternates living spaces to either face of the building and has communal lobby spaces that link through to entrance doors to each side. The level of car parking provided in residential development must take account of

current Regional Spatial Strategy and Leicestershire County Council guidance, should not exceed 1 space per unit and should acknowledge:

- The Town Centre location where services are readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport;
- The type of housing. For example, the demand for parking in accommodation for elderly people and single people is likely to be less than for family housing. In some circumstances (e.g. purpose built student housing) a no car agreement will be required;
- Proposals involving the conversion of existing buildings where off-street parking is less likely to be successfully designed into the scheme.\

For the Opportunity Site generally no private car parking should be provided for occupiers of commercial/office development other than that which can be demonstrated to be absolutely essential.

### **Cycle Facilities**

In the detailed design of vehicular accesses and any necessary off-site works to highways, the scheme must make adequate provision for the safe movement of cyclists. Cycle storage/parking must be located as close as possible to the main entrances of offices, shops and other facilities, offering a real advantage over the nearest car parking. Locations should be under constant natural surveillance/CCTV and well lit. 'Sheffield' type stands large enough to allow bike frames and wheels to be secured are the preferred parking facility.

Under cover and secure cycle parking facilities should also be provided for residential properties, preferably within the building envelope. For this key Town Centre site cycle parking provision well in excess of the current minimum requirement for residential development (i.e. one space for every five dwellings) will be expected. A provision of one space per residential unit and, in the case of student accommodation, one space per two resident students is considered desirable.

### **Access for People with Disabilities**

It is important that the development is designed to create an environment that is accessible, safe and comfortable for all sections of the community, including

wheelchair users, people with walking difficulties, the blind and the deaf.

Further guidance on access considerations is provided in the Council's 'Making it Easy SPD'.

The detailed matters to be addressed will include:

- The provision of adequate and convenient car parking;
- The design and siting of street furniture and signs;
- The treatment of the floorscape;
- Entry and access details to individual properties as well as the development as a whole;
- The design and location of lifts and the provision of suitable toilet facilities.

## **Public Art**

The Council will seek to negotiate the provision of public art, in accordance with Policy EV/43 of the Local Plan. This should be incorporated into the fabric of the development or its open spaces and be original, skilful, robust and of lasting value to both the development and the cultural life of the town. Further guidance is provided in the Council's 'Public Art: Making Places Distinctive SPD'.

## **Sustainability**

Development will be expected to follow the principles of sustainable construction and design to reduce the demand for energy, use energy more efficiently and generate more energy from renewable sources.

Sustainability will be encouraged in the following ways:

- The opportunity to re-use good quality existing buildings should always be examined before demolition or replacement is considered.
- The development must follow the energy hierarchy by:
- Reducing the demand for energy (e.g. avoid/reduce cooling requirements) by maximising solar gain.
- Using energy efficiency measures to meet demand, including the use of community combined heat and power (for the production of both electricity and heat), tri-generation (for the production of electricity, heat and cooling during summer months) or district heating.
- Incorporating energy efficient and renewable energy equipment on site to reduce predicted carbon emissions of the development by at least 10%.
- Undertaking a BREEAM or EcoHomes assessment and achieving a VERY GOOD or HIGH rating.



- Incorporating measures to reduce water demand and recycle greywater and rainwater. Consideration should be given to the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) designed to limit the waste of water, and reduce water pollution and flood risk.
- Incorporating recycled materials into developments. Best practice indicates that at least 10% of the total value of materials used should derive from recycled and reused contents in the materials and products selected.
- Using wood from sustainable and managed forests, in accordance with RIBA environmental guidance, and avoiding the use of tropical hardwood.
- Using, where possible, locally sourced materials in constructing buildings and urban spaces.
- Undertaking a Site Waste Management Plan for the development to minimise the disposal of waste to landfill, by reducing wastage of materials on site and encouraging re-use and recycling of wastes that arise. This includes adopting the maximum use of recycled or secondary aggregates feasible in the construction project.
- Reducing air pollution by ensuring acceptable air quality.
- Providing recycling capacity in the development including built-in recycling facilities for organic and other wastes.

