

FORMER GENERAL HOSPITAL AND AUMBERRY GAP DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Supplementary Planning Document:

Public Consultation Draft

July 2006

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Chinese

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Punjabi

“ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਭਾਗ ਦੀ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦਾ
ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਇਸਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ/ਠਕਲ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਔਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ
ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 01509 634603 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।”

Hindi

“इस दस्तावेज़ के किसी भी भाग की आपकी भाषा में व्याख्या का प्रबन्ध करने के लिए या
इसकी प्रतिलिपी/कापी, ब्रेल, ऑडिओ टेप पर या बड़े प्रिंट में प्राप्त करने के लिए, कृपया
01509 634603 पर फ़ोन कीजिए।”

Gujarati

“આ ડોક્યુમેન્ટ (દસ્તાવેજ) ના કોઈપણ વિભાગને આપની ભાષામાં સમજવા માટે વ્યવસ્થા
કરવા અથવા બ્રેઇલ (ઉપસાવેલા અક્ષરો), ઓડીયો ટેપ અથવા મોટા અક્ષરોમાં કોપી
મેળવવા 01509 634603 નંબર ઉપર મહેરબાની કરી ફોન કરશો.”

Bengali

“এই ডকুমেন্টের কোন অংশ নিয়ে আপনার নিজের ভাষায় বিস্তারিত আলোচনা করার জন্যে
অথবা এর কপি ব্রেইলি, অডিও টেপ বা বড় প্রিন্টে পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01509 634603
এই নম্বরে ফোন করুন।”

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Foreword: A Development Brief for former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap, Loughborough

The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan identifies the former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap as key development opportunities in Loughborough town centre. The Development Brief provides guidance on how these important sites should be developed in line with relevant planning and design policies. It provides an indicative but flexible vision of future development form, and is being prepared in conjunction with the Loughborough Town Centre Master Plan.

We hope that you will consider this draft brief and let us have your comments, the closing date for which is **Friday 1st September 2006**. We will then produce a final version of the document for consideration by Cabinet and adoption by the Council as Supplementary Planning Documentation (SPD).

If you have any comments on the Development Brief draft, please send them by post to the Conservation and Design Team, Borough of Charnwood, Southfields, Southfield Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 2TN or by email to built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cameron MacLeod'.

Councillor Cameron MacLeod
Cabinet Lead Member for Planning

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

This brief sets out the Council's planning requirements for the development of the former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap sites, in the context of Policy CA/4b of the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan which identifies the sites as key development opportunities. Policy CA/4b of the adopted Local Plan states that:

Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of the identified Opportunity Sites at Fennel Street, Baxter Gate and Leicester Road provided the ground floor uses fall within the following classes (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987):

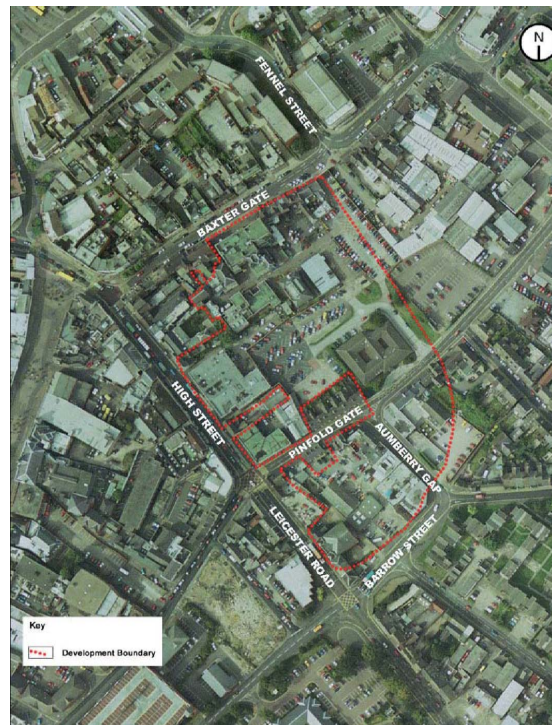
- i) shops (Class A1);
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2);
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3);
- iv) office (Class B1 (a));
- v) hotels (Class C1);
- vi) residential institutions (Class C2);
- vii) dwelling houses (Class C3);
- viii) non-residential institutions (Class D1);
- ix) assembly and leisure (Class D2);

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 identified 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;
- e) screen from wider view service areas and storage compounds; and
- f) 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 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 proposed.

