If you would like this document in a different format, including different languages, Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01483 444471.
CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION
1.1 Purpose of the brief.......................... 5
1.2 Structure of the brief.......................... 5
1.3 Site and context............................... 6
1.4 Land ownership................................ 7

2 PLANNING CONTEXT
2.1 Planning history.............................. 9
2.2 Planning policy............................... 9
2.3 Strategic context............................. 13
2.4 Cross-cutting studies......................... 14

3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS
3.1 Introduction.................................. 17
3.2 Town centre dynamics......................... 18
3.3 Access and movement........................ 20
3.4 Street structure and links.................... 22
3.5 Topography, strategic views and building heights.......................... 24
3.6 Approach, local views and marker buildings.......................... 26
3.7 Building quality and plot widths.............. 28
3.8 Public spaces and street life.................. 30
3.9 Technical constraints........................ 31

4 VISION AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
4.1 Vision............................................. 33
4.2 The approach..................................... 33
4.3 Development area............................. 33
4.4 Land uses........................................ 34
4.5 Links, streets and spaces..................... 34
4.6 Built form....................................... 41
4.7 Sustainable design............................. 44
4.8 Delivery and management..................... 46
4.9 In summary..................................... 47
1 INTRODUCTION

The North Street development site represents the most significant and exciting development opportunity in Guildford town centre. Currently an unattractive backland immediately adjacent to Guildford’s prime town centre retail area, it provides some important functions, but reflects poorly on the rest of the town centre.

The new National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centre. It also states that local authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised.

This site is the only land within the retail core area capable of accommodating the required amount of retail floor space for which demand has been identified. Furthermore, redevelopment offers great potential to enhance Guildford’s townscape, stimulate the regeneration of neighbouring streets and safeguard and improve Guildford’s position as a popular shopping and visitor destination.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE BRIEF

The principal purpose of this brief is to provide a clear steer to prospective developers on the form of the development considered most appropriate for the site.

The brief considers the potential impact of developing the site on Guildford as a whole and lays down principles for its redevelopment that seek to serve the interest of the wider town.

The brief is being prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document and on adoption by the Council will become a material consideration when determining planning applications for the area. It updates and replaces the Design and Development Brief for North Street, Commercial Road and Leapale Road (2003).

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE BRIEF

This brief is structured as follows:

- section 1 provides an introduction to the brief and the site
- section 2 provides the planning context, including planning history, planning policy and interrelated studies
- section 3 provides the urban design analysis and sets out the key opportunities and constraints
- section 4 provides the vision and design and development guidelines.
1.3 SITE AND CONTEXT

Guildford is the principal town within the borough and its main focus of economic activity. It is accessible by a variety of transport modes, with efficient rail and bus services to London and other surrounding centres. Nearby major roads, including the A3 provide road access.

Guildford is one of the largest town centres in the South East outside London and provides an excellent choice of services and facilities. The town is known for its picturesque historic High Street and the narrow lanes, locally known as gates, leading off it. In this time of economic downturn, it has proved to be one of the most resilient centres in the country, due mainly to its largely affluent customers.

The North Street development site is located to the immediate east of the Friary shopping centre. The High Street is just a few minutes’ walk away via the numerous gates linking North Street with the High Street. The areas to the north and east are characterised by a high proportion of residential development.

The site is bounded by the Friary Centre, North Street, Haydon Place and Leapale Road and includes a total of 2.5 hectares. There is a variety of existing uses across the site, including retail, offices, residential, the town’s bus station and temporary surface car parking. Although these provide some important functions to the town centre, the poor quality environment dominates and reflects badly on the wider town.

In comparison to the 2003 Brief, the site has been extended to include Dominion House, Leapale multi-storey car park and the adjacent Norwich House. This is to:

- create more attractive gateways into the town centre, in particular from the north (Dominion House)
- increase the potential development area to meet identified demand
- aid the regeneration of North Street by extending its new retail frontage
- create opportunities to rationalise vehicular movement across the site.

Figure 1.1 The North Street development site is located in the heart of Guildford town centre
The inclusion of the BT exchange building on Leapale Lane was also considered, but it was felt that to do so could significantly delay and jeopardise the delivery of the scheme because BT have a use long term use for the site and it is therefore unavailable for redevelopment. However, the development of this site is a long-term aspiration of the Council and the development of the North Street site should not preclude a mixed use scheme coming forward in the future.

1.4 LAND OWNERSHIP

A number of landowners, including the Council and Hermes, hold an interest in the land. Hermes also owns the Friary shopping centre, having recently acquired the interest from Westfield. The Council owns the freehold of the Friary Centre and part of the land subject to this brief.
2 PLANNING CONTEXT

The redevelopment of the North Street site has been a long held aspiration of the Council. The Council has consistently promoted its development through its local planning policies and in 2004 granted permission for a comprehensive mixed use development. More recently the Council has commissioned a range of studies to understand and overcome the obstacles to the delivery of the scheme.

2.1 PLANNING HISTORY

The key developments have been summarised below:

**Development Brief for North Street, Commercial Road and Leapale Road, 1995**
Brief for a retail-led redevelopment of the site and refurbishment of the bus station.

**North Street, Commercial Road and Leapale Road Design and Development Brief, 2003**

**Friary Extension (Westfield Scheme) – Outline planning permission, 2004 and 2010**
Outline planning permission was granted in December 2004 (04/P/00090) for a comprehensive mixed use development of 25,135 sq m commercial floor space, 170 residential units and a bus station in the area bounded by the Friary Centre, North Street and Leapale Road. A Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the scheme was agreed in January 2006 for three years and lapsed in January 2009. The planning permission has been renewed in 2010 (09/P/02043).