## **Biodiversity**

The presence and requirements of protected species and the wider biodiversity, including existing habitats and species, should be assessed and taken on board to ensure that they will not be adversely affected by development proposals and that robust mitigation measures will be implemented to retain sustainable populations. Furthermore the detailed design of buildings and spaces should encourage wildlife and deliver biodiversity gain in accordance with the local 'Biodiversity Action Plan'. Sympathetic design includes the use of native tree and shrub species, the provision of bat and bird boxes within the fabric of buildings, the incorporation of green features such as green roofs, living walls and roof gardens, and the creation of wildlife corridors linking existing habitats and reaching into the heart of the Town Centre.

The serious incorporation of biodiversity features will promote healthy living, give the development a strong sense of local identity, and contribute to an aesthetically pleasing environment, which relates well to the Park.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

### **Phasing**

Any phasing will need to ensure that the planning aims and requirements for the overall development of the area are not prejudiced or compromised.

### **Co-operation Between Owners**

The most successful development of this important site will be assisted by negotiated, mutually beneficial agreements between adjoining owners. The Council encourages owners and prospective developers to negotiate with each other to achieve the most sensible and efficient use of land for mutual benefit and to achieve the best planning for the area.

### **Council Owned Land**

In order to ensure the successful development of the Opportunity Site, and to achieve the aims and objectives of the Town Centre Masterplan and the Development Brief, the Council will, subject to appropriate financial appraisal, work closely with developers of adjoining sites.

### **Compulsory Purchase**

The Council has powers to acquire land compulsorily. It will make use of these compulsory powers where necessary in order to ensure the delivery of key proposals of the Masterplan and the Development Brief, and in the interests of the proper planning of the area.

### **Developer Contributions**

The Council will seek developer contributions towards the provision of various facilities and amenities required to provide adequately for the needs of the development. These negotiations will take place within the context of the guidance set out in Circular 5/05 having regard to the Council's emerging 'Section 106 Developer Contributions SPD' and to specific references set out in the adopted Local Plan, which have been summarised in previous sections of this brief. The nature and level of contributions will be related to the composition and character of the development proposed but might be expected to include consideration of:

- Recreation, community facilities and amenity land;
- Affordable housing;
- Education, library, civic amenity, waste management and primary health care facilities;
- Pedestrian and cycle facilities, public transport enhancement, Travel Plans, road improvements, traffic management, car parking, traffic regulation orders and associated works;
- Reasonably related contributions to assist in the provision of those elements of the Inner Relief Road necessary to serve adequately the redevelopment proposed (see Local Plan Policy CA/4a);
- Community cohesion and public realm improvements (including CCTV);
- % for Art.

# APPENDICES

## **I. Charnwood Local Plan Policies**

### **Strategic Policy 1 (ST/1): Overall Strategy**

Sets out the Council's overall strategy including need to sustain and enhance Loughborough's role as the principal centre within the Borough for shopping and allied services.

### **Strategy Policy 3 (ST/3): Infrastructure**

Outlines the Council's approach to developer provision / contributions towards reasonably related infrastructure or community facilities.

### **Environment Policy 1 (EV/1): Key Design Policy**

Outlines that the Council will seek a high standard of design in all new developments.

### **Environment Policy 3 (EV/3): Archaeological Sites of County and Local Significance**

The site falls within an Archaeological Alert Zone and as such an evaluation of archaeological interest is required.

### **Environment Policy 10 & 13 (EV/10 & EV/13) : Development / Advertising in Conservation Areas**

Part of the falls within the Queens Park Conservation Area and new development within this area should preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

### **Environment Policy 8 (EV/8): Buildings of Local Historic Interest**

Outlines the Council's approach to development proposals that affect its local list buildings.

### **Environment Policy 16 (EV/16): Access for People with Disabilities**

Outlines the Council's concern that the design and layout of development ensures easy access for people with disabilities.

