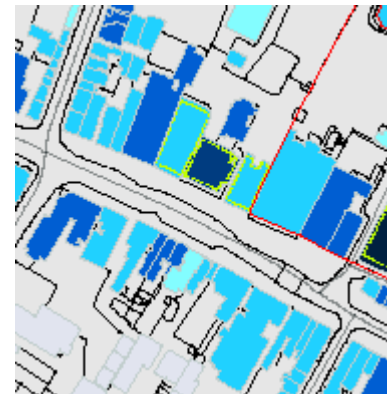




Concept Statement for Water Lane / High Street, Berkhamsted



**Adopted
November 2007**



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This publication is the Concept Statement for the new shopping development in Berkhamsted town centre at land off High Street/ Water Lane. If you would like this information, or you would like to contact the Council in any language not listed above, please call 01442 867213.

If you would like this information in another format, such as large print or audio tape, please call 01442 228660 or for Minicom only 01442 867877.

یہ اشاعت Berkhamsted town centre at land off High Street/Water Lane کے لئے ہے۔ اگر آپ یہ معلومات اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، یا کوئی اور معاملے میں رابطہ قائم کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو، براہ مہربانی 01442 867212 پر فون کریں۔

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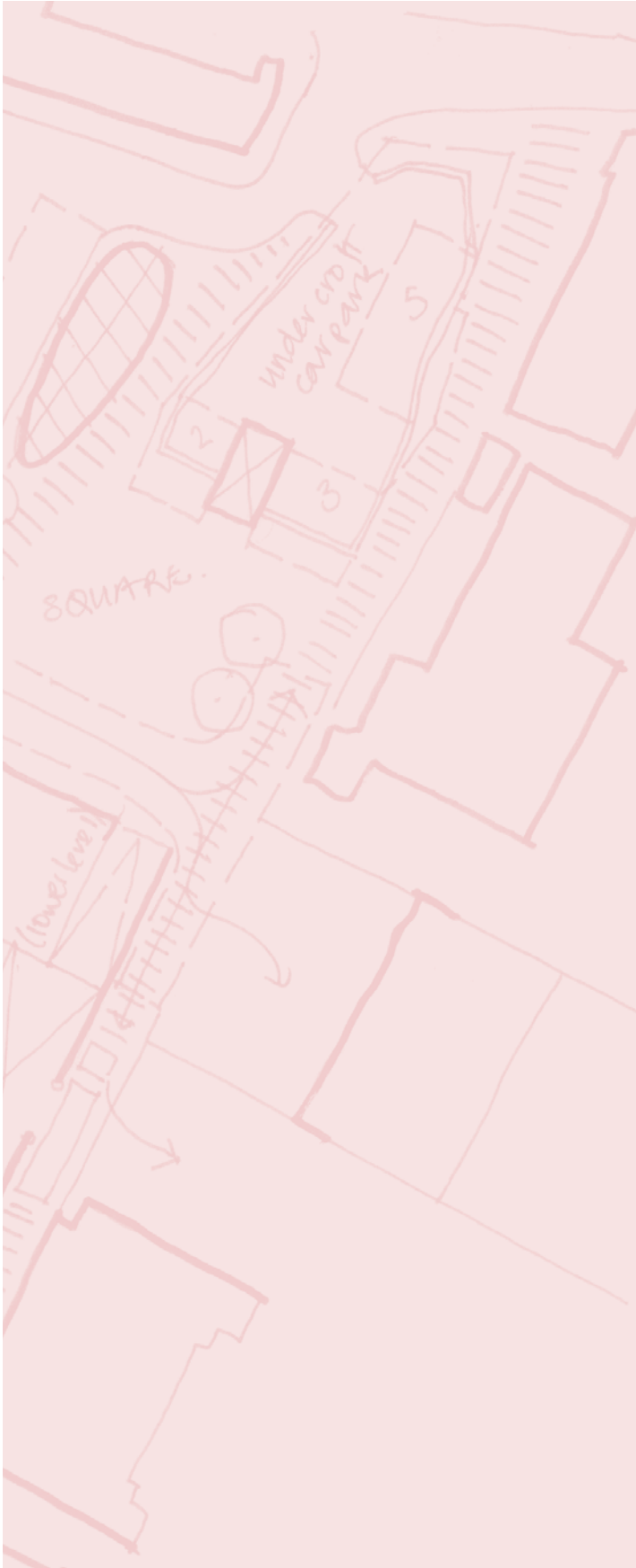
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Concept Statements are brief statements of how the development of a site should contribute to the Local Authority's vision. They explain how the policies and objectives of the Development Plan should apply to specific sites. They are much less detailed than development briefs, but more informative for developers and the community than the Plan's policies and maps.
- 1.2 This Concept Statement is intended to guide developers in drawing up proposals for the redevelopment of land off the High Street and Water Lane in Berkhamsted. It has been commissioned by Dacorum Borough Council and will be used by the Council as a framework for assessing planning applications for the site.
- 1.3 This Brief follows on from a Feasibility Study commissioned by the Council from consultants in June 2006 for the S1 Site as identified in the Dacorum Local Plan 1991–2011 (Local Plan) and shown in Fig 1.1 overleaf. This Study included detailed appraisals of the site and its context; developed a number of alternative proposals for the sites; tested the viability of the options; and made recommendations for a preferred way forward. This Brief addresses the S1 Site and the existing buildings and sites adjacent to it.
- 1.4 The Brief is structured as follows:
- Section 2 sets out a summary of the constraints and opportunities that will affect the redevelopment of the area.
 - Section 3 sets out the design principles that should inform developers' proposals for the area. These are derived from: analysis of the site and its context (summarised in Section 2); urban design good practice; and the proposals explored by the Feasibility Study.
 - Section 4 provides an illustration of one way in which the site may be developed in accordance with Section 3's principles. There will, of course, be other ways in which the site may be developed so that it meets the principles set out in this Concept Statement.
- Section 5 provides details of land assembly options, S106 contributions and phasing.
- 1.5 The S1 Site is located within Berkhamsted Town Centre and is approximately 0.9 hectares (2 acres) in area. It is in multiple ownership - refer to Fig 1.2 overleaf. Berkhamsted is a vibrant and busy market town organised around an attractive High Street. The town (together with the adjacent area of Northchurch) has a population of around 18,500 (source: Census 2001). The population of Berkhamsted are relatively wealthy and the town has low levels of unemployment (In April 2003 it was 1.7%. Source: Berkhamsted Health Check and Action Plan March 2004). The town is well located for transport and the train station provides direct services to central London in less than an hour. It has a strong character that brings a high level of local support and interest.
- 1.6 The S1 Site comprises:
- the Water Lane Car Park (with 100 short stay car parking spaces including 6 disabled spaces);
 - 172-176 High Street (currently occupied by Altered Images, Laura Ashley Home and Fitness First above);
 - 168 High Street (currently occupied by Waterstones bookshop with offices above);
 - 162-166 High Street (currently occupied by Costa Coffee with offices above);
 - 160 High Street (currently occupied by Tesco, including a basement level customer car park);
 - 1 Church Lane (Avalon, The Wood Floor Store);
 - Water Lane, which includes a taxi rank;
 - The Wilderness;
 - Greene Field Road; and
 - an electricity sub station on the Wilderness.