**Friary Extension (Westfield Scheme) – Reserved matters consent, 2006**
A reserved matter application was approved in 2006 but has since lapsed.

2.2 PLANNING POLICY

**National Planning Policy Framework, 2012**
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption for sustainable development which requires local authorities “to positively seek opportunities to meet development needs of their area.” (Para 14).

The policies with particular relevance to the North Street Design and Development Brief are contained in:

- Section 2 Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Section 7 Requiring good design
- Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
Section 2 - With regard to town centres the NPPF requires local authorities to “promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centre.” It also states that local authorities should “allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability.” (Para 23).

Section 7 - The NPPF emphasises the importance of good design “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people” (Para 56). “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions” (Para 64).

Section 10 - The NPPF recognises the key role played by planning “in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure” (Para 93). To support the move to a low carbon future, when setting any local requirements for a building’s sustainability, local planning authorities should do so “in a way consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards” (Para 95).

Section 12 – The NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and deserve to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. With regard to the heritage value of a wider townscape the NPPF states that “In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of […] the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness” (Para 131).
**Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003)**

The local planning framework for the development site is provided by saved policies of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003). The Local Plan identifies the area bounded by the Friary Centre, North Street and Leapale Road as an major approved development site (Para 9.62).

The Local Plan directs developments to within the built up areas. The strategy for the town centre is expressed in the form of a list of key objectives. Major travel generating development is directed to the town centre. Maintaining vitality and viability, and an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sectors are stated ambitions.

The local plan policies with particular relevance to the development of this site include:

- G1 General standards of development
- G5 Design code
- G6 Planning benefit
- G13 Green Travel Plans
- H4 Housing in urban areas
- H10 New residential development
- H11 Affordable housing
- M1 Parking provision
- M4 Provision for buses
- M6 Provision for cyclists and pedestrians
- S2 Additional retail development in Guildford town centre
- S3 Provision of small retail units (Class A1)
- HE1 Proposals which affect listed buildings
- HE2 Changes of use of listed buildings
- HE3 The demolition of listed buildings
- HE4 New development which affects the setting of a listed building
- HE6 Locally listed buildings
- HE10 Development which affects the setting of a conservation area
- R4 Recreational open space in relation to new commercial developments
- T1 Arts and entertainment in urban areas and identified settlements
- CF1 Provision of new community facilities

**Guildford Borough Local Plan Strategy (in preparation)**

The Local Plan will be replaced by a new Local Plan in due course. The Council’s timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan is the Local Development Scheme. The Council is working towards consultation of the draft Local Plan Strategy in Autumn 2012. It is anticipated that the development area will be the subject of a strategic allocation policy that will set out the Council’s objectives for its redevelopment of an appropriate mix of uses that will safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the whole town centre.
The Guildford Town Centre Interim Framework is currently in preparation and sets out a strategy that will help to shape the town centre over the next 18 years, till 2030. Consultation on the draft document (previously named Guildford Town Centre Masterplan) took place in December 2011 to January 2012. In consideration of the feedback received, it was decided that further studies of the traffic and transport issues would be required to prepare a comprehensive masterplan. The document’s purpose and title has thus been revised. The Interim Framework will now serve to as a tool to deal with the most immediate planning and investment decisions while the relevant traffic and transport studies are being prepared. It is due to be adopted in 2012.

A key strategic strand of the Town Centre Interim Framework is the redevelopment of sites to enhance the built environment and to provide additional floor space within the town centre. The North Street site is identified as a Key Opportunity Site (KOS) - a large site with potential to have a significant impact on the wider area, including the regeneration of surrounding areas. It defines the opportunities for the site as:

- a key site in defining the town centre’s future, and central to the regeneration of North Street
- a major retail-led mixed use development.

Other proposals with particular relevance to the development site include:

- a change in designation of frontages on North Street, Commercial Road, Woodbridge Road and Leapale Road from secondary / tertiary shopping frontage to primary shopping frontage
- identification of North Street as a priority area for the improvement of urban quality and character, redressing the balance between cars and pedestrians (see below).

2.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

A wide range of studies has been undertaken to help formulate a long term strategy for the development of Guildford borough and/or Guildford town centre. The points with particular relevance to the redevelopment of the North Street development site are listed below:

**Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2006**

The North Street development site is bounded by Conservation Areas to the south and east. There is one listed building within and several listed buildings adjacent to the site. The Character Appraisal identifies North Street as an area with a number of issues, including buildings that are inappropriate to the Conservation Area, and a poor pedestrian environment.
West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment, 2009

This document contains the findings from a housing needs and market assessment survey carried out on behalf of the Council. These include, amongst others a large and growing need for new homes, particularly for young and elderly, singles and couples, as well as the need for affordable homes.

Guildford Borough Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026

The Sustainable Community Strategy is a local, long-term strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the borough and improve the quality of life of its residents. It acknowledges Guildford town centre as one of the most sought after retailing locations in the country and envisions a local economy that is competitive and sustainable.

Guildford Town Centre Development Study, Cushman and Wakefield, 2010

This study is a review of the strategic development options available in the town centre to secure its long term status, viability and vitality. The document states that it is essential to plan for future development “to stem the potential stagnation / decline that will occur if no action is taken whilst surrounding towns, such as Woking and Kingston upon Thames continue to improve their town centre offers and local economies.”

In terms of retail development, the study considers that a considerable amount of modern retail floor space for comparison goods is required in Guildford to maintain its status as a regional shopping centre. The North Street site is identified as the only suitable site to deliver this level of floor space.

