NORTHGATE, DEVIZES

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2002

LYONS+SLEEMAN+HOARE Architects
Contents

1. Introduction

2. Site Analysis/Appraisal

3. Planning Context

4. Planning Obligations

5. Transportation

6. Development Principles

7. Masterplan

8. Consultation
1. Introduction

1.1 This design and development brief has been prepared on behalf of Kennet District Council (the Council). The brief relates to an area of land and property assembled by the Council in Devizes so as to facilitate its regeneration with a mixed-use development. The site is a key one within the town centre and has been the subject of various proposals over a period of some years. Following publication of an earlier brief on behalf of the Council various proposals were put forward by the then selected development partners but these have not progressed.

1.2 Paragraph 1.28 of the Replacement Local Plan (the Local Plan) states that the Council will prepare a Strategic Development Brief for the development sites allocated in Devizes. This Strategic Development Brief will be prepared in conjunction with developers, landowners, service providers and the local community. It will deal with the consequences of development at the strategic level including affordable housing, community needs, open space and transport. The Council intends to commence the preparation of this document during the summer of 2002, following the completion of the Public Inquiry into the Local Plan.

1.3 Policy PD1a of the Local Plan requires the preparation of a Planning Brief for each of the allocated sites in the Plan. Planning Briefs for sites in Devizes must comply with the provision of the Strategic Development Brief. The Council is anxious to progress the regeneration of the Northgate area of Devizes as a matter of priority. Therefore, work has commenced on the preparation of a Development Brief for the Northgate site in advance of, but without prejudice to, the Strategic Development Brief. This Brief sets out the fundamental principles for a redevelopment which will respect the surroundings, is practical, and will deliver economic, environmental and community benefits.

1.4 In accordance with the guidance contained in Policy PD1a this document includes and appraisal of the site context and setting, a brief review of planning policies and guidance, indication of the measures proposed to meet the impact of the development and a statement of design principles.

1.5 This Development Brief was adopted by Kennet District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 17th September 2002. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies and proposals contained in a Local Plan. Although it does not form a part of the Local Plan and, therefore, does not have the status that Section 54A of the 1990 Act provides in deciding planning applications, SPG may be taken into account as a material consideration. The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to SPG when making decisions on matters that come before him, providing that it is consistent with the Local Plan, and has been prepared in the proper manner.
2.1 The site subject to this brief extends to some 0.9 hectare in total, 0.75 hectare being in the ownership of the Council together with an adjoining area of land adjacent to the Brewery roundabout being owned by Gaiger Bros. and the County Council (see Plan 1).

2.2 The site is contained within the Devizes Conservation Area and is set to the rear of properties fronting Northgate Street/Market Place and is bounded by New Park Street to the north and by Snuff Street to the east.

2.3 The brief boundary on its northern side excludes the Salem Chapel, a listed building, which is to be retained. Other than no. 50-52 Northgate Street there are no other buildings within the site which are listed nor are there any trees covered by Preservation Orders. A number of adjoining properties are on the statutory list (see Plan 2).

2.4 The site is essentially open and/or vacant, falling slightly from a high point in the north east corner down by some 3 metres towards the lowest point at the south west corner.

2.5 The site comprises the former Devizes Cattle Market, land which once housed the Devizes Motor Company, Dillons store (formerly Bath Co-operative Society), and the car park to the rear, a vacant site of a former property on the Northgate Street frontage with additional land comprising a car park and Gaigers' workshops adjacent to the junction between New Park Street and Northgate Street.

2.6 A right of way exists across from New Park Street through to the rear of the cinema for the benefit of the cinema and no. 21 Market Place. The right of way is understood to be moveable. A further right of way exists via the roadway within the site which runs from New Park Street across the rear of the properties at no's. 50 - 58 Northgate Street.

2.7 While parts of the site are available to the public for car parking others are closed off. Other areas such as the site of the former garage have been temporarily landscaped with paths provided from New Park Street through the gap into Northgate Street. There are extensive gaps in built frontages to adjoining highways and there are particularly poor backland views across to the rear of the cinema and the rear of other properties fronting Northgate Street and Market Place.