Figure 1.1: Site location and study area

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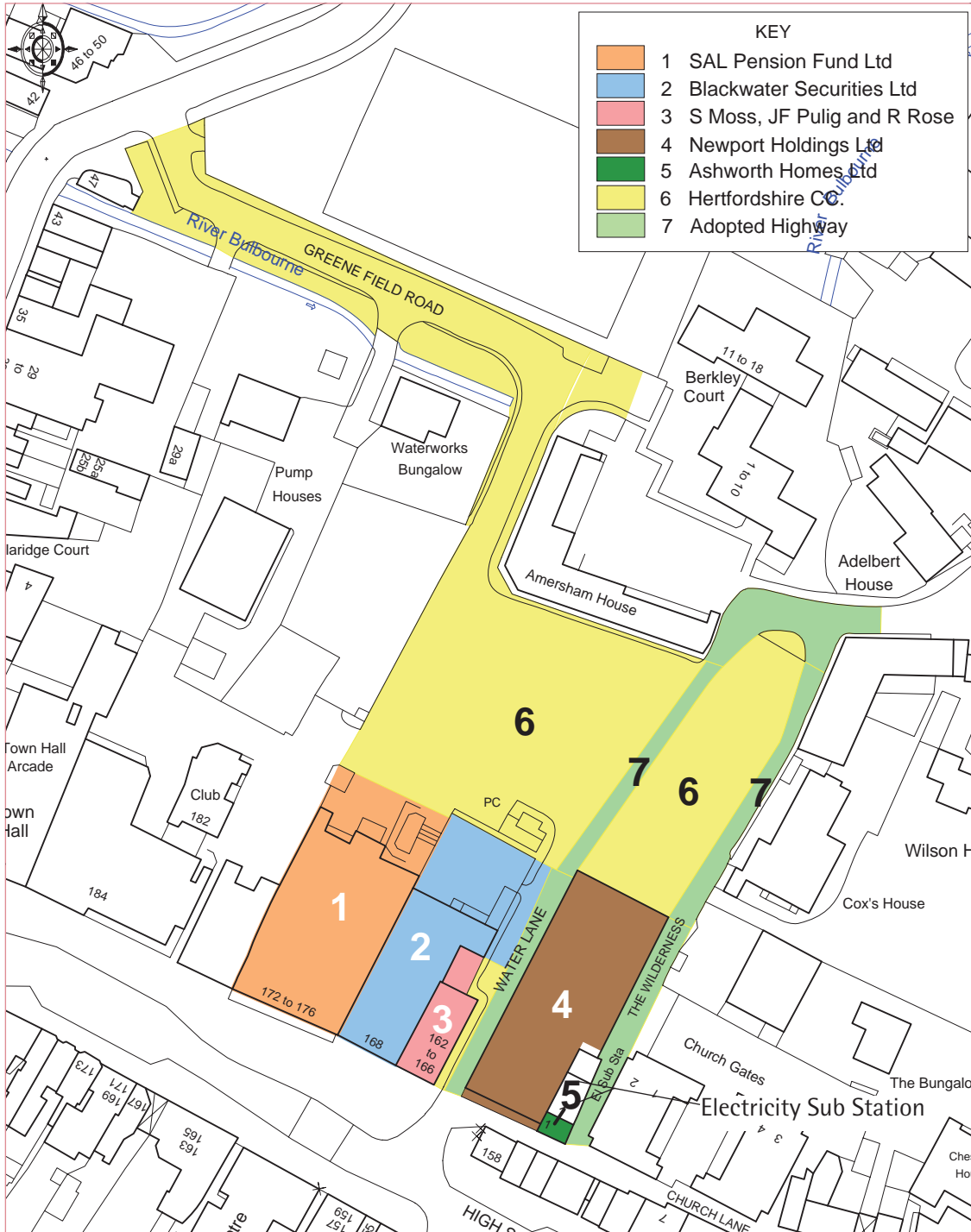


Figure 1.2. Land ownership (freeholders) across the study area (source: Land Registry).

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2.0 Constraints & Opportunities

2.1 This section provides a summary of the key constraints and opportunities that will affect the redevelopment of the S1 Site. The key physical constraints are:

- services;
- ground conditions and archaeology;
- vehicular access and circulation.

2.2 A short summary of relevant planning policy is provided. However, this is intended only to provide an overview and developers should refer directly to the Local Plan.

2.3 The section concludes with a brief assessment of the urban design character of the site and its context, and the opportunities for new development to improve the character and quality of the area. This assessment leads directly to the urban design principles set out in Section 3.

Physical Constraints

2.4 **SERVICES:** There is a sewer and a gas main running along Water Lane. Although it is technically possible to move these, their location suggest that Water Lane should remain on its current alignment.

2.5 There are two electricity sub stations on the site, one of which is a substantial facility on the eastern edge of the site. It is recommended that this is retained in-situ.

2.6 **GROUND CONDITIONS AND ARCHAEOLOGY:** The southern areas of the site have been heavily developed and thus any potential archaeological remains are likely to have been severely impacted, although medieval remains may exist. There is evidence of surviving medieval roads and property boundaries within the proposal site. Their preservation should be considered. The area of the Tesco underground car park has been excavated into the chalk, and therefore any potential archaeology will have been destroyed in this area. Reuse of this basement would be sensible, rather than constructing new basements. Other parts of the site lie within a zone of potentially high archaeological interest. A full archaeological survey should be undertaken to inform proposals for the site and to accompany any planning application.

2.7 The eastern part of the site has the strong potential for contamination from a former gas work located on this part of the site (see fig. 2.1).

2.8 No ground surveys have been undertaken to inform this Concept Statement. However, ground conditions are known to be alluvium and peat over chalk, with the chalk no more than 3 metres deep. Traditional foundations are therefore anticipated.

2.9 **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION:** Vehicles currently access the car park via the one way access along Water Lane or via Mill Street. Egress is via Mill Street or Greene Field Road. Any redevelopment of the site should maintain access to the private car parking for Chiltern House and retain the service access for properties on The Wilderness and the rear of properties on the High Street.

2.10 Water Lane and The Wilderness are used by pedestrians, with the latter being particularly used by pupils from the nearby Collegiate school as a link to the High Street. Neither link provides an attractive pedestrian environment, as they are very narrow and buildings present blank, uninviting frontages to them. There is an opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment by closing Water Lane and the Wilderness to general vehicular traffic, and reorganising access to the car park to be from Mill Street and Greene Field Road.

2.11 There is an opportunity to improve vehicular access by widening Greene Field Road to make it suitable for two-way traffic. A small amount of third party land may be needed to create a satisfactory junction with Lower Kings Road.