The study considers why the consented Westfield scheme has not been delivered in a period of sustained economic growth. It concludes that the scheme is unviable because of a number of factors, including the land assembly costs, high construction cost relating to the design and basement facilities, infrastructure costs, anchor store requirements, community facility and affordable housing requirements and the redevelopment of a new bus station on site.

Guildford Economic Strategy 2011-2030

The Council’s vision is to maintain the borough’s position as the top non-metropolitan borough in the UK. The Economic Strategy provides a framework for the future shape of the local economy. It establishes a number of economic objectives for the town centre. This includes “increasing the area’s retail offer to ensure the town centre can compete with neighbouring centres.” (TC2).

The Strategy is currently being updated.
This study reviews the retail and leisure floors space requirements in the town. It recommends that the Council should take active steps to bring forward improved retail floor space in the town centre. The study considers the required additional floor space up to 2021 to be approximately 36,200 sq m for comparison goods and 4,500 sq m for A3-A5 (“food and drink”) uses. This is in addition to the outstanding planning permission for the Friary Centre Extension (Westfield Scheme) of some 25,000 sq m.

The North Street site is identified as “the most obvious development opportunity to deliver a significant scale of retail floor space.”

2.4 CROSS-CUTTING STUDIES

There are a number of guiding studies that are highly relevant to the development of the North Street site. The preliminary conclusions of these studies, where available, have been taken account of in the development of this study brief. The development brief has helped shape these studies where appropriate.

Guildford Bus Study, MVA Consultancy, 2012

MVA’s Bus Study reviews issues and opportunities relating to the provision of a bus facility within Guildford town centre. Alternative solutions have been tested, including a bus station in Bedford Road car park, an on-street facility and a much smaller bus facility within the development site boundaries.

Review of the night time economy and the Council’s licensing role and function, 2012

Undertaken by an independent consultant. This included a particular focus upon consideration of the Council’s regulatory and enforcement powers related to the night time economy.


The Guildford Borough Parking Strategy from 2004 aims to maintain existing levels of short-term car parking whilst redeveloping some of the town centre surface car parks. It supports a phased reduction in long-stay parking as more Park and Ride spaces become available and/or significant improvements are made to public transport.

The 2004 Parking Strategy is currently being updated through the Strategic Parking Strategy. The Strategy seeks to help achieve the Council’s objectives for local economic growth and desire to reduce congestion in the town centre through well-considered parking policies. It sets out a strategy for the provision of long and short term parking spaces in Guildford and is due to be completed soon.
North Street Environmental Enhancement Scheme

Guildford Borough Council, working with Surrey County Council, is currently progressing the North Street Enhancement Scheme. The scheme seeks to upgrade the quality of the streetscape in a manner that complements the high quality heritage materials used nearby, but reflects North Street’s own distinct character. It is envisaged that the scheme will be delivered in three phases:

**Phase One** relates to the pavements on the south side of the road, with exception of the stepped section currently used by market traders. Proposals include:

- re-surfacing of pavement area
- removal of clutter
- introduction of planting
- replace and reposition street furniture
- introduction of new seats
- introduction of entry treatments on side streets / cross-overs
- improve services supplying the street market (water, electricity etc.).

Phase One is due to be implemented later this year (2012).

**Phase Two** concerns the stepped section in the centre of the street used for the street market. Designs are currently being finalised with plans to implement the scheme in 2012/2013.

**Phase Three** would include wider improvements to the whole of the street, including resurfacing of the carriageway, introduction of planting, new street furniture and gateway features. It is envisaged that this would be delivered as part of the North Street site redevelopment.

In addition to these studies, Cushman and Wakefield have advised the Council on viability and deliverability issues relating to the development.

North Street site development commercial advice, Cushman & Wakefield, 2012

The advice includes:

- reducing the land take by the bus facility from the development and the reduction of other infrastructure costs are key to unlocking the site
- the need for a strong anchor tenant, which is likely to require a store of some 20,500 sq m (gross). This could be laid out over four floors
- some 41,000 sq m (gross) of other retail floor space, which is required to secure an anchor store
- the anchor store preferred location would be to have a North Street frontage
- future retail tenants are likely to seek in the region of 1,000 parking spaces. However, this demand should be balanced against the Council’s sustainable transport policies.
3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

This Brief seeks to ensure that the North Street development is treated as an extension to the existing town centre and not as an isolated, “bolt-on” shopping area. Therefore it is imperative that the design of any scheme brought forward considers and responds to the wider town centre.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Brief reviews the issues and opportunities relating to the main urban design elements of the site and the surrounding area.

This includes:

- town centre dynamics / retail circuit
- access and movement
- urban structure and links
- topography, strategic views and building height
- approach, local views and marker buildings
- building quality and massing
- public spaces and “street life”.

Figure 3.1 Historic map of the town showing High Street and North Street linked by a series of little lanes or “gates”
3.2 TOWN CENTRE DYNAMICS

The Guildford retail circuit is currently focused along the High Street, Phoenix Court / White Lion Walk and the Friary Centre. Despite being Guildford’s “second retail street”, North Street does not currently form part of the main retail circuit.

With the exception of the units at the western end (near the Friary Centre and Marks & Spencers) much of North Street suffers from a lack of footfall outside of market days, and this is a factor contributing to the number of vacant retail units.

Figure 3.2a The existing shopping circuit cuts out the middle and eastern section of North Street
Issues and opportunities

The development of the site presents an opportunity to extend the current retail circuit to include North Street and the proposed supermarket development on Leapale Lane. Location of a key attractor(s) on North Street at the eastern side of the development site would help to draw people through and establish North Street as an economically successful and lively destination.
3.3 ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Within the strategic road network, Onslow Street (via Woodbridge Road) provides the most direct access to the development site.

