

*Dacorum Borough Local Plan
1991 - 2011*

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

**DEACONSFIELD ROAD (DOWLING COURT /
JOHNSON COURT ROAD)**



June 2005

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1. Local Plan Context:

- 1.1 The Dacorum Borough Local Plan was adopted by the Council in April 2004. Policy 10 of this Plan seeks to optimise the use of urban land. It aims to ensure that land assembly and planning deliver comprehensive and co-ordinated schemes which enhance the urban environment. Through this development brief the Council hopes to avoid a piecemeal approach to development and ensure the creation of a high quality residential environment.

2. Site Assessment:

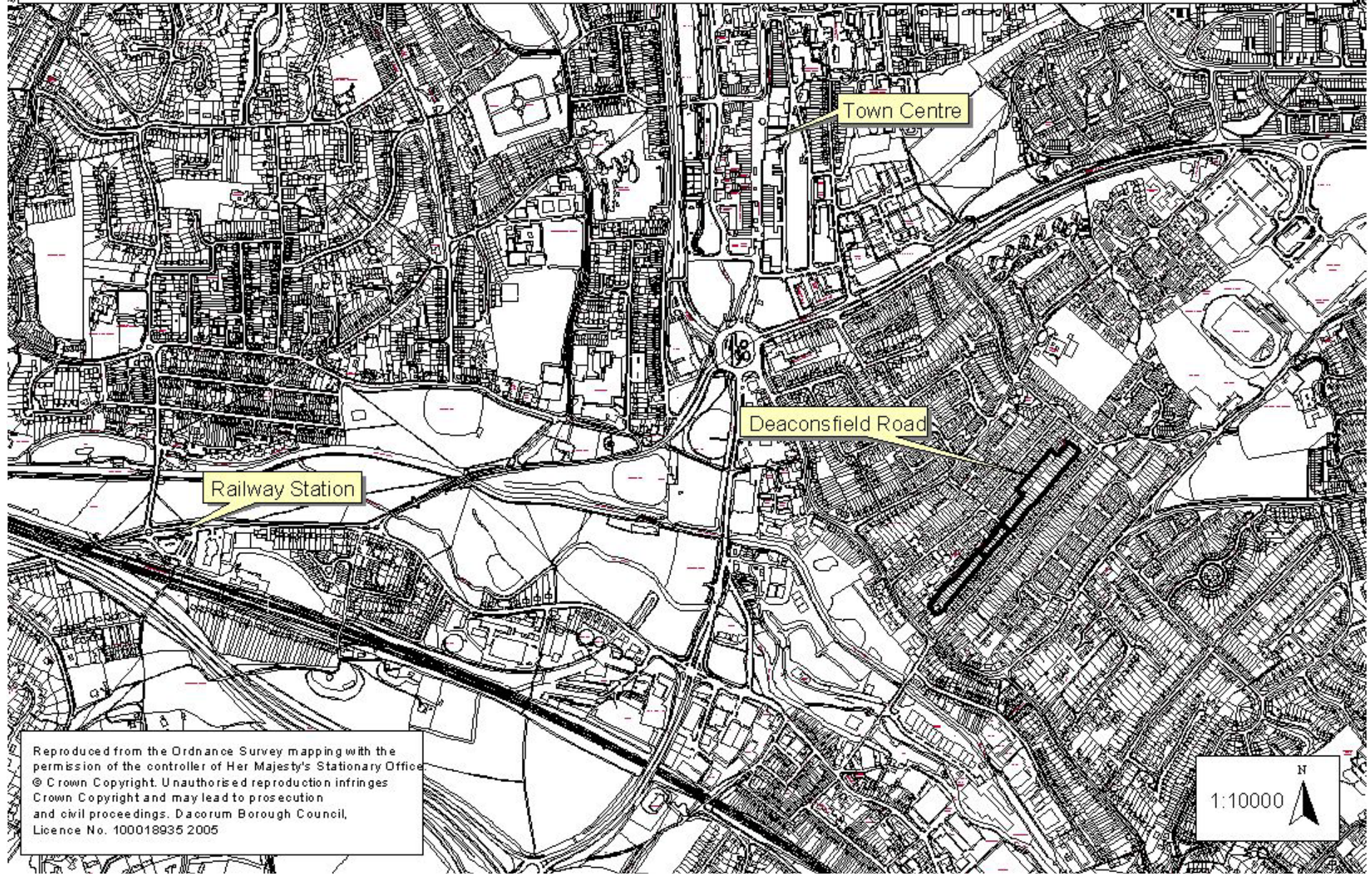
- 2.1 The site (shown in Figure 1) falls within a residential area, where appropriate residential development is encouraged. A number of planning applications have already been received for residential development.
- 2.2 Should further development opportunities arise on this site, the principles set out in this Development Brief will apply.
- 2.3 This residential area, known as Crabtree, is characterised by regularly spaced inter-war housing, based on a structure of parallel roads. This part of Hemel Hempstead has also been extensively infilled, resulting in pockets of more recent housing.
- 2.4 The immediate surrounding area features regularly spaced blocks of short terraces (Seaton Road), semi-detached housing (Deaconsfield Road and Ivory Court), and low-rise flats (Christopher Court).
- 2.5 All of the properties fronting this section of Deaconsfield Road have long rear gardens.
- 2.6 The land slopes upwards from Deaconsfield Road to Dowling Court / Johnson Court.