2.12 The constraints map opposite provides a summary of the services and ground conditions constraints.

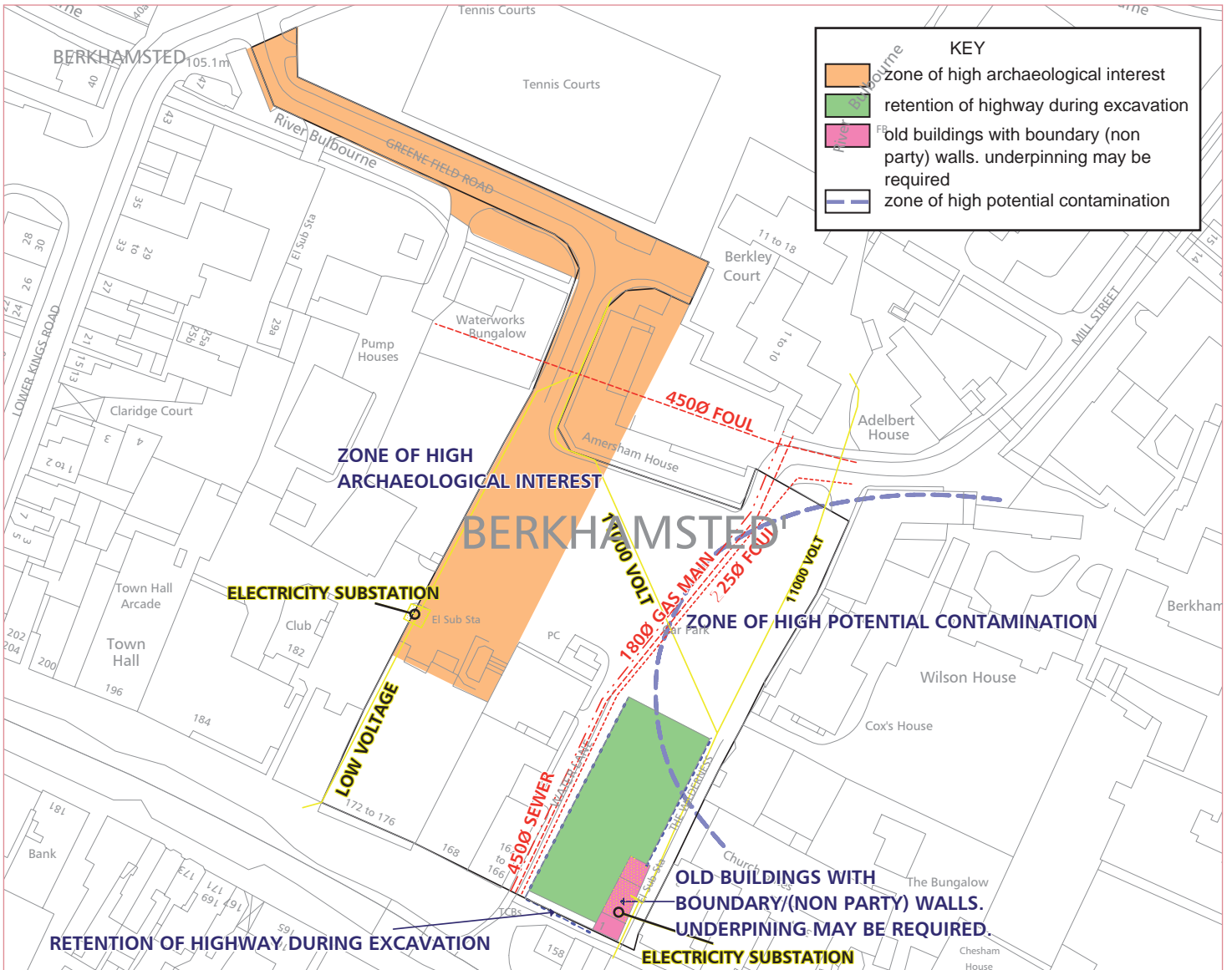


Figure 2.1: Services and site constraints summary

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Looking northwards along Water Lane towards the High Street



Parts of the existing car park are in a zone of high archaeological interest



Older buildings and electricity substation next to the existing Tesco store

Planning Policy

- 2.13 The adopted local plan is the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011. The key policy relating to the Site is Proposal S1 under the schedule of shopping proposal sites. This policy is reproduced opposite.
- 2.14 There are a number of other policies that should be considered in the redevelopment of the site, and it is recommended that developers and their design advisors consult the Local Plan and discuss the policies with the Council early in the process of developing proposals for the site(s). Policy 11 (Quality of Development) also requires that development is appropriate in terms of:
- layout
 - site coverage
 - design
 - scale
 - bulk
 - height
 - material
 - landscaping
- In addition, the policy requires development to respect the townscape, density and general character of the area in which it is set.
- 2.15 The site falls within the Berkhamsted Conservation Area. The Berkhamsted Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Policy Statement is set out in the Area Based Policies document (adopted May 2004) that supplements the Local Plan. The Appraisal splits the Conservation Area into three individual 'identity areas'. The site and adjacent buildings fall within identity area one, the High Street.
- 2.16 The High Street Identity Area incorporates the commercial centre of the town which is interspersed with residential areas of varying size.
- 2.17 The High Street is made up of buildings that span eight centuries, from the 13th century Church of St Peter to the present day. The buildings are in many different styles including gothic, classical and pseudo-Elizabethan. There is a wealth of timber-framed buildings along the High Street, which date from the 17th century and earlier, but many have been disguised by later re-facings.

Shopping Proposal Site S1: Berkhamsted

Proposal: Town centre redevelopment scheme for a food supermarket.

Planning requirements: A modern food store of around 1000-1500 sq m (net) to be secured. Design to be of high quality and sympathetic to the historic character of the town. Split or multi-level car park could be acceptable in principle. Access to Water Lane public car park to be retained. Existing provision of spaces to be maintained and managed as public parking. Investigate possibility of increasing the amount of parking which should be made available as shared spaces. Overall parking to be guided by need for short-stay spaces for shoppers.

Retain access to Berkley Court and rear servicing arrangements to High Street and The Wilderness. Improvements to adjoining highway network may be needed, especially at Greene Field Road / Lower Kings Road junction. Maintain pedestrian links across the site. Public toilets to be retained and, if necessary, relocated within the site.

Assessment of archaeological potential required before redevelopment takes place, with implementation of measures to mitigate the impact of development as necessary.

A development brief is required. The brief will need to consider, in particular, car parking management and land assembly (including the possibility of compulsory purchase).

- 2.18 The general policy approach to design is set out in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Policy Statement as follows:

The diversity of uses, design, heights of buildings, roofscape and materials within this area all contribute to create the distinct character and appearance of this busy market town. This diversity should be maintained and encouraged, whilst targeting resources to achieve the enhancement of buildings and elements which presently detract from the overall character and appearance of the area. (para. 4.2.1)

Urban Design Character: Wider Context

- 2.19 This section provides a description of the site context, in order to develop a basis for design principles that are set out in Section 3. The description draws on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and an urban design analysis undertaken by Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design.
- 2.20 **PLOT WIDTHS:** Berkhamsted is a provincial market town containing areas of varying character and appearance. The long High Street is its spine, with narrow medieval burgage plots (enclosed fields within medieval towns established by the Lord of the Manor) and roads running at right angles to it down to the river and up the steep valley side which encloses the town to the south.
- 2.21 The width of plots on which buildings are constructed has a major influence on the appearance of individual buildings and, hence, the character of the wider Conservation Area. The width of the plot determines the length of the frontage of each individual building onto the High Street.
- 2.22 The width of plots on the High Street varies but – in areas where there is a consistent run of older buildings – there is a fairly narrow range of plot widths, generally from 6 to 9 metres, with the occasional larger building (such as banks or pubs) at around 15 metres. Many of the later 20th century buildings straddle the old plot boundaries of the buildings they have replaced, and thus have significantly longer frontages onto the High Street. An example is 172-176 (Laura Ashley Home) on the S1 site which has a frontage of some 22 metres. This disrupts the characteristic rhythm set up by buildings that respect the old plot widths.
- 2.23 **BUILDING HEIGHTS:** Building heights vary considerably along the length of the High Street (see figure 2.2). The majority of the buildings are two to three storeys in height, although there are some substantial four storey buildings (such as no. 134) and some very low scaled two storey buildings (such



Figure 2.2: Plan showing building heights

as the Britannia Building Society at no. 222). The existing buildings on the Water Lane site are some of the highest in the area.

- 2.24 The scale changes between buildings can often be significant and rather abrupt (such as between no. 140-142 and no. 146). However, scale changes are more normally of half to one storey. Shop fronts are at a similar height, and so act as a strong unifying feature along the length of the High Street.
- 2.25 The scale changes help to reinforce the strong rhythm of the plot widths, by identifying each building as an individual unit along the High Street.
- 2.26 **BUILDING FORM:** Building forms along the High Street are extremely varied. However, it is possible to identify common themes:

- Most buildings sit at the back edge of pavement, providing a strong sense of enclosure to the High Street;
- Where eaves are parallel to the street, they tend to form an unbroken run for the entire width of the plot so giving a horizontal emphasis. Dormer windows do not normally break through the eaves line.
- There are many examples of gables facing onto the High Street. These range from simple gables terminating traditional pitched roofs to elaborate 'dutch gables'. They are normally symmetrical, centred around the central point of the building.
- Where roofs are visible, they tend to be simple, traditional pitched roofs. Parapets are sometimes used to conceal the roof and make buildings appear taller.



Plot widths of older buildings tend to range between 6 and 9 metres, giving a strong rhythm to the High Street.



There are some abrupt changes in building height along the High Street



Where eaves are parallel to the street, they tend to form an unbroken run for the entire width of the plot



Left: it is unusual for dormer windows to break through the eaves line. Right; dormers are more normally set back within the roof.



There are many examples of gables, which are normally symmetrical

- On the whole, buildings do not respond specifically to corner locations i.e. turn to face both directions - this includes older buildings as well as more recent additions.

2.27 **WINDOW OPENINGS:** Most windows are flat within the facade, and there are few examples of projecting bays. The scale and proportion of window openings varies throughout the area. However, windows tend to relate to the scale and character of the building, that is:

- Grand 'Georgian' sash windows with a strongly vertical emphasis tend to appear on the larger scale buildings, such as Abbey National at no. 230, or more important buildings, such as the Civic Centre.
- Squarer or more horizontally proportioned windows tend to appear on smaller scale buildings, or those with a less urban character, such as The Swan public house.
- Buildings with a gable onto the street tend to have windows organised symmetrically about the centre of the elevation - e.g. no 136.
- The variety of window sizes and the different ways in which they are organised helps to further reinforce the individuality of each plot along the High Street.