Car parking is provided across the town centre with two of the largest car parks located to the north-east and north-west of the development site. Within the site boundaries, there are a number of car parks, including Leapale Road multi-storey, providing a total of 498 spaces.

The bus station on Commercial Road provides conveniently located bus access to the town centre. However, the bus station is unattractive and takes up a very large area of land.

Issues / opportunities

Comprehensive redevelopment of the site would remove all existing public car parking. Car parking would need to be re-provided on- and/or off-site to appropriate levels following the recommendations set out in the Guildford Strategic Parking Strategy.

Comprehensive redevelopment would create opportunities to relocate on-site car parking to the north-west corner of the site, entered near the Onslow Street - Woodbridge Street access point. This would help reduce vehicle movements through / around the development site, including North Street.

The redevelopment of the North Street site creates opportunities to vastly improve the quality of the townscape in the area currently occupied by the bus station and make more efficient use of available land. However, the development needs to be delivered hand-in-hand with an alternative bus facility.

The Guildford Bus Station study includes a number of options for the provision of bus access to the town centre. Each of the options under review has benefits and drawbacks when considering a range of criteria, including passengers and bus operator convenience, impact on townscape and economic viability. The redevelopment of this site will need to deliver the preferred solution and demonstrate it meets the design criteria set out in this Brief.
Figure 3.4 Cars, taxis, buses and lorries circulate through the area to service shops and access car parks and the bus station. There is an opportunity to rationalise and reduce traffic movements in the area by relocating car parks and the bus facility.

Car parking spaces lost as a result of redevelopment will need to be re-provided on the site. A transport assessment would need to demonstrate that additional car parking will not create unacceptable traffic congestion nor unacceptably encourage car travel into the Town Centre.

A mixed use scheme on this site would be likely to require a full transport assessment, including a travel plan.

Any scheme must have full regard to the Town Centre Interim Framework and the findings of the town centre transport modelling.
3.4 STREET STRUCTURE AND LINKS

Guildford’s street structure is highly significant to the quality and identity of the town centre. It stems from the Saxon town on the east bank of the River Wey. Strong east-west aligned streets rise up the valley and are linked by informal lanes and passages, locally known as “gates”, that connect north-south.

In the current core retail area, the main east-west street is High Street which provides the primary shopping frontages and the largest public space. The gates contrast as intimate spaces with smaller scale frontages and potential for different kinds of outdoor use from High Street.

Historically, North Street (originally “North Ditch”) was the northern boundary of the town and in terms of its urban structure it is distinctly different from the area to the south. Pedestrian access to the area from the south is good, with three streets (Commercial Road, Woodbridge Road and Leapale Road) giving access from North Street. However,
the development area is poorly connected with the areas to the north, east and west. The three north-south streets through the area curve to converge in a single point on Leapale Lane. There are no east-west links through the area between Leapale Lane and North Street. Although there are two entrances into the Friary Centre from Commercial Road the routes through the centre towards Onslow Street and the Bedford Road car parks and railway station beyond are convoluted and only accessible during shopping hours.

**Issues and opportunities**

The redevelopment of the North Street area presents an opportunity to improve linkages and integrate the area with its surroundings. The street pattern within the site is not as clearly established as it is south of North Street, and new development should aim to create a better-defined structure.

A strong east-west link with more intimate north-south connecting lanes would complement the established street pattern of the town centre.

*Figure 3.5b A new street structure would help integrate the area with its surroundings*
3.5 TOPOGRAPHY, HEIGHTS AND STRATEGIC VIEWS

Topography is an important feature of Guildford. Long distance views of the town centre can be obtained from locations such as Bright Hill, the Mount and Stag Hill as well as from higher buildings.

From these vantage points the roofs of buildings can be seen from above and have an impact on views.

North Street runs up the eastern side of the River Wey valley. Although not quite as steep as High Street, there is a considerable change in levels across the development area. The high point is located at the North Street – Haydon Place junction. From here the site falls towards the northwest by some 10 metres to the Commercial Road – North Street junction and 9 metres to the Commercial Road – Woodbridge Road junction.

Figure 3.6 View from Bright Hill across the valley towards Guildford Cathedral. Located on higher ground, House of Fraser and the two taller elements of the BT exchange building are the most dominant features of the development site.
There is a general three to four storey development range on the main shopping streets in the town centre. There are also a number of taller buildings locally, although these have not always been accommodated successfully.

On the lower lying land near Onslow Street buildings are up to seven storeys high. The BT Exchange on Leapale Lane is a very large structure with seven storey service towers.

Within the development site there are also some low, single storey structures.

Issues and opportunities

The development of three to four storeys with some higher buildings in the north-west of the development site would be appropriate to the site and wider town. It should be noted that retail floor heights are greater than residential, and that this should be taken into account in sections through building and massing studies.

Guildford’s topography means that the development can be viewed from above. The form of the roof structures and its impact on long distance views are therefore a significant design consideration.
3.6 APPROACH, MARKER BUILDINGS AND LOCAL VIEWS

Breaks in the North Street frontage created by adjoining streets are critical in views along the street. They are particularly important on North Street as the overall street alignment steps slightly backward and forward at street corners so that corner buildings have more prominence.

The approach from the north (Woodbridge Road and Leapale Lane) and east (Martyr Road) is currently poor, with views being dominated by the bus station and poor quality buildings, such as Dominion House and Leapale multi-storey car park.