Any proposals for the 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. Furthermore, the site is critical to the overall success of the emerging Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan, a non-statutory document which will provide a clear vision for development over the next fifteen years. The Draft Master Plan suggests that the two Local Plan Opportunity sites should be considered together and that the land between them and the land isolated by the line of the Inner Relief Road should be incorporated in the development brief. This draft SPD reflects that approach.

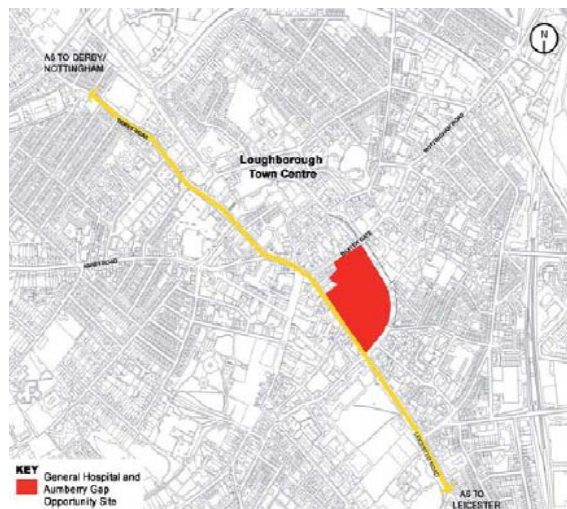


The Site

The site is located within the easternmost part of Loughborough Town Centre and directly adjacent to the A6 that bisects the town centre. The M1 J23 is approximately 5 km to the west of the town centre and is connected by the A512 (Ashby Road.) Leicester is located approximately 18 km to the south and Nottingham lies approximately 20km to the north.

A number of separate development sites are included within this area but the key sites are the opportunity sites of Aumberry Gap and the former General Hospital Site (including the Charnwood & North West Leicestershire Primary Care Trust ownership) identified in the Local Plan.

The total site area is approximately 2.8 hectares and its boundaries are the proposed Inner Relief Road that will connect Barrow Street with Fennel Street (eastern and southern boundaries), Baxter Gate (northern boundary) and Leicester Road / High Street (western boundary).



Purpose of the Brief

The brief provides guidance for an integrated, planned approach to the redevelopment of this key area of Loughborough Town Centre aims to:

- ensure that any new development pays due regard to the site context and features, planning objectives for the wider area and existing amenities;
- facilitate phased site development, whilst optimising the area's potential and the quality of the development;
- 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 former General Hospital and Aumberry Gap Development Brief is being produced as part of the LDF and will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) to guide the area’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 high quality, which will transform an existing blighted area, containing a significant number of vacant buildings and extensive surface parking and servicing areas, into a positive part of the town centre offering a mix of uses, distinctive architecture, respect for heritage assets and an innovative approach to the treatment of the public realm.

Planning Objectives for the Area

- Well planned and phased development, which makes efficient use of brownfield land and follows an urban design strategy based on a structure of routes, public spaces, active frontages, new built form and re-use of buildings of heritage value,
- A coherent, distinctive and attractive development which responds to the positive characteristics and heritage value of its surroundings and relates sensitively to its neighbours,
- A mix of uses that reflect the site’s town centre location and includes a significant residential content,
- A development that enhances all key frontages, including new frontages to the proposed Inner Relief Road (IRR) and the proposed principal pedestrian route through the site,
- A development that adds to the quality and quantity of public space, including improved linkages between the area, other parts of the town centre and adjacent residential suburbs,
- The provision of a strategic car park (c 300 spaces) within the development area, adjacent to the proposed IRR.