2.28 **MATERIALS:** Elevational materials vary, but are drawn from a limited palette, including:

- red brick, along with some examples of buff or brown brick;
- render, usually white although there are also colours such as an earthy-toned pink;
- flint;
- stone dressings to windows, doorways and corners;
- where roofs are visible, they are normally clay tiles, although there is also some slate.

2.29 Materials are used consistently within each individual building so that, although a brick building may be next to a rendered building, brick and render are not usually used on the same building.



Grand 'Georgian' sash windows tend to appear on the larger scale buildings



Smaller scale, less urban buildings tend to have squarer or more horizontally proportioned windows



White rendered walls and slate roofs are a common combination



Buff brick and clay tiles



Materials vary from building to building, but are used consistently within individual buildings.

Urban Design Analysis: Site

- 2.30 The site is varied and contains a mix of buildings of minimal townscape value and large areas of tarmac car parking. This site supports approximately 162 parking spaces. There are also a small number of trees within the site and the opportunity should be taken to retain these where appropriate. The buildings that make up the frontage along the High Street were mostly constructed in the 1960's and 1970's and are noticeably different in scale and character from many of the more historic high street frontages. The Tesco store is partly obscured by the narrow strip of buildings between High Street and Church Lane. The store was the site of the first cinema in the town. However, its blank flank walls are very prominent from oblique views to the site.
- 2.31 Historically Berkhamsted developed as a linear High Street with smaller lanes and roads running off it at right angles. This tends to result in main building frontages being oriented towards the High Street. As back land sites such as the car park become opened up to use by the public, there is a problem of poor quality building 'backs' forming the first impression of Berkhamsted.
- 2.32 The northern part of the development site, along Greene Field Road is more open and green and sits at the edge of the main developed area of the town. It abuts open playing fields of the Collegiate school to the north, and the narrow and contained River Bulbourne, directly to the south.
- 2.33 Within the site, the edges of the development along The Wilderness and Water Lane are generally blank and so create unattractive routes, especially for pedestrians.
- 2.34 The buildings on the site at present appear in reasonable condition (from external inspection only) and to serve their current use. However, they are not attractive and do not contribute to the overall character and appearance of the town, especially the Conservation Area. In particular the backs of these buildings are unappealing and fail to provide a positive impression of the town as seen by those using the Water Lane car park. Apart from 1 Church Lane, no buildings of historic interest remain on the Water Lane Site. While this is an older building it



Three buildings make up nos. 162 to 172 to the west of Water Lane. Constructed in the 1960s/1970s, they have little townscape value.



The backs of buildings onto the car park create a poor first impression of Berkhamsted, and provide little overlooking of the car park.

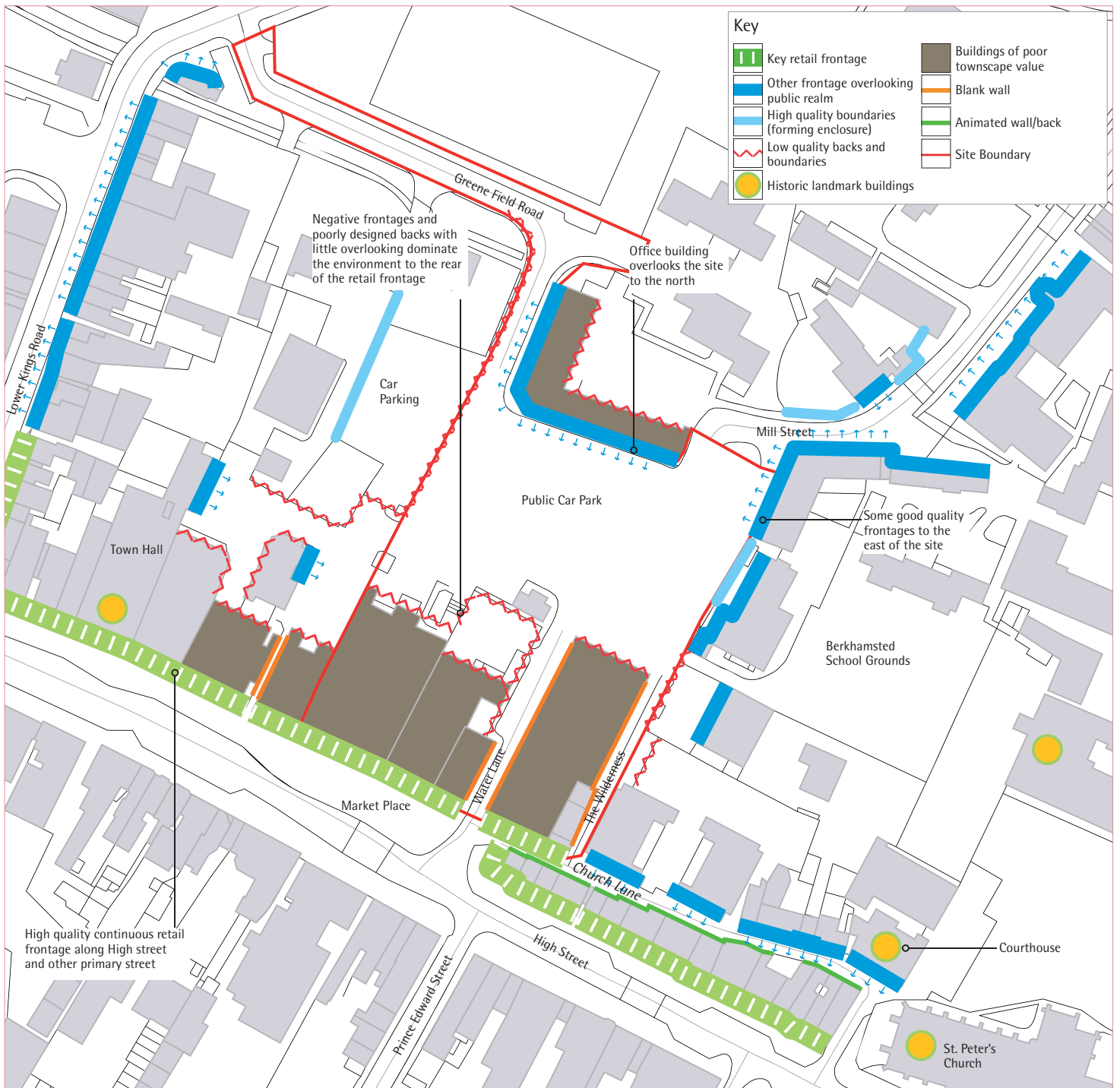


Figure 2.3. Townscape and urban design: Mixed up backs and fronts and inconsistent frontages within the S1 Site.



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is of limited architectural importance, and could be included within the development.

2.35 However, the current Tesco building contains an existing basement storey, the walls of which provide support to the existing highway on either side (Water Lane and the Wilderness) and their construction would have removed or destroyed any interesting archaeology. For these reasons it is may be appropriate to retain the frame or structure of this building, together with the basement in the form of a re-clad and reconfigured building.

2.36 It is not only the buildings on the S1 site that affect the character and quality of the area: the buildings adjacent to the site also have an influence. To the north are a range of 1970's offices and flats (Berkely Court and Amersham House) which appear dated. Amersham House in particular does not make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

2.37 To the north east is Mill Street, an area of generally attractive houses and other uses. This area is not likely to become an important through route into or from the site.

2.38 There is a range of retail / light industrial uses to the east of the site and on The Wilderness. The high walls and gates create a rather blank edge to this part of the site. The area also contains Berkhamsted Collegiate school and a number of attractive historic buildings. Pupils from the school use The Wilderness as a route through to the High Street, the car park is used by parents to drop off and pick up pupils.

2.39 To the west of the site are various back land uses including car parking, service yards and a number of utility and water related functions, some of which are housed in relatively attractive buildings. The close boarded fence to the Waterworks Bungalow forms a rather low quality and unattractive edge to the site.



Berkhamsted Collegiate School's grounds are immediately to the east of the S1 site, and are partly concealed behind high walls.



The utility and water related functions present low-grade boundaries to the S1 Site.