2.8 The property currently occupied by Dillons (formerly Kwiksave) is acknowledged as an unattractive building on an important corner site, a site that was formerly occupied by an attractive 3 storey brick and stone building under a pitched roof (approx. 1900 - see photo in Section 6).
2.9 In addition to the vacant garage/workshop building to the east of the Salem Chapel the other remaining buildings comprise no. 78 New Park Street, a 3 storey rendered building under a pitched roof of no particular architectural or historic interest, formerly used as a café, and Gaiger's workshops and their 2 storey building at no. 50-52 Northgate Street.

2.10 Adoptable highway on the New Park Street and Snuff Street frontages extends as far as the back edge of pavement, there being no highway within the site.

2.11 The site is located within an area of mixed use within the town centre. Within the island site adjoining uses include offices and residential within Nags Head Court on the corner of New Park Street and Snuff Street and a mixture of retail and associated uses fronting Northgate Street including the Cinema and the Swan Hotel.

2.12 On the east side of Snuff Street is a line of residential properties, The Cottages, comprising low 2 storey buildings, while to the north fronting New Park Street is a substantial 4 storey building now converted to residential (Longs Buildings), together with other conversions and new build to the rear comprising Snuff Court. To the south of The Cottages is a retained wall of a former warehouse known as Tobacco Building, to the rear of which is an area of car parking. Further to the east is an access road leading through to a further area of public parking.

2.13 On the eastern corner of Market Place and Snuff Street is a fine 3 storey building comprising retail uses at ground floor with other uses above. Buildings fronting Northgate Street are a variety of 2 & 3 storeys, the rear tower of the cinema building representing a particularly noticeable, unattractive feature in the townscape. A number of the properties fronting Northgate are listed.

2.14 The Wadworth Brewery building complex lies to the north west of New Park Street comprising a substantial brick built complex on the corner together with a newer functional warehouse building adjacent. Other properties on the north side of New Park Street include a garage and filling station, a public house, a tyre depot and then to the east of Wharf Street there is a 2½ storey Police Station complex and a line of 2/3 storey domestic scale properties.

2.15 Market Place is currently undergoing environmental enhancement. The first phase has been completed and it is understood that the work will be completed in the forthcoming financial year.
2.16 In relation to services, detailed ground and soil investigations have been undertaken and have shown there to be no substantial impediment to development. While there are some minor services within the site the main services lie underneath adjoining highway, no major diversions being required to enable the development proposals.

2.17 History and archaeology - a number of archaeological desk studies and some evaluation work have been undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in relation to the site as it forms an important resource within the historic town. The site has been developed since medieval times and a strong continuously built up frontage has developed against New Park Street. It is important that the Norman street pattern of Devizes is retained and restored whenever possible. The County Council is currently preparing a 'Historic Towns Study' which includes detailed information on Devizes.

2.18 The principle archaeological resource is understood to be the line of the former outer bailey defences which are projected to run through the southern part of the site in a concentric semi-elliptical pattern. While additional evaluation will need to be undertaken prior to development, bearing in mind the history of development on the site it is not anticipated that the archaeological resource will preclude development on any part of it.

Market Place - historical view
3 Planning Context

3.1 There are a number of Planning Policy Guidance Notes issued by the Government which provide guidance on the issues relevant to the site in question. These include PPG 1, PPG 3, PPG 6, PPG 13 and PPG15.

3.2 'General Policies and Principles' (PPG 1) issued in 1997, sets out guidance on sustainable development, design, maintaining and improving the quality of the existing environment and reinforcing civic pride and a sense of place through good design.

3.3 The guidance produced on 'Housing' (PPG 3, published March 2000) emphasises the need to focus new housing within existing towns and recognises the need to reuse previously developed land. It also promotes a greater emphasis on quality and designing places for people.

3.4 PPG 6, 'Town Centres and Retail Development' (1996) recognises the need to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of our town centres through sustainable development and mixed - uses.