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 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 Guidance Notes 15 and 16 set out the government’s policy and guidance on planning issues relating to the historic environment and archaeology.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) was adopted in March 2005. Policy 23 states that;

Local authorities, emda and Sub- Regional Strategic Partnerships should work together on a sub-area basis to promote the vitality and viability of existing town centres, including those in Market Towns. Where town centres are under performing, action should be taken to promote investment through design led initiatives and the development and implementation of town centre strategies.

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 table shows key planning policies relating to this opportunity site:

KEY PLANNING POLICY	POLICY SUMMARY
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 5 (EV/5): The Setting of Listed Buildings	Planning permission for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.
Environment Policy 7 (EV/7): Demolition of Listed Buildings	The site contains a number of listed buildings within the development boundary. Proposals that require their demolition will require listed building consent.
Environment Policy 10 & 13 (EV/10 & EV/13) : Development / Advertising in Conservation Areas	Part of the site falls within the Church Gate Conservation Area and new development within this area should enhance /preserve its character.
Environment Policy 8 (EV/8): Buildings of Local Historic Interest	Outlines the Council’s approach to development proposals that affect its local list buildings.

KEY PLANNING POLICY	POLICY SUMMARY
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 20 (EV/20): Landscaping in New Development	A high standard of landscape design will be required given the presence of the Conservation Area and the aspirations for high architectural quality.
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 per 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 area.
Population and Housing Policy 12 (H/12): Student Accommodation	Sets out guidance for the provision of student halls of residence.
Transport Policy 2 (TR/2): A6 Inner Relief Road	Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction of the Inner Relief Road.
Transport Policy 5 (TR5): Transport Standards for New Development	This Policy is framed to ensure satisfactory access for all travel modes, and avoid over-dominance 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 Baxter Gate, adjacent to the opportunity site. 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.
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 previous uses, planning permission for ground floor development will be granted for hotels (C1), non- residential

KEY PLANNING POLICY	POLICY SUMMARY
	institutions (D1), places of assembly and leisure (D2) subject to certain conditions.
Central Areas & Shopping Policy 4a (CA/4b): Fennel Street, Baxter Gate and Leicester Road 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	Encourages pedestrian preference measures within certain town centre streets, including Baxter Gate and the A6 Corridor.
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.
Employment Policy 1 (E1)	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.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Other Guidance

- **‘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 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.
- **‘Student Housing’**: adopted SPD which sets out the Council’s approach to the student accommodation proposals within Loughborough and identifies the former Hospital site and the Aumberry Gap site as possible locations for purpose built student housing.
- **‘Public Art - Making Places Distinctive’**: adopted supplementary planning guidance which encourages the provision of public art in new developments.

- **‘Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan’**: document in preparation which will provide detailed guidance for the development and improvement of the town centre. Emerging proposals that may directly affect the development site are:
 - Provision of a strategic, multi-storey car park (c 300 spaces) within the development area, adjacent to the IIR; and
 - Opportunity for public realm improvements including the creation of a new linear open space through the development area linking the new Magistrate’s Court and strategic car park with the High Street; and
 - Sites on Leicester Road and Baxter Gate identified as being within key gateways to the town centre and capable of a landmark development.