Amersham House does not contribute positively to the area

3 Development Principles



car park option 2
30 public spaces
public square
10 residential car park

Block 1
15,660 supermarket

Tesco's
retail = 6,195 sq ft

- 3.1 The Concept Plan opposite sets out the broad principles that should inform the development of the Water Lane Site. These include:
- the creation of a strong frontage onto the High Street;
 - the upgrading of the car park to form a more attractive car parking square; and
 - the improvement of pedestrian links between the car parking square and High Street, through a combination of new development and restricting vehicular access.
- 3.2 This section sets out the principles that should inform the redevelopment of the sites. The principles provide a flexible framework within which a variety of design solutions may be brought forward, from comprehensive redevelopment of the entire S1 Site to development of individual sites over time (see para 3.3). The principles address three specific areas, and these are:
- the High Street frontage;
 - frontages onto the car parking square; and
 - the public realm, including the car parking square.
- 3.3 An important principle of the redevelopment of the S1 site is to seek to achieve a comprehensive proposal across the site as a whole. Where this is not possible smaller applications will be considered as long as they achieve a significant benefit for the regeneration of the site and its environment and design quality (See para 5.3).
- 3.4 Whilst the Development Principles aim to encourage development that is sympathetic to the character of Berkhamsted Town Centre, they do not seek to impose a particular architectural style on any redevelopment. Instead, they aim to set out the key design principles that give the Town Centre its character and ensure that developers and their designers use them to influence the scale, mass, proportion and detailed design of their proposals.
- 3.5 The Development Principles are summarised in figure 3.1 overleaf.
- 3.6 Secured by Design is an important guiding principle for development of the site. This is reflected in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on Safety and Security. Early contact with the local Crime Prevention Officer is encouraged.
- 3.7 Sustainability is also a key element in bringing forward the proposal, and is covered in more detail in the Feasibility Study (see paragraph 1.3). Any scheme will need to demonstrate that it will deliver a sustainable form of development. This would need to be assessed in detail against a range of sustainability matters, as set out in the sustainability checklist under Appendix 1 of the Local Plan.

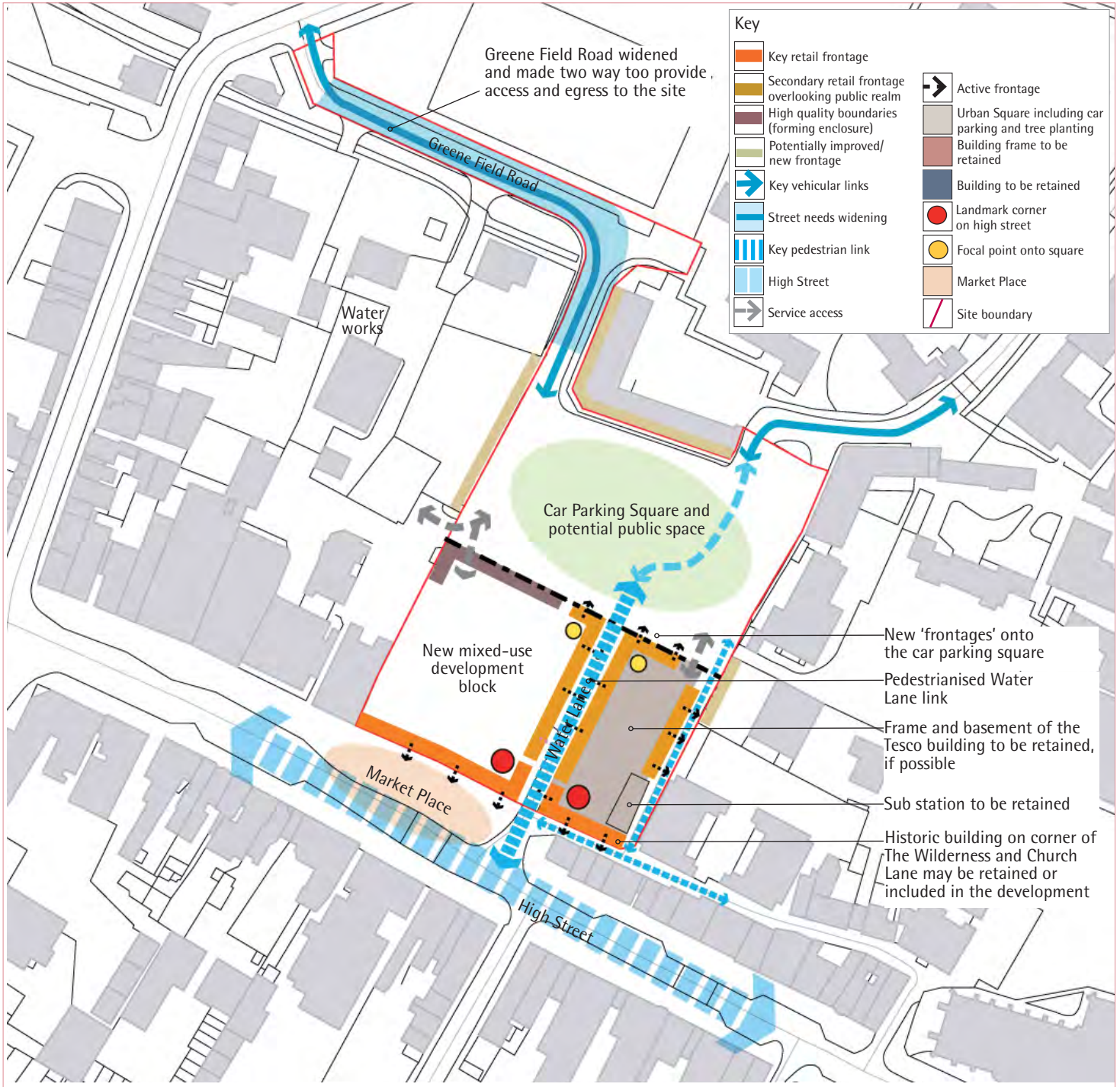


Figure 3.1. Development concept for site S1 showing the broad distribution of uses and blocks that should form the basis of proposals for the site

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Development Principles

Built Form: High Street Frontage	LAND USES	Land uses must be predominantly retail (A1) at ground floor. Restaurants and cafes (A3) and/or drinking establishments (A4) may also be included, but these should be subservient to the retail use. Upper floors may be residential (C3), offices (B1), and/or leisure (D2). Additional car parking may be included within the new development.
	PLOT WIDTHS	New buildings must be designed so that their elevations echo the established plot rhythms of the wider Conservation Area. Long, unbroken elevations must be avoided.
	BUILDING HEIGHTS	New buildings must not exceed the height of the existing buildings, which are already dominant in the area. The height of new buildings must be varied to help reinforce the plot rhythms that the scheme aims to echo. If 1 Church Lane is included in the development, then any replacement building needs to relate carefully in height and scale to existing properties on Church Lane.
	BUILDING FORM	Buildings must be located at the back edge of pavement (i.e. no setbacks) and must maintain the consistent building line along the street. Building form should be varied to help reinforce the plot rhythms that the scheme aims to echo. Where a traditional appearance is intended, roofs that reflect the simple forms of existing buildings on the High Street should be used.
	ACTIVE EDGES	Buildings must be designed to present a main retail frontage onto the High Street. There should be more than one access point to upper floor uses to help bring activity to frontages. Large floor plate uses (such as a supermarket) must be carefully designed to maximise active edges, and minimise blank edges to public streets and spaces.
	WINDOW OPENINGS	The scale and proportion of window openings should relate to the character and use of the building. The pattern of window openings should be organised to reinforce the plot rhythms that the scheme aims to echo.
	MATERIALS	Materials should predominantly reflect the limited palette of materials traditionally used in the Town Centre and across the Conservation Area - i.e. brick or render, along with flint and stone detailing, clay tile or slate roofing. Changes of materials should be used to reinforce the plot rhythms that the scheme aims to echo.



Materials should predominantly reflect the limited palette of materials traditionally used within the High Street.



The High Street is characterised by active frontages, and it is essential that new development also creates active frontages onto the High Street.

Blank frontages such as these must be avoided at ground floor level, and kept to a minimum on upper floors as they deaden the street.



Large floor plate uses such as supermarkets must be carefully designed to provide active frontages: glazing allows views in, additional uses such as cafes and small shops create activity, and otherwise blank frontages can be screened by other uses such as residential.

