Development Brief
Land at Alma Road Car Park, Alma Road Windsor

Planning Policy Unit

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1. **Introduction**

Development briefs are a useful tool for improving the quality and consistency of advice to developers, the efficiency of the planning process and the quality of the built environment. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions highlighted this in a recent study. The purpose of this brief therefore is to assist those who are interested in developing a scheme for the site at Alma Road Car Park, Windsor. The brief:

- Provides information on the site and known constraints
- Establishes the planning and design parameters that will be considered during the planning application procedure
- Discusses the land use aspects of the development opportunity.
- Identifies the most appropriate form of development that will enhance this part of Windsor and provide a high quality scheme.

2. **Site Location**

The site is situated west of Windsor Town Centre. Entry to the site is off Alma Road. The study area falls outside the Windsor Town Centre Commercial Area but has good access to the town centre, its shops and services and excellent proximity to Alexandra Gardens, the River Thames and Windsor Leisure Centre. The site has excellent connection to public transport services, Windsor Central Station being only a five to ten minute walk.

3. **Site Description**

The site comprises an area of approximately 0.53 ha (1.3 acres). It is a flat site that is hard-surfaced and marked with parking spaces. The site is enclosed on three sides: along its southern edge by a fence that separates it from a number of properties along Arthur Road; along its eastern edge by a 3ft wall and a barrier to Windsor Dials car park (vehicular access for weekends only); and on its northern side by a 10 ft wall separating the site from a private access drive to premises within the railway arches. The site is accessed from Alma Road (the western edge of the site).

Nos. 75-57 Arthur Road have right of
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pedestrian access across the site from the rear of their properties to Alma Road. Numbers 2-12 Alma Road and 83-87 Arthur Road are included within the study area. (No.10 Alma Road belonged to Sir Sidney Camm.) The access to Windsor Dials car park at weekends is subject to a Section 106 Agreement.

There are a number of trees adjacent to the southern boundary within the gardens of the properties along Arthur Road. There are no trees within the site itself. There is a small amount of landscaping on either side of the entrance to the car park. (Please refer to page 8 for the site appraisal.)

4. Policy Context
The site is subject to the policies set out in the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Adopted July 1999). The site is a mixed use site but part of the study area falls within an area designated for employment use within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan. The site also falls within an area liable to flooding. However, the policy assessment set out in the following section is based on Environment Agency advice that the site can be brought forward for residential development.

Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 (Adopted)
The following Structure Plan Policies are relevant to the development of the site:

- Policy OS1 - The overall strategy.
- Policies LD1, LD2, LD3 and LD5, LD6, LD7 and LD8 aim to limit the impact of development including making appropriate provision for transport, other infrastructure, protection of water resources and benefits to the wider community.
- Policies EN1, EN2 and EN3 deal with environment and conservation issues including matters relating to the character of new development, noise sensitive development and the prevention of flooding.
- Policies H2, H4, H6, H7, H9 and H10 are concerned with the location of housing development, the provision of affordable housing and a variety of dwelling types and sizes including housing which is accessible to the disabled.
- Policy BU3 deals with the redevelopment of employment sites/premises.
- Policies T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 and T7 deal with provision for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, private car use, traffic management and car parking.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Adopted July 1999)
The following Local Plan policies are relevant to the development of the site:

- Policies DG1, F1, NAP1 and NAP2 are concerned with detailed design considerations, the area liable to flooding and noise considerations.
- Policies R3, R4 and R5 require the provision of open space and play facilities; within residential schemes.
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- Policies H3, H7, H8-H11 and H15 are the housing and design policies of the Plan including affordable housing.
- Policies E1, E2 and E5 deal with the location of development and the loss of employment land and premises.
- Policies T3 to T9 and Policy P4 are concerned with transport and parking provision.

5. Planning History

96/74458 Construction of a surface car park for public use on land at rear of Nos. 5-12 Alma Road and Nos. 57-77 Arthur Road. APPROVED 5/6/96

98/77491 Redevelopment of land to rear of Nos. 51-87 Arthur Road and Nos. 2-12 Alma Road to provide 502 space 4 storey car park. WITHDRAWN 31/03/99

6. Development Constraints and Opportunities

i) Loss of Employment Land

The Structure Plan employment policies have a number of elements. Whilst under Policy BU1, new employment-related development is acceptable, subject to a number of criteria, the Plan seeks to maintain a variety of business, industrial, distribution and storage premises with proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of such premises encouraged in appropriate circumstances as defined in local plans. The change of use of employment land is encouraged (Policy BU3), provided that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the availability of such land elsewhere. The replacement of employment floorspace will be opposed unless proposals comply with the Plan’s policy for the assessment of employment proposals.