3. SITE INFORMATION

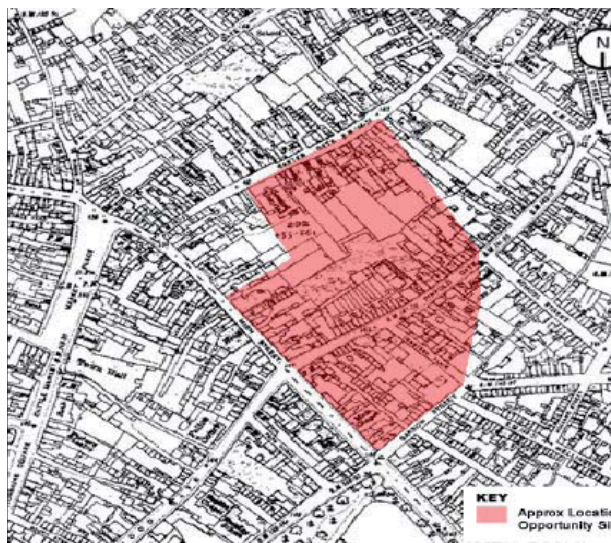
Site History

The red area on the historic map shows the approximate location of the opportunity site. The road network is fully developed by 1884, and is fully enclosed by development. Industrial premises occupy a significant area on the north side of Pinfold Gate. The map shows that the road currently known as Aumberry Gap was originally known as Cemetery Place.



The map also shows the General Hospital on Baxter Gate, which was originally established here in 1819 as a public dispensary. In 1862 a gift by the Herrick family of Beaumanor provided funds for a new dispensary and General Hospital.

The building was originally two storeys but two storeys were added in the first part of the twentieth century and further buildings were subsequently added to the complex.



By the 1920s the industrial premises off Pinfold Gate have been demolished. The open space created by the demolition, in combination with the private gardens, created a significant open area in the centre of the development block. This open area has been used as a car park in recent times.

Current Uses and Ownerships

A wide range of uses are currently accommodated within the development area including:

- Health Centre (with a significant area of surface parking)
- Commercial / Retail
- Residential (above ground level)
- Light Industrial
- Office
- Hotel

The Health Centre and related car parking area (0.68 hectares) is owned by the Charnwood and North West Leicestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT). The redundant hospital buildings and related land (0.76 hectares) on the northern part of the site have recently been sold by the PCT to a single private interest. The Aumberry Gap site (0.52 hectares), with the exception of a public house on the Leicester Road frontage, is within a single private ownership but with multiple tenancies. The site is currently being used as mixed industrial and commercial with some residential at first floor level. Other parts of the development area are in multiple private ownerships and tenancies.



Site Constraints

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 above but particular attention is drawn to:



- The proposed Inner Relief Road (IRR), which includes a small part of the eastern edge of the area for development from Baxter Gate to Barrow Street. The Council will seek to ensure that any development will not have an adverse impact on the implementation of the road and will negotiate a contribution towards the proposed road (through a Section 106 Agreement) in accordance with Policy TR/2 of the Local Plan. The IRR forms part of Leicestershire County Council's Integrated Transport Strategy for Loughborough. The County Council has resolved to include the IRR in its Local Transport Plan bid for funding in the period 2006 – 2011. It has also resolved to make provision for buses through two 'bus hubs' rather than an off-street bus station and to allow southbound buses to move through an otherwise pedestrianised A6 between Biggin Street and Baxter Gate. The resolutions impact significantly on the development site and are fundamental to the content of the emerging Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan.
- The buildings on the Baxter Gate frontage of the site are within the Church Gate Conservation Area. The Council will expect any development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the relevant Local Plan Policies. In addition, the demolition of any buildings here will require special justification in accordance with PPG15.

- The following buildings are Grade II listed:
 - no. 54 Baxter Gate (former hospital offices);
 - nos. 30 and 31 Pinfold Gate (former houses with workshops and both now part of a hotel);
 - nos. 45 – 54 Pinfold Gate, a terrace of cottages immediately adjacent to the development site.

The Council will expect any development to retain and restore listed buildings in accordance with Policy EV/7 of the Local Plan and guidance in PPG15. However, nos. 30 and 31 Pinfold Gate fall within a part of the site indicated for comprehensive redevelopment. Any proposal to demolish these buildings would need to be assessed against criteria set out in PPG15.

- The following buildings are within or partly within the site and are included on the Council's local list of buildings of historic or architectural interest:
 - no. 52 Baxter Gate;
 - no. 8a Leicester Road (former Methodist Chapel); and
 - former Warner Street School and Schoolhouse, Pinfold Gate.