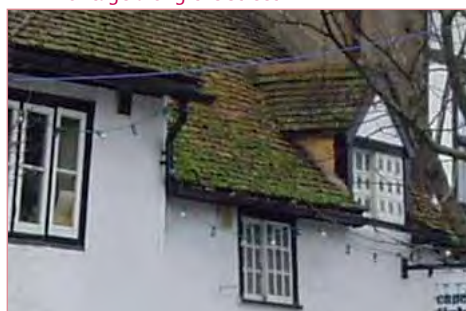
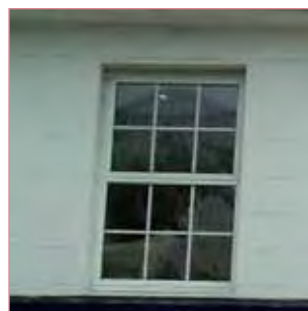


A mix of uses should be achieved with residential, offices or leisure activities on the upper floors.

The pattern of window openings should reinforce the plot rhythm.

Pitched roof emphasises the vertical rhythm of the plot maintaining a continuous active frontage along the street.

Access points along the high street contribute to the success of a walkable place.



Materials should predominantly reflect the limited palette of materials traditionally used within the High Street.

Development Principles

Built Form: Car Parking Square	LAND USES	<p>Land uses in buildings to the south of the square must be predominantly retail (A1) at ground floor. Upper floors may be residential (C3), offices (B1), and/or leisure (D2). Public toilets to replace the existing must be provided in a location that is easily accessible from the High Street.</p> <p>Redevelopment of sites fronting onto the S1 site may include the following: residential (C3), offices (B1), leisure (D2), and school / community facilities (D1).</p>
	EXISTING BUILDINGS	<p>Opportunities to improve building frontages onto the square through upgrading or redevelopment will be encouraged.</p>
	PLOT WIDTHS	<p>There is an opportunity for buildings surrounding the car parking square to have their own identity, and they need not relate as strongly to the character of the Conservation Area as buildings on the High Street frontage. However, it is important that new buildings (and any refurbishment of existing buildings) avoid long, unbroken elevations such as the existing Amersham House.</p>
	BUILDING HEIGHTS	<p>Buildings should be designed to be sympathetic to the scale of the wider Town Centre and heights should generally not exceed four storeys. However, there may be scope for elements of the buildings to the south of the square to exceed four storeys so long as this does not add to the apparent bulk and height of the building when viewed from the High Street.</p>
	BUILDING FORM	<p>Buildings should be designed to define and enclose the car parking square, and - where possible - they should front onto the square. Building form should respond to location, in particular corners and other elements should relate to how they are viewed. Where a traditional style is intended, roofs should reflect the simple pitched roof forms of the Town Centre/Conservation Area.</p>
	ACTIVE EDGES	<p>Blank edges to buildings must be avoided adjacent to Water Lane and The Wilderness, and active edges that provide overlooking of these routes should be provided. Blank building edges to the car parking square must be minimised, and active edges provided where possible.</p>
	WINDOW OPENINGS	<p>Window openings should be designed to reflect the character and style of the building to which they belong.</p>
	MATERIALS	<p>Materials should predominantly reflect the limited palette of materials traditionally used in the Town Centre and wider Conservation Area - i.e. brick or render, along with flint and stone detailing, clay tile or slate roofing. However, there is scope for using contemporary materials along with traditional materials in imaginative and high quality designs.</p>



Recent development in Boston, Lincolnshire that successfully integrates upper storey car parking into the elevations



The Car Parking Square should be designed to create an attractive environment to allow the transition between cars and pedestrians



At present the car parking area and Water Lane do not provide an attractive pedestrian environment as the buildings present blank uninviting frontages



Frontages should be active with particular attention on key corner buildings



Water Lane and the Wilderness should be pedestrian routes with retail at the ground floor



Careful design of paving along lanes and narrow routes should define clear spaces



Building height should not exceed four storeys and on lanes recessed upper floors should be encouraged

Development Principles

Public Realm	PUBLIC SPACE	Consideration should be given to creating a public space as part of the development.
	CAR PARKING SQUARE	The existing car parking must be retained and enhanced through a landscape scheme so that it is integrated into the new development. Consideration should also be given to the retention of existing trees, where appropriate, within any scheme. The car parking square should be designed as both a public space and an attractive and welcoming arrival point, rather than as just a place to park vehicles. High quality paving materials, street furniture and tree planting are required to upgrade the square. Current car parking numbers must be maintained.
	PEDESTRIAN ACCESS	Water Lane should be closed to all vehicular traffic, and public realm enhancement scheme should be implemented to create an attractive pedestrian link. The Wilderness should be closed to all but essential service access, and enhanced to create a more pedestrian friendly link to the High Street. Pedestrian desire lines across the car parking square should be designed into the scheme as part of the upgrading of the square.
	VEHICULAR ACCESS	Vehicular access to the car park should be reorganised so that it is from Greene Field Road and Mill Street. A scheme for the widening of Greene Field Road and any junction improvements to make it suitable for two way traffic is important.
	SERVICING	Service access may be provided only from the car parking square: there is to be no service access from the High Street frontage. Service areas should be enclosed within new buildings, and service yards should not front onto the Car Parking Square.



Pedestrian desire lines across the car parking square should be designed into the layout.



New and existing trees should be designed into the car parking square to create an attractive environment.



Quality paving material, street furniture and trees should enhance the public realm.

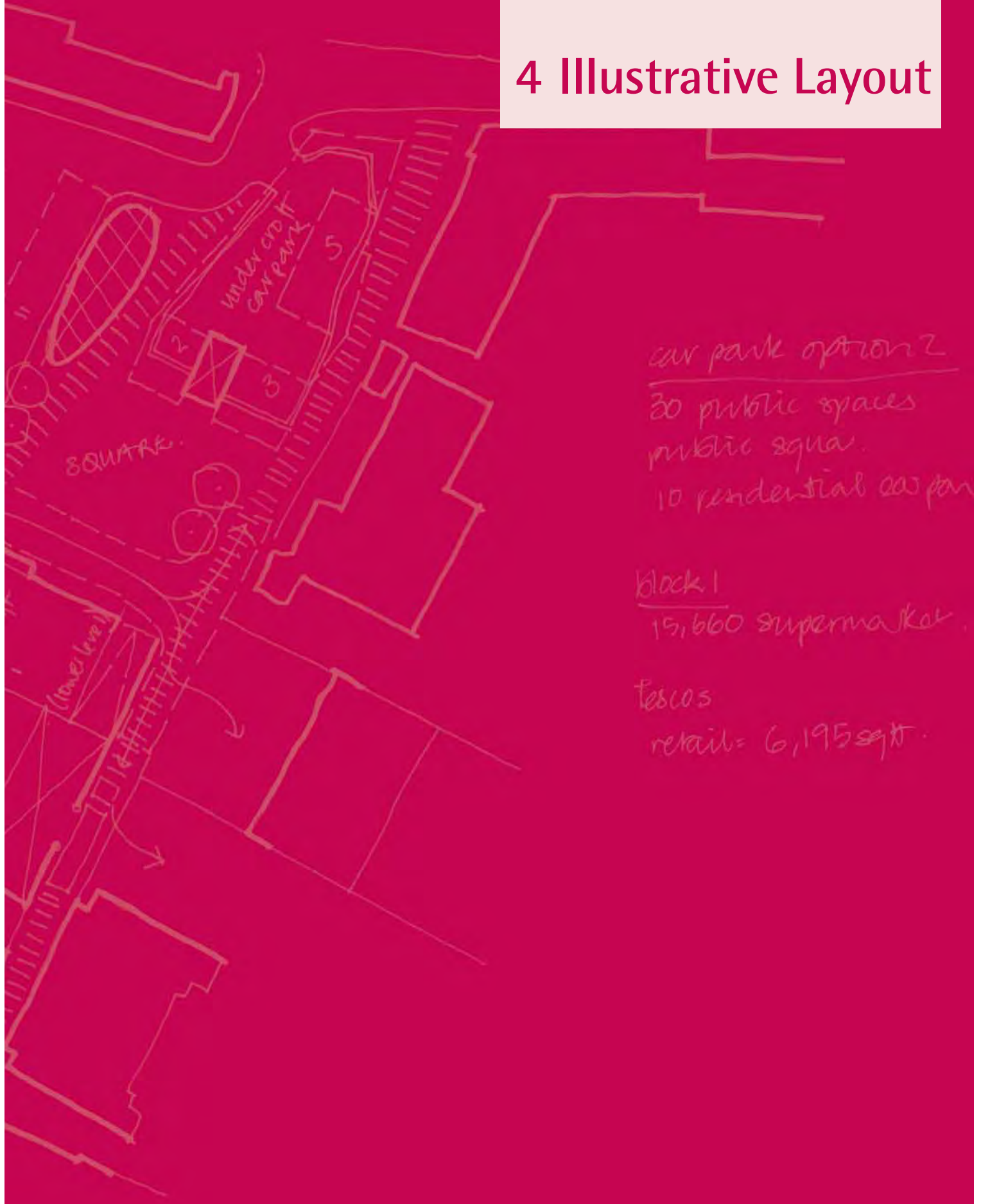


High quality paving materials and detailing should be used within the parking square.