3. Key Aims / Objectives:

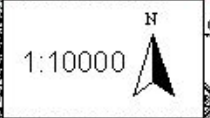
- **Secure a comprehensive and cohesive residential development that makes best use of urban land.**
- **Provide high quality small residential units, using materials sympathetic to the area.**
- **Create a safe and pleasant environment in which to live.**
- **Limit the impact of development on existing residents, including those in Deaconsfield Road, Dowling Court and Johnson Court.**
- **Secure an appropriate contribution to the provision of affordable housing in the area.**

Location Plan

Figure 1



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4. Development Principles:

- 4.1 The land covered by this brief has been divided into 3 different zones. Zone 1 comprises land to the rear of 1 to 35 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive), Zone 2 comprises land to the rear of 37 to 57 Deaconsfield Road and Zone 3 relates to land adjacent to Johnson Court. These zones are illustrated in Figure 2. These three zones have a number of different requirements in terms of layout and design, which are reflected in this brief. Unless specified, the following advice relates to development in all three zones.
- 4.2 Although redevelopment is anticipated to come forward in phases, each separate application must respect the design and layout of both existing and proposed dwellings and must not be prejudicial to the implementation of further future development within the context of the principles set out in this brief.

Layout:

- 4.3 Development will not be permitted on plots within Zones 1, 2 or 3 with a road frontage of less than 7 metres. This will ensure that new development is compatible with existing housing styles, in terms of their size and scale, and uses attractive and harmonious proportions. Plots that do not meet this threshold will only be considered for redevelopment when combined with adjacent land. The only exception relates to land to the rear of 57 Deaconsfield Road. Due to the location of this plot and an existing planning permission on the adjacent site, development can only be achieved in the form of a single free-standing unit.
- 4.4 Planning permission will not be granted in any of the three Zones for schemes that would result in the creation of isolated plots, below the 7m threshold.
- 4.5 When considering the layout of new dwellings reference should be made to existing supplementary guidance on 'Safety and Security.' Of particular relevance is advice relating to optimising natural surveillance, and the need to provide active frontages and avoid the creation of long stretches of blank walls facing the street.

Zone 1:

- 4.6 Development in this area must have regard to existing planning permissions (both implemented and extant).
- 4.7 The preferred form of development is semi-detached units, with direct access from the highway.

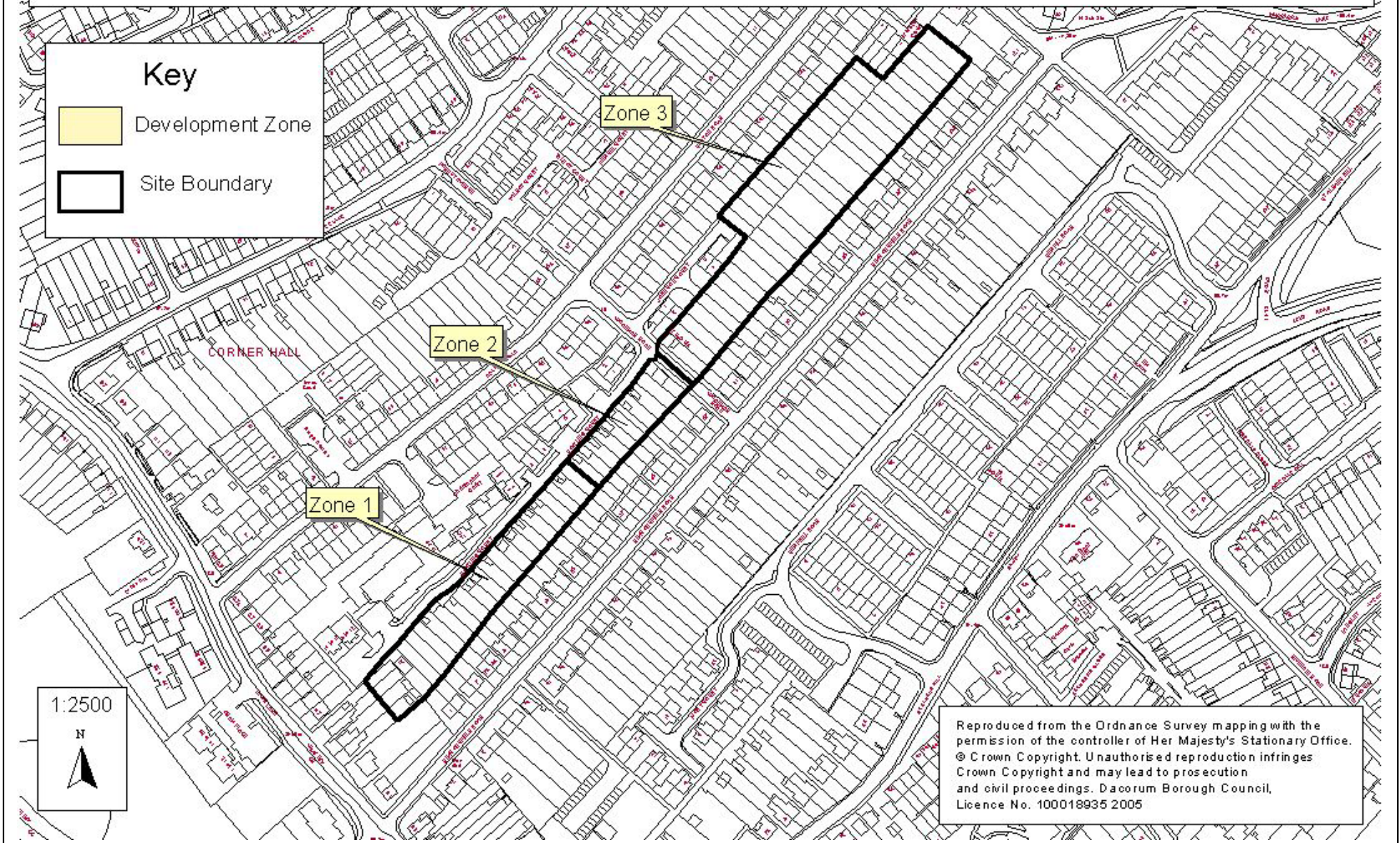
Zone 2:

- 4.8 One possible layout for this section of the site is two parallel rows of terraced units, arranged at right angles to Dowling Court, as illustrated in Figure 3. This layout has a number of advantages. It reflects the layout on the opposite side of the road, it will add variety to the street-scene and will protect the privacy of existing occupiers on the other side of this narrow road. An indicative phasing programme is illustrated in Appendix 1.
- 4.9 An alternative layout is for the new dwellings to face directly onto Dowling Court. This layout will be permitted provided the detailed requirements relating to design,

SITE PLAN

Deaconsfield Road (Dowling Court/Johnson Court)

Figure 2



layout and parking set out in this brief can be met. This arrangement will also be subject to detailed examination regarding the impact of the development upon residents of numbers 1 to 8 Dowling Court.

Zone 3:

- 4.10 The existing 4 units in Johnson Court establish a layout principle, which can be applied successfully to the remainder of the potential development area of this Zone, as illustrated in Figure 4.
- 4.11 The existing footway will need to be extended as indicated and the whole surface for vehicular movement and parking within each 'court arrangement' should be treated as a shared pedestrian / vehicular area, with raised levels at access points.
- 4.12 In addition to the minimum distance of 23 metres between rear windows, a minimum of 21 metres is to be maintained between front windows, except in very special circumstances.
- 4.13 Careful elevational treatment will be required for properties adjacent to the new access road to avoid long stretches of blank frontage. Boundaries should be delineated by high quality walling and landscaping.
- 4.14 Although it is appreciated that the plots will come forward at different times, it is the Council's intention to achieve a well-ordered and pleasant environment. To ensure this is realised, planning permission will not be granted for schemes that would jeopardise future development based on these principles.
- 4.15 Analysis of the suggested layout in Figure 4 indicates that this layout can be achieved in 9 incremental stages. An indicative phasing programme is set out in Appendix 2.

Building Design:

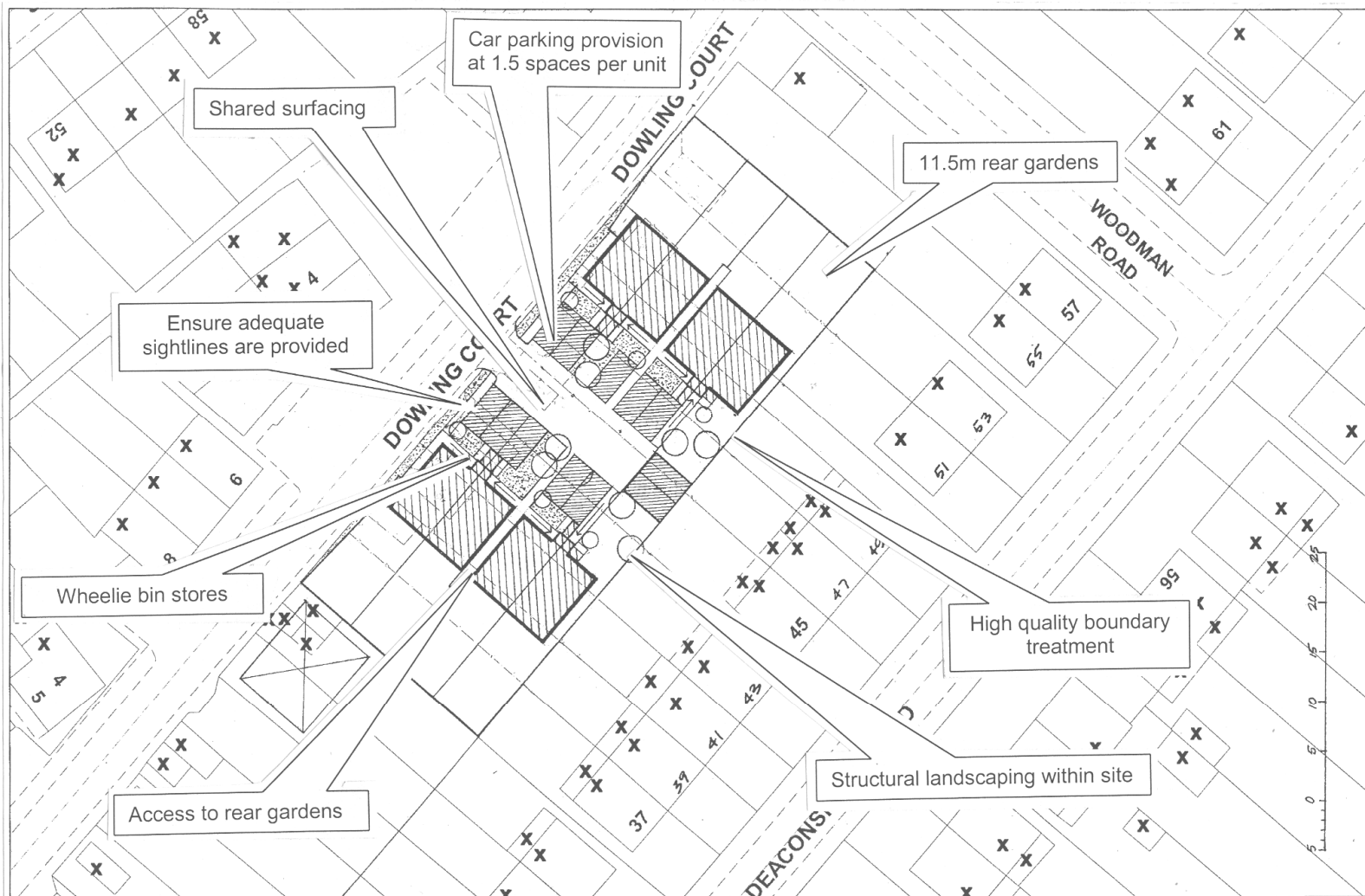
- 4.16 A very high standard of design is expected across the site.
- 4.17 The height and design of all new buildings will be carefully controlled to prevent an over-dominating effect. Ridge heights should be a maximum of 8m, with hipped roofs favoured.
- 4.18 Buildings should be no more than 2 storeys high. Dormer windows will not be acceptable.
- 4.19 External materials to be sympathetic and appropriate to the area.
- 4.20 Use of quality paving materials rather than tarmac for hard landscaping on frontages and driveways will be required.
- 4.21 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have incorporated sustainable drainage practices into the design of each proposal i.e. by minimising areas of hardstanding and through the use of permeable paving.

Zone 1:

- 4.22 The Council's preference is for semi-detached units. However, other dwelling types may be acceptable if appropriately designed.