Figure 3.8 Poor quality approach from the north (Woodbridge Rd) - compare with illustrative view on Page 43

Figure 3.9 There is an opportunity to extend Martyr Road into the development site, thereby improving connectivity to the east (York Rd car park)
Issues / opportunities

There are opportunities to greatly enhance the arrival experience within this part of Guildford town centre by the positioning of some attractive, marker buildings on the main approaches. In particular the area around Leapale Lane / Woodbridge Road junction should be recognised as an important gateway, not just to the development site, but to Guildford town centre as a whole.

The buildings on the corners of North Street with Commercial Road, Woodbridge Road and Leapale Road are important markers of the streets linking the development area to North Street and the wider town centre. If they were to be redeveloped, it is important that any future building will continue to accentuate these street corners.

Figure 3.10 Corner buildings on North Street articulate the connecting streets. There is a important opportunity to enhance the entrance to the town centre by the introduction of a landmark building at Dominion House
3.7 BUILDING QUALITY AND PLOT WIDTHS

A large proportion of existing buildings in the development site area are of poor quality, either due to lack of maintenance and neglect or poor architectural design and inappropriate massing. The area suffers from extensive areas without an active frontage, including the Friary Centre on Commercial Road, Leapale multi-storey car park / Norwich House and several surface car parks.

In the surrounding area, the development site is bounded by Conservation Areas to the south and east. There is one Grade II listed building within the development area, on North Street, and two further listed buildings in close proximity to the site.

Although of limited architectural quality, many buildings on North Street have an attractive scale and massing. A key feature of the existing urban form is the relatively narrow width of individual building frontages. Historic plot widths in English towns tended
to average five to six metres (sometimes narrower), and this sets a typical module for building dimensions. Often plots double or treble up to form a larger unit for modern use, but the rhythm is well established and is appreciated in minor variations in the heights and features of façades that contribute strongly to the urban character. In Guildford, the east-west fall of the topography means that these modular breaks are a convenient way of stepping down the slope.

**Issues and opportunities**

Redevelopment of the North Street site presents opportunities to demolish and replace some very poor quality buildings and greatly improve the townscape in this part of Guildford town centre.

Although most of the buildings on this side of North Street have limited architectural value, it is important that the fine-grained response to topography is retained.
3.8 PUBLIC REALM AND STREET LIFE

There are a limited number of public spaces in Guildford town centre to provide opportunities for lingering, outdoor eating or drinking or street performances. The Rotunda off North Street is one of the few exceptions. Although the High Street and gates are pedestrian priority / pedestrian-only spaces, they lack either the space or a focal point to generate the range of street activities normally associated with lively and successful town centres.

The high and spacious pavement on the south side of North Street (originally the Cattle Market) currently provides space for a twice-weekly street market.

---

Figure 3.12 The enhancement scheme for North Street (south side)
**Issues and opportunities**

There are opportunities to create a number of public spaces as part of the future development to widen the potential for a range of street activities to take place. To maximise the vitality and vibrancy of these spaces, they should be located on (crossing of) the main pedestrian routes.

Further environmental enhancement to North Street would form an important aspect of the redevelopment proposals. Phase one and two of the project for the south side of the street are planned to be undertaken by the Council in 2012-2013 as detailed on Page 15 and illustrated in figure 3.12.

It is envisaged that the final phase on the north side of North Street will be undertaken as part of the North Street development scheme and that the development would make a contribution to the enhancements.

The scheme will be subject to proposed bus movements in and around the development site.

**3.9 TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS**

As is to be expected of a town centre redevelopment site, there are a large number of services located below ground. This includes a fibre-optic cable which cuts diagonally across the site.

A full survey of the position and nature of these underground services is expected to be carried out as part of the development of any scheme.
4 VISION AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

4.1 VISION

Redevelopment of the North Street area is intended to make it a fully integrated part of Guildford town centre based on typical town centre uses, especially retail. In its physical layout, it will extend the network of gates and streets that characterise the historic street pattern of Guildford between North Street and High Street and thereby extend the active part of the town centre beyond North Street. The objective for North Street is to make it an attractive and interesting street aligned to the High Street, albeit with a potentially distinct retail character. Redevelopment also provides the opportunity to improve the visual impression of the town centre on the approach from the north along Woodbridge Road, and to make the transition from town centre activities into the residential areas east of the Brief area.

4.2 THE APPROACH

Design in the redeveloped area will reflect the characteristics identified in the Urban Design Analysis that make Guildford town centre such an attractive destination. The Brief does not prescribe a particular architectural approach, but it does require proper attention to “place-making”. In Guildford this depends upon principles that are well illustrated in the historic urban form and scale of the town centre and which are the basis for attractive townscapes designed for human interaction and enjoyment. This does not imply a default to historic styles or pastiche, and there are opportunities for good contemporary design.

The following paragraphs set out the expected approach.

4.3 REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The area includes the existing Leapale Road car park and the North Street frontage to its south so that connections can be made to streets such as Martyr Road and Leapale Lane / The Bars. In the longer term, the same development structure could take in redevelopment of the existing BT exchange site.

There are few buildings within the area that need to be retained, although re-use is always encouraged to help preserve the existing scale and grain of development and as a sustainable approach to the use of existing resources. There is one listed building that must be retained at 17 North Street. Redevelopment proposals will also need to demonstrate how existing functions of the area that would be affected by site clearance, such as car parking or bus facilities, can be appropriately re-provided on or off site.
4.4 LAND USES

The North Street site is key in meeting the identified retail needs for the town. The future development should provide for this need as part of a mixed use scheme that will form a vital and lively extension to the town centre during the day and into the evening. Other uses to be accommodated could include:

- New homes (a sustainable location and a priority for the Council)
- A3 uses (cafes and restaurants)
- Leisure uses, such as a gym

The size of the development should be subject to detailed capacity and feasibility studies, but it is expected that it will be in the order of 50 to 60,000 sq m (gross). The proportion of commercial space (retail and other commercial uses, for example office) within this total depends on the amount of non-commercial use that might be proposed. It should also be noted that floor space can be provided in basement areas, taking advantage of the sloping site, and that there is capacity for some taller elements within the development: see the sections in figures 4.1 and 4.2, opposite.