Car Parking Square should be designed to allow pedestrian movements.

4 Illustrative Layout



car park option 2
30 public spaces
public square
10 residential car park

block 1
15,660 supermarket

tescos
retail = 6,195 sq ft

4.1 There will be many ways in which the redevelopment of the S1 site and any of the surrounding sites can meet the principles set out in this concept statement. This section demonstrates one way in which the S1 site may be developed through an illustrative scheme that was explored in the Feasibility Study. It must be emphasised that this is not a 'design' for the site, but an illustration of what might be possible.

4.2 The illustrative scheme is based on providing:

- a supermarket up to the size of the maximum proposed in the Local Plan on the western half of the site, with an enclosed service yard, a basement car park and a mix of leisure, office and primarily residential uses above;
- new or relocated retail uses at the ground floor of a substantially refurbished eastern block, also incorporating replacement public toilets and residential uses above, with reuse of the car parking below; and
- the existing car parking square is re-landscaped as a car parking square. Note: All of the parking uses need to be coherently managed and maintained to ensure simple and secure operation of the site.

4.3 A dedicated public square is not specifically proposed in this option as there is a need to deliver both substantial quantities of lettable floorspace, and car parking. This does not mean that a new square is not possible in any proposal, just that within the constraints of the Feasibility Study there is limited space available.

4.4 It is assumed that the existing interests in the land (via landownership and leases) would need to be bought out by whoever was to assemble the land in order to undertake a comprehensive redevelopment.

4.5 **ACCESS:** Water Lane closed to general traffic and possibly retained for taxis. Greene Field Road widened and made two way to provide both access and egress to the site. Mill Street unchanged.

4.6 **LAND USES AND AREAS**

- 1300 sqm gross supermarket with enclosed service yard (total max floor area 2050 sq m including ramp to basement and circulation to other levels).
- 680 sqm gross additional retail.

- 800 sqm gross offices/leisure.
- Up to 54 no. 1 and 2 bedroom flats (3455 sqm approx GIA).
- Replacement public toilets.
- Recycling facilities within parking square.

4.7 **CAR PARKING**

- 100 public/supermarket car parking spaces in landscaped parking square.
- 30 residential car parking spaces in existing basement.
- Around 43 supermarket car parking spaces in new basement below store.
- Cycle parking spaces will be incorporated for all uses.

There are a number of options for the way the basement spaces could be managed, for example:

- Whether operational parking is allowed to meet essential needs (which would be usual).
- The remaining parking is made available for customers and visitors only.
- The residential element is car-free.
- The different basements are managed differently (e.g. using the basement parking below the eastern buildings for residents parking and allocating parking beneath the new supermarket for customers).

4.8 **SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT:** The western building is up to 4 storeys high (1 commercial/retail storey of 5m plus 3 of residential/mixed uses at 2.7m floor to floor). Total up to approx 13m high.

The eastern building is up to 4 storeys high (1 retail storey of 5m floor to floor, plus 3 of residential uses at 2.7m floor to floor). Total up to approx 13m high.

4.9 Both buildings will be made up of short width frontages to relate to the scale of closely adjacent buildings (see figure 4.2).

Note: all areas are approximate and based on OS survey data

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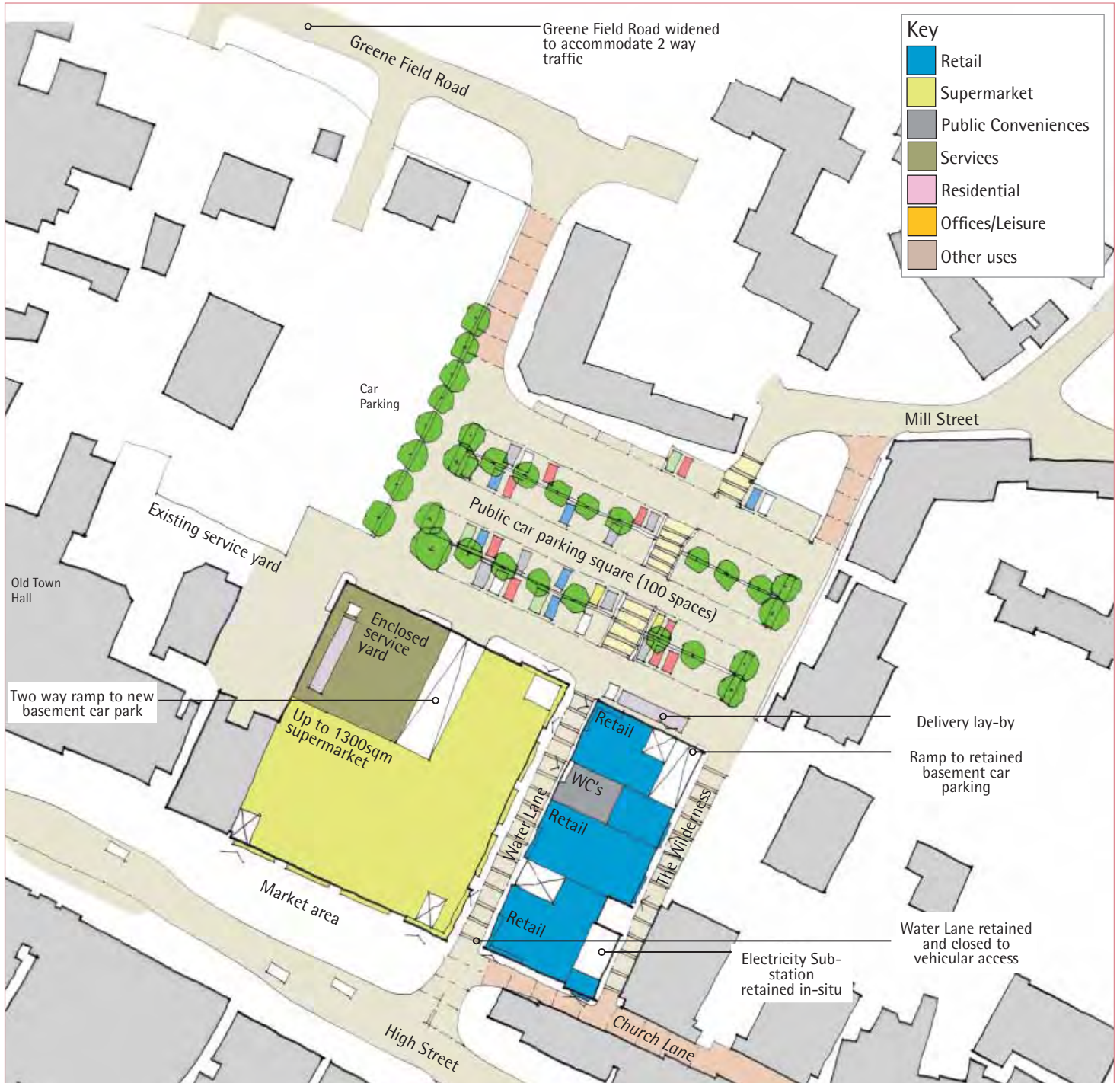


Figure 4.1: Sketch plan of preferred option: ground floor plan showing the western building containing the supermarket and service yard, the eastern building containing smaller retail units and a landscaped parking square to the north.