However, in the Adopted Local Plan, Policy E2 states that the study area is allocated primarily for industrial, small-scale distribution and storage uses. Policy E5 states that within employment areas, the council will not permit development, re-development or change of use for retail or any other purpose other than a business or warehousing use. More recent Government guidance (PPG1; PPG3 and PPG13) encourages mixed use development. Given the site’s relationship with adjacent residential uses a mixed-use scheme is encouraged. However, PPG3 (Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (March 2000)) also encourages the reallocation of employment and other land to housing. National planning policy guidance notes are a material consideration. Accordingly the principle of housing on this site is likely to be acceptable subject to design and other criteria as set out below.

ii) Loss of Housing

The re-development of the site will not result in the loss of any dwellings through demolition. Numbers 2-12 Alma Road and 83-87 Arthur Road are to be retained. The refurbishment of
these units should form part of proposals for the development of the site.

**iii) Access**

A Transport Assessment will be required for the development, detailing measures, including off site works, required to accommodate the traffic generated by the change of use of the site. It must include an assessment of the provisions for pedestrian, cycling, public transport and highway measures and improvements including parking and arrangements for deliveries and servicing. The primary vehicular access to the site will be via the existing access from Alma Road. Weekend access to Windsor Dials must be retained through the development for both vehicles and pedestrians and other public access. This is preferred as any access through the Windsor Dials site and the new roundabout will involve new negotiations with the land owners. The access roads must be designed to adoptable standards as provided in the Berkshire Design Guide, Design Guide Policy T7 and the new highway network will be adopted. Provision should also be made within the site for rear vehicular access to Nos. 75-57 Arthur Road.

**iv) Open Space**

Policy R3 requires the provision of 4.3ha of formal and informal open space per '000 population. In July 2001, the local planning authority adopted draft supplementary planning guidance (Draft SPG) for the interpretation of the Local Plan’s open space policies. This Draft SPG is now a material consideration under Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act. The Draft SPG seeks financial contributions towards off-site provision for parks and playing pitches serving the Windsor urban area. An appropriate contribution will therefore be sought towards any element of this provision that is not to be provided on site. Further advice on the contributions should be sought from the Council’s Planning Policy Unit.

Under Policies R4 and R5 of the Adopted Local Plan, a children’s play space should be provided (Policy R4 and Policy R5). This should include a Local Area for Play (LAP). The site has excellent access to Alexandra Gardens, thus the Council may accept financial contributions for off-site provision.

**v) Pedestrian and Cycling Provision**

As part of the development of an integrated transport strategy, the scheme layout needs to make appropriate provision for pedestrian and cycle access. Adequate cycle parking arrangements should be made for dwellings and any new employment
vi) Flooding
The site lies within an area designated under Policy F1 of the Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map as liable to flooding. However, the Environment Agency's 'Post MWEFAS' maps indicate that this part of Windsor will be relieved from flooding once the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Schemes has been completed and is fully operational. In September 2001, the Environment Agency indicated that the Scheme was fully operational. This advice was accepted by the Council on the 22nd October 2001. Accordingly, the site now falls within the defended area and is no longer within an area liable to flooding.

vii) Noise
The site lies within an area where under Policies NAP1 and NAP2 of the Local Plan, insulation against aircraft noise levels will be required. Insulation will need to be incorporated within the design of any dwellings to ensure that indoor and outdoor noise levels meet the appropriate standards set out in DETR PPG24, "Noise". Insulation measures are also likely to be required in relation to train noise emanating from the Windsor to Slough line adjacent to the site.

viii) Affordable Housing
The site is considered suitable for accommodating affordable housing as part of its development in accordance with Policy H7 of the Structure Plan and Policy H3 of the Local Plan. It lies within an area with a high level of housing need demonstrated by the results of the Council's "Housing Need Assessment. It is well located for services and facilities, including public transport services and schools. It is therefore an ideal site for a reasonably high level of provision. A minimum of 30% of the total number of dwellings provided should be in the form of affordable housing to meet the needs of qualifying persons as defined in the adopted local plan. This will be in addition to a proportion of key worker housing, possibly by means of shared equity.