INDICATIVE LAYOUT – ZONE 2

Figure 3

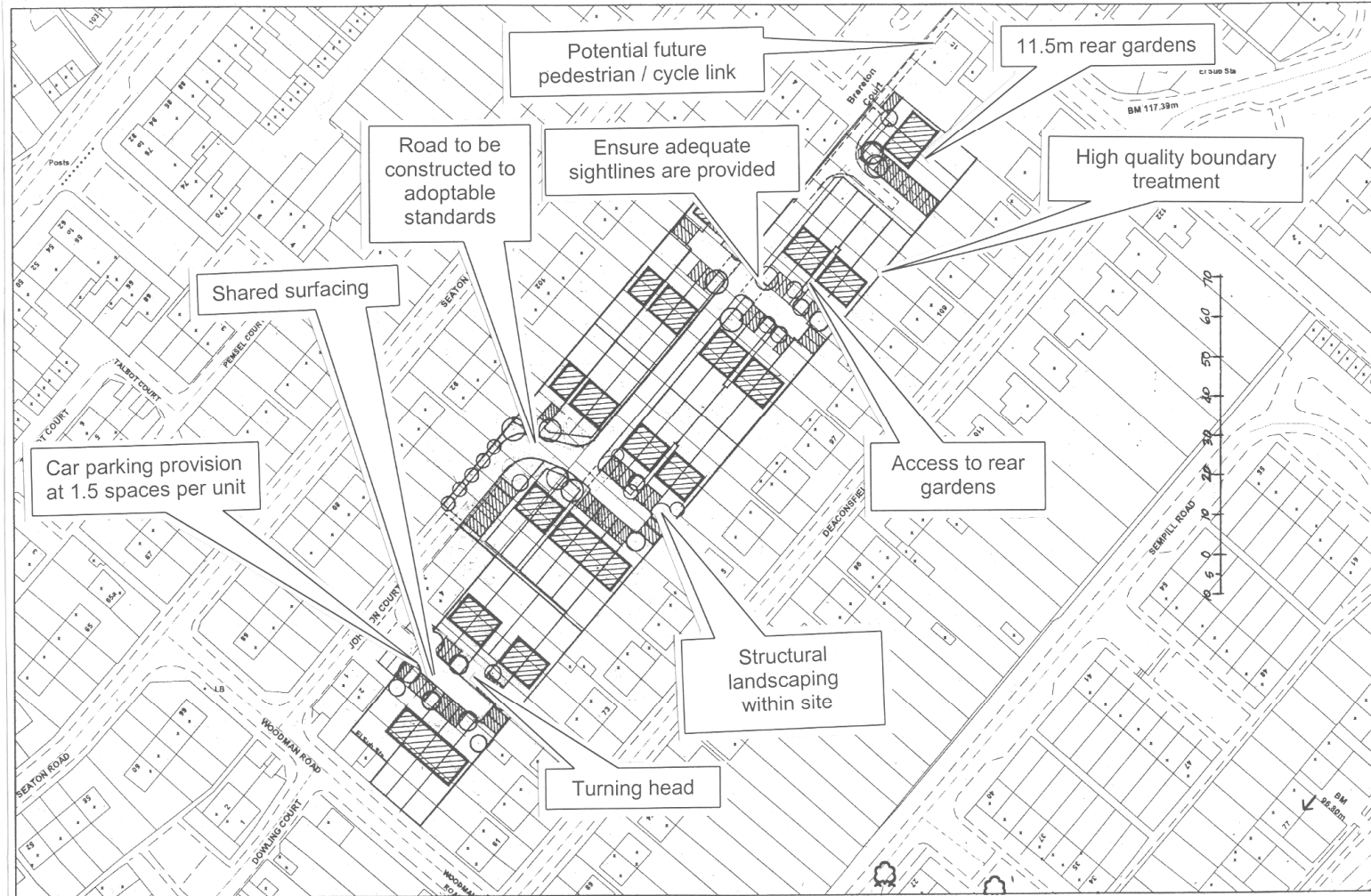


Note: This layout excludes land to the rear of 55 and 57 Deaconsfield Road

NOT TO SCALE

INDICATIVE LAYOUT – ZONE 3

Figure 4



NOT TO SCALE

Zones 2 & 3:

- 4.23 Development should be in the form of semi-detached units and/or short terraces comprising a maximum of 4 units.
- 4.24 Small detached units with fewer than 3 bedrooms will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where insufficient space is available to accommodate other forms of development.

Amenity Issues:

- 4.25 A minimum of 23 metres must be retained between the rear windows of existing properties and the rear windows of the new dwellings, and a minimum of 1 metre to common side boundaries.
- 4.26 The rear gardens of both existing and proposed units should comply with Local Plan standards (i.e. not less than 11.5m in length). Flats will be expected to provide a private communal amenity area to the rear, at least equal to the footprint of the building.
- 4.27 Sufficient distance must be retained between rear and flank walls of buildings (both new and existing). Although 12.5m is usually acceptable in terms of ensuring adequate daylight, this distance may increase depending on site levels and other relevant factors.
- 4.28 All new development must incorporate adequate provision for bin storage. Advice regarding the appropriate size of wheelie bin stores should be sought from the Council's Waste Services section.
- 4.29 All rear gardens should have access to the highway via a side or rear gate.
- 4.30 When assessing amenity issues, reference will be made to guidance from the Building Research Establishment.¹

Zone 1:

- 4.31 Maintain a strong building line, set back 1.5m from the edge of the carriageway, for consistency with existing and permitted developments. Exceptions will only be made when the implementation of this building line would have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of existing residents.
- 4.32 Front gardens should be enclosed, with the boundaries delineated by low walls and/or railings.

Zone 2:

- 4.33 If new development faces Dowling Court, front gardens should be enclosed, with the boundaries delineated by low walls and/or railings.
- 4.34 If the layout in Figure 3 is followed, front gardens should be open plan, with strong structural planting incorporated along the highway boundary. High quality walling will be required to mark the new boundary with the rear gardens of Deaconsfield Road.

¹ 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice,' P Littlefair (1991).