3.5 Amongst other aims PPG 13 on transport seeks to reduce the reliance on the private car.

3.6 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG 15) released in September 1994 contains advice on the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment.

3.7 The general principles contained in the aforementioned government guidance are reflected in the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 and the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10).

3.8 In keeping with PPG3, Policy HC2 of the Local Plan (March 2001) states that the North Gate site, along with the Wharf and Devizes Hospital is zoned for housing. It is proposed within this policy that between the three aforementioned sites approximately 150 dwellings should be created.

3.9 In accordance with both PPG3 and PPG6, the North Gate site is a brown field site and is therefore in compliance with Local Plan Policy HC2a.

3.10 As per PPG3 and PPG13 proposals for a mixed use development on this site will need to address the potential impact of development on transport. Further impacts which should be addressed as per policy HC7a of the Local Plan are the impact on the local communities and amenities (including affordable housing and open space), educational facilities, services and any locally important natural features within the vicinity.
3.11 The North Gate site forms part of the area zoned in the Local Plan for a mixed-use development. Policy HC9 refers to the need for the development of the site to include elements of leisure, retail, employment and recreation as well as housing. The Policy then goes on to reiterate the need for any proposal on the site 'to contribute by its design to the quality of the Town Centre Conservation Area'.

3.12 Policy HC9 also goes on to state that to promote good urban design the open space requirement for a proposed development may be reduced in consultation with the Council.

3.13 In the context of Policy HC29 of the Local Plan, at least 50% of any residential units constructed should be affordable housing, about 30% being subsidised units provided by a Registered Social Landlord for rent or shared ownership and about 20% low cost market provision for sale as starter homes or market rent. The level of requirement may change in accordance with any change in Local Plan policy.

3.14 Affordable housing should be carefully integrated within the development and the size and type of dwellings should reflect local needs, in accordance with policy HC31.

3.15 Policy ED19 requires development within the area to comply with the following:

a) build on the scale and pattern of existing development and provide for the retention and refurbishment of existing listed buildings and other good quality buildings in the area;

b) be for mixed-uses including housing, leisure and recreation, retail and employment;

c) provide for direct pedestrian links within the site overall to the main shopping centre and to the Lower Wharf Development Area;

d) contribute through its design to the quality of Devizes Town Centre Conservation Area.

3.16 The Snuff Street frontage of the site is zoned within the Local Plan as a Prime Shopping Area (ED16). Therefore Policy ED16 establishes the District Councils' aim to retain an A1 retail presence along the Snuff Street frontage unless:

a) the development makes a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the centre; or

b) the development is necessary to secure the future of a Listed Building at Risk or other buildings important to the street scene; or

c) the development would make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area by the replacement of unsympathetic or out of scale buildings.

3.17 In relation to criteria (b) and (c) the Local Plan states that the development should not reduce the vitality and viability of the centre. Any planning application will need to be supported by evidence to show that any retail element will not detract from the viability of shops and services within the town centre as a whole.
3 Planning Context (contd)

3.18 As the site lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area policies HH5, HH6 and HH7 of the Local Plan apply. These policies prevent development within Conservation Areas unless it would preserve or enhance their character and appearance. Reference should be made to the general leaflet regarding Conservation Areas as published by the Council. It should be noted that the Council is currently preparing a Conservation Area Designation Statement for Devizes.

3.19 Policy HH7 relates to development within Devizes and states that any development should respect the historic character of the town centre and preserve the local identity by:

a) reflecting the historic pattern of streets and building frontages;
b) retaining walls and other boundary features on the lines of the former burgage plots;
c) providing attractive and varied roof lines and forms;
d) utilising high quality traditional materials; and

e) including appropriate measures to prevent the spread of fire in order to protect the historic fabric.

3.20 Devizes has a rich and varied history which has created a unique local identity for the town. This local identity and indeed character are inextricably linked to the townscape and due to the higher level of development within the District, the conservation issues are 'of prime significance, especially in the town centre'. English Heritage will be consulted regarding major development proposals.