4. SITE AND CONTEXT APPRAISAL

Site Character

Refer to Site Analysis Plan.



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.



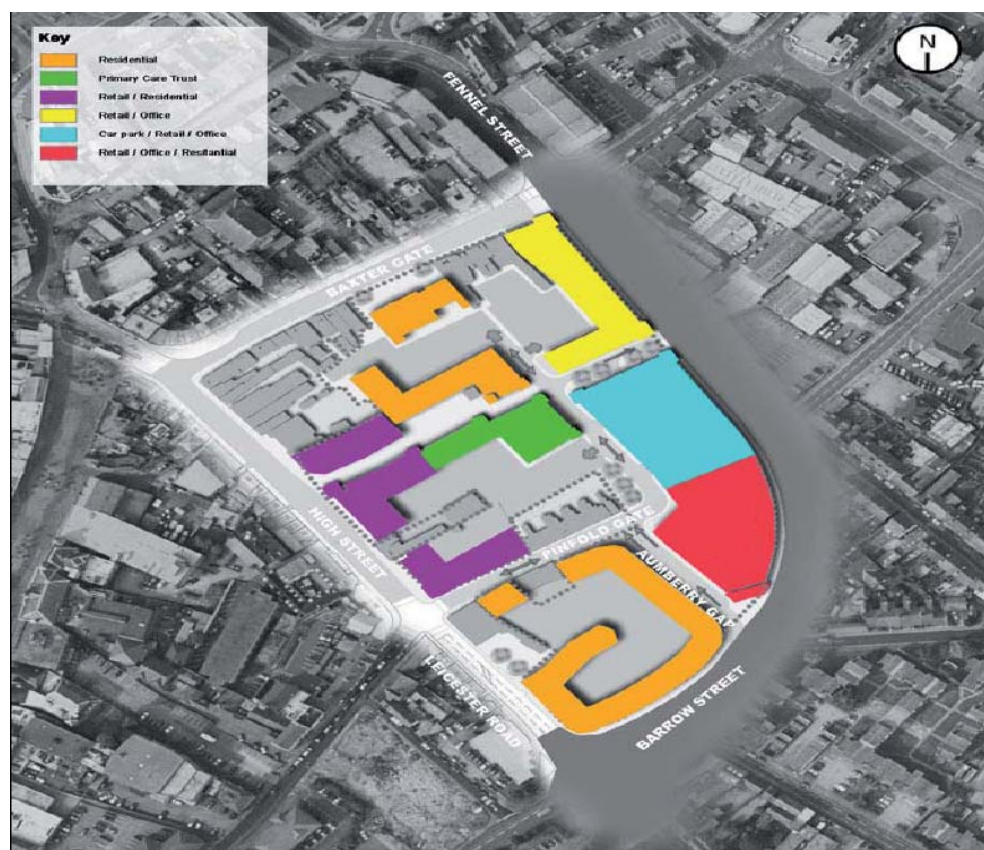
The Opportunity Site might reasonably contain a mixture of compatible uses but the overall aim should be to achieve a scheme of appropriate scale which reflects the existing character of this part of the commercial centre of the town and adds vitality and interest to the streetscene. The nature and purpose of the development should seek to complement and expand upon the facilities of the established town centre. As the site is located within the town centre, a high density of development will be acceptable. In the case of a residential development it should be not less than 40 dwellings per hectare.

A comprehensive approach is proposed for the General Hospital/Aumberry Gap Opportunity Site, suggesting the incorporation of land between the two parts as well as suggesting the creation of a new linear open space through the area. The proposals effectively tie the two areas together into a single site with Pinfold Gate and Aumberry Gap eventually operating as internal access and service roads. The design option is based upon available information on the proposed alignment of the Inner Relief Road. No buildings should be located on the safeguarded route of the proposed IRR. The Opportunity Site has an extensive area and covers a number of separate development phases which are detailed later in this brief.