Zone 3:

- 4.35 Front gardens should be open plan, with boundaries delineated by structural planting.
- 4.36 Carefully designed structural planting must be incorporated at articulations of the extension of Johnson Court and at the end of the cul-de-sac, as well as within each individual court arrangement. Shared pedestrian / vehicular surfaces must make it clear that pedestrians have priority over vehicles in these areas.
- 4.37 The boundaries between new properties and existing rear gardens must be delineated by substantial brick walls, not less than 1.8m in height.
- 4.38 Garages abutting the boundary at the ends of the courts will be considered where appropriate.

Highways:

- 4.39 Access should be from Dowling Court / Johnson Court, although other access arrangements may be considered.
- 4.40 The number of new access points should be minimised.
- 4.41 Double width crossovers will not be permitted to serve a single dwelling, but may be accepted if required to serve a pair of semi-detached units.
- 4.42 Adequate sightlines must be maintained to ensure the safety of pedestrians and other road users. Further detailed advice is available from the Highways Authority.

Zones 1 & 2:

- 4.43 Due to the narrow road width and existence of a wide footway on the northern side of Dowling Court, a new footway will not be required as part of any new residential scheme(s).

Zone 3:

- 4.44 The existing footway along the northern side of Johnson Court should be extended and incorporated into the new layout. This footway should remain a minimum of 1.8m wide.
- 4.45 The new access road should be constructed to adoptable standards.

Parking:

- 4.46 One and two bed units will be expected to provide a minimum of one and a half off-street parking spaces, and three bed units two off-street parking spaces. These requirements are based on the maximum standards set out in the Local Plan and an assessment of site accessibility. These levels of provision are required to ensure that the new development does not have a detrimental impact upon pedestrian and highway safety and cause over-spill parking. Neither Dowling Court nor Johnson Court are of sufficient width to allow on-street parking on both sides of the highway.
- 4.47 Development comprising flats or maisonettes must provide secure cycle parking.

Zone 1:

- 4.48 On-site car parking fronting onto Dowling Court should be arranged so as not to dominate the street scene and must be located behind the building line.

Zone 3:

- 4.49 Parking may be provided in small landscaped parking courts on shared pedestrian / vehicular surfaces and some visitor parking may be arranged directly off Johnson Court.

5. Financial Considerations:

Nature of Provision:

- 5.1 To accord with the requirements of Policy 20 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, each development will be required to provide a commuted sum towards the provision of affordable housing. Contributions will also be required towards childcare, youth and library facilities and for the provision of fire hydrants.
- 5.2 Developers will be expected to ensure that there is adequate waste-water capacity both on and off-site to serve the development, and that the development will not result in problems for existing or new users. Developers are recommended to contact Thames Water for further advice on this issue.
- 5.3 The incremental effect of even small developments can overreach the capacity of the area's social infrastructure. The above contributions are therefore required to allow the new development to be properly implemented in the public interest, and to ensure that the dis-benefits and off-site costs of development are not imposed on the local community without adequate recompense.
- 5.4 These contributions therefore accord with the requirements of Policy 13 – *Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations* of the Local Plan and with advice from central government contained in Circular 1/97.

Method of Payment:

- 5.5 These financial contributions will be secured by means of a legal agreement (s106 agreement) and will be index-linked.
- 5.6 A summary of these financial contributions is contained in Appendix 3. The wording of the legal agreement is separately available. Please contact the Council's Planning Solicitor.
- 5.7 Standardising developer contributions across the whole development brief site has a number of advantages. It ensures that all new residential development makes the same level of contribution; simplifies the issue of developer contributions, so that both residents and developers can more accurately assess land values; and reduces the amount of Officer and applicant time spent negotiating on the individual financial components and drawing up the relevant legal agreements.
- 5.8 In order to speed up the planning application process, applicants are encouraged to submit a signed copy of this legal agreement as soon as possible after the planning application has been registered.

5.9 Construction cannot commence on-site until this legal agreement has been signed by both the landowner(s) and the Council.

5.10 Further advice relating to developer contributions is contained in Appendix 4.

6. Planning Applications:

6.1 In addition to the standard forms and site plans, each planning application must also contain the following:

(a) A short statement indicating:

- i. how the new development will fit in with any adjacent dwellings, in terms of layout, design and levels.
- ii. whether the proposed development will result in the loss of off-street parking serving existing residents and, if so, what measures are being taken to mitigate these effects.
- iii. how the required financial contributions will be provided.

(b) Elevational drawings, showing how the development will fit in with surrounding buildings.

(c) A 'Sustainability Checklist' (see Appendix 1 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 for further information).