4 Planning Obligations

4.1 It is proposed that redevelopment of the site should be considered in the form of a comprehensive scheme in the first instance supported as need be by studies such as transportation assessments albeit that elements of that scheme may be subsequently detailed and implemented separately, e.g. residential accommodation. Applications for individual parcels of land will not be accepted as each is dependent on the other. Any overall consent will probably include allowance for phasing, while also ensuring comprehensiveness.

4.2 Any planning application is likely to be considered in the context of obligations enforced through Section 106 of the Act, requirements being borne equitably throughout the site.

4.3 These are likely to include an obligation to undertake works to the highway and providing for access to the site and also a contribution towards junction improvement at the Brewery roundabout.

4.4 A planning agreement will be required to secure the necessary affordable housing element of any proposals and it is expected that a Registered Social Landlord or other provider will be party to that agreement. A financial contribution may also be required in lieu of provision for open space or for items such as public art. The residential element of any scheme, if for family housing, will be required to contribute towards the development of a new primary school in Devizes.
5.1 The site is located within the town centre and is easily accessible by a range of modes of transport. Bus services stop within the Market Place. There is also a taxi rank just off the Market Place. The site is readily accessible for both pedestrians and cyclists.

5.2 Primary vehicular access is gained from the western-most access point onto New Park Street with a central service/spine route providing access to the parking areas and from which access can be gained for servicing, deliveries and refuse collection. There could also be other, minor access points. Any scheme should ensure that the access arrangements to the site address the access needs of properties currently served by the road into the site.

5.3 The highway authority has confirmed that in response to delays that have been experienced at the Brewery roundabout, consideration has been given to improvements to the junction in the form of revised geometry to the roundabout. This may involve some land take within the brief site and it is anticipated that those works will be part funded by the development, part by other proposed development in the vicinity of the Wharf.

5.4 Bearing in mind the nature and scale of the proposals the highway authority do not require preparation of a detailed transportation assessment at the present stage but will require an analysis of impact at the application stage together with consideration of preparation of a Green Travel Plan.

5.5 It should be noted that there are proposals for a new zebra crossing across New Park Street just to the east of the junction with Snuff Street, adjacent to which there are to be traffic management measures to include physical measures to ensure left turn only out of Snuff Street and one way traffic northwards along Couch Lane. The works include proposals for a loading bay on the southside of New Park Street. Limited vehicular use of Snuff Street will be encouraged.

5.6 In addition to provision for 30-40 short stay public parking spaces in the centre of site some parking provision will be required for the new residential accommodation to be provided in courtyards but not for the new retail space. The central landscaped parking area should be dedicated to and managed by the Council. It is anticipated that provision for residential accommodation will be in the region of 1 space per unit, although a lesser standard might be accepted in relation to the affordable element.

5.7 Some limited provision is made for parking spaces to the rear of the proposed office building and possibly along the route of the existing access road to the rear of 53-55 Northgate Street.

5.8 It is suggested that provision should be made for cycle parking within the scheme located as it is on the edge of the centre of the town centre, with cyclists being allowed to share the principal pedestrian routes.
6.1 It is intended that the site should be developed for a mix of uses incorporating residential, retail and office uses together with associated provision for access, servicing and parking.

6.2 The final development must contribute to the vitality of the town centre and the Council consequently want to see as much retail floorspace as possible provided at ground floor level. The Council is aware that a number of retailers have expressed a strong interest in locating in Devizes if suitable premises are available.

6.3 The Council expect any development proposal to include a minimum retail floorspace of 1000 sqm which can be divided between larger space users and smaller units for specialist retail (A1) or for restaurant/wine bar (A3) uses. Sensitivity will be needed in respect of the design of the servicing arrangements and details of these will have to be submitted to the Highway Authority for consideration and approval.

6.4 A building is proposed for office use on the Northgate Street frontage on the corner of the site opposite the brewery together with a limited amount of parking provision to the rear accessed from New Park Street. Some of those parking spaces should be available for public use at weekends and evenings.

6.5 The centre of the site is proposed for the main access and circulation space while also providing for between 30 & 40 short stay public parking spaces.