Appropriate Uses

The principle of developing the area for a variety of uses is accepted, as set out in the Local Plan Policy CA/4b, and the Council will seek a mixture of these uses, so that development contributes to the regeneration of the area. A wide range of land uses is considered appropriate in land use planning terms:

- 1) Retail uses (food & non-food)(Class A1);
- 2) Office and Business uses (Classes A2 & B1(a));
- 3) Food & Drink uses(Class A3);
- 4) Hotels and Hostels (Class C1);
- 5) Residential Institutions(Class C2);
- 6) Dwelling houses (Class C3);
- 7) Non-residential Institutions(Class D1); &
- 8) Assembly & Leisure uses (Class D2).



The Council will seek a mixture of these uses, so that the development contributes to the regeneration of the area. 'Active' frontages, particularly on the ground floors of buildings, are encouraged (i.e. a frontage that adds interest, life and vitality to the townscape). Residential use above ground floor is also encouraged, including the provision of student accommodation. Any proposal incorporating 25 or more residential units will be required to provide at least 30% affordable housing either for rent or shared ownership or a mix of these, within the development.

Phase 1: Aumberry Gap

Residential uses, principally above ground level, are proposed for this site and student accommodation may be suitable due to the requirement for lower car provision. Active uses on the ground floor are important, particularly on the Leicester Road frontage and Barrow Street corner.

Phase 2: Charnwood PCT

The existing healthcare facility might be relocated to this site. The location would be well related to the new pedestrian route connecting to High Street.

Phase 3: Strategic Car Park

A 300 space multi-storey car park is proposed with a frontage of ground floor shops facing the Inner Relief Road and offices / residential above. The southern end of the development is proposed as a mixed-use scheme with retail on the ground floor and residential / office accommodation on upper floors.

Phase 4: Former General Hospital

The internal buildings are proposed for residential uses. The building facing the proposed Inner Relief Road may be suitable for retail on the ground floor and office uses on upper floors. Student accommodation may also be appropriate on this site.

Phase 5: High Street

Ground floor uses are to be principally retail with residential / office accommodation on upper floors.

Phase 6: Charnwood PCT

Expansion space for the Primary Care Trust or the site could be sold for a separate development with the potential for shops on the ground floor with residential uses above.

Phase 7: Pinfold Gate

Retail is the primary use proposed on the ground floor with residential / office accommodation on upper floors.

Built Form and Layout

The development should be designed to continue the urban form of this part 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 should form part of a design 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 heritage interest of the site and its surroundings. It should reinforce and evolve the characteristics that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the town centre.



KEY

1. Junction improvements
2. Proposed Inner Relief Road
3. Magistrates Court
4. Former General Hospital
5. Baxter Gate
6. New Bus Hub
7. Building on corner of Baxter Gate / High Street retained
8. New mixed use development retail / offices / residential
9. New residential development
10. New PCT building
11. Existing residential Cottages retained
12. New retail / office development
13. Secure internal courtyard
14. New Multi Storey Car Park skinned by mixed use development
15. Traffic flow on Pinfold Gate reversed (one way) allowing access to MSCP
16. Mixed use development provided on the corner of Leicester Street / Barrow Street
17. Development to act as gateway to the town centre
18. New residential development

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 and follow historic precedents closely, not pastiche. In any event the Council seeks excellent contemporary design appropriate to a vibrant market and university town. An approach to architecture, including materials, that is firmly of today that draws intelligent inspiration from the context and in that sense is rooted in the past without being constricted by tradition would be welcomed. Facing materials should be of a high quality, preferably natural, and relate to the town's historic palette.