ix) Parking
Policy P4 of the local plan provides the context for the Council's current parking standards. Recent government guidance in the form of PPG3, "Housing" and PPG13, "Transport,"
indicate that parking provision within new residential developments should be reduced, particularly in locations which are close to town centres and accessible by public transport. In accordance with recent government guidance, provision on this well located site should be no more than an average of 1.5 spaces per unit. Proposals for the development of the site will be required to make provision for disabled parking.

x) Archaeology

This is an area of Windsor where very little archaeological exploration has been carried out and although it is felt unlikely that there are any medieval remains in this area, there may be evidence in relation to Windsor’s prehistoric past due to its proximity to the river Thames. For this reason an Archaeological Evaluation should be carried out prior to the planning consent being granted.

xi) Drainage

Sewage from the developments will be treated at Thames Water’s Windsor Sewage Treatment Works. As a brownfield site there may be existing operational sewers crossing the site. A diversion could be required. In addition an impact study of the sewerage system will be required to determine the magnitude of spare capacity in the system. The developer will be required to fund this and any necessary upgrading. For information on both sewerage and sewage treatment please contact Thames Water Utilities, Kew Business Centre on 0207 713 3877.

In the disposal of surface water, Thames Water requires the separation of foul and surface water sewerage on new developments. It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.

xii) Water Supply

Water will be supplied to the site by Thames Water. With regard to water supplies to brownfield sites within the area there may be existing water mains crossing the site. In such cases the developer would also have to pay for new off-site infrastructure.

Once the magnitude of new development has been confirmed Thames Water will need to investigate the impact on the existing network. Even small scale development can have a significant impact on the infrastructure and if necessary, developers would be required to fund associated studies and upgrading of the network. For further information on water supply infrastructure please contact Thames Water Utilities, Kew Business Centre on 0207 713 3877.
Design Rationale

- Residential development should incorporate a mix of housing tenures and types.
- The Alma Road frontage should be enhanced to create an attractive streetscape.
- Weekend access into Windsor Dials should be retained as it forms part of an existing S106 Agreement. A clear pedestrian right of way from the car park through the site to Alma Road should be maintained.
- Numbers 2-12 Alma Road and 83-87 Arthur Road should be retained and refurbished. These buildings are not listed, however they are an important part of the street scene. No.10 Alma Road belonged to Sir Sidney Camm; therefore this building has an important place in local heritage.
- The main vehicular access will be from Alma Road.
- Provision should be made for rear vehicular access to Nos. 75-57 Arthur Road.
- A high-density layout should respect the Alma Road and Arthur Road frontages.
- The development layout should be designed for maximum surveillance and safety. Private backs of houses should not be made vulnerable by lying adjacent to public spaces.
- Private, semi-private and public space should be clearly defined.
- The segregation of users who enter the site i.e., pedestrians, car park, commercial and residential traffic should be avoided. This will increase the potential of the site and create a more permeable and vibrant place.
- Design clues should be taken from the neighbouring residential area.
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Alexandra Gardens
Car Park
Coach Park
Windsor Dials

Pedestrian route to town
Proposed pedestrian route
Existing Car Park
Entrance to Car Park
Views to Windsor Castle
The arches

Significant trees
Active Frontages
Poor frontages
Main routes
Pedestrian Routes
Views
Landmarks
Town centre
Active node
Not to scale

12/03/08
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8. Design Principles

Relationship to Surrounding Developments

Careful consideration needs to be given to the relationship of any new development with the varied character of properties and built forms in the area. Particular attention needs to be paid to Local Plan Policy H11, which requires that new development should not be incompatible with, nor cause damage to, the character and amenity of established residential areas. The site lies on the edge of the residential district to the west of Windsor town centre. The district is characterised by high-density residential houses with the railway line acting as a defined edge to this district. The other side of the railway line has an equally distinct and different character, that of open space for uses such as car and coach parks, and Alexandra Gardens on the banks of the Thames.