6.6 Remaining land for development should comprise buildings for residential, office or similar use including workshops or studios. It is proposed that these should be located primarily on the northern part of the site fronting New Park Street. Appropriate land uses are shown on Plan 4.

6.7 Principles of design approach are illustrated on Plan 3 ('Development Principles'). The main access point into the site from New Park Street is some 50 metres from its junction with Northgate Street. Precise location and alignment may need to allow for provision for some parking along the line of the existing access road. A central access spine route provides vehicular access to the middle of the site with its public parking and provides for access through into adjoining uses and properties. Access through to the rear of the cinema could be gained from this route replacing the right of way.
Varied building frontages - Long Street

Gap in existing frontage on Northgate Street

Distant view along Northgate Street - need for corner landmark

Gaijer corner - existing view

Example of end stop / landmark building

Example of landmark corner
6.8 Pedestrian permeability through the site is seen to be important with linkages through to New Park Street and Northgate Street and the Market Place. The main link through from the Market Place through towards the canal and the Wharf area should be along Snuff Street and through northwards via Couch Lane.

6.9 While no specific proposals are made for the rear parts of land associated with Northgate Street frontage properties, the analysis shows how access could be gained to such land from the central service road enabling development of backland areas and provision for rear servicing and parking as appropriate.

6.10 Built frontage is proposed to New Park Street recreating a hard edge to the street and a sense of enclosure that formerly existed - see 1949 aerial photograph and 1889 Ordnance Survey plan. Such a frontage is important in townscape terms with further built frontage leading back from it along pedestrian walkways and courtyards, and also to form new frontage reinforcing the historic line of Snuff Street.

6.11 Built form should essentially be 2-3 storeys with the possibility of some four storey elements, and essentially of a domestic scale with vertical differentiation and varied roof forms. Its orientation should reflect the historic burgage plots where possible. Reference to old Ordnance Survey maps and other material highlights the organic growth of the town, the classic burgage plot shapes and proportions radiating from the highway frontages. Each plot would have been fronted by a building, probably 'individual' in style and form, separated vertically from its neighbour.

6.12 The new office building on the corner of Northgate Street/New Park Street represents an opportunity to form an important focal building within the townscape and thus should be of high design quality on what is a particularly prominent site. This building should be at least 2-3 floors, 'wrapping around' the corner.

6.13 Residential accommodation is anticipated to be at a comparatively high density and is likely to comprise small units reflecting the recommended PPG3 density of some 30-50 dwellings per hectare, possibly including sheltered or 'nurse-assisted' housing for the elderly. Within the residential accommodation Policy HC31 of the Local Plan expects the 50% affordable housing provision to be clustered in small groups of not more than 10 dwellings. Given the nature of the site, the Council appreciates that housing densities are likely to be high and that this level of separation may be difficult to achieve on every case. If particular difficulties arise the Council may therefore be prepared to relax this policy.
6.14 Layout will need to make allowance for access for service and emergency vehicles and note should be taken of the Council's approach to refuse collection in terms of accessibility from highway and across private land.

6.15 Within the scheme it is important that care and attention is paid to both hard and soft landscaping. Treatment of external floorscape should reflect the quality of the historic landscaped areas of the town such as the Market Place, particularly on pedestrian routes, while there is an opportunity for soft landscaping within the centre of the site to break up and soften the road and open parking area. Such soft elements will be limited in scope but of strategic importance, incorporating hedging, trees and grassed areas, taking examples from species historically planted around the town. Hard and soft landscaping should form part of any planning application for the site.

6.16 Within the vacant site between 55 and 58 Northgate Street it is proposed that there should be a new building probably for retail or similar use of some 2 storeys in height, the design of which should allow for a pedestrian access way through, preferably also the retention of the existing, attractive red brick buildings at the rear, one of which was once a bakery. The larger of these could be used for leisure or similar community use such as a local history museum.