**Environment Policy 17 (ev/17): Safety in New Development**

Outlines the Council's concern that the design and layout of new development creates a safer environment.

**Environment Policy 18 (EV/18): Open Spaces of Special Character**

Queens Park is designated as such and development proposals should respect the existing amount of open space and its overall design.

**Environment Policy 20 (EV/20): Landscaping in New Development**

A high standard of landscape design will be required given the presence of the Conservation Area and an Open Space of Special Character.

**Environment Policy 27 (EV/27): Protection of Floodplains**

The opportunity site lies within the flood plain of Wood Brook and therefore consultation with the Environment Agency is essential.

**Environment Policy 39 (EV/39): Pollution**

Outlines the Council's concern that new development incorporates appropriate measures to overcome potential pollution problems.

**Environment Policy 40 (EV/40): Light Pollution**

Outlines the Council's concern to minimise light pollution from external light sources.

**Environment Policy 43 (EV/43): Public Art**

Affirms the Council's commitment to the provision of works of public art as an integral component in the design of major developments

**Population and Housing Policy 3 (H/3): Density**

Given the site's proximity to the Town Centre, residential development should be a minimum of 40 dwellings a hectare.

**Population and Housing Policy 5 (H/5): Affordable Housing on Unallocated Sites**

The Borough Council will seek to negotiate an element of affordable housing based upon the identified need in the town.

**Population and Housing Policy 12 (H/12): Student Accommodation**

Sets out guidance for the provision of student halls of residence.

**Transport Policy 5 (TR5): Transport Standards for New Development**

This Policy is framed to ensure satisfactory access for all modes, and avoid overdominance by provision for road traffic.

**Transport Policy 6 (TR/6): Traffic Generation in New Development**

New development must be acceptable in terms of its impact on the existing highway network.

**Transport Policy 7 (TR7): Improving Bus Services and Facilities**

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the successful implementation of measures to secure high quality bus services.

**Transport Policy 13 (TR/13): Access for Cyclists and Pedestrians**

A cycle route is planned for Ward's End, adjacent to the opportunity site, for which the Borough Council will seek to negotiate a contribution towards its development.

**Transport Policy 18 (TR/18): Parking Provision in New Development**

This Policy aims to secure a level of parking which as a minimum discourages reliance on the private car but provides sufficient off-street parking to allow



development to proceed without creating traffic problems.

**Transport Policy 27 (TR/27): Servicing Non-residential Development**

This Policy aims to secure the appropriate provision of servicing off the existing highway.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 2 (CA/2): Acceptable Uses in the Loughborough Core Area**

Planning permission for ground floor development will be granted for shops (A1), financial and professional services (A2) and food and drink (A3) subject to certain conditions.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 3 (CA/3): Acceptable Uses in the Loughborough Outer Area**

In addition to the above uses, planning permission for ground floor development will be granted for hotels (C1), non-residential institutions (D1), places of assembly and leisure (D2) subject to certain conditions.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 4a (CA/4a): Devonshire Square Opportunity Site**

Provides the general policy and design context for the site which is expanded upon within this brief.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 7 (CA/7): Pedestrian Preference In Loughborough Town Centre**

The Borough Council will seek a contribution towards a redesign of Devonshire Square to limit vehicular access and give greater preference to pedestrians.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 11 (CA/11): Use of Upper Floors**

Encourages the positive use of upper floors for a range of commercial and non-commercial uses. In particular residential use is encouraged wherever possible.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 12 (CA/12): Shop Front Design**

Outlines the need for good design in shop fronts.

**Central Areas & Shopping Policy 13 (CA/13): Shop Front Security**

Outlines the need for appropriate design standards in the fitting of roller shutters and security grills.

**Employment Policy 1 (EI)**

Provides planning criteria for employment development, which may be relevant to BI uses.

**Recreation Policies 3, 4 & 5 (RT/3, 4 & 5): Recreation Provision in New Development**

Sets out requirements for play space, youth / adult play and amenity open space in the event of elements of housing being included in new development.

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