4.5 LINKS, STREETS AND SPACES

The urban design analysis shows how the urban structure of the town centre is based on a distinctive pattern of streets and passages, or “gates”. This structure generates useful block sizes for a range of retail stores, from larger footprints with frontages onto the main street to smaller units on the linking gates. This Design and Development Brief envisages a similar structure north of North Street, and the Development Principles diagram on pages 36-37 shows how similar block sizes can be developed on the site.

Street pattern

A key element in redevelopment will be to introduce a new east-west street across the centre of the site, extending the line of Martyr Road towards the Friary Centre. The east-west street is to be connected to North Street via a number of smaller north-south orientated lanes.

The new street can provide a direct route from the Friary Centre and the new development to Chertsey Road and the 605 car parking spaces at York Road car park. This would allow the opening up of a new eastern entrance into the Friary Centre, which would provide the focal point of views along the new street from the east, increasing the visibility of the Centre to shoppers in the new development.

In due course, Leapale Lane could be developed in a similar way, and it is an important link to the proposed food store development on Leapale Lane / Haydon Place and to the York Road car park.

Street character

The design of the new east-west street should reflect its significance as the spine of the redevelopment. A width of at least 12 metres from building face to building face is appropriate (see Figure 4.1. opposite).
VISION AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES | North Street Design and Development Brief

Figure 4.1 Street section of the proposed new main street

taller buildings set back not to overshadow street
building frontages step to create incidental space
street space for trees, stalls, seating areas etc.
min 12 to 15 metres

Figure 4.2 Street section of the new linking gates

shop units with mezzanine sales areas
upper sales area accessed from higher street level shops
upper floor sales areas
shop units accessed at differing street levels across the block
max 8 metres
residential / offices above retail floors
upper floor sales areas
upper sales area accessed from higher street level shops

shop units with mezzanine sales areas
upper sales area accessed from higher street level shops
upper floor sales areas
KEY PRINCIPLES DIAGRAM

1. landmark opportunity at corner of new block
2. focus for views arriving at Woodbridge Road
3. access point for servicing / car parking out of main line of view
4. potential for part of the site to be developed above four storeys
5. building heights sensitive to existing street frontages
6. potential to extend Friary Centre
7. new eastern entrance to Friary Centre
8. listed building to be retained within the development
9. routes cross at centre of development: an opportunity to create a focal space (see also Figure 4.4)
10. opportunity for space at junction of Leapale / Woodbridge Roads to mark arrival in the retail core of the town centre
11. new shopping street
12. new “gates” provide pedestrian links between North Street and new shopping street
13. North Street with improved pedestrian environment
14. rhythm of narrow shop frontages retained/ introduced into street elevations

active edges  pedestrian areas
key urban spaces  listed buildings
marker buildings (see page 41)
Figure 4.3 Development principles diagram
By comparison North Street and High Street are 12 – 18 metres wide. Such a width allows the incorporation of many elements that contribute to the traditional street: for example tree planting, space for window shopping, seating, signage and information, kiosks and stalls, areas for servicing, etc., and incidental spaces at street corners. Frontages should be very active, suited to the larger retail operators in the development.

In contrast, the linking lanes should be much smaller in scale with a suggested maximum width of 8 metres face to face (Figure 4.2). In other places in the town centre the gates are often only 4 – 6 metres in width.

Open streets
Throughout the new development all streets and lanes should be open for public access at all times, so that businesses can remain open into the evening and people can pass freely through the area as they can in other parts of the town centre.

Urban spaces
When towns grow organically, as Guildford has, urban spaces tend to develop where people pause as they pass through, rather than as deliberate set pieces designed to impress. Such spaces also tend to be relatively small in scale and very closely related to activities taking place in the buildings around them: bigger spaces can often feel impersonal and lacking in the vitality that the Brief seeks to achieve.

The network of streets and gates that the Brief proposes provides numerous points where such paths cross, which are all opportunities to create these kinds of lively, informal spaces. Figure 4.3 shows these opportunities, and picks up particularly the locations where Woodbridge Road crosses Leapale Lane and the new east-west street, as is illustrated in Figure 4.4. These are seen as part of a network of small focal spaces cross the town centre.

Development proposals must show very clearly:

- how any vehicular movements are constrained to create a pedestrian priority environment and reserve areas for cafés and shops to extend activity onto the street space
- how the alignment of building frontages create areas for outdoor use
- how materials and the design of surfaces and street furniture indicate different ways of using outdoor space
- that orientation makes the most of sunny corners and aspects, using sun shadow studies.

Wider public realm improvements
The relationship of development in the Brief area to North Street is critical. The design of buildings on North Street should relate to activities in the street itself. Developers should be aware of the Council’s proposals for the environmental enhancements of North Street and are encouraged to contribute their ideas. The development will
1. Woodbridge Road: a new “gate” with views to St. Saviour’s church spire
2. Parts of development rising to five or more storeys
3. New east-west street with tree planting
4. Crossing of Woodbridge Road and new shopping street enlarged slightly to create sitting space
5. Corners designed to exploit views into street

Figure 4.4 View of a small square at the intersection between Woodbridge Road and the new main (east-west) street
be expected to contribute financially to the North Street enhancement schemes.

Contributions will also be sought to improve street crossings on Onslow Street to help achieve improved pedestrian linkages to town centre areas immediately west of the site and to the railway station.