The historic railway line, which leads into the centre of Windsor, is to the north of the site. Its arches add significantly to Windsor town in terms of their character and uses. They provide small units of space in a unique environment for a mix of light industrial, retail and A3 uses. The scheme should seek to improve the setting of the arches.

The scheme should seek to improve existing residential amenity. The private rear gardens to Arthur Road are vulnerable and lack privacy as they lie adjacent to a public area. The scheme should seek to provide some security and privacy in this area.

Road Frontage Development and Surveillance

The public edge of the buildings should contribute to the life of the street. The first step is to locate as many entrances as possible in a position where the comings and goings are visible from the street. The layout of the activities within the buildings should seek to enhance the animation of the street. For example, kitchens and the living rooms located on the front of the buildings should overlook the street. This could be further enhanced with bay windows or balconies. Horizontal distance, level change, or a combination of both can achieve privacy.

The high wall which fronts the arches restricts surveillance. Its removal to allow views and full access to the
companies operating in the arches will be considered at the formal planning application stage together with other access, design and layout considerations.

Any open space provision should also be laid out so that it benefits from a high level of surveillance from adjoining buildings as set out above. This is especially important in the provision of small local areas for play where casual supervision is required from overlooking houses to increase the perceived safety of the space and increase its usage.

In the light of the duty on Local Authorities to do all that they reasonable can to prevent crime & disorder under section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1988, the crime risks facing this locality include domestic and commercial burglary, car crime, damage and anti social behaviour. Prospective developers should obtain suitable advice to address these issues.

**Views**

Views are not just pleasurable visual points but they provide the users with connections to orientate themselves around town. Around the site the street patterns are laid out in straight blocks to allow clear views around the district. To the rear of the arches to the north of the site clear views of the Castle can be seen along the pedestrian footpath, leading people clearly to the centre. These routes and views should not be detracted from by the development of this site. Views along Alma Road should be clear and encourage people to use the route along the railway into town, the coach park and the park.

The current pedestrian route is unclear and pedestrians are sent around a contorted route following road markings.

**Building Form and Design**

As part of any well designed scheme the form and architectural design should take clues from the surrounding area to ensure it enhances the area. The table over leaf outlines these features.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vertical rhythms</th>
<th>Narrow plots (approx. 0.5 metres).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal rhythms</td>
<td>Properties are two storeys with increasing height to 3 storeys near to the railway line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skylines</td>
<td>Continuous slate roofs broken by chimneys pots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall details</td>
<td>Yellow London stocks with raised and red brick details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Vertical emphasis, sash windows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Set within porches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground level details</td>
<td>Strip of front private gardens with low wall or door directly onto the street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. **Development Appraisal**

As indicated above, the site is suitable for residential development and is capable of accommodating a mixed development including flats and small houses. An allowance needs to be made for open space provision, and for land to be made available for the access to Windsor Dials. The net developable area is estimated to be in the region of 0.38 ha. Subject to any capacity limits identified under the Transport Assessment, it is estimated that this net developable area will accommodate around 64 dwellings assuming a development comprising primarily studio and one bedroom dwellings in the form of flats*. Part of the development will comprise 3 storey flats.

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* Based on studio floor area of 35 sq.m. and 1 bed apartments of 50 sq.m.
The following diagram shows an indicative layout that would meet the criteria set out in this brief. It shows the retention and refurbishment of the terrace houses on Arthur Road and Alma Road, front service and parking for the Arches and access to Windsor Dials car park. The possibility for rear access to the properties on Arthur Road is also included. The high density development is achieved by a mainly three storey development with activity to the front and private rear car parking, and some reduction in the size of the rear gardens to the properties on Alma Road. A single aspect flat block is used to mask the Windsor Dials car park and improve the residential environment.


ii Much can be done within a development to save water. Further guidance on water conservation can be obtained from ‘Water Conservation in Business- A Briefing Guide for Construction Clients and Building Owners’ which has recently been jointly prepared by the Construction Industry Council (CIC), Construction Clients Forum and DETR (Price £5.00, ISBN 1898671 20 6, contact CIC on 0207 637 8692). Alternatively guidance could be obtained direct from the Environment Agency National Water Demand Management Centre (www.environment-agency.gov.uk) or Thames Water (Thames Water, Environment & Quality Department, Reading Bridge House, Reading RG1 8PR, or www.thames-water.com/waterwise)”