There are several key aims that the new built form must satisfy:

- To provide high quality, active frontages to all principal faces of the development, including onto the proposed Inner Relief Road and the new strategic pedestrian route;
- To provide buildings of landmark quality at the identified key gateways of Leicester Road / Barrow Street and the corner of Baxter Gate / Fennel Street;
- To provide a strategic, multi-storey car park (c 300 spaces) within the development area, adjacent to the Inner Relief Road;
- To create a new pedestrian route of quality through the opportunity site to link the proposed multi-storey public car park and new Magistrates Court with the town centre;
- To respect existing positive built form and heritage assets;
- To remove aesthetically poor buildings and incompatible land use activities and restore built form and active street frontages where this has been lost.

Buildings should where possible be joined to form continuous street frontages and enclosed spaces, including along the new pedestrian route connecting the new Magistrates Court and strategic multi-storey car park to the High Street. The development should be designed to wrap around and conceal any service areas. Private backs should adjoin private backs. No blank gables should face public spaces, parking areas or pedestrian routes.

The layout of proposed buildings should take into account the requirements to provide a perimeter block. 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. Barrow Street) or its creation where none currently exists (e.g. the frontage to the Inner Relief Road) is essential.

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.

Scale of Development

New buildings will need to sit happily into their particular context, respecting the height and pattern of neighbouring buildings, avoiding overbearing or overshadowing relationships. In some situations buildings of four to five storeys will be accepted, provided they are located where they will not dominate or adversely affect the existing premises around the site. However, some recent town centre buildings have exceeded this height, for instance the Print Room and multi-storey car park developments on Wood Gate. Parts of the Opportunity Site, where the constraint of needing to take account of established development does not apply, may similarly be able to accommodate higher development.



The following general guidelines are provided for the different parts of the site and should be viewed with the plan showing building heights:



Inner Relief Road Frontage:

A building height of four storeys should be achieved along this road to provide the necessary enclosure with the potential to increase the height towards the centre of the development, addressing any sensitive relationships.

Aumbery Gap:

This key gateway site should provide a height of five storeys on the southern corner, where there is an opportunity to create a landmark building at a gateway to the town centre. The height should reduce to three storeys on Aumbery Gap, respecting the two-storey listed properties situated on Pinfold Gate nearby.

Pedestrian through route:

Buildings in the area proposed for the new Primary Care Trust facility are proposed to be a minimum of two storeys high with some potential for three-storeys. The three storey building height continues until reaching the High Street where a building height of four storeys is considered possible.

Heritage Assets

The layout, design, massing and scale of the proposed buildings must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as well as the setting of historic buildings. It is important that the listed building fronting Baxter Gate is retained and restored. The main hospital building fronting Baxter Gate is of some townscape, architectural and historic interest. Any development scheme that incorporates a replacement building must demonstrate a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Government guidance, set out in PPG15, establishes a 'general presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area' and outlines broad criteria for the assessment of proposals to demolish buildings in a conservation area. However, demolition of the main hospital building may be accepted if such an approach can be justified when examined against the PPG15 criteria, particularly in respect of the merits of the alternative proposals for the site.

Similar considerations would need to apply but more so to any proposal to demolish the listed buildings formerly known as 30 and 31 Pinfold Gate and now incorporated into a hotel.

Within the Aumbery Gap site some buildings of historic interest remain on the Pinfold Gate and Leicester Road frontages. None of these buildings are listed and a number of them are vacant. Their general condition is very poor and they appear to be beyond viable restoration.

Public Realm

It is important that the development contributes to the improvement of the accessibility, permeability and legibility of the town centre. Within the development safe, attractive and convenient pedestrian routes should be created that integrate with and enhance the wider movement pattern. This should include well designed pedestrian accesses into the site from Baxter Gate and the proposed Inner Relief Road, and a possible future link between the new Magistrates Court and the High Street.