**Vehicle access**

Within the site, the public realm should be as free of vehicles as possible, and proposals must show how the scheme will be designed and managed to achieve this. As the environment will be pedestrianised it is unlikely that there will be taxi ranks within the scheme.

All streets in and adjacent to the development need to be designed to form an integrated part of the scheme design and include high quality materials and detailing. Areas that require vehicular access, i.e. for access, circulations and/or servicing, should be designed to prioritise pedestrians following the shared space principles (see reference below).

The main approach for vehicular access into the development is from the north at Onslow Street / Woodbridge Road, for both servicing and customer car parking. It is essential that this area is not seen in purely traffic terms, as it will be the arrival point for many people using the development; the public realm can and must be designed in detail and managed to minimise possible conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

Any increase in the amount of traffic on North Street will not be acceptable.

Useful guidance can be found in the Department for Transport’s publication “Shared Space” - Local Transport Note 1/11 DfT Oct 2011.

Solutions to provide servicing to some or all of the development at basement level are acceptable, and the topography of the site may facilitate this (see page 41). However, the access into basement service areas can be particularly unsightly and must not dominate the appearance of the development at ground level, especially on the approach from Onslow Street. Provision of car parking should be considered on upper levels of the development to replace existing spaces lost in the redevelopment scheme, above retail space on ground/mezzanine floors, minimising the visual impact of external ramps, etc.

Similarly, any provision for buses within the site must be considered very carefully for impacts on townscape. Any bus stands must not be allowed to dominate the street scene and must be positioned away from the main lines of views into the site. Great care must be taken to achieve a high quality and attractive pedestrian environment around bus facilities.
4.6 BUILT FORM

Heights, widths and corners

Figure 4.3 shows how development heights could be arranged across the site to remain sympathetic to the scale of their immediate street surroundings, while taller development could be accommodated in the centre. Possible development solutions could include retail space across more or less the whole of the ground area of the site. Since most retail development is likely to occupy no more than two storeys, proposals should show how upper levels would be used and designed to achieve at least three to four storey development.

The urban design analysis shows how narrow plot widths in historic parts of the town create a strong visual rhythm to the appearance of street frontages. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how design will reflect the scale and the controlled variety of appearance that these historic patterns generate, and how their rhythm can be incorporated meaningfully into street elevations, ideally planning building level changes around it.

The urban design analysis also shows the importance of street corners on the frontage to North Street. Street corners are often the more memorable places in towns, and the development proposals should show how the design maximises them for visual effect, retaining the historic frontage alignments and continuing active façades (e.g. shop windows) around into the gates.

Views and marker buildings

As well as the relatively subtle markers that corner buildings along North Street create, redevelopment will offer the opportunity for some significant new marker buildings. These include:

- the corner of Haydon Place and North Street, where a new retail anchor is envisaged. This strongly represents the gateway into the rejuvenated North Street area and the new retail quarter of Guildford town centre
- the potential for a new eastern entrance into the Friary Centre, visible from as far as Chertsey Road
- the northern apex of new development on Woodbridge Road, viewed from Onslow Street. This is currently occupied by Dominion House which stands isolated and lacks any active street façade; on closer approach unattractive views open up into the current bus station and the back of the Friary Centre. This must be developed to mark the new development architecturally, and it must ensure that vehicular and service accesses are not immediately visible and that pedestrians feel welcomed as is illustrated in Figure 4.5.
• the Woodbridge Road entrance location is closely linked to the space created at the junctions of Woodbridge Road, Leapale Lane and Leapale Road. More pedestrian movement is expected from Leapale Lane than at present, and this location will be a new entry point into the development requiring active uses around and in the space (Figure 4.5).

In addition, consideration should be given to the appearance of the scheme in glimpsed views from gates south of North Street.

Topography
The fall across the development area is both a constraint and an opportunity. The need for large retail sales areas means that level changes may have to be greater than traditional small step changes allow. On the other hand, it is of such a magnitude that level access from the street is possible on two separate floors across the width of a single development block (see Figure 4.2 on page 35).

Development proposals must use topographic changes across the site sensitively and creatively. Solutions that endeavour to create a single engineered level across the site are unlikely to be acceptable and are very likely to create the kind of monolithic development that this Brief seeks to avoid.

Roof forms
The roofscape of the new development is particularly important because of its visibility from so many high vantage points around the town. The design should recognise that the town centre presents a complex pattern of roof pitches and surfaces, often reflecting the narrow plot widths discussed above, and that extensive flat areas are not in character.

In commercial development there is usually a need to accommodate mechanical plant and services at roof level. It is a requirement that any equipment and installations are contained within appropriate structures to minimise its visual impact in high level views across the town centre, and that such structures are integrated into the overall design of buildings and the wider roofscape.

Architectural design
The Brief does not prescribe a particular architectural approach, but it does require proper attention to place-making, by following the urban design principles set out above.

The site is adjacent to the town centre conservation area and architectural design must take account of this. However, the site is an opportunity to achieve an exemplar of contemporary design while reflecting the materials, scale and urban grain of its historic context.

No. 17 is the one remaining listed building in North Street. It is well proportioned early 19th century brick building that demonstrates well the regular frontage module, described above, that makes up the traditional form of the street. Adjacent proposals should reflect the scale and rhythm of building frontages that this example represents.
The Brief promotes the development of streets and blocks that reflects Guildford’s street structure. A variety of architects and designs should be used in these different parts of the development to achieve vitality in appearance and character.