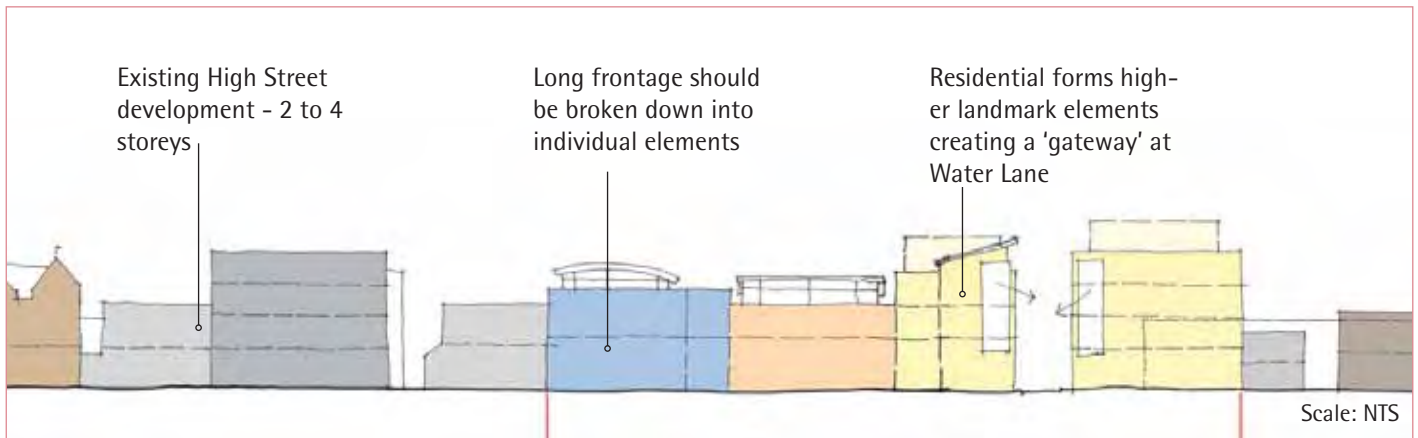


Figure 4.2: Sketch elevation diagram of the high street frontage showing how the proposals could be broken down into smaller elements to reflect the rhythm of plot widths in the High Street.

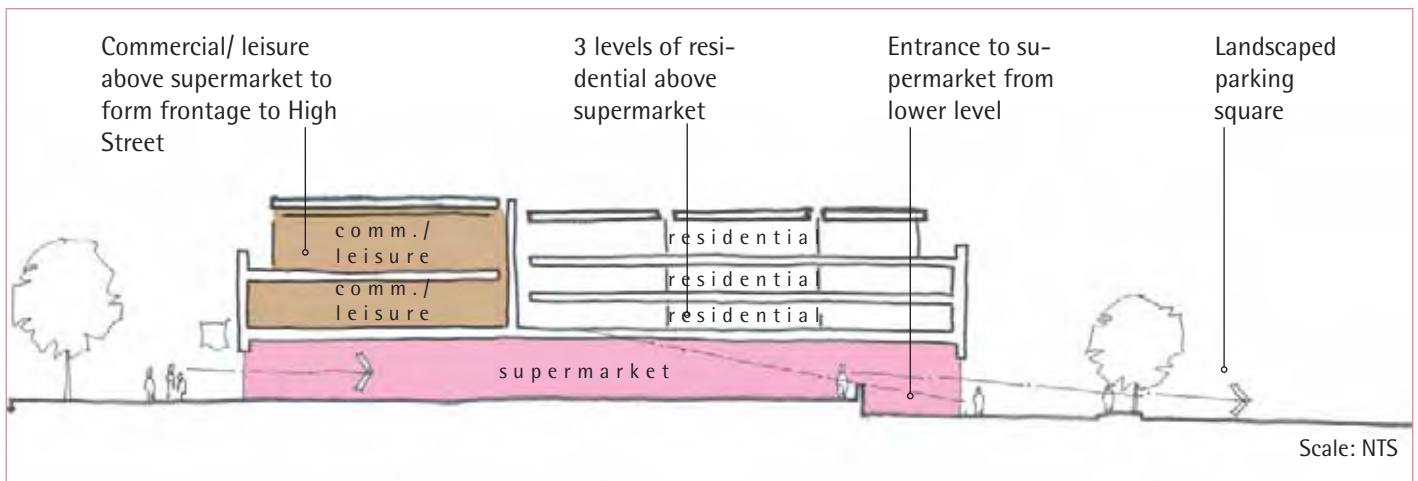


Figure 4.3: Sketch section showing how mixed uses can be accommodated above a new supermarket.



Figure 4.4: Sketch plans showing how upper floor uses within both new buildings could be organised.



Figure 4.5: Illustrative sketch of the junction between the High Street and Water Lane.



Figure 4.6: Axonometric sketch of how a potential proposal for the site could look and better relate in scale to surrounding buildings.

5 Land Assembly and S106



car park option 2
30 public spaces
public square
10 residential car park

block 1
15,660 supermarket

tescos
retail = 6,195 sqft.

- 5.1 The feasibility study indicates that comprehensive redevelopment of the S1 site would secure significant regeneration benefits, and this approach is preferred to piecemeal redevelopment. The land assembly options (in no particular order) are:
- the forming of a partnership by the individual freeholders, with the intention of creating an appropriate joint venture vehicle to deliver the regeneration scheme;
 - one of the existing majority landowners (such as Tesco) acquiring some or all of the other key sites and taking the lead in promoting a mixed-use development; or
 - compulsory purchase of the sites that make up the S1 Site by Dacorum Borough Council.
- 5.2 Whether development is comprehensive or phased, the Council will expect any proposals to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of this Concept Statement, including the design and arrangement of the buildings themselves, access and circulation arrangements, the public realm and car parking.
- 5.3 Although the concept and principles for this site are based on a comprehensive development across the whole S1 site, the split land ownership means that the potential for redevelopment of smaller elements must be considered. It is accepted that it would be possible for the eastern and western blocks to come forward independently of each other and for each to deliver regeneration benefits in accordance with the guidance in this document.
- 5.4 However, whichever block is developed earlier must not prejudice later development of the remainder of the site coming forward in a co-ordinated way. Piecemeal redevelopment of each of these sub-blocks would not be acceptable as this would deliver very little in terms of site re-organisation, regeneration and improvements in design quality.
- 5.5 Each element would be expected to make pro-rata contributions towards the access, public realm and car parking requirements as set out. Careful consideration would need to be given to what it is possible, viable and realistic for each element to contribute.
- 5.6 Contributions will be sought towards each of the elements of the improvements identified in this Concept Statement with priority given to ensuring that each contribution is deliverable within a reasonable timescale. This may include:
- The supermarket element delivering the significant upgrading of the car park;
 - The new access arrangements being related to the delivery of the new supermarket (or significant retail uses) and substantial additional car parking or servicing; and
 - Public realm improvements being particularly related to the creation of any residential uses so as to provide an improved environment for the residents.
- 5.7 In addition to the Local Plan requirements as set out in the site specific policy, redevelopment of the site will also attract planning obligations that will need to be negotiated with the Local Planning Authority as part of the planning process. Officers of Dacorum Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council have initially advised that the following would form the starting point for these discussions:
- an affordable housing provision related to any residential development of around 30% (approximately 16 units);
 - 10% lifetime homes requirement;
 - education contributions from residential development, based on unit size and tenure (HCC);
 - contributions towards library facilities for each residential unit (HCC);
 - financial contributions towards childcare and youth facilities for each residential unit (HCC);
 - fire hydrant provision within 60m of each residential unit (HCC);
 - financial contributions towards off site provision or upgrade of open space may be possible;
 - a contribution towards off-site highway improvements as necessitated by the development;
 - a contribution towards sustainable transport as appropriate (HCC); and

- a public realm contribution to cover the delivery and maintenance of works both on and off-site. This might include streetscape improvements, public art, signage, improved street lighting, CCTV etc.

Early contact with the County Council's Planning Obligations team is encouraged.

- 5.8 While the proposal is capable of supporting a level of affordable housing, a flexible approach to any contribution is acceptable in order to assist the viability of the scheme.