Vehicular Access

The safeguarded route of the proposed IRR includes a small part of the eastern edge of the area for development, from Baxter Gate to Barrow Street. The Council will seek to ensure that any development will not have an adverse impact on the implementation of the road and will negotiate a contribution towards the proposed road (through a Section 106 Agreement) in accordance with Policy TR/2 of the Local Plan. The IRR forms part of Leicestershire County Council's Integrated Transport Strategy for Loughborough. The County Council has resolved to include the IRR in its Local Transport Plan bid for funding in the period 2006 – 2011. The Borough Council is anxious to achieve an IRR design that is subservient to the urban form and which does not sever communities from the town centre.

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.

Cycle Facilities

The scheme must take into account, in the detailed design of vehicular accesses and any necessary off-site works to highways, the need to make adequate provision for the safe movement of cyclists. Cycle storage/parking must be located as close as possible to main entrances of offices, shops, healthcare facilities etc, offering a real advantage over the nearest car parking. Locations should be under constant natural surveillance/CCTV and well lit. The preferred parking facility would be 'Sheffield' type stands large enough to allow bikes frames and wheels to be secured. Under cover and secure cycle parking facilities should also be provided for residential properties, preferably within the building envelope.

Access for People with Disabilities

It is important that the development is designed to create an environment accessible and comfortable for all sections of the community, including wheelchair users, people with walking difficulties, the blind and the deaf. Guidance is provided in the Council's 'Making it Easy' SPD.

However, 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. 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

Consideration should be given to the use of the principles of sustainable design. The use of sustainable construction techniques can assist in minimising the use of natural resources and the production of waste. Energy efficiency measures and water saving initiatives should be investigated. There may also be opportunities for more innovative techniques such as grey water cycling. The development should also make provision for residents recycling facilities. Further guidance is provided in Section 5 (Sustainable Places) of the 'Charnwood: Leading in Design' SPD and in the Council's 'Climate Change Strategy'.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Phasing

The overall development will need to be phased over a number of years. The phasing needs to ensure that the planning aims and requirements for the overall development of the area are not prejudiced or compromised. Certain parts are capable of early redevelopment but progress on much of the rest will depend on the completion of the Inner Relief Road and the opportunities for further land assembly.

Phase 1: Aumberry Gap

The development of this site could proceed in advance of the construction of the proposed Inner Relief Road due to the location of the site's road access on the existing highway network.

Phase 2: Charnwood PCT

A new building could be constructed in the existing car park whilst the present building continues to operate. Access to the site would be via the existing arrangement until further development phases are undertaken. This development could also be completed in advance of the proposed Inner Relief Road.

Phase 3: Strategic Car Park

This phase of development requires land assembly and the PCT to sell their unused landholdings. Once achieved the internal road network can be built allowing direct access to the new PCT building, a connection onto the proposed Inner Relief Road and access to Phase 4 development. When construction of the strategic car park is completed the proposed changes to traffic flows on Pinfold Gate and Aumberry Gap can be undertaken. This development may require the Inner Relief Road to be completed before construction of the built form begins.

Phase 4: Former General Hospital

The completion of the internal road network will secure direct access to this development. The western half of the proposed could be completed prior to the completion of the proposed Inner Relief Road, whilst the eastern half is more dependent on the final alignment.



Phase 5: High Street

The redevelopment of this site is not dependent on other phases but development pressure would increase once the proposed strategic car park opens and the desire for a direct pedestrian link into the town centre increases. This could form phase 4 of the overall scheme as it is not dependent on the redevelopment of the former General Hospital site.

Phase 6: Charnwood PCT

Upon completion of the new pedestrian link, this phase of development can be undertaken to complete the enclosure of the route. Vehicle access would be via the PCT car park.

Phase 7: Pinfold Gate

The expectation is that redevelopment of this site would become more attractive as high quality adjacent developments are built.

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 combining of land for mutual benefit and to achieve the best planning for the area.

Compulsory Purchase

If the development of the area is prejudiced by land assembly, in the appropriate circumstances, the use of compulsory purchase powers will be considered 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 specific references set out in the adopted Local Plan and summarised in previous sections of this brief. The nature and levels of contributions necessarily will be related to the composition and character of the development of the site.