6.17 The building currently occupied by Dillons should be either refurbished with associated improvements to its elevational treatment or preferably redeveloped. The Council are seeking a building of very high quality on this important corner within the townscape. Such a building should be at least 2, preferably 3 floors in height and while its bulk, form and scale should reflect other buildings in the vicinity there is an opportunity for the creation of a well detailed contemporary building in traditional materials rather than necessarily following a 'pastiche' approach.

6.18 Any new development should respect sustainable design principles so as to protect vital resources and to ensure that development plays a positive role in ensuring that sustainability is integral to any scheme proposals.

6.19 A high quality of design will be required reflecting the sensitivity of the site within the Conservation Area. Careful consideration should be paid to detailing and to the selection of appropriate traditional materials reflecting the character and vernacular of the town.
Devizes Market Place around 1900 - the former building which occupied the Dillons site is in the centre

Devizes Market Place - current view as existing
7 Masterplan

7.1 A masterplan has been prepared illustrating a form of development which might evolve from the land use principles outlined in Section 4. It is shown in context on Plan 4 and at a bigger scale on Plan 5. The plan illustrates an approach to development of the site which reflects the qualities of Devizes yet which is distinctive, arising from and complementing its setting.

7.2 The aim of this brief is to provide guidance in terms of fundamental principles. The masterplan is just that, suggesting a framework as a basis for careful consideration of more detailed design issues which will need to be undertaken in conjunction with the planning and other authorities at a later stage in the development process.

7.3 The masterplan illustrates one way in which the opportunities that can be taken to develop the site in a comprehensive way, providing economic, environmental and community benefits as per the aims and objectives of the emerging Devizes Community Area Community Strategy, assisting regeneration of this part of the town in the context of the Community Plan.

7.4 In particular, the masterplan aims to give guidance on a potential resolution to the following key issues:

- Provide new street frontages to complete the urban form and replace existing gaps.

- Form a network of pedestrian routes through the site which link existing desire lines, punctuated by interesting public spaces.

- Provide an urban form that connects the site with its historic past with recognition of the importance of the bailey defences and the burgage plots within the layout and urban grain.

- Creation of new built form within the site which line the pedestrian routes, and echo the character of Devizes with courtyards, entrances through archways and positioning of key ‘landmark’ buildings

7.5 It should be emphasised that the masterplan is an illustrative proposal, and it is likely that there may be other design solutions that meet the design principles, and would be acceptable in urban design terms, provided their architectural quality is high.
8.1 The Council is committed to working with the community and local businesses. As this brief is intended to carry weight in the form of supplementary planning guidance, it has been subject to a comprehensive and widespread consultation process which was initiated in June 2002.

8.2 Consultations included the following:

- Consultation with:
  - Internal departments within the District Council;
  - Statutory bodies, including the County Highway Authority, the Fire Brigade and the Health Authority;
  - Advisory bodies, including the Civic Trust and English Heritage;
  - The Town Council and Elected Members of District and County Councils;
  - Local groups - over 20 local interest groups including the Lions Club, the Devizes Partnership of Churches, the Devizes Retail Revival Project Team and CPRE.

- Presentations: Devizes Community Area Forum (24th June 2002) and Devizes Town Council (25th June 2002).

- Public Exhibition: An exhibition was mounted within the Corn Exchange all day on 2nd July 2002, details of which had been circulated to local organisations, residents, businesses and elected members, and had been advertised in the local paper. Comments forms were available for visitors to complete.

- Workshop: Representatives of local organisations, elected members, residents and local business people were invited to attend an evening workshop, held in the Corn Exchange on the evening of 2nd July.

- Information Leaflet: The District Council distributed an information leaflet widely within the town providing information regarding the brief, advising of the exhibition and workshops and providing contacts for further information. The period for comments was extended from 12th July until the end of July.

- Direct Contact: All neighbouring landowners were written to and, where possible, approached directly to advise of the Brief and to invite comment, including parties such as Wadworth and Co. and British Waterways Board.

8.3 The outcome of this public consultation process have now been analysed and has resulted in some amendments to this Brief, including some changes to the text and minor alterations to the masterplan in the vicinity of the Salem Chapel.