1. St. Saviour’s church
2. Woodbridge Road
3. Vehicle access into development out of line of main view
4. Focus at retail entrance to north of new development
5. Possible car parking above retail levels
4.7 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

This Brief takes a holistic view of sustainable development and has been guided by sustainable design principles that promote socially, economically and environmentally successful communities.

The Brief seeks to facilitate the development of the North Street site to ensure that the identified retail demand in the borough is directed to this highly accessible town centre location.

It considers the sustainability of development beyond that of the individual buildings to a more holistic consideration of how to create great and enduring places. This includes the promotion of:

- a network of streets that extend the existing urban pattern
- an active development edge to create a vital and safe public realm
- an attractive and multi-functional public realm
- a mix of uses
- increased densities
- a built form that is responsive to local context
- flexible development blocks with opportunities for change not just of occupiers but also building use.

Mobility

The Brief promotes a high density, mixed use development with a high quality pedestrian network which would make it an attractive place for walking and cycling. The development will also be well-connected by public transport. This means that there are opportunities for the development to reduce car dependency for visitors and residents. Specific features may include:

- minimising traffic impacts by balancing the commercial need for car parking and traffic generation
- including green travel plans for employees and residents in the development
- preparing management plans for servicing and deliveries
- supporting bus and other public transport strategies for the town centre
- introducing bicycle parking of a sufficient quantity and quality
- providing safe bicycle parking facilities in any proposed dwellings
- introducing a car sharing club
- electric vehicle charging points
- a fit for purpose bus facility.

The Design and Development Brief does not look specifically at the provision of the bus facility. An Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be carried out as part of the options testing around the future bus facility provision.

Scheme proposals must show how future development will cater for the needs of those with impaired movement. Spaces should be organised with places to sit and stop for all people, especially the elderly and people with impaired mobility.
Sustainable building design and construction

The scheme design should satisfy the general guidance set in national and local planning policies and meet all current statutory construction standards in respect of thermal insulation, energy and water consumption, and use of recycled, recyclable materials and sustainably sourced materials. Particular reference should be made to the Council’s supplementary planning document, “Sustainable Design and Construction”, adopted in March 2011.

The site is adjacent to the town centre conservation area and architectural design must take account of this. However, the site is an opportunity to achieve an exemplar of contemporary design, achieving the highest levels of building performance through architecture which reflects the materials, scale and urban grain of its historic context.

The development should meet the following standards for sustainable building design:

- BREEAM “Very Good” rating, or higher for commercial buildings*
- Code for Sustainable Homes Level Four, or higher for residential buildings.

Water and sewerage

The future development should minimise water consumption through a series of measures. This may include a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS), storing and collecting rainwater runoff, with the potential to clean the water for use as grey water in residential and commercial buildings.

It is essential that developers demonstrate that adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure capacity exists both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing users. In some circumstances this may make it necessary for developers to carry out appropriate studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing water & sewerage infrastructure. Where there is a capacity problem and no improvements are programmed by the water company, then the developer needs to contact the water authority to agree what improvements are required and how they will be funded prior to any occupation of the development.

* BREEAM (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is a performance based assessment method and certification scheme for new buildings. The primary aim of BREEAM New Construction is to mitigate the life cycle impacts of new buildings on the environment in a robust and cost effective manner. A rating “very good” or higher has been required for public sector buildings since 2008.

BREEAM (www.breeam.org):
- uses a straightforward scoring system that is transparent, flexible, easy to understand and supported by evidence-based science and research,
- has a positive influence on the design, construction and management of buildings,
- defines and maintains a robust technical standard with rigorous quality assurance and certification.
**Energy**

The development should be an exemplar of energy-efficient design. To conserve energy, several options could be considered, such as:

- high insulation standards through the use of the Code for Sustainable Homes and building regulations for commercial buildings
- orientate internal and external space for maximum solar advantage, including sun shadow studies to demonstrate optimum orientation
- building design to minimise the need for mechanical environmental control: for example on upper floors avoiding deep-space plans so that accommodation can be ventilated naturally through windows and passive techniques
- heat co-generation for buildings in the new development
- combined Heat and Power (CHP) generation on site, which can use organic waste from local sources, such as wood chips from local forests
- energy from renewable sources through micro-generation, i.e. solar systems.

**Waste**

The new development should minimise waste in both the construction stage and during its lifetime. This may include:

- adopting sustainable construction methods by using recycled building materials, and by reducing and recycling of construction waste, and where possible, using it in new construction;
- designing and constructing buildings for a long lifetime, with the flexibility to change use or size
- providing adequate facilities for recycling and waste collection for local residents and commercial users. This could include an automated waste collection system, such as the Swedish Envac system, where waste is transported via underground mains to a central collection point.

**4.8 DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT**

The way new retail development is managed is critical to the Council’s aspiration for a vibrant new quarter in the centre of Guildford. This will be reflected in the design of the redeveloped area in streets and blocks so that:

- streets will be open and development frontage accessible to the public twenty-four hours a day, so that a range of shops, cafés and other businesses can be open to customers at any time
- development based on a network of public streets will allow incremental development of blocks to suit the phasing or mix of development.
4.9 IN SUMMARY

Guildford town centre is an exciting place to develop and invest in. The town is the largest retail, service and commercial centre in Surrey, and one of the most important in the South East, outside London.

The town centre, known for its historic High Street and the picturesque “gates” leading off it forms a very attractive place to shop and spend time in. Thanks to its largely affluent customers, it has proved to be one of the most resilient centres in the country in times of economic downturn.

The North Street site represents a major opportunity for a significant mixed-use development within the heart of the town centre. A large site located immediately to the north of the High Street, it has the potential to provide modern retail accommodation, whilst drawing on, and benefitting from Guildford’s distinctive historic character.