7. Further Information:

7.1 For further information please contact:-

- Laura Wood: Senior Planning Officer, Development Plans – 01442 228661 (*For initial advice on planning issues*)
- Mark Brookes: Planning Solicitor – 01442 228236 (*For advice on legal agreements*)

APPENDIX 1

Suggested Phasing Programme – Zone 2

Notes:

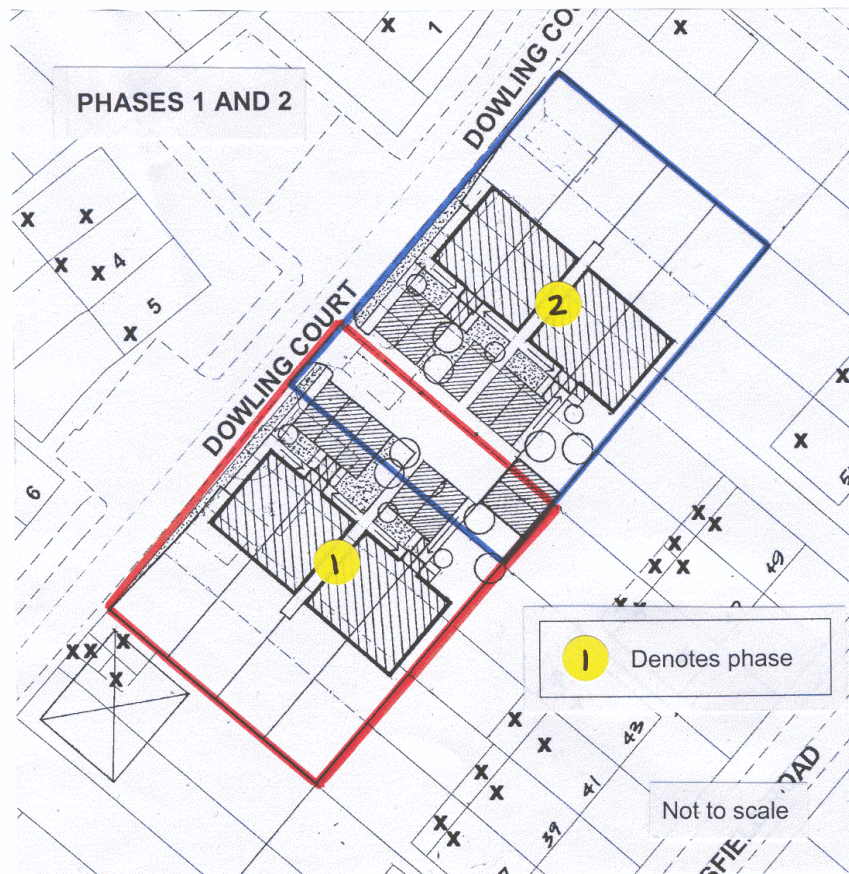
- Land to the rear of Number 55 Deaconsfield Road already has planning permission for a single detached unit. This planning permission can be implemented at any time.
- The single plot to the rear of Number 57 Deaconsfield Road can also come forward at any time, as it does not form part of the indicative layout scheme.

PHASE 1:

Rear of numbers 37 to 45 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)

PHASE 2:

Rear of numbers 45 to 53 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)



APPENDIX 2

Suggested Phasing Programme – Zone 3

Notes:

- Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 do not have to come forward in sequence as they could be constructed independently of one another.
- Phases 5 to 10 are dependent upon the provision of the new access road to the rear of 88 to 94 Seaton Road

PHASE 1:

Rear of 59 to 67 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)

PHASE 2:

Rear of 67 to 75 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)

PHASE 3:

Rear of 77 to 85 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive) and rear of 88 to 94 Seaton Road (inclusive)

PHASE 4:

Rear of 83 to 91 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive) and 88 to 94 Seaton Road (inclusive)



PHASE 5:

Rear of 93 to 101 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)

PHASE 6:

Rear of 96 to 102 Seaton Road (inclusive)

PHASE 7:

Rear of 102 to 112 Seaton Road (inclusive)

PHASE 8:

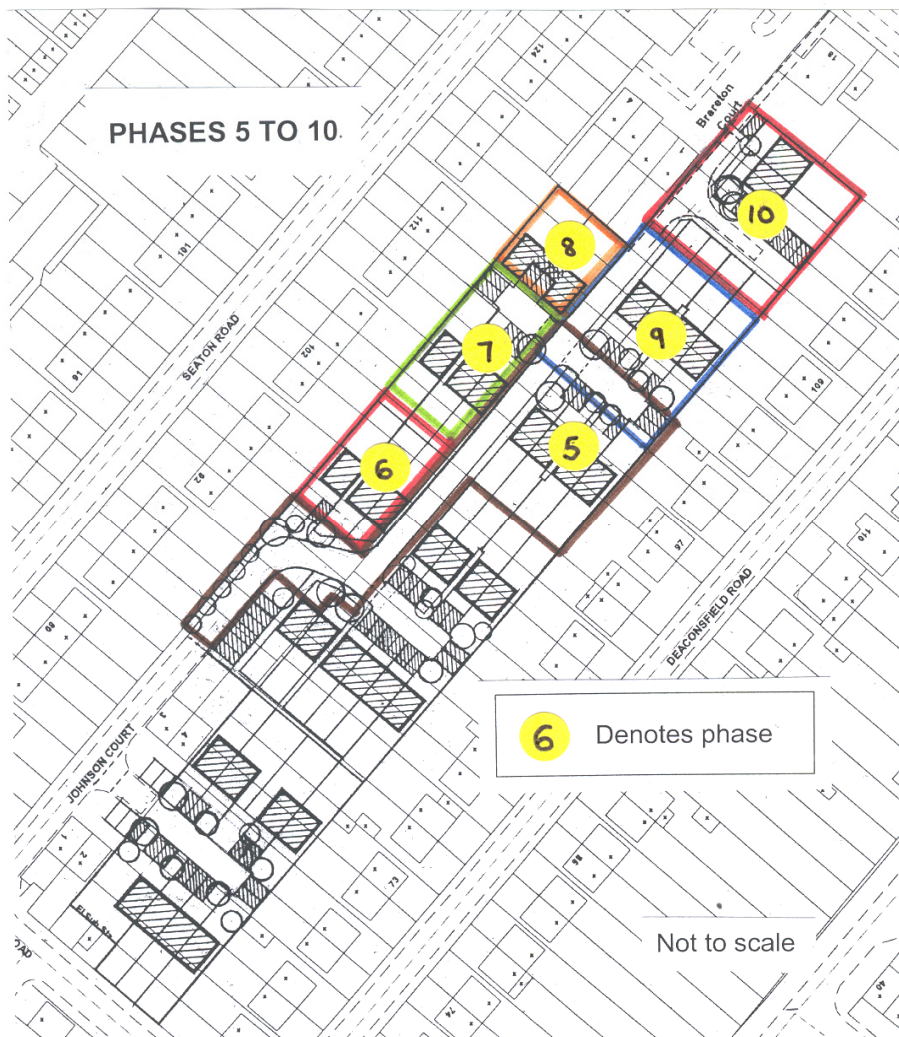
Rear of 112 to 118 Seaton Road (inclusive)

PHASE 9:

Rear of 101 to 109 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)

PHASE 10:

Rear of 111 to 117 Deaconsfield Road (inclusive)



APPENDIX 3

Section 106 Agreements - Summary of Financial Requirements

<i>Nature of Contribution</i>	<i>Amount per new unit</i>
Affordable housing	£5,200
Childcare provision	} £550 (index linked)
Library provision	
Youth facilities	
Fire hydrants	

APPENDIX 4

ADVICE NOTE

CALCULATION OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Affordable Housing:

- 1.1 The Council's preference is for affordable housing to be provided on-site through 'design and build' schemes where possible. However, the Council will accept commuted sums where it is not considered practical or reasonable to provide affordable housing on site.
- 1.2 This commuted sum should usually cover the full cost of the land subsidy that would have been incurred by the developer / landowner if affordable housing had been provided on the site.
- 1.3 The methodology for calculating commuted payments is taken from the Affordable Housing Advice Note, adopted by the Council in December 2002.

CALCULATION:

- **open market land cost of the whole site *multiplied by***
 - **normal proportion of affordable housing (i.e. a minimum of 20%)**
- multiplied by***
- **subsidy on the land element (taken as 60%)**
- = Affordable Housing Contribution**

- 1.4 When calculating the open market land cost (or 'residual value'), the following assumptions were made:
- i. The land is not contaminated
 - ii. The ground substructure is stable with little or no future risk of subsidence
 - iii. No allowance has been made for alterations in constructions arising in point (ii) above i.e. piled or raft foundations etc
 - iv. Planning permission will be granted for the proposed development
 - v. No allowance is included for possible contributions under S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act
 - vi. The basis of valuation is Market Value as defined by the RICS Valuation and Appraisal Standards Fifth Edition (Practice Statement 3.2)
- 1.5 It has been assumed that the development costs on the site will be high (and hence the open market land cost of the site reduced). This is to take account of the likely difficulties associated with land assembly and the need to provide essential highways and utilities infrastructure.

- 1.6 An affordable housing contribution will be required for each new residential unit created. Therefore, if three plots are amalgamated to form a pair of semi-detached houses, a contribution of £10,400 will be required (i.e. 2 x £5,200).

NOTE: Affordable housing contributions will be index linked to take account of any significant changes in house prices.

2. Provision of Educational, Library, Childcare & Youth Facilities; and Fire Hydrants

- 2.1 It is essential to ensure appropriate contributions towards educational, library, childcare and youth facilities are obtained from new residential development. Although the site is expected to come forward in phases, its cumulative impact on the area's social infrastructure will be significant.
- 2.2 Hertfordshire County Council have advised that contributions will not be required towards educational facilities from this particular development area. Contributions towards childcare, youth and library facilities are however considered appropriate.
- 2.2 Fire hydrants are essential to ensure that, should fire break out within the new development, the fire brigade are able to access a readily available supply of water to control the blaze and thereby ensure the safety of all residents.
- 2.3 Hertfordshire County Council therefore require each new residential unit provide £550 to support the provision and/or expansion of these facilities. All contributions are